

1. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
October 13, 1931

I do not want to be aggressive. I maintain that the failure to discover a solution for the communal question is largely due to want of knowledge about the new constitution and also to the unrepresentative character of delegates. The Government know only too well that the Congress is the only body which can deliver the goods. What then is the use of their pretending that the Congress is one among different groups, namely, Hindus, Depressed Classes, Christians, landlords, zamindars? When the struggle was in progress the Hindu Sabha was not different from the Congress. I am certain that a referendum is held today, the Hindus and Depressed Classes will by overwhelming majority be found to be in sympathy with the Congress. I am certain that the Nationalist Muslims will render a good account of themselves. If I had my own way, I certainly would surrender to the Muslims, but it will be of no use for the Government to exaggerate the differences which are largely due to the composition of the delegation which is their own action. If the Government is genuinely not in favour of framing a constitution prior to a communal settlement, I invite them to put their hand to the plough. I am prepared to co-operate with the Government on the minimum terms which the Congress is prepared to accept. The Congress insists on the fullest control of the army, foreign policy and finance. The Government have the choice to accept or reject the Congress demands.

I do not expect the the Government to solve the Indian question at this Conference, but am participating in it in the fulfilment of the promise that I gave Lord Irwin to discuss every issue and I value the contacts outside the Conference more.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15-10-1931

2. *SPEECH AT INDIAN STUDENTS' MEETING*¹

LONDON,

October 13, 1931

Gandhiji, after reiterating India's fundamental claims, said he knew before starting that these were not likely to be granted because no nation ever yet obtained its lost freedom by mere appeal to reason. Something much more serious had always been required. He did not suppose India would be an exception. It was now plainer than ever that only through suffering would victory be won, but his hope was that the suffering already endured might have created a sufficient impression on the British mind favourable to reason and negotiation.

I must confess that, as I go on, I feel the task Herculean. Probably nothing would come out of it, but being an optimist, I would not give up hope in its entirety until I find nothing more can be done. Still I pray the seed being sown now will bear fruit in the conscience of this country and the Ministers will feel compelled to come to terms with the nation of sufferers.²

It may be that the seed which is being sown now may result in softening the British spirit and that it may result in the preventing of the brutalization human beings. I have known the English nature in its hideous form in the Punjab. I have known it elsewhere also, during these fifteen years of experience and through history, I have known the same thing happening. It is my purpose by every means at my command to prevent such a catastrophe occurring again. I am more concerned in preventing the brutalization of human nature than in preventing the sufferings of my own people.

I have often gloated over the sufferings of my own people. I know that people, who voluntarily undergo a course of suffering raise themselves and the whole of humanity, but I also know that people who become brutalized in their desperate efforts to get victory over their opponents or to exploit weaker nations or weaker men, not only drag down themselves but mankind also. And it cannot be a matter of pleasure to me or anyone else to see human nature dragged in the mire. If we are all sons of the same God and partake of the same

¹ The meeting took place in Gower Street Hostel, Bloomsbury. Sir Ewart Greaves of the Indian Y.M.C.A. was in the chair.

² What follows is extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter" in *Young India*.

divine essence, we must partake of the sin of every person whether he belongs to us or to another race. You can understand how repugnant it must be to invoke the beast in any human being, how much more so in Englishmen, amongst whom I count numerous friends! I invite you to give all the help you can in the endeavour that I am making.

To the Indian students my appeal is to study this question in all thoroughness and, if you really believe in the power of non-violence and truth, then, for God's sake express these two things in your daily life—not merely in the political field—and you will find that whatever you do in this direction will help me in the struggle. It is possible that Englishmen and Englishwomen who come into close touch with you will assure the world that they have never seen students so good, so truthful, as Indian students. Don't you think that that would go a long way towards vindicating our nation? The words "self-purification" occurred in a Congress Resolution in 1920. From that moment the Congress realized that we were to purify ourselves. We were by self-sacrifice to purify ourselves so that we would deserve liberty and so that God would also be with us. If that is the case, every Indian whose life bears testimony to the spirit of self-sacrifice helps his country, without having to do anything more. Such, in my opinion, is the strength of the means which the Congress adopted. Therefore, in the battle for freedom, every student here need do nothing more than that he should purify himself and present a character above reproach and above suspicion.

Q. Lord Irwin is reported to have said in a speech at the Central Hall that he knew you would not insist on Complete Independence. Is this true?

A. Well : In the first instance, I do not know that Lord Irwin made the speech which is imputed to him. Secondly, I must not speak for Lord Irwin. That would be a question well addressed to him. But I never told Lord Irwin that I would not press for Complete Independence. On the contrary, so far as my memory serves me right, I told him that I would press for Complete Independence, and, for me that does not mean ruling India through deputies, i.e., Indian agents rather than English agents. Complete independence to me means National Government.

Q. How do you reconcile Complete Independence with the retention of British troops.

A. British troops may remain in India and that would depend upon the arrangement that the partners came to. This, for a limited period, would be to the interests of India because India has become emasculated and it is necessary to retain some portion of British troops or some portion of British officers under the National Government and in the employ of the National Government. I shall defend the partnership and yet defend the retention of those troops.

Q. Do you envisage a Viceroy when you speak of an Independent India ?

A. Whether the Viceroy remains is a question to be decided by both the parties. Speaking for myself, I cannot conceive a Viceroy remaining. But I can conceive a British Agent remaining there because there would be so many interests which the British have brought into being there which I personally do not seek to destroy and, in order to represent those interests and if there is also an army consisting of British troops and officers, I could not possibly say, 'No, there will not be a British Agent.' And since there are also the Princes concerned I cannot vouchsafe for what the Princes will do and, therefore, I do not expect that under the scheme I have in mind there will be no British Agent there—whether he is called a Viceroy or a Governor-General. But I would defend it as a partnership having the condition that it is to be terminated at the will of either on terms of absolute equality. I am writing on a slate from which I have to rub out many things.

Q. What are the common objects that such a partnership would advance ?

A. The common object that the partnership is going to advance is to cease the exploitation of the races of the earth. If India becomes free from this curse of exploitation, under which she has groaned for so many years, it would be up to India to see that there is no further exploitation. Real partnership would be of mutual benefit. It would be a partnership between two races the one having been known for its manliness, bravery, courage and its unrivalled powers of organization, and the other an ancient race possessing a culture perhaps second to none, a continent in itself. A partnership between these two peoples cannot but result in mutual good and be to the benefit of mankind.¹

¹ What follows is from *The Hindu*.

Dealing lengthily with the communal problem, he said he was incapable of bargaining away the rights of minorities and insisted again that the Congress was predominantly representative of the dumb millions.

The golden rule is : Believe just the contrary of what the newspapers say on such matters. What I have been trying to do is to persuade Hindus and Sikhs to give Muslims what they want and persuade Muslims to so frame their demands as to make them acceptable to other communities.

Regarding smaller minorities, he pointed out the part played by the Parsis in Bombay as an example of what numerically insignificant communities could do without special advantages and what great opportunities adult suffrage would provide all alike.

The most determined opposition to the claims of untouchables and other minorities except Muslims and Sikhs was expressed by Mr. Gandhi. He said:

I shall resist those claims at the cost of my life and I appeal to you to join me in shaming the delegates into withdrawing them.

He denied that he had offered to accept the demands of Mussalmans if they would join him in resisting the demands of untouchables. He said he was forced to agree to Muslim and Sikh demands for historical reasons, but he would not agree to the grant of special representation to any other community in any circumstances.

The manifestations of goodwill by people in England had convinced him that the English people would never again tolerate repression in India. If it became necessary for Indians to resume passive resistance and non-co-operation, he appealed to the students to behave themselves and win the respect of the English people.

The Hindu, 14-10-1931, and *Young India*, 29-10-1931

3. CABLE TO DR. M. A. ANSARI

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,

[Before *October 14, 1931*]¹

DR. ANSARI

DARYAGANJ

DELHI

HAVE HAD THREE PAINFUL CONVERSATIONS OVER YOU WITH NO FRUITFUL RESULT. TOLD THEM COULD NOT ENDORSE THEIR

¹ The source does not give the date. But Gandhiji makes a reference to the “handicap” of Dr. Ansari’s absence in his statement to the Press of October 14, 1931; *vide* “Statement to the Press”, 11-10-1931

DEMAND WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT AND THAT YOUR HELP
NECESSARY MOMENT TO MOMENT. HAVE AGREED HOWEVER ASSIST
EVERY EFFORT FOR SETTLEMENT EVEN WITHOUT YOU THOUGH
WITH LITTLE PROSPECT OF SUCCESS.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 18217

4. STATEMENT TO "THE ISLAND"¹

LONDON,

[On or before *October 14, 1931*]²

The movement of artists and poets who are endeavouring to free themselves from the shackles of commercial and industrial influences of this age is a most laudable venture if only they have strength enough to do it. Religion is the proper and eternal ally of art. What religion teaches people the artist brings near to them in form on the plastic plane. I hate "art for art's sake", which I think is a lamentable aberration of the human mind. Art has a profound similarity with religion inasmuch as the fundamental experience in both of them belongs to the domain of man's relationship with God. Indian art symbolizes this relationship and at the same time expresses the ritual of religious worship. If an artist who thinks he is surrounded by people without any religious sentiment chooses to become a scoffer, he will inevitably frustrate his own vocation. On the other hand if he feels that his is a mission, then a poet or artist has a right to oppose the prevalent creed or lack of creed and he will be justified by the greater value of his own revelation. I do not pretend to know anything about art, but I believe firmly that both religion and art have to serve the identical aims of moral and spiritual elevation. The central experience of life will for ever remain the relationship which man has to God and it will never be superseded or replaced by anything else, just as human bodies will never free themselves from the law of gravitation. In this relationship of man to God it is the

¹ Gandhiji made the statement in conversation with the Editor, Joseph Bard. The latter made a record of it and submitted the script for Gandhiji's approval. Gandhiji approved it, except for the last paragraph which read: "Both the priestlike and the artistic human beings aspire to what is sacred and, when the vulgar mind pities them for the sacrifices they make, they forget that for both of them a sacrifice retains the joyous meaning of its origin—the road towards the sacred."

² *The Island* gave the date -line October 14.

mysterious forces which matter, not the meagre texts expressed in words. There may be changes in this relationship of man to God as represented by the various and successive religions of mankind; but to quote Cardinal Newman: "One Step enough for me."

From a photostat: G.N. 1055-a

5. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

LONDON,

October 14, 1931

Though it is a matter for deep sorrow that the negotiations for a communal settlement failed, I have not given up hope of success.

In spite of the Premier's energetic disclaimer, I still hold that the causes of the failure were inherent in the composition of the Conference. I am more than ever convinced that the framing of a constitution should not depend on the previous settlement of the communal question. It was, therefore, wrong for the Premier to suggest that further progress in constitution-making largely depended on the communal settlement. In judging events here the Indian public will do well to bear in mind these two defects in Government procedure; they will then not become nervous each time there is failure.

I have had several protracted conversations with the Muslim Delegation, but we could not come to a final conclusion. I have felt the absence of Dr. Ansari a severe handicap, but he will be of no real use unless the Muslim Delegation desires or approves of his selection as a delegate.

The position I have taken up is of a double character. In an individual capacity I have retained my original position, namely, to concede all to all parties, but, as a Congress delegate, I have endeavoured to act as an intermediary, up to now without success. I have made it clear I should have to receive the sanction of the Working Committee before I accept any scheme. I have made no reference to the Working Committee, as I have nothing definite before me.

At the same time I am keeping myself in touch with all parties. The moment I have anything on which I have to take action, I shall ask for instructions. Meanwhile, I would warn the public against being affected or agitated by newspaper reports.

The Hindu, 15-10-1931

6. *SPEECH AT FEDERAL STRUCTURE
COMMITTEE MEETING*

LONDON,
October 14, 1931

MY LORD CHANCELLOR AND FRIENDS,

I have to tender my apology for intervening in the debate. It was my intention to request you to give me a few minutes at the end of this discussion for making a few brief remarks, but, as I listened to the discussion yesterday, I thought I might be able to make a suggestion which might remove the difficulty with which this Committee had to contend. I became more convinced than ever of this when Mr. Jinnah presented his difficulty, and therefore, it was that I requested you, Lord Chancellor, with apologies to Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad, to let me intervene and make a few remarks. I want to do so with a view to saving time if possible.

Before I proceed with my suggestion, I should like to tender my congratulations to Lord Peel's Subcommittee upon their labours and upon the exhaustive report they have given to us. I feel, however, that the Sub-committee aimed too high, and hence, quite unconsciously, threw an apple of discord in our midst. The reference is clearly to examine and report upon the general principles upon which the financial resources and obligations of India should be apportioned between the federation, etc. Well, in my humble opinion, if the Sub-committee had not aimed too high, it could have presented us with a definite scheme. I sympathize with Mr. Jinnah's objection; but at the root of his objection is, I believe, a misunderstanding of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's presentation of his case—this is to say, if I have understood him correctly. Mr. Jinnah's objection is that, unless there was some sort of a scheme, there could be no Federation whatsoever. I think that that would be a fatal objection if it was true. If I have understood Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's contention correctly, it is that there should be a scheme, but that there might be, or should be, an Expert Committee to be brought into being by the Federal Government, if it ever comes into being, which could examine the whole question *de novo*, and present that Government with an exhaustive report. Naturally, that report could be shelved, could be torn to pieces, examined by all the parties and, if it commended itself to them, it could be then adopted by the Federal Government. There was no question of embodying

that report in any constitution. The constitution would have been framed before the Federal Government came into being. I personally confess that I do not envisage a constitution, to be framed by the greatest Parliament of the world, that would make us riskproof and difficulties-proof. I believe that this Federal Government, if it comes into being would be faced even in the very beginning with many difficulties with which it would have manfully to struggle; but I feel that it is not beyond the power of this Sub-committee to give us an elementary scheme about which all parties are agreed. I do not mind how humble that scheme is, but it should be a scheme which would commend itself to the States. Let the States themselves decide, in consultation with the other members of this Conference, as to how far they are willing to go.

Let me illustrate what I am saying. Here, as they have started with a mention of the natural difficulties that they have to contend against, the whole of this Report is a tentative Report and for its finality it depends upon these two Expert Committees which have been suggested by the Sub-committee. What I feel is that, just as they have said in paragraph 10 that so many heads are marked "Federal", if they could sit again, and if this Report was referred back to them, they would then come, not with a tentative suggestion, but with an agreed suggestion that so many items of revenue would be federal. Even if there was an Expert Committee appointed, we would certainly not get absolutely accurate figures. Absolutely accurate figures can only be had after the event has happened—after the revenues have been collected—but we should have something to go by. I venture to suggest that such a thing is not necessary for our purpose before we can come to an agreement as to what items shall be or shall not be considered to be Federal; and so I simply take up these items and I say, let them concentrate upon these items to the exclusion of everything else and say definitely, 'Yes, External Customs, including Export duties, shall be Federal' or 'shall not be Federal'. Then they would know immediately what are the sources of revenue. Similarly, let them sit together and say 'These will be the obligations that shall be Federal', and let the States decide for themselves. After all, it is they who are invited to come, or who have volunteered to come. I welcome gratefully the assurance given by His Highness of Bhopal, as also by His Highness of Bikaner. My sympathies are entirely with Sir Akbar Hydari when he says that he cannot possibly, either on behalf of Hyderabad or on behalf of the States' Delegation, take a leap

in the dark. Let there, therefore, be no leap in the dark; and, in order to avoid such a catastrophe, let there be just now a very humble scheme of participation, and let us launch that humble scheme. Then it would be open to the Federal Government—and there should be sufficient elasticity, for which His Highness of Bhopal pleaded, in the constitution itself to enable the Federal Government and the Federal Parliament—to take on what burdens they chose to take on. We do not want a castiron constitution, out of which we can never get, or to which we may never make any addition or amendment. If we have an elastic constitution, then it will be open to the Federal Government, as it gains experience, to appoint, not one Expert Committee, but ten Expert Committees to examine many things; and then the Federal Government, as it begins its march, will shoulder further responsibilities, and as it proceeds to shoulder responsibilities, it will also have further avenues of revenue to be derived from various sources. If one the thing is launched, I anticipate no difficulty and no trouble of any kind whatsoever.

Therefore my concrete suggestion, if it commends itself to you, is that we refer this Report back to the Sub-committee with thanks, and ask the Sub-committee, with the material at its disposal, to give us a minimum scheme to which the States agree; and that we accept that scheme as a scheme to start with, without any encumbrance in the shape of Expert Committees. If we do that, we meet entirely Mr. Jinnah's objection, I think. We meet also the legitimate fears of Sir Akbar Hydari; and, what is more to the point for a man like me, we waste no more time even on a matter which is of importance. I must confess to you that I dread a committee which might report in twelve months' time or even in three months' time or even in one month's time or three weeks' time. I think that this Conference has been called upon to shoulder a particular burden. It should manfully shoulder that burden and not throw responsibilities upon any further committees. Whatever we can hammer into shape we should present to His Majesty's Government, to the Parliament, and to the people of India also; but I think that, unless we approach the task in this manner, so far as I can see, we shall certainly never see light out of what appears to me to be impenetrable darkness at the present moment.

That really is the reason why I have intervened. I think that I

have sufficiently explained the suggestion that I have ventured to place before this Committee.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session) : Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 192-3

7. LETTER TO ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 15, 1931

DEAR ARCHBISHOP,

It was a pleasure to receive your letter for which Mr. Andrews had prepared me this morning. I shall present myself at the Palace at 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 20th. I was most anxious to make your acquaintance and discuss with you the mission that has brought me here.

I quite agree with you that our conversation should be confined to us two only.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 18108

8. LETTER TO PANNALAL JHAVERI

October 15, 1931

CHI. PANNALAL,

I am happy that you have gone to Khurshedbehn.¹ You must regain your health. I hope Nanibehn will also join you.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Manavtana Prahari—Pannalal Jhaveri, p. 30

¹ Khurshedbehn Naoroji had gone to North-West Frontier Province to teach spinning.

9. *EXTRACTS FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL
STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING*¹

LONDON,
October 15, 1931

SIR MANECKJEE DADABHOY: My Lord, the Mahatma goes further and says that his concrete suggestion is, if it commends itself to the meeting, to refer this Report back to the Sub-committee with thanks, and ask the Sub-committee, with the material at its disposal, to give the Conference a minimum scheme to which the States agree, and that we should accept that scheme as a scheme to start with, without any encumbrance in the shape of an Expert Committee. The Mahatma, however, did not make clear what he meant by a minimum scheme. I am still at a loss to understand what is meant by a minimum scheme. I have

however, a graver constitutional objection. If you are going to put the Federation into operation, you cannot do it by a patch-work system and you cannot work on a piecemeal basis. If the Federation is to come into operation, it should be a full, complete, all-absorbing Federation, which will leave no room for doubt or difficulty. You cannot make arrangements for a sort of partial Federation. If the Federation is to be brought about, moreover, it must be conformity with the general principles which underlie all such federations. Moreover, does Mahatma Gandhi feel certain that, even if we have a minimum scheme, the Indian States are going to agree to that?

MR. GANDHI: That is the crux of my scheme.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session) : Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, p. 205

¹ The subject discussed was distribution of financial resources between the Federation and its units.

10. SPEECH AT STUDENTS' MEETING'

LONDON,
[October 15, 1931]²

FELLOW STUDENTS,

I have been speaking to people on all sorts of things, but principally on the mission that has brought me here and by this time you know by heart what I have to say in connection with my mission. I had not intended to speak to you on any special subject. So I said to myself: Perhaps I shall best utilize our time in answering questions instead of wasting it by a set address.

You may put me any question you like. If I do not know the subject on which you ask me, I shall frankly confess my ignorance. Barring that, you will not embarrass. It will be an act of courtesy on your part if you are frank towards me. I have addressed you as "Fellow Students". It is not a formula. I regard myself essentially as a student and if you are wise, as I am (Laughter), in after life you will regard yourselves as students.

Throughout my varied experiences of life, I have come to the conclusion that our student life commences after we leave our Colleges and Universities and Law Chambers where we are supposed to be studying tied down to our studies with the key to our knowledge and, when we leave these premises, we practically forget all that we have learnt. It is really in after life that we have to unlearn many things. The so-called student's life is merely a preparation or real life of a student. When you are in college or anywhere else, you have got set subjects. Even in optional subjects you have to learn them in a particular fashion because you are definitely bound down.³ But after that stage is over, you are free like a bird with wings to soar high and, the higher you soar, the stronger you become. So I am still a student who has not graduated in the world.

When you are buffeted about and thrown on your resources, it becomes a tough job. If you give yourselves to study, if you dedicate

¹ The meeting was held at the International Students' Movement House, Russell Square. About 200 students hailing from all parts of the world were present.

² The date is according to Mahadev Desai's Diary.

³ The source has "hide-bound".

yourselves to study, to eternal research, there is no limit to joy, there is no limit to pleasure that you derive from that study. My study consistently has been the search after Truth. During the early days of my study and search I could not consistently find Truth unless I invited injury against myself and not against others. I could find Truth only when I eschewed all feeling of causing injury to others, but, when necessary, inflicting it on myself. Because, as you must be knowing, Truth and violence are opposed to each other: Violence hides Truth and, if you try to find Truth by violence, you will betray horrible ignorance in the search of Truth and, therefore, non-violence without any exception whatsoever. I have come to realize the essence of life, that is ahimsa.

With this brief introduction I leave myself at your disposal. You are at liberty to put me all kinds of questions.

A NEGRO STUDENT FROM GOLD COAST : On your way to Dandi, you advised the police and headmen to resign—policemen bound by allegiance to Government. You also asked Gurkhas to disobey orders. It is not contrary to non-violence?

GANDHIJI: Interesting question, but shows superficial knowledge. But that cannot be helped because this philosophy could not be studied from books. No contradiction. In the first instance, I asked the village headman to resign if it is assumed that he knew that he was serving a Government which was doing wrong. And there cannot be a vow or promise or determination to do wrong. It is like the vow or determination of a man or woman to smoke 50 cigars a day or drink 2 bottles of whisky per day or before taking his meal to take one human life—it cannot be a vow. If a policeman enlists himself in service of a Government which does wrong, it is his bounden duty to leave the service; so I undertook to preach to the people that they were doing violence to themselves and to their country and doing disservice to the Government themselves. The consequence was imprisonment which they should put up with—without murmur. There was in this no breach of truth or non-violence. It was a good thing on their part and on my part.

I now leave the village headmen and Dandi policemen and go to the Punjab. The Garhwali soldiers received orders from their superiors. I have never condemned that as an act of violence. That too was a patriotic act. They got imprisonment which was worse. It was breach of discipline and some of them were sentenced under Martial Law. While I admire them for having refused to shoot their

countrymen and still suffering, I shall have to ask for mercy which, as a Civil Resister, I cannot do.

If the reins of Government were given in charge of the Congress, the Congress would discharge them tomorrow. As there is no law in the reason, there is not contradiction. He who knows the whole history can fling in my face the whole settlement. They did so. Some countrymen thoughtlessly asked me to get these men discharged. But I said 'No'. It was no part of the Congress campaign that such soldiers should commit breach of discipline. The Congress had issued no such instructions. They were not civil resisters and remember every patriotic man is not a civil resister necessarily, nor every resister is a patriotic man.

A RUSSIAN STUDENT: If you were less religious, would you not have come to an agreement quicker?

G. Oh, I understand your question. You want to suggest that I should make a promise and break it (Laughter). It is a very good definition of politicians (Laughter). I can now tell you why I entered politics. I entered politics to free politics from the reproach. As a rule the politician is free from any law suit. But I thought that would not do. Politics like a snake's coil surrounds, crushes you and seeing that I am in the midst of it, I realize my helpless plight, and I endeavour to control politics. I am supposed to be managing somehow or other the largest organization of the world—the Indian National Congress. It represents today millions of human beings who respond to its call. If the Congress really and truly carries out the political work on [the lines of] non-violence and truth, politicians will come to the conclusion that it is not necessary to make false promises and that politics becomes corrupted when you resort to any such means. Because some religious men are bad, it is a wrong deduction to say that religion is bad. That is a hopelessly false position to take and, because politicians resort to ways that are crooked, it is wrong to say that politics cannot be improved.

Mr. Keir Hardie felt out of fatigue that the House of Commons was not a good place or a true Christian because the majority of the House were bad: but that is wrong. We must stand up for forlorn causes and we will be wholly justified in being in the House of Commons for fighting for them. It is not given to human beings to command success, but it is given to every one of us to command effort. At the same time do not forget it is arrogance to pretend to do

everything by your own effort alone, because you cannot bend even a blade of grass. Before you do that, your hand may become paralysed as life is so uncertain. We are at the mercy of God. We should give up all ambition. Be truthful at any cost and make efforts, and leave the results to God.

A KOREAN STUDENT: Why are you [not] opposed to police, or State or army on ground of non-violence?

G. I admit the inconsistency. If I said that army was essential for a State, it would be inconsistent. Whilst I can invite all States to do without police or army, I have not yet been able to bring myself to believe that you can preserve a society without police. If we would suffer thieves or robbers to go about in society, I can conceive a society without police. Tolstoy has conceived of Dukhobors. There are people all over the world not needing police protection. But they should admit that they would not even lead that life unless they were in ordered surroundings. This is not out of my scheme, but I am at present hooked on to my limited work. You can thus say that my toleration of police is a limitation of non-violence. Army is opposed to non-violence. In one case it is my want of courage, in the other it is my inability to convince my people to do without an army. I have not mustered sufficient strength to pit non-violence against thieves and scoundrels and cutthroats but I can ask people to pit non-violence against hordes of the army. If perchance India wins her deliverance through non-violence, we may perhaps show to the world that it is not necessary to have an army State—I do not regard it Utopian to think of a State without an army, but it requires a higher degree of courage and purity.

AN ENGLISH STUDENT: Your people live on land, Our people live on work. They cannot carry on strikes indefinitely. What is your remedy?

G. This is truly an embarrassing question. It is presumptuous for me to present a remedy. I am a perfect stranger in this country, not knowing her circumstances. But as we are fellow-students, we can have exchange of views. I shall place my own views. I assure you, your distress distresses me too. If God gave me courage to put an end to it, I would willingly do it. Well, I have conducted strikes. I claim for myself that I am an expert in conducting strikes fairly successfully.

But one indispensable condition was that strikes must not live on charity, but they should live on their labour. Among those who

advised them to strike and led them into it was a mill-owner's daughter¹ who worked with them in carrying sand for a building which the strikers built for a Municipality. On another occasion I was in jail, but my people gave the strikers enough work in hand-spinning and weaving and paid them wages for the work more than what they got in the market. They worked for eight hours worthy of getting enough to live. But in the situation in London, where there is a well-organized society, it is difficult. But we are bound to surmount the difficulty because when there is a will, there is a way. Be ready and prepare not to live on charity. Find out ways and means.

To Englishmen who are conferring with me on this issue, I say: break up the highly organized industrialization. Go back to the villages. You have to revolutionize your conception of life. Your standard of life is artificial, incapable of sustaining for long. The modern civilization is a toy. You are increasing your standard of life. The more a man wants the more he becomes debased and breaks under. Well, an Englishman in Lancashire said, "I do not mind starvation but I have lost in my own estimation." I know of a man who was noble and patriotic, but because of his greed when he earned a million rupees, I did not congratulate him, but I sent him condolences. But later in life, he lost all, could not see anyone and ultimately drank a bowl of poison. Alas! such a noble good friend is lost today due to the ever-increasing wants. In order to adopt my method, you have to revise your mode of life, particularly you of the English race.

You are a race of exploiters. (Laughter)

Your King is the King of England and the Dominions; but he is the Emperor of India. That shows the pride lying behind it. You are therefore having false liberty. You have committed a series of crimes in order to bend Indians to your will compelling them to take your commodities. No wonder you are one of the richest countries. But where did you get your money from? Not in this soil. It came from all parts of the Empire. Your people say they take interest in India. Why? Because so many people get employment there. What revolution I would like to suggest if you follow my plan is: revise your mode of life. Don't wait till you are compelled to do so. I have given you what is agitating my mind. Though I wanted to

¹ Anasuyabehn Sarabhai; *vide* "Ahmedabad Mill-Hands Strike", 26-2-1918

go my way, you yours, you have challenged me as fellow-students. So I have opened my heart

The Bombay Chronicle, 17-10-1931. Also manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary, 1931. Courtesy: Narayan Desai.

11. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS¹

LONDON,

[Before *October 16, 1931*]²

Q. If the Communal problem should not predominate over all the rest, why should you yourself have said, at one stage, that you would not think of going to the Round Table Conference, unless the Communal question was settled ?

A. You are right. But you forget that I was borne down by the extreme pressure of English and other friends in india who said that it was imperative that I should go. I was also persuaded that, if only to keep my word of honour with Lord Irwin, I should go. Now, here I find myself face to face with men who are not nationalists, and who were selected only because they were communalists. Therefore, though I said that it was a matter of humiliation for us all not to have been able to come to a decision, the principal cause was the very composition of the committee itself. It is too unreal for words. There are men who claim to represent communities which, if they were in India, and if a referendum were to be taken, would disown them.

Q. What about the untouchables? Dr. Ambedkar was very severe on you and said that the Congress had no right to claim to represent the untouchables.

A. I am glad you have asked the question. I do not mind Dr. Ambedkar. He has a right even to spit upon me, as every untouchable has, and I would keep on smiling if they did so. But I may inform you that Dr. Ambedkar speaks for that particular part of the country where he comes from. He cannot speak for the rest of India and I have numerous telegrams from the so-called 'untouchables' in various parts of India assuring me that they have the fullest faith in the Congress and disowning Dr. Ambedkar. And this confidence has a reason. They know the work that the Congress is

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". Desai says it is "not one talk, but bits from various talks."

² Elsewhere in "London Letter", Mahadev Desai says: "As I am writing this, the time is drawing near for a conference with temperance workers. . . ." This conference took place on October 16.

doing for them and they know that, if they cannot succeed in making their voice felt, I would be prepared to lead a campaign of civil resistance on their behalf and paralyse the Hindu orthodox opposition, if there were such an opposition against them. On the other hand, if they were to be given special electorates, as Dr. Ambedkar persists in demanding, it would do that very community immense harm. It would divide the Hindu community into armed camps and provoke needless opposition.

Q. I see your point, and I have no doubt that you can legitimately speak for the untouchables. But you seem to ignore the fact that communities all the world over insist on being represented by their own people. The devoted Liberals of the north would truly represent the working men, but they would have their representatives from amongst themselves, and the great stubborn fact against you is that you are not an untouchable.

A. I know it very well. But the fact that I claim to represent them does not mean that I should think of representing them on the legislatures. By no means. I should have their own representatives drawn from their own class on the legislatures, and if they are left out, I should provide for their statutory co-option by the elected members. But when I am talking of representing them, I am talking of the representation on the Round Table Conference and I can assure you that, if anyone in India challenged our claim, I should gladly face a referendum and successfully.

Q. From this point of view it would be interesting to hear you about the Mussalmans too. You do not say that the Mussalmans here do not represent their community?

A. Well, they are not duly elected, and I may tell you that I asked so many of the real nationalist Mussalmans to stay away. There is a vast majority of the younger leaders—Mr. Khwaja, Mr. Sherwani, to name only two whom I came to know only through the friends who are today ranged against the Congress, and who are opposed to any Communal solution of the problem. Personally, I would give the Mussalmans all that they want and I have been waking up late after midnight in persuading the Hindus and the Sikhs to go with me, but I have failed. Do you think I would have failed if the Sikhs were elected by the Sikhs and not nominated by Government? Master Tara Singh¹ would have been

¹ Sikh leader

here. I know his views and he has his 17 points to pit against Mr. Jinnah's 14, but I am quite sure I could bear him down, as he is after all a comrade-in-arms. Is it surprising then that we should fail to achieve a settlement in the present atmosphere? It is, therefore, I said, that having already handicapped us, do not handicap us more by saying that the solution of the communal problem must precede any decision on the Constitutional question. I tell them let us know what we are going to get, so that on that basis I might endeavour to bring about unity even in the present ill-assorted group.

Let us for God's sake have something tangible. It would be another string to the bow and help us to arrive at a solution. For I could tell them that they were dashing a precious thing to pieces. But, today, I have nothing to present them with. And even if there were no solution, I have suggested various ways—private arbitration, judicial tribunal, etc. That is the situation. I am a slave to my friends, and it is because I honour Lord Irwin as a friend that I came. But I now see that it is an impossible situation.

Q. Is it quite impossible? You think you should not have come?

A. Not quite, and I am not going to give up my efforts until the last. As for my visit I do not at all feel sorry for having come, for I know that indirectly, out of the Conference, the work that I am doing is wholly satisfactory and I am establishing contacts which I shall treasure.

Q. May I take it then that you do not attach much importance to the communal question?

A. I have never said so. I say that the question has been allowed to overshadow the main thing, which needs to be specially emphasized.

Young India, 29-10-1931

12. INTERVIEW TO CALLENDER¹

LONDON,
[October 16, 1931]

Q. Do you feel, Gandhiji, that mass production will raise the standard of living of the people?

A. I do not believe in it at all. There is a tremendous fallacy behind Mr Ford's reasoning.² Without simultaneous distribution on an equally mass scale, the production can result only in a great world tragedy. Take Mr. Ford's cars. The saturation point is bound to be reached soon or later. Beyond that point the production of cars cannot be pushed. What will happen then?

Mass production takes no note of the real requirement of the consumer. If mass production were in itself a virtue, it should be capable of indefinite multiplication. But it can be definitely shown that mass production carries within it its own limitations. If all countries adopted the system of mass production, there would not be a big enough market for their products. Mass production must then come to a stop.

Q. I wonder whether you feel that this saturation point has already arrived in the Western world. Mr. Ford says that there never can be too many articles of quality, that the needs of the world are constantly increasing, that, therefore, while there might be saturation in the market for a given commodity, the general saturation would never be reached.

A. Without entering upon an elaborate argument, I would categorically state my conviction that the mania for mass production is responsible for the world crisis. Granting for the moment that machinery may supply all the needs of humanity, still, it would concentrate production in particular areas, so that you would have to go in a round-about way to regulate distribution, whereas, if there is production and distribution both in the respective areas where things are required, it is automatically regulated, and there is less chance for fraud, none for speculation.

¹ An American Press correspondent. Pyarelal Nayar, from whose article "Mass Production *versus* Production by the Masses", this has been extracted does not mention the name. This and the date of the interview have been taken from the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary, 1931.

² The interviewer had earlier met Ford in America, who had put forward the view that demand for cheaper things would stimulate mass production.

The American friend mentioned Mr. Ford's favourite plan of decentralization of industry by the use of electric power conveyed on wires to the remotest corner, instead of coal and steam, as a possible remedy, and drew up the picture of hundreds and thousands of small, neat, smokeless villages, dotted with factories, run by village communities. "Assuming all that to be possible", he finally asked Gandhiji, "how far will it meet your objection?"

A. My objection won't be met by that, because, while it is true that you will be producing things in innumerable areas, the power will come from one selected centre. That, in the end, I think, would be found to be disastrous. It would place such a limitless power in one human agency that I dread to think of it. The consequence, for instance, of such a control of power would be that I would be dependent on that power for light, water, even air, and so on. That, I think, would be terrible.

Q. ... have you any idea as to what Europe and America should do to solve the problem presented by too much machinery?

A. You see that these nations are able to exploit the so-called weaker or unorganized races of the world. Once those races gain this elementary knowledge and decide that they are no more going to be exploited, they will simply be satisfied with what they can provide themselves. Mass production, then, at least where the vital necessities are concerned, will disappear.

Q. As a world organization.

A. Yes.

Q. But even these races will require more and more goods as their needs multiply.

A. They will then produce for themselves. And when that happens, mass production, in the technical sense in which it is understood in the West, ceases.

Q. You mean to say it becomes local.

A. When production and consumption both become localized, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. All the endless difficulties and problems that our present-day economic system presents, too, would then come to an end. Take a concrete instance. England today is the cloth shop of the world. It, therefore, needs to hold a world in bondage to secure its market. But under the change that I have envisaged, she would limit her production to the actual needs of her 45 millions of population. When that need is satisfied, the production

will necessarily stop. It won't be continued for the sake of bringing in more gold irrespective of the needs of a people and at the risk of their impoverishment. There would be no unnatural accumulation of hoards in the pockets of the few, and want in the midst of plenty in regard to the rest, as is happening today, for instance, in America. America is today able to hold the world in fee by selling all kinds of trinkets, or by selling her unrivalled skill, which she has a right to do. She has reached the acme of mass production, and yet she has not been able to abolish unemployment or want. There are still thousands, perhaps millions of people in America who live in misery, in spite of the phenomenal riches of the few. The whole of the American nation is not benefited by the mass production.

Q. There the fault lies in distribution. It means that, whilst our system of production has reached a high pitch of perfection, the distribution is still defective. If distribution could be equalized, would not mass production be sterilized of its evils?

A. No, the evil is inherent in the system. Distribution can be equalized when production is localized; in other words, when the distribution is simultaneous with production. Distribution will never be equal so long as you want to tap other markets of the world to dispose of your goods. That does not mean that the world has not use for the marvellous advances in science and organization that the Western nations have made. It only means that the Western nations have to use their skill. If they want to use their skill abroad, from philanthropic motives, America would say, 'Well, we know how to make bridges, we won't keep it a secret, but we say to the whole world, we will teach you how to make bridges and we will charge you nothing.' America says, 'Where other nations can grow one blade of wheat, we can grow two thousand.' Then, America should teach that art free of charge to those who will learn it, but not aspire to grow wheat for the whole world, which would spell a sorry day for the world indeed.

The American friend next asked Gandhiji, referring to Russia, whether it was not a country that had developed mass production without exploiting, in Gandhiji's sense, the less industrialized nations, or without falling into the pit of unequal distribution.

A. In other words, you want me to express opinion on State-controlled industry, i.e., an economic order in which both production and distribution are controlled and regulated by the State as is being today done in Soviet Russia. Well, it is a new

experiment. How far it will ultimately succeed, I do not know. If it were not based on force, I would dote on it. But today, since it is based on force, I do not know how far and where it will take us.

Q. Then, you do not envisage mass production as an ideal future of India?

A. Oh yes, mass production, certainly, but not based on force. After all, the message of the spinning-wheel is that. It is mass production, but mass production in people's own homes. If you multiply individual production to millions of times, would it not give you mass production on a tremendous scale? But I quite understand that your 'mass production' is a technical term for production by the fewest possible number through the aid of highly complicated machinery. I have said to myself that that is wrong. My machinery must be of the most elementary type which I can put in the homes of the millions. Under my system, again, it is labour which is the current coin, not metal. Any person who can use his labour has that coin, has wealth. He converts his labour into cloth, he converts his labour into grain. If he wants paraffin oil, which he cannot himself produce, he uses his surplus grain for getting the oil. It is exchange of labour on free, fair and equal terms—hence it is no robbery. You may object that this is a reversion to the primitive system of barter. But is not all international trade based on the barter system?

Look, again, at another advantage, that this system affords. You can multiply it to any extent. But concentration of production *ad infinitum* can only lead to unemployment. You may say that workers thrown out of work by the introduction of improved machinery will find occupation in other jobs. But in an organized country where there are only fixed and limited avenues of employment, where the worker has become highly skilled in the use of one particular kind of machinery, you know from your own experience that this is hardly possible. Are there not over three millions unemployed in England today? A question was put to me only the other day: "What are we doing today with these three million unemployed?" They cannot shift from factory to field in a day. It is a tremendous problem.

Q. Would not machine agriculture make a great difference to India, as it has done to America and Canada?

A. Probably. But that is a question I do not consider myself fit to answer. We in India have not been able to use much complicated machinery in agriculture with profit so far. We do not exclude machinery. We are making cautious experiments. But we have not found power-driven agricultural machinery to be necessary.

Q. Some people have the impression that you are opposed to machinery in general. This is not true, I believe.

A. That is quite wrong. The spinning-wheel is also machinery. It is a beautiful work of art. It typifies the use of machinery on a universal scale. It is machinery reduced to the terms of the masses.

Q. So, you are opposed to machinery, only because and when it concentrates production and distribution in the hands of the few?

A. You are right. I hate privilege and monopoly. Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo to me. That is all.

Harijan, 2-11-1934

13. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS¹

LONDON,
October 16, 1931

Q. Are you hopeful of a successful outcome?

A. Being an optimist, I never lose hope, but I can say that I am no nearer a solution than I was in Bombay. There are numerous difficulties. I know that the Congress demand appears a little too high in the atmosphere that is found to exist here, though I think that is none too high.

Q. Is there no way out of the difficulty?

A. There are many ways, but whether they will be adopted by the parties concerned, I do not know. We have been told that the solution of the constitutional question depends on the solution of the communal question. It is not true, and I am afraid, it is the very presentation of the question in this inverted form that has made the question more difficult and given it an altogether artificial importance, and because it has been made the fulcrum, the parties concerned feel that they can pitch their demands as high as possible. And thus, we are

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". The questions were asked at a luncheon given by American Journalists at Savoy Hotel. Desai says: Gandhiji, in thanking them for it, described it as a delicate courtesy. He regaled them for some minutes with stories as to how journalists had misquoted him and how in one instance a misrepresentation had nearly cost him his life. The cup of bitterness, he said, would be full when, in the words of a journalist in India, they deliberately embellished truth itself with "a little bit of embroidery". He commended to them the motto of truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

moving in a hideously vicious circle and the task of peace becomes more and more difficult. But I, for the life of me, see no vital connection at all between the two questions. India will have freedom whether the communal question is solved or not solved. No doubt we would have difficult times after the attainment of freedom, but freedom itself cannot be held up by the question, for we can get freedom as soon as we are worthy of it, and being worthy of it means suffering enough for it, paying a rich price for the rich prize of freedom. But if we have not suffered, if we have not paid the price, even a solution of the question would be of no help to us. If we have suffered enough, and offered sufficient sacrifices, no argument or negotiation would be necessary. But who am I to determine that we have suffered enough? In the hope that we had suffered enough, I came here and I am not at all sorry that I came here, for I find that my work lies outside the Conference and that is why—in spite of my numerous engagements—I agreed to come here, for this I regard as part of my work.

Q. Does not the General Election make your work difficult?

A. It need not. If British statesmen realized that the financial situation would be more difficult if there were a war between England and India, however non-violent, they would not allow the General Election to hamper the solution of our problem. They must realize that, in case India's demand is not granted, there is bound to be a fierce boycott, and all the attention of Great Britain will have to be absorbed in looking after her quickly perishing trade interests in India. On the contrary, if there is an honourable partnership, Great Britain would be more free to mend her own affairs. But there is another very great difficulty in our way. So long as India is held by the bayonet, the British ministers will continue to cast their hungry eyes on the famishing masses of India and forging fresh means of draining the last ounce of silver and gold from India not necessarily by a malicious design, but forced by the necessity of the case, for when there is unemployment and want stalking the land and there is a chance of relief from some direction, no matter whether it is by exploiting another country, you cannot expect the statesmen to weigh everything in golden scales, and model their conduct on a strictly ethical code. It will drive them to desperate measures like manipulating India's currency. That may for a time put off the agony, but the ultimate doom cannot long be delayed.

Young India, 29-10-1931

14. *EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL
STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING¹*

LONDON,
October 16, 1931

MR GANDHI: My Lord Chancellor, in view of the impending conversations between Their Highnesses or their representatives and Delegates on this side of the table, perhaps it is unnecessary for me to say anything in defence of the suggestion which I had the privilege of making before this Committee; but I would be unjust to Lord Peel and unjust to Sir Akbar Hydari (and I have listened with all the respect and attention which anything that Lord Peel or Sir Akbar Hydari might say deserves) if I did not confess that I am unconvinced and that I remain unrepentant. It may be that I am too obtuse to realize those difficulties; it may be that I am too impatient to see something concrete before us to see those difficulties; but I also know that I have confidence enough in myself and my countrymen to believe that we are well able to bear the burden and the responsibilities that self-government would impose upon us, and therefore I am not baffled by difficulties, real or imaginary.

But I want to apply my very simple mind to this question of apportionment of the revenue and the expenditure of the Government of India. We have been talking about principles. Well, I have really failed to see many principles in connections with the work before us. There is certainly one principle, namely, on what standard are we going to apportion the revenues and the expenditure? There certainly we shall have to come to some rough and ready principle on which we should decide; and that principle, as I visualize it before myself, is whether the British Indian part of India is to shoulder any additional burden beyond what it shoulders today by reason of Federation, and likewise whether, the states are to do so, or whether, in entering upon Federation, each party will refuse, say, for the time being, to take over any further burdens. That, to my mind, would be the principle that would guide us in coming to an apportionment of revenue and expenditure.

¹ The Committee continued consideration of Head 4: Distribution of Financial Resources between the Federation and its Units.

The difficulty, therefore, really, that has appeared to me as a result of having listened to all these discourses, is one not of principle, but rather, if I may respectfully put it, of disinclination. If we have got the determination that we want Federation, that we want Federation at any cost consistently with the self-respect of each party, or each partner—if we have that determination I, again, as I say, as a simple man, a layman, can see no difficulty whatsoever. All we have to do is to find out those heads of revenue which we can easily understand without any complication, and we set about saying, “These are the heads of the revenue which we shall hold jointly. The balance will go either to the Federal Government or to the Provinces.” That distribution can, in my opinion, easily be made. Today the greatest difficulty lies in bringing the States’ and the other Delegates together and coming to a conclusion. If we lay down the principle that neither party is just now to bear any fresh burdens, we shall divide the heads accordingly; or if there is going to be a little give-and-take, each taking a little more responsibility, we shall arrive at a conclusion in accordance with that Principle. Nor do I see any difficulty in finding what items of expenditure we are going to hold in common. If we have come to the conclusion that, at the present moment, we are going to have A, B and C sources of revenue, we know today, so far as our information permits us, that from these three sources we shall get so much revenue. Then we shall take such heads of expenditure as will balance that revenue. I know that our estimate may prove to be wrong; it will be time enough for the Federal Government to decide how it would adjust the difference. If there is a surplus, there should be no difficulty; if a deficit, naturally there would be some difficulty, but not one of us expects that the Federal Government will, when it is launched out on the stormy ocean of responsibility, meet no difficulty whatsoever.

I see that there is a kind of fear regarding decisions by the Federal Government, seeing that, in the Federal Government, up to now, we have pictured to ourselves a majority of those on the British Indian side; so that the fate of the States might be in the hands of the majority. If there is any such fear, we need not have any reservation whatsoever, or we might have some such reservation as I can just now think of, namely, that, unless there is an agreement between a two-thirds majority of the Princes on the one side and a similar majority on the other, there will be no decision taken binding on both sides. It ake that by way of illus

tration as it comes into my mind whilst I am speaking. I simply say that difficulties of this kind need not baffle us, and I feel that we ought to get rid of this incubus of expert opinion at every point. We are, after all, a poor country, and we are not going to get the assistance of experts at every turn. I think that, in India, we have intelligence enough to understand roughly what we want without having the guidance of experts; and in, my humble experience of things of the world, I have seen that, when you go to experts, sometimes you founder, because one expert says one thing, another expert says another. And when you come to matters of finance, which are ordinarily too deep for humble folk, these folk do not know which expert's opinion to take; so that they cast lots and trust to the future, saying that they are not going to be buffeted about by these experts. You find the same thing in law, with all deference to the Lord Chancellor.

H.H. THE MAHARAJA OF BIKANER : You are a distinguished lawyer yourself.

MR.GANDHI : That is why I speak from bitter experience. The same is true of medicine. Heaven help us from medical men! Let us get rid of these difficulties that experts cast for us. After all, if we make any mistake, we ourselves will be the sufferers. But if we tread upon this ground with fear lurking in our breast, we shall not be able to evolve a scheme consistent with the dignity of the great and ancient country that we are. I have therefore simply explained my position as a very simple man before this Committee, so that, when we have these informal conversations, we may approach the question with fresh minds and not with minds full of dread.

May I, as I conclude, respectfully suggest to the Princes that they have come here with their experts also. They have brought their best men here. I will trust myself to those experts, and use my common sense judgment also if they dare to mislead me. But I shall be entirely satisfied, and in a few hours come to a definite conclusion as to what I want and what I do not want. Hence I remain absolutely convinced that we should either send this thing to Lord Peel's Sub-committee, putting the burden on them to come with a definite conclusion, or, instead of worrying that Sub-committee, some of us should sit together and produce a very humble agreed scheme with which we can start the financial part of the Federation.

Indian Round Table Conference (second session) : Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp.220-1

15. *SPEECH AT TEMPERANCE WORKERS' MEETING'*

LONDON,
October 16, 1931

The Speaker lost no time in plunging in thoroughly business like fashion into his subject. The first half of the hour at his disposal he devoted to what proved to be a clear, concise and convincing statement of the position in India with regard to the traffic in drink and drugs. The rest of the time, by his own request, we devoted to answering questions which, he said, was “the best way to establish contact with his hearers”. And of questions there were not a few—regular fusillade, in fact—all of which were clearly and courteously replied to.

Drink, we learned, was not the fashion in India as it is with us, in U.S.A. and on the continent, In fact, it is ‘taboo’ in good society there. India, seeks to rid herself of the traffic in it, the revenue from which, alas! goes to the Provincial Governments and is a main source of support for education. Indians, despairing of any help from the Government, had sought in recent years to reduce the evils resulting from the trade in intoxicants by peaceful picketing of the liquor shops, a work (involving much self-sacrificing efforts on their part) heroically undertaken by Indian women, some of them of high degree. And Lord Irwin, with whom he had discussed the subject at length, had admitted the right of Indians to adopt that course of action in pursuing their campaign against “these two sinful traffics” as Gandhi with emphasis called them.

Such were some of the things we learned from the lips of this strange, asceticlooking leader of men who only twice showed any emotion or fire in his narrative; once when an interrogator suggested that if the Indians were really earnest in desiring to end the traffic, it would surely not be difficult for their representatives on the Legislative Councils to suggest alternative methods of revenue-raising (e.g., by a light tax on salt or other article in general use) . This suggestion Gandhi promptly and scornfully rejected. He would be no party, he said, to laying any greater burden on the people than they were already bearing. Reduction of the unnecessary expenditure on the standing army in India and of the excessive cost of the Indian Civil Service were his alternative methods. An inquiry respecting the payment of compensation to dispossessed licence-holders provoked amazement on his part that anyone should think of compensating them. It was the victims of the traffic, not those who conducted it, who, in his view, should be compensated.

British Weekly, 22-10-1931

¹ The meeting, which took place in the Central Hall, Westminster, was called by the Temperance Council of Christian Churches.

16. CABLE TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU¹

[After October 16, 1931]

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

ALLAHABAD

YOUR CABLE. YOU SHOULD UNHESITATINGLY TAKE
NECESSARY STEPS MEET EVERY SITUATION. EXPECT
NOTHING HERE.

BAPU

From a photostat : S.N. 18224

¹ This was in answer to a cable dated October 16 from the addressee, which read: "Agrarian situation becoming critical. Coercive processes attachments forcible collection rent continued right through without interval. Many ejected tenants proceeded against for criminal trespass many for fear permanently losing land sold cattle belongings borrowed money paid full demand plus extras. Fresh demand now made for current season inadequate remissions threat that if full payment not made within month remission might be cancelled also no objection considered on behalf tenants till full payment made. Condition kisans deplorable thoroughly exhausted after past six months continuous harassment forcible measures. Apparently process likely be repeated this season also. Allahabad District Congress Committee resolved under circumstances ask permission start satyagraha if necessity arises by advising withholding payment rent application for permission made to Vallabhbhai and Provincial Committee. Representative District Kisan Conference being held next week to decide question. Decision likely have far-reaching consequences but question payment or withholding payment must be decided soon vital urgent problem for kisan no delay" (S.N.18223).

17. LETTER TO LORD IRWIN

KINGSLEY HALL,
BOW,
October 17, 1931

DEAR FRIENDS,

Your letter¹ came as if in response to my prayer. I was about to write to you to send me an appointment when your welcome letter came. I shall be with you at 10 a.m. on Wednesday if the hour is not too early. So far as I can see, my work at the R.T.C. is nearly finished. But I cannot take any serious step without conferring with you. Of all this when we meet.

Pray excuse the left hand writing.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : C. W. 9439

18. SPEECH AT NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

NOTTINGHAM,
October 17, 1931

Gandhi said the Indian Congress demanded complete independence in the fullest sense of that term. India sought for power to control the defence forces, external affairs and finance.

I have used the term demand. As a matter of fact, no nation has ever secured independence by demanding it. Independence has to be earned by sacrifice and self-suffering. So far as history teaches, nations have come to freedom through rivers of blood. They have beaten back the intruder, oppressor or exploiter, but in the process they have suffered a big share of the beating.

¹ It read: "I am coming to London the Monday next for two or three days—and I wondered if you had half an hour or an hour free on Wednesday morning 21. You might have cared to have another talk at Eaton Square. I know you will be very busy and may well be engaged in important Committee work. But I thought I would let you know my own movement and plans—in case you thought a talk would be helpful. I have nothing particular to say that I am afraid I have not said before—and shall well understand if you feel reluctance to add to what must already be an overburdened engagement book!" (S.N.18100)

We are fighting by truthful and non-violent means for freedom, the birthright of every nation. I am tired of people inflicting violence on others. Justice does not come that way. Civil disobedience has limitations, for millions cannot indulge in it. Our constructive activities consist of removing the curses of alcohol, drugs and untouchability. Don't think we are all at sixes and sevens because we have not yet arrived at agreement.

Birmingham Post, 19-10-1931

19. INTERVIEW TO EVELYN WRENCH¹

LONDON,

[On or after *October 17, 1931*]²

WRENCH: I am very glad to have this opportunity of having a talk with you, Mr. Gandhi, for the benefit of the readers of *The Spectator*.

GANDHIJI: One of the things I wanted to do while in England was to talk to the Editor of *The Spectator*, because we in India appreciate very much the part *The Spectator* has played in enlightening the people of Great Britain on Indian problems. I know that you may not necessarily agree with all the views I hold, but I recognize that you have repeatedly stated in the columns of *The Spectator* that the only satisfactory basis for the future relations of Great Britain and India is one of friendship, absolute equality and a recognition of the fact that the people of India must be the final arbiters of their destiny.

Q. Let's see; when were you last in England, Mr. Gandhi? It was some time before the War, wasn't it?

A. Yes, I visited England in 1909 and I was here again just two days after the outbreak of War³. On that occasion I assisted in the organization of a Red Cross unit, but unfortunately I fell ill and a severe attack of pleurisy prevented my doing what I wanted to do before I returned to India at the end of November that year.⁴

¹ Editor of *The Spectator*. The account has been extracted from Wrench's report "An Evening with Mr. Gandhi." The interview took place at Wrench's residence between 8 and 11 p.m.

² The source does not mention the date of the interview, but merely says it took place "last week".

³ The first World War, in August 1914.

⁴ Gandhiji sailed for home on December 19, 1914 and reached Bombay actually on January 9, 1915.

Q. What is your chief impression as regards the British understanding of the Indian problem today ? Do you find that public opinion has changed much ?

A. Yes, I find a vast change in the attitude of the man in the street, and I have made a special point of talking with all sections of the British people. I am very happy in London and I have received wonderful signs of affection from your ordinary folk. In the East End I have been greatly touched by the friendliness displayed. People come out of their houses and shake hands with me and wish me well. I was much gratified by the reception I received in Lancashire, where the people seemed to me to understand my position; and despite the fact that my policy in India was reported to have affected Lancashire so grievously, no grudge was borne me and I found genuine friendship both from operatives and employers alike.

Q. What about the so-called upper and official classes? Do you think their opinion has changed and are they ready to give India what it wants?

A. I fear they still do not understand the position and are ready to give the freedom that we claim as our right. They think that India is not ready today to control her own affairs, and I fear not many of them would be prepared to admit our right to the same freedom that Great Britain possesses, that is, the right to control our armed forces, our finances and our external affairs.

Q. As you know, Mr. Gandhi, *The Spectator* has always been a great believer in what is called Dominion Status. We think it has achieved the apparently impossible task of reconciling two apparent opposites, co-operation and independence. Would India be satisfied, do you think, with the same status that South Africa has as a Dominion within the British Commonwealth?

A. I regard the status of India as unique. After all, we represent a fifth of the human race. I do not think, therefore, that a political status which might suit other Dominions of the British Commonwealth would necessarily suit us. You must remember that India has been a subject nation for a very long time. If Great Britain approaches the question of the future relations between our peoples in a spirit of friendship with no reservations, she will not find India behindhand in coming to meet her proffered hand. We would be quite ready, once our right to independence has been recognized, to enter into an alliance or partnership on equal terms which would place the relations of Great Britain and India on a satisfactory basis.

Q. Once Great Britain has stated finally and once for all that the peoples of India have the same right to control their own destiny that we have, do you think that India would still want to employ, on terms within India's means, British officials, British soldiers, British technicians, and to draw upon our experience in building up the Indian State of the future?

A. Yes, most certainly. Once Great Britain recognizes what we consider our just claims, I certainly would not wish to remove all the British officials in India.

I want to avail myself of all the experience you have gained. I believe that we could make mutually satisfactory arrangements once there is no dictation on your side.

Q. Is it true, as some of my more extreme nationalist friends have said, that India when she wants European advisers would rather turn to Continental Europeans such as Germans, French, Swedes, Dutch, in place of British?

A. No, I do not think this is true in general. We would certainly need advice and guidance from Europe in several things. If we could get these from Great Britain on terms that we can afford, we would welcome them. The only thing that would make us turn away from Great Britain would be if Great Britain refuses to grant what we consider our just demand.

If you will play the same with us and recognize our right to control our own defence, we should confer with your experts and ascertain what is considered the minimum number of British troops necessary for our needs. I would regard the British Commander-in-Chief in India as my technical adviser on military matters, but the British Army in India would, of course, have to be under the Indian National Government.

Q. What about the statement that it would be undignified for British subjects to place themselves in the position of mercenaries to the Indian Government?

A. I have heard the argument, but I cannot appreciate it. Behind the objection is the lurking belief that partnership is to be partnership in name only and that in reality we are to remain a subject nation. Or else, how can British soldiers serving a partner nation be considered mercenaries? But if British soldiers will not serve the National Government, we must do without them.

Q. In terms of self-interest, therefore, from the British standpoint, you think that a friendly India in close alliance and partnership with Great Britain would be an asset to us.

A. You should be the best judges. In my opinion, the solution

of the Indian problem in a manner satisfactory to Indian aspirations would largely help Great Britain to solve her own economic question. It would be good for Great Britain, India, and the world. If Great Britain enters into a free-will partnership with India, that is to say, a partnership of equals, she will have a friendly nation to trade with and all the boycotting of British trade would naturally cease, apart, of course, from cloth. I fear Lancashire cannot get much help as we are determined to make our own cloth, but there are many others goods required which we shall have to import from abroad. for instance, I think India imports eighteen crores worth of sugar and seven crores worth of hardware, and so on.

We shall certainly not be able to manufacture all our own requirements for a long time to come.

Q. Then, Mr. Gandhi, I understand you to mean that you want India's right to control her own destiny recognized now once for all. If this were done, you think that the whole atmosphere would change and that Great Britain would then find the India that you represent only too ready to work out the details of co-operation? Rather than that the Round Table Conference should fail, you think that the principle of India's complete control of her destiny should be acknowledged and that such problems as the communal question should be left over to arbitration?

A. Yes, that is so. I think that once the British Government proclaimed to the world that India had as much right to freedom as Great Britain, we should be quite ready to accept the principle of arbitration on the difficult communal question. I do not think, however, that all the time which has been spent at the Round Table will be found to have been wasted. Believe me, Congress is not obstructive.

Sir Geoffrey Corbett's scheme has emerged from it. Sir Hubert Carr's scheme, which practically gives to the Moslems what they want in the Lower Chamber and to the Sikhs what they want in the Upper Chamber, also deserves very careful consideration. But, as I have said, I think much the best method would perhaps be to leave the question of the adjustment of seats and separate or joint electorates to an impartial judicial tribunal which would only be called into being in the case of non-settlement.

Q. What about the untouchables? I know it is thought in some quarters that they ought to have separate electorates and that you are not qualified to speak for them.

A. I am glad you have dealt with this subject. I do not hesitate to say that, if the untouchables in all parts of India would record their votes, I should be their representative. Dr. Ambedkar is

undoubtedly clever and enthusiastic. He has every reason to be bitter. I have spent the best part of my life in championing their cause, I have mixed with them east, west, north and south in India, I have my of them in my own Ashram, I adopted an untouchable girl. My Congressmen think as I do and realize how serious is the untouchable problem.

In the interests of the untouchables themselves I think it would be fatal for them to have a special electorate, or to have reservation of seats. If this were attempted, it would create opposition to them. I think their interests would be best safeguarded by their coming "through the open door", to let them have the same voting rights as the ordinary Hindu. They will find that the leaders of Indian opinion are determined to improve their social status and give them the right to enter into temples and are ready to remove those other terrible disabilities under which they have suffered in the past.

Q. Readers of Miss Mayo's book¹ have never been able to understand the Indian treatment of animals. They know that the Hindu thinks it is wrong to take life, but they cannot understand a system which allows wretched animals in a diseased condition to be left to die on the roadside and not put out of their misery. What have you got to say on that subject?

A. You have dealt with one of the problems which reformers in India hope to rectify in time. In my Ashram, we had a dying calf.² He had stinking sores and was lame. I put an end to his earthly existence by painless injections. I was bitterly attacked by some of my fellow-countrymen, who in my view have yet to learn that ahimsa never meant that suffering which could be terminated should be permitted. I think that much of the animal suffering in India today is due to this travesty of what ahimsa meant.

Q. To move on to another subject. I would be interested to know something of your religious beliefs. Have you ever had religious doubts and when did you first firmly believe in God and since then have you ever been through dark nights of the soul?

A. When I was quite young I did go through a period of complete disbelief, I was an atheist in fact. This was when I was about fourteen. Since then, however, I have always believed in God.

¹ *Mother India*; or Gandhiji's comments on the book, *vide* "Drain Inspector's Report"

² *Vide* "The Fiery Ordeal"

Q. Do you then believe in the personal immortality of the soul?

A. Yes, I believe in the immortality of the soul. I would like to give you the analogy of the ocean. The ocean is composed of drops of water, each drop is an entity and yet it is part of the whole, 'the one and the many'. In this ocean of life we are all little drops.

My doctrine means that I must identify myself with life, with everything that lives, that I must share the majesty of life in the presence of God. The sum total of this life is God.

Q. Did any book ever affect you supremely and was there any turning point in your life?

A. Yes, the book that affected me more than any other was *Unto This Last* by Ruskin. I was living in South Africa then. It was the reading of *Unto This Last* on a railway journey to Durban in 1904 when I was thirty-five, they made me decide to change my whole outward life.¹ There is no other word for it, Ruskin's words captivated me. I read the book in one go and lay awake all the following night and I there and then decided to change my whole plan of life. Tolstoy I had read much earlier. He affected the inner being.

Q. You were a fairly successful lawyer then, weren't you Mr. Gandhi? Did your conversion mean then that you came to the conclusion it was wrong to enjoy the good things of this life? What income were you making then?

A. As far as I recollect, I was making something like 3,000 a year by my legal practice. My "conversion", as you call it, decided for me that in future I would dedicate all my earnings to causes that I felt were for the benefit of my fellows, that in the future I would live simply and by physical labour, and imperfectly as I have tried to carry out that aim, I know that it is only by living thus that one achieves complete peace of mind.

Q. I have been very much struck with your wonderful vitality. Few men of sixty-two can be so full of energy. I have read in the papers some of the things about your diet. Would you tell me just what your daily bill of fare is?

A. Certainly. I am sure that most people eat much too much. I have never felt better than I do on my present regimen and I have a horror of drugs and medicines. This is my daily bill of fare: For my breakfast at 8 o'clock I have sixteen ounces of goat's milk and four oranges, for my luncheon at 1 o'clock I again have sixteen ounces of

¹ Vide "An Autobiography"

milk, grapes, pears or other fruit. My evening meal is between 5 and 6 o'clock. I eat a teaspoonful of almond paste, twenty or thirty dates, several tomatoes and a lettuce or other salad. This avoids indigestion. As you will note, I eat no starch and no cereals.

Q. To sum up, Mr. Gandhi, if the Conference breaks down, do you think the people of India will be satisfied with partial Home Rule, with the possibility of a further conference in ten or twenty years when the British Parliament considers that India is in a position to control her own destiny?

A. I am sure you know what my answer will be. I have tried while I have been in England not to say anything provocative, but those of us who are giving our lives to India will never be satisfied with half-measures. If the people of India after this Conference become convinced that Great Britain is not genuine in her desire to give them immediate self-government, all the forces at their disposal will be used.

Q. What is your final word to the readers of *The Spectator*?

A. My final word to your readers is that they should use all the influence at their disposal to get their friends to see our point of view, that they should work for the great cause of a real partnership between our countries on a basis of equality. I think that a free association of our two nations or groups of nations, can be utilized for the solving of many world problems, not merely for the good of the greatest number, but for the good of all.

The Spectator, 24-10-1931

20. LETTER TO ALBERT EINSTEIN'

LONDON,
October 18, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I was delighted to have your beautiful letter sent through Sundaram. It is a great consolation to me that the work I am doing finds favour in your sight. I do indeed wish that we could meet face to face and that too in India at my Ashram.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

PROF. EINSTEIN

From a photosat: C.W. 9500

21. LETTER TO ROMAIN ROLLAND

October 18, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I was grieved to learn from your letter to Mira that Birukoff² was no more. Through Sundaram now I have a beautiful note from him. This was written just before his death. Will you please convey to his widow my respectful condolences and tell her how grieved I am that the cruel hand of death has deprived me of the pleasure of meeting one who knew Tolstoy so intimately. Hoping to meet you soon.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, pp. 155-6

¹ This was in answer to Einstein's letter, dated September 27, which read; "You have shown by all that you have done that we can achieve the ideal even without resorting to violence. We can conquer those votaries of violence by the non-violent method. Your example will inspire and help humanity to put an end to a conflict based on violence with international help and co-operation guaranteeing peace to the world.

"With this expression of my devotion and admiraton I hope to be able to meet you face to face."—*Statesman*, 22-5-1965

² Paul Birukoff, Tolstoy's devout secretary

22. INTERVIEW WITH BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM¹

SELY OAK,
BIRMINGHAM,
October 18, 1931

The scientist Bishop made out a strong case for science and machinery which he said must be made to free man from manual toil, so that he may have all his time or the bulk of it for intellectual work. Gandhiji reminded the Bishop that he could not trust the average man to use all his spare time profitably on the strength of the old adage: 'Satan always finds some work for idle hands to do.' But the Bishop demurred. "Look here", said he, "I do not do manual work for more than an hour a day. The rest of my time I give to intellectual pursuits". Gandhiji laughing, said:

I know, but if all became Bishops, the Bishops would find their occupation gone.

Young India, 5-11-1931

23. MESSAGE TO INDIANS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM²

SELY OAK,
BIRMINGHAM,
October 18, 1931

You handful of Indians in the British Isles are trustees for the good name of India. So beware!³

Put your talents in the service of the country instead of converting them into £.s.d. If you are a medical man, there is disease enough in India to need all your medical skill. If you are a lawyer, there are differences and quarrels enough in India. Instead of fomenting more trouble, patch up those quarrels and stop litigation. If you are an engineer, build model houses suited to the means and needs of our people, and yet full of health and fresh air. There is

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account: "The Birmingham Visit". According to a report in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 24-10-1931, the interview took place in the morning.

² Extracted from Mahadev Desai's: "The Birmingham Visit"

³ After this brief message, Gandhiji answered questions put to him.

nothing that you have learnt which cannot be turned to account. Do what Kumarappa¹, also a Chartered Accountant like you, is doing. There is a dire need everywhere for accountants to audit the accounts of Congress and its adjunct associations. Come to India—I will give you enough work and also your hire—4 annas per day, which is surely much more than millions in India get India will have to go through the fiery ordeal before Englishmen can be made to say : ‘We are sorry, we did not do what we should have done long before.’ A strong nation would not succumb so easily as we might imagine. And as one wedded to non-violence I should not have England compelled to yield anything without a will. England must be convinced that it is good for her to yield and for India to win her freedom, before she actually surrenders power.

Q. To convince England do you not think you should stay here a little longer?

No, I cannot stay beyond my time. I would cease to have any influence here if I overstayed and the people would cease to respond. The influence that I now exercise is only a temporary influence, not permanent. My place is in India, in the midst of my countrymen, who may be called upon to start another campaign of suffering. In fact, the English people seem to respond today because they knew that I represent a suffering people, and when I am suffering with my own countrymen, I would be speaking to them from India as heart speaks to heart.

Young India, 5-11-1931

¹ Dr. J.C. Kumarappa, economist

24. SPEECH AT BIRMINGHAM MEETING

SELY OAK,
BIRMINGHAM,
October 18, 1931

Whereas to other places I have gone as a matter of business, to deliver my message, I have come here as a matter of pilgrimage because this Settlement it was that spared and sent Mr. Horace Alexander to us at a time² when we were in need of a friend. . . . It was a time when news of satyagraha could not be transmitted from India, everything that was sent was censored, the principal men were all in jail. It was then that the friends came to the conclusion that a mission ought to be sent to India and Mr. Alexander was chosen for the purpose. Not only were you able to spare him but his wife, a cripple, spared him. Now you will understand why it is a pilgrimage for me to come here.

With regard to the work before me, I did not think I should take your time to describe it to you now. The vast majority of the people now know what the Indian National Congress claims for the nation. You know what means we have adopted, perhaps, for the first time in history, to achieve our independence. And you also know how far the nation during the last year was able to live up to its creed. I would like to emphasize upon you the fact that, if the work that is now being done at the Round Table Conference is to bear fruit, it will do so only if the pressure of intelligent public opinion is brought to bear upon it. I have often remarked that my true work in England lies outside the Conference, not in the Conference. In my few public speeches I have not hesitated to throw out a hint that no work was being done in the Conference, that it was marking time and that the precious time of those who had come from India and those who were representing British interests in the Conference was being wasted. That being my

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account: "The Birmingham Visit". The meeting was held in the afternoon at Woodbrooke Settlement with Horace Alexander in the chair. According to a report in *Birmingham Post*, 19-10-1931, those present included the Mayor of Birmingham, W. W. Saunders, and the Lady Mayoress and the Bishop of Birmingham. The meeting lasted two hours.

² In 1930, after the failure of the Sapru-Jayakar mediatory efforts

opinion, I cannot be too insistent that responsible leaders of public opinion in the British Isles should inform themselves of the true nature of the struggle that Indians are carrying on against heavy odds. For, unless you understand the true nature and the¹ inner meaning of this struggle, you will not be able to bring effective pressure to bear on those who are conducting the affairs of the State here.

I know enough of the composition of this meeting to know that you are all earnest seekers after truth and anxious to do the right, not only especially with regard to this, but any cause that deserves the assistance of human beings. And if you will approach this question from this standpoint, it is just likely that the deliberations of the Round Table Conference might prove fruitful.

One of the questions that were put to Gandhiji at the end of his speech was whether settlement was not made impossible by Indian representatives not agreeing among themselves on the communal question. Gandhiji, while emphatically repudiating the suggestion, said:

I know you have been taught to think like that. You cannot shake off the spell of that hypnotic suggestion. My case is that alien rulers have ruled India on the principle of "Divide and Rule". No alien Imperial rule could go on in India unless the rulers now conquered with one and then with the other party. We will continue to be divided so long as the wedge of foreign rule remains there, and sinks deeper and deeper. That is the way of the wedge. But take out the wedge and the split parts will instantly come together and unite. Again, the attainment of unity has been rendered a task of Herculean difficulty by the composition of the Conference itself, as all the Delegates here are nominated, none of them is duly elected. If, for instance, the Nationalist Muslims had been asked to elect their representative, it would have been Dr. Ansari. Lastly, we should not forget that even if the present Delegates had been elected, they would have acted with a better sense of responsibility. We, on the other hand, are here on the sufferance of the British Prime Minister. We are responsible to nobody, we have no constituency to appeal to. Again, we are reminded that unless we agree among ourselves on the communal issue no progress is possible. In the very nature of the things, therefore, each pulls it a different way and to exact the utmost he can. Again while the Delegates are called upon to present an

¹ The source has "its".

agreed communal solution, they are not told what they would get if they agree and so the incentive that could have made agreement beforehand possible is killed at the very start, rendering agreement very nearly impossible. Let the Government declare that they are going to withdraw from India whether Indians agreed or not and you will see that we shall then soon agree. The fact of the matter is that no one feels that he is going to get real live liberty. What is offered is simply a share in the power of the bureaucracy to exploit India and this sets up an apple of discord in our midst. Further, the Government having made constitution-making dependent upon the solution of the communal question, every party is tempted to pitch its demand as high as possible. If the Government at all means business, it would unhesitatingly accept my suggestion, viz., to appoint a judicial tribunal to decide the communal question at issue. If this is done, there is every possibility of an agreed solution being reached without the intervention of the judicial tribunal.

In reply to a further question asking what would happen in India during the transition period if the British Government abdicated its function, Gandhiji said:

Alien rule is like foreign matter in an organic body. Remove the poison and body will at once start recuperating. It is preposterous to suggest that the British Government would be abdicating its function if it withdraws from India. The only function that it is fulfilling today is of exploiting India. Let Britain cease to exploit India and India will immediately revive economically.

Q. Have the people of India themselves come to an agreement on fundamentals?

The Congress has come with an agreed scheme of communal settlement, but it is not accepted. Here at the Conference the Congress is only one of the many parties that are said to be represented here. The organic fact, however, is that it is the only representative body speaking for the vast masses in India. It is the one live, organic and independent organization that has been functioning for close upon fifty years. It is the only organization that has stood the test of untold suffering. It is the Congress which arrived at a Settlement with the Government, and say what you will, it is the only organization that will one day replace the present Government. My claim is that the scheme that is produced through a representative committee of one Sikh, one Muslim and one Hindu member of its Cabinet would stand the test of any judicial tribunal so far as fairness and justness is concerned.

One member of the audience asked the question whether the Round Table Conference had broken down and whether India should wait for swaraj until another conference. Gandhiji replied:

I am not giving up all hope till I have severed all connection with the Round Table Conference. Apparently, therefore, I still entertain some hope though, I may say, I have little data to build on. But it is against my nature to violently break away from an organization with which I have been co-operating. I do not know whether, the next time when the solution comes, there will be another Round Table Conference or not, but this much I know that if the Round Table Conference breaks down, a solution will not be reached before India has passed through a fiery ordeal much more severe than the one it passed through last year.

Q. You talk of the impoverishment of India as being the result of British exploitation, but is it not a fact that the real cause of the agriculturists misery is the rapacity of the Bania and extravagance of expenditure on the occasion of marriages and funerals? Finally, you chare the British Government with extravagance. But what have you to say to the extravagance of the Indian Princes?

A. The Indian Bania is not a patch upon the English Bania and, if we were acting violently, the Indian Bania would deserve to be shot. But then, the British Bania would deserve to be shot a hundred times. The rate of interest charged by the Indian Bania is nothing compared to the loot carried on by the British Bania through the jugglery of currency and merciless exactions of Land Revenue. I do not know of another instance in history of such an organized exploitation of so unorganized and gentle a race. As for the profligacy of the Indian Princes, while I would have little hesitation, if I had the power, in dispossessing them of their insolent palaces, I would have infinitely less in depriving the British Government of New Delhi. The extravagance of the Princes was nothing compared to the heartless squandering of crores of rupees on New Delhi to satisfy the whim of a Viceroy in order to reproduce England in India, when masses of people were dying of hunger.

An amusing question was asked by a friend who quoted a letter from *The Manchester Guardian* in which the correspondent questioned Gandhiji's authority to speak for the untouchables, as he belonged to the priestly class which had kept that community depressed so far, and asked whether Gandhiji himself was not a great hindrance in the way of a settlement.

I never knew that I was a Brahmin, but I do happen to be a Bania, which is certainly regarded as a term of painful reproach. But let me inform the audience that my community excommunicated me when I came to English shores 40 years ago and the work that I have been doing entitles me to be called a farmer, weaver and untouchable. I was wedded to the work for the extinction of untouchability long before I was wedded to my wife. There were two occasions in our joint life when there was a choice between working for the untouchables and remaining with my wife and I would have preferred the first. But thanks to my good wife, the crisis was averted. In my Ashram, which is my family, I have several untouchables and a sweet but naughty girl living as my own daughter. As to whether I am acting as a hindrance to a settlement. I confess, I am for the simple reason that I would not be satisfied with any compromise short of real complete independence for India.

Q. Sometimes we have found it difficult to reconcile the special form of united protest that you have evolved, with an appeal to reason. What is it that makes you sometimes feel that appeal to reason should be put aside in favour of more drastic action?

A. Up to the year 1906 I simply relied on appeal to reason. I was a very industrious reformer. I was a good draftsman, as I always had a close grip of facts which in its turn was the necessary result of my meticulous regard for truth. But I found that reason failed to produce an impression when the critical moment arrived in South Africa. My people were excited—even a worm will and does sometimes turn—and there was talk of wreaking vengeance. I had then to choose between allying myself to violence or finding out some other method of meeting the crisis and stopping the rot, and it came to me that we should refuse to obey legislation that was degrading and let them put us in jail if they liked. Thus came into being the moral equivalent of war. I was then a loyalist, because I implicitly believed that the sum total of the activities of the British Empire was good for India and for ‘humanity’. Arriving in England soon after the outbreak of the War, I plunged into it and later, when I was forced to go to India as a result of the pleurisy that I had developed, I led a recruiting campaign at the risk of my life, and to the horror of some of my friends. The disillusionment came in 1919 after the passage of

the Black Rowlatt Act and the refusal of the Government to give the simple elementary redress of proved wrongs¹ that we had asked for. And so, in 1920, I became a rebel. Since then the conviction has been growing upon me, that things of fundamental importance to the people are not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering. Suffering is the law of human beings; war is the law of the jungle. But suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears, which are otherwise shut, to the voice of reason. Nobody has probably drawn up more petitions or espoused more forlorn causes than I, and I have come to this fundamental conclusion that, if you want something really important to be done, you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also. The appeal of reason is more to the head, but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man. Suffering is the badge of the human race, not the sword.

Young India, 5-11-1931

25. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS²

[After *October 18, 1931*]³

Q. Don't you think there is fear of the different communities violently quarrelling among themselves when the British withdraw from India?

A. I have compared the British rule to a wedge and no sooner the wedge is removed than the divided parts will unite. But even if we continue to fight, I should think it a godsend. A man who broods on evil is as bad as a man who does evil, if he is no worse, and so, if we are prevented from running at one another's throats simply because of the superimposed force of alien rule, the sooner that force is removed the better. We should fight harder for a time, but we should unite better ultimately.

Q. Are you quite sure that, if you had the elected representatives of the people on the Conference, you would be united at once?

¹ The Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs,

² Extracted from Mahadev Desai's article: "The Fundamentals". He had taken down all that Gandhiji said "at one meeting or another in London for other places" and put it "in the form of answers to questions, in his own language."

³ Mahadev Desai said, this was to be read along with his report of the Birmingham meeting, which was held on October 18, 1931.

A. I am quite sure. We should then have gone by the decision of the majority. It is not so much the fault of men as the absence of responsibility under which they labour. Even these very people, if elected, would act differently.

Q. Would you not use salt for taxing and balancing the budget?¹ Would you not agree to the Federation having limitless powers to tax some articles including salt?²

A. The Federation should have no right to tax salt. Not unless I wanted to commit the sin of taxing the poor would I think of balancing the budget by taxing salt. If you want to balance the budget, why not cut down the military expenditure? It would be a crime against humanity to add to the already heavy burden of the poor Indian tax-payer. You may as well tax air and water and expect India to live.

Young India, 5-11-1931

26. LETTER TO NAWAB OF BHOPAL

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,

LONDON, W.,

October 19, 1931

DEAR NAWAB SAHEB,

At the meeting that is to take place at Claridge's tonight, I suggest that the following proposals be discussed.

Only certain heads of revenue such as:

- a. Customs, subject to existing rights of the States.
- b. Similarly salt.
- c. Export Opium.
- d. Excises on articles (today) levied in addition to Custom duties.
- e. The receipts from federal commercial undertakings, e.g., Railways, Posts and Telegraphs.
- f. Profits from Federal Currency.
- g. Existing revenue derived direct from the Provinces, e.g., Income Tax, and from the States through the territories

¹ This was asked at the Birmingham meeting.

² This was asked by Lord Sankey.

ceded by them and in other ways, be accepted as common sources of Federal revenue against expenditure to the extent of the revenue that might accrue through such heads. This method secures the States against any risk of undertaking liabilities beyond the actual income.

In the event of it being found necessary to tap other sources of revenue, the Constitution may provide that no such revenue shall be Federal, unless a two-thirds or larger majority of the representatives of the States in the Federal Legislature agree.

H. H. THE NAWAB SAHEB OF BHOPAL
CHANCELLOR OF THE CHAMBER OF PRINCES

From a photostat: S.N. 18142

27. LETTER TO MRS. J.H.L. POLAK

October 19, 1931

DEAR MAM,

You are naughty. You will not write because I cannot write. I think of you often but get no time to write letters. I am obliged even to neglect the Indian mail. Maud reminds me that you are expecting to hear from me in accordance with my message sent to you.

I have a few moments today during my silence. I have had interesting accounts of your condition and I was pleased to know that you were bearing your years so well. I suppose there is little chance of our seeing each other. But I suppose physical meeting is not so much as the meeting of hearts. And I know that ours meet. I shall not easily forget the Sundays I used to pass with you in 1909.

Yours sincerely,

M.K. GANDHI

From the original : Gandhi-Polak Correspondence. Courtesy : National Archives of India

28. *EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL
STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING¹*

LONDON,
October 20, 1931

MR. GANDHI: If it is to be said that they are decided, I think I ought to say a word.

CHAIRMAN: Do you think there ought to be a limit?

MR. GANDHI: Not only that, but personally I should resist a tax on Salt altogether, and not merely limit it. I do not think I can say offhand, moreover, that there should be no limit so far as Customs are concerned, There are many things on which I would say, 'No, I will not go beyond this.' Similarly with opium.

CHAIRMAN: What do you say with regard to Opium?

MR. GANDHI: Opium I would have limitless.

CHAIRMAN: That is good. We are all agreed on Opium anyhow. Now, Mr. Gandhi, with regard to Customs, would you say there should be some limit there?

MR. GANDHI: I think so.

CHAIRMAN: What limit is in your mind?

MR. GANDHI: I would not take Customs in general; my judgment would vary, and I would not allow an expert to tell me what I should do, because it would be a matter of policy.

CHAIRMAN: That means giving the Federal Authority no limit, so that you agree with regard to Customs. We are all agreed on Opium, and we agree on Customs, because you say, "I do not want any expert to tell me what I am to do", nor does the Federal Government. Now, with regard to Salt, I know that is rather a difficult question, but we want to get to the heart of the matter now. What do you think should be the position of the Federal Government so far as a tax on Salt is concerned? Do you think there ought to be no tax at all?

MR. GANDHI: Not only no tax, but the tax which is today levied on Salt should go.

¹ The Chairman put forward for the Committee's consideration the question whether, for the purpose of creating a balanced budget, the Federation should have power to impose certain taxes. As to this there was general agreement. Sir Akbar Hydari said, it had already been agreed that Customs, Salt and Opium should be included among the taxes to be federalized. The question then was whether there should be a limitation on levying these taxes. A number of speakers said there should not be and the Chairman asked whether the matter should be taken as decided.

LORD PEEL: Mr. Gandhi is expressing his individual opinion; but does he suggest that, in the Statute itself, the right to tax Salt by the Federal Government should be expressly excluded?

MR. GANDHI: I do.

CHAIRMAN: Very well; we will make a note that Mr. Gandhi objects to any tax on salt.

LORD PEEL: It is more than that; it is more than a personal objection. He thinks Salt ought to be excluded.

CHAIRMAN: He thinks Salt ought to be excluded, yes. Now, Mr. Gandhi, would you help us with regard to this. First of all, can anybody say what the present tax on Salt brings in.

MR. GANDHI: Six crores.

SIR AKBAR HYDARI: 6.7 crores, less 1.23.

MR. GANDHI: I will give in to anybody who says between 6 and 7 crores.

CHAIRMAN: Very well, we will say 7.

SIR AKBAR HYDARI: The Government of India figure would make it about 5.50.

CHAIRMAN: Now, Mr. Gandhi, perhaps you will help us in this way. Suppose we were to say, "Well, Mr. Gandhi is quite right; there ought not to be this tax", I would like to ask you where are we to get this five millions—taking it at five millions—from. Could you just help us with regard to that? What would you do?

MR. GANDHI: My answer is that there should be a reduction to the extent of 6 crores from the Military expenditure.

CHAIRMAN: The way you want to do things is to reduce expenditure?

MR. GANDHI: I do.

CHAIRMAN: Now, Sir, Akbar, what other taxes do you think ought to be included?

SIR AKBAR HYDARI: There are two or three sources which have been indicated in the report of the Sub-committee, and one or two were indicated in His Highness of Bhopal's speech; but before I can finally commit myself to them, I should like first of all to have before me the finally examined figures—I will not use the word 'expert', because it seems to be in a way unpalatable to certain people, and it seems to give rise to confusion as to whether these are experts in the role of arbitrators, or of explorers or of confirmers—therefore, I say, I should like to have before me the figures, from which I could see how much is required, or will be required, ordinarily to balance the budget, and what these sources are likely to produce. . . .

MR. GANDHI: Lord Peel, will you oblige us by undertaking to

frame a concrete formula? If you do not, then it might be nobody's business, and we shall get nowhere; but if you would guide us by giving us a concrete formula which we might discuss, I would gladly welcome your suggestion.

LORD PEEL: I think I can say that, whether through the Chairman or through some other member of the Government, the Government would be prepared to put forward a proposal for the consideration of the Committee.

MR. JINNAH: As I understand it, your proposal is only as to the terms of reference?

LORD PEEL: I do not want to limit it exactly to the terms of reference, but as to what should be the actual operation and the scope of the work of this Committee. I put it in more general language. I do not want to limit it too closely.

MR. JINNAH: It assumes that it must be referred to a Committee.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session) : Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, p. 224-8

29. SPEECH AT CHATHAM HOUSE MEETING¹

LONDON,

October 20, 1931

You were good enough to say that I have spared from my busy time a few moments to address a gathering under the auspices of this Institute. I must confess that I seize every opportunity I can of coming into touch with British public opinion and putting before them the purpose of my mission. I have therefore come before you quite selfishly, and I hope that the words I speak to you this evening will find a lodgment in your hearts. At the end of what I have to say I should like you to cross-examine me and ask me any questions you may like to put. I have found by experience that that is the only way of removing the mists of misunderstanding. I have noticed that the greatest stumbling-block in my way is the hopeless ignorance of the true facts of the situation, through no fault of yours; you belong to one of the busiest nations in the world, you have your own problems, and at the present moment this great island of yours is going through a crisis such as you have never had to face within

¹ Held under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the meeting was attended by influential Englishmen and Englishwomen drawn from all parts of England. Lord Lothian presided.

living memory. My whole heart goes out to you in your troubles, and I hope that you will soon be able, with your marvellous energy, to cut a way out of them. No wonder, however, that, preoccupied as you are, you find no time to study the problems that affect a distant land like India. It is therefore a matter of keen pleasure to me that so many of you have found time to come here and listen to what I may have to say. I only feel grieved that many of you who are listening to my voice are unable to find accommodation in this room. With these preliminary words, I plunge into my subject.

In order to give you a description of the future of India as I conceive it, I shall tell you in as few words as possible what India is at present. India is a sub-continent by itself, nineteen hundred miles long, fifteen hundred miles wide, with a population of roughly 350 millions. Of these about 210 millions are Hindus, 70 millions are Mussalmans, 3 millions are Sikhs; there is also a fairly large Indian Christian population, and a very small European or, more correctly speaking, English population. Numerically it is insignificant, but, as you know, it enjoys a position of privilege and influence unsurpassed, belonging as it does to the ruling race.

We have within this population our own Hindu-Muslim—Sikh problem, or, as it is called, the problem of minorities. I will not go into the problem as it affects other minorities, nor will I take up your time by airing my views with regard to these minorities, but one minority I may not omit, the unhappy untouchables, a word which is a standing reproach to the Hindus of India who form the majority of the population. Untouchability is a curse upon Hinduism, and I have no hesitation in saying that, if untouchability is not rooted out of Hinduism, Hinduism must perish. The time has come when any system, no matter how hoary and ancient it may be, must stand the light of day, must be able to stand fierce criticism, and if Hinduism harbours untouchability, it has no place on this earth.

I am glad to tell you that Congress has made the removal of untouchability an integral part of its programme, and under the inspiration of Congress there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of young Hindu reformers who have dedicated their lives to the removal of this blot upon Hinduism and upon India. These young men and women are reaching a hand to these untouchables in a variety of ways. We are digging wells for them, opening schools for them, building new temples for them and opening up old temples for them. We are

giving to twenty-five thousand untouchable women, if not more, work in their own homes. We have introduced them to spinning-wheels. We have found for several thousand untouchables their old occupation of rough weaving, which had died out owing to the competition of modern manufactured cloth. This meant that they had taken either to scavenging or to some other occupation, because of their inability to earn their livelihood from this noble hereditary occupation of weaving. Thanks to God and to the efforts of these young reformers, several thousand untouchables have thus recovered their old occupation of rough weaving. There are several families who were heavily indebted and who now are not only free from debts but have laid by a decent sum. One family I can recollect has laid by what in India a very respectable sum for a poor family—two thousand rupees. This family is in demand all over India as teachers, because both husband and wife are accomplished weavers and conscientious and skilled workers. You can imagine how much self-respect they must have gained, owing to their being wanted as teachers and not as scavengers and treated almost as a plague.

That is a very important minority, important in the sense that it deserves all the sympathy and all the aid that can be given to it. I have not a shadow of doubt that this untouchability is going very fast, and if, through God's grace, India comes to her own as a result of the deliberations of the Round Table Conference or otherwise, you will find that untouchability has gone for ever.

But I have not yet finished my description of India as it is. What is this 350 million population doing? More than eighty-five per cent of this population is engaged in agriculture and is living in seven hundred thousand villages, dotted over the vast surface that I have described. There are some villages in India which I have population of not more than a hundred souls; there are, again, villages which have a population of as many as five thousand. Now Indian agriculture depends very largely—it has to—upon its precarious rainfall. In parts of that subcontinent, like Cherapunji, you have a deluge of rain, as much as 600 inches. In other parts, like Sind and Central India, for example you have hardly 5 inches. And then, often, it is not equally distributed.

Agricultural holdings are anything between one acre, or three-quarters of an acre, and two and a half acres. I think, taking province by province, in no province are the holdings, on the average, more

than two and a half or three acres per head. I am open to correction, but I think I am not far out, and there are thousands upon thousands who have less than one acre, and again tens of thousands who are absolutely landless, and who are therefore living in India as serfs, one might almost say as slaves. It cannot be called a state of legal slavery, but it is really a state bordering on slavery. This population, because all the rainfall is concentrated within two, three, four or five months at the outside, lives without any continuous occupation for nearly six months of the year. In some places where there are double crops, the absence of occupation extends over a period of four months, but, roughly speaking, you may say that these agriculturists of India are without any constant occupation for half the year.

That being so, there is deep and ever-deepening poverty among the masses. The average income of the people for the whole of India is two pence per day. If the average income of these 350 million people is two pence a day—and in calculating this average the wealth of a few millionaires is included—you will have no difficulty in understanding that there are tens of thousands of people who do not even earn two pence per day. The result is that nearly one-tenth of the population is living in a condition of semi-starvation. They have no more than one meal per day, consisting of stale chapati and a pinch of dirty salt. There is no such thing as bread. They do not know from year's end to year's end what milk is, or even skimmed milk; they do not know what butter is; they do not know what oil is; they never get green vegetables. That is the condition of the vast mass of sunken humanity in India.

I have now to tell you what should be, and, if the Congress had its way, would be the future state of India. I have not filled in the picture with the cities because the cities do not make India; it is the villages which make India. Nor have I put in the Princes; the Princes also have a portion of these villages, and the life of the villagers in British India. If there is any difference, and there is some, it is a difference of degree and in no sense a difference of kind. Princes will come and Princes will go, empires will come and empires will go, but this India living in her villages will remain just as it is. Sir Henry Maine has left a monograph. *The Village Communities of India*, in which you will find the author saying that all these villages were at one time, and are to a certain extent now, self-contained "little republics". They have their own culture, mode of life, and method of protection themselves, their own village

schoolmaster, their own priest, carpenter, barber, in fact everything that a village could want. There is certainly today no kind of government to be seen in the villages, but whatever their life is, these villages are self-contained, and if you went there, you would find that there is a kind of agreement under which they are built. From these villages has perhaps arisen what you call the iron rule of caste. Caste has been a blight on India, but it has also acted as a sort of protecting shield for these masses. But I must not take you into the intricacies of this caste system.

What I am trying to give you is as faithful a picture as possible of India as it is at present. I must also not detain you with the impress that British rule has left on India, what that rule is today and what it accounts for. I have dwelt upon that at other meetings and you have some of the literature; but you have no literature on the future of India. I could not possibly have given you a picture of the future unless I had given you this background. If I tell you more about this peasantry of India, you will not now be surprised. The Congress has made it an article of faith that the test of its work and its progress shall be the measure of its becoming a predominantly present organization, and we have set for ourselves this rule, that we shall not consider any interest in India which is in conflict with the fundamental well-being of this eighty per cent of the population.

Then, what should the government of that population be? The foremost thing that the future State of India would look after would be the economic welfare of these masses. You will therefore have no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that, then, this Government is going to find some occupation or these idle six months of the year for the peasant. That should really be the primary concern of any person who undertakes this gigantic task. By a process of elimination we have come to the conclusion that for this homogeneous population you must have one predominant occupation. You must have an easy occupation; you must have tools for that occupation that can easily be made in the villages, and the product of the village industry must be capable of being consumed by the villagers. If you can give some occupation which will answer all these tests, you will have a process of production and distribution, self-contained and without any other intermediary having to be resorted to. Such an occupation was the ancient occupation of hand-spinning and hand-weaving. I will not now take you through the history of how it was destroyed. But you

find that, due to the Congress, the Spinners' Association is penetrating as quickly as it can the thousands of villages of India. We have in this manner penetrated two thousand villages. This occupation has nearly doubled the income of the villagers. You will understand what two pence added to two pence means to a poor man; it means, I suggest, a fortune. You will then take all the occupations necessary in connection with cotton, from hand-spinning and hand-weaving to printing, dyeing and washing. When you take into consideration all these occupations, it does govern the income of the people, and when we have done that, we have given these people a little bit of hope and courage and have put a little lustre into their eyes. If you walked with me in the villages of Orissa, you would see walking death throughout the length and breadth of that thrice-afflicted land. You see specimens of humanity, not voluntarily but compulsorily, mere skin and bone without any flesh on their limbs. If we give them this occupation, we put into them new life and new hope.

But the activity of the new State will not stop there. These people are living in utter ignorance of sanitation and we have to look after the hygienic conditions. So we try to introduce the hygienic methods of Dr. Poor, who has written a volume on village hygiene. Briefly speaking, it consists of turning human excreta into manure. The Chinese people are the greatest people of the earth in the knowledge of the use of these human excreta, and Dr. Poor says the Chinese were his teachers in discovering the economic treatment. We are trying to do two things—to add to the wealth of the nation and to the health of the nation—and if we teach the people this method of treating human excreta, the result will be that we shall rid ourselves somewhat of the plague of flies, and sterilize to some extent the poisonous mosquito not fully, I know, but it is in the right direction.

Then we must give them some medical assistance in his malaria ridden country. India suffers from many diseases, but malaria is essentially a disease induced by want. It is not to be driven away by simply giving the villagers packets of quinine. Quinine is essential, but it is useless unless you can give them some milk of some fruit, as their digestive apparatus is not capable of taking anything else. So we are trying to give them some simple medical aid where we can. I am not trying to give you an idea that we have already done this, but I am talking of the future State, not as a visionary but as a practical man. We have tried this on a small scale,

and if I can multiply this activity through the aid of the future State, you will understand what India can be without a vast outlay. We give this medical aid, not through the very expensive methods that the Western doctors teach us, but we revive our own ancient treatment. Every village once had its own medical man. You may say he was a quack and that he was extremely ignorant of the elementary principles which govern this little body of ours; all which is very true. But all the same he was a man who could give them some comfort, and, the occupation being hereditary, where he was not dishonest man, he really served an efficient purpose. If you give him this elementary knowledge of hygiene, which is preventive medicine, and teach him this simple way of curing the people of malaria, you have gone a very long way.

What I am telling you today is a thing that was approved by the Surgeon-General of the Bombay Presidency. When he came to see me whilst I was lying in the Sassoon Hospital¹, he was discussing it with me, and I told him, "Your English methods are too expensive for this poor country, and if you want to treat a village through your method, it would take two or three centuries." He agreed and said, "What would you do?" So I told him my plan.

That does not finish the picture. We have the education of this future State. I say without fear of my figures being challenged successfully, that today India is more illiterate than it was fifty or a hundred years ago, and so is Burma, because the British administrations, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out. They scratched the soil and began to look at the root, and left the root like that, and the beautiful tree perished. The village schools were not good enough for the British administrator, so he came out with his programme. Every school must have so much paraphernalia, building, and so forth. Well, there were no such schools at all. There are statistics left by a British administrator which show that, in places where they have carried out a survey, ancient schools have gone by the board, because there was no recognition for these schools, and the schools established after the European pattern were too expensive for the people, and therefore they could not possibly overtake the thing. I defy anybody to fulfil a programme of compulsory primary education of these masses

¹ In January 1924, when Gandhiji underwent an operation for appendicitis

inside of a century. This very poor country of mine is ill able to sustain such an expensive method of education. Our State would revive the old village schoolmaster and dot every village with a school both for boys and girls,

Then, although British people have spent millions in completing some irrigation works, we claim that their progress in that work has not been as quick as it might have been. The military railways, which have done some good, no doubt, in transporting goods from one place to another, have done nothing of what irrigation would have done. These irrigation schemes were and are really too expensive to cover the whole of India. We have, however, our own ancient method of irrigation: deep-well irrigation in some parts, in other parts well irrigation that is not deep well. I must confess my ignorance of this, but an Englishman, who is trying experiments in intensive agriculture, and who is now here, was telling me that he had been working in the poet Tagore's village. It was Mr. Elmhurst who really gave life to that village experiment, and owing to it they were opening canal irrigation works which did not require any skill other than that produced in that villages. He tells me they have compelled the Government to recognize the superiority of this method. I am simply giving you the evidence that this man gave to me about this canal irrigation, but I do know that there are ancient methods of irrigation compatible with the capacity of the people.

I have told you what we would do constructively, but we should have to do something destructive also. Otherwise we should not be able to carry on, because this Indian today is ill able to afford the revenue that is being forced from it from year's end to year's end in order to support an insupportable weight of military and civil expenditure. The military expenditure takes 62 crores—an enormous sum for this country whose average income is two pence a day. Compare that with the military expenditure of any country on earth, and you will find that India is groaning under a weight that is insupportable. We should immediately set about restoring the scales, and if I could possibly have my way, we should get rid of three-quarters of the military expenditure. If we really succeed in demonstrating that we have won our freedom through non-violent means, the people of India will not require much argument to convince them that non-violence will also enable them to retain their freedom. Congress does not fear the bugbear of Afghan invasion, or invasion from Japan, certainly not invasion from Bolshevik Russia.

Congress has no such fear what ever, and if we understand the lesson of non-violent non-co- operation, then no nation on earth can bend us to its will. If the nation simply learns one single English word—and we have a similar expression in our Indian languages also—we can simply say, “No”, and it is finished for any invader who casts hungry eyes on India. We are convinced that we do not need the arms that India is carrying.

For civil expenditure I must give an instance which I have given at several meetings. Here the Prime Minister gets fifty times the average income; the Viceroy in India gets five thousand times the average income. From this one example you can work out for yourselves what this civil expenditure also means to India. India cannot support this service, however efficient and able it may be. It is quite likely that, if I could send medical experts to every village in India, we should have no disease whatever, but since we cannot afford medical experts for every village in India, we have to be satisfied with quacks that we can get in our own villages. No country on earth can possibly live beyond its means; it can only take such services as it can afford to pay for. If I want strawberries and cream for every villager, I know it is a day-dream and I should be an idiot if I wished to give them to every villager. Well, I tell you that this military and civil expenditure is strawberries and cream. I cannot possibly deal out this food for my people.

I have very nearly finished my picture; if you find vacant spots, please remind me and I shall fill them by answering your questions.

Q. Would not Mr. Gandhi admit that within living memory the resisting power of the rural masses to the economic breakdown produced by a failure of crops had been enormously increased, and that the famine codes in India had been brought to a high degree of perfection at a time when the increased prosperity of the masses had rendered them unnecessary?

Mr. Gandhi replied that his experience was that the resisting power of the people had not increased, but that railway transport enabled people to get grain from other places which they had not formerly been able to obtain.

SIR PHILIP HARTOG: Would Mr. Gandhi give his authority for the statement that literacy had diminished in India during the last fifty years?

Mr. Gandhi replied that his authority was the Punjab Administration Reports, and said that he had published in *Young India* a study of the Punjab educational statistics.

SIR PHILIP HARTOG: Would Mr. Gandhi explain why the literacy figure was fourteen per cent of the men and only two per cent of the women, and why illiteracy was higher to Kashmir and Hyderabad than in British India.

Mr. Gandhi replied that the women's education had been neglected, to the shame of the men. He could only conjecture, with regard to the figures for Kashmir, that if illiteracy was greater there, it was due to the negligence of the ruler or because the population was predominantly, Mohammedan, but he thought that, as a matter of fact, it was six of the one and half a dozen of the other.

Q. Were the Brahmins in Congress helping the untouchables? If so, why was it necessary to dig wells for the untouchables? Could they not use the Brahmin wells? Was it not the Salvation Army and the missionaries who did most of the work among the untouchables?

Mr. Gandhi replied that he had given the reason why the untouchables could not use the Brahmin wells when he said it was the curse of Hinduism. If all the Brahmins had been reformed there would be no difficulty, but the majority of the workers engaged in digging wells and performing other services for the untouchables were themselves Brahmins, who considered they were doing some measure of penance for the suffering which their fellow-castemen had imposed on the untouchables. The work of the Salvation Army and the missionaries was of a different character from that done by the Hindu reformers, and he did not wish to go into that issue on that occasion.

Q. What effect would the proposed reforms have on the population of India? If better hygiene was introduced, it would lower the death rate and increase the population, and if a better standard of living was attained through individual industry and economy of public expenditure, was there anything which would hold back the birth-rate from again rising to keep the population hard up against subsistence level? Was not permanent improvement prevented without restriction of the birth-rate?

Mr. Gandhi replied that this problem was not a monopoly of India; it was a modern superstition. He did not regard a normal increase in birth-rate as an evil, and he would congratulate the Congress workers if they could show that, as a result of their hygienic and other reforms, the birth-rate of India had increased. He was not afraid of an increase of poverty if the birth-rate did increase. They were trying to inculcate among themselves the kind of life which regarded a normal increase in birth-rate as one thing and animal indulgence resulting in birth-rate as another, and there could not be too much stress laid upon education of that character. He had undertaken a prayerful study of the question and was in correspondence with Western thinkers all over Europe and America on the subject, and he had come definitely to the conclusion that the methods of birth-control suggested by modern reformers would be found upon experience to have been death-traps.

Even though it might be proved that in England, Holland, France, other parts of Europe and some parts of America, this method of controlling birth-rate might have done some good, it could only do immeasurable harm in India, where it was not possible to give these remedies to the people. It was wicked for anybody to suggest these remedies for India when India could not understand these methods in any shape or form.

Q. Would Mr. Gandhi state briefly on what principle a strong, stable Executive could be framed for India ?

Mr. Gandhi replied that a strong, stable Executive Government could best be framed by getting strong, stable hearts, and there was no dearth of such hearts in India. He had not dwelt on the political side, because the future of India as he had been picturing it, did not admit of much political treatment. The cure of the disease of economic misery was economic, but he was dabbling in politics because it was impossible to deal with economics unless he also dealt with politics. He had given his political faith from many platforms, and had taken it for granted that the audience knew the principles which guided Congress, but he was willing to give his political faith again if desired. He believed with Tolstoy that that country was best governed which was governed the least, and if Congress had its way, the politician would not be allowed to invade the privacy and sanctity of the home, but would be called upon to keep his place.

Q. How far was the very honourable attitude of the Brahmin reformers shared by caste Hindus throughout the country?

Mr. Gandhi said the attitude was very largely shared by those who called themselves Congressmen, but there was very great headway to make. The harvest was ripe, but the labourers were undoubtedly few. There were a few thousand, whilst tens of thousands were needed in order to get rid of the corruption which had injured the fibre of the nation. He could say with assurance that untouchability was going fast, because some had given up their lives, and counted them of no cost, in order to remove that curse. Either Hinduism would be broken to bits or untouchability would disappear before many years were past.

The Chairman then asked Mr. Gandhi if he would be good enough to say something more about the political situation.

Mr. Gandhi said that the Congress wanted nothing short of complete political independence, and therefore complete control over the army, foreign relations and finance. The easiest method of getting at Congress mentality was to step into Indian shoes and imagine the English transported on to India and Indians inhabiting Great Britain. If the Indian inhabitants of the British Isles then said, "You are not fit to govern yourselves; we shall have to see whether you can handle your army or defend yourselves from the hordes that will descend on you from China, Tibet, Afghanistan or Russia," the British would say, "We can take care of ourselves, or at any rate

we shall try.” The most that could happen would be that the Indians, as a nation, would be wiped out of existence. The iron had entered the souls of thousands of Indians who were determined to throw off the foreign yoke at any cost, however much the British Lion might put out his claws and defy the civil disobedience that India might offer. Great Britain had tremendous financial interests in India, estimated by Lord Rothermere at a thousand million pounds. Those interests would be protected by Indians, if they were legitimate interests for the battle was not one of vengeance but for the exercise of the Indian's birthright. The Indians were not as armed as the British; they did not know the science of fighting; they were called a gentle race, and he was glad to belong to a gentle race. But weakness of body did not matter when they had stout hearts. Indian women had stout hearts, and had received lathi blows with breasts forwards, not turning their backs as if they were escaping villagers who had received no education from English schools, and the greatest heroine among them was a woman who could hardly read a letter in her own mother tongue. They acted like this in order that they might gain liberty for their country. The masses in India were awakening, and it was too late to persuade them that good alien rule was better than bad indigenous rule. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had said that good government was no substitute for self-government. The British were past-masters in the art of making mistakes, and Lord Salisbury said they knew the art of blundering through to success. Why should the British deprive the Indians of their right to make mistakes? India was impatient of the control which denied her that right. Although his creed was non-violence, he would risk the calamity to which Sir Henry Gidney had referred. But what mistakes could they make? The minorities should all have protection, but there were ways and ways of granting it. India must regain the freedom which she had lost so long, with British help if it were given, without it if it were withheld. He appealed not only to the British but to the whole of humanity that this nation, which was trying an experiment in non-violence on a scale unknown to history, should receive its full measure of support from the nations of the world.

Did the British know whether they had conferred benefit on India, or did the Indians know? Would the British be judged by their own testimony or by the testimony of men like Dadabhai Naoroji, Renade, Gokhale, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta—men who doted on England and were proud of the Western civilization, who said that, although Englishmen meant well, their rule had on the whole been harmful to India because they left an emasculated nation? If after a century of British rule the result of withdrawing was expected to be fighting amongst Indians themselves, who was to blame? British rule had left them utterly helpless. He recognized that they were helpless, and he wanted British help, but on his terms; India could not afford to have door-keepers who demanded such high wages. If India paid them seventy-five per cent of her earnings, how could she keep body and soul together

on the remaining twenty-five per cent? It was a matter of simple arithmetic. The nation was impoverished by the many burdens under which it was groaning, and as he had travelled incessantly all over India from 1916 to 1931, except for the periods when he was in prison, he could claim to know the condition of the villages better than any British officer.

He was prepared to evolve his own Constitution, and when the minorities question was flung into his face, his patience was exhausted. What was this bugbear of the minority problem? Congress was not merely one of the many political organizations. It was predominantly the one organization that had given battle and had suffered. Hundreds of villages were oppressed, their crops were destroyed and thousands of rupees' worth of land confiscated and sold. This suffering was voluntarily gone through at the bidding of the Congress. Who would go through that suffering for a mess of pottage? He had come to plead with what was finest in the British character and to tell them the whole truth. If, at the end of that chapter, he was told that nothing could be done unless he could close with the Moslems and everybody else, then he would go, but the British would have committed another blunder.

They must remember that the Round Table Conference delegates were all nominated by the Prime Minister, not elected like the members of the House of Commons whom no one could remove. They represented no one but the will of the Prime Minister. The Congress was the only organization representing the whole of India. Those who fought and went to gaols were not all Hindus. They had several thousand Mussalmans amongst them, and Sikhs and Christians too. The Congress might be called a majority community if they liked, and the Congress had its own scheme of solving the minorities problem. The scheme presented for acceptance was an organic scheme in the cause of unity. The Congress majority did not speak as Hindus; Hindus could be reduced to a minority. The Constitution to be framed was for Indians, not for Hindus. How could the Congress parcel out India among several sections of Hindus, and several sections of Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and the rest? Imagine the whole nation vivisected and torn to pieces; how could it be made into a nation with all these divided groups? That was what the minorities wanted. These minorities had a perfect right to full civil, social and religious liberty, and they could appeal to the electorate for election in the open field. Why did they want special electorates? Why did the Anglo-Indians fear to trust to the general mass of the electorate? Not because they were Anglo-Indian, but because they had not served India. The Parsees did not want any special reservations, simply because they had served India, and were sure to be represented by right of service. The grand-daughters¹

¹ Perin Captain and Nargis Captain

of Dadabhai Naoroji, brought up in the lap of luxury, had so served India that no one could deny them the right to represent the people. If members of other minorities entered by the open door and served India, they also would be elected. There was no room for those who wanted to maintain special privileges. It was a shame that Englishmen should claim privileges in so poor a country and special seats on a poor people's legislature. Why should they not depend on the vote of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and everyone to enter the legislature? They need not want to enter by the vote of a handful of Englishmen. The English still had power enough. The Indians still needed their unrivalled skill and faculty for organization, probably their capital; why did they fear for their security? They could live in India in perfect safety. If they asked for a passport of safety, he could understand, but if they asked for a special privilege to enter the legislature, he would not be a party to that guilt. There were not two millions of them. It was a claim that would be rejected before any tribunal of judges. An any rate he would in no case be party to the vivisection of a whole nation.

International Affairs, November 1931

30. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

October 21, 1931

CHI. PREMA,

I have started getting letters from you now. I am eager to reply to them at length, but I have no time for that. Please, therefore, be satisfied with this acknowledgment.

Why do you fear that I would yield on any essential matter?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10265

31. SPEECH AT CHURCH HOUSE¹

LONDON,

October 21, 1931

I ask all Englishmen to study the case for India and, if they feel that my position is correct, they must render all the assistance they can in order to make the R.T.C. proceed to a successful

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". The meeting, presided over by the Archbishop of York, was attended by thirty-two bishops and other church dignitaries.

issue. But I see no hope. Lord Sankey is marking time, and today we are no nearer success, no nearer even to the great issue, viz., "is or is not India going to get Complete Independence? Is or is not India going to get full control over her defence, finance and external affairs?" We have not even discussed these things. We have been spending all our time in discussing things of a second-rate or even third-rate importance. The communal question, which is said to bar the progress, should not have been used for that purpose.

Young India, 5-11-1931

32. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS¹

LONDON,

[About *October 21, 1931*]

Q. Is it not unfortunate that though you represent a strong body of opinion you are not today the leader of a united India?

A. I am not. But that is because unity is impossible here. Don't you see it is a packed Conference? If we had been asked to elect our own representatives, I should have represented and spoken for them all, excepting, of course, the princes who cannot speak except as vassals of the Government on whose sufferance they live. Whereas, we have here today Mussalmans talking as ultraloyalists who only a little while ago were intolerant even of British connection under any terms.

Q. Then what *The Daily Herald* said is true?

A. No, I think the Prime Minister is right in saying that the Government are not trying deliberately to break up the Conference. But they might have to wind it up for the simple reason that they cannot, in all decency, prolong the agony. For it is nothing less. We have been talking and talking about points which do not touch the fundamentals. What is the use of discussing allocation of finance between the Federation and the Provincial Government, when we do not know what finance we will have, what authority we are going to exercise and what army we shall have to pay for.

Young India, 5-11-1931

¹ Mahadev Desai, from whose "London Letter" the report is extracted, does not mention when or by whom the questions were asked. But he reports it along with the "Speech at Church House", the preceding item.

33. LETTER TO MIRZA ISMAIL

October 22, 1931

DEAR SIR MIRZA,

It will be a great triumph of yours if you convert Dr. A.¹ Having suffered like him in S. A.², Dr. A. always commands my sympathy in all he says. He needs the gentlest treatment.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. G.

From a photostat: G. N. 2188-1

34. INTERVIEW TO "THE STATESMAN"

LONDON,

October 22, 1931

Mr. Gandhi declared that he feared the Conference would fail unless the Government offered a liberal and determined plan, of which up to the present there had been no inkling.

If the Conference fails, I very much fear there will be no choice before the Congress except a revival of the boycott and civil disobedience as early as is necessary.

Mr. Gandhi asserted that the charge that the Government was to blame for the Round Table Conference delays was true, but he was unable to say that the delay began when the Government became a National one.

Asked which was, in his opinion, the best way of arriving at a communal settlement, Mr. Gandhi said it was for the Government to declare that constitutionmaking would proceed irrespective of a settlement of differences, and if a settlement in private was not reached, a judicial tribunal would be appointed to decide the claims of three rival parties.

Mr. Gandhi declared himself completely puzzled how *The Daily Herald* got the information regarding the correspondence between him and the Premier. This correspondence, he stated, was known only to his immediate co-workers, and there must have been a leakage.

In this correspondence he made no charge against Mr. MacDonald of a change of policy.

Commenting on the General Election, the Congress leader said that the

¹ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

² South Africa

absence of any mention of India in election speeches and literature showed that all parties had one policy towards India.

The Statesman, 23-10-1931

35. *EXTRACTS FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING*

LONDON,
October 22, 1931

CHAIRMAN : . . . The reason why the States would be willing to go to a Federal Court would be because, in the exercise of their sovereign power, they would consent and confer jurisdiction upon that Court. . . . I only venture to suggest for your consideration, and not for an answer now, that you could, in just the same way as you confer that jurisdiction, by the exercise of your sovereign power, on a new Court like the Federal Court, also confer it on the Privy Council.

MR. GANDHI: I should like to put a question to Sir Mirza Ismail, if I may. Sir Mirza, do you contemplate in any circumstances any right of appeal on the part of the subjects of Indian States to this Federal Court?

SIR MIRZA ISMAIL: I think so, Mahatmaji, In regard to matters arising under the Constitution or federal laws they would, in the ordinary course, have the right of appeal to the highest judicial tribunal competent to deal with such questions. . . .

LORD PEEL: . . . There should, first of all, be a small impartial committee which should investigate the questions connected with the States' contributions, ceded territories, the position of the Maritime States, and so on. Now, the question of the Maritime States need not necessarily be settled, I think, before the Bill becomes an Act; but the other matters—the question of the States' contributions and the ceded territories—have to be gone into, and gone into carefully. The first suggestion is, therefore, that this small impartial Committee shall deal with those problem and, of course report as quickly as possible. . . .

The second Committee suggested to be set up is to some extent varied from the original proposal. It was to be a Committee which should deal with the various problems submitted to it, and might have some freedom even to make alternative suggestions on matters of principle. Well, there was a good deal of anxiety expressed in some quarters that that might, I will not say lead to the tearing-up of the principles set out in the Finance Sub-committee's report, but at least might give too much latitude to that Committee. The new suggestion cuts down considerably the functions of this Committee, and limits its powers. It is suggested that it should be a fact-finding Committee, to be appointed in India

consisting of officials familiar with questions of finance, including, of course, States' finance. . .

I hope that those suggestions will meet the views which have been expressed by the members of the Committee. I can sum them up very shortly.

There is, first of all, the general acceptance, as a basis for drafting the Bill, of the principles laid down by the Finance Sub-committee. Then there are these two Committees to be set up, the one a small body dealing with the question of the States, and the other a fact-finding Committee which can get to work rapidly and provide the material on which final decisions are taken. Then, before the end of the Conference, the Government must state its proposals and make its own recommendations as to the best method of consulting the parties concerned on the few points which may be left over to be decided after these Committees have reported. . . .

CHAIRMAN: We are very much obliged to Lord Peel. Certainly great strides have been made towards coming to an agreement, and I think the differences have nearly all been composed. I hope we shall do our best to accept that.

SIR AKBAR HYDARI : My lord, I entirely endorse what Lord Peel has said; and this represents what was really in our minds.

DR. AMBEDKAR: I should just like to say one thing. Lord Peel said just now that there was general agreement regarding the principles enunciated in the Report of the Federal Finance Sub-committee. Now, whatever may be the view of the other members of the Federal Structure Committee, I should for myself like to make this reservation, that I certainly do not agree with the principles enunciated by the Federal Finance Sub-committee; and I should for myself like to say that I have no objection to the appointment of this Committee, provided it is distinctly understood that the Committee has a right to suggest alterations and amendments of the principles, in order that the future financial system for the Federal Government may be a sound system.

MR. GANDHI: I should like to say a few things, Lord Chancellor, with your permission. I have very serious misgivings about the result of this proposed Committee, although the scope of it has been very considerably altered, and therefore it is less open to objection. I would, however, in order not to press my objection at this stage, suggest, along the very lines adumbrated by Lord Peel, that this question might be taken up at a later stage when we are about to gather the loose ends. He says—I think very properly—that His Majesty's Government cannot at the present stage say what would be the machinery adopted in order that the conclusions of the proposed Committee might be examined by some Committee or some body that would be in a way representative of the Round Table Conference. I think that is a very

sound objection. There will, undoubtedly, be several matters left over by the time the deliberations of this Committee and of the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference are concluded.

If rumour in this case is not baseless, we may hope that November 10th will be the final day of our sitting—I mean the sitting of the Round Table Conference also—and, if that is so and I hope it is so—there could be things left over with regard to certain details, and perhaps also with regard to fundamental principles, for which some machinery will have to be devised. It might then be proper to endorse the appointment of the Committee which Lord Peel suggests, and which His Majesty's Government seem to desire; and, if that is done, my objections need not be pressed. But, at the same time, I should like to state my objection.

As members are aware, on behalf of the Congress there is a claim or demand that there should be an impartial investigation of these obligations, financial and fiscal, that the National Government will be called on to shoulder. It seems to me it would be putting the cart before the horse for me, representing the Congress, to say there should be an allocation of these debts, and that an Expect Committee should be called upon to make that allocation, when I know that, at some stage or other, I would be raising objections to the obligations themselves. If that Committee knew that the obligations were not so formidable as they appear to be today, their allocation would be of a different character; or, if they are absolutely rigid and not a rupee is to be taken away from them, that also would affect the character of the allocation. I have therefore the gravest misgivings as to the results of the deliberations of that Committee, and as to the action that I would then be justified in taking on behalf of the Congress.

My second objection is that this Committee, although its scope will be restricted, will really be doing the work that the National Government or the Federal Government should do. If His Majesty's Government feel insecure as to the ability of the Federal Government to discharge its obligations from the source of revenue that will be accepted as common, surely there are other methods of giving them a sense of security as to the ability of the National Government to cope with the obligations that might legitimately fall on its shoulders. It cannot be done, in my humble opinion, through a Committee of this character.

When I agreed roughly to the source of revenue to be common,

I had in mind undoubtedly that I should be able to press for total repeal of the Salt Tax, merely by way of instance; but I should not in any way bind myself to the other taxes. I know that legally I do not do so; but if there is a recommendation on the part of the Committee, or if there are some calculations based upon the rigidity of the taxes that are enumerated there, I should again feel that I had not done justice to the cause that I represent.

Therefore, for these three reasons, I have very grave misgivings as to giving my consent to the appointment of this Committee and finding myself debarred from raising objections of a fundamental character. So what really would please me, as representing the Congress, is that this matter might be left over entirely for the National Government to investigate and decide. It should be enough just now for His Majesty's Government to know and feel absolutely reassured—and for that they are entitled to any assurance, legal or otherwise, that they may desire—but this delicate thing (to me it is a delicate thing) should be left over to the National Government. For these reasons, if this Committee wishes to express an opinion on the point now instantly, then I must press these objections of mine. Otherwise, in order that we may have an agreed settlement in this matter, I would suggest that the matter may be for the present left over, so that, by the time we approach the end of our labours, we shall all be in a better position to make up our minds. . . .

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: . . . I take it that what Your Lordship suggests now is that this fact-finding Committee will only find facts in accordance with the principles laid down in the Report?

LORD PEEL: Yes.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: Well, if that be so, I have no objection at all; but again I should like, like both Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah, to be satisfied in regard to the procedure that is to be adopted for coming to final decisions, because I take it, after the point was raised by Mr. Jinnah, that it was not intended to come to any decisions immediately after the Report has been submitted, but to arrive at tentative proposals, and that those tentative proposals will be laid before a Committee or before the whole Conference, or that you will devise some sort of machinery in order to arrive at final decisions. If that be the understanding, then I have no objection at all.

MR. GANDHI: But it is clearly subject to the principles that Lord Peel himself adumbrated.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: As regards the other Committee suggested by Lord

Peel, I have no objection to that.

CHAIRMAN: I think the position now is that, thanks to the tact and good sense of the parties, we have arrived at a compromise which is a workable compromise; and we are very much indebted to Lord Peel and those who are associated with him for having brought us this happy result. I quite appreciate Mr. Gandhi's caveat, and that will appear in the record of the proceeding; and I also appreciate Dr. Ambedkar's caveat. That, however, does not prevent us at all from accepting this very helpful compromise. We have made a very long step forward towards our future work. We will report in that sense; and let me express, at any rate, my personal thanks and your personal thanks to Lord Peel and the Sub-committee.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 252-5

36. LETTER TO SIR PHILIP HARTOG

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 23, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

Inadvertently, I have no doubt, you have omitted to sign your letter, but as the address is fully given, I am hoping that this letter will reach you.

You will realize that I could not off hand give you the date, but since you would gladly study the whole question, I would find out the numbers of *Young India* in which the articles¹ appeared and send the references to you. I shall also find out what is possible to prove with reference to other Provinces, apart from the deductions that I have drawn from the Punjab. Meanwhile, I have no difficulty in drawing the deduction for the rest of the Provinces from the examples of the Punjab and Burma. Whatever may be the strides made by the Punjab during the past five or ten years cannot affect the argument that I have advanced to you.

About Kashmir, as I said in reply, mine was merely a conjecture, but since you are so interested in the question, I shall try and find out the true state of education in Kashmir.

You are quite right in feeling certain that, if there were any error

¹ Quoting figures from a Punjab Administration Report concerning education in the Punjab; *vide* "Speech at Chatham House", pp. 193-206. The addressee had questioned Gandhiji's assertion that "literacy had diminished in British India in the last fifty years."

in my reasoning or the facts that I stated, I should immediately correct them, and whilst I should try to verify more fully the statements that I made, you will also on your part oblige me by giving me such information as may be in your possession and as may help me to understand the truth.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 9395. Courtesy: India Office Library

37. INTERVIEW TO REUTER

LONDON,

October 23, 1931

Mr. Gandhi special interview by Reuter today with reference to a report published in London that he had cabled to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that nothing could be expected from the Round Table Conference,¹ said that that was his feeling, but it must be remembered that his cable was reply to Pandit Jawaharlal's cable giving a graphic description of the agrarian situation in the United Provinces and he was referring to that matter.

Asked by Reuter whether the interpretation could be given to his cable that he was not giving the Round Table Conference a chance of success, Mr. Gandhi said that there was evidently some misconception. His cable to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had nothing to do with the proceedings of the Round Table Conference and referred only to the situation in the United Provinces.

At any rate, as far as he was concerned, Mr. Gandhi was giving the Conference every chance possible for him to give. He was endeavouring to help where he could, putting no hindrance in the way. If the Conference failed, it would fail because of its inherent weakness and because, as he had pointed out, the British Government was not responding to the Congress claim.

The Hindu, 24-10-1931

¹ *Vide* "Cable to Jawaharlal Nehru", 16-10-1931

38. *EXTRACTS FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL
STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING*

LONDON,
October 23, 1931

MR. GANDHI : Lord Chancellor and fellow Delegates, I feel considerable hesitation in speaking on this subject¹, which has been rendered so highly technical by the course that the discussion has taken; but I feel that I owe a duty to you and a duty to the Congress which I represent. I know that the Congress hold some decided views on the question of the Federal Court—views which would be, I am afraid, very distasteful to a large number of the Delegates here. Whatever they are, seeing that they are held by responsible body, It is, I suppose, necessary that I should at least present them to you.

I see that the discussions are based, if not upon utter distrust, upon considerable distrust of ourselves—that the National Government will not be able to conduct its affairs in an impartial manner. This communal tangle also is colouring the discussion. The Congress, on the other hand, bases the whole of its policy on trust and on confidence that, when we have come to power, we shall also come to a sense of our responsibility, and all the communal bias will drop out. But should it prove otherwise, then, too, the Congress would run the boldest risks imaginable because, without running those risks, we shall not be able to exercise real responsibility. So long as we have the mental reservation that we have to rest upon some foreign power for our guidance and for conducting our affairs at a critical juncture, so long, in my opinion, there is no responsibility. One feels also embarrassed by the fact that we really are trying to discuss this thing without knowing where we shall be. I should give one opinion if Defence was not under the control of the responsible to Government, and another opinion if Defence was under our own control. I proceed upon the assumption that, if we are to enjoy responsibility in the real sense of the term, Defence will be under our control—under national control in every sense of the term.

I entirely sympathize with Dr. Ambedkar in the difficulty that he raised. It is all very well to have a judgment of the highest tribunal; but if the writ of that tribunal does not run beyond the confines of its

¹ The Federal Court

own Court, that tribunal will be laughing-stock of the nation and of the whole world. What is then to be done in connection with that writ? What Mr. Jinnah said, of course came home—that the military would be there; but it will be the Crown that will run the writ. Then I would say, let the High Court also, or the Federal Court, be under the Crown. In my opinion, the Supreme Court has to be, if we are responsible, under the responsible Government; and therefore the process of carrying out the writ has also to be made good by the responsible Government. Personally, I do not share the fears that actuate Dr. Ambedkar; but I think that his objection is a very reasonable objection, and that a Court which gives judgments should also have perfect confidence that its judgements will be respected by those who are affected by its judgments. Hence I would suggested that the Judges should have the power of framing rules in order to regulate matters in connection with those judgments. Naturally the enforcement will not rest with the Court—the enforcement will rest with the executive authority; but the executive authority would have to conform to the rules that might be framed by the Court.

Somehow or other we fancy that this Consitution is going to give us every detail in connection with the composition of this Court. I respectfully differ from that view in its entirety. I think that this Constitution will give us the framework of the Federal Court and will define the jurisdiction of the Federal Court, but the rest will be left to the Federal Government to evolve. I can not possibly understand that the Constitution is also going to tell us how many years the Judges are to serve, or whether they are to resign or retire at the age of 70 or 95 or 90 or 65. I think that these will be matters to be taken up by the Federal Court; hence I propose a drastic method, for what it may be worth, that the Constitution will give us, to start with, the Judges, and these Judges will serve for a fixed, definite period, so that the responsible Government might not have to shoulder the burden of a Federal Court or a Supreme Court, whatever we choose to call it, which may not answer the needs of the country.

We bring in the Crown at the end of almost every sentence. I must confess that, according to the conception of the Congress, there is no question of the Crown. India desires complete independence; and if India enjoys complete independence, whoever the supreme authority there may be, that supreme authority will be responsible for the appointment of Judges and several other matters which today belong to the Crown.

It is a fundamental belief with the Congress that, whatever the course the Constitution takes, there should be our own Privy Council in India. The Privy Council's portals, if it is really to give relief to the poor people in matters of the highest importance, should be open to the poorest people in the land, and I think that is impossible if the English Privy Council is to decide our fate in matters of the greatest importance. There, too, I would guide ourselves by implicit trust in the ability of our Judge to pronounce wise and absolutely impartial decisions. I know that, in making great changes, we run always very great risks. The Privy Council here is an ancient institution, and an institution which justly commands very great regard and respect; but, in spite of all the respect that I have for the Privy Council, I cannot bring myself to believe that we will not be able to have a Privy Council of our own which will command universal esteem. Because England can boast of very fine institutions, I do not think that therefore we must be tied down to those institutions. If we are to learn anything whatever from England, we should learn to erect those institutions ourselves. Otherwise there is a poor chance for this nation whose representatives we claim to be. Therefore, I would ask us all to have sufficient trust and confidence in ourselves at the present moment. Our beginning may be very small, but if we have strong, true and honest hearts to give decisions, it does not matter in the slightest degree that we have not got the legal traditions which the Judges in England claim and very properly boast of before the whole world.

That being my view, I feel that this Federal Court should be a Court of the widest jurisdiction possible, and not decide cases only that arise from the administration of federal laws. Federal laws, of course, will be there, but it should have the amplest jurisdiction to try all the cases that may come from the four corners of the world to try all the cases that may come from the four corners of India. It is, then, a question where the subjects of the Princes will be and where they will come in. Subject to what the Princes may have to say, I would suggest, with the greatest deference and with equal hesitation, that there will be, I hope, at the end of it—if we are going to make something out of this Conference—something which will be common to all India, to all the inhabitants of India, whether they come from the States or whether they come from the rest of India. If there is something in common between all of us, naturally the Supreme Court will be the guardian of the rights that we may consider to be common to all.

What those rights should be, I am totally unable to say. It is entirely for the Princes to say what they can be and what they cannot be. In view of the fact that they represent here not only their own Houses but have taken on themselves the tremendous responsibility of representing their subjects also at this Conference, I would certainly make a humble but fervent appeal to them that they would of their own accord come forth with some scheme whereby their subjects also may feel that, though they are not directly represented at this table, their voices will find adequate expression through these noble Princes themselves.

So far as the salary is concerned, you will laugh, naturally, but the Congress does believe that it is an impossible thing for the Congress, which represents a nation of dwarfs, to vie with the English nation, which represents today giants in wealth. India, whose average income is 2d. per day, can ill afford to pay the high salaries that are commanded here. I feel that it is a thing which we will have to unlearn if we are going to have voluntary rule in India. It is all very well, so long as the British bayonet is there, to squeeze out of these poor people salaries of Rs. 10,000 a month or salaries of Rs. 5,000 a month or salaries of Rs. 20,000 a month. I do not consider, however, that my country has sunk to such an extent that it will not be able to produce sufficient men who will live somewhat in correspondence with the lives of the millions and still serve India nobly, truly and well. I do not believe for one moment that legal talent has to be bought if it is to remain honest. I recall the names of Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, Manomohan Ghosh, Badruddin Tyabji and a host of others, who gave their legal talent absolutely free of charge and served their country faithfully and well. The taunt may be flung in my face that they did so because they were able to charge princely fees in their own professional work. I reject that argument, for the simple reason that I have known every one of them with the exception of Manomohan Ghosh. It was not that they had plenty of money and therefore gave freely of their talent when India required it. It had no connection with their ability to have ease and luxury. I have seen them living the life of poor people and in perfect contentment. I can point out to you several lawyers of distinction who, if they had not come to the national cause, would today be occupying seats on the High Court Benches in all parts of India. I have therefore absolute confidence that, when we come to conduct our own affairs and so on, we will do so in a patriotic spirit and taking account of the miserable state that the millions of India occupy.

One word more and I have finished. Seeing that the Congress

holds the view that this Federal Court or Supreme Court—which ever you call it—will occupy the position of the highest tribunal beyond which no man who is an inhabitant of India can go, its jurisdiction in my opinion will be limitless. It will have jurisdiction, so far as federal matters are concerned, to the extent that the Princes are also willing; but I cannot possibly imagine that we shall have two Supreme Courts—one in order to deal with merely federal law and another to deal with all the other matters that are not covered by the federal administration or the Federal Government. because at the present moment, I suppose, as things go, the Federal Government will concern itself with the minimum subjects, matters of the highest moment will be extrafederal. Who is to adjudicate upon these extrafederal matters if not this very Supreme Court? Therefore, this Supreme Court or Federal Court will exercise double jurisdiction, if necessary treble jurisdiction. The greater the power that we give to this Federal Court, I think, the greater the confidence we shall be able to inspire in the world and also in the nation itself.

I am sorry to have taken up these precious minutes of the time of the Conference, but I felt that, in spite of my great reluctance to speak to you on this Federal Court, I must give you the views that many of us in the Congress have been holding for a large number of years, and which we would, if we could, spread throughout the length and breadth of India. I know the terrible handicap under which I am labouring. All the most distinguished lawyers are arrayed against me; the Princes also probably arrayed against me so far as the salaries and jurisdiction of this Court are concerned. But I would be guilty of neglect of duty to the Congress and to you if I did not give you the views that the Congress and I hold so strongly on the matter of the Federal Court.

CHAIRMAN: We are much obliged to Mahatma Gandhi for so very frankly and so very fearlessly expressing his view. We are here to exchange views and to hear arguments upon them; that is the object of the Conference. If he will allow me to say so, when you know what a man wants, you can do your best to meet him, and he will no doubt do his best to meet you. The difficulty is to negotiate with a man who does not know what he wants. I am very much obliged to Mr. Gandhi for putting his views before us like that. It will always be my ambition to try and go as far as possible to meet them, and, indeed, as far as possible to meet anybody's views. I am sure we shall have that spirit of accommodation all round the Federal Structure Committee. Meanwhile, let me express my personal thanks to Mr. Gandhi for putting before us so very frankly and so very fearlessly what his views upon this subject are.

MR. JINNAH: Mahatma Gandhi made a reference to what I said. I did not quite catch that.

MR. GANDHI: You see, you put Dr. Ambedkar in a quandary by saying what should happen, and Dr. Ambedkar was afraid of the logical consequences of his own remarks. Therefore, I simply brought your name in and said that, if India is divided into parts, one governed by the Crown and the other governed by herself, we are likely to fall between two stools.

MR. JINNAH: I did not express any opinion.

MR. GANDHI: No, I know you did not express any opinion; but you said: "I assume that Defence is a Crown subject."

MR. JINNAH: I did not say "I assume". I said that, so far as the report of the Federal Structure Committee has gone, it is assumed that Defence is a Crown subject. I expressed no opinion.

MR. GANDHI: That is right.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 267-8

39. SPEECH AT GATHERING OF SCHOOLBOYS¹

ETON,

[October 23, 1931]²

You occupy a big place in England. Some of you will become prime ministers and generals in future and I am anxious to enter your hearts whilst your character is still being moulded and whilst it is easy yet to enter your hearts. I should place before you certain facts as opposed to the false history traditionally imparted to you. Among high officials I find ignorance, meaning not absence of knowledge but knowledge based on false data, and I want you to have true data before you as I think of you, not as Empirebuilders, but as members of a nation which will have ceased exploiting other nations and become the guardian of the peace of the world, not by force of arms but by its moral strength. Well, then, I tell you that there is nothing like a Hindu case,³ at least so far as I am concerned, for in the

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report: "The Week-end at Eton and Oxford: Among Future Empire-Builders".

² Gandhiji in his diary says that he went to Eton on this date in the evening and addressed a meeting of youths.

³ Gandhiji had been asked to present the Hindu case just as "Mr. Shaukat Ali gave us the Muslim case".

matter of my country's freedom I am no more a Hindu than you are. There is a Hindu case put by the Hindu Mahasabha representatives who claim to represent the Hindu mind, but who, in my opinion, do not do so. They will have a national solution of the question, not because they are nationalists but because it suits them. I call that destructive tactics, and am pleading with them that, representing as they do the great majority, they must step out and give to the smaller communities what they want, and the atmosphere would be as clear as if by magic. What the vast mass of Hindus feel and want nobody knows, but claiming as I do to have moved amongst them all these years, I think they do not care for these pettifogging things, they are not troubled by the question of loaves and fishes in the shape of electoral seats and administrative posts. This bugbear of communalism is confined largely to the cities which are not India, but which are the blotting sheets of London and other Western cities which consciously or unconsciously prey upon villages and share with you in exploiting them by becoming the commission agents of England. This communal question is of no importance before the great question of Indian freedom of which the British ministers are studiously fighting shy. They forget that they cannot go on for long with a discontented rebellious India—true, ours is a non-violent rebellion, but it is rebellion none the less. Freedom of India is superior to the disease which for the time is corroding some portions of the community, and if the constitutional question is satisfactorily solved, the communal distemper will immediately vanish. The moment the alien wedge is removed the divided communities are bound to unite. There is therefore no Hindu case, and if there is one it must go by the board. If you study this question, it will profit you nothing and when you go into its exasperating details you will, very likely, prefer to see us drowned in the Thames.

I am telling you God's truth when I say that the communal question does not matter and should not worry you at all. But, if you will study history, study the much bigger question: How did millions of people make up their minds to adopt non-violence and how they adhered to it? Study, not man in his animal nature, man following the law of the jungle, but study man in all his glory. Those engaged in communal squabbles are like specimens in a lunatic asylum. But study men laying down their lives, without hurting anyone, in the cause of their country's freedom. Study man in his glory, man following the law of his higher nature, the law of love, so that when you grow to manhood you will have improved your heritage. It can be no pride to you that your nation is ruling over

ours. No one chained a slave without chaining himself. And no nation kept another in subjection without herself turning into a subject nation. It is a most sinful connection, a most unnatural connection that is existing at present between England and India and I want you to bless our mission because we are naturally entitled to our freedom which is our birthright and we are doubly entitled to it by virtue of the penance and suffering we have undergone. I want you, when you grow up, to make a unique contribution to the glory of your nation, by emancipating it from its sin of exploitation, and thus contribute to the progress of mankind.

The other question was what would happen to India with the rapacious Princes when the Englishmen retire from India. Gandhiji assured the young men there was no danger from the Princes, but if they ran amok, they were easier to deal with than Englishmen, that their very weakness would prevent them from doing any mischief, and that India's glory would lie, not in driving out the English, but in converting them from exploiters into friends, remaining there to protect India's honour in time of need.

Young India, 12-11-1931

40. NOTE FOR MIRZA ISMAIL

[On or after *October 23, 1931*]¹

It will be a glorious thing if the question can be satisfactorily settled.

M. K. G.

From a photostat: G. N. 2188-9

¹ This was written on a letter dated October 23 from the addressee, which read: "I saw the Aga Khan last night. He said that he was meeting the Muslim Delegation on Monday and that he would mention the matter to them and let me know how they viewed it. . . . I feel hopeful that a satisfactory settlement of the vexed question may soon be reached."

41. SPEECH AT INDIAN MAJLIS

OXFORD,

October 24, 1931

Muslims and Sikhs are all well organized. The untouchables are not. There is very little political consciousness among them and they are so horribly treated that I want to save them against themselves. If they had separate electorates, their lives would be miserable in villages which are the strongholds of Hindu orthodoxy. It is the superior class of Hindus who have to do penance for having neglected the untouchables for ages. That penance can be done by active social reform and by making the lot of the untouchables more bearable by acts of service, but not by asking for separate electorates for them. By giving them separate electorates you will throw the apple of discord between the untouchables and the orthodox. You must understand I can tolerate the proposal for special representation of the Mussalmans and the Sikhs only as a necessary evil. It would be a positive danger for the untouchables. I am certain that the question of separate electorates for the untouchables is a modern manufacture of a Satanic Government. The only thing needed is to put them on the voters' list, and provided for fundamental rights for them in the Constitution. In case they are unjustly treated and their representative is deliberately excluded they would have the right to special election tribunal which would give them complete protection. It should be open to these tribunals to order the unseating of an elected candidate and election of the excluded man.

Separate electorates to the untouchables will ensure them bondage in perpetuity. The Mussalmans will never cease to be Mussalmans by having separate electorates. Do you want the untouchables to remain untouchables for ever? Well, the separate electorates would perpetuate the stigma. What is needed is destruction of untouchability and when you have done it, the bar sinister which has been imposed by an insolent "superior" class upon an "inferior" class will be destroyed. When you have destroyed the bar sinister, to whom will you give the separate electorates?

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report: "The Week-end at Eton and Oxford: Among Future Empire-Builders". Desai says the report has been "amplified by what he said about the same thing on other occasions".

Look at the history of Europe. Have you got separate electorates for the working classes or women? With adult franchise, you give the untouchables complete security. Even the orthodox Hindus would have to approach them for votes.

How, then, you ask, does Dr. Ambedkar, their representative insist on separate electorates for them? I have the highest regard for Dr. Ambedkar. He has every right to be bitter. That he does not break our heads is an act of self-restraint on his part. He is today so very much saturated with suspicion that he cannot see anything else. He sees in every Hindu a determined opponent of the untouchables, and it is quite natural. The same thing hapened to me in my early days in South Africa where I was hounded out by the Europeans wherever I went. It is quite natural for him to vent his wrath. But the separate electorates that he seeks will not give him social reform. He may himself mount to power and poition, but nothing good will accrue to the untouchables. I can say all this with authority, having lived with the untouchables and having shared their joys and sorrows all these years.

Q. Do you still believe in the good faith of England?

A. I believe in the good faith of England to the extent that I believe in the good fait hof human nature. I believe that the sum total of the energy of mankind is not to bring us down but to lift us up, and that is the result of the definite, if unconcious, working of the law of love. The fact that mankind persists shows that the cohesive force is greater than the disruptive force, centripetal force greater than centrifugal. And inasmuch as I know only of the poetry of love, you should not be surprised that I trust the English people. I have often been bitter and I have often said to myself, "When will this comouflage and? When will these people ceases to exploit these poor peoples?" But instinc tively I get the reply: "That is the heritage that they have had from Rome." I must conduct myself in accordance with the dictates of the law of the love, hoping and expecting in the long run to affect the English nature.

Q. What is your view about the industrialization of India?

A. Industrialism is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors. It is because these factors are getting less and

less every day for England that its number of unemployed is mounting up daily. The Indian boycott was but a fleabite. And if that is the state of England, a vast country like India cannot expect to benefit by industrialization. In fact, India, when it begins to exploit other nations—as it must if it becomes industrialized—will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world. And why should I think of industrializing India to exploit other nations? Don't you see the tragedy of the situation, viz., that we can find work for our 300 millions unemployed, but England can find none for its three millions and is faced with a problem that baffles the greatest intellects of England? The future of industrialism is dark. England has got successful competitors in America, Japan, France, Germany. It has competitors in the handful of mills in India, and as there has been an awakening in India, even so there will be an awakening in South Africa with its vastly richer resources—natural, mineral and human. The mighty English look quite pigmies before the mighty races of Africa. They are noble savages after all, you will say. They are certainly noble, but no savages and in the course of few years the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?

Q. What do you think of the I.C.S.?

A. The I. C. S. is not really the Indian Civil Service, it is the E. C. S., the English Service. I say this knowing that there are Indians in the Service. Whilst India is a subject nation they cannot but serve the interests of England. But supposing India secures freedom and supposing able Englishmen are prepared to serve India, then they would be truly national servants. At the present time, under the name of I.C.S. they serve the exploiting Government. In a free India, Englishmen will come out to India either in a spirit of adventure, or from penance and willingly serve on a small salary and put up with the rigours of Indian climate, instead of being a burden on poor India whilst they draw inordinately large salaries and try to live there in extra English extravagance and reproduce even the English climate. We would have them as honoured comrades, but if there is even a lurking desire to lord it over us and behave as a superior race, they are not wanted.

Q. Do you say that you are completely fit for independence?

A. If we are not, we will try to be. But the question of fitness

does not arise, for the simple reason that those who have robbed us of independence have to render it back. Supposing you repented of your conduct, you can express your repentance only by leaving us alone.

Q. But why not Dominion Status? The fact is that the English understand what Dominion Status means. They don't know what is partnership, whereas Dominion Status means very nearly what you want. Why not accept it, if it is offered, as the Irish accepted the Free State status of their own accord. Does your partnership mean anything more than that?

A. present the case to me, let me examine the contents and if I find that Dominion Status that you present is the same thing as Independence, I shall accept it at once. But I must throw the burden of proving it on those who say that Dominion Status is the same as Independence.

Young India, 12-11-1931

42. TALK AT OXFORD¹

OXFORD,
October 24, 1931

Sir Gilbert Murray. . . seemed to be very much perturbed over what he thought were most dangerous manifestation of non-violent revolution and nationalism. "I find myself today in greater disagreement with you than even Mr. Winston Churchill", he said. Gandhiji said:

You want co-operation between nations for the salvaging of civilization. I want it too, but co-operation presupposes free nations worthy of co-operation. If I am to help in creating or restoring peace and goodwill and resist disturbances thereof I must have ability to do so and I cannot do so unless my country has come to its own. At the present moment, the very movement for freedom in India is India's contribution to peace. For so long as India is a subject nation, not only she is a danger to peace, but also England which exploits India. Other nations may tolerate today England's Imperialist policy and her exploitation of other nations, but they certainly do not appreciate it; and they would gladly help in the prevention of England becoming a greater and greater menace every day. Of course you will

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report: "The Week-end at Eton and Oxford: Among Future Empire-Builders". Those present at the talk included Dr. Gilbert Murray, Dr. Gilbert Slater, Prof. Reginald Coupland and Dr. Datta.

say that India free can become a menace herself. But let us assume that she will be have herself with her doctrine of non-violence, if she achieves her freedom through it, and for all her bitter experience of being a victim to exploitation.

The objection about my talking in terms of revolution is largely answered by what I have already said about nationalism. But my movement is conditioned by one great and disturbing factor. You might of course say that there can be no non-violent rebellion and there has been none known to history. Well, it is my ambition to provide an instance, and it is my dream that my country may win its freedom through non-violence. And, I would like to repeat to the whole world times without number that I will not purchase my country's freedom at the cost of non-violence. My marriage with non-violence is such an absolute thing that I would rather commit suicide than be deflected from my position. I have not mentioned truth in this connection, simply because truth cannot be expressed except by non-violence. So, if you accept the conception, my position is sound. . . .

You may be justified in saying that I must go more warily, but if you attack the fundamentals, you have to convince me. And I must tell you that the boycott may have nothing to do with nationalism even. It may be a question of pure reform, as without being intensely nationalistic, we can refuse to purchase your cloth and make our own. A reformer cannot always afford to wait. If he does not put into force his belief he is no reformer. Either he is too hasty or too afraid or too lazy. Who is to advise him or provide him with a barometer? You can only guide yourself with a disciplined conscience, and then run all risks with the protecting armour of truth and non-violence. A reformer could not do otherwise.

Q. Would not India wait some time before she launched on the difficult task of self-government? If we send out our soldiers, we have to be responsible for their lives, and so may it not be that the sooner you get an Indian army the better? The Muslim community said last year in a united voice that they did not want responsibility at the centre. How are we to judge?

A. The long and the short of it is that you will not trust us. Well, give us the liberty to make mistakes. If we cannot handle our affairs today, who is to say when we will be able to do so? I do not want you to determine the pace. Consciously or unconsciously you adopt the role of divinity. I ask you for a moment to come down from that pedestal. Trust us to ourselves. I cannot imagine anything

worse happening than is happening today, a whole humanity lying prostrate at the feet of a small nation.

And what is this talk of being responsible for the lives of your soldiers. I issue a notice to all foreigners to enlist for military service in India, and if some Britishers will come, will you prevent them? If they will enlist, we should be responsible for their lives, as any other Government whom they serve would be. The key to self-government is without doubt the control of the army.

As regards a united demand, I must say, what I have now said several times that you cannot have a united demand from a packed Conference. It is my case that the Congress represents the largest number of Indians. The British Ministers know it. If they do not know it, I must go back to my country and have as overwhelming an opinion as possible. We had a life-and-death struggle. One of the noblest of Englishmen¹ tried us and did not find us wanting. In consequence he opened the jail gates and appealed to the Congress to go to the Round Table Conference. We had long talks and negotiations during which we exercised the greatest patience and there was a Settlement under which the Congress agreed to be represented on the Round Table Conference. The Settlement was respected by Government more in its breach than its observance, and after much hesitation I agreed to come, if only to keep my word of honour given to that Englishman. On coming here I find that I had miscalculated the forces arrayed against India and the Congress. But that does not dismay me. I must go and qualify myself and prove by suffering that the whole country wants what it asks for. Hunter has said that success on the battle-field was the shortest cut to power. Well, we worker for success on a different battle-field. I am trying to touch your heart instead of your body. If I do not succeed this time, I shall succeed next time.

Young India, 12-11-1931

¹ Lord Irwin, as Viceroy of India

43. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS¹

OXFORD,

October 24, 1931

Q. How far would you cut India off from the Empire?

A. From the Empire entirely; from the British nation not at all, if I want India to gain and not to grieve. The British Empire is an Empire only because of India. That Emperorship must go and I should love to be equal partner with Britain, sharing her joys and sorrows and equal partner with all Dominions. But it must be a partnership on equal terms.

Q. To what extent would India be prepared to share the sorrows of England?

A. To the fullest extent.

Q. Do you think India would unite her fortunes inextricably with England?

A. Yes, so long as she remains a partner. But if she discovers that the partnership is like one between a giant and a dwarf, or if it is utilized for exploitation of the other races of the earth, she would dissolve it. The aim is the common good of all nations of the earth and, if it cannot be achieved, I have patience enough to wait for ages rather than patch up an unreal partnership.

Q. How would you distinguish exploitation from trading with a nation?

A. There are two tests: (1) The other nation must want our goods which should in no case be dumped on it against her will. (2) The trade should not be backed by the navy. And whilst in this connection I may say that, when you realize what wrong has been done by England to nations like us Indians, you will not sing *Britannia rules the waves* with any kind of pride. Things, in English Readers, which are matter for pride today, will have to be matters for shame, and you will have to cease to take any pride over the defeat or humiliation of other nations.

Q. How far is the British attitude towards the communal question an obstacle in your path?

A. Largely, or I should say half and half. There has been consciously or unconsciously that policy of divide and rule working

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report: "The Week-end at Eton and Oxford: Among Future Empire-Builders". The questions were put to Gandhiji at a meeting at the Raleigh Club.

here as in india. The British officials have sometimes coquetted with one party, sometimes with another. Of course, if I were a British officail, I would probably do the same and take advantage of dissensions to consolidate the rule. Our share of responsibility lies in the fact that we fall easy victims to the game.

Q. You think the British Government should suggest a solution of the communal question?

A. No, But I am the only party to say no. It is a humiliating thing and neither the Congress nor I can be party to it. But I have suggested a judicial tribunal. There are some committals on the side of Government in Government of India and Provincial Government dispatches, though all Government solutions are tinged by political considerations. As for us, each party, though talking of justice, fights shy of arbitration, which shows that there is a good deal of expediency and it is a question of degree who is wrong and who is right. The judicial tribunal can certainly be trusted to adjudicate between the various claims.

Q. Could you tell us anything about the personnel?

A. They may be non-Hindu and non-Muslim judges of the Indian High Courts or judges from the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

Q. Would their decision be accepted?

A. There can be no question of accepting the decision of a Court. I may confess that there is a trick at the back of the suggestion. If Government will play the game and adopt my suggestion, the whole atmosphere will change and before the judicial Committee comes into being the communities will come out with a solution. For, there is sufficient material in the advances already made to satisfy the politically-minded and each one knows the flaws in his own claim.

Young India, 12-11-1931

44. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS¹

[On or after *October 24, 1931*]²

Q. Why do Hindus want joint electorates?

A. Because they are foolish. They can take the wind out of the sails of Mussalmans by immediately giving them separate electorates and leaving them wondering whether there may not be after all something sinister in the separate electorates.

Q. Why are you so uncharitable to those who drink?

A. Because I am charitable to those who suffer from the effects of the curse.

Q. Do you ever suffer from nerves?³

A. Ask Mrs. Gandhi. She will tell you that I am on my best behaviour with the world but not with her.

Well, my husband is on his best behaviour with me.

Then I am sure that Mr. Miles has bribed you heavily.

Q. Is not the charkha a mediaeval device?

A. We were doing many things in the middle ages which were quite wise. But if most of us have given them up, why accuse me of my wisdom? However mediaeval the device may be, I am not ashamed of adding thereby fifty per cent to the income of my impoverished villagers. During the War you produced potatoes and fashionable ladies of Lyceum Club invited men to stitch sleeping-suits for the soldiers with plain needle and thread. Was it not mediaeval? Well, I learnt the mediaeval trick from the ladies of the Lyceum Club.

Q. What is the chief obstacle in the way swaraj?

A. It is the unwillingness of the British officials to part with power; or our incapacity to wrest power from unwilling hands. Well, you feel sorry that I have not given you the expected reply. I want you to understand that we can wrest power in spite of our disunion, and if the hands which have to yield power were willing, our disunion would soon disappear. You say the British are impartial on lookers! Well, I have had the audacity of accusing the Government of India of

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter"

² Desai has reported together answers given on different dates. But the first question, he says, was asked by some students at Oxford, where he was on October 24.

³ The question was put by Mrs. Eustace. Miles.

acting like a wedge and of accusing the British Government with having appointed a packed conference. We have our own communal solution arrived at by the Congress with enlightened Mussalmans. But, if unfortunately, some Mussalmans claiming to represent a majority are not satisfied, and because of that the Government will say that they would hold on the chains they have thrown round us, I say that we shall simultaneously strike a blow to break both the chain and the disunion.

Young India. 12-11-1931

45. LETTER TO MIRZA ISMAIL¹

[After *October 24, 1931*]²

DEAR SIR MIRZA,

Many thanks for the cutting³ which I have read. I hope you[r] effort with Dr. Ambedkar will prevail. It was a joy to me to meet Humayun at Oxford. I wish I could have seen more of him.

Yours,

M. K. G.

From a photostat: G.N. 2188-5

46. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

October 26, 1931

CHI. MANI,

I continue to get your letters. Do not stop writing because I cannot send any reply. Nowadays I have simply not the time to write letters. Today I am utilizing a few minutes snatched out of the Conference sessions.

I was delighted to learn that Dahyabhai had recovered. Convey my good wishes to him and Yashoda.

¹ This was in reply to Mirza Ismail's undated note which read: "May I request you to glance through this cutting, especially the para I have marked, May I have it back so that I may show it to Dr. Ambedkar and a few others in corroboration of what I have been telling them"

² From the references to the visit to Oxford

³ Not available

Ask Laskhmidas¹ and Manjubehn² to write to me. I think we shall be in England till at least one more mail steamer arrives.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-4: Manibehn Patelne, pp. 79-80

47. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

LONDON,

October 26, 1931

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I simply get no time to write letters. I am writing even this letter while attending the meeting of the Federal Committee. You ought to take some treatment for your nose. All my work here is done outside the Conference. It may not yield immediate results, but I believe it will have very good results afterwards. I have very little hope of returning with anything substantial. However, I will not return with dishonour. I have been meeting many responsible men.

The work of the Conference is likely to be over by the middle of November. I have invitations from nearly all over Europe. I am very eager to visit all those countries. I think my visiting them can do nothing but good. Meet all the people and cable to me your decisions. If you think it necessary that I should undertake the tour, you may take it that I shall be away a month longer. That is, I can reach India not earlier than in January. (Having written so far, I started dozing in the chair. As you can see, the pen refused to proceed further.) If you can spare me for so long, do so. In India you may do what you think best. You must have seen my reply³ to Jawaharlal's cable. Irrespective of what happens here, I am convinced that, if it becomes necessary to fight the Government there on any issue, you should do so. I see no possibility of anything being done here just now concerning local issues. I had thought that something could be done about the Bengal detenus, but I got no opportunity to do anything. I can't say if anything can be done after the election.

¹ Lakhmidas Asar

² Manjubehn Mashruwala

³ *Vide* "Cable to Jawaharlal Nehru", 16-10-1931

I see that in Gujarati the authorities are violating the Settlement in everything they do. Fight against all their decisions. The reply that has been received concerning Ras seems to me insolent. I am confident that we shall be able to fight it out with the Government on all these issues.

I think I have written enough.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 15-6

48. LETTER TO LADY EVE CRERAR

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 27, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

You will please forgive me for being so long answering your letter. The fact is that I have been overwhelmed with work, and your letter lay buried in the pile of arears. It was rescued today, and I am now sending you the cards duly autographed.

Yours sincerely,

LADY EVE CRERAR
CLONSKEAGH
ROTHERFIELD
SUSSEX

From a photostat: S. N. 18184

49. LETTER TO EVELYN WRENCH

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
October 27, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. The friend who writes to you has evidently missed the mark. The Congress is the Moderate Party. There is no such thing as an extreme demand. "Independence" is not an extreme demand, but it is the only self-respecting, logical and consistent demand. Moderation is in the method. Congress eschews violence in any shape or form. There is

undoubtedly a party in India which does not want independence because it fears it, but that is a constitutional disease. Those who are not suffering from that disease naturally want their digestive apparatus craves for. Nobody would call that an extreme craving, nor expect the man with a vigorous appetite to be satisfied with one [*sic*] who has all but lost it.

The friend is again wrong when he talks about meeting English sacrifice with Indian sacrifice. I am reminded of a striking sentence of Dr. Chalmers: "Duty will be merit when debt becomes a donation." I hold that it is the duty of England to return to India what she has taken away from her. There is no sacrifice in the discharge of that obligation. But so long as Englishmen believe that, whatever measure of freedom England grants means so much sacrifice on the part of England, so long will there be no meeting ground between the two countries, because England will not be able to come up to India's credit balance against England.

I do not know whether I have made my meaning quite clear. If I have not, you will please state difficulty and I shall endeavour to make it clear.

Yours sincerely,

EVELYN WRENCH, ESQ.

99 GOWER STREET, W.C.1

From a photostat: S. N. 18181

50. LETTER TO A. CARLYLE WALSH

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,

LONDON, W.,

October 27, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

The pamphlets¹ written by your late father have been, I see, already acknowledge. I heard of your father's love for India whilst I was in the jail last year.

¹ One of the pamphlets written by Walker Walsh, addressee's father, was *Gandhi and Free India*.

Though so late in the day, I would like to convey my respectful condolence to your mother. I would also like to make your acquaintance if you could make time to see me—say Tuesday next, between 9 and 9.30 a.m. at the above address.

Yours sincerely,

A. CARLYLE WALSH, ESQ.
NORTHAM
ATHENAFEUM ROAD
WHETSTONE, N. 20

From a photostat: S. N. 18182

51. NOTE TO MIRZA ISMAIL¹

[About *October 28, 1931*]²

This won't do. The draft refers to all other matters. What is wanted is that all matters must be under the control of a cabinet that is wholly responsible.

M. K. G.

From a photostat: G. N. 21884

52. LETTER TO MIRZA ISMAIL

[About *October 28, 1931*]³

DEAR SIR MIRZA,

Your draft is defective. My own draft is with them. Here it is.

1. Complete Independence not to exclude partnership at will and on terms of absolute equality.

2. Therefore complete control of defence forces, external affairs and finance.

¹ This was written on the following note from the addressee: "The Moslems will fully associate themselves in demanding full self-government for India, subject to such transitional reservations with regard to the Army and External affairs as may be found quite necessary in the interest of India. All other matters will be under the control of a Cabinet responsible to the Legislature."

² The exact date is not ascertainable. It is, however, likely that this was written about the same time as the following item.

³ The draft mentioned in the letter was followed by another which the addressee sent to Gandhiji and which the latter found "all right", *vide* "Note to Mirza Ismail", 28-10-1931. The letter therefore must have been written before that date.

3. Resistance to any extension of special reservation or separate electorate.

I think this is all the draft contains.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 2188-2

53. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

October 28, 1931

MY DEAR AMTUL,

I have been receiving your letters. But I have not been able to reply to all the letters from the Ashram people and others. I get no time. I must not give you a detailed reply. You should take such medicine and such medical advice as may be necessary. You must get well quickley. Do not think much. Simply trust God in all things.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 247

54. LETTER TO SIR HENRY S. LAWRENCE

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,

S.W.1,

October 28, 1931

DEAR SIR HENRY,

Many thanks for your kind letter. So far as the Congress is concerned, it is quite clear on the question of the vote for women. They must be on a par with men without any reservation. On all the other points you have mentioned, I am in agreement with you. I wish I could avail myself of the kind offer of your hospitality. But I see no chance so far as I can see at present.

From a photostat: S. N. 18197

55. SPEECH AT MONTESSORI TRAINING COLLEGE ¹

LONDON,

[October 28, 1931]²

Madame, you have overwhelmed me with your words.³ It is perfectly true, I must admit it in all humility, that however indifferently it may be, I endeavour to represent love in every fibre of my being. I am impatient to realize the presence of my Maker, Who to me embodies Truth, and in the early part of my career I discovered that if I was to realize Truth I must obey, even at the cost of my life, the law of love. And having been blessed with children, I discovered that the law of Love could be best understood and learned through little children. Were it not for us, their ignorant poor parents, our children would be perfectly innocent. I believe implicitly that the child is not born mischievous in the bad sense of the term. If parents would behave themselves whilst the child is growing, before it is born and after, it is a well-known fact that the child would instinctively obey the law of Truth and the law of Love. And when I understood this lesson in the early part of my life, I began a gradual but distinct change in life.

I do not propose to describe to you the several phases through which this stormy life of mine has passed, but I can only, in truth and in perfect humility, bear witness to the fact that to the extent that I have represented Love in my life, in thought, word and deed I have realized the “peace that passeth understanding”. I have baffled many of my friends when they have noticed in me peace that they have envied, and they have asked me for the cause of that priceless possession. I have not been able to explain the cause by saying that, if my friends found that peace in me, it was due to my attempt to obey this, the greatest law of our being.

It was in 1915 when I reached India, that I first became acquainted with your activities. It was in a place called Amreli that I found that there was a little school being conducted after the Montessori system. Your name had preceded that first acquaintance. I found no difficulty in finding out at once that this school

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai’s report; “At Montessori Training College”

² According to Gandhiji’s Diary, he visited the institution on this date.

³ Madame Montessori had welcomed Gandhiji “as a soul rather than a man”.

was not carrying out the spirit of your teaching; the letter was there. But whilst there was an honest—more or less honest—effort being made, I saw too that there was a great deal of tinsel about it.

I came in touch, then, with more such schools, and the more I came in touch, the more I began to understand that the foundation was good and splendid, if the children could be taught through the laws of nature—nature, consistent with human dignity, not nature that governs the beast. I felt instinctively from the way in which the children were being taught that, whilst they were being indifferently taught, the original teaching was conceived in obedience to this fundamental law. Since then, I have had the pleasure of coming across several of your pupils, one of whom had even made a pilgrimage to Italy and had received your personal blessings. I was looking forward to meeting the children here and you all and it was a great pleasure to me to see these children. I had taken care to learn something about these little children. I had a foretaste of what I saw here, in Birmingham, where there is a school between which and this there is a difference. But I also saw that there also human nature was struggling to express itself. I see the same thing here and it was a matter of inexpressible joy to me that from their childhood the children were brought to understand the virtue of silence, and how, in response to the whisper from their teacher, the children came forward one after another in that pindrop silence. It gave great joy to see all those beautiful rhythmic movements and, as I was watching those movements of the children, my whole heart went out to the millions of the children of the semi-starved villages of India, and I asked myself as my heart went out to those children, “Is it possible for me to give them those lessons and the training that are being given under your system, to those children”? We are conducting an experiment amongst the poorest of the children in India. I do not know how far the experiment will go. We have the problem of giving real vital education to these children of India’s hovels, and we have no material means.

We have to fall back upon the voluntary assistance of teachers, but when I look for teachers, they are very few, especially, teachers of the type wanted, in order to draw the best from the children through understanding, through studying their individuality and then putting the child on its own resources, as it were, on its own honour. And believe me from my experience of hundreds, I was going to say thousands, of children I know that they

have perhaps a finer sense of honour than you and I have. The greatest lessons in life if we would but stoop and humble ourselves, we would learn not from grown-up learned men, but from the so-called ignorant children. Jesus never uttered a loftier or a grander truth than when he said that wisdom cometh out of the mouths of babes. I believe it, I have noticed it in my own experience that, if we would approach babes in humility and in innocence, we would learn wisdom from them.

I must not take up your time. I have simply given you what is, at the present moment, agitating me, namely, the delicate problem, considered in human terms, of drawing out the best from these millions of children of whom I have told you. But I have learned this one lesson—that what is impossible with man is child's play with God and, if we have faith in that Divinity which presides over the destiny of the meanest of His creation, I have no doubt that all things are possible and in that final hope I live and pass my time and endeavour to obey His will. Therefore, I repeat that even as you, out of your love for children, are endeavouring to teach those children, through your numerous institutions, the best that can be brought out of them, even so I hope that it will be possible not only for the children of the wealthy and the well-to-do, but for the children of paupers to receive training of this nature. You have very truly remarked that if we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won't have the struggle, we won't have to pass fruitless idle resolutions, but we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at last all the corners of the world are covered with that peace and love for which, consciously or unconsciously, the whole world is hungering.

Young India, 19-11-1931

56. NOTE TO MIRZA ISMAIL

[On or after *October 28, 1931*]¹

This draft seems all right so far as it goes. You know that it does not cover all points. Please get the points they already have and work on them.

M. K. G.

From a photostat: G. N. 2188-3

57. INTERVIEW TO CHARLES PETRASCH AND OTHERS²

LONDON,

[*October 29, 1931*]³

Q. In your opinion, what is the method by which the Indian Princes, landowners, industrialists and bankers acquire their wealth?

A. At present by exploiting the masses.

Q. Can these people enrich themselves without exploiting the Indian workers and peasants?

A. Up to a certain point, yes.

Q. Have these people any social right to live better than the simple workers or peasants who perform the labour from which they draw their wealth?

A. No right. My social theory is that, although we are all born equal, that is to say, that we have a right to equal opportunities, nevertheless we have not all the same abilities. By the nature of things it is impossible that we should all be of an equal stature, that we should all have the same colour of skin, the same degree of intelligence; and consequently it is natural that some of us should be

¹ The note was written on a letter dated About October 28, 1931 from the addressee along with which he had sent a revised draft: *vide* "Letter to Mirza Ismail", 28-10-1931

² An account of the interview, originally published in *Le Monde*, 20-2-1932, was reproduced in the *Labour Monthly*. Petrasch says, he and his Indian friends "had drawn up a list of question which we wished to put to Gandhi before his departure from London" and that they "wrote down his replies as the interview went on." Mahadev Desai reported the interview in his "London Letter", published in *Young India*, 26-11-1931. The two reports which have slight verbal variations have been collated here.

³ Neither of the sources gives the date of the interview. But Mahadev Desai says, Sarojini Naidu's son, Baba, was among the interviewers. Gandhiji's diary has an entry under October 29, indicating the meeting with Baba and other youths.

more fitted than others to acquire material gain. Those who are capable wish to acquire more, and they utilize their abilities to this end. If they use their abilities in the best spirit, they will be working to the benefit of the people. Those people will be 'trustees' and nothing more.

I should allow a man of intelligence to gain more and I should not hinder him from making use of his abilities. But the surplus of his gains ought to return to the people, just as the earnings of the children, whose work goes to the common family fund. They are only the 'trustees' of their gains, and nothing else. I may be sadly disappointed in this, but that is the ideal which I uphold, and that is what is understood in the declaration of fundamental rights.

Q. Would you demand a higher reward for intellectual work?

A. In an ideal state no one can demand a higher reward for his intelligence. He who acquires more ought to use it for social ends.

We asked Gandhi if he did not believe that one of the principal causes of the poverty of the Indian peasants and workers lay in the appropriation of the fruit of their labour by the landlords and capitalists, since only a minute portion of the profits of the latter class goes to the Government. Gandhi agreed.

Q. Don't you think that the Indian peasants and workers are right in throwing themselves into a class struggle in order to secure their social and economic freedom and to rid themselves once and for all of the burden of supporting the parasite classes?

A. I myself am making the revolution for them without violence.¹

Q. By your movement for the reduction of rents in the U. P. you may ameliorate the condition of the peasants, but you do not strike at the root of the system.

A. Yes. But you can't do everything at one and the same time.

Q. What would be your attitude in face of a revolution of the peasants and workers against the Princes, landlords, capitalists and their ally, the British Government? And also, what would be your attitude if such a revolution occurred in an independent India, in an India under a Protectorate, in an India with Dominion Status, or in an India in no matter what kind of circumstances?

A. My attitudes would be to convert the better-off classes into trustees of what they already possessed. That is to say, they would keep the money, but they would have to work for the benefit of the people who procured them their wealth. And for doing this they

¹ The question and the answer that follow are taken from *Young India*.

would receive a 'commission'.

Q. How do you count on organizing this trusteeship? By persuasion?

A. Not solely by verbal persuasion. I will concentrate on my means.¹ I have been called the greatest revolutionary of my time. That is perhaps not correct, but I do believe that I am a revolutionary, a non-violent revolutionary. My weapon is 'non-co-operation'. No one can thrive without the collaboration, willing or forced, of the people.

Q. Would you support a general strike?

A. A General strike is a form of non-co-operation. It is not necessarily violent. I should take the lead of such a movement if it were peaceful and justified from all angles. Far from discouraging it I should even encourage it.

Q. Who constituted the capitalists trustees? Why are they entitled to a commission?²

A. They have the right to a 'commission' because the money is in their possession. No one compels them to be 'trustees'. I invite them to act as 'trustees'. I ask all owners of wealth to act as 'trustees', that is to say, not as wealth-owners by right, but as owners mandated by those whom they have exploited. I do not fix a figure for this 'commission', but I ask them only to demand what they consider they are entitled to.

For example, I shall ask the person who has a hundred rupees to keep fifty rupees and give the other fifty to the workers; but in the case of a person who has ten million rupees I shall ask him to retain, say, one per cent. So you see that my 'commission' would not be a fixed figure because that would result in grave injustice.

Q. The Maharajas and the landlords have allied themselves with the English, and you wish to make them 'trustees'. But your best followers are among the masses, who consider the Maharajas and landlords as enemies. What attitude would you take if the masses, coming to power, decided to put an end to these classes?

A. The masses at the present time do not regard the landlords and Princes as enemies. But it is necessary to make them aware of the wrong which is being done to them. I do not teach the masses to regard the capitalists as enemies, but I teach them that the latter are doing themselves harm. My followers have never told the people that the English or that General Dyer are bad, but that they are the victims of a system and that it is necessary to destroy the system and not the individual. That is why British officials can live with impunity among

¹ This sentence is from *Young India*.

² This question is from *Young India*.

the people, although the latter are so inflamed by their desire for liberty.

Q. If you wish to attack the system, there is no difference between a British capitalist and an Indian capitalist. Why, then, do you not apply your system of non-payment of taxes to those which are demanded from you by your own landed proprietors?

A. A landed proprietor is only an instrument of the system. It is not at all necessary to undertake a movement against them at the same time as against the English system. It is quite possible to distinguish between the two. We have told the people not to pay the zamindars because it is with this money that they pay the Government. But we are on good terms with the zamindars.

Q. According to Tagore, Bernard Shaw and others, the suppression of the landlords, capitalists and financiers in Russia and the establishment of the Soviets as the system of Government has led in a very short time to a considerable betterment in the social, economic and cultural conditions of the people. Now, it is to be noticed that Russia, at the time of the Revolution essentially an agricultural country, presented the same condition from a religious and cultural point of view as does India today. We should be curious to know your opinion on this matter.

A. In the first place I do not care about basing my opinions on those of others. That is why I am unable to form an appreciation of the condition of Russia. Moreover, believing for this is what the Soviet leaders themselves say that the Soviet system is founded on the employment of force, I have strong doubts of its final success.

Q. What is your concrete programme for giving to the peasants and workers the absolute power of deciding their own destiny?

A. My programme is a programme which I am having elaborated by the Congress. I am certain that it is resulting in the position of the peasants and workers being infinitely superior to what they have been able to have within human memory. I do not allude to their material condition. I mean the extraordinary awakening which affected them and their capacity for resisting injustice and exploitation.

Q. How do you propose to relieve the peasantry of their debt of five hundred crores?

A. No one knows the exact amount of debt. Such as it is, if the Congress gets the power, the Congress will undertake the scrutiny of the so-called obligations of the peasantry as it insists with regard to the obligations of the incoming Indian Government to be taken over from

the outgoing alien Government.

Equally characteristic was Gandhiji's reply to the next question, asking him why he had not demanded the inclusion in the R.T.C. of a representative of the Indian States' Subjects. It would not have been consistent with the dignity of the Congress to demand the inclusion of anybody in a Conference in the making of which it had power. He explained:

I could not plead on behalf of the Congress and the Congress, being an erstwhile rebel against the Government, could not consistently entreat for the inclusion of anybody in the Conference.

Q. What do you mean by 'machine'? Is not the charkha a machine? Is it that exploitation is not inherent in certain kinds of machines? or do you think it is the matter of using machines which makes them an instrument of exploitation?

A. The charkha and similar instruments are clearly machines, and from this you can gather my definition of machines. I am willing to admit that it is largely the abuse of the machine system which is responsible for the exploitation of the working class in the world.

Q. You speak of stopping the exploitation of the masses which implies the abolition of capitalism. Do you intend to suppress capitalism, and if so are you ready to deprive the capitalists of his surplus wealth so as to prevent him from restarting a new capitalism?

A. If I come to power, I shall certainly abolish capitalism but I shall not abolish capitals, and it follows that I shall not abolish the capitalists. I am convinced that the co-ordination of capital and labour is perfectly possible. I have seen it realized with success in certain cases and what is true in one case can become true for all. I do not consider capital in itself as an evil, no more than I consider the machine system in itself as an evil.

We then went on to speak about religious matters and we asked Gandhi if he thought that there existed a Hindu-Muslim problem. His reply was definitely in the affirmative. We then asked him if this problem was of major importance for the masses, and in that case if he thought that it could be remedied by the application of political measures, or by a compromise.

A. I do not think this problem exists among the masses, or at least, not to a very great degree. It is not possible to solve it by political measures, but it can be done by a compromise, for compromise is the essence of life, inasmuch as it does not touch the roots of the principles of life.

Q. In a federal India, with the Princes as autonomous rulers, if the subjects demanded the same elementary political rights as the people of British India and had recourse to civil disobedience, with a popular uprising to enforce their demands, would the federal forces be called to help the Princes in suppressing the uprising? And what would your attitude be in that case?

A. If I had the power I should never use it, or allow it to be used, for suppressing civil disobedience, no matter how or where it arose, for I hold civil disobedience to be a permanent law of our being entirely replacing violence, which is the law of the beast.

Q. Is it true that you withdrew your support from those popular movements which arose in the native states, movements with the object of demanding from the Princes the same which you demand from the British in British India?

Gandhi looked at us in surprise and gave the lie to this report.

We asked him what, in his opinion, was the difference between “independence” and “equality of collaboration in Empire matters”.

A. There is, and there is not, a difference between the two. That is to say, two independent states in an Empire can perfectly well be partners, collaborating in an imperial association. But obviously India is not in such a situation. Consequently, an association of India with Britain in the same Empire is a state, or rather a condition, which cannot be likened to independence, for a comparison can only take place between two things of the same kind. In this case the things are not of the same kind. Hence, if there is to be an association, on an equal footing, between Britain and India, the Empire must cease to exist.

At this, we retorted that the Lahore Congress made no mention of an association of equality within the limits of the Empire.

Gandhi replied that it was no use mentioning this in the Congress, but the question had been touched upon in the speeches.

Q. Does this equality of association envisage the withdrawal of the Viceroy?

A. The idea of “empire” must disappear entirely. But it is impossible for me to say definitely whether the idea of royalty must also be abolished. I am quite unable to say at present that the king of Great Britain will cease to be the king of India.

Q. Are you taking account of the fact that, since the time of the Lahore Congress, when the declaration of Independence displaced the compromise resolution adopted at Calcutta, the youth of India has believed that it was fighting for an independence India, in which there would no longer be a king? Is it not bad politics to tell the youth of India now that royalty will remain?

Gandhi, quite unruffled, replied that there was no question of bad faith. If the question had been put to him at Karachi, he would have given the same reply.

Q. Well, then, what difference is there between you and Malaviya, who was in the opposition at the Lahore Congress?

A. The difference is this, that Malaviya, still wished to give the Empire a chance, whereas I did not.

Q. Do you regard King George and his predecessors as usurpers in India?

A. I own that Great Britain and King George are usurpers of India.

We then asked him whether he thought it possible that a country which fought against exploitation could remain part of an Empire based on the exploitation of weaker races.

A. It is impossible, I would lend my heartiest support to the abolition of the British system of Government, as well as to the abolition of the capitalist system, but not to the abolition of capital and capitalists. If the British Empire does not stop exploiting the weaker races, we shall refuse to collaborate with it. Imperialist exploitation must disappear; collaboration will have to be free, and India at liberty, if she pleases, to sever the association.

Q. What were the reasons which led you to conclude a truce with Lord Irwin? Was it because, as we have been told, the Congress movement was only fighting on one wing, and if a truce were not arranged, it would be in grave danger of being strangled? And does that mean that you and the Congress were afraid that you would be crushed by the violence of the British Government? Would it not have been preferable, for the principle of "non-violence", that those of you who believe in the principle, should continue the fight and refuse to surrender to the violence of the British Government? Even if the movement thereby suffered a set-back, the reverse itself would have been its victory.

A. The suggestion of the impending collapse of our movement is entirely false. The movement was showing no signs of slackening. It is possible, and even probable, that in certain cases, it may have wavered, but I did not know of it, since I was in prison. But it would be going absolutely against the rulers of satyagraha (non-co-operation) to come to an agreement at the moment when the satyagrahis (followers of non-co-operation) were showing any lukewarmness. It is at that moment that they refuse to come to an agreement. I had no fear whatever that the movement was weakening nor was such a thought in my head when I put forward the idea of a truce. The idea of a truce was accepted on its own merits and it is contrary to the principles of satyagraha not to come to an agreement when suitable terms are offered.

Your opinion would have been right had it been through fear of suffering that we accepted the truce, but a satyagrahi would betray his ideal if he exposed his companions without reason to suffering. You would be perfectly right if we had accepted the truce from base or selfish motives.

Labour Monthly, March 1932, and *Young India*, 26-11-1931

58. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

LONDON,

October 30, 1931

I am grieved to hear of the attacks made on the lives of Mr. Villiers¹ and Mr. Durno². Ours is a difficult task and is rendered still more difficult by these senseless attacks. I am convinced that these attacks do no good, but do create harm by increasing the vindictive spirit on both sides. I know that I shall be reminded of such continuing provocations as the wicked barbarities in Chittagong, which have moved to indignation even the poet Rabindranath Tagore, and the wanton firing in the Detenus camp at Hijli.

My point, however, is that you must preserve the spirit of non-violence in spite of the greatest provocation. Our success lies through non-violence.

How I wish impatient young men would help the Congress programme, and thus hasten the day of deliverance, which consummation, I know, is as dear to them as to the Congress.

The Bombay Chronicle, 31-10-1931

59. SPEECH AT MEETING OF COMMONWEALTH OF INDIA LEAGUE³

LONDON,

October 30, 1921

He said, there was a great deal of ignorance among the English people as to the real state of affairs in India. There was also false knowledge spread about the history of India. He contended that most of the works that the British people read on

¹ E. Villers, President of the European Association, Calcutta, was shot at in his office on October 29. He received minor injuries.

² District Magistrate of Dacca

³ The meeting was held at the Central Hall, Westminster, with J.F. Horrabin in the chair.

Indian history were, in his opinion, one-sided. For instance, he pointed out the “Black Hole” of Calcutta. It had now been found that it was largely a matter of imagination. There was no such thing as the “Black Hole”. It had been found by Indian historians and other impartial writers that physically it was impossible to keep so many in that room.

I can give many instances from modern history, and later researches have shown as mere fables many things which at one time were supposed to be gospel truths. It was therefore the duty of institutions like the Commonwealth League to acquire true knowledge about India with reference to the past as well as the present.

There is also, I see, a conspiracy of silence with reference to the events happening in India. Barbarities, or, I may say, atrocities have been committed in Chittagong. Chittagong is a most important port and town in Bengal. It has a large population and there were, as there are today, large commercial interests. An officer was assassinated by a Bengali youth of about 16 years. By way of reprisal, shops were looted and atrocities were committed which aroused even men like the Poet Tagore to indignation.

Many of you may be aware that as a rule that ailing, infirm man never comes out into the public, but spends his time amidst books and dreams conducting a unique college and school at Santiniketan, experimenting with so many things. He can ill afford to go out, but he could not possibly rest himself on this occasion.

After Chittagong, we have the incident at Hijli, where are kept what are called detenus. Now, you may not know what is meant by a detenu. I shall tell you immediately. A detenu is a person kept in prison without a trial. He does not even know what the charges against him are. Simply on suspicion of being a terrorist or belonging to terrorist organization, he is detained, and detained indefinitely. In no sense is he an ordinary prisoner.

These Hilji detenus are supposed not to have behaved quite according to the proper standard—the standard of the guards on duty. I am giving you simply the newspaper reports or a bare summary of the evidence of the report of a recent inquiry. For their misbehaviour, these men were shot, two died and several others were injured.

About the Hijli atrocities the Poet is indignant. I have mentioned to you only the Poet’s name because he is a well-known figure. Besides him, many people of name and fame have attended meetings convened to condemn these wanton atrocities.

But here in this country, you do not know what things are happening in India and how they stir the people.

You are simply told by the British Press that the detenus are bad fellows. They are people who deserve what Government, in the name of law and order, are giving them.

Now I shall speak to you about the attacks on the lives of Mr. Villiers and Mr. Durno. They are deplorable and, from my standpoint, disgraceful and most embarrassing to what I represent. However, I cannot understand why so much is made of these incidents. I should ask and tell you frankly that to you, the British public, other incidents such as Chittagong and Hijli should also be made much of.

You cannot ignore the fact that there is repression on the part of the Indian Government, and as a result there is terrorism on the part of those who have run amok, who have lost what I may call their balance. They are out for vengeance and are determined to take some lives.

Now, no one can claim more than I do that most severely rule out what they do. I hate violence, particularly when it is committed by my own people. It interrupts my experiment. It distrusts my mission of non-violence, which I have been making for the last so many years.

Although these young men do not belong to the Congress or accept its programme, yet a situation of such a character makes matters worse for me. This shows that the Congress is not able to exercise sufficient influence on these people to prevent them from doing mad things.

Things such as have happened in Chittagong and Hijli would give rise to open, widespread rebellion in any other country, but in my country things do not move so swiftly as that, for two reasons.

Believe me, I sincerely think my people are too paralysed to offer resistance to violence and, for the last ten years the gospel of non-violence which I have been preaching has become a disturbing factor to them. Non-violence has given rise to a great awakening of the people; that is, in spite of these grave provocations, the newspapers and the Press here do not care to take notice of the real situation. They ought to do what Russell did at the time of the Crimean War.¹

¹ Sir William Howard Russell in his report to *The Times* from Crimea, exposed mismanagement of the Crimean War and inspired the work of Florence Nightingale.

Unfortunately, we have no Russell today who will give the English public a true state of the affairs, nor have the newspapers a desire to give the whole truth and nothing but the truth. They are persisting in giving an incomplete account, a wholly incorrect picture, suited to their interests.

The Viceroy has passed one more Ordinance. Do you know what is an Ordinance? An Ordinance is passed over the head of the Legislature by the Viceroy in exercise of his special jurisdictionary power. This Ordinance gives the widest powers to the police to arrest people without trial and detain them. This is done as if the powers already enjoyed were not enough. I personally think that these fresh powers are not necessary, but the Indian Government, shall I say, goes mad when this kind of terrorism takes place. This is not known as reprisal but as repression. This has commenced now and will continue for long. In spite of the repression, the terrorists have become active, fearless and, I might say, foolhardy. They dare to anything. They have sacrificed life in advance. They think their lives in the service of the country are not worth the purchase.

The only way of preventing Chittagong and Hijli is to let India manage her own affairs. Let India mismanage her affairs, as you have a right to manage or mismanage her affairs. You have recently done it. You hopelessly mismanaged affairs. You place right men in wrong places, wrong men in right places. It is a game of seesaw. Commit mistakes and you can correct them by experience. It is a fine game (Loud laughter). Human nature is like that. But what is the situation in India? We cannot manage our own affairs. Today India is one vast prison-house. We are prisoners. You Englishmen and Englishwomen are our jailors. You have to realize your responsibility, that just as we have to render an account of ourselves, you as jailors will also have to render an account of yourselves.

So what does it show? It shows our unnatural relationship. I must tell you that this unnatural relationship must be ended soon. We Indians have to do nothing but to attain our freedom. God willing, we shall take our freedom from unwilling hands. These few days of grace, brought about by that noble Englishman, may soon be over. He thought we had drunk enough of the cup of suffering and brought us out of the prison walls. He negotiated with us, as a result of which there was a settlement, which made it possible for the Congress to be represented at the Round Table Conference.

It would have been wrong of me as a satyagrahi not to accept his offer.

Now I am telling you some home truths. It is better, really better, to end this thing that exists in India. But let me tell you that it is not your fault. It is the result of my limitations. We have not suffered enough. I shall be content to go away to India to invite my countrymen to go through the fiery ordeal once again.

For me Chittagong and Hijli are beacon lights. They are pointers, inviting me to hurry to India. But I shall not leave the Conference abruptly in anger.

That does not mean that I never become angry. But God has given me sufficient strength to suppress that anger. In any case, anger or no anger, I am not going to leave these shores because of these things. I shall wait, watch, pray and plead, but I keep in reserve for myself that, if the Round Table Conference fails and does not give what the Congress demands, what the Congress is entitled to have, I shall do what we did not a long time back.

I am hoping that we shall not be found wanting in that in the time to come. It will be your turn then to wake up England.

Therefore try to understand from now what the Congress means, what Chittagong means, what Hijli means.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 4-11-1931

60. SPEECH AT MEETING OF COMMONWEALTH OF INDIA LEAGUE¹

LONDON,
October 30, 1931

The British people, added Mahatma Gandhi, should not hasten to condemn Indians after reading one-sided reports in their press. He wanted them to know the other side. He did not, however, ask them to accept the Congress version or any Indian version, but to seek to find the truth without blind acceptance. Mahatma Gandhi turning to the Chairman² said:

Till now you had too many irons in the fire. Since you are not returned to Parliament you will, I hope, have more time. As a true

¹ This is the concluding part of the speech reproduced in "Speech at Meeting of Commonwealth of India League", 30-10-1931

² J. F. Horabin

friend of India, your constituency, I have to doubt, is India. I am unable to express to you sufficiently our appreciation of the services that you and your League have rendered to us. I have opened out my heart to you, even at the risk of taking up so much of your time, because I want you to know what is uppermost in my mind.

Answering questions, Mr. Gandhi said he was not afraid of the Afridis, since the strength that enabled them to end British domination was sufficient to keep other invaders away. The Afridis had no grudge against Indians.

If we are able to give battle to powerful Britain, we can turn the same weapons against the Afridis. Besides, the Afridis are not savages, nor Englishmen so sober and cultured that we can fight only the latter. I have seen Englishmen savage during my experience of the South African War.

Asked whether he would not print cheap literature to distribute in England, Mr. Gandhi said that if he did that it would be discounted in advance. He said that was the true task of the Commonwealth of India League.

Your League should broadcast the literature; we can only supply you with genuine information. Stead¹ prayed in St. Paul's for reverses to British arms during the Boer War—you can do likewise.

In answer to a question on the Hindu-Muslim problem, Mahatma Gandhi said that the Congress had solved it.

But the British Government throws in our face the opinions of those who disagree with us. I have already had the audacity to accuse the Indian Government of acting like a wedge between the two palms of India.

The Round Table Conference is a packed Conference, not one of elected representatives, and I will not be surprised if it fails. Your Government is anxious to hold a chain round our neck, but we shall strike a simultaneous blow at this chain and our own disunion.

The Indian News, 3-11-1931

¹ W. T. Stead

61. CABLE TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

October 31, 1931

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI

BARDOLI (INDIA)

BENGAL REPRESSION¹ OTHER THINGS DISTURB ME.
REALIZE HELPLESSNESS HERE. NEVERTHELESS REGARD
PRESENCE HERE NECESSARY AND THEREAFTER TRAVEL-
LING CONTINENT. THIS MAY MEAN INABILITY
REACH HOME BEFORE MIDDLE JANUARY. SEND
CONSIDERED OPINION.²

BAPU

From a photostat : S.N. 18211

¹ The repression (*vide* the preceding item) had been launched under the Bengal Criminal Law Ordinance No. 9, 1931, as amended to give greater power to the Bengal Government.

² Referring to this Vallabhbhai Patel later cabled : "Working Committee considered your cable. On facts available here feel that your further continuing Conference unnecessary and liable be misunderstood but in view your definite opinion that presence necessary apparently based on facts circumstances better known to you Committee leaves final decision to you. Situation here growing more critical. Government attitude generally much worse. Conditions Bengal worsening. Frontier Province repression increasing. All activities in some places there being stopped. United Provinces early non-payment campaign seems inevitable. Withdrawal from Bardoli inquiry may soon become necessary owing most unsatisfactory procedure and other reasons. Early return desirable. Long Continental tour would have prejudicial effect."

62. CABLE TO SAILENDRA NATH GHOSE¹

October 31, 1931

GHOSE

31 UNION SQUARE

NEW YORK

YOUR CABLE. REGRET UNABLE VISIT AMERICA. HAVE
EXPLAINED FULLY MRS. GHOSE.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 18209

63. SPEECH AT FRIENDS' HOUSE²

LONDON,

October 31, 1931

1. I should shortly say it³ is intended to bear the dictionary meaning, but in the Congress mandate it is said it does not exclude termination of partnership at will by either party; in order not to create any confusion and not to be uncertain, mandate mentions that. It includes the three controls, subject to such adjustment as are absolutely necessary in the interest of India. A nation which has been a subject nation and another which has been an exploiting nation cannot easily become partners. But for the fact that our struggle is non-violent, independence and partnership are incompatible and complete severance would have been necessary.

2. Canada is not considered to be in partnership with Great Britain. It is a daughter State. They represent the same civilization same mode of life of course all humanity meets in the end, otherwise ours is a distinct civilization. Independence was mentioned so that there may be no idea lingering in our mind of a subject nation. Then it is used to distinguish Dominion Status. I was for it

¹ This was in reply to the addressee's cable of 30-10-1931 saying : "Thanks letter wife. Burdwan arrived launching vigorous anti-Gandhi campaign supported interested parties with practical appreciation importance American opinion. If my God same God guiding you then search inner conscience and realize with me way clear your visit. . ." S.N. 18208.

² Mahadev Desai also reported briefly this meeting with the Quakers in his "London Letter", published in *Young India*, 19-11-1931.

³ "Partnership"

once, but when lawyers contended against me and said it was a higher status, I said to myself that I was certainly for no lower status. I said if Dominion Status is lower, I was for independence.

3. Separate not from British Commonwealth—if India means to be independent in reality it must be complete severance from the Empire. It is an Empire because there are Princes, vassal States. Great Britain should cease to subjugate all these Princes. It means extinction of the Empire and the Empire spirit. I should not associate with any nation which believed in exploitation and sustained its commerce by force. A tremendous principle is at stake. We are eager not only to get rid of exploitation but to prevent India from becoming a highly industrialized nation and becoming a menace to the world. We want the masses to feel that they do not want any dominion on any nation or any groups of individuals even. There should be vital equality between nations, and even if it took years to make this idea mature, we would wander in the wilderness to get them. This is no verbal jugglery, but a fundamental yearning of human nature.

Q. For some years Britain would continue certain subject territories like Gold Coast. Would Mr. Gandhi object?

A. I would certainly object. India would certainly aspire after influencing British policy. Supposing there came a cry from West Coast or Swaziland, India would feel that it was a partner . . .¹ I do not want India to be an engine of oppression. I am dreaming of a time when India would be a check on aggrandizement by other nations. But I should not immediately sever the connection, though I know that Zulus, Swazis are being corrupted and exploited. It is a policy which is radically wrong. To be able to call these dominions should be no matter for pride. There is no use your saying that, whilst they were Crown Colonies, you do for them everything, and when they become responsible, you would do nothing.

Q. Partnership means economic alliance or does it presuppose a common British Crown?

A. That question has been agitating me. There is a Crown, but how far I should be linked with the Crown I do not know. I should argue it out with friends. It is a solid and good question as to what connection India would have with the Crown. How the Council would be defined is more a matter of phraseology than of moral difficulty.

Q. Termination of partnership like termination of alliances between nations—

¹ A few words here are not clear.

on what terms?

A. If it is not profitable for Britain, it must retire. I would wish it to be in perpetuity. Common relations would be contractual relations. For constitutional partnership I have not fixed any terms. It does involve giving of a notice for dissolution.

4. I have agreed yet to no safeguards. When I have been cornered, I have said safeguards for such I.C.S. members as you will keep, such military officers as you keep. For we want to go before the world as a solvent nation. We should be sure of what we take over. . .¹ I have been cruelly misrepresented as repudiating liabilities. A lurid picture of widows being ruined who had taken loans, etc., was cruelly untruthful. That party could not be harmed in any shape or form. Great Britain's honour, prestige and everything is concerned as partner in all these liabilities. All that happens in a commercial business should happen between Britain and India also. We should satisfy creditors that the liabilities we take over should be discharged. There is a third safeguard— existing interests of Europeans in India. . .² Every legitimate interest will be legally and lawfully protected. There is no desire for racial discrimination. We have been fighting it in South Africa and elsewhere. But it is one thing and guarding the nation against ruinous competition is another thing. There is a Swedish match factory combine which has descended upon India as a blight and threatens ruin of match factories. They have secured handsome terms from Government. They have acquired fine land and have even penetrated the Andamans. I do not object to this because it is a Swedish combine. I should have objected to it if it was an Indian combine. Under the partnership there would be a favoured nation clause, with outbeing charged with racial discrimination.

5. The adjustment would be adjustment naturally due between outgoing and incoming firms. . .³ If Britain wants to do the thing it must do it decently. Safeguards do not in any way derogate from complete independence.

HORACE ALEXANDER : Schuster suggested assurance of establishment of a Reserve Bank and raising a new internal loan.

6. GANDHIJI : We would have to do it. We want the Reserve Bank ourselves, but there are no reserves to fall back upon. No gold

¹ A few words here are not clear.

² Some portions here are not clear.

³ *ibid*

reserve. I have given you an inkling. Partnership at will. Period I do not know.

7. No one came by right of election—none by invitation. If the Prime Minister wanted to bar my entry he could do so. An M.P. cannot be put out. No procedure is necessary to put one out. It is an embarrassing position. I have come as a guest of the nation and must walk warily and I cannot tell you how warily I am walking. . . .¹ I have a tremendous moral problem before me. I have an invitation to attend the King's party. I am feeling so heart-sick and sore upon happenings in India that I should not like to go. If I had come as an elected representative, I should have had not no hesitation. Here is the function which is social [but] has a political nature, but I am doing nothing hastily. I put myself in touch with Whitehall. I am a man who every moment considers the morality of the thing, not its legality.

The Conference is packed. The other representatives have been chosen by the Viceroy. His conception was faulty. The selection was his and it was not possible for him to come to an unerring judgment. I can demonstrate to you how wicked some of these things have been, how much wire-pulling has been done. We would certainly have captured the Mahasabha. I would have been the only elected representative of the untouchables. I would be selling their birthright if I lent myself to this vile scheme of separate representation. Moonje is a friend of mine, but he is a reactionary. Would Congress have allowed the Native States' subjects' rights to be sold away? It is diabolical thing for them to say that they represent their own people also. It is a fatal flaw in the formation of the Conference that Princes should come here in a double capacity. There is a States' People's Conference and it is held back under my iron rule. I have been holding them back and though they are men of great status and ability. I have asked them to be satisfied with their present position. But this shows to you that it is wholly unrepresentative. Today the communalists occupy the front pages of newspapers. I would at once say to Mussalmans and Sikhs : take what you can. It is today the dream of a visionary. therefore, I have suggested three things : (1) I have put before the R.T.C. the Congress Scheme framed by a Committee of Hindus, Mussalmans and Sikhs. They met all leading Mussalmans and leading Sikhs. (2) Otherwise private arbitration. (3) Failing that, a judicial tribunal. The fourth thing is one with which I

¹ A few words here are not clear.

cannot associate myself, viz., asking Government to suggest a solution. It would be selling the country. For no Government in the nature of things would suggest a solution unfavourable to themselves. The utmost I said that could be done is to go to British Courts of Law, Non-Hindu, Non-Muslim Judges or Members of Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. These are concrete alternative proposals. If Government cannot summon courage, it is doomed to failure. Government put themselves into a tight corner by suggesting that nothing can be done without settlement. What has Defence to do with communal settlement? No favoured minorities but pampered minorities. Congress foolishly lent itself to a communal settlement and it cannot be easily undone. How can I go out of an express train and jump into an aeroplane? I shall only be falling to my destruction.¹ . . . I have given you an outline of what is agitating me. You may think the Congress incapable of bargaining away any minorities' rights to win swaraj. The Congress considers it bad for Mussalmans, Sikhs, Hindus and bad for the nation to give them separate electorates. But it is worst for untouchables. Untouchables are above this. For me who feels with them and knows their life, it is equal to killing them if separate electorates are given them. They are in the hands of superior classes. They can suppress them completely and wreak vengeance upon the untouchables who are at their mercy.

I may be opening out my shame to you. But, in the existing circumstances, how can I invite utter destruction for them? I would not be guilty of that crime. Dr. Ambedkar, able as he is, has unhappily lost his head over this question. He sees blood wherever Hinduism is. If he was a real representative, I should have withdrawn. Today he cannot coherently think of the problem. I repudiate his claim to represent them. I am the representative of the depressed classes. Get a mandate and I may not [*sic*] be elected but Ambedkar cannot be returned. The Congress Scheme covers the interest of minorities completely. One line or clause I would insert—Judicial Tribunal. I said I proposed this clause and I would see that it was carried.

I must take the other end. I should resist separate representation for Europeans on other grounds. They are the ruling race, they were able to shadow an Indian Governor and make his life a hell. Sinha's Secretariat shadowed him. His very servants were acting as his spies. He died of a broken heart. I had seen him at the height of his

¹ A few words that follow are not clear.

power. I saw him when he was utterly broken. I said smilingly to Sir Hubert Carr, "why not come to us for votes? You may be sure that a man like Mr. Andrews would always be returned by an Indian electorate."¹ Carr said Andrews would not be a fit representative of Englishmen, Mr. Andrews no more represents the English mind than an Indian does. "Well, if the Englishman must stay there, he must represent the Indian mind. Lord Salisbury's black man Dadabhai Naoroji was elected by the suffrage of Central Finsbury."

Then Anglo-Indians. I know them much better than Col. Gidney does. I have seen them weep before me. They come to me and say, "We are bastards. Englishmen do not recognize us; Indians would not adopt us." I say, "Come to us, discard your tinsel and we will adopt you." I saw a fat man—an Anglo-Indian—he could not bear the idea that his mother was an Indian woman. they would be pariahs and untouchables with a separate electorate under National Government. Sir Henry Gidney may be all right but others won't be knighted. But if they would come and claim the suffrage of our people they are quite welcome—Kumarappa—Joseph Kumarappa²—can turn Gujarat round his fingers by dint of service.

HORAGE ALEXANDER : You would have constituted the Conference by election. Just how tell us?

G. An orientation should have been defined. There are telegrams from Jains—also Lingayats. If you are to humour these so-called manufactured orientation, how can you do so?

The Congress Scheme recognizes (1) Weightage; (2) Sind [as a] separate province if it can be economically sustained; (3) Joint electorates and adult suffrage; (4) Reservations for minorities and weightage; (5) Guarantees-cum-rights and civic liberties for all communities;

Q. Is it not a fact that the majority of Mussalmans [do not] consent to have responsibility in Centre if the majority question cannot be settled?

A. I say whether they attend or not, the Conference must finish deliberations. If British Government wants to part with power, its progress must not be allowed to be blocked by even the Congress. If a proper scheme is prepared, what is the meaning of a party resisting the thing? After all, the Congress represents

¹ This sentence is from *Young India*.

² Dr. J. C. Kumarappa

Mussalmans also. Judicial tribunal composed of Parsis, Christians or all of them but not of Hindus or Muslims. It is foolish, tantalizing, humiliating—this playing a waiting game.

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND : Would a formula in Act of Parliament, indicating wish of the people of India to be separated, or not separated, do?

A. Yes; but the partnership must be a strong bond and not subject to be torn to pieces by disruptive forces.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary, 1931. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

64. LETTER TO REGINALD REYNOLDS¹

[October/November, 1931]

MY DEAR REGINALD,

Just a line in reply to your question whilst I am sitting at the Conference. I favour preference to Lancashire to help a partner nation in its distress, assuming of course that partnership was possible. why should Japan complain that I prefer a partner in distress? If India becomes partner instead of remaining subject, there is no Empire. You must relate all my acts to ahimsa. In ahimsa there is no room for immoral expedience.

Of course must meet before I leave.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat : C.W. 4541. Courtesy : Swarthmore College, Philadelphia

¹ The addressee, in *To Live in Mankind*, says : "It was a reply to another critical query relating to policy justifying economic concessions which I had wrongly attributed to lack of firmness on his part. His letter made it clear that he did not offer these concessions from weakness, but out of sympathy for the British people, of whose economic problems he had learnt a good deal. He had been especially interested in the conditions of the Lancashire textile workers."

65. SPEECH AT PEMBROKE COLLEGE¹

CAMBRIDGE,

[November 1, 1931]²

The partnership has to be on equal terms. It should not be 'subjection' in glorified language. That means that the present relationship must be completely transformed though the connection may be retained, and that connection should be wholly and solely for the benefit of mankind. India by herself has no capacity to exploit the nations of the earth, but with Great Britain's assistance she can do it. Now the partnership must mean that exploitation shall cease, and, if Great Britain should not desist from it, India should sever the connection. All that is wanted is a fundamental change in the British policy of exploitation. Britain cannot thereafter boast that she has a strong navy guarding the maritime highways and all her overseas commerce.

What about the South African possession? I would not insist on a transformation of Britain's relations with them, as a condition precedent to our partnership. But I should certainly strive to work for the deliverance of those South African races which, I can say from experience, are ground down under exploitation. Our deliverance must mean their deliverance. But, if that cannot come about, I should have no interest in a partnership with Britain, even if it were of benefit to India. Speaking for myself, I would say that a partnership, giving the promise of a world set free from exploitation, would be a proud privilege for my nation and I would maintain it for ever. But India cannot reconcile herself in any shape or form to any policy of exploitation and, speaking for myself, I may say that, if ever the Congress should adopt an imperial policy, I should sever my connection with the Congress.

But would not the Congress be satisfied with a status equal to South Africa or Canada, for the time being at any rate? I see the danger of saying 'yes'. If you visualize a higher or superior

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". According to Desai this is a condensation of the talk which lasted several hours. Present at the meeting were Ellis Barker, Lowes Dickinson, Dr. John Murray, Dr. Baker and Evelyn Wrench.

² The date is according to Gandhiji's diary, which also says that the meeting was held in the morning.

status towards which we have then to work, I should say 'no'. But if it is a status beyond which we have not to aspire, I should say 'yes'. It should be a status which the ordinary man in the street should understand to be a radically different status from the present. I would, therefore, not accept a transition period during which we may have to be satisfied with a lower status. The Congress will not be satisfied with a state lower than the best.

But what about the Princes? They do not want independence. I know they don't, and they cannot, as they are the mouthpiece of the British Government. But there are others too who think that they cannot live except under the protection of British arms. For me, I cannot accept anything short of a complete control of the army. If all other leaders of the land were to accept a compromise on the army question, I would say I would rather stay out, but would not resist it and make a call to the people to suffer. If there were such a large step taken which would ultimately and quickly lead to the final thing, I would tolerate it, though I would not endorse it.

But, if you say the British units will never serve under the national Government, it would mean to me a fatal objection to any connection with Great Britain. We do not want, we cannot possibly tolerate, an army of occupation. No scheme of Indianization can serve any useful purpose inasmuch as, until the last moment, the command will be British, and the same doubts about our capacity to take over charge will be expressed as are expressed today. The real responsible Government can come when Britishers begin to trust India and her ability. Chaos can be got over only when Britain has a living conviction that it has done wrong to India and should now, by way of undoing the wrong, keep British troops at the disposal of Indian ministers. You are afraid that British soldiers may be cut to pieces under the foolish orders of Indian ministers. Well, I ask you not to forget that, during the Boer War, there came a time when British generals were described in England as asses and British soldiers as heroes. If British generals erred, Indian ministers too may err. The Indian ministers would certainly discuss everything with the Commander-in-Chief and other military experts, but the final authority and responsibility will certainly have to be the ministers'. Let the Commander-in-Chief then resign or obey.

The idea of my paying for freedom by blood startles you. Well, I, who claim to know the conditions of India through and through, know that India is dying by inches. The land revenue

exactions mean morsels forcibly taken out of the mouths of the peasants' children. It is an indescribable agony through which the peasant is passing. In order to put that condition right, a transition stage is not the remedy. Do the British Government understand transition as I mean it? Would they keep the British soldiers to help us, i.e., only in our interests? If so, we would have them and pay them according to our means. But, if the position honestly held is that we are incapable, and the control should not be relaxed, then, if God wills it, we must go through the purgatory. I have not talked of rivers of other people's blood flowing, for I know that the party of violence is dying out. But I have talked of Gangesful of our own blood—a pure voluntary act of self-immolation to face the situation. It would be good for India to go through that purgatory if it must. Personally, I do not think there can be such communal riots as you fear. Ninety per cent of the population of India is rural and the strife is confined only to the ten per cent urban population. I would count that bloodshed as of no consequence beside this slow ignominious death which carries no glory with it. This, of course, assumes that India is being starved to death by having to pay the phenomenal expenditure for a foreign army of occupation and the most expensive civil service in the world. Even Japan, which is armed to the teeth, does not pay for her army to the extent that we have to do.

My quarrel with you is this. I know that every honest Englishman wants to see India free, but is it not tragic for them to feel that the moment British arms are removed there would be invasions and internecine strife? Well, as against that, my contention is that it is the British presence that is the cause of internal chaos, because you have ruled India according to the principle of divide and rule. Because of your benevolent intentions you feel that the harrow does not hurt the toad. In the nature of things, it cannot but hurt. It is not that you are in India in response to our invitation. You must realize that there is sullen discontent everywhere and everyone says, "We do not want foreign rule." And why this over-anxiety about how we would fare without you? Go to the pre-British period. History does not record a larger number of Hindu-Muslim riots. In fact, the history of my own times shows a darker record. The fact is that the British arms are powerless to prevent riots, though they are powerful enough to punish the guilty and the innocent. We hear of no riots in the reign of even Aurangzeb. As for the invasions, the worst invasion left the villages untouched. There were periodic visitations of the

plague. If to avoid that kind of plague, which after all may be a cleansing process, we should have to maintain an army of doctors and starve ourselves to pay for them, we would far rather have the cleansing process. Take the occasional inroads of tigers and lions. Would we submit to the erection of castles and fortresses at the expense of millions of rupees rather than fight the beasts straight and take the risks? Pardon me, we are not such a nation of absolute cowards who would always run away from risk. Better that we were wiped off the face of the earth than remain alive sustained by foreign bayonets. No, you must trust us to know how to patch up our quarrels and to deal with invasions. India, which has survived many invasions, and showed a culture and a civilization unsurpassed by any on earth, need not be pitied and kept in cotton-wool.

Young India, 19-11-1931

66. SPEECH AT INDIAN MAJLIS

CAMBRIDGE,

November 1, 1931

The attitude of the delegates to the Round Table Conference was not representative of the attitude of the people of India. If the Round Table Conference failed, civil resistance would certainly be revived in India. It would not occur immediately. Civil resistance was a movement under control and would be revived only after the Congress had formally decided to do so after due consideration.

So said Mr. Gandhi speaking at a meeting of the Indian Majlis at Cambridge.

Mr. Gandhi recalled that he addressed the Majlis in 1908.¹

In reply to a question, Mr. Gandhi said that his solution was the Congress solution, but as that was unacceptable to the Muslims, he proposed either private arbitration or arbitration by a judicial tribunal. If those two alternatives were not accepted, only time could produce a settlement.

Failure to effect a settlement of the Punjab question arose from common distrust among Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. He warned the hearers against exaggerating the importance of the Punjab question.²

Don't think that paralysis has possessed the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh masses in India. Had it been the case, I should not have been here to represent the biggest organization in India. But the

¹ This seems to be an error for 1909, when Gandhiji visited Britain as member of a deputation.

² What follows has been extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter" published in *Young India*.

stupidity is confined to the present company. Present company meaning not this House, but the Indian delegates in the Round Table Conference, including, of course, myself.

Q. Why does not the unemployed rural population go to the towns and join some industry?

A. Even the Royal Commission on Agriculture did not suggest this remedy.

Q. Could you please tell us how an Englishman going to India can co-operate with Indians and serve India?

A. Well, the first thing he should do is to see Charlie Andrews and ask him what he did and what he has gone through to serve India. He has dedicated every minute of his life to the service of India, and done the work of several thousand Englishmen. Let the Englishman, therefore, have his first lessons from him. Then, he must go, not with a view to teach, but to learn how to serve India, and if he approaches his task in that spirit, he will certainly teach. But, in doing so, he will efface him-self and merge himself with the Indians, as for instance, Mr. Stokes has done in Simla Hills. Let them all identify themselves, with the Indians, and try to help them. What cannot real love do? Let all those who are fired with love for India certainly go to India. They are needed there.

The Hindu, 2-11-1931, and *Young India*, 19-11-1931

67. STATEMENT AT THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE¹

LONDON,

November 2, 1931

Being silent I would like to express my dissent in writing from the draft report in the following among other matters.

I adhere to the view that one chamber would be the best for the purpose intended to be served. But, subject to certain vital modifications, I would be prepared to support Sir Mirza Ismail's proposal if the body contemplated by him becomes an advisory body.

The Congress is wholly opposed to the special representation of

¹ The Committee had concluded consideration of paragraphs 1-51 of its Third Report which were adopted with a few alterations. Since this was Gandhiji's day of silence, he made the statement in writing which was read out by Lord Sankey.

the interests of landlords, European and Indian commerce and labour. Representatives of these interests should appeal to the common electorate for their election.

The Congress is similarly opposed to the nomination of members. But specialists should have facility given to them to address the chamber on required occasions.

There is much I would like to say with reference to the paragraphs about the States especially on the matter of the representation of the subjects of the States. But I reserve my opinion for the time being.

I adhere to the proposal I had the privilege of making on indirect election or, rather, election through delegates using the villages as units. This scheme is based on adult suffrage to which the Congress is pledged.

M. K. GANDHI

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, p. 334

68. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS¹

LONDON,

November 3, 1931

Gandhiji's programme depends entirely on the situation in India. Discussing this, he remarked:

I expect to spend the Xmas on the Continent or India. Everything depends on the situation in India. I am not my own master, but a willing slave of the whole nation.

The Hindustan Times, 7-11-1931

¹ Gandhiji made the statement at the conclusion of his talk with Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald which lasted from 10.15 a.m. to 11 a.m.

69. *SPEECH AT CHILDREN'S HOUSE*¹

BOW,

Tuesday [November 3, 1931]

He said that if the children received the right kind of training and if the education was what it really should be—to bring out what was best in them—we could have great hopes of the future generation.

The general situation at the present moment is so gloomy and the only ray of light in the gloom is through the children who, profiting from our mistakes and bitterness and jealousies, can leave the world a better place for their being in it.

The Manchester Guardian, 4-11-1931

70. *EXTRACTS FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING*²

LONDON,

November 4, 1931

MR. GANDHI: There is a reference to “treaties of cession”. I do not know whether Sir Samuel Hoare can give any information on this. Will these treaties be secret treaties or open treaties?

SIR SAMUEL HOARE: Lord Reading says that he thinks there are no private treaties of any kind.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: That is so.

MR. GANDHI: But will the new treaties all be public?

LORD READING: I think, in a matter of this character, when you are dealing with rights which have to be ceded, that those who are interested in the Constitution, and who are framing it, and who are taking part in it, and who are co-operating with it, must know what the treaty obligations are between the States and the Government of India. . . .

MR. GANDHI: Would you add here that the Congress opinion is, or

¹ This was at the annual meeting of the Children's House at Bow, run under the auspices of the Kingsley Hall Settlement. Gandhiji also attended a party held before the meeting.

² The Committee was considering paragraphs 52-66 of its Third Report, which dealt with the Federal Court.

it is contended on behalf of the Congress, that the Federal Supreme Court should be the final Court of Appeal?'

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session) : Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, p. 337

71. SPEECH AT INDIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

LONDON,

November 4, 1931

I really do not know why I was brought here at all. Some of the medical friends came to me and said that, as I had gone to the students, I should accept this invitation. Also, I might say I was almost compelled to come. I have only five minutes. Of this scheme² that has been expounded you are the best judges. I really can pronounce no opinion whatsoever.

The Manchester Guardian, 5-11-1931

72. SPEECH AT MEETING OF POSTAL WORKERS' UNION

LONDON,

November 5, 1931

I was almost going to address you as comrades. Because the Congress is trying to undertake in India all life and activities, so we have labour unions, postal unions and several other unions taking up the Congress [work]³ . . . I know something of the lives of post men in India. Before I come to that, I must tell you what a pleasure it was to come. It was your enthusiasm that brought me, especially the story of your work for the Leper Asylum. I felt irresistibly drawn to you and was so pleased to find that postmen could take such living interest in the oppressed humanity in India. I felt it was too good to be true. This visit of mine is a compliment to you and I congratulate Mr. Cardinal. This work⁴ done in India really touches only the fringe of it. Life in India is constituted quite differently from life

¹ The Committee had just concluded consideration of paragraph 58 which said that the right to refer matters to the Court for an advisory opinion must be vested exclusively in the Governor-General, "acting, no doubt in the normal course on his Ministers' advice". Shafa'at Ahmed Khan, Mohammad Shafi, Jinnah and others had opposed the inclusion of the last phrase which seemed to limit the power of the Governor-General and the Chairman had agreed to omit it.

² This concerned the Indian Hospital in London.

³ A few words that follow are not clear.

⁴ *ibid*

in the West and we have not in India anything like State-regulated charity. People know the value of charity themselves—so in India philanthropy of people finds its way in a healthy channel. I cannot say that all charity¹. . . is wisely exercised. You will find in streets lepers staring you in the face and it is difficult to pass through these people to go to a leper asylum. Some have become rich and some are exploiters. In the midst of this position [workers have] dropped from the West. It is one of the few things that has come as a boon from the West.

There is no comparison between your postal employees and ours. Your officers give me joy, but there is nothing that I can offer you by way of comparison. Our men are wretchedly paid people (10/6 per month), exceedingly hard-worked men. Among a few organizations that are ably conducted, this Postal Department is one². . . Postal union exists merely to ventilate grievances. I dare not suggest to my postmen to copy you and to subscribe for lepers. Whilst I congratulate you upon the noble work you are doing for lepers, I would like you to take more and more interest in your fellow-workers in India. They have not got compact organizations. They are struggling to live—and they do not know how to express themselves precisely writing in a foreign tongue. It will be a matter of charity to these younger fellow-workers of yours in India to go to the substance of those matters. You are capable of varying interests. Give of the plenty that God has blessed you with.

You know what the post office does for us—it does censoring work. I have come here to take complete independence for my country in the dictionary sense of the word. Some laugh at me—look at this man coming from a nation so utterly divided against itself. That is because you are being taught false history that if Britain withdrew there would be chaos, darkness invisible, and there is an instance—Kashmir. The Maharaja had to invite the over-worked English soldiers to go and impose order. The whole thing seems to me to stage-managed. I do not mean that the whole trouble was fomented and soldiers were to be asked for at particular hours. No, but it is the policy of divide and rule. The Maharaja could do nothing. You do not know what it is to be under a foreign yoke and to be a subject race—not holding arms. If that is the condition of the man in the street, condition of the Princes is worse. They cannot do as they choose. They have 21 [gun] salutes, palaces, but they are

¹ In connection with leprosy

² A few words that follow are not clear.

prisoners in their own palaces, because while they have power of life and death on their people, they have no real power. They have armies, but are they free to train them in any way the like? These Princes are the blotting -sheet of your armoury. Your thrown-out arms the Princes use. The Nizam is fabulously rich. Could he do anything he liked against Jathas? These are utterly helpless; the restrictions may be well deserved or ill deserved, they are not independent but impotent. At the critical moment they cannot take measures they want to take. Residuary powers vest in the overlord. That is the state of things my whole being rebels against. [Indian Civil Service] is a freemasonry, the greatest secret society in the world therefore, the spell that this Civil Service has cast upon you should be destroyed. I myself showered compliments on them. If I was a loyalist among loyalists, I was delighted, but after 30 years my eyes opened and I found that underneath it was all brass. Therefore, when an Englishman tells me that you cannot defend yourself, he is paying an ill compliment to the British rule in India. We are one of the most ancient nations, depositories of a matchless civilization. Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek—where are they? Ancient India lives in the modern. A civilization which has persisted throughout all ages, through invasions of Genghis and Ghazni, India has lived. There was nothing so hopelessly wrong about India when the British came and they made it fight. We could have put up a fight. That nation which has survived all tests finds itself paralysed—that is not quite true though. I speak as a humble representative of a vast organization, the greatest the world possesses. This is a unique example in history of a world organization which has no army to back it and has carried on a sustained fight for 30 years. It is a romantic story, although I say it in all truth and humility. It is a nation which has hurled defiance against the whole Empire. Look at the other part of the enchanting story—constructive work of an amazing character. Postal Unions, Railway Unions covering thousands of members. We have men who have dedicated their lifetime: Malaviyaji. It is a libel both on England and India to say that we are incapable of managing our affairs. You can certainly mould public opinion. We may have to go through fiery ordeals of suffering and, when you hear of them, you will recall tonight's meeting and give your share. It is bound to count if it knowingly, willingly, intelligently given.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary, 1931. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

73. *LETTER TO NICK SOLOMON*

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
November 6, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. Of course I see your sister often.

You must excuse me from the task you have imposed upon me—I have really not the knack for writing messages to order. Without knowing anything of the paper, surroundings and the life, I should not know what to write.

Yours sincerely,

NICK SOLOMON, ESQ.
214 DICKINSON AVENUE
SWARTHMORE, PA., U. S. A.

From a photostat: S. N. 18249

74. *LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER¹*

LONDON,
November 6, 1931

DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

It is with deep concern that we hear rumours to the effect that provincial autonomy will be introduced as a first step in the political reconstruction of India, leaving federation and responsibility at the Centre to follow later.

We have read a statement to the contrary, which appeared in the daily Press this morning (namely, November 6). The rumours, however, are so strong and persistent that we must ask for leave to place our views before you beyond a possibility of doubt.

The needs of the present situation can be met only by a complete and comprehensive scheme, of which responsibility at the federal Centre must be as integral a part as autonomy of the federating units. To divide the scheme into parts and bring into immediate operation one of the parts and postpone the other is to arouse fears of uncertainty and suspicions of the intentions of the Government.

¹ Presumably drafted by Gandhiji

We realize the importance of the Minorities question, of which no satisfactory solution has yet been found, but, at the same time, it must not be allowed to block the way to a full and comprehensive scheme of responsible government, which alone can provide an adequate settlement of the pressing problems.

We are, dear Prime Minister,

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI,

M. M. MALAVIYA, V. S. S. SASTRI, T. B. SAPRU, P. SETHNA, COWAJI JEHANGIR, M. R. JAYAKAR, RAMCHANDRA RAO, (MRS.) SUBBARAYAN, A. RANGASWAMI IYENGAR, PURSHOTTAMDAS THAKURDAS, G. D. BIRLA, JAMAL MUHAMMAD, S. K. DATTA, UJJAL SINH, MOONJE, (MRS.) SAROJINI NAIDU, TAMBE, RAJA NARENDRANATH, RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR, JADHAV, SAMPURAN SINGH, BAROOAH, N. M. JOSHI, V. V. GIRI, CHIMANLAL SETALVAD AND SHIVA RAO

The Hindustan Times, 11-11-1931

75. INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE BERNARD SHAW¹

LONDON,

[*November 6, 1931*]²

Mr. Bernard Shaw had long been wanting to see Gandhiji, and it was not without considerable hesitation that he came. He sat with Gandhiji for close on an hour, interrogating him on a bewildering variety of topics—ethno-graphical, religious, social, political, economic,—and his talk was illumined by his sparkling wit and sardonic humour. “I knew something about you and felt something in you of a kindred spirit. We belong to a very small community on earth”. said he. Whilst his other questions were of universal importance, he could not help asking a question about the R.T.C. “Does not the Round Table Conference try your patience?” he asked, and Gandhiji had to confess with sorrow:

It requires more than the patience of a Job. The whole thing is a huge camouflage and the harangues that we are treated to are meant only to mark time. Why not, I ask them, make a clean breast and announce your policy and let us make our choice? But it does not seem to be in the English political nature to do so. It must go by round about and tortuous ways!

Young India, 19-11-1931

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai’s “London Letter”. No other report of the interview is available.

² The date is taken from Gandhiji’s diary.

76. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

LONDON,

November 6, 1931

Q. Why refuse special representation to the Depressed Classes if you are agreeable to surrender to the Muslims and Sikhs?

A. I would gladly resist Muslims and Sikhs also, but special representation for Muslims has been my [stand] since 1916. As a practical man, I realize it is impracticable to escape the legacy of the Lucknow Pact¹, but, as a sincere well-wisher of the Depressed Classes as well of the Nation, I should be failing in my duty if I agreed to special representation to smaller minorities. My offer to Muslims and Sikhs stands, but I certainly expect Muslims and Sikhs to agree to state that they are unable to escape seeking special protection, but that they feel any extension of special protection is undersirable. This is especially so since adult suffrage, for which I stand, ensures the fullest opportunity to all sections who serve the community to enter legislatures.

Q. Since the need for swaraj is imperative, why not surrender to the Depressed Classes also?

A. Because that is not swaraj. I consider it fundamental. I am devoted to untouchables, but do not agree to the vivisection of the community. I am not afraid of the failure of the conference. As I feel it will fail, let us return to the country and seek other ways for swaraj.

The Hindustan Times, 9-11-1931

77. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

LONDON,

[November 6, 1931]

Gandhiji, commenting on the East Africa Report, confirmed Mr. Sastri's conclusion. The solution of the problem of overseas Indians lay in India's own internal freedom. In his inimitable style Gandhiji said:

If we can do something at the centre, the circumference will be all right. When the centre is unfixed, the circumference is merely a make-shift.

The Hindu, 7-11-1931

¹ Between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, conceding separate electorates for Muslims.

78. INTERVIEW TO "THE STAR"

[Before November 7, 1931]

Gandhiji emphatically denied the suggestion that his supporters have been clamouring for his return to India because of imminent revolutionary trouble. On the contrary he proposed to remain in England until his mission to the Conference was concluded. Even then a whirlwind tour to European capitals might delay his return. He said.

Reports of trouble and unrest have been greatly exaggerated and the Congress attitude misrepresented. I don't fear at the moment any likelihood of a return before the work is finished, but if my presence is desired, I shall of course go back.

The Hindu, 7-11-1931

79. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

Sunday, November 8, 1931

CHI. PREMA,

You unnecessarily worry about developments here. Do not draw any inference from newspaper reports. Have confidence that I will not sell the country's self-respect. My method of work is bound to be different from that of others. You should not, therefore, make comparisons. You will understand in what the difference lies only when I return and explain to you. The better thing, therefore, is not to occupy your mind with what is happening here. Do you understand what I mean?

I have no time to write more. Be satisfied with this.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10266

80. LETTER TO INDU PAREKH

LONDON,
November 8, 1931

CHI. INDU,

Your letter is lying before me. I hope you are giving proper attention to your studies. See that you justify my faith in you. I hope you also keep good health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 6261

81. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
November 8, 1931

Questioned whether, if eighty per cent of the Congress demand is granted, the Congress would declare a fight, Gandhiji replied:

I am personally not interested in anything less than full hundred per cent. If, however, it is really eighty per cent that is going to be conceded, it is likely that the Congress will consider whether to work or to fight the Constitution.

The Hindustan Times, 11-11-1931

82. DIWALI MESSAGE¹

LONDON,
November 9, 1931

True Diwali will come when swaraj is won. Let us remember that Diwali represents the annual celebration of the victory of the forces of Rama—that is, non-violence and truth—over those of Ravana—violence and untruth.

The Bombay Chronicle, 10-11-1931

¹ It being his Silence-Day, Gandhiji wrote this message on a slip of paper when a correspondent wished him a happy Diwali.

83. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS¹

LONDON,

November 9, 1931

In anticipation of the Congress Working Committee's decision I have already cancelled my Continental engagements. My eye has constantly been on the events in India, but I feel it will be wrong on my part to leave England while the Round Table Conference work keeps me here. I expect that I will be able to decide the date of my departure during this week.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 10-11-1931

84. SPEECH AT FRIENDS' HOUSE

LONDON,

November 9, 1931

You have asked me whether, though there was a voice crying in India for freedom, there were enough people ready to shoulder the responsibility of the country. To me the question is quite reasonable. I shall endeavour, as briefly as I can, to answer this important question. Let me tell you that the real point at issue is the Congress demand on the one hand and, if I can so put it, reluctance on the part of responsible men to respond to that demand on the other. The Congress wants independence which in other words means it wants control over Defence, External Relations and Finance, i.e., partnership at will terminable by either party. That is the substance of the Congress demand, because the Congress honestly believes that the country has got capable hands to take over charge from the foreign Government.

But on the part of responsible men I have been seeing nothing during my wanderings and talks. On the other hand, I find they are raising considerable difficulties in conceding what is the legitimate claim of the Congress. I shall tell you without any modesty that the Congress seeks and claims to represent the whole mass of India. Its

¹ It being his Silence-Day, Gandhiji made the statement in writing at 11 a.m. on his return from his visit to Oxford.

² The meeting, held in the evening, was organized by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The hall was filled to capacity and a large crowd had to go back disappointed.

claim cannot be disputed. You know India is in villages and not in cities like Bombay, Calcutta or Madras. The Congress claims to represent also even the Princes in spite of themselves. Of course, it does not want to usurp their rights, but does justice to them also so long as their claims do not become inconsistent with those of the teeming millions. At the same time, the Congress offers the least resistance to them because it engages itself in putting forth the claims on behalf of the masses.

As you are devoted to seeking avenues for peace, you should have no difficulty in recognizing the claim of the Congress. The history of the past fifteen months before the Delhi Pact tells you that these masses were at war with Government, but it was a peaceful war for the simple reason that the masses had taken the pledge to win freedom without shedding a drop of blood. In this struggle, thousands upon thousands of women and children received lathi blows. Tens of thousands were sent to jail. Women of India rose as if by magic. There was a phenomenal awakening on their part. Thousands of villages responded to the Congress message. I myself do not know why and how I was not prepared for such a splendid response to me. There must have been the hand of God behind. These villages and villagers were all unarmed, because remember, there is compulsory disarmament in my country.

But those who wielded lathis and used bayonets did not realize that these women and villagers had with them an instrument which was not perishable and which was far more effective. That instrument was in the form of love, non-violence and truth against their force of arms and other brutal methods.

Though the word 'independence' has a specific meaning in the English dictionary, to these masses it has also a larger and deeper meaning. They do not understand what 'Parliament', 'Responsible Government', or 'Councils' mean, but the word 'swaraj' gives them the meaning in the twinkling of an eye. Today they are paying the land revenue but they do not know why and how much is spent for the country's purposes. They do not even know that 55 crores are spent over the military. At the same time, remember they have no fear from the frontiers, or the Afghans or any other place. As a matter of fact, the invasions never bother Indian villagers because invasions in India did not begin with the East India Company. We had them even before that period. These invaders did not go beyond the cities. They did not go beyond Delhi and, as you know from the geography

of India. a vast number of its people living in villages were unaffected by the invasions. Moreover, internal quarrels do not affect by the villagers. They therefore need no protection. Today the vast masses are living in abject starvation. They do not know what it is to have two meals a day. They have no bread and butter for themselves, nor a drop of milk for their children.

We have added dignity to their life and they have gained confidence that they will be able to make both ends meet and keep the wolf away from their doors.¹

The Congress has purified politics. It has almost spiritualized it, though personally I do not like that word. We are out to win freedom with non-violence and truth, by removal of untouchability, and by recognition of every villager as a human being. Our non-co-operation fight signifies that no man can possibly tyrannize over another. Our whole movement is based on morality. We do not believe in the theory of the sweet will of our rulers. You know what we do in India. When authorities say do this, which we know is a wrong order, we say, thank you, we will not do it. We say we won't do anything which injures our self-respect, hurts our human dignity, and in such a struggle even millionaires have discarded their wealth and have ultimately become trustees of their wealth for the betterment of Indian villagers.

If British Ministers do not recognize my claim and want to keep the yoke on our neck, we may once again go through the fiery ordeal because, perhaps, we still need to suffer. Your Government has brought no benefit to my country. It has only emasculated it. It is a shame that we are made incapable of defending ourselves against foreign yoke, and even in our internal affairs. That is terribly disgraceful, but what have we done? We have today created selfless workers in every village. They are our civil servants and they will do anything that he Congress asks them to do. They are capable of governing the country. They know, as I do know, that we have already burnt our boats and are marching with our backs to the wall, because we are working for freedom of the teeming villagers.

The Bombay Chronicle, 12-11-1931

¹ Gandhiji here was referring to the work done by the All-India Spinners' Association.

85. INTERVIEW TO J. M. SEN GUPTA

LONDON,

November 10, 1931

I shall know much this week. I expect nothing either about the particular issues¹ like Chittagong or Hijli or about the Constitution. I have been in touch with everybody. I am staying on so that I may not miss a single opportunity of coming to a settlement or to be put in the wrong. If something does come out of these discussions, the release of detenus is a certainty, but I have little on which to base any hope.

The Hindustan Times, 13-11-1931

86. SPEECH AT LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS²

LONDON,

November 10, 1931

The main obstacle to my mission is—myself. So many people tell me that the Congress demand is pitched too high. When I come to grips, they begin to listen to me. Those responsible are equally guilty inasmuch as they are in no mood to listen. There does not seem to be that atmosphere which is responsive and receptive. Some of the best Englishmen and Englishwomen feel that something has got to be done to define freedom. . . .³ I have come here out of prison; with me there were thousands. The avowed object of the Settlement with the Viceroy was that Congress should be represented at the Round Table Conference. I and many Congressmen were trying to negotiate this. Generally at a round table people sit who are elected; who have got there is their own right. I do not sit in my own right, I am there on sufferance: our of nominated members you do not expect brilliant results. I have never known a conference with nominated members which has decided on principles.

We have set out to give our own blood. But the attitude here [is]: ‘Look at these ungrateful fellows, they do not see the blessings of British rule.’ It is not only the official mind, but those capable of

¹ The interviewer had given Gandhiji an account of the situation in Bengal.

² According to a Press report “the theatre of the London School of Economics did not suffice to accommodate the members of the School’s Students’ Union who assembled to hear Mahatma Gandhi. The audience consisted mostly of English students and was perhaps the largest English audience Mahatma Gandhi had addressed in England”.

³ Some words are not clear here.

shaping public mind. It was Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman who said that good government was no substitute for self-government. Those who are concerned do not feel that British rule has done good. Gokhale said it has emasculated us. How has that nation suddenly become conscious of its strength? The obstacle is the colossal ignorance of the best of Englishmen. The ignorance is nearly appalling. It is misinformation, false history. The Press contains nothing of what happens in India. Chittagong is a black page in history. Officers ran amok and created havoc on unarmed population. In Hijli innocent men were shot down; 16 were seriously injured. I would condemn attempts on lives of Englishmen in the severest language possible.

But what does this mean? There is a vital connection between Chittagong, Hijli and these attacks.

The whole of India is seething with unrest for which there are definite causes, and in which British rule is involved. Moral and material progress of India? The sum total is nil. See what a hurdle race I have to run. I give you absolute assurance that day and night I am trying my very best to reach a solution and am putting no obstacle in the way. We have burnt our boats and we have our backs to the wall. I want freedom in the name of untouchables, poor masses. I would sacrifice a million lives, and that freedom would be cheaply bought. Voluntary sacrifice of a million lives is infinitely preferable to the death millions are undergoing by inches. I cannot tolerate this. . . .¹ The only restriction is that we shall not soil our fingers with the blood of our opponents and we will not descend to untruth.

We won't have the tremendous weight of an army of occupation. . . .² We pay the bulk of our savings to our door-keepers.

You have no door-keepers, only unequalled matchless policemen. The difference between freedom and slavery. The axe would descend upon the military budget. When Mir Alam Khan attacked me, an Englishman saved my life and his daughter sang "Lead Kindly Light". Are the ten thousand Mussalmans who went to jail going to be traitors?. . . .³ Immediately the wedge is withdrawn we shall close our ranks. If the God of the Afghans tells them that they should take our lives, we shall invoke that very God—though they are taking the name of that God five times a day. If God wants it, we will challenge Him too. Let us shed the fear of man.

¹ Some words are not clear here.

² *ibid*

³ *ibid*

A NEGRO STUDENT: You love an Englishman as much as an Indian and yet you dislike British Government. Now British people make up the Government.

GANDHIJI: Man is superior to his method. A man's method may be vile, and yet you may not aptly apply the adjective to the man himself. . .² British system is Satanic. But, in spite of British system being Satanic, I love the British like my brothers. I have a boy who has rebelled against me. Yet I love that boy equally as I do the other brothers. I detest his methods and ways. I have learnt from domestic law that, if I have humanity in me, I should love the Britisher whom God has made. And yet I detest his method and am doing my best to destroy his method. . .³

In the war of non-violence we walk in the fear of God, give no secret information, brook no treacherousness.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai.

87. LETTER TO JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
November 11, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

You have been most diligent in writing to me and to Mahadev and encouraging others to write to me about the much-talked-of visit of mine to America. I do not know, however, whether it was at all necessary for you to take all this trouble either for yourself or others. I never entertained the slightest doubt about the wisdom of your judgment, and I have been absolutely clear in my statements to every Pressman that I would not go to America until you had decided to bring me out there. Having made up my mind to trust your judgment, was I not right in telling all and sundry that you were the keeper of my conscience in this matter ?

Of course, it has thrown a little more responsibility upon you, but your shoulders are broad enough to bear it and I am saved a lot of worry in arguing with importunate friends and reporters.

I met Mr. Bomanji fairly often during the few days that he was here. He is now on his way to India.

Yours sincerely,

THE REVEREND JOHN HAYNES HOLMES, D.D.

From a photostat : S.N. 18283

88. *LETTER TO H. H. MONTGOMERY*

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
November 11, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I have kept your long letter by me all these days to be able to send you just a line of thanks for it and for the sentiments expressed therein. Charlie Andrews also shared it with me and he found great joy to read the sentences about him.

Yours sincerely,

THE RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP MONTGOMERY
NEW PARK
MOVILLE
CO. DONEGAL, IRELAND

From a photostat : S. N. 18131

89. *LETTER TO VIVIAN BUTLER BURKE*

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
November 11, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I have seen your letter addressed to a mutual friend. I have no knowledge of a previous letter from you.

As you have rightly surmised, it is true that my programme outside London is regulated by Mr. Andrews. I do not share the view that you hold.¹ I have the highest regard for Mr. Andrews. I have known him intimately for nearly twenty years, and have had no occasion whatever to repent of having followed his advice.²

¹ The addressee had said it was a pity that Gandhiji's plans were left to C.F. Andrews and quoted an Irish saying: "One must never trust the horns of a bull and the smile of an Englishmen."

² As to this the addressee, writing on November 14, said: ". . . I only know Mr. Andrews through Romain Rolland's book about you: it was Indian followers of your own who told me, in former years, that they did not trust him, and it was suggested to

I am very sorry to inform you that my contemplated visit to Ireland is likely to be dropped, because of a peremptory summons from India. If it is at all possible, however, I hope to visit Ireland, in which case I shall stay with a private friend.

Yours sincerely,

MISS VIVIAN BUTLER BURKE
DUGORT
WESTPORT, CO. MAYO

From a photostat: S.N. 18207

90. *LETTER TO F. B. FISHER*

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
November 11, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I have been receiving your very warm letters. I have time just to say this.

With reference to the American visit, my own instinct was that the time had not arrived to visit America. That instinct still abides. I had made up my mind when the visit was first talked about that I would do as Dr. Haynes¹ advised me. This was about 3 years ago or more when the visit was first talked about.

As you know we have since met. He was in London just waiting for me, and I have told him that I would be guided entirely by him in connection with the pressing invitations that I received from America on my landing here.

me that he might have been the cause of my invitation to Ireland having been ignored. I know of one case where one of the rare Englishmen who have consistently and courageously spoken for India's right to complete freedom, and who wrote to you, was answered slightly by Mr. Andrews's secretary. As I am not a believer in Christianity myself—finding in Eastern religions what appeals to me most—I have an instinctive mistrust of Christian missionaries!—especially where Christian or Imperial interests are at stake! There are very, very few Englishmen willing to see their Empire destroyed for the sake of justice.”

To which Gandhiji authorized the following reply: “Mr. Gandhi has your letter. You did a monstrous injustice to Mr. Andrews and yourself in referring to Mr. Andrews as you did, for which you will be sorry when you realize it.”

¹ Dr. John Haynes Holmes

Dr. Holmes and several other friends are decidedly of the opinion that it would be a mistake for me to go to America. Your decision therefore has come upon me as a surprise. You are just as dear a friend to me as Dr. Holmes; I shall therefore look forward to the result of your conversations with him. You know Richard Gregg too. He also supports Dr. Holmes and enforces the opinion by adding that winter will not be the proper season for me to visit America.

Yours sincerely,

THE RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP FISHER
THE FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

From a photostat: S.N. 18282

91. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
November 11, 1931

I do not think the Conference must fail. If that were my conviction I should not stay here at all. What I believe is that, unless something startling happens and unless all that is good in English life conspires together to bring about a satisfactory result, the Conference is likely to fail.

Q. If the Conference were to fail, to whom would you apportion the blame?

A. I should distribute the blame evenly between the Government and the whole of the Conference delegates. I am not prepared to blame one party alone, but I am convinced that, if the National Government really wills it, the Conference need not fail at all.

Q. How long do you think it will take you to be satisfied that such a will is manifest in the National Government?

A. I shall know in a week. I shall continue to hope until I have positive evidence that nothing is to be gained from my further stay in England. I am not going to think of civil disobedience as long as there is the slightest vestige of hope, and I can give my absolute assurance to all concerned that there will be no civil disobedience in connection with the Conference as long as there is a possibility of carrying on negotiations such as I am engaged in at the present moment. I have come here with a fixed determination of making every effort humanly possible to achieve an honourable settlement—honourable both to Great Britain and to India.

In a reference to the administrators in England, Mr. Gandhi said:

The administrators here, so far as I am concerned, [*sic*] but I have a suspicion that the information they have about India and what is going on there at present is at variance with the true situation as I know it, and this is a terrible handicap in spite of all their goodwill and good wishes. It has been a matter of the deepest regret to me that, for reasons I cannot understand, events of the gravest importance do not appear in the Press, and I doubt if the authorities here know them from other sources.

The atrocities that took place in Chittagong under the very nose of the officials, and as the report before me says, "with their connivance, if not direct encouragement," seems to me to be unknown to them and certainly has not been noticed by the Press, and this is only one out of the many instances that I could quote.

Yorkshire Post, 12-11-1931

92. SPEECH AT CONFERENCE OF DELEGATES TO R.T.C.

LONDON,

November 11, 1931

At a conference of the Round Table Conference delegates this evening, Mahatma Gandhi fully explained his conception of provincial autonomy, which is understood to differ entirely from what is outlined in the Simon Report and the Government of India despatch. Mahatma Gandhi's main idea contemplates unfettered popular control of all subjects, Governors not possessing any reserve powers, while the provinces should be so completely autonomous that interference from the Centre in such matters as internal disorders will be impossible except at the Provinces, request. Moreover the Provinces should be free to refuse contributions to the Central Government if they so desire.

The Hindustan Times, 14-11-1931

93. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

[Before *November 12, 1931*]¹

The whole report is garbled,² and contradicts what I am prepared to accept. It is wholly unnecessary for me to go into the details. It is sufficient for me to say unequivocally that there is no difference in substance between what Mr. Sastri and other friends want and what I am prepared to accept.

The Bombay Chronicle, 14-11-1931

94. SPEECH AT COMMONWEALTH OF INDIA LEAGUE³

LONDON,

November 12, 1931

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

It gives me great pleasure to be in your midst this morning. The change that you have made in the working of your object is a good change, but I would suggest that you went a step further and have as your object *purna* swaraj which is the Indian rendering of complete independence. The original objective of the Indian National Congress was swaraj, but since certian conventional meanings grew up round this term, the Congress, in order to make its claim quite clear, added one word '*purna*', which means complete.

I have always been of the opinion that a Committee of the nature of the Commonwealth of India League should avoid affiliation to the Congress, in order that it may retain an independent existence, that it may be at liberty to exercise an independent judgment, thereby acquiring a greater influence with public opinion in this country than if it were merely the mouthpiece of the Indian National Congress. I think it would be a calamity for an organization of this nature to occupy the position merely of a creation

¹ The statement was originally published in *The Hindu* of this date.

² The reference is to the rumours that Gandhiji was strongly inclined to accept Provincial Autonomy and that his attitude was not shared by Srinivasa Sastri, Sapru and others.

³ This was a meeting of the Executive Committee and Parliamentary Committee of the League. Among those present were Horrabin, Chairman, and V.K. Krishna Menon, Secretary.

of the Congress. I have also always advised the Congress against affiliating outside. Indian Congress has in the past affiliated with England¹ but it has found it a mistake, and is now refusing affiliation with America and other countries. What you have done in remaining outside the Congress is certainly the very best thing.

As to the work which you are doing in this country, my opinion is that nothing is going to come out of this Conference. I have made this statement, but please do not think for a moment that I am, therefore, now doing nothing, or that I am obstructing the Conference in its passage towards the achievement of a Constitution for India. On the contrary, the less hope I see from outside the more efforts I have been making to achieve success from the inside. I do not want to put my country through any fiery ordeal again, but if necessary I shall do so, and I know that it will be a much more terrible struggle this time even than before, and therefore, I shall make every attempt of which a human being is capable to bring about an honourable settlement through negotiations. But remember I shall work inside the three corners of my mandate. That means I believe in that mandate and anything less than the mandate would not be enough. We must have control over Finance and the Army. However impracticable this may appear to men over here, the Congress believes that it can handle these matters as successfully, nay, even more successfully, than the Government has done.

The manipulation of the Exchange had been started before the time of Lord Curzon and through this policy 85 per cent of the population of India had suffered badly. The fixing of the rupee to the pound at a fixed price of one shilling and six pence has meant that the Indian agriculturists have to sell at prices that will not even cover the cost of production. Even the advisers of the India Office in this country have admitted that, if the rupee was set free, the agriculturists would profit. The price of imports would certainly rise, but the mass of the Indian people is so little dependent upon imports that it would not be affected. The difficulty is that the majority of Britishers have no knowledge of Indian conditions, and they draw the wrong comparisons.

¹ The Congress had set up the British Committee in London which functioned till it was abolished by a resolution at the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in 1920

The rupee has been sustained to make a greater scope for exports from this country to India. Each time that the rupee has been fixed it has been against the advice of Indian experts. The Government is the party that has benefited. By fixing the rupee to the pound it has saved itself from insolvency. If financial control were in the hands of Indians, the financial policy would be pursued in the interests of the agriculturists, and not so much in the interests of the exporters.

India is an exporting country, and in nine out of every ten years her exports have exceeded her imports, but the balance of gain has been used either for Civil Service pensions or as capital for what I consider wild-cat schemes such as Sukkur Barrage, etc.

Mahatma Gandhi then referred to the scanty Press space that has been given to the Government's acknowledgment of hopeless miscalculations over this scheme. From a small corner in the Press he had seen that the actual cost of the irrigation scheme was twice of that estimated. Mahatma Gandhi stated that he had no confidence in these large schemes which the Government put forward as they would not benefit the small agriculturists, but merely serve to strengthen and extend the capitalist system.

Mahatma Gandhi then reasserted the Congress demand of complete control of finance and fiscal policy. He said, India must not be wrapped in cotton-wool. She must be given the chance even of making atrocious blunders. But in spite of every effort, he added, he had failed to impress this fact upon the official mind, which was fed upon blue-books and histories of India written by Englishmen, that is, the conquerors. He found himself baffled by the wall of ignorance around him in this country. Continuing, he said:

Hence it is necessary that some of you in England should give yourselves up to the task of enlightening this ignorance, to start a hurricane propaganda and the knowledge that so many in this country are working for us will perhaps soften the agony of those who are suffering over there. We shall treasure the knowledge of your friendship, and be heartened by you as Emily Hobhouse heartened those who suffered in South Africa during the Boer War. I ask you to help us, and if we are losing heart, perhaps send us a cablegram saying, 'Never mind, we Englishmen are watching and wishing you success.' I ask you to pray for us, anything that will give us encouragement and sympathy. But please do it on one condition, that you believe that our cause is worthy. If you think that we are making extravagant demands, then tell us that and reject our demands. Then, if we see that

friends are forsaking us, we shall perforce reconsider our position and think again whether what we demand is just. But in the last resort our reliance is on God. We do not ask our freedom as a gift, but as the fruit of our labours and sufferings. I came here to negotiate because I thought we had suffered enough. If the Conference fails, I shall know that India must suffer still more to impress this country with the justice of her demand.

Mr. Horrabin then asked Mahatma Gandhi what particular sources of information would be available to the League in its work of spreading true information about India, and Mahatma Gandhi said that the resources of the Congress would always be at the disposal of the League. He said:

Ask for whatever you want, and it will be given to you at once. We shall not hesitate to send information by cable if necessary, also all the literature that you need. If you like, we could arrange to send you a weekly service of news. Ask, and we shall supply and if there are any difficulties with the authorities over information we have given you, please call upon us to substantiate whatever news we have given you. Put us to the proof and if we are wrong we shall apologize, or you will apologize on our behalf to the India Office. We shall be honest and shall not exaggerate or mislead because the success of our struggle does not depend upon false or exaggerated information. The policy of the Congress is to admit errors immediately and to expose every exaggeration of which its members have been guilty.

Miss Ellen Wilkinson asked Mahatma Gandhi if he thought it advisable to start a campaign about the political prisoners in India. Mahatma Gandhi in reply pointed out that, before such a campaign could be successfully begun, detailed information was necessary, as each case stood on its own merits.

Just at present the attention of the authorities could not be sufficiently engaged, but later on, if the Conference broke down then would be the time to start such a campaign. The Congress offices will always be ready to send all the information that is needed, and you must remember that it is an obstinate Government that you have to deal with.

Asked what he considered were the chief agencies responsible for the non-success of the Conference, Mahatma Gandhi replied that he believed the fault to lie equally with the Indians for failing to reach a settlement over the communal question, and with the British Government for the wrong lead that it had given in the early stages of the Conference. By making the communal question the central issue in the whole scheme, the Government had laid the

way open for Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims to pull their own ways. In reality, the communal question was only one of many issues, and the Conference was not necessarily the instrument to bring about a communal settlement. When the Government called together the Conference, it knew that the communal leaders had not come to an agreement and by bringing the communal question to the fore immediately the Government prepared the way for disunion, and for perpetuating that disunion. Also one must remember that the Conference is a packed Conference of non-responsible members. What the British Government did not realize was that the Congress is the nation as far as swaraj is concerned. Had the Government recognized this instead of treating the Congress as just one among the other parties, all this time would not have been wasted.

I am confident that ultimately it is only with the Congress that your Government will have to reckon. As for myself, although I may not represent Sir Mahomed Shafi, I do claim to represent the Mussalmans; though I do not represent Dr. Ambedkar, I do represent the Depressed Classes; though not Dr. Dutta, but the Christians.

These people do not want separate representation. I claim that 330 millions of the Indian people are represented by the Congress. The interests of all classes must be subservient to the interests of the masses. It is this representative character of the Congress that is not recognized by the Government and herein lies the chief blame.

When asked whether he did not think it was essential, should the Conference break down, that he should explain his position either at a public meeting or at least to a group of people in this country, Mahatma Gandhi said that he was very anxious to have an opportunity for putting forward his reasons for action as he did, that he very much wished to speak to a group, but that his original promise not to hinder the Government would prevent his making any public declaration.

In discussing the question of the multiplicity of organizations in this country working for India, Mahatma Gandhi urged that every effort should be made at amalgamation of these organizations. All energies must be concentrated, he added, into work or through one channel, and that, in the main, the burden should fall upon English people who could act with Indian advice. His advice to the Commonwealth of India League was to widen their organization as much as possible and to invite co-operation from all possible quarters.

The Hindustan Times, 4-12-1931

95. TELEGRAM TO LORD IRWIN

LONDON,

November 13, 1931

CONFERENCE CRUMBLING DOWN. LEAVING LONDON NEXT THURSDAY.¹

The Hindustan Times, 16-11-1931

96. INTERVIEW TO “NEWS CHRONICLE”²

LONDON,

November 13, 1931

Q. I want to know, Mr. Gandhi, whether you are going to sign the request to the Prime Minister to arbitrate in the dispute between the Hindus and Muslims, which seems now almost certain to bring about the failure of the Round Table Conference.

A. I am afraid I cannot do so. I should have no objection to Mr. MacDonald personally as arbitrator. Do not mistake me there.

But to ask him, as Prime Minister, to arbitrate would be to petition the British Government to do so and that would be to put myself in a false position in respect of the Congress mandate.

The Government, on its side, would at once conceive itself to be in a position to bargain on matters in which, in my view, no bargain is possible—I have in mind, for example, the Army and Finance.

Mr. Gandhi went on to say that his refusal to sign the request did not mean that Mr. MacDonald need be prevented from arbitrating. He continued:

I myself would agree to any solution of the minorities problem accepted by the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs.

But, for me, the minorities problem does not travel beyond the three communities, and if arbitration were contemplated with regard to the representation on the legislatures of the other minorities, I could not tolerate it. In my view that would be the negation of responsible government.

I asked Mr. Gandhi whether, in view of the general feeling that the Conference was certain now to end in calamitous failure, he himself preserved any hope.

He answered that he was not yet altogether hopeless, although at the moment he saw little on the horizon to justify it. He added:

¹ Gandhiji actually left London on December 5, 1931.

² Gandhiji was interviewed by the paper's Foreign Editor.

But I myself and others are using every possible means and sparing no effort to save the Conference even at the eleventh hour.

If we have to go back empty-handed as we are, I think the unavoidable consequences in India will be deplorable.

Q. But may I not take it, Mr. Gandhi, that you will be ready to put into effect so much of the new scheme as has been agreed upon in London ?

A. I would gladly do so, but without the co-operation of the three communities nothing could be done. It is impossible that the provincial legislatures should come into being until that is assured.

Provincial autonomy is impossible without a statutory guarantee of autonomy at the Centre. We have experienced enough already to show that autonomy in the Provinces cannot be worked without complete Central responsibility.

What the public hitherto has failed to realize is that there is a connection between the Centre and the Provinces so vital that the provinces would be entirely helpless without autonomy in the Centre.

Q. And what of the proposed Constituent Assembly, the Central Convention, which it is said had been under discussion? Does that mean that it has been discussed between the Government and the Indian leaders ?

A. It has been discussed with me. But I am afraid the discussion is already at an end.

I could not possibly agree to the meeting of any such Assembly without a statutory guarantee of the same indispensable responsibility at the Centre.

I have dared to discuss provincial a part from Central autonomy simply in order to show the impossibility of creating autonomous provinces without the guarantee of Central responsibility—and yet, even some of my friends in Fleet Street have reported me as having endorsed provincial autonomy as a first instalment.

This is a thing I have never contemplated, a part from a guarantee that responsible government at the Centre will come into being almost immediately after the working of provincial authority.

I say ‘almost immediately’ because I have contemplated a short interval in view of certain difficulties represented to me.

Under my proposal the same statute will provide for provincial autonomy and complete responsibility at the Centre and will create the machinery for bringing into existence the Federal and Central structure.

News Chronicle, 14-11-1931

97. SPEECH AT MINORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

LONDON,
November 13, 1931

PRIME MINISTER AND FELLOW DELEGATES,

It is not without very considerable hesitation and shame that I take part in the discussion on the minorities question. I have not been able to read with the care and attention that it deserves the memorandum¹ sent to the Delegates on behalf of certain minorities and received this morning.

Before I offer a few remarks on that memorandum, with your permission and with all the deference and respect that are your due, I would express my dissent from the view that you put before this Committee, that the inability to solve the communal question was hampering the progress of Constitution-building, and that it was an indispensable condition prior to the building of any such Constitution. I expressed at an early stage of the sittings of this Committee that I did not share that view. The experience that I have since gained has confirmed me in that view; and, if you will pardon me for saying so, it was because of the emphasis that was laid last year and repeated this year upon this difficulty, that the different communities were encouraged to press with all the vehemence at their command their own respective views.

It would have been against human nature if they had done otherwise. All of them thought that this was the time to press forward their claims for all they were worth, and I venture to suggest again that this very emphasis has defeated the purpose which I have no doubt it had in view. Having received that encouragement, we have failed to

¹ The memorandum, submitted “on behalf of the Mohammedans, the Depressed Classes, the Anglo-Indians, The Europeans and a considerable section of Indian Christian groups”, demanded *inner alia* that these communities “shall have representation in all legislatures through separate electorates. . . provided that, after a lapse of ten years, it will be open to Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal and any minority communities in any other provinces to accept joint electorates. . . With regard to the Depressed Classes no change to joint electorates... shall be made until after 20 years. . .” Special claims were advanced on behalf of Mussalmans, the Depressed Classes, the Anglo-Indians and the Europeans. The document was signed by the Aga Khan, Dr. Ambedkar, Rao Bahadur Pannirselvam, Sir Henry Gidney and Sir Hubert Carr.

arrive at an agreement. I therefore associate myself entirely with the view, expressed by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, that it is not this question which is the fulcrum, it is not this question which is the central fact, but the central fact is the Constitution-building.

I am quite certain that you did not convene this Round Table Conference and bring us all six thousand miles away from our homes and occupations to settle the communal question, but you convened us, you made deliberate declarations that we were invited to come here, to share the process of Constitution-building, and that, before we went away from your hospitable shores, we should have the certain conviction that we had built up an honourable and a respectable framework for the freedom of India, and that it awaited only the imprimatur of the approval of the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

Now, at the present moment, we are face to face with a wholly different situation, namely, that, because there is no communal settlement agreed to by us, there is to be no building of the Constitution, and that, as a last resort and as the last touch, you will announce the policy of His Majesty's Government in connection with the Constitution and all the matters that may arise from it. I cannot help feeling that it would be a sorry ending to a Conference which was brought into being with so much trumpeting and with so much hope excited in the minds and in the breasts of many people.

Coming to this document, I accept the thanks that have been given to me by Sir Hubert Carr. Had it not been for the remarks that I made when I shouldered that burden, and had not it been for my utter failure to bring about a solution, Sir Hubert Carr rightly says he would not have found the very admirable solution that he has been able, in common with the other minorities, to present to this Committee for consideration and finally for the consideration and approval of His Majesty's Government.

I will not deprive Sir Hubert Carr and his associates of the feeling of satisfaction that evidently actuates them, but, in my opinion, what they have done is to sit by the carcass, and they have performed the laudable feat of dissecting that carcass.

At representing the predominant political organization in India, I have no hesitation in saying to His Majesty's Government, to those friends who seek to represent or who think they represent the minorities mentioned against their names, and indeed to the whole

world, that this scheme is not one designed to achieve responsible government, but is undoubtedly a scheme designed to share power with the bureaucracy.

If that is the intention—and it is the intention running through the whole of that document—I wish them well, and the Congress is entirely out of it. The Congress will wander no matter how many years in the wilderness rather than lend itself to a proposal under which the hardy tree of freedom and responsible government can never grow.

I am astonished that Sir Hubert Carr should tell us that they have evolved a Scheme which, being designed only for a temporary period, would not damage the cause of nationalism, but, at the end of ten years, we would all find ourselves hugging one another and throwing ourselves into one another's laps. My political experience teaches me a wholly different lesson. If this responsible government, whenever it comes, is to be inaugurated under happy auspices, it should not undergo the process of vivisection to which this scheme subjects it; it is a strain which no government can possibly bear.

There is the coping-stone to the structure, and I am surprised, Mr. Prime Minister, that you allowed yourself to mention this as if it was an indisputable fact, namely, that the proposals may be taken as being acceptable to well over one hundred and fifteen millions of people or about 46 per cent of the population of India. You had a striking demonstration of the inaccuracy of this figure. You have had, on behalf of the women, a complete repudiation of social representation, and as very happen to be one-half of the population of India, this 46 per cent is somewhat reduced, but not only that: the Congress may be a very insignificant organization, but I have not hesitated to make the claim, and I am not ashamed to repeat the claim, that the Congress claims to represent 85 per cent of the population not merely of British India but of the whole of India.

Subject to all the questions that may be raised, I repeat the claim with all the emphasis at my command that the Congress, by right of service, claims to represent that population which is called the agricultural population of India, and I would accept the challenge, if the Government were to issue the challenge, that we should have a referendum in India, and you would immediately find whether the Congress represents them or whether it does not represent them. But I go a step further. At the present moment if

you were to examine the register of the Congress, if you were to examine the records of the prisons of India, you would find that the Congress represented and represents on its register a very large number of Moham-medans. Several thousand Mohammedans went to jail last year under the banner of the Congress. The Congress today has several thousand Mohammedans on its register. The Congress has thousands of untouchables on its register. The Congress has Indian Christians also on its register. I do not know that there is a single community which is not represented on the Congress register. With all defence to the Nawab Sahib of Chhatari, even landlords and even mill-owners and millionaires are represented there. I admit that they are coming to the Congress slowly, cautiously, but the Congress is trying to serve them also. The Congress undoubtedly represents Labour. Therefore, this claim that the proposals set forth in this memorandum are acceptable to well over one hundred and fifteen millions of people needs to be taken with a very great deal of reservation and caution.

One word more and I shall have done. You have had presented to you and circulated to the members, I hope, the Congress proposal in connection with the communal problem¹. I venture to submit that, of all the schemes that I have seen, it is the most workable scheme, but I may be in error there. I admit that it has not commended itself to the representatives of the communities at this table, but it has commended itself to the representatives of these very classes in India. It is not the creation of one brain, but it is the creation of a Committee on which various important parties were represented.

Therefore, you have got on behalf of the Congress that scheme; but the Congress has also suggested that there should be an impartial arbitration. Through arbitration all over the world people have adjusted their differences, and the Congress is always open to accept any decision of an arbitration court. I have myself ventured to suggest that there might be appointed by the Government a judicial tribunal which would examine this case and give its decision. But if none of these things are acceptable to any of us, and if this is the *sine qua non* of any Constitution-building, then I say it will be much better for us that we should remain without so called responsible Government than that we should accept this claim.

¹ Vide "Speech at Minorities Committee Meeting", 8-10-1931

I would like to repeat what I have said before, that while the Congress will always accept any solution that may be acceptable to the Hindus, the Mohammedans and the Sikhs, Congress will be no party to special reservation or special electorates for any other minorities. The Congress will always endorse clause or reservations as to fundamental rights and civil liberty. It will be open to everybody to be placed on the voters' roll and to appeal to the common body of the electorates.

In my humble opinion, the proposition enunciated by Sir Hubert Carr is the very negation of responsible Government, the very negation of nationalism. If he says that, if you want a live European on the legislature, then he must be elected by the Europeans themselves, well, Heaven help India if India has to have representatives elected by these several, special, cut-up groups. That European will serve India as a whole, and the European only, who commands the approval of the common electorate and not the mere Europeans. This very idea suggests that the responsible Government will always have to contend against these interests which will always be in conflict against the national spirit—against this body of 85 per cent of the agricultural population. To me it is an unthinkable thing. If we are going to bring into being responsible Government and if we are going to get real freedom, then I venture to suggest that it should be the proud privilege and the duty of every one of these so-called special classes to seek entry into the Legislatures through this open door, through the election and approval of the common body of electorates. You know that Congress is wedded to adult suffrage, and under adult suffrage it will be open to all to be placed on the voters' list. More than that nobody can ask.

One word more as to the so-called untouchables.

I can understand the claims advanced by other minorities but the claims advanced on behalf of the untouchables, that to me is the "unkindest cut of all". It means the perpetual bar-sinister. I would not sell the vital interests of the untouchables even for the sake of winning the freedom of India. I claim myself in my own person to represent the vast mass of untouchables. Here I speak not merely on behalf of the Congress, but I speak on my own behalf, and I claim that I would get, if there was a referendum of the untouchables, their vote, and that I would top the poll. And I would work from one end of India to the other to tell the untouchables that separate electorates

and separate reservation is not the way to remove this bar-sinister, which is the shame, not of them, but of orthodox Hinduism.

Let this Committee and let the whole world know that today there is a body of Hindu reformers who are pledged to remove this blot of untouchability. We do not want on our register and on our census untouchables classified as a separate class. Sikhs may remain as such in perpetuity, so may Mohammedans, so may Europeans. Will untouchables remain untouchables in perpetuity? I would far rather that Hinduism died than that Untouchability lived. Therefore, with all my regard for Dr. Ambedkar, and for his desire to see the untouchables uplifted, with all my regard for his ability, I must say in all humility that here the great wrong under which he has laboured and perhaps the bitter experiences that he has undergone have for the moment warped his judgment. It hurts me to have to say this, but I would be untrue to the cause of the untouchables, which is as dear to me as life itself, if I did not say it. I will not bargain away their rights for the kingdom of the whole world. I am speaking with a due sense of responsibility, and I say that it is not a proper claim which is registered by Dr. Ambedkar when he seeks to speak for the whole of the untouchables of India. It will create a division in Hinduism which I cannot possibly look forward to with any satisfaction whatsoever. I do not mind untouchables, if they so desire, being converted to Islam or Christianity. I should tolerate that, but I cannot possibly tolerate what is in store for Hinduism if there are two divisions set forth in the villages. Those who speak of the political rights of untouchables do not know their India, do not know how Indian society is today constructed, and therefore I want to say with all the emphasis that I can command that, if I was the only person to resist this thing, I would resist it with my life.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 543-4

98. SPEECH AT WESTMINSTER SCHOOL¹

LONDON,
November 13, 1931

At the present moment the Conference seems to have fizzled out and there seems to be no ray of hope in the impenetrable gloom. But some of your great men are trying their best to avoid a catastrophe. If they fail and if the Conference ultimately ends in a fiasco, as I fear it will, there will be thousands upon thousands ready to go through the fire of suffering, and will not quail before the fiercest repression. We are promised that the repression that is coming will be ten times as fierce as last year's . But I shall pray that humanity may be spared that exhibition of brute power.

Young India, 26-11-1931

99. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
November 14, 1931

Q. What is your attitude towards the Prime Minister's request that all parties should agree to his arbitration ?

A. I am unable to agree that a signed request should be made to the Premier to arbitrate, but I must explain that I am not opposed either to Mr. MacDonald personally or to the principle of arbitration. On the contrary, I have always pleaded for parties agreeing to arbitration, but I must refuse to be a party to requesting the Premier to arbitrate because the Premier makes the suggestion not in his private capacity as Mr. MacDonald, but as the Premier where he is placed by the Cabinet. He, therefore, speaks on behalf of the Government and I cannot be a party to the Government deciding this issue. It is because I have a high sense of honour that I refuse to seek the obligation of the Government hand. I cannot compromise as regards the Congress political demands. I can accept only such adjustments as are manifestly in the interest of India. Therefore, I will accept no obligation.

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". No other report of the speech is available.

Q. Does this mean that there can be no response to the Premier's request?

A. No, there can be. In fact, friends are considering addressing a joint letter to the Premier leaving me out. In fact, my consent to the Premier arbitrating is totally unnecessary since I represent the Congress and not any community. Also because, in terms of the Congress solution, I am bound to accept any settlement acceptable to Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Therefore, if Premier MacDonald arbitrates and Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims accept it, I am bound to accept the same. There is also another way. All the parties may sign a letter accepting arbitration on which the parties might nominate Mr. MacDonald as arbitrator. But I must repeat that such an arbitration must concern Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. If any award deals with other communities, I cannot take a tolerant position, because I am bound to resist every attempt to vivisect India converting the nation's legislature into a communal cockpit.

Q. But you promised, speaking at the Federal Committee, to provide through convention or co-option adequate representation to smaller minorities, in case they were not elected through the open door ?

A. I have not withdrawn the offer. It stands. I accept as legitimate demands made on behalf of smaller minorities that, if they were not elected through the open door the defect must be remedied. I am prepared to provide through convention or co-option, but would not agree to separate electorates or special reservation.

Q. Are other delegates likely to approach the Premier?

A I do not know. The delegates discussed the question, but were unable to reach any decision.

Q. Is there any prospect of a communal settlement now or in the immediate present?

A. I can say no effort will be spared for that purpose, but I see no prospects.

Q. Will you continue your efforts to solve the communal deadlock when you return to India?

A. Certainly. I am sure to reach an agreement in India, though I have no concrete plans just now.

Q. Whose scheme is this to introduce provincial autonomy into the provincial legislatures electing Constituent Assembly?

A. It is correct to say that the scheme was discussed in

A. It is correct to say that the scheme was discussed in Government circles with me and also other delegates. I am unable to say whether it is Government 's scheme, but it is not proposed by any delegate.

Q. Is it true that you are agreeable to the scheme with slight modifications?

A. No, I am totally opposed to the scheme of provincial autonomy as a first instalment. The only difference between others and myself is, they refused to discuss this scheme, while I dared to discuss the scheme.

Q. What are the conditions attached to your scheme?

A. Firstly, the statute which embodies provincial autonomy must also embody responsibility at the Centre. Secondly, it must also fix a time limit within which the Federal Constitution with responsibility at the Centre will come into operation. I suggested six months. Thirdly, the provinces must enjoy practically sovereign rights.

Q. What is then left for the Constituent Assembly to decide?

A. It can be reserved for the Constituent Assembly to discuss whether it is through single or bicameral legislature and what the strength of the Federal Legislature should be. But I have left no doubt in anybody's mind that the decision must be reached here and now as regards responsibility at the Centre, especially, the control of Finance, Army and Foreign Affairs.

Q. Have you given up all hopes of reaching a settlement?

A. No, I am sparing no endeavour to explore all avenues for a settlement. I would not be surprised if a settlement were reached even at twelfth hour.

Mahatma Gandhi was asked if the Conference failed to reach a settlement, what effects would it have on India.

Mahatmaji answered if the Congress failed to reach a settlement here and now, it must inevitably result in the revival immediately of civil disobedience with all its consequences, because the failure of the Conference means that Indian reformers who are wedded to responsibility at the Centre must not hope to expect the Government to meet them for an indefinite time. The civil disobedience is bound to start immediately once it is clear that the Conference has failed.

The Hindustan Times, 16-11-1931 and 18-11-1931

100. LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER

88, KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, W.,
November 14, 1931

DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

I know that letters signed by delegates are being sent to you inviting you to settle the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh question. You will notice the absence of my signature in any of those letters. Common friends desirous of seeing a successful issue to the Round Table Conference have suggested that it would help you if I sent a letter explaining why I do not sign the letters.

I should have no hesitation in putting my signature to a letter appointing you sole arbitrator in your individual capacity to settle the communal question, so far as the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs are concerned, but you will appreciate my hesitation in consenting to your appointment as arbitrator in your capacity as Prime Minister, for the simple reason that if I did so, I should feel embarrassed in presenting the Congress claim on the constitutional issue. But my reluctance does not mean that the Congress will in any way resist your award; in fact Congress cannot do so, for it is bound by a resolution to approve of any solution that is acceptable to the three parties concerned, and if those claiming to represent the three communities refer the matter for your decision, the Congress cannot object to your award.

The portion regarding the other minorities is different. You know the position taken up on behalf of the Congress. As I reiterated at the last meeting of the Minorities Committee, in my opinion they should be satisfied with complete protection of their civic and religious rights and of all their legitimate interests. There are many extra-legal ways that can be suggested for ensuring the election of deserving candidates from all the other minorities through the ordinary electorate, and I feel that that is the only proper and legitimate course.

In any case, the Congress will never be reconciled to any further extension of the principle of separate electorate or special statutory reservation.

Yours, etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER
10 DOWNING STREET
S.W.1

From a photostat: C.W. 9382, Courtesy: India Office Library

101. LETTER TO MARY OSBORN

November 16, 1931

DEAR SISTER,

I have just read your letter carefully and heartily endorse all you say. You rightly say that we are one with the Universal Spirit. I have found that in order to realize this state we must serve all that lives. This service is possible only if we reduce ourselves to zero. Self-effacement, i.e., self-sacrifice, is the law of life. And lest we feel that it is I who produced a particular result, we must learn to know that no man can ever alone produce a result. We must therefore work without attaching ourselves to results. Ours is to work, the result is in the hands of God. You seem to be on the right path.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1295

102. MESSAGE TO F. B. FISHER¹

LONDON,
November 17, 1931

My friends in India, members of the Working Committee of the Congress, have cabled me to return to India, immediately the Conference is over; so I must not go to America. It seems that there

¹ The message was conveyed to Bishop Fisher, who was in Chicago, on the telephone.

is still a long time before I could give any message to America. Perhaps God thinks that, though I would like to meet friends, I have no reason to go to America.

The Bombay Chronicle, 19-11-1931

*103. EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL
STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING¹*

LONDON,
November 17, 1931

MR. GANDHI: Lord Chancellor and fellow Delegates, I know that a tremendous responsibility rests upon my shoulders in having to give the Congress view on this most important question.

I have been sent here with the deliberate intention of exploring every possible avenue to achieve an honourable settlement, whether by open discussion at this table or by private conferences with Ministers and public men who influence public opinion here, and with all those who are interested in questions vitally affecting India. Therefore, I am under obligation not to leave a single stone unturned in order to arrive at a settlement, if only because the Congress is wedded to a policy which is known to you all. The Congress is intent upon reaching its goal at the earliest possible moment, and holds also very decided views upon all these matters. What is more to the purpose, it is today, or considers itself today, capable of shouldering all the responsibilities that flow from responsible self-government.

That being the case, I thought that I could not possibly allow the discussion on this most important matter to close without placing, as humbly as I could, and as briefly as I could, the Congress view on the question.

As you are all aware, the Congress case is that there should be complete responsibility transferred to India. That means, and it has been there stated, that there should be complete control over Defence and over External Affairs; but it also contemplates adjustments. I feel that we ought not to deceive ourselves, deceive the world, into thinking that we would be getting responsible government although we may not ask for responsibility in this vital matter. I think that a

¹ The subject being considered by the Committee was Defence.

nation that has no control over her own defence forces and over her external policy is hardly a responsible nation. Defence, its Army, is to a nation the very essence of its existence, and if a nation's defence is controlled by an outside agency, no matter how friendly it is, then that nation is certainly not responsibly governed. This is what our English teachers have taught us times without number, and therefore some Englishmen twitted me also when they heard the talk that we would have responsible government, but we would not have or would not claim control over our own defence forces.

Hence I am here very respectfully to claim, on behalf of the Congress, complete control over the Army, over the Defence forces and over External Affairs. I put in this also so as to avoid having to speak on it when Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru speaks on that subject.

To this conclusion we have come with the greatest deliberation. If we do not get this control at the time of embarking upon responsibility, I cannot conceive a time when, because we are enjoying responsibility in other matters, we would be suddenly found fit to control our own defence forces.

I would like this Committee for just a few brief moments to understand what this Army at the present moment means. This Army, in my opinion, whether it is Indian or whether it is British, is really an army of occupation. It does not matter to us, at any rate to me, a bit—I speak from experience—that they are Sikhs or that they are Gurkhas or that they are pathans or that they are men from Madras or that they are Rajputs; not matter who they are, they are foreigners to me whilst they are in the Army, controlled by an alien government. I cannot speak to them. Soldiers have come to me stealthily, and have been afraid even of speaking to me, because they felt that they might be reported. It is not possible for us ordinarily to go to the places where the soldiers are kept. They are also taught to regard us not as their countrymen. Unlike any other country in the world, there is absolutely no correspondence between them and the ordinary civil population. This I give as my evidence before this Committee as a man who has endeavoured to come into touch with every part of Indian life, with all those with whom it was possible for me to come into touch and this is not my own personal experience alone, but it is the experience of hundreds and thousands of Congressmen that there is an absolute wall between them and us.

I am therefore quite aware that it is a tremendous thing for us at once to shoulder that responsibility and to have control of this Army,

say, less the British soldiers. That is our unfortunate, unhappy position, created for us, I am sorry to have to say, by our rulers.

Then there is the British section of the Indian Army. What is the purpose of this British Army? Every Indian child knows that that British Army is there, including the Indian Army, for the defence of British interests and for avoiding or resisting foreign aggression. I am sorry to have to make these remarks, but that is precisely what I have learned and have experienced, and it would be unjust even to my British friends if I did not give expression to the truth as I have given it and as I hold it. Thirdly, it is an Army intended to suppress rebellion against constituted authority.

These, then, are the main functions of that Army, and hence it does not surprise me that Englishmen should take the view they do. If I were an Englishman, and had also the ambition to rule another nation, I would do precisely the same thing. I would take hold of Indians and train them as soldiers, and I would train them to be loyal to me, so loyal that they would at my command, shoot anybody I desired them to shoot. Who was it that shoot people at Jallianwala Bagh, if it was not their own countrymen? It is therefore not a matter of surprise to me, but it is a fact which stares me in the face.

The existence of the British troops there is also intended to serve this very purpose; it holds the balance between these different Indian soldiers evenly. It undoubtedly protects, as it must, the British officers, and it protects British lives. Again I do not make any complaint, if I would assume the premise that it was right for Great Britain to occupy India, and that it is right for Great Britain to hold India today and to continue to hold India, no matter under what altered conditions.

That being so, I have no difficulty in answering the question which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru would not face and which Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya also would not face. Both of them said that, not being experts, they were not able to say to what extent this Army could be or should be reduced. I, however, have no such difficulty. I have no difficulty in saying what should happen to this Army; that is to say, I would say emphatically that the whole of this Army should be disbanded, if it does not pass under my control, before I could possibly shoulder the burden of running the government of India under the terrible handicaps under which we are labouring as a legacy of alien rule.

Therefore, that being my fundamental position, I would say that if you British Ministers and British people really wish well by India, if you will transfer power now to us, then regard this as a vital condition, that they Army should pass under our control in its entirety. But then I have told you that, I know the risk that is attendant upon it. That Army will not accept my command. I know that very well. I know that the British Commander-in-Chief will not accept my command; nor would the Sikhs, nor the proud Rajputs—none of them would accept my command. But I expect, even so, to exercise that command with the goodwill of the British people, that they will be there at the time of transferring the command to teach a new lesson to these very soldiers, and to tell them that they are after all serving their own countrymen if they do so. British troops may also be told; 'Now is the time for you not to remain here to protect British interests and British lives, but you are here to protect India against foreign aggression, even against internal insurrection, as if you were defending and serving your own countrymen.

That is my dream. I know that I shall not realize that dream here. That is what I feel; the evidence that is before me, the evidence of my senses, tells me that I am not going to realize that dream today and here as a result of the deliberations of this Conference. But I should still cherish that dream. It is the dream I should like to cherish up to the end of my time. But, seeing the atmosphere here, I know that I cannot possibly infect British statesmen or the British public with the idea or with the ideal that this should be also their cherished mission. That is how I would interpret the Prime Minister's declaration; that is how I would interpret Lord Irwin's wishes. It should be the proud privilege and the proud duty of Great Britain now to initiate us in the mysteries of conducting our own defence. Having clipped our wings, it is their duty to give us wings whereby we can fly, even as they fly. That is really my ambition, and therefore I say I would wait till eternity if I cannot get control of Defence. I refuse to deceive myself that I am going to embark upon responsible government although I cannot control my Defence.

After all, India is not a nation which has never known how to defend herself. There is all the material there. There are the Mohammedans, standing in no dread of foreign invasion. The Sikhs will refuse to think that they can be conquered by anybody. The Gurkha, immediately he develops the national mind, will say: 'I alone can defend India.' Then there are the Rajputs, who are supposed to

be responsible for a thousand Thermopylaes, and not one little Thermopylae [as] in Greece. That is what the Englishman, Colonel Tod, told us. Colonel Tod has taught us to believe that every pass in Rajputana is a Thermopylae. Do these people stand in need of learning the art of defence?

I assume that, if I shoulder the burden of responsibility, all these people are going to join hands. I am here writhing in agony to see that we have not yet come to terms on the communal question; but whenever the communal settlement comes, it must presuppose that we are going to trust each other. Whether the rule is predominantly Mohammedan or Sikh or Hindu, they will not rule as Hindus or Mohammedans or Sikhs, but they will rule as Indians. If we have distrust of one another, then we want British people there if we do not want to be killed by one another. But then let us not talk of responsible government.

I at least cannot possibly think that we have got responsible government without control of the Army, and therefore I feel deep down at the bottom of my heart that if we are to have responsible government—and the Congress wants responsible government, the Congress has faith in itself, in the masses of the people, and in all those brave military races, and what is more, the Congress has faith also in Englishmen some day doing their duty and transferring complete control to us—we must infect the British with that love for India which would enable her to stand on her own feet. If the British people think that we shall require a century before that can be done, then for that century the Congress will wander in the wilderness, and the Congress must go through that terrible fiery ordeal, it must go through a storm of distress, misrepresentation and—if it becomes necessary and if it is God's will—a shower of bullets. If this happens, it will be because we cannot trust one another, because Englishmen and Indians have different angles of vision.

That is my fundamental position. I do not want to go into it in detail. I have put this case as forcibly as I am capable of putting it. But if this one thing is admitted, I am resourceful enough to submit and frame safeguard after safeguard which will commend themselves to any unbiased mind, provided that it is common cause that those safeguards must be in the interests of India. But I want to go further and endorse what Lord Irwin said, that although the safeguards in the Pact are stated to be in the interests of India, they must be

considered—I believe Lord Irwin used my name, and said that Gandhi also said they must be considered—as in the mutual interests of India and England. I endorse that. I do not conceive a single safeguard that will be only in the interests of India, not a single safeguard that will not be also in the interests of Great Britain, provided that we contemplate a partnership, a partnership at will, and a partnership on absolutely equal terms. The very reasons that I have given you today for demanding complete control for the Army are also reasons for pleading for, for demanding, control over our External Affairs.

Not being well versed in what is really meant by External Affairs and having to plead my ignorance of what is stated in these Reports of the Round Table Conference on the subject, I asked my friends Mr. Iyengar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to give me a first lesson in what is meant by external affairs and foreign relations. I have got their reply before me. They state that the words mean relations with neighbouring powers, relations with Indian States, relations with other powers in international affairs, relations with the Dominions. If these are external affairs, I think we are quite capable of shouldering the burden and discharging our obligations in connection with External Affairs. We can undoubtedly negotiate terms of peace with our own kith and kin, with our own neighbours, with our own countrymen, the Indian Princes. We can cultivate the friendliest relations with our neighbours the Afghans, and across the seas with Japanese; and certainly we can negotiate with the Dominions also. If the Dominions, will not have our countrymen to live there in perfect self-respect, we can deal with them.

It may be that I am talking out of folly, but you should understand that the Congress has thousands and tens of thousands of foolish men and foolish women like me, and it is on behalf of these that I respectfully register this claim, again saying that, with the safeguards we have conceived, we shall literally fulfil our obligations. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya has sketched the safeguards. With much of what he has said I entirely associate myself, but that is not the only solitary safeguard. If Englishmen and Indians put their heads together, sailing in the same direction with no mental reservation whatsoever, it is possible, I submit with every confidence, that we would bring into being safeguards which will be honourable alike to India and to England, and which would be a guarantee for the safety of every British life and the safety of every British interest to which India pledges her honour.

Lord Chancellor, I cannot go further. I tender a thousand apologies for taking up the time of this meeting, but you will understand the feeling that is welling up in me sitting here day after day, and thinking of it day and night, how these deliberations can come to a successful issue. You will understand the feeling which actuates me. It is a feeling of absolute goodwill towards Englishmen, and a feeling of absolute service to my countrymen.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gandhi, I have listened with very great interest to your appeal, and I want you to be good enough, if you will, to help me personally, I am very much impressed first of all by what you call your dream—I cannot, of course, share your dream—and then I am very much impressed by your ideals. Those I can—perhaps not to the height that you entertain them—share to a very great extent. I am just as anxious to secure peace and happiness in India as you are, and I am just as anxious as you are and as Lord Irwin is to carry out those conditions which he and you arrived at the beginning of the year, and which, in paragraph 2, read as follows :

“Of the scheme there outlined, Federation is an essential part; so also are Indian responsibility and reservations or safeguards in the interests of India for such matters as, for instance, Defence, External Affairs, the position of minorities, the financial credit of India and discharge of obligations.”

I will ask you to assume that I am just as anxious as you are to carry out that programme. I do not doubt your good faith. I ask you not to doubt mine.

You said, in the course of your remarks, that you hoped that we should be able to teach you the lesson of self-defence. (I am only summing up generally some of the matters that you referred to.) Nobody doubts the bravery of your fellow-countrymen. It has been, through the centuries, manifested on many a stricken field. But supposing it is right, as I think it is, that what you say is correct—namely, that at the present moment the Indians have to learn this lesson of self-defence. I agree with you. I think that is right. Now let me tell you my trouble.

If it is right that at the present moment an Indian Army is not ready for that, you are asking me and you are asking us to take a terrible responsibility when you ask us either to withdraw the Army or to reduce it to such a size as to make it not consistent with safety.

With much of what you say I have the greatest sympathy, but, if you will forgive me for saying so, Mr. Gandhi, the difficulty I feel is the responsibility that I should incur if I were a dictator and said, ‘Tomorrow I will withdraw every English soldier.’ It would be a terrible risk, and if anything happened to the peace and prosperity of India, I for one could never forgive myself for taking a decision to do that when, upon admission, the lesson has to be learned how Indians can conduct their own defence.

It is because I feel that responsibility that, although I like to share your ideals, I feel it is asking me, at any rate, to go beyond what I really ought to agree to. I agree with you. Mr. Gandhi, that what we have to consider here are the interests of India; but give me at any rate the same credit that I give you when I tell you that honestly I do not think it would be in the interests of India to comply with an immediate request to withdraw the Army. It is a responsibility that I think no statesman who has a real regard for the interests of India—forgive me for putting it in that way—could justify himself in assuming. The time may come, and I hope it will....

MR. GANDHI: May I just correct you ? I have not asked for the withdrawal of the British troops. I do not think that there was any sentence in my remarks to that effect, and if I did utter a sentence of that character, I should like to withdraw it.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session) : Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 387-9

104. SPEECH AT MEETING OF WOMEN'S INDIAN COUNCIL¹

LONDON,²

November 18, 1931

Gandhiji took the opportunity of correcting various fantastic notions about the women of India and presented a vivid picture of the heroic part they had played during the last struggle. He said:

They are perhaps in many ways superior to you. You had to go through untold suffering to win your suffrage. In India women got it for the asking. No hindrances have been placed in the way of their entering public life and the Congress had not only women for its Presidents, but had Mrs. Naidu as a member of its Cabinet. For several years, and during the last struggle when our organizations were declared illegal and those in charge of them put into prison, it was the women who came to the forefront, took the place of “dictators” and filled the jails. That, however, does not mean that they have not suffered at the hands of men. They have had their bitter cups to drink, but I have no hesitation in telling you that what you have read

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's “London Letter”. The meeting was organized by Agatha Harrison and took place at Morley College.

² According to a report in *The Hindustan Times*, 21-11-1931, the meeting took place on this date.

in Miss Mayo's book about India is 99 per cent untrue. I have read the book from cover to cover and as I finished it I exclaimed that it was verily a drain inspector's report¹. Some of the things she has said are true, but her generalizations are absolutely false, and several statements in the book are pure figments of her imaginations.

He then went on to describe how last year they came out of their homes in one mass and showed an awakening which was miraculous. They took part in processions, defied the law, and bore the lathi, without raising a little finger, without swearing at the police, and used their power persuasion to wean the drunkard from drink and the sellers and purchasers of foreign cloth from it. It was not a learned woman like Sarojini Naidu but an unlettered woman² who had borne lathi blows on her head which bled profusely whilst she stood unflinching, ordering her companions not to move from their posts, and converted the little town of Borsad into a Thermopylae. It was to these women that the last year's victory was mainly due.

There was little time for questions, but one or two that were asked were expressive of the anxiety with which they were watching the deliberations of the Round Table Conference. Gandhiji said:

There is yet time for these two countries to remain united on terms of equality for the good of the world. It would not satisfy my soul to gain freedom for India and not to help in the peace of the world. I have the conviction in me that, when England ceases to prey upon India, she will also cease to prey upon other nations, At any rate, India will have no part in the blood guilt.

Young India, 3-12-1931

105. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, S.W. 1,
November 19, 1931

DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

I have not troubled you save for sending copy of a cablegram on the situation as it is developing in India.

It is not my intention even now to weary you with a review of the situation there, but there are wild rumours going about in our

¹ *Vide* "Drain Inspector's Report"

² Gangabehn Vaidya

circles to the effect that martial law in Bengal is imminent; repression on an extensive scale has already commenced there, and that all information about the situation in Bengal is being suppressed by the authorities.

Could you please tell me whether there is the slightest justification for these rumours, and further, what is being actually done by the authorities in Bengal? Also, could I cable to the President of the Congress asking for information about Bengal in the certain hope that the reply that might be sent will not be censored, if it otherwise complies with the Censorship Regulations ?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR SAMUEL HOARE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA
INDIA OFFICE, S.W.1

From a photostat: C.W. 9383, Courtesy: India Office Library

106. LETTER TO SIR PHILIP HARTOG

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, S.W. 1,
November 19, 1931

DEAR SIR PHILIP,

I am much obliged to you for your letter of the 17th inst.

I do not propose just now to withdraw the statement¹ I made at the meeting at Chatham House. At the present moment I have not got any time for searching the records to which you are making reference. I, how-ever, promise not to forget the matter, and if I find that I cannot support the statement made by me at Chatham House, I will give my retraction much wider publicity than the Chatham House speech could ever attain.

¹ Namely, that the percentage of literacy in India had fallen during the British rule. The addressee had questioned the correctness of the statement. In his letter of November 17 he said he had examined the *Young India* articles and the Punjab Administration report and could find nothing in them to support Gandhiji's contention and had concluded: ". . . may I suggest that you should now withdraw your statement? . . ." *vide* also "Letter to Sir Philip Hartog", 23-10-1931

Meanwhile I am endeavouring to find out the references you want.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

SIR PHILIP HARTOG, K.B. E.

5 INVERNESS GARDENS, W. 8

From a photostat: C.W. 9403-a. Courtesy: India Office Library

107. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS'

LONDON,

November 19, 1931

Not only am I not callous about the Princes joining the Federation, but most anxious that they should do so. So far as it lies in me, I should make every effort to induce the Princes to join the Federation.

The Hindu, 20-11-1931

*108. EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL
STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING*

LONDON,

November 19, 1931

MR.GANDHI: Lord Chancellor and friends, I would like to tender my congratulations to Mr.Benthall on his very temperate statement, and I wish that he could have seen his way not to spoil that admirable statement by importing two sentiments. One sentiment expressed by him was practically that Europeans or Britishers claimed what they are claiming because of their having conferred certain benefits on India. I wish that he could have omitted this opinion, but having expressed it, there should have been no surprise expressed, as was expressed by Lord Reading, that there was a courteous retort from Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, and now, as we have heard, reinforced by Sir Phiroze Sethna. I wish also that he could have omitted the threat that has been used in that statement on behalf of the great corporation

¹ Gandhiji, according to the source, issued the statement to refute the "baseless" report that he had told the Premier in his interview with him that he did not want the Princes to federate.

that he represents. He said that the European support to the national demand was conditional upon Indian nationalists accepting the demands of the European community expressed by Mr. Benthall, as also, not stated in this statement, but we had it, unfortunately, a few days ago, the separatist tendency expressed in the demand for a separate electorate, and their joining that separatist combination about which it was my painful position to speak the other day. I have endeavoured to study the resolution passed at the last Conference. I want to read that resolution again, although you are familiar with it, because I shall want to say a few things in connection with that resolution.:

At the instance of the British commercial community the principle was generally agreed that there should be no discrimination between the rights of the British commercial community, firms and companies trading in India and the rights of Indian-born subjects.

The rest I need not read.

I am extremely sorry, in spite of the great regard and respect I entertain for Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar, to have to dissent from this sweeping resolution. I was, therefore, delighted yesterday when Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru readily admitted that it was vague and that it was susceptible of improvement. You will see the general character of this resolution if you will carefully study it. There is to be no discrimination between the rights of the British mercantile community, firms and companies trading in India and the rights of Indian-born subjects. If I have interpreted this correctly, I think that it is a terrific thing, and I for one could not possibly commit the Congress to a resolution of this character, much less commit the future Government of India.

There is here no qualification whatsoever. The rights of the British commercial community are to stand on exactly the same footing as those of Indian-born subjects. Therefore, it is not as if there is merely not to be any racial discrimination, or anything of that kind, but here the British commercial community are to enjoy absolutely the same rights as Indian-born subjects. I want to state, with all the emphasis that I can command, that I could not even endorse the formula that the rights of all Indian-born subjects themselves could even be guaranteed as equal. I shall show you the reason presently.

I think that you will readily grant that the future Government of India would be constantly obliged (to use the admirable phrase used

just now by Sir Phiroze Sethna) in order to equalize conditions to do what the existing Government has neglected to, namely, continually to discriminate in favour of the famishing Indians against those who have been blest by nature or by the Government themselves with riches and other privileges. It will be necessary for the future Government, perhaps, to provide quarters free for labour, and the monied men of India might say : 'If you provide quarters for them you should give corresponding grants to us, although we do not require quarters of that nature.' It would undoubtedly be discrimination in favour of poor people, and the monied men might then say, according to this formula, that it would be discrimination against them.

I therefore venture to suggest that this sweeping formula cannot possibly be accepted by us in this Conference when we are trying to assist His Majesty's Government—in so far as they will accept our assistance—in shaping the future Constitution of India.

But having said this, I want to associate myself completely with the British merchants and European houses in their legitimate demand that there should be no racial discrimination. I, who had to fight the great South African Government for over 20 years in order to resist their colour bar and their discriminating legislation directed against Indians as such, could be no party to discrimination of that character against the British friends who are at present in India or who may in future seek entry. I speak on behalf of the Congress also. The Congress too holds the same view.

Therefore, instead of this I would suggest a formula somewhat on these lines, a formula for which I had the pleasure and privilege of fighting General Smuts for a number of years. It may be capable of improvement, but I simply suggest this for the consideration of this Committee and especially for the consideration of European friends. "No disqualification not suffered by Indian-born citizens of the State shall be imposed upon any person lawfully residing in for entering India merely"—I emphasize the word "merely"—"on the ground of race, colour or religion." I think that this is an all-satisfying formula. No Government could possibly go beyond this. I want to deal briefly with the implications of this, and the implications of this are, I am sorry to say, different from the deductions that Lord Reading drew or sought to draw from last year's formula. There would be no discrimination in this formula against a single Britisher or

for the matter against a single European as such. I propose here to draw no distinction whatever between Britishers or other Europeans of Americans or Japanese. I would not copy the model of the British Colonies or the British Dominions which have, in my humble opinion, disfigured their Statute-books by importing legislation essentially based upon distinctions of colour and race.

India free, I would love to think, would give a different kind of lesson and set a different kind of example to the whole world. I would not wish India to live a life of complete isolation whereby she would live in water-tight compartments and allow nobody to enter her borders or to trade within her borders. But, having said that, I have in my own mind many things that I would have to do—to repeat that expression—in order to equalize conditions. I am afraid that for years to come India would be engaged in passing legislation in order to raise the donwtrodden, the fallen, from the mire into which they have been sunk by the capitalists, by the landlords, by the so-called classes, and then, subsequently and scientifically, by the British rulers. If we are to lift these people from the mire, then it would be the bounden duty of the National Government of India, in order to set its house in order, continually to give preference to these people and even free them from the burdens under which they are being crushed. And if the landlords, zamindars, monied men and those who are today enjoying privileges I do not care whether they are Europeans or Indians if they find that they are discriminated against, I shall sympathize with them, but I will not be able to help them, even if I could possibly do so, because I would seek their assistance in that process, and without their assistance it would not be possible to raise these people out of the mire.

Look at the condition, if you will, of the untouchables. The law has to come to their assistance and set a part miles of territory. At the present moment they hold no land; at the present moment they are absolutely living at the mercy of the so-called higher castes, and also, let me say, at the mercy of the State. They can be removed from one quarter to another without complaint and without being able to seek the assistance of law. Well, the first act of the Legislature will then be to see that, in order somewhat to equalize conditions, these people are given grants freely.

From whose pockets are these grants to come? Not from the pockets of Heaven. Heaven is not going to drop money for the sake of the State. They will naturally come from the monied classes,

including the Europeans. Will they say that this is discrimination? They will be able to see that this is no discrimination against them because they are Europeans; it will be discrimination against them because they have got money and the others have got no money. It will be, therefore, a battle between the 'haves' and the 'havenots'; and if that is what is feared, I am afraid the National Government will not be able to come into being if all those classes hold the pistol at the heads of these dumb millions and say: 'You shall not have a Government of your own unless you guarantee our possessions and our rights.

I think I have given sufficiently an indication of what the Congress stands for; of the implications of this formula that I have suggested. On no account will they find that there has been discrimination against them because they are English or because they are Europeans or Japanese or any other race. The grounds that will be applicable to them for discrimination will be also the grounds for discrimination against Indian-born citizens, and, therefore, I have got another formula also, hurriedly drafted because I drafted it here as I was listening to Lord Reading and as I was listening Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. The second formula that I have got with me is in connection with existing rights :

No existing interest legitimately acquired, and not being in conflict with the best interests of the nation in general, shall be interfered with except in accordance with the law applicable to such interests.

Here, too, I would explain shortly what I have in mind. I certainly have in mind what you find in the Congress resolution in connection with the taking over by the incoming Government of obligations that are being today discharged by the British Government. Just as we claim that these obligations must be examined by an impartial tribunal before they are taken over by us, so should existing interests be subject to judicial scrutiny whenever necessary. There is no question, therefore, of repudiation but merely of taking over under examination, under audit. We have, some of us here, some of us who have made a study of the privileges and the monopolies enjoyed by Europeans, but let it not be merely Europeans, there are Indians—I have undoubtedly several Indians in mind—who are today in possession of land which has been practically given away to them not for any service rendered to the nation but for some service

rendered, I cannot even say to the Government, because I do not think that the Government has benefited, but to some official; and if you tell me that these concessions and these privileges are not to be examined by the State, I again tell you that it will be impossible to run the machinery of government on behalf of the "have-nots", on behalf of the dispossessed. Hence you will see here that there is nothing stated in connection with the Europeans. The second formula also is applicable equally to the Europeans as it is applicable to Indians, as it is applicable, say, to Sir Purushottamadas Thakurdas and Sir Phiroze Sethna. If they have obtained concessions which have been obtained because they did some service to the officials of the day and got some miles of land, well, if I had the possession of the Government, I would quickly dispossess them. I would not consider them because they are Indians, and I would just as readily dispossess Sir Hubert Carr or Mr. Benthall, however admirable they are and however friendly they are to me. They may stand me fifty dinners, but they will not stand in the way of my dispossessing them. The law will be no respecter of persons whatsoever. I give you that assurance. After having given that assurance, I am unable to go any further. So that is really what is implied by "legitimately acquired"—that every interest must have been taintless, it must be above suspicion, like Caesar's wife, and, therefore, we shall expect to examine all these things when they come under the notice of that Government.

Then you have "not being in conflict with the best interests of the nation". I have in mind certain monopolies, legitimately acquired undoubtedly, but which have been brought into being in conflict with the best interests of the nation. Let me give you an illustration which will amuse you somewhat, but which is on neutral ground. Take this white elephant which is called New Delhi. Crores have been spent upon it. Suppose that the future Government comes to conclusion that this white elephant, seeing that we have got it, ought to be turned to some use. Imagine that in Old Delhi there is plague or cholera going on, and we want hospitals for the poor people. What are we to do? Do you suppose the National Government will be able to build hospitals, and so on? Nothing of the kind. We will take charge of those buildings and put these plague-stricken people in them and use them as hospitals, because I contend that those buildings are in conflict with the best interests of the nation. They do not represent the millions of India. They may be representative of the monied men who are sitting at the table; they

may be representative of His Highness the Nawab Sahib of Bhopal or of Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas or of Sir Phiroze Sethna or of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, but they are not representative of those who lack even anywhere to sleep and have not even a crust of bread to eat. If the National Government comes to conclusion that that place is unnecessary, no matter what interests are concerned, they will be dispossessed, and they will be dispossessed, I may tell you, without any compensation, because, if you want this Government to pay compensation, it will have to rob Peter to pay Paul, and that would be impossible.

I am trying to humour you in order to present this bitter pill, for it is a bitter pill which has got to be swallowed if a Government as Congress conceives it comes into being. I have no desire to deceive you; I have no desire, in order to take away something from here, to deceive you into the belief that everything will be quite all right. I want, on behalf of the Congress, to lay all the cards on the table. I want no mental reservation of any description whatsoever; and then, if the Congress position is acceptable, nothing will please me better, but, if that position is no acceptable, if today I feel I cannot possibly touch your hearts and cannot carry you with me, then, the Congress must continue to wander and must continue the process of proselytization until you are all converted and allow the millions of India to feel that at last they have got a National Government.

Up to now, no one has said a word in connection with the two lines which appear at the end of this resolution, namely :

It was agreed that the existing rights of the European community in India in regard to criminal trials should be maintained.

I must confess that I have not been able to study all the implications of it. I am glad to be able to say that for some days I have been engaged in carrying on friendly—absolutely friendly—and Private conversations with Sir Hubert Carr, Mr. Benthall, and some friends. I was discussing this very theme with them and I asked them to tell me what these two things meant and they said it was the same thing for the other communities. I have not ascertained what is the meaning of the same thing for the other communities. It means, I suppose, that the other communities also may demand their own jury. This refers to trial by jury. I am afraid, I cannot possibly endorse this formula.

MR. JINNAH: May I correct you, Mr. Gandhi? It refers not only to juries but to the tribunals, the tribunals which will try Europeans and Indians, and there are many other distinctions. It is not merely the jury.

MR. GANDHI: I did not know that. That is why I said I have not studied it. If there is something more, you will pardon my ignorance, but I could not possibly be a party to such reservations. I think that a National Government cannot possibly be shut in by these restrictions. All the communities today who will be the future Indian nation must start with good will, must start with mutual trust or not at all. If we are told that we cannot possibly have responsible government, that will be a state of things one can understand. But we are told there must be all these reservations and safeguards. It would not be liberty and responsible government, but it would be all safeguards. Safeguards would eat away the whole of the Government. I was trying this morning to find something analogous and I came to the conclusion that if all these safeguards are to be granted and all the talk here takes concrete shape and we are told that we are to get responsible government it will be almost on a par with the responsible government that prisoners have in their jails. They too have complete independence immediately the cell door is locked and the jailer goes. The prisoners inside that cell about 10 ft. square or 7 ft. have complete independence. I do not ask for that kind of complete independence, with the jailors safeguarding comfortably their own rights.

Therefore I appeal to our European friends that they should withdraw this idea of safeguarding their rights. I venture to suggest that the two formula that I have put forward should be adopted. You may cut them about in any manner you like. If the wording is not satisfactory, by all means suggest some other wording. But, outside these formula of a negative character whereby there is no bar sinister placed against you, I venture to say you may not—shall I say dare not—ask for more. So much with reference to existing interests and future trade.

Mr. Jayakar was talking yesterday about key industries and I propose to associate myself entirely with the sentiments that he expressed. I do not think that I need take up your time by talking of what importance Congress attaches to key industries. The Congress conception is that, if the key industries are not taken over by the State itself, the State will at least have a predominant say in the conduct and administration and development of the key industries.

A poor undeveloped country like India is not to be judged as a highly developed individualist island like Great Britain may be. What

is good for Great Britain today is, in my opinion, in many respects poison for India. India has got to develop her own economics, her own policy, her own method of dealing with her industries and everything else. Therefore, so far as the key industries are concerned, I am afraid that not merely the Britishers but many will feel that they are not having fair play. But I do not know what is the meaning of "fair play" against a State.

And then about coastal trade too, the Congress undoubtedly has the greatest sympathy with the desire to develop national coastal trade; but, if in the Bill about the coastal trade there is any discrimination against Europeans as such, I will join hands with the Europeans and fight that Bill or the proposal which discriminates against Englishmen because they are Englishmen. But there are the vast interests that have come into being. I have travelled fairly frequently up the great riverways of Bengal and I travelled years ago up the Irawaddy. I know something of that trade. By concessions, privileges, favours, whatever you call them, these huge corporations have built up industries, built up companies and built up a trade which does not admit of any opposition whatsoever.

Some of you may have heard of a budding company between Chittagong and Rangoon. The directors of that company, poor struggling Mohammedans, came to me in Rangoon and asked me if I could do anything. My whole heart went out to them, but there was nothing to be done. What could be done? There is the mighty British India Steam Navigation Company simply underselling this budding company and practically taking the passengers without any passage money at all. I could quote instance after instance of that character. Therefore, it is not because it is a British Company. If it were an Indian company that had usurped this thing, it would be the same. Supposing an Indian company was taking away capital, as today we have Indians who, instead of investing their capital in India, invest their capital or invest their monies outside India. Imagine that there was a huge Indian corporation that was taking away all its profits and investing them in some other parts of the world, fearing that the National Government was not going along a correct policy, and, therefore, in order to keep their money intact they were taking away that money outside. Go a little step further with me and say that these Indian directors, in order to organize in a most scientific, finished and perfect manner, brought

all the European skill that they could bring there and did not allow these struggling corporations to come into being, I would certainly have something to say and have legislation in order to protect the companies like the Chittagong company.

Some friends could not even float their ships along the Irawaddy. They gave me chapter and verse in order to assure me that it became utterly impossible; they could not get their licences, they could not get the ordinary facilities that one is entitled to. Everyone of us knows what money can buy, what prestige can buy, and when such prestige is built up which kills all the saplings, it becomes necessary then to use the expression of Sir John Gorst which he used forty-two years ago—that it then becomes necessary to lop off the tall poppies. Tall poppies ought not to be allowed to crush these saplings. That is really the case on behalf of the coastal trade. It may have been clumsily worded, the Bill. That does not matter, but I think the essence of it is absolutely correct.

About the citizenship, that is the last thing, Well, you have the definition from the Nehru Report. Naturally the Nehru Committee had to consider situations as they arose, and, therefore, there were several changes rung on the original description; but I would like this Committee to realize that the Nehru Report is—I am sorry to have to say it, but it is so—today a back number. Even the late Pandit Motilal Nehru was obliged to say that, not because we wanted to treat the Nehru Report as a back number. The Nehru Report is undoubtedly a compromise between several positions. Though not a member of the committee, I knew exactly what was happening, because I happened at that time to be in India, to be in touch with the members of the Committee, and, therefore, I know something of the history that Report and how that Committee also came into being. I am not going to weary you with the details of the history of that Committee, but, as you will see, that Report is based upon the idea that we were to have Dominion Status. Well, the Congress has taken several strides further. The Congress had to forget that Report in connection with the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh formula, as it has been obliged to forget that Report about many other things. Although the Nehru Report is a creation, or the Nehru Committee is in the first instance a creation, of the Congress, I am not able, therefore, to say that we will be able today to swear by everything that appears there. Beyond that I do not want just now to go.

The definition of "citizen" is a terrific job. I could not possibly undertake on the spur of the moment to present, as I understand the Congress mentality of today, what will commend itself to the Congress or what will commend itself to me. It is, as I say, a matter on which I would like to confer with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other friends and try to understand what is at the back of their minds, because I must confess that out of this discussion I have not been able to reach the heart of the thing. I have made the Congress position absolutely clear, that we do not want any racial discrimination, but after having cleared that position I am not called upon now to give a summary decision for the opinion of the Congress in connection with the definition of the word "citizen". Therefore, I would simply say in connection with the word "citizen" that I reserve my opinion as to the definition entirely for the time being.

Having said this, I want to close with this remark. I do not despair of finding a common formula that would satisfy the European friends. The negotiations in which I was privileged to be a party are, I think, still to continue. If my presence is required, I will still attend that little committee meeting.

The idea is to enlarge it and give it a little less informal shape and find out a common basis.

In spite of what I have said, I do not despair of finding a common formula, but having expressed that hope, I would again hark back to the point that, so far as I can understand it, I cannot think of any detailed scheme which could be incorporated in the Constitution. What can be incorporated in the Constitution is some such formula as this, round which all kinds of rights can arise.

There is no conception here, as you see, of doing anything administratively. I have expressed my own hope in connection with the Federal and Supreme Court. To me the Federal Court is the Supreme Court; it is the final Court of Appeal beyond which there would be no appeal whatsoever; it is my Privy Council and it is the Palladium of Liberty. It is the Court to which every person who is at all aggrieved can go. A great jurist in the Transvaal—and the Transvaal and South Africa generally have undoubtedly produced very great jurists—to whom I used to go for assistance when I was a youngster, once said to me, in regard to a very difficult case, "Although there may be no hope just now, I tell you that I have guided myself by one thing, or else I should not be a lawyer; the law

teaches us lawyers that there is absolutely no wrong for which there is no remedy to be found in court of law, and if judges say there is no remedy, then those Judges should be immediately unseated.” I say that with all deference to you, Lord Chancellor.

I therefore think that our European friends may rest assured that the future Federal Court will not send them away empty-handed, as we expect to go away empty-handed if we do not have the favour of the Minister who are the present advisers of His Majesty. I am still hoping that we shall have their ear and get round their better side, and then we may hope to go away with something substantial in our pockets, but, whether we go away with anything substantial in our pockets or not, I hope that, if the Federal Court of my dreams comes into being, then the Europeans and evrybody—all the minorities—may rest assured that that court will not fail them, though a puny individual like myself may fail them.

CHAIRMAN: We are very much obliged to Mr. Gandhi or that speech. If you will allow me to say so, everybody must be impressed by the earnestness and sincerity with which he advocates his ideals, and I thank him very much indeed. perhaps he will be good enough to give me those two formulae.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: I should like to ask Mahatma Gandhi to explain one part of his speech, in regard to which there is some doubt in my mind. Does he propose that the National Government of the future should examine and investigate the title to property of everyone, and if so, would it be any title acquired within a certain period of time or not? What is the machinery he proposes to bring into existence for the examination of that title and does he propose to give any compensation at all, or that the National Government should simply expropriate property which, according to his view o the majority, seemed to have been wrongfully acquired?

MR. GANDHI: If you will give me permission, I will certainly answer those questions, which are very legitimate questions. I have really given my view. So far as I understand, it is not intended that the administration should do the things; everything that is done will be above board.

It will be done by legal machinery. All these claims—

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: That is what I want to know. What is the legal machinery to be?

MR. GANDHI: I have not at the present moment thought of any limitation. I think that there is no limitation running against a wrong.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU: Under your National Government, therefore, no title in India is safe?

MR. GANDHI : Under our National Government the Court will decide these things, and if there is any undue fear about these things, I think it is possible to satisfy every legitimate doubt. I have no hesitation in saying that generally speaking this is a formula which should be accepted. Where complaints are made that there are illegitimate rights acquired, it should be open to the courts of law to examine those rights. I am not going to say today in taking over the Government that I shall examine no rights whatsoever, no titles that have been acquired.

CHAIRMAN : I think each of you will consider most carefully what the other has said and we will consider what both of you have said.

PANDIT M. M. MALAVIYA : After the very exhaustive speech of the Mahatama Gandhi, I do not propose to detain the Committee very long . I wish to make a few points quite plain. We are all agreed that there shall be no discrimination against Europeans trading in India and no wrong done to them. They shall be dealt with justly and fairly. On that point there is general agreement.

CHAIRMAN : Would you rather continue at our next meeting ?

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session) : Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp.425-9

109. *LETTER TO W. TUDOR OWEN¹*

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, S.W. 1,
November 20, 1931

DEAR FRIENDS,

I have your letter. I am likely to be free about 5 p.m. on Wednesday next. I would like you please to telegraph to me if that hour will suit you.

I would be glad to renew old memories, if we can possibly meet.

Yours sincerely,

W. TUDOR OWEN, ESQ.
BROADHURST
LITTLE COMMON
BEXHILL-ON-SEA

From a photostat : S.N.18328

¹ A former official of the Government of India, then guardian of the Maharaja of Bharatpur , a minor

110. *SPEECH AT MEETING OF LONDON VEGETARIAN SOCIETY*

LONDON,

November 20, 1931

When I received the invitation to be present at this meeting, I need not tell you how pleased I was, because it received old memories and recollections of pleasant friendship formed with vegetarians. I feel especially honoured to find on my right Mr. Henry Salt. I was Mr. Salt's book, *A Plea for Vegetarianism*, which showed my why, apart from a hereditary habit, and apart from my adherence to a vow administered to me by my mother, it was right to be a vegetarian. He showed me why it was a moral duty incumbent on vegetarians not to live upon fellow-animals. It is, therefore, a matter of additional pleasure to me that I find Mr. Salt in our midst.

I do not propose to take up your time by giving you my various experiences of vegetarianism, nor do I want to tell you something of the great difficulty that faced me in London itself in remaining staunch to vegetarianism, but I would like to share with you some of the thoughts that have developed in me in connection with vegetarianism. Forty years ago I used to mix freely with vegetarians. There was at that time hardly a vegetarian restaurant in London that I had not visited. I made it a point, out of curiosity, and to study the possibilities of vegetarian restaurants in London, to visit every one of them. Naturally, therefore, I came into close contact with many vegetarians. I found at the tables that largely the conversation turned upon food and disease. I found also that the vegetarians who were struggling to stick to their vegetarianism were finding it difficult from health point of view. I do not know whether, nowadays, you have those debates, but I used at that time to attend debates that were held between vegetarians and vegetarians, and between vegetarians and non-vegetarians. I remember one such debate, between Dr. Densmore and the late Dr. T. R. Allinson. Then vegetarians had a habit of talking of nothing but food and nothing but disease. I feel that is the worst way of going about the business. I notice also that it is those persons who become vegetarians because they are suffering from some disease or other—that is, from purely the health point of view it is those persons who largely fall back. I discovered that for remaining staunch to vegetarianism a man requires a moral basis.

For me that was a great discovery in my search after truth. At an early age, in the course of my experiments, I found that a selfish basis would not serve the purpose of taking a man higher and higher along the paths of evolution. What was required was an altruistic purpose. I found also that health was by no means the monopoly of vegetarians. I found many people having no bias one way or the other, and that non-vegetarians were able to show, generally speaking, good health. I found also the several vegetarians found it impossible to remain vegetarians because they had made food a fetish and because they thought that by becoming vegetarians they could eat as much lentils, haricot beans, and cheese as they liked. Of course, those people could not possibly keep their health. Observing along these lines, I saw that a man should eat sparingly and now and then fast. No man or woman really ate sparingly consumed just that quantity which the body requires and no more. We easily fall a prey to the temptations of the palate, and, therefore, when a thing tastes delicious, we do not mind taking a morsel or two more. But you cannot keep health under those circumstances. Therefore, I discovered that in order to keep health, no matter what you ate, it was necessary to cut down the quantity of your food and reduce the number of meals. Become moderate; err on the side of less, rather than on the side of more. When I invite friends to share their meals with me, I never press them to take anything except only what they require. On the contrary, I tell them not to take a thing if they do not want it.

What I want to bring to your notice is that vegetarians need to be tolerant if they want to convert others to vegetarianism. Adopt a little humility. We should appeal to the moral sense of the people who do not see eye to eye with us. If a vegetarian became ill, and a doctor prescribed beef-tea, then I would not call him a vegetarian. A vegetarian is made of sterner stuff. Why? Because it is for the building of the spirit and not of the body. Man is more than meat. It is the spirit in man for which we are concerned. Therefore, vegetarians should have that moral basis—that a man was not born a carnivorous animal, but born to live on the fruits and herbs that the earth grows. I know we must all err. I would give up milk if I could but I cannot. I have made that experiment times without number. I could not, after a serious illness, regain my strength unless I went back to milk. That has been the tragedy of my life. But the basis of my vegetarianism is not physical, but moral. If anybody said that I should die if I did not take beef-tea or mutton, even under medical advice, I would prefer death. That is the basis of my vegetarianism. I would love to think that all of us who called ourselves

vegetarians should have that basis. There were thousands of meat-eaters who did not stay meat-eaters. There must be a definite reason for our making that change in our lives, for our adopting habits and customs different from society, even though sometimes that change may offend those nearest and dearest to us. Not for the world should you sacrifice a moral principle. Therefore the only basis for having a vegetarian society and proclaiming a vegetarian principle is, and must be, a moral one. I am not to tell you, as I see and wander about the world, that vegetarians, on the whole, enjoy much better health than meat-eaters. I belong to a country which is predominantly vegetarian by habit or necessity. Therefore, I cannot testify that that shows much greater endurance, much greater courage, or much greater exemption from disease. Because it is a peculiar, personal thing. It requires obedience, and scrupulous obedience, to all the laws of hygiene.

Therefore, I think that what vegetarians should do is not to emphasize the physical consequences of vegetarianism, but to explore the moral consequences. While we have not yet forgotten that we share many things in common with the beast, we do not sufficiently realize that there are certain things which differentiate us from the beast. Of course, we have vegetarians in the cow and the bull—which are better vegetarians than we are—but there is something much higher which calls us of vegetarianism. Therefore I thought that during the few minutes which I give myself the privilege of addressing you, I would just emphasize the moral basis of vegetarianism. And I would say that I have found from my own experience, and the experience of thousands of friends and companions, that they find satisfaction, so far as vegetarianism is concerned, from the moral basis they have chosen for sustaining vegetarianism.

In conclusion, I thank you all for coming here and allowing me to see vegetarians face to face. I cannot say I used to meet you forty or forty-two years ago. I suppose the faces of the London Vegetarian Society have changed. There are very few members who, like Mr. Salt, can claim association with the Society extending over forty years. Lastly, I would like you, if you want to, to ask me any questions, for I am at your disposal for a few minutes.

Mr. Gandhi was then asked to give his reasons for limiting his daily diet to five articles only, and he replied:

That has no connection with vegetarianism. . . . There was another reason. I had been a pampered child of nature. I had acquired then that notoriety that when I was invited by friends, they placed before me ample dishes of food. I told them, I had come there to serve, and personally, I should find myself dying by inches if I allowed myself to be pampered like that. So, in limiting myself to five

ingredients of food, I served a double purpose. And I must finish all my eating before sundown. I have been saved many pitfalls by that. There are many discoveries about that in regard to health reasons. Dietists are saying that we are more and more tending towards simplifying diet, and that, if one must live for health one must have one thing at a time and avoid harmful combinations. I like the process of exclusion better than that of inclusion because no two doctors have the same opinion.

Then I think the restriction to five articles of food has helped me morally and materially—materially because, in a poor country like India, it is not always possible to procure goat's milk, and it is a hard thing to produce fruit and grapes. Then, I go to visit poor people, and if I expected hothouse grapes, they would banish me. So, by restricting myself to five articles of food, it also serves the law of economy.

Harijan, 20-2-1949

111. LETTER TO J. R. GLORNEY BOLTON

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,

LONDON, S.W. 1,

November 21, 1931

DEAR MR. BOLTON¹,

I was much touched by your letter. I had already seen your letter in the *Times*, and thought it was just the thing. So far as I can see nothing is going to come out of the Conference, when therefore, the struggle revives, many Englishmen and women will be faced with the question whether they can put right before country. I am still making a desperate effort to secure a settlement, and thus avoid conflict which is likely to be more bitter than that of last year.

Yours sincerely,

J. R. GLORNEY BOLTON, ESQ.

9 KING'S BENCH WALK

E.C. 4

From a photostat: S.N. 18239

¹ Bolton had been twice in India, and later, in 1934, wrote a book *The Tragedy of Gandhi*.

112. LETTER TO SIR HENRY LAWRENCE

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
S.W. 1,
November 21, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

You will pardon this dictated letter. I am so sorry for the misunderstanding that has arisen.¹ I did not want a letter about the Depressed Classes. I personally want to keep the Depressed Classes question as out of the ordinary. It stands on its own plane. But when Mr. Davis brought them in, I did not mind the argument. What I wanted was the briefest letter possible condemning the action of the Englishmen first of all, in entering into a combination with the other Minorities, and, secondly, in asking for a separate electorate and special reservation at all. I did not even wish to bring in the adult franchise in this connection, because in my opinion adult franchise does not help a very insignificant minority. My argument about the Englishmen was that they should expect to find their way to the Legislatures by an appeal to the common electorate and expect to succeed by right of service. But Mr. Davis thought that no one would look at the proposal without the background of adult suffrage. I could have no objection to that, but I could not possibly write anything myself about a letter which did not make mention of the Englishmen's move. And then too I would have been obliged to be very cautious, for the simple reason that, whilst I am a delegate to the Conference, I do not want to engage in newspaper propaganda. I have avoided it as much possible. I say my say at the Round Table Conference. If you cannot afford to say anything about the English Combine with the other Minorities, or if you approve of that combine, I can have nothing to say, and I cannot expect you to express any opinion save that of approval of the

¹ In a letter of the same date the addressee had said: "... Davis telephoned me a message from you asking me to write to a letter to the *Times* advocating adult suffrage as an argument in support of your appeal. I drafted such a letter. . . . Mr. Davis then told me that you would write a letter in support of mine, and I journeyed to London to get the two letters accepted by the *Times*. Now he tells me that you decline to write this letter unless I condemn the Europeans who have supported separate electorates.... Would you please let me know the true facts of your mind? . . ."

combine, if an opinion had to be expressed. I wonder if I have made my position quite clear.

Yours sincerely,

SIR HENRY LAWRENCE
BOARS HILLS
OXFORD

From a photostat : S.N. 18332

113. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS¹

LONDON,
[November 22, 1931]

Q. Is the Conference certainly doomed to failure ?

A. It is ungrateful to say so. But I see very little warrant for success.

Q. Don't you think the Government having allowed the discussion will now do something? Will the change in the Government make any difference?

A. I expected them to do certainly better, but I do not know that they have made up their minds to transfer power. As regards the two parties, I think for India it is 'six of the one and half a dozen of the other'. In fact, I am rather glad that I have to do with an overwhelmingly large Conservative majority. For I do not want to steal anything from here. I want something large and good which poor people can easily see and understand and so it is best that I have to fight a strong party and win what I want from a strong party. What I want is a lasting thing. I do not want to dissolve the tie, but to transform it. The relationship between India and England, the basis of equal partnership, can exist only if each does the common thing out of a consciousness of strength and not of weakness. And, therefore, I would love to feel that during the Conservative regime we were able to convince the Conservatives that we were not unworthy opponents nor unworthy partners.

Young India, 3-12-1931

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "London Letter". Desai says the questions were put "by the son of a prominent public man". On November 25 *The Hindustan Times* carried a brief report of an interview Gandhi gave to Randolph Churchill. On November 22, Churchill was acting on behalf of the Hearst Press.

114. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

88 KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
LONDON, S.W. 1,
November 24, 1931

This morning I received the enclosed telegram from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, President of the Congress. It speaks for itself. For quickly understanding the cable, I extend it here below:

Hijli and Chittagong still unremedied. Indiscriminate arrests under ordinances continuing. Detenus' number approaching one thousand. Daily arrests by scores including many Congress workers. Numerous sedition prosecutions for protesting against Hijli and Chittagong atrocities. Recently there has been repetition of Chittagong on a smaller scale at Dacca, where police openly put innocent men, women and children to great humiliation and indignities. Bengal Europeans persistently demanding more repression. It is generally believed that Government have agreed to this. Widespread resentment prevails driving young men into desperation. You already know U.P. situation. In Andhra several Congress leaders arrested under security or sedition sections, with a view to preventing growing agitation against Krishna and Godavari District Revenue enhancements, despite unanimous opinion Government's own Committee and opposition Legislature. Situation there getting serious. Imamsaheb getting daily temperature, spitting no blood, no cause immediately anxiety.

The last sentence refers to the illness of friend.

Could I make public use of this cablegram ?

THE RT. HON. SIR SAMUEL HOARE

INDIA OFFICE, S.W. 1

From a photostat: S.N. 18339

115. INTERVIEW TO "ECHO DE PARIS"

[November 24 , 1931]¹

Emphasizing his refusal to accept anything less than complete Home Rule, Mahatma Gandhi said that he would re-commence the struggle if the Round Table Conference broke down. He expected all leaders to be arrested successively, but the Nationalist Movement would continue.

The Hindustan Times , 26-11-1931

116. NOTE TO MIRZA ISMAIL²

[November 25, 1931]³

Could you manage 9.30 p.m. tonight ?

From a photostat: G.N. 2188-8

117. INTERVIEW TO "NEW LEADER"

LONDON,

[November 25, 1931]⁴

Q. Is it possible for you to speak about what developments are likely in India if the Conference breaks down ?

A. Not in detail. As I sense the future now, there will be a revival of trouble in its intensest form.

Q. But do you think you will be able to renew the psychology of resistance? When a movement is called off, is it not always more difficult to renew it?

A. I have no doubt whatever about it. I have never found it difficult to renew a movement which I have called off. But I must feel the strength within. My friends were nervous when we finished at

¹ From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 25-11-1931, which also carried a report of the interview.

² This was in answer to an enquiry from the addressee for a time when he and Dr. Ambedkar could see Gandhiji.

³ According to "Diary, 1931", Gandhiji met Mirza Ismail and Ambedkar on this date.

⁴ The date is from *The Hindustan Times*, 28-11-1931, which carried a brief report of the interview. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28-11-1931, also reported the interview.

Bardoli in 1922, and then renewed the struggle in 1930. But it was just the right time. And the suspension proved to be good. During the intervening years we were not idle. The people were imbibing our ideas. Our constructive work went on, and it told on the masses who assimilated the meaning and spirit of the movement, and there was a very wonderful response.

Q. I see that Jawaharlal Nehru is saying that it is difficult to keep back the people now.

A. That is all to the good. I can say in the plainest possible manner that I should not like to start the struggle if there were no spontaneous feeling among the people. But even at this distance, I am conscious that the people are absolutely ready. They are only waiting for the signal.

Q. Is that the case with the peasants as well as with the population in the towns?

A. Yes. I have to depend more and more on the peasants.

Q. Do they take part in the movement principally from economic or political motives?

A. Their economic difficulties have given them a grasp of the political situation. They understand that their economic position will not be better until the present political system is destroyed, root and branch. The Government in India has become the protector of the rich. There seems to be a conspiracy of the rich behind the Government to get every pice they can from the poor. The position of the peasants cannot be improved until the cruel burden of taxation which they have to bear is removed.

Q. In the struggle at the beginning of this year, South India seemed to be weak. Do you think you can count on South India this time?

A. South India gave its share steadily in the last struggle, and was coming forward splendidly when the civil disobedience campaign was suspended. It will come forward again when the struggle is renewed. South India is like that. It moves more slowly, but it is sound. I did not lose faith in the South before. In the making of khaddar the South has done the best, and its work among the untouchables has been solid... But I cannot say which province will be best this time. I have faith in all the provinces.

Q. Have you any fear that the impatience in India may prevent you from maintaining the movement on non-violent lines?

A. No, I think not. If the people continue to respond and the

mass character of the movement is maintained, violence will play no part.

Q. I don't want to embarrass you, but I cannot escape the conviction that some of the Muslims at the Round Table Conference have been more concerned about their communal claims than about Indian self-government.

A. I would not say that. I would say that their predominant concern is the guarding of what they consider to be the rights of Islam in India. That certainly occupies a very important place in their minds. But one has to say the same of the communal claims of the three sections; the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs.

Q. Do you regard the communal "representatives" at the Conference as in fact representative, or would you say that the larger part of their communities are behind Congress?

A. Undoubtedly they are behind Congress. Otherwise, Congress could not do its work. We have had the hearty support of both Sikhs and Muslims. There are five Muslims on the Congress Working Committee. And they are not non-entities. They are really representative Muslim leaders.

Q. Would you say that the National Muslim Party (which supports Congress) is more representative than most of the Muslim "leaders" at the Conference?

A. Certainly. That is what Dr. Ansari, who is on our Working Committee, is always claiming. It may not be so true, perhaps, as Dr. Ansari thinks, but it is becoming truer day by day. There is no doubt whatever that it is true of the younger generation, which is turning from sectarianism.

Q. Is this tendency in the younger generation a revolt against sectarianism only, or is it a revolt against religion itself?

A. It is difficult to say. I am not able to say that they are agnostics and atheists. I can only say that they have developed the spirit of toleration. Whether that signifies less appreciation of Islam and a waning of the religious instinct, I do not know.

Q. If the Round Table Conference breaks down on the issue of responsible government at the Centre, do you think there will be a repetition of the united opposition, which was given to the Simon Commission?

A. Yes, I think so. The Liberals and Moderates will not join the direct action movement, but their opinions will be entirely on the Congress side.

Q. Do you see any possibility of agreement with the British Government on

the basis of self-government in the Provinces?

A. No. I suggested a formula, but the British Government would not accept it. There might be a possibility of agreement if the Provinces were given real control immediately and if an absolute guarantee were given of early Central responsibility. I would accept an interval in point of time, but not in legislation. The same legislation must deal with the two things. Indian Nationalists will not look at Provincial autonomy without the certainty of Central responsibility. They say they have waited a long time for complete independence, and they can wait a little longer rather than accept a compromise which withholds Central responsibility.

Q. What is your view of Mr. Brailsford's suggestion of complete Provincial autonomy, with provision for a national constituent assembly to settle the issue of the form of Central Government.

A. Only a guarantee of responsible government under statutory provision would do. We must have responsible government.

The Hindustan Times, 14-12-1931

118. SPEECH AT FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

LONDON,

November 25, 1931

My Lord Chancellor, I tender my congratulations to Mr. Lees-Smith for being responsible for this debate, and I tender my congratulations to you, My Lord Chancellor, for having allowed this debate. I think that Mr. Lees-Smith has shown amazing optimism in initiating this debate. He has come as a physician with an oxygen pump and he is trying to pump oxygen into a dying body. I do not say that we are a dying body because of this rumour or threat of Provincial autonomy divorced from Central responsibility. In my own humble manner, almost from the commencement of these proceedings, I have been uttering words of warning and I was oppressed, and I said so in so many words, with a sense of unreality which dawned upon Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru only yesterday, or as I happen to know, has been dawning upon him for the last few days, because he has given me the privilege of taking me into his confidence in common with his other friends and comrades, if I can also bracket myself as one of his comrades. Out of his ripe experience of administrative affairs, having held high offices in

the Government, he has warned us of the danger of Provincial autonomy so-called. I am very often an unrepentant sinner. He had reasons for issuing this warning, especially in connection with me, because I had dared to discuss the question of Provincial autonomy with many English friends who are responsible public men in this country, and he had heard of it, and so he gave me ample warning. It was for that reason that you find me as one of the co-signatories not to the document that has been placed before you, My Lord Chancellor, but to another similar document that was issued to the Press about ten days ago and was addressed to the prime Minister. I told him, as I say here, that both he and the others who have spoken after him and I reached the same goal through different routes. Fools walk in where angels fear to tread. Not having had any experience of administration actually, I felt that, if Provincial autonomy was the Provincial autonomy of my conception, I for one would not mind handling the fruit, feeling the thing and seeing whether it really answered my purpose. I love to meet friends, who may be opponents in policy, on their own platform and find out their difficulties, and find out also whether what they are offering is likely to lead one to the same place, and in that spirit and in that sense I ventured to discuss Provincial autonomy, but I found at once on discussion that what they meant was certainly not the Provincial autonomy that I meant, and so I told my friends also that I would be quite safe if they left me alone, that I was not going to sell the interests of country out of a foolish conception of Provincial autonomy, or out of impatience to get something for the country. What I am anxious to do is, having come all these miles with the greatest diffidence, having come here to tender my whole-hearted co-operation to the Government and to this Conference, without the slightest mental reservation, and having applied that spirit of co-operation in thought, word and deed, to leave nothing undone, I have not hesitated even to go into the danger zone, and hence I have dared to talk about and discuss Provincial autonomy. But I have come to the conclusion that you, or the British Ministers, do not contemplate giving India that measure of Provincial autonomy which would satisfy a man of my mentality, which would satisfy the Congress, and which would reconcile the Congress to taking up Provincial auto-nomy although there may be delay in getting responsibility at the Centre.

At the risk of taking up a little of the time of this meeting, let me

make my meaning clear, because here too I am adopting a somewhat different line of argument, and I am most anxious not to be misunderstood. Let me take, therefore, one illustration. I want to take for my illustration Bengal, because it is one of the Provinces today in India which is deeply affected. I know that there is a terrorist school active in Bengal. Everybody ought to realize by this time that I can have no manner of sympathy with that terrorist school in any shape or form. I am as convinced as I have ever been that terrorism is the worst kind of action that any reformer can take up. Terrorism is the very worst thing for India in a special manner, because India is a foreign soil for terrorism to flourish in. I am convinced that those young Indians who are giving their lives for what they consider to be a good cause are simply throwing away their lives, and that they are not bringing the country by one inch nearer to the goal which is common, I hope, to us all.

I am convinced of all these things, but, having been convinced of them, supposing that Bengal had Provincial autonomy today, what would Bengal do? Bengal would set free every one of the detenus. Bengal would not hunt down the terrorists—an autonomous Bengal, I mean—but Bengal would try to reach these terrorists and convert these terrorists, and I should approach them with every confidence and wipe out terrorism from Bengal.

But let me go a little step further, in order to drive home the truth that is in me. If Bengal was autonomous, that autonomy itself would really remove terrorism from Bengal, because these terrorists foolishly consider that their action is the shortest cut to freedom; but, having attained that freedom, the terrorism would cease.

Today there are a thousand young men, some of whom, I would dare swear, have absolutely nothing in common with the school of terrorism, a thousand young men who have not been tried and who have not been convicted; they have all, every one of them, been arrested on suspicion. So far as Chittagong is concerned, Mr. Sen Gupta, who was Lord Mayor of Calcutta, who was member of Bengal Legislative Council, and who was also President of the Provincial Congress Committee in Bengal, is here today. He has brought to me a report signed by members of all the parties in Bengal in connection with Chittagong, and it is sad reading. It is painful to read this report, but the substance of this

report is that there has been an inferior edition of the Black and Tans in Chittagong—and Chittagong is not a place of no importance on the map of India.

We now see there has been a flag-showing ceremony, and in making this demonstration all the military forces have been concentrated together in Calcutta, and these demonstrations have gone through ten streets of Calcutta. At whose expense, and what will it do? Will it frighten the terrorists? I promise you it will not frighten the terrorists. Will it then wean the Congressmen from civil disobedience? It will not do so. The Congressmen are pledged to this thing. Suffering is the badge of their tribe. They have determined to go through every form of suffering. It cannot, therefore, frighten them. Our children would laugh at this show, and it is our purpose to show the children that they must not be terrified, they must not be frightened by this display of artillery, guns, air force, and so on.

So you see what is my conception of Provincial autonomy. All these things would be impossible; I would not allow a single soldier to enter the Province of Bengal; I would not pay a simple farthing for the upkeep of an army which I may not command. In such Provincial autonomy you do not contemplate a state in Bengal whereby I can set free all these detenus and I can remove from the statute-book the Bengal Regulation III. If it is Provincial autonomy, then it is independence for Bengal precisely in the same manner as that responsible Government. I have seen growing up in Natal. That is a little colony, but it had its own independent existence; it had its own volunteer force and so on. You do not contemplate that thing for Bengal or any of these Provinces. It will be the Centre still dictating, still ruling, still doing all these things. That is not the Provincial autonomy of my conception. That was why I said, if you present me with that live Provincial autonomy. I shall be preapred to consider that propositon; but I am also convinced that that autonomy is not coming. If that autonomy was coming, we would not see all these protracted proceedings that have taken place here; then we would have managed our own affairs in an entirely different manner.

But what really grieves me still more is this: We have all been brought here with one single purpose. I have been brought here specially through that very pact in which it is written that I was coming here to discuss and to receive real responsibility at the Centre: Federation with all its resonsibility

safeguards undoubtedly—safeguards in the interests of India. I have said in season and out of season that I would consider every safeguard that is necessary. I personally do not really consider, with Mr. Lees-Smith or anybody, that all this Constitution-building should take all these long years—three years. He thinks of Provincial autonomy in eighteen months. My folly tells me that all this time is not necessary. Where the people have made up their minds, the Parliament has made up its mind, the Ministers have made up their minds and the public opinion here is ready, then these things do not take time. I have seen them not taking time where there has been one mind applied; but I do not know that there is not one mind applied, but there are many minds, all following their own course and all perhaps with a disruptive tendency. That being so, I feel convinced that, in spite of this debate, not only is there going to be no responsibility at the Centre, but no tangible result coming out of this Conference. It hurts me, it pains me, that all this precious time of British Ministers, of the nation and of all these Indians who have come here, all of us, should have been wasted; but I am very much afraid that, in spite of this oxygen pump, the result will be nil.

I do not say that the result is, therefore, bound to be that Provincial autonomy will be thrust down our throats. I do not really fear that result. What I fear is something still more dreadful—that nothing at all is going to come out of this thing but terrible repression in India. I do not mind that repression; repression will only do us good. If we have repression in the right time, I will consider that also as a very fine outcome from this Conference. Repression has never done harm to a single nation which is sailing for her destined goal with a fixed determination, for that repression is really an oxygen draught, though not the draught that Mr. Lees-Smith has administered.

But what I fear is that the slender thread which I had again built up of co-operation with the British nation and with British Ministers is about to snap and that I should again declare myself a convinced non-co-operator and civil resister that I should redeliver this message of non-co-operation and civil resistance to the millions of India, no matter how many air balloons will float over India or how many tanks will be brought to India. They will have no result. You do not know today that they produce no results even upon the tender young children. We teach them to dance with joy when bullets are flying about them they are like so many crackers. We teach them to suffer for the freedom of their country. I do not despair I do not

think that because nothing happens here there will be chaos in the land. I do not think so. Not so long as Congress remains untarnished and non-violence goes forward throughout the length and breadth of India undiminished.

I have been told so often that it is the Congress that is responsible for this terrorism. I take this opportunity of denying that with all the strength at my command. On the contrary, I have evidence to show that it is the Congress creed of non-violence which up to now has kept the forces of terrorism in check. We have not succeeded to the fullest extent I am sorry but as time goes on we hope to succeed. It is not as if this terrorism can bring freedom to India. I wanted freedom precisely of the same type, only fuller, as Mr. Jayakar. I want full freedom for the masses, and I know that terrorism can do no good to the masses. The masses are silent and disarmed. They do not know how to kill. I do not talk of individual instances, but the masses of India have never moved in that direction.

Wanting that freedom for the masses, I know that this terrorism can do no good whatsoever. Whilst on the one hand Congress will fight British authority and its terrorism, legalized, so also will Congress fight terrorism, illegal, on the part of the youth. Between these two what I feel is that there was this course of co-operation opened up for the British nation and for me by Lord Irwin. He had built this bridge, and I thought I was going to have a safe passage. I had a safe passage, I have come here, and I have come here to tender my co-operation. But I must confess to you that, apart even from what Mr. Lees-Smith has said, and from what has been said on this side by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and by Mr. Sastri and the other speakers, the limited responsibility at the Centre which they have in view would not satisfy me.

I want that responsibility at the Centre that will give me, as you all know, control of the Army and Finance. I know I am not going to get that here now, and I know there is not a British man ready for that, and, therefore, I know I must go back and yet invite the nation to a course of suffering. I have taken part in this debate because I wanted to make my position absolutely clear. What I have been saying to friends in private sitting-rooms with reference to Provincial autonomy I have now said openly at this table, and I have told you what I mean by Provincial autonomy and what would really satisfy me. I close by saying that I sail in the same boat as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others,

and I feel convinced that real Provincial autonomy is an impossibility unless there is responsibility at the Centre, or unless you are prepared to so weaken the Centre that the Provinces will be able to dictate to the Centre. I know that you are not prepared today to do this. I know that this Conference does not conceive a weak Centre when this Federal Government is brought into being, but that it conceives a strong Centre.

A strong Centre governed and administered by an alien authority, and a strong autonomy, are a contradiction in terms. Hence I feel that Provincial autonomy and Central responsibility have really speaking to go together. But I say again that I have an open mind. If somebody will convince me that there is Provincial autonomy, such as I have conceived, for instance, for Bengal, available, I would grasp it.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. 1, p. 453-4

119. EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

LONDON,
November 25, 1931

My Lord¹, I followed your speech yesterday on this very important subject with the greatest attention and with all the respect that is undoubtedly your due, and in connection with that speech I read the paragraphs on Finance in the Federal Structure Committee's Report of last year, I think it is paragraphs 18, 19 and 20, and I regret to have to record my opinion that I cannot endorse the restrictions that have been suggested in these paragraphs. My position, and, I think the position of all of us, must be very difficult when we do not know exactly what are the financial burdens.

Let me explain. I would naturally have to consider the thing from one point of view if 'Army' was reserved subject, and another point of view if 'Army' was a transferred subject. I have also very great difficulty in expressing my view by reason of the fact that the Congress is emphatically of opinion that the obligation to be taken over by the incoming Government should be subject to audit and impartial examination.

¹ Lord Reading. He had taken the chair when Lord Sankey left.

I have in my hands a Report prepared by four impartial men, two of them ex-Advocates General of the Bombay High Court: I mean, Mr. Bahadurji and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai. The third examiner or member of the Committee is Professor Shah¹, for a long time Professor in the University of Bombay, a man having an all-India reputation and author of valuable works on Indian economics. The fourth member of the Committee is Mr. Kumarappa², who holds European degrees and whose opinions on Finance command considerable acceptance and influence. These four gentlemen have submitted an elaborate Report in which they, as I hold, make out a conclusive case for an impartial enquiry, and they show that many of the obligations do not really belong to India.

In this connection, I want very respectfully to say that the Congress has never suggested, as it has been viciously suggested against it, that one single farthing of national obligations should ever be repudiated by the Congress. What the Congress has, however, suggested is that some of the obligations which are supposed to belong to India ought not to be saddled upon India and should be taken over by Great Britain. You will find in these volumes a critical examination of all these obligations. I do not propose to weary this Committee with a recital of these things. Those who would care to study these two volumes may, and I have no doubt will, study them with considerable profit, and they will perhaps discover that some of these obligations should never have been saddled upon India. That being the case, I feel that if one knew exactly where one was, it would be possible to give a decisive opinion, but subject to that, I venture to suggest, that the restrictions, or the so-called safeguards, that have been suggested in paragraph 18, 19 and 20 of this Report of the Federal Structure Sub-committee will, instead of helping India on her course, hinder her progress at every step.

You, My Lord, were pleased yesterday to say that the question before you was not one of want of confidence in Indian Ministers. On the contrary, you had every hope that the Indian Ministers would do as well as any other Ministers, but you were concerned with the credit of India outside the borders of India, that the investors who supplied capital to India and who brought their money to India at reasonable

¹ Prof. K. T. Shah

² J. G. Kumarappa

rates of interest would not be satisfied if there were not safeguards of the type suggested

here; and you went on further, if I remember rightly, to say that when there were any investments in India from here, or when there were any moneys sent to India, it was not to be supposed that they were not also for the interest of India.

If I remember rightly, Your Lordship used the words "obviously it was in the interests of India". I was really waiting to find some illustrations, but no doubt you took it for granted that we would know those matters or those illustrations which you had in mind. I had really converse illustrations in mind while you were speaking, and I said to myself, I have within my own experience several illustrations where I could show that the interests of India were not, in those particular illustrations, identical with the interests of Great Britain, that the two were in conflict, and that, therefore, we could not possibly say that every time there were loans from Great Britain, they were in the interest of India.

Take for instance so many wars. Take the wars of Afghanistan. As a young man I read with great avidity the history of wars in Afghanistan written by the late Sir John Kay and I have a vivid recollection left on my mind that most of these wars were certainly not in the interests of India; and not only that, but that the Governor-General had bungled over these wars. The late Dadabhai Naoroji taught us young men that the history of British finance in India was a history of muddle and bungling where it was not also one of exploitation of India.

The Lord Chancellor uttered the warning, and you were pleased to enforce his warning, that Finance at the present moment was a very delicate matter and that, therefore, those of us who took part in the discussion should be cautious and careful so as not to mishandle the subject and create difficulties or add to the difficulties that already face the Finance Minister in India. I, therefore, do not propose to go into any details; but I cannot help saying one thing in connection with this increase in the ratio. I mean when the rupee was appreciated to 1/6 from 1/4. Now, there the measure was adopted in the face of almost unanimous opposition from Indians—Indians who were not in any way connected with the Congress. They were all independent, some of them great experts in finance who knew exactly what they were saying. Now, there again one finds that the Indian interest

was really subordinated to foreign interest. It does not require an expert to know that a depreciated rupee is always, or as a rule would be, in the interest of the cultivators. I was very much struck by an admission made by two financiers here that, if the rupee, instead of being linked to sterling, had been left to itself, at least for the time being, it would have been of great advantage to the cultivators. They were going to the last extreme and thinking of some catastrophe that might befall India if the rupee left to itself went down to the intrinsic value, namely 6d. or 7d. Personally, I have not even then been able to see that really the Indian cultivator would be in any shape or form damaged.

Now, that being the case, I cannot possibly endorse safeguards that would interfere with the full discharge of his responsibility by the Indian Finance Minister, and that responsibility conceived predominantly in the interests of the ryots.

But I want to draw the attention of this Committee to one thing more. In spite of the caution uttered by the Lord Chancellor and you, My Lord, I feel somehow or other that if Indian Finance was properly managed entirely in the interests of India, we should not be subject to fluctuations as seriously as we are today in the foreign market, the fluctuations in London. I want to give you my reason for it. When I first became acquainted with the writing of Sir Daniel Hamilton, I approached him with considerable diffidence and hesitation. I knew nothing practically of Indian Finance, I was absolutely new to the subject, but he with his zeal insisted upon my studying the papers that he continued to send me. As we all know, he has large interests in India, he has himself held offices of importance and is himself an able financier. He is today making experiments himself along the lines he has suggested, but this is the one striking thought that he has placed before all who would care to understand his mode of looking at Indian finance, and he says that India does not need to look to the gold standard or to the silver standard or to any metallic standard. India has metal all its own, and he says that that consists in her innumerable, countless millions of labourers. It is true that the British Government has not declared itself insolvent in connection with Indian Finance, that it has been, up to now, able to pay its way; but at what cost? It has been, in my humble opinion, at the cost of the cultivator, the money has been squeezed

from the cultivator. Instead of thinking in terms of rupees, if the authorities had consulted and thought of finance in terms of these masses, they could have managed the affairs of India, in my humble opinion, infinitely better than they have hitherto done, they would not then have been obliged to fall back upon foreign market. Everybody recognizes, British financiers have told us, that for nine years out of ten India has always a favourable balance.

That is to say, whenever India has what may be called an eight-anna or ten-anna year, eight annas is really enough to give her a favourable balance. Then India produces through bountiful Nature, from Mother Earth, more than enough to pay for all her obligations, and more than for all the imports that she may ever require. If it is true, and I hold that it is true, a country like India does not really need to fall back upon the foreign capitalist. She has been made to fall back upon the foreign capitalist because of the enormous drain that has taken place from India in order to pay what are called the home charges, in order to pay terrific charges for India's Defence. She is utterly unable to discharge these obligations, and yet they have been met a revenue policy which has been condemned in unmeasured terms by one of the officiating commissioners, the late Romesh Chandra Dutt. I know he engaged in a controversy with the late Lord Curzon on this very topic, and we Indians came to the conclusion that the right was on the side of the late Romesh Chandra Dutt.

But I want to go a step further. It is known that these millions of cultivators remain idle for six months in the year. If the British Government saw to it that these men would not remain idle for six months in the year, imagine the wealth that they would produce. Why would we then need ever to fall back upon the foreign market? That is how the whole idea of finance appears before me, a layman—a man who continually thinks of these masses and wants to feel as they would feel. They would say: 'We have all the labour; we do not want, therefore, to fall back upon any foreign capital.' So long as we labour, the whole world would want the products of our labour. And it is true the world today wants the products of our labour. We would be able to produce those things that the world would voluntarily and willingly take from us. That has been the condition of India for ages past. Therefore, I really do not feel the fear that you, My Lord, have expressed in connection with Indian Finance. Having these views, I do not really share the fear that Indian Finance would be in jeopardy if

we whispered something that need not be said now, or if a man like me said today that I would want complete control of Indian Finance if India is to have responsibility at the Centre. In my opinion, unless we have control over our own door-keepers and over our own purse absolutely unrestricted, we shall not be able to shoulder the responsibility, and it will not be a responsibility worth the name.

Holding this view, I feel that the safeguards that I would suggest are of a totally different character; but I am not in a position at the present moment to suggest any safeguard at all—not until I know that the nation is to have complete responsibility, complete control over her Army, over the Civil Service, that the nation will be at perfect liberty to take over so many of the Civilians as the nation would want, so many of the soldiers as the nation would want and on terms that would be suitable for a poor nation like India. Unless I know all these things, it is practically impossible for me to suggest the safeguards. As a matter of fact, when all these things are taken into consideration, probably there will be no necessity for any safeguards, unless one starts with want of confidence in India's ability to shoulder her burden and India's ability to carry on the administration of the country in a peaceful manner. The only danger under such circumstances that I can possibly conceive would be that the moment we take charge there would be utter chaos and disorder. Now, if that is the fear that seizes the British mind, then there is no meeting ground. We take responsibility, we ask for responsibility, we demand responsibility, because we have got that confidence that we would be able to carry on our affairs in a decent manner and, I would feel, certainly in a much better manner than British administrators have done or could ever do—not because they are not able. I will grant that they are much abler than we are; I will grant that they have got an organizing capacity which we have to learn at their feet. But we have one thing, that we know our country, we know our people and we should, therefore, be able to run our Government cheaply. We would avoid all the quarrels, and we, not having any imperialistic ambition, would not go to war with the Afghans or any other nation, but we would cultivate friendly relations, and they would have nothing to fear from us.

That is the kind of idea that runs through my mind as I conceive Indian Finance. You will see, therefore, that, in my opinion, Indian Finance does not occupy such a large place in my conception, and not such a dangerous position as it evidently occupies in your

mind, or the Lord Chancellor's mind or in the minds of British Ministers with whom I had the privilege of discussing this question. Hence, and for the reasons that I have explained I must respectfully say that it is not possible for me to subscribe to the safeguards that are suggested here, or to endorse the fears that agitate the British public or the responsible men in Great Britain.

One thing I would like to say: that for every obligation that the National Government undertakes there will be proper guarantees, such guarantees as a nation can possibly give, forthcoming, and assurances of a right type forthcoming. But, in my opinion, they will never be of the type or the character described in these paragraphs. After all, if there are, and there would be, I have no doubt, certain obligations that we would have to take over and we have to discharge towards Great Britain, supposing that we bungled and did not do anything whatsoever, no assurances given on paper would be worth anything. Or supposing that India, when she comes into her own, unfortunately for her has a series of bad seasons, then again I do not know that any safeguards that might possibly be conceived would be enough to squeeze money out of India. In these critical circumstances—unforeseen circumstances, visitations of nature—, it is impossible for any national Government to give guarantees.

I do not wish to labour this point any further. I thought that I should occupy a few minutes of this Committee in disburdening myself of the views that a layman like myself holds upon Indian Finance.

I can only close with the great sorrow that has overtaken me in connection with these things that I should find myself in conflict with so many administrators who have experience of Indian affairs and also of so many of my countrymen who are attending this Round Table Conference; but, if I am to discharge my duty as a representative of the Congress, even at the risk of incurring displeasure I must give expression to the views I hold in common with so many members of the Congress.

CHAIRMAN: I did not want to interrupt you, Mr. Gandhi, when you were speaking, but I do not think that you quite accurately represented what I had said. Obviously I could not interrupt you, because it meant going back and repeating what has been said, and, after all, it stands recorded. It may be a misinterpretation of some observations that were made, and of course there are many economic and financial matters which you have raised which have not been discussed at all. I only want to

say in reference to them that you have introduced them for the purpose of your argument. All I want to say is that I have already given in the speeches that I have made with regard to finance, but I did not want it to be assumed that there is no answer to it.

GANDHIJI : Of course not.

Young India, 17-12-1931; also *Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee*, Vol. I, pp. 459-60

120. EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

LONDON,
November 26, 1931

CHAIRMAN : Will you please take the draft report in your hands. I do not think it will take very long, because what I have done is that I have asked various members to let me have their views and I have incorporated them. I will just read it through in the way we usually do and then come back to each paragraph. It is the fourth Report of the Federal Structure Committee, on Commercial Discrimination.

1. On this subject the Committee are glad to be able to record a substantial measure of agreement. They recall that, in paragraph 22 of their Report at the last Conference, it was stated that there was general agreement that in matters of trade and commerce the principle of equality of treatment ought to be established and that the Committee of the whole Conference, at their meeting on January 19th, 1931, adopted the following paragraph as part of the Report of the Minorities Subcommittee.

"At the instance of the British Commercial community, the principle was generally agreed that there should be no discrimination between the rights of the British mercantile community, firms and companies trading in India, and the rights of Indian-born subjects, and that an appropriate Convention based on reciprocity should be entered into for the purpose of regulating these rights."

More than one member in the course of the discussion also reminded the committee that the All-Parties' Conference in 1928 stated in their Report that "it is inconceivable that there can be any discrimination legislation against any community doing business lawfully in India."

2. The Committee accept and reaffirm the principle that equal rights and equal opportunities should be afforded to those lawfully engaged in commerce and industry within the territory of the Federation, and such differences as have

manifested themselves are mainly (though not entirely) concerned with the limits within which the principle should operate and the best method of giving effect to it. . . .

MR. GANDHI: I should like this added, Lord Chancellor, at the end of that paragraph:

"Some, however, contend that the future Government should not be burndened with any restraint, save that no discrimination should be made merely on the ground of race, colour or creed."

CHAIRMAN: I will certainly put that in. Where do you want that to go?

MR. GANDHI: At the end of he second paragraph.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, pp. 472-4

121. LETTER TO ABDUL KADIR BAWAZEER

November 27, 1931

BHAI IMAM SAHEB,

There is no end to your misfortunes. I learnt from Qureshi's letter that Amina lost her two children. But where is the need to console you for this? We look upon birth and death as equal. I know you will have kept your peace of mind. I have got the reply to my wire to Sardar inquiring about your health. I think we shall meet soon. There is no time to write more.

Blessings and regards from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 10788. Courtesy: Gulam Rasul Qureshi

122. LETTER TO AMINA AND GULAM RASUL QURESHI

November 27, 1931

MY DEAR QURESHI AND AMINA,

You have been well warned by Providence. Do not grieve over the children's death. All who are born must die. I hope Amina is keeping good health.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10806. Courtesy: Gulam Rasul Qureshi

*123. EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEDERAL
STRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING¹*

LONDON,

November 27, 1931

CHAIRMAN : Mr. Gandhi has something that he wants to add at the end of paragraph.²

MR. GANDHI: I wish to add at the end of paragraph 2,2 after the words "responsible government" the words, "and that the derogation from complete control would hamper the Finance Minister in the discharge of his duty."

CHAIRMAN: Those words are noted.³

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session) : Proceedings of Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee, Vol. I, p. 483

¹ The Committee were continuing discussion on the Draft Fourth Report dealing with Financial Safeguards.

² The paragraph ended: ". . . some members again. . . went further in their objection to the financial safeguards, and expressed themselves as unwilling to contemplate any limitations upon the powers of an Indian Finance Minister to administer his charge in full responsibility to the Legislature, on the ground that a constitution which did not concede complete control of finance to the Legislature could not be described as responsible government."

³ They were incorporated in the amended version of the Report.

124. CABLE TO VALLABHABHAI PATEL

[November 28, 1931]¹

LEAVING SATURDAY REACHING VILLENEUVE SUNDAY.
THERE TILL ELEVENTH. SAILING VENICE CRACOVIA
TWELFTH.²

Young India, 3-12-1931

125. EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF PLENARY
SESSION OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

LONDON,
November 28, 1931

SIR HUBERT CARR: Lord Chancellor, during the past week or ten days we have heard a good deal regarding the alleged failure of the Conference, and I am glad to have this opportunity to express the view of my colleagues and myself, which is very emphatically opposed to that description. We feel that the deliberations extending over the past year have led to a very remarkable degree of agreement on many questions of vital importance to the future of India. In holding this view, we do not shut our eyes to the difficulties which still exist, but we have a keen recollection of the great difficulties which faced this Conference when it first assembled last year. . .

Without their work Mahatma Gandhi might have remained for many people in this country a more or less mythical figure, making salt in forbidden places or weaving all kinds of yarns.

MR. GANDHI: You mean spinning all kinds of yarns.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of the Plenary Session, pp. 103-5

¹ In "Diary, 1931", Gandhiji mentions having sent a cable to Vallabhbai Patel on this date. Presumably this is the cable.

² Actually Gandhiji sailed from Brindisi on December 14.

126. INTERVIEW TO LONDON GENERAL PRESS

[Before November 30, 1931]¹

If the Round Table Conference fails the effects on British trade will be disastrous, for the boycott will increase. One would think, therefore, it is to Britain's own interests to see that the Conference does not fail. I am even prepared to make reasonable sacrifices rather than that should hap-pen. Of course the Round Table Conference will be a partial failure should only part of our demands be granted. It would be a failure to that extent.

Q. Would you be content if only part were granted with a promise of a fuller measure later on ?

A. I should have to consider what was offered. It is not likely that I can get all I want. But if what I get is such that I can make much of it, then I might reconcile myself to it. I am prepared to compromise if necessary.

I do not think that India should appeal to the League of Nations. Not now. We are still negotiating. If the Round Table Conference fails, then those who have no faith in the direct method may place India's cause before the Tribunal of the League. But I would not do so. I prefer the method of civil resistance because it is the cleanest and the best method. The League of Nations is not strong enough to deal with the question. India is a world in itself. It is too big a bite even for the League.

Q. Do you agree with me, Mr. Gandhi, that you are the safety-catch on the great machine of India, that you are the restraining influence on the wild youth of the country, that it would be criminal folly to deport you from India, for once you are gone, there will be revolt and rebellion?

A. I agree with you. Such a thing would be the act of a blindman who wilfully shuts his eyes to the state of affairs in India, who fails to realize the extent to which this unrest, this demand for swaraj has gripped the whole country. If I were to be deported from India many evil things might happen, but I feel that even in my absence my influence for peace will last; though I may be for away

¹ The source does not mention the date. From the contents, however, it would seem that the interview took place before the commencement of the last session of the Round Table Conference on November 30.

my spirit will remain behind. The struggle would go on. It would become more acute. Yet I trust it would not become violent. I should be sorry to think my restraining influence should disappear after I had vanished. No, I should not resist deportation. No true satyagrahi should resist suffering laid on him. He must welcome any punishment that is meted out to him.

Passing to another topic Gandhi remarked :

Machinery is a grand yet awful invention. It is possible to visualize a stage at which the machines invented by man may finally engulf civilization . If man controls the machines, then they will not; but should man lose his control over the machines and allow them to control him, then they will certainly engulf civilization and everything.

Q. What are your impressions of the West ? Do you condemn Western civilization ?

A. I have condemned it. It is too hurried, too materialistic, too artificial. I cannot say that I hate it. "Hate" is a bad word to use. But I strongly dislike it. No, I am not going to America. I must return to India. I must hurry back there. My country has need of me.

Yes, I have met many of the leading men of Europe. Not politicians alone—men of the world of art and literature too, of every walk of life. I have met the great ones, and I have mingled freely with the very poorest of the poor. I have met Bernard Shaw.

Q. What do you think of him ?

A. Well, I think he is a very good man.

Q. So are many people.

A. Well, I think he is a very witty man, a lover of epigram and paradox, with a Puck-like spirit and a generous ever-young heart, the Arch Jester of Europe.

Whom do I consider the most true friends of India? Comparisons are invidious; it is difficult to single out one when I have met in England so many true friends of India. I really cannot say who impressed me as having the most forceful personality. I must be discreet.

My dream of a free India ? Ah! It will take years to materialize. I see India free, self-governing and self-supporting, with peace abroad and trade and communications well established, with

great cities in which busy men and women dwell contented as bees in humming hives, and with a chain of linked villages happy in their home industries. Women shall play their part equally with men in this new, free India.

“Then to the clear , blue heavens, her banner wide unfurled, Let the New India face the future and the world.”

The Hindu, 21-12-1931

*127. EXTRACT FROM PROCEEDINGS OF PLENARY SESSION
OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE*

LONDON,
November 30, 1931

MR. GHUZNAVI We demand separate electorates, and we will continue to demand them. We have them now. We had them for over twenty years with considerable experience of their work and we believe them to be an absolute essential for our safety. This is the result of experience and not of mere opinion. With your permission I will just read a few passages quoted in the supplementary note by Sir Abdullah al-M’amun Suhrawardy, to the Report of the Indian Central Committee :

“I do not believe that the Mussalman is the natural enemy of the Hindu. . . . I have no desire to obtain swaraj,even if it were possible, by the sacrifice of a single legitimate interest of a single minority.” (Mr. M.K.GANDHI in *Young India*,¹ quoted in the Overseas Edition of *The Statesman*, September 19th ,1929.)

MR. GANDHI : *Young India* is here to confirm that opinion.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session) : Proceedings of the Plenary Sessions, p.209

128. CABLE TO SANYAL

[On or after *November 30, 1931*]²

CLOSELY FOLLOWING SITUATION. WISH YOUNG MEN
WOULD LEARN PRICELESS LESSON NON-VIOLENCE.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 18367

¹ For the correct version, vide “My Limitations

² This was in reply to the addressee’s cable received on November 30, asking Gandhiji to send a message for a special Bengal Provincial Conference which was to be held at Berhampore on December 5.

129. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

[On or before *December 1, 1931*]¹

DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

I appreciate your confidence. I am sorry I cannot associate myself in the address. You know the reasons. I have nothing whatsoever against the person of His Majesty. It is the principle underlying which I cannot subscribe to. The best way out of difficulty is for you to tell me when the address will be moved and for me to absent myself at the time. I do not want to do anything to mar the proceedings so far as possible.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : C.W. 10375. Courtesy: British High Commission.

*130. LETTER TO CHAIRMAN, ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE*²

[On or before *December 1, 1931*]³

THE CHAIRMAN

ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

DEAR SIR,

In affixing our signatures to this letter, we, the undersigned delegates attending the Round Table Conference, before its conclusion, desire to express and to bring to your personal notice our deep sense of appreciation of the unfailing courtesy, attention, kindness and excellent services rendered to us during our stay in England while attending the Round Table Conference, by the Joint Social Secretaries, Mr. F. A. M. H. Vincent, C.I.E., C.B.E., M.V.O., and Mr. P.K. Dutt.

¹ The letter is undated. It is clear, however, that it was written on or before December 1, 1931 on which date the last session of the Round Table Conference ended.

² It is not certain if this was drafted by Gandhiji.

³ The last session of the Round Table Conference took place on December 1, and this, as the text would indicate, was written before that date.

The able manner in which these two officers have performed their onerous and delicate duties has, in our opinion, enabled all of us to come into close contact with each other and understand one another.

Yours truly,

M. K. GANDHI,

[AND MANY OTHERS]

From a photostat: C.W. 9384. Courtesy: India Office Library

*131. SPEECH AT PLENARY SESSION OF
ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE*

LONDON,

December 1, 1931¹

PRIME MINISTER AND FRIENDS,

I wish that I could have done without having to speak to you, but I felt that I would not have been just to you or just to my principles if I did not put in what may be the last word on behalf of the Congress. I live under no illusion. I do not think that anything that I can say this evening can possibly influence the decision of the Cabinet. Probably the decision has been already taken. Matters of the liberty of practically a whole continent can hardly be decided by mere argumentation, even negotiation. Negotiation has its purpose and has its play, but only under certain conditions. Without those conditions negotiations are a fruitless task. But I do not want to go into all these matters. I want as far as possible to confine myself within the four corners of the conditions that you, Prime Minister, read to this Conference at its opening meeting. I would, therefore, first of all, say a few words in connection with the Reports that have been submitted to this Conference. You will find in these Reports that generally it has been stated that so and so is the opinion of a large majority, some, however, have expressed an opinion to the contrary, and so on. Parties who have dissented have not been stated. I had heard when I was in India, and I was told when I came here, that no decision or no decisions will be taken by the ordinary rule of majority, and I do not want to mention this fact here by way of complaint that the Reports have been so framed as if the proceedings were governed by the test

¹ The session began on November 30 and, after adjourning at 11.50 p.m., was resumed at 12.5 a.m.

of majority. But it was necessary for me to mention this fact, because to most of these Reports you will find that there is a dissenting opinion, and in most of the cases that dissent unfortunately happens to belong to me. It was not a matter of joy to have to dissent from fellow Delegates, but I felt that I could not truly represent the Congress unless I notified that dissent.

There is another thing which I want to bring to the notice of this Conference, namely: what is the meaning of the dissent of the Congress? I said at one of the preliminary meetings of the Federal Structure Committee that the Congress claimed to represent over 85 per cent of the population of India, that is to say, the dumb, toiling, semi-starved millions. But I went further: that the Congress claimed also by right of service to represent even the Princes, if they would pardon my putting forth that claim, and the landed gentry, the educated class. I wish to repeat that claim and I wish this evening to emphasize that claim.

All the other parties at this meeting represent sectional interests. Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India, all interests. It is no communal organization; it is a determined enemy of communalism in any shape of form. Congress knows no distinction of race, colour or creed; its platform is universal. It may not always have lived up to the creed. I do not know a single human organization that lives up to its creed. Congress has failed very often to my knowledge. It may have failed more often to the knowledge of its critics. But the worst critic will have to recognize, as it has been recognized, that the National Congress of India is a daily-growing organization, that its message penetrates the remotest village of India; that on given occasions the Congress has been able to demonstrate its influence over and among these masses who inhabit 700,000 villages.

And yet here I see that the Congress is treated as one of the Parties. I do not mind it; I do not regard it as a calamity for the Congress; but I do regard it as a calamity for the purpose of doing the work for which we have gathered together here. I wish I could convince all the British public men, the British Ministers, that the Congress is capable of delivering the goods. The Congress is the only all-India-wide national organization, bereft of any communal basis; that it does represent all the minorities which have lodged their claims here and which, or the signatories on their behalf, claim I hold unjustifiably to represent 46 per cent of the population of India. The Congress, I say, claims to represent all these minorities.

What a great difference it would be today if this claim on behalf of the Congress was recognized. I feel that I have to state this claim with some degree of emphasis on behalf of peace, for the sake of achieving the purpose which is common to all of us, to you Englishmen who sit at this table, and to us the Indian men and women who also sit at this table. I say so for this reason. Congress is a powerful organization; Congress is an organization which has been accused of running or desiring to run a parallel Government; and in a way I have endorsed the charge. If you could understand the working of the Congress, you would welcome an organization which could run a parallel Government and show that it is possible for an organization, voluntary, without any force at its command, to run the machinery of Government even under adverse circumstances. But no. Although you have invited the Congress, you distrust the Congress. Although you have invited the Congress, you reject its claim to represent the whole of India. Of course it is possible at this end of the world to dispute that claim, and it is not possible for me to prove this claim; but, all the same, if you find me asserting that claim, I do so because a tremendous responsibility rests upon my shoulders.

The Congress represents the spirit of rebellion. I know that the word 'rebellion' must not be whispered at a Conference which has been summoned in order to arrive at an agreed solution of India's troubles through negotiation. Speaker after speaker has got up and said that India should achieve her liberty through negotiation, by argument, and that it will be the greatest glory of Great Britain if Great Britain yields to India's demands by argument. But the Congress does not hold that view, quite. The Congress has an alternative which is unpleasant to you.

I heard several speakers—and let me say I have endeavoured not to miss a single sitting; I have tried to follow every speaker with the utmost attention and with all the respect that I could possibly give to these speakers—saying what a dire calamity it would be if India was fired with the spirit of lawlessness, rebellion, terrorism and so on. I do not pretend to have read history, but as a schoolboy I had to pass a paper in history also, and I read that the page of history is soiled red with the blood of those who have fought for freedom. I do not know an instance in which nations have attained to their own without having to go through an incredible measure of travail. The dagger of the assassin, the poison bowl, the bullet of the rifleman, the spear and all these weapons and methods of destruction have been up to now used

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by what I consider blind lovers of liberty and freedom, and the historian has not condemned him. I hold no brief for the terrorists. Mr. Ghuznavi brought in the terrorists and he brought in the Calcutta Corporation. I felt hurt when he mentioned an incident that took place at the Calcutta Corporation. He forgot to mention that the Mayor of that Corporation made handsome reparation for the error into which he himself was betrayed and the error into which the Calcutta Corporation was betrayed through the instrumentality of those members of the Corporation who were Congressmen. I hold no brief for Congressmen who directly or indirectly would encourage terrorism. As soon as this incident was brought to the notice of the Congress, the Congress set about putting it in order. It immediately called upon the Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation to give an account of what was done and the Mayor, the gentleman that he is, immediately admitted his mis-take and made all the reparation that it was then legally possible to make. I must not detain this Assembly over this incident for any length of time. He mentioned also a verse which the children of the forty schools conducted by the Calcutta Corporation are supposed to have recited. There were many other mis-statements in that speech which I could dwell upon, but I have no desire to do so. It is only out of regard for the great Calcutta Corporation and out of regard for truth and on behalf of those who are not here tonight to put in their defence that I mention these two glaring instances. I do not for one moment believe that this was taught in the Calcutta Corporation schools with the knowledge of the Calcutta Corporation. I do know that in those terrible days of last year, several things were done for which we have regret, for which we have made reparation. If our boys in Calcutta were taught these verses which Mr. Ghuznavi has recited, I am here to tender an apology on their behalf, but I should want it proved that the boys were taught by the schoolmasters of these schools with the knowledge and encouragement of the Corporation.

Charges of this nature have been brought against the Congress times without number, and times without number these charges have also been refuted, but I have mentioned these things at this juncture. It is again to show that for the sake of liberty people have fought, people have lost their lives, people have killed and have sought death at the hands of those whom they have sought to oust. The Congress then comes upon the scene and devises a new method not known to history, namely, that of civil disobedience, and the

Congress has been following that method up. But again I am up against a stone wall and I am told that that is a method that no Government in the world will tolerate. Well, of course, the government may not tolerate, no government has tolerated open rebellion. No government may tolerate civil disobedience, but governments have to succumb even to these forces, as the British Government has done before now, even as the great Dutch Government after eight years of trial had to yield to the logic of facts. General Smuts is a brave General, a great statesman, and a very hard taskmaster also, but he himself recoiled with horror from even the contemplation of doing to death innocent men and women who were merely fighting for the preservation of their self-respect and the things which he had vowed he would never yield in the year 1908, reinforced as he was by General Botha, he had to do in the year 1914, after having tried these civil resisters through and through. And in India Lord Chelmsford had to do the same thing; the Governor of Bombay had to do the same thing in Borsad and Bardoli. I suggest to you, Prime Minister, it is too late today to resist this, and it is this thing which weighs me down, this choice that lies before them, the parting of the ways probably. I shall hope against hope, I shall strain every nerve to achieve an honourable settlement for my country if I can do so without having to put the millions of my countrymen and countrywomen and even children through this ordeal of fire. It can be a matter of no joy and comfort to me to lead them on again to a fight of that character, but if a further ordeal of fire has to be our lot. I shall approach that with the greatest joy and with the greatest consolation that I was doing what I felt to be right, the country was doing what it felt to be right, and the country will have the additional satisfaction of knowing that it was not at least taking lives, it was giving lives; it was not making the British people directly suffer, it was suffering. Professor Gilbert Murray told me I shall never forget that I am paraphrasing his inimitable language. He said: You do not consider for one moment that the Englishmen do not suffer when thousands of your countrymen suffer, that we are so heartless? I do not think so. I do not know that you will suffer; but I want you to suffer because I want to touch your hearts; and when your hearts have been touched will come the psychological moment for negotiation. Negotiation there always will be; and if this time I have travelled all these miles in order to enter upon negotiation, I thought that your countryman, Lord Irwin, had sufficiently tried us through his ordinances, that he had sufficient evidence that thousands of men and women of India and that thousands of children had suffered; and that, ordinance or no ordinance, lathis or no lathis, nothing would

avail to stem the tide that was onrushing and to stem the passions that were rising in the breasts of the men and women of India who were thirsting for liberty.

Whilst there is yet a little sand left in the glass, I want you to understand what this Congress stands for. My life is at your disposal. The lives of all the members of the Working Committee, the All-India Congress Committee, are at your disposal. But remember that you have at your disposal the lives of all these dumb millions. I do not want to sacrifice those lives if I can possibly help it. Therefore please remember that I will count no sacrifice too great if by chance I can pull through an honourable settlement. You will find me always having the greatest spirit of compromise if I can but fire you with the spirit that is working in the Congress, namely, that India must have real liberty. Call it by any name you like; a rose will smell as sweet by any other name, but it must be the rose of liberty that I want and not the artificial product. If your mind and the Congress mind, the mind of this Conference and the mind of the British people, mean the same thing by the same word, then you will find the amplest room for compromise, and will find the Congress itself always in a Compromising spirit. But so long as there is not that one mind, that one definition, not one implication for the same word that you and I and we may be using, so long there is no compromise possible. How can there be any compromise so long as we each one of us has a different definition for the same words that we may be using. It is impossible, Prime Minister, I want to suggest to you in all humility that it is utterly impossible then to find a meeting ground, to find ground where you can apply the spirit of compromise. And I am very grieved to have to say that up to now I have not been able to discover a common definition for the terms that we have been exchanging during all these weary weeks.

I was shown last week the Statute of Westminster by a Sceptic, and he said: "Have you seen the definition of 'Dominion'?" I read the definition of 'Dominion', and naturally I was not at all perplexed or shocked to see that the word 'Dominion' was exhaustively defined, and it has not a general definition but a particular definition. It simply said: the word 'Dominion' shall include Australia, South Africa, Canada and so on, ending with the Irish Free State. I do not think I noticed Egypt there. Then he said: "Do you see what your Dominion means?" It did not make any impression upon me. I do not mind what my Dominion means or what Complete Independence

means. In a way I was relieved. I said I am now relieved from having to quarrel about the word 'Dominion', because I am out of it. But I want Complete Independence, and even so, so many Englishmen have said: "Yes, you can have Complete Independence, but what is the meaning of 'complete independence'?" And again we come to different definitions. Therefore, I say the Congress claim is registered as Complete Independence.

One of your great statesmen¹—I do not think I should give his name—was debating with me, and he said: "Honestly, I did not know that you meant this by Complete Independence." He ought to have known, but he did not know, and I shall tell you what he did not know. When I said to him, "I cannot be a partner in an Empire," he said, "Of course, that is logical." I said, "But I want to become that. It is not as if I shall be if I am compelled to, but I want to become a partner with Great Britain. I want to become a partner with the English people; but I want to enjoy precisely the same liberty that your people enjoy, and I want to seek this partnership not merely for the benefit of India, and not merely for mutual benefits; I want to seek this partnership in order that the great weight that is crushing the world to atoms may be lifted from off its shoulders."

This took place ten or twelve days ago. Strange as it may appear, I got a note from another Englishman whom also you know and whom also you respect. Among many things he writes: "I believe profoundly that the peace and happiness of mankind depend on our friendship," and as if I would not understand that, he says, "your people and mine." I must read to you what he also says, "And of all Indians you are the one that the real Englishman likes and understands."

He does not waste any words on flattery, and I do not think he has intended this last expression to flatter me. It will not flatter me in the slightest degree. There are many things in this note which, if I could share them with you, would perhaps make you understand better the significance of this expression, but let me tell you that, when he writes this last sentence, he does not mean me personally. I personally signify nothing, and I know I would mean nothing to any single Englishman; but I mean something to some Englishman

¹ Presumably, Lloyd George who met Gandhiji on November 18; *Vide* "Diary, 1931".

because I represent a cause, because I seek to represent a nation, a great organization which has made itself felt. That is the reason why he says this.

But then, if I could possibly find that working basis, Prime Minister, there is ample room for compromise. It is friendship I crave. My business is not to throw overboard the slave-holder and tyrant. My philosophy forbids me to do so, and today the Congress has accepted that philosophy not as a creed, as it is to me, but as a policy, because the Congress believes that it is the right and best thing for India, a nation of three hundred and fifty millions, to do. A nation of 350 million people does not need the dagger of the assassin, it does not need the position bowl, it does not need the sword, the spear or the bullet. It needs simply a will of its own, an ability to say "No", and that nation is today learning to say "No".

But what is it that that nation does ? Summarily, or at all, dismiss Englishmen? No. Its mission is today to convert Englishmen. I do not want to break the bond between England and India, but I do want to transform that bond. I want to transform that slavery into complete freedom for my country. Call it 'complete independence' or whatever you like, I will not quarrel about that word, and even though my countrymen may dispute with me for having taken some other word, I shall be able to bear down that opposition so long as the content of the word that you may suggest to me bears the meaning. Hence I have times without number to urge upon your attention that the safeguards that have been suggested are completely unsatisfactory. They are not in the interests of India.

Three experts from the Federation of Commerce and Industry have in their own manner, each in his different manner, told you out of their expert experience how utterly impossible it is for any body of responsible Ministers to tackle the problem of administration when 80 per cent of India's resources are mortgaged irrevocably. Better than I could have shown to you they have shown, out of the amplitude of their knowledge, what these financial safeguards mean for India. They mean the complete cramping of India. They have discussed at this table financial safeguards, but that includes necessarily the question of Defence and the question of the Army. Yet, while I say that the safeguards are unsatisfactory as they have been presented, I have not hesitated to say, and I do not hesitate to repeat, that the Congress is pledged to giving safeguards endorsing safeguards which may be demonstrated to be in the interests of India.

At one of the sittings of the Federal Structure Committee, I had no hesitation in amplifying the admission and saying that these safeguards must be also of benefit to Great Britain. I do not want safeguards which are merely beneficial to India and prejudicial to the real interests of Great Britain. The fancied interests of India will have to be sacrificed. The fancied interests of Great Britain will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of India will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of Great Britain will also have to be sacrificed. Therefore, again I repeat, if we have the same meaning for the same word, I will agree with Mr. Jayakari with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, and other distinguished speakers who have spoken at this Conference. I will agree with them all, that we have after all, after all these labours, reached a substantial measure of agreement, but my despair, my grief, is that I do not read the same words in the same light. The implications of the safeguards of Mr. Jayakar, I very much fear, are different from my implications, and the implications of Mr. Jayakar and myself are perhaps only different from the implications that Sir Samuel Hoare, for instance, has in mind; I do not know. We have never really come to grips. We have never come to brass tacks as you put it, and I am anxious—I have been pining to come to real grips and to brass tacks all these days and all these nights, and I have felt: ‘Why are we not coming nearer and nearer together, and why are we wasting our time in eloquence, in oratory, in debating, and in scoring points?’ Heaven knows I have no desire to hear my own voice. Heaven knows I have no desire to take part in any debating. I know that liberty is made of sterner stuff, and I know that the freedom of India is made of much sterner stuff. We have problems that would baffle any statesman. We have problems that other nations have not to tackle. But they do not baffle me; they cannot baffle those who have been brought up in the Indian climate. Those problems are there with us. Just as we have to tackle our bubonic plague, we have to tackle the problem of malaria. We have to tackle, as you have not, the problem of snakes and scorpions, monkeys, tigers and lions. We have to tackle these problems because we have been brought up under them. They do not baffle us. Somehow or other we have survived the ravages of these venomous reptiles and various creatures. So also shall we survive our problems and find a way out of these problems. But today you and we have come together at a Round Table and we want to find a common formula which will work. Please believe me that, whilst I abate not a

title of the claim that I have registered on behalf of the Congress, which I do not propose a repeat here, while I withdraw not one word of the speeches that I had to make at the Federal Structure Committee, I am here to compromise; I am here to consider every formula that British ingenuity can prepare, every formula that the ingenuity of such constitutionalists as Mr. Sastri, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar, Mr. Jinnah, Sir Muhammad Shafi, and a host of other constitutionalists can weave into being. I will not be baffled. I shall be here as long as I am required because I do not want to revive civil disobedience. I want to turn the truce that was arrived at, at Delhi, into a permanent settlement. But for heaven's sake give me, a frail man, 62 years gone, a little bit of a chance. Find a little corner for him and the organization that he represents. You distrust that organization though you may seemingly trust me. Do not for one moment differentiate me from the organization of which I am but a drop in the ocean. I am no greater than the organization to which I belong. I am infinitely smaller than that organization; and if you find me a place, if you trust me, I invite you to trust the Congress also. Your trust in me otherwise is a broken reed. I have no authority save that I derive from the Congress. If you will work the Congress for all it is worth, then you will say goodbye to terrorism; then you will not need terrorism. Today you have to fight the school of terrorists which is there with your disciplined and organized terrorism, because you will be blind to the facts or the writing on the wall. Will you not see the writing that these terrorists are writing with their blood? Will you not see that we do not want bread made of wheat, but we want bread of liberty; and without that liberty there are thousands today who are sworn not to give themselves peace or to give the country peace.

I urge you then to read that writing on the wall. I ask you not to try the patience of a people known to be proverbially patient. We speak of the mild Hindu, and the Mussalman also by contact, good or evil, with the Hindu, has himself become mild. And that mention of the Mussalman brings me to the baffling problem of minorities. Believe me, that problem exists here, and I repeat what I used to say in India I have not forgotten those words that without the problem of minorities being solved there is no swaraj for India, there is no freedom for India. I know that, I realize it; and yet I came here in the hope, perchance, that I might be able to pull through a solution here. But I do not despair of some day or other finding a real and living solution in connection with the minorities problem. I repeat what I

have said elsewhere, that so long as the wedge in the shape of foreign rule divides community from community and class from class, there will be no real living solution, there will be no living friendship between these communities. It will be after all and at best a paper solution. But immediately you withdraw that wedge, the domestic ties, the domestic affections, the knowledge of common birth do you suppose that all these will count for nothing?

Were Hindus and Mussalmans and Sikhs always at war with one another when there was no British rule, when there was no English face seen there? We have chapter and verse given to us by Hindu historians and by Mussalman historians to say that we were living in comparative peace even then. And Hindus and Mussalmans in the Villages are not even today quarrelling. In those days they were not known to quarrel at all. The late Maulana Muhammad Ali often used to tell me and he was himself a bit of an historian, he said, "If God"—'Allah', as he called God—"gives me life, I propose to write the history of Mussalman rule in India; and then I will show through documents that British people have erred, that Aurangzeb was not so vile as he has been painted by the British historian; that the Mogul rule was not so bad as it has been shown to us in British history," and so on. And so have Hindu historians written. This quarrel is not old; this quarrel is coeval with this acute shame. I dare to say it is coeval with the British advent, and immediately this relationship, the unfortunate, artificial, unnatural relationship, between great Britain and India is transformed into a natural relationship, when it becomes, if it does become, a voluntary partnership to be given up, to be dissolved at the will of either party, when it becomes that you will find that Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Christians, untouchables, will all live together as one man.

I want to say one word about the Princes, and I shall have done. I have not said much about the Princes, nor do I intend to say much to-night about the Princes, but I should be wronging them, and I should be wronging the Congress if I did not register my claim, not with the Round Table Conference, but with the Princes. It is open to the Princes to give their terms on which they will join the Federation. I have appealed to them to make the path easy for those who inhabit the other part of India, and therefore I can only make these suggestions for their favourable consideration, for their earnest consideration. I think that if they accepted, no matter what they are, but some fundamental rights as the common property of all India,

and if they accepted that position and allowed those rights to be tested by the Court, which will be again of their own creation, and if they introduced elements—only elements—of representation on behalf of their subjects, I think that they would have gone a long way to conciliate their subjects. They would have gone a long way to show to the world and to show to the whole of India that they are also fired with a democratic spirit, that they do not want to remain undiluted autocrats, but that they want to become constitutional monarchs even as King George of Great Britain is. Sir, a note has been placed in my hands by my friend Sir Abdul Qaiyum, and he says, will not I say one word about the Frontier Province? I will, and it is this. Let India get what she is entitled to and what she can really take, but whatever she gets, whenever she gets it, let the Frontier Province get complete autonomy today. That Frontier will then be a standing demonstration to the whole of India, and therefore, the whole vote of the Congress will be given in favour of the Frontier Province getting Provincial autonomy tomorrow. Prime Minister, if you can possibly get your Cabinet to endorse the proposition that from tomorrow the Frontier Province becomes a full-fledged autonomous Province, I shall then have a proper footing amongst the Frontier tribes and convene them to my assistance when those over the border cast an evil eye on India.

Last of all, my last is a pleasant task for me. This is, perhaps, the last time that I shall be sitting with you at negotiations. It is not that I want that. I want to sit at the same table with you in your closets and to negotiate and to plead with you and to go down on bended knees before I take the final leap and final plunge. But whether I have the good fortune to continue to tender my co-operation or not does not depend upon me. It largely depends upon you. But it may not even depend upon you. It depends upon so many circumstances over which neither you nor we may have any control whatsoever. Then let me perform this pleasant task of giving my thanks to all—from Their Majesties down to the poorest men in the East End, where I have taken up my habitation.

In that settlement which represents the poor people of the East End of London I have become one of them. They have accepted me as a member, and as a favoured member of their family. It will be one of the richest treasures that I shall carry with me. Here, too, I have found nothing but courtesy and nothing but a genuine affection from all with whom I have come in touch. I have come in touch with so

many Englishmen. It has been a priceless privilege to me. They have listened to what must have often appeared to them to be unpleasant, although it was true. Although I have often been obliged to say these things to them, they have never shown the slightest impatience or irritation. It is impossible for me to forget these things. No matter what befalls me, no matter what the fortunes may be of this Round Table Conference, one thing I shall certainly carry with me—that is, that from high to low I have found nothing but the utmost courtesy and the utmost affection. I consider that it was well worth my paying this visit to England in order to find this human affection. It has enhanced, it has deepened my irrepressible faith in human nature that although Englishmen and Englishwomen have been fed upon lies so often that I see disfiguring your Press, that although in Lancashire the Lancashire people had perhaps some reason for becoming irritated against me, I found no irritation, no resentment even in the operatives. The operatives, men and women, hugged me. They treated me as one of their own. I shall never forget that.

I am carrying with me thousands upon thousands of English friendships. I do not know them, but I read that affection in their eyes as early in the morning I walk through your streets. All this hospitality, all this kindness will never be effaced from my memory no matter what befalls my unhappy land. I thank you for your forbearance.

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session) : Proceedings of the Plenary Sessions, pp. 265-75

132. INTERVIEW TO JOURNALISTS¹

[December 1, 1931]²

Q. How can Christian pacifists and internationalists help India ?

A. First of all they can do so by a thorough scientific study of the question, so that events shall not nonplus them, and so that they shall not be subject to vacillation. There are people who sometimes hug me and sometimes revile me. They are subject to the passing moment. I want them to assimilate the truth about the movement in India so that they are not easily changed. If there are such people, then the movement is safe. Otherwise it has no roots. This study must also be followed by corporate action based on the truth they have assimilated.³

Peace may arise out to strife, or all strife is not antipacific. To stand with folded hands is not to achieve reform.

I have been told that by suffering myself I hurt the feelings of those who are opposed to me. Yes, certainly I do. That is what I want to do. Surely you do not want your opponent to be so hard-hearted that he is indifferent to what others suffer. Of course, the sufferings must not be wanton and not merely for the sake of suffering. That would be terrible. I only suffer if I must suffer. When the suffering is there, the suffering must be borne; it is a necessity.

Is not this the process of conversion ? Instead of overthrowing your adversary and compelling him either to yield or perish you permit yourself to be overthrown and to suffer. If it hurts him to see you suffer, that is what you want. The pacifists in this country do not believe in the fundamental law of peace. They must be prepared to suffer with those who suffer.

It has been said to me, "Surely it is not necessary to impose this suffering upon ourselves? Why cannot the object be obtained by

¹ Someone signing himself "H.W.P." met Gandhiji along with "a small party of journalists". His account of the interview in *The Friend* has been collated with another report in *Reconciliation*.

² "H.W.P." mentions a meeting held at Friends' House on December 2 and says the interview took place "on the previous morning, just before the beginning of the last session of the Round Table Conference". The session concluded on this date.

³ The three paragraphs that follow are from *Reconciliation*.

way of negotiation?" I reply, 'Argument has never convinced any man, but, on the contrary, conviction precedes argument.' If that were not so, all books would appeal to all men alike. I have been touched by books which made no appeal to millions, because I already had the conviction within me.

Take my vegetarianism. I was born a vegetarian. I was a vegetarian by the vow I made before my mother. Then I read Salt's *Plea for Vegetarianism* and I was convinced, but the conviction was already in me. Similarly with Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. I was trying to follow that life, but Ruskin made it real in my own life. He changed it, but the conviction was already there. To others, in whom the conviction was not already, the same book would make no appeal.

Q.How, Mr. Gandhi, can satyagraha be effective when followed merely as a method and not as a principle?

A.'Satyagraha' means utter insistence upon truth. When a man insists on truth, it gives him power. If a man without real perception uses it, he is taking its name in vain. I may refuse to acknowledge the rule of the road because of some principle involved. Another man may do so because he finds it inconvenient. We are both doing the same thing, but in the one case there is moral backing for the action, but not in the other. One of us is a civil resister, the other is a criminal resister. But the danger has its own corrective in that ultimately you have to suffer, and not many will invoke suffering from an impure motive.

The true conscientious objector is correct in his conduct, for he has a spiritual backing. But the act is correct whether there is spiritual backing or not. The difference is that the conduct in one case is correct throughout, and, in the other only up to a point.

Q.You have often said that Western civilization is Satanic. What are its Satanic elements, and are none of these elements present in Indian civilization?

A.Western civilization is material, frankly material. It measures progress by the progress of matter—railways, conquest of disease, conquest of the air. These are the triumphs of civilization according to Western measure. No one says, 'Now the people are more truthful or more humble.' I judge it by my own test and I use the word 'Satanic' in describing it. You set such store by the temporal, external things. The essential of Eastern civilization is that it is spiritual, immaterial. The fruits of Western civilization the East may approach with avidity but with a sense of guilt. Your idea is the more you want

the better you are, and you don't fall far short in your belief. Your civilization has gone from one stage to another. There is no end to it. You are proud of your conquest over nature, but this makes no appeal to me. You might see me fly tomorrow, but I should be feeling guilty about it. Suppose all your London tubes and buses were taken away. I should say, 'Thank God I shall be able to walk to my quarters at Bow, even if it takes me three hours'.

A final question put to Mr. Gandhi was as to whether he found the spirit which he sought in any of the Western religious books. He replied at once:

Yes. For instance, some years ago my friend Henry Polak gave me Thomas a Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*. I read it through at a sitting and I thought I was reading an Eastern book.

Q. You mean a universal book?

A. Well, when I use the term 'Easter' I mean 'Universal'. The term is one of my little 'foot rules'.

The Friend, 11-12-1931, and *Reconciliation*, January 1932

133. *EXTRACTS FROM PROCEEDINGS OF PLENARY SESSION OF ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE*

December 1, 1931

CHAIRMAN: ... At the beginning of the year I made a declaration of the policy of the then Government, and I am authorized by the present one to give you and India a specific assurance that it remains their policy. I shall repeat the salient sentences of that declaration:

"The view of His Majesty's Government is that responsibility for the government of India should be placed upon Legislatures, Central and Provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee, during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances, and also with such guarantees as are required by Minorities to protect their political liberties and rights.

"In such statutory safeguards as may be made for meeting the needs of the transitional period, it will be a primary concern of His Majesty's Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India through the new Constitution to full responsibility for her own government."

With regards to the Central Government, I made it plain that, subject to defined conditions, His Majesty's late Government were prepared to recognize the principle of the responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature, if both were constituted on an all-India Federal basis. The principle of responsibility was to be

subject to the qualification that, in existing circumstances, Defence and External Affairs must be reserved to the Governor-General, and that, in regard to Finance such conditions must apply as would ensure the fulfilment of the obligations incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State, and the maintenance unimpaired of the financial stability and credit of India.

Finally, it was our view that the Governor-General must be granted the necessary powers to enable him to fulfil his responsibility for securing the observance of the constitutional rights of Minorities, and for ultimately maintaining the tranquillity of the State.

These were, in broad outline, the features of the new Constitution for India as contemplated by His Majesty's Government at the end of the last Conference.

As I say, my colleagues in His Majesty's present Government fully accept that statement of January last as representing their own policy. In particular, they desire to reaffirm their belief in an all-India Federation as offering the only hopeful solution of India's constitutional problem. They intend to pursue this plan unswervingly and to do their utmost to surmount the difficulties which now stand in the way of its realization. In order to give this declaration the fullest authority, the statement which I am now making to you will be circulated today as a White Paper to both Houses of Parliament, and the Government will ask Parliament to approve it this week.

MR. GANDHI: Prime Minister and Friends, the privilege and the responsibility of moving a vote of thanks to the Chair have been entrusted to me, and I have taken up the responsibility and the privilege with the greatest pleasure. It is not expected of any single one of us, and least of all of me, that I should say on this occasion anything whatsoever about the weighty pronouncement to which we have all just listened. A chairman who conducts the proceedings of his meeting in a becoming and courteous manner is always entitled to a vote of thanks, whether those who compose the meeting agree with the decisions taken at the meeting, or with the decisions that may be given by the Chairman himself.

Sir, I know that yours was a double duty. You had not only to conduct the proceedings of the Conference with becoming dignity and with impartiality, but you had often to convey the decisions of His Majesty's Government. And your final act in the Chair has been to convey the considered decision of His Majesty's Government over the many matters on which this Conference has deliberated. I propose to omit that part of your task; but for me the pleasanter part is how you have conducted the proceedings, and let me congratulate you upon

the lessons that you have given us so often in time-sense. Chairmen often neglect that very elementary duty, and I must confess in my country almost with tiresome regularity. We are not credited with proper \time-sense. Prime Minister, it will be my pleasant and bounden duty to give to my countrymen when I return to India what the British Prime Minister has done in the matter of time-sense.

The other thing that you have shown us is your amazing industry. Brought up in your hard Scotch climate, you have not known what rest is set and you have not allowed us also to know what rest is. With , shall I say, almost unexampled ferocity you worked every one of us, including old men like my friend and revered brother Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and equally old men like me. You have worked almost to exhaustion, with a pitilessness worthy of a Scotsman like you, my friend and revered leader Mr. Sastri. You let us know yesterday that you knew his physical condition, but before a sense of duty you set aside all these personal considerations. All honour to you for that, and I shall treasure this amazing industry of yours.

But let me say on this matter that, although I belong to a climate which is considered to be luxuriant, almost bordering on the equatorial regions, perhaps we might there be able to cross swords with you in industry, but that does not matter. If what you gave us yesterday, if that is only a foretaste of what you are capable of working even for a full twenty-four hours as your House of Commons has done at times—well then, of course, you will take the palm.

Thereore I have the greatest pleasure in moving this vote of thanks. But there is an additional reason, and it is perhaps a greater reason why I should shoulder this responsibility and esteem the privilege that has been given to me. It is somewhat likely I would say only somewhat likely, because I would like to study your declaration, once, twice, thrice, as often as it may be necessary, scanning every word of it, reading its hidden meaning if there is a hidden meaning in it crossing all the T's, dotting all the I's, before I come to a conclusion that, so far as I am concerned, we have come to the parting of the ways, that our ways take different directinos; it does not matter to us. Even so, you are entitled to my hearty and most sincere vote of thanks. It is not given to us in this society of ours for all to agree in order to respect one another. It is not given to us always to expect meticulous regard for each other's opinions and always to be accommodating so that there is no principle left with you. On the

contrary, dignity of human nature requires we must face the storms of life, and sometimes even blood brothers have got to go each his own way, but if at the end of their quarrel at the end of their difference they can say that they bore no malice, and that even so they acted as becomes a gentleman, a soldier if it will be possible at the end of the chapter for me to say that of myself and of my countrymen, and if it is possible for me to say that of you, Prime Minister, and of your countrymen, I will say that we parted also well. I do not know. I do not know in what direction my path will lie, but it does not matter to me in what direction that path lies. Even then, although I may have to go in an exactly opposite direction, you are still entitled to a vote of thanks from me from the bottom of my heart.¹

CHAIRMAN: ... I am so much obliged to Mahatma Gandhi for the very kind and friendly things he said in moving this resolution. There is only one thing I quarrel with him about, and I hope he will not consider it is a major thing, and I hope he will not have any misunderstandings about it. It is this. Why does he refer to himself, in relation to me, as an old man? Why, the Mahatma has got years to his advantage. It was a young man who spoke at 12 o'clock last night—a young man, a youth. It was an old man who sat in the chair and kept him at his work. Mr. Gandhi has got the advantage of youth compared with me. I do not know which of us looks the older—but if you turn up these records that lie not, the records of "Who's Who", and that sort of thing, you will discover that in the ordinary course of nature I am much nearer the end of my time than Mr. Gandhi himself, ("No, you are not, Sir") and that, if there is anybody who has got any grievance about prolonged sitting it is not the young man who spoke, as I see you all, smiling youths—it was the old man who presided over you and whom you kept out of bed until half-past two this morning and then made him get up at 6 o'clock this morning in order to come here with a prepared statement to read to you. That is where the grievance is. But my friends, I have none not a particle, not a shadow if it has been in the interests of India and for the purpose of bringing you together.

There is only one thing more I want to say. I am so glad that my old friend opposite me (Sir Abdul Qaiyum) seconded the resolution. It is a great achievement to get Mahatma Gandhi and him together. That is a foretaste of what is going to happen when Muslim and Hindu

MR. GANDHI: Not Hindu !

CHAIRMAN : Mr. Gandhi understands the lapses of an untrained human tongue.

MR. GANDHI : I forgive it.

¹ The vote of thanks was carried unanimously and with acclamation.

CHAIRMAN: He understands the lapses of an untrained human tongue such as mine, but the Mussalmans and the others came together. I am beginning to pick up Mr. Gandhi's thoughts, because he has always told us that you were sections and that he comprehended you all.

MR. GANDHI : Of course!

CHAIRMAN: But look at the effect of the two of you coming together in order to co-operate and express your gratitude to a Scotsman. My dear Mahatma, let us go on in this way; it is the best way; you may find it will be the only way. It is certainly a way that will enable both of us to take great pride in our work and to relate our political action with those glorious spiritual impulses which lie at the source of all our being.

One other thing. When the Mahatma takes the Chair in India, if he will let me know, I will come over and see whether he is an apt pupil of mine or not, whether he can enforce with energy and with success the "time-sense" for which he has been so kind and liberal in his praise of me this morning.

Well, a very good voyage home to you all ! A very happy and very prosperous returning! And do remember that we are enlisted in the same cause, that we are bound by the same loyalty, the loyalty to India herself. Do remember to stand shoulder to shoulder with us, to exchange views, and by mutual co-operation, with good luck and good fortune, we shall solve the problems that now confront us and see India stand self-governing and self-respecting in the world.

For the last time, I declare that the Conference now adjourns.¹

Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session): Proceedings of the Plenary Sessions, pp. 289-300.

134. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

LONDON,
December 1, 1931

It is not so much the Premier's statement or what happened at the Conference that is worrying me as what is happening in India at the present moment. You have an English saying which is appropriate: "Coming events cast their shadow before." Well, the situation in India, especially in Bengal, is very ugly, leaving little room for hope that anything big will come out of the Conference. I refer to the

¹ The Conference terminated at 12.33 p.m.

Ordinance just passed in Bengal giving extra-ordinary powers to the Government to deal with what has been called terrorism and to a certain extent rightly so called, but past experience tells me that the Government has become panicky as it is wont when European life is taken or is attempted. I detest such a crime, but I am quite clear in my mind that the powers taken are altogether out of all proportion to the possibilities of the spread of terrorism. If it is let to me, it shall be dealt with under ordinary law.

I must say the executive in authority has very wide powers even under the ordinary law, and after all is said and done, if one were to examine the mere arithmetic in connection with terrorism, I do not think Bengal would come out the worst. Then, instead of dealing with the root cause, the Government of India, rather the Government of Bengal, assisted by the Government of India and the Secretary of State here have merely dealt with the symptom and not the disease. Terrorists, everybody admits, do not resort to terrorism for the sake of it. Nobody throws away his life without some motive behind and it is, I think, admitted by all that the terrorists resort to their method in the hope of thereby securing freedom for their country. If that freedom comes, there surely may be no terrorism, certainly no attempts on European life or the life of officials whether they are Europeans or others. If I had my way, therefore, I would certainly utilize all the ordinary legal powers to put down crime and at the same time find out what the terrorists mean by freedom and if, as a result of enquiry, I found their demands just, I would straight away concede their demands and there would be no terrorism in the land.

The late Mr. C.R. Das and many other public men of his time advised the Government to adopt this method, but their advice went unheeded or was not accepted in the fullest extent. But it is never too late to retrace one's steps in a matter of this character and I fear very much that, unless full freedom for which the nation is hungering comes, terrorism will not be rooted out.

The Congress has adopted a method whereby terrorism can entirely be replaced by means of civil resistance and all it means, and I am certain the Congress method has, in a very large degree, kept the terrorist crime under check. But I make no larger claim for the Congress method just yet. I hope, however, whether the Government regains sanity or not, the Congress will pursue its course and some day effectively stamp out terrorism. But I confess that the progress is slow as all methods of conversion are likely to be.

The relevance, however, of what I have said is that these extra ordinary powers of repression with which the Bengal Government has

armed itself seem to me wholly inconsistent with the desire expressed here to part with power, and give India the real freedom she wants. Apart, therefore, from the meaning which the Premier's declaration bears, this Ordinance and the other things that, I know, are happening in India, fill me with the greatest misgiving and may leave the Congress no choice in the matter of tendering further co-operation.

How I wish public opinion here was moved in the right direction. I am sure if the honest Indian version of the whole affair come to light as to what is happening in Bengal today, it would not, at any rate, be tolerated.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3-12-1931

135. *LETTER TO H. S. L. POLAK*

LONDON,
December 2, 1931

MY DEAR HENRY,

I was distressed to find that without waiting to discuss with me you paid the landlady two days' extra rent. You ignored the conditions that were made. And now without even caring to know the facts you have insisted upon payment of damages for the wear and tear of the carpet. Prosperity and association with the rich and the powerful have evidently unfitted you to represent the poor you should know that I am not operating on my own property. I am trustee for the poor and I have no right to squander away the monies belonging to the poor. And every rupee coming into my hands becomes part of the poor man's trust. I have said nothing to you about the past transaction when you paid the cheque to the landlady. I had to speak sharply to both Maud and Andrews. I had hoped that after that incident nothing would be done over my head. I am deeply hurt. Now tell me what you would have me do about the carpet.

Love.

BHAI

H. S. L. POLAK
DE VERE GARDENS
LONDON

From a photostat: S.N. 18373

136. INTERVIEW TO SIR PHILIP HARTOG¹

LONDON,

December 2, 1931

In my last letter to Mr. Gandhi relating to his statement at the Royal Institute of International Affairs on October 20 that literacy in India had diminished during the last 50 or 100 years,² I had asked him for an interview. . . I went to see Mr. Gandhi at 88 Knightsbridge at 4 p.m. and stayed till five. He was lying on a sofa, covered with his shawl, in front of a big fire, obviously tired, though he insisted on rising both when I came and when I went. He told me that he had thought his strength was equal to anything, but that he was now saturated. I suggested that he might be too tired to discuss matters, but he said that it was a pleasure to meet me and he apologized sincerely for not having written to over me an appointment.

He admitted at once that he had at present no facts to substantiate his statements and did not attempt to answer my argument that the articles in *Young India* for December 8 and 29, 1920 by Daulat Ram Gupta, of which he had furnished me with typed copies, contained no literacy figures and that the most recent official report on them, Dr. G. W. Leitner's *History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab*, was written in 1882 and could therefore furnish no evidence with regard to the progress or decline of literacy in India during the last 50 years. He told me that Mr. Mahadev Desai (who was present) had been investigating the matter in the British Museum. Mr. Desai admitted that he had found nothing fresh up to the present. Mr. Gandhi said that he would question the writer of the articles in *Young India* and that on his return he would get competent friends at his Ashram to investigate the matter for him over there and that he would send me a cablegram with regard to the result, and that in it he would say whether he had found material that would convince me that he was right, or that he would apologize handsomely for his mistake, and he would make his withdrawal in such a way as to reach a much wider audience than his original statement.

I showed him Leitner's book and pointed out the statement on 3 in which Leitner pointed out that the Punjab was not typical, but far behind the Central Provinces and Lower Bengal in the proportion of pupils to population, a statement not referred to by Mr. Gupta, though he had quoted figures in regard to Hushiarpur from p. 2. I told Mr. Gandhi that the population of British India in 1882 was roughly speaking 210 millions, and that it had increased in 1931 to about 270 millions i.e., about 30 per cent in round figures, and that during that period the number of pupils

¹ Extracted from Sir Philip Hartog's notes of the interview.

² Vide "Speech at Chatham House Meeting", 20-10-1931

under instruction in British India had increased from about $2\frac{1}{3}$ millions to over 11 millions, i.e., more than 4 times, and that it would be surprising, therefore, if literacy had diminished during these 50 years.

I also pointed out that it was impossible to draw any accurate conclusions, on the other hand, in regard to literacy from the numbers of pupils under instruction. Howell in his *Education in British India* had pointed out that for many reasons, including the early age at which the children are withdrawn, the schools in the early 19th century were almost worthless. I also mentioned that during the years 1917-1927 in Bengal with an increased enrolment of over 300,000 pupils (the actual figure is about 370,000) there had been a decline of about 30,000 pupils in number that reached class IV where, under present conditions, literacy was first attained.

I also showed Mr. Gandhi certain figures of literacy for Bengal from Adam's *Report on Vernacular Education of 1835-38* and compared them with the census figure for 1921, Vol. 5, p.302. I further showed him census figures for 1911 and 1901 taken from the same volume p. 285, showing considerable increases in literacy in Burma, Bengal and Madras, though the Punjab, Bihar, Bombay and United Provinces had made little or no progress during those years. Mr Gandhi said, "I know very little about these things" in a tone of apology, to which I rejoined that he had no doubt many other things to occupy his attention.

Towards the end of the interview, I said that I hoped that he was now on the side of peace. He replied that he had meant exactly what he had said on the previous day, that he would read the Prime Minister's declaration over again and again, and that he felt the immense personal responsibility that rested on his shoulders in advising Congress. He said that he had postponed his departure in order to see Sir Samuel Hoare on the following Friday as Sir Samuel had said that he would have no free time during the debate in Parliament (on Wednesday and Thursday). I said: "I am sure you must be convinced that Englishmen are in earnest in wishing to give India everything possible at the present moment." He said:

Yes, but there is one thing that the English sincerely believe, but which I cannot understand. They think us incapable of managing our own affairs even with the help of experts. When I was a young man and my father was Prime Minister of an Indian State, I knew the Prime Minister of another Indian State (Junagadh), who could hardly sign his own name but who was a very remarkable man and managed the State wonderfully. He knew just who were the right people to advise him and took their advice. When I spoke to your own Prime Minister about the exchange value of the rupee, he said to me that he knew nothing about exchange values, that the Prime Minister had of course to do things in his own name, but had really to depend on experts. We have had experience in governing in the past and we could do equally well.

I ended up the interview by saying that I was a man of peace, and had no desire to enter on a controversy, but that I must state the facts in the *Journal Affairs*, and to this I understood Mr. Gandhi to assent. I wished him a pleasant journey back to India and said I hoped I had not tired him. He replied that it had been a real pleasure to see me, and that he hoped to keep in touch with me. . . .

Mr. Gandhi said that he had not accused the British Government of having destroyed the indigenous schools, but they had let them die for want of encouragement.

I next told Mr. Gandhi that I could accept his suggestion that universal primary education must necessarily be very remote, and that my Committee had estimated that an additional recurring expenditure of about 19 crores would bring about 80 per cent of boys and girls into the primary school system. Mr. Gandhi then asked me if I thought that primary education would be of much use unless the children went on to middle schools. I said that was the next step, that would follow, and that I regarded the encouragement of the vernacular middle schools as of the greatest importance not only for the sake of the children but children they produce the primary teachers. I said that I was sorry that Bengal despised vernacular middle schools and insisted on English teaching middle schools.

We then spoke of girl's education and I quoted the opinion of my Committee that, in all schemes of expansion, priority should be given to the claims of girls. Mr. Gandhi said that he entirely agreed, but he asked himself whether primary education would make girls better mothers. Mr. Gandhi said that he had not read the Report of my Committee.

From a photostat: C.W. Courtesy: 9408. India Office Library

137. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

LONDON,

December 3, 1931

Squatting before a fire in a small room in his Knightsbridge office, Mahatma Gandhi shortly before midnight received some 40 Press representatives, seated on the floor round him. He told them that he was unable to give his decisive view either on the Premier's statement or on the Commons debate, but assured them that, before reaching any conclusion, he proposed to exhaust all resources at his disposal in order to understand both the statement and the debate. Mahatma Gandhi added that any conclusion he might reach would have no weight until it had been submitted to the Congress Working Committee and accepted by it.

Mahatma Gandhi repeated his declaration regarding civil disobedience and reaffirmed his tentative opinion that the statement meant a parting of the ways, but he had not yet studied it as he had promised. Mahatma Gandhi said that it was a tremendous responsibility for any man to call upon a nation to go through the fiery

ordeal again. Therefore, he was not likely light-heartedly to advise the resumption of civil disobedience, but resistance in the policy of repression envisaged by the Bengal Ordinance might upset all calculations and precipitate any day civil disobedience on a national scale. Mahatma Gandhi declared that there was no justification for the Ordinance and continued:

I am no more pessimistic than when I left India. I never believed that we would get anything more than what our own internal strength entitled. The Round Table Conference negotiations have been a method of finding out the measure of our strength compared with those with whom power at present resides. We have evidently failed. The Congress, therefore, must refill the battery so that it will be powerful enough to do its work.

Mahatma Gandhi thought that it was a good thing that he came to England. His work outside the Conference had been more valuable than the work inside it. He was willing to continue negotiations provided Government's policy was a policy of conciliation and consultation of public opinion, and if the Premier's declaration left room for the acceptance of the Congress demands. In that event, he would advise the continuance of whole-hearted co-operation. Mahatma Gandhi regretted that he had not met Mr. Churchill and others. He expects to reach India on 28th December.

The Hindustan Times, 6-12-1931

138. DISCUSSION WITH J.F. HERRIN AND OTHERS¹

LONDON,
December 3, 1931

HERRIN: Government proposals are dangerously plausible.

GANDHI: The declaration is no advance on past year. In one essential respect it is a backward step. Not that it has gone back, but whereas last year's proposals² were tentative, this year's leave no room for alteration. They are not provisional but final. Last year's are to be accepted subject to the recommendations made by the Federal Structure Committee. These are stiffer than last year's, e.g., Financial safeguards. Last year's conclusions were, I was told, not final and that is why I came. The declaration accepts the findings of the Federal Structure Committee. Every report states a dissent but does not say whose. If the quantum of the vote of each party was to be considered, the Congress vote would be larger than all put together.

¹ The discussion took place in the evening.

² Those made at the First Round Table Conference.

Defence and Finance are Crown subjects. It is a wholly untenable position. No man is master of his household unless he has control over the door-keeper and his purse. So I said Indians accepting this would make themselves a laughing-stock. It is a humiliating position. It is also dishonest. Government should have said: we are prepared to give you control. But they are talking here of transitional safeguards.

Now consider this thing in the light of happenings in Bengal . The Ordinance is most objectionable. The most objectionable was the Rowlatt Act. This is much more objectionable. It reminds us of the Mutiny days and Martial Law days. It is worse than the Martial Law. In Martial Law decisions are liable to be revised, not here. Here it is legalized Martial Law. Attempt to commit murder to be punished by hanging. No appeal, proceedings in camera, mere boys given powers to try, and they can transmit these powers to police officers. The Irish thing is not worse. Delivering up the absconders. This will punish the whole of Bengal. The crimes in Martial Law were bad, but vengeance was terrible.

When I read the declaration in the light of this Ordinance I find no readiness not part with power. The little responsibility given is a shadow and our difficulties to work under this handicap would be evidence against us. Take the assembly today. Men, practically of Government nomination, rejected proposals which got certified. The budget also suffered the same fate. How can you have responsible government the next day when you have undiluted repression? In South Africa, when responsible government came, it came naturally to them . People knew it was coming. Every organic growth is like that. Here is no such thing. But my opinion is subject to this that the present proposals are tentative, that some alterations would be made, that the Ordinance would be removed in two or three days.

WRENCH: I cannot help feeling that there is a great change. Rothermere and Churchill do not count very much. MacDonald's statement is better than I had hoped. If you get a Tory majority as far as it has gone, I do not think you can have anything better. Why not wait for three years ? Let Great Britain show that it is really honest.

GANDHIJI : The Irish parallel does not answer. There were negotiations during which there was no repression; here repression is going on whilst there have been negotiations going on. Sir Samuel Hoare frankly said, I have no confidence in your ability or competence." If you say, don't judge us by what Churchill says, I agree. But if you say, don't judge us by what MacDonald says or

Lothian says, then I should despair. Hoare is a straight man, a man of his word, honest; but he is rigid, hard, impossible to dislodge, [and shows an] amazing ignorance of Indian history. He feels that Indian administration has been a positive blessing. He feels that he can't conduct this Government without this thing. Others do the same thing [but] they don't say what Hoare says.

LASKI : The whole Cabinet does not believe in the Ordinance. I would allow you just a little grace.

GANDHIJI : No ? Then the members should resign. It is a sickening thing. It is positively horrid. I will break myself in the attempt to break it. If you remain silent in a matter of this kind you are guilty.

LASKI : Consider from our angle that the Prime Minister made a brilliant strategic move. He postponed the hour of effective decision. He has made your strategic position difficult, ours also difficult. It seems to me that you are entitled to ask him for the full proof of his good faith. If I was in your position , I should ask for the complete revision of the Bengal Ordinance. You can ask him to explain what is happening there . Rather than say to them: you have committed sin and I can have nothing to do with you. Then there are committees. You can insist on good faith by having right kind of men. I should demand a substantial representation of Congress on committees. Thirdly I should want proof in the shape of increasing association of Indians in the Central responsibility . It is the gravest error to regard these things as water-tight compartments. Before civil disobedience is resumed, I want you within a period to urge on Government that, if they are prepared to meet you, you would continue with the Round Table Conference work.

GANDHIJI: Even without entering into your difficulties, as a satyagrahi I can't do anything else. I do propose to take the same steps you have suggested in my talks tomorrow. I will not say safe-guards are capable of being split up. To retain the subjects for the Crown and then to part with certain things is no good for me. But there may be safeguards conceived which may not imperil the defence of India and the defence of English lives. I would certainly hammer into shape certain safeguards of this kind. It should be open to me in Committee to revise these safeguards. If so, I would consider them; but if you think 'no', then we should have nothing to do. As regards associations of Indians I would not be satisfied; there should be a radical change of policy. They will have to respond to public opinion. They should have men with Congress mentality. This Ordinance is directed against Congress. Terrorism should be fought, but an admini-

stration which takes no risks should not think of administration but retire and make room for other men. President Carnot¹ had no sense of security.

Cleveland² was murdered, but America did not go mad. You can't think of emasculating a whole nation. Cut off the heads of assassins but not of their parents, don't wipe out villages. Villages would have silent sympathy, but how can you help it? If you repress them, you will stimulate them all the more. Every step would be taken, until we have driven them into a corner. But the British mind is not in a temper to do anything more. In South Africa the Prime Minister's feat would be called "fun-making". What an equivocal declaration? I should make the best use of it, put the best interpretation to it, and pin him of it. But Government must understand India would not allow Bengal to lie prostrate. Failing all these, if the declaration bears only my interpretation, then there is only one alternative possible.

KINGSLEY MARTIN : Hoare has had a fight with MacDonanld and the latter has won. And on that ground too you should restrain yourself.

GANDHIJI: Not if things in India continue to be as black as they appear to be here. In South Africa I had 16 who became 16,000.

KINGSLEY MARTIN: Certain new measures you think would be necessary?

GANDHIJI: If the ordinary law could not cope with the situation, then I should have special powers. I know Sir Charles Tegart who threw all propriety to the winds.

NEVINSON: What changes would you have?

GANDHIJI: I would want complete responsibility for Central Government. For Central subjects provinces would [not] have to be responsible. Subject to responsibility of Provinces to the Centre, they should have complete autonomy. I would not have a bicameral system. We do not want to reproduce the House of Commons.

LASKI Don't reproduce the House of Lords.

GANDHIJI: Even the House of Commons worries me. If you had a Central Legislature for Ireland, Scotland and England, you would have a smaller House of Commons. I would not be satisfied without adult suffrage. At a stroke I arm the untouchables with tremendous power. My criterion would be that the representatives know

¹ Marie Francois Sadi (1837-94), fourth President of the French Republic

² Presumably a slip for President William McKinley who was shot by an anarchist in 1901.

what they talk about and that they are incorruptible. Would you trust the Liberal Party to effect a change? I trust to its good intentions, but not its capacity to put them into effect. The electors won't allow Labour its own way so far as India is concerned. But that is nothing. I am willing to wait, if I had room for waiting. I want the active support and sympathy of every one of you. I would placate you, but I would on principle not precipitate civil resistance. How can I allow Bengal to go piecemeal during the time of transition? Smuts also has said: you either get it or fight.

NEVINSON: How is it possible with the greatest possible constitutional reform to eradicate poverty?

GANDHIJI: We are trying to do it now. Show me something [to add] to the income. I would burn the spinning-wheel.

BRAILSFORD: We may be too stupid to know when we are beaten; but you may be too clever to see when you have won. I have been trying to see MacDonald's thing objectively—silence of the Muslims, complete lack of agreement on details and many other things. He would have found pretext after pretext under the circumstances. What you have got from a constitutional government is vastly more than what you got from a Labour minority. . . . MacDonald maintains his position on the constitutional question, and he accepts the constitutional position on anarchism. It is a sacrifice to the wolves so that MacDonald may save the whole cargo.

You can carry out your poverty policy once you have a majority on Provincial councils.

GANDHIJI: There is no bad faith. I feel the paralysis of the British mind. You say: take what is offered. No, you can't do it. In Centre 80 per cent is reserved. Provinces are in a pitiable condition with a top-heavy administration under the present scheme. After all Central revenue is derived from the Provinces—47 crores. With all these burdens there is no scope for improvement in Provinces. Not until you give me scope for expansion can I accept this thing.

The declaration is not a dishonest declaration.

Princes are too far committed now. Bhopal, Hydari promise to examine the terms. Ismail and others are quite sound. After the brave statement of Sir Manubhai, there should be no difficulty.

Steel industry does not lend itself to hand labour. It is either the irresponsible critic or the enemy that spreads the rumour that I am opposed to machinery. I should have most delicate machinery to make fine surgical instruments. For food and clothing I would be dead against industrialization.

WRENCH: There is a tremendous change in public opinion—in unexpected places.

GANDHIJI: I am a lover of British nation. No virtue of yours has escaped me. You throw logic to the winds. I should have certainly patience, but not the patience of a stone. I should be convinced that the British official means good faith. Do you want me to sit still in the hope that things are coming right?

There should be a conference of men representing all shades of opinion. Only that party which can deliever the goods should be invited. Nothing is staged, but it looks as though it was staged. Did they not know that I and Sapru would never agree, or that Mussalmans who came here did not want to agree or that Dr. Moonje had no place? After all, our liberty will come through our own strength and not through weakness.

Under the present declaration there is no responsibility at the Centre or in Provinces. Regarding debts the fundamental rights are not foreclosed. There can be a clause which may contain all the rights. I am incapable of throwing a single card away.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai.

139. INTERVIEW TO EDMOND DEMETER¹

LONDON,

[Before *December 5, 1931*]²

Q. I thought you were the sworn enemy of all machines. How does it happen that you use a watch?³

A. I must know what time it is, consequently, I must use a watch. Moreover, I am doing nothing against my principles. I am an enemy not of mechanism but of organized mechanism. I consider this system, which has become the basis of your civilization, as the greatest danger which could menace man. If I use a watch, that does not mean that I am its slave. But when it is a question of the machine organized, man becomes its slave and loses all of the values with which the Lord endowed him.

Q. Excuse me, if I interrupt you. You speak of God. Your God is not mine.

A. But your God is also mine for I believe in your God, in spite of the fact that you do not believe in mine.

¹ Extracted from an account of the interview by Edmond Demeter

² The source does not mention the date of the interview, but Gandhiji left England on December 5.

³ Gandhiji had looked at his watch just as the interview commenced.

Q. Exactly, because you have several.

A. That is without importance. One is able to understand as soon as one believes in man. The difference between us consists in the divergence of opinions as to man and his destiny. You say, you Europeans, that man is born without being either good or bad, and that it is the place, the institutions, and a dozen other factors which determine the road which he is going to follow. I affirm, to the contrary, that man is always good and that it is the only bad institutions which turn him from the straight road.

Q. Then it is a declaration of war against our institutions?

A. No, I never make declarations of that kind. I say simply that one ought to reform human institutions in order to make them more just. The reforms ought to be realized by pacific means and, in this regard, I can recommend the same processes which I followed in my political struggle. I do not fight, for I believe that men are good, and that they are going to understand the truth some day if one will convince them by friendliness.

Q. Do you think that the English are good?

A. Of course. If there are differences between us, it is only because of their bad institutions. Some day they will understand the truth and abandon their present attitude.

Q. Is happiness the goal of your life, Mahatma?

A. No. Happiness is not the purpose of my life, but it is a means of being able to approach the true beacon of my existence. It is simple: I wish to see India independent, strong, peaceful and happy.

[A VISITOR¹] I leave tomorrow for India. I came to bid you good-bye.

[GANDHIJI:] What have you done in London ?

[VISITOR:] I have just finished my studies in the school of medicine.

[GANDHIJI:] What do you wish to do in India?

[VISITOR:] I want to spread your ideas.

[GANDHIJI:] Are you engaged?

[VISITOR:] No.

[GANDHIJI:] Listen to me. You ought to marry as soon as possible and have children as soon as possible.

[DEMETER:] In your opinion, what world figure has exercised the greatest and best influence upon the twentieth century?

A. Tolstoy. He alone.

¹ This was an Indian girl who had just come in.

In speaking of politics, Gandhi made the following declarations:

The Indian National Congress, which I represent at the Round Table Conference, makes no distinctions between classes, beliefs or sexes. It has always shown itself the champion of the cause of the pariahs. But, before everything, the Congress represents the millions of the wretched who live in India and who represent more than 85 per cent of the population.

In the name of that organization, I demand the Complete Independence of India without excluding a voluntary association with England in terms of absolute equality. We do not refuse certain federation or recognized safeguards for the interests of India.

The Hindustan Times, 17-12-1931

140. A MANIFESTO¹

[On or before *December 5, 1931*]

The Congress demands Complete Independence, including full control of defence forces, External Affairs and Finance, not excluding equal partnership with Britain determinable at the instance of either party, subject to the discharge or adjustment of mutual obligations.

SAFEGUARDS

The Congress will accept safeguards necessary in the interests of India and is willing to take over all legitimate obligations, subject to examination by an impartial tribunal. The Congress is committed to a purely national solution of the question of minorities but will, if necessary, accept the principle of special reservation of seats in legislature for Muslims and Sikhs as a necessary evil for historical reasons.

UNTOUCHABLES

The cause of untouchables will be the special care of the Congress and it would be unjust to treat them separately and thus give untouchability a legal status when every attempt is being made to abolish the evil altogether.

¹ The source says this was a parting manifesto by Gandhiji issued by the Commonwealth of India League. Since no other version is available, it cannot be ascertained whether this was the complete text or only portions taken from the document.

NO RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

No political disability will be placed on anyone on the ground of race, creed or colour and, the Congress being wedded to adult franchise, there should be no difficulty in representatives of any adult minority getting elected to the legislatures on the strength of national service.

The Hindustan Times, 9-12-1931

141. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS¹

LONDON,
December 5, 1931

Mr. Gandhi said that the Commons debate was a distinct victory not only for the Government but for responsibility at the Centre and the Provinces.

But I fear that the vote does not carry the Indian position very far. What was outlined in the Declaration and emphasized in the debate is far short of real responsibility. The House of Commons vote lands us again in unreality.

The Hindu, 6-12-1931

142. INTERVIEW TO REUTER²

FOLKESTONE,
December 5, 1931

The English people should believe me when I say that, if it falls to my lot to fight them, I will be engaged in the fight, never out of hatred but most surely out of love, even as I have fought some of my dearest relations. Hence I am determined to make every effort to continue co-operation as far as it is consistent with national self-respect.

I must, however, confess that the more I study the Bengal Ordinance the more I am filled with misgivings of the gravest character. Bad as is the section which makes possible the infliction of capital punishment for attempted murder, there are other sections which are infinitely worse.

¹ Gandhiji gave the interview just before leaving London.

² Gandhiji gave this interview just before embarking on the steamer, *The Maid of Kent*.

We can afford to make a present of a few innocent heads, but it is impossible to contemplate with equanimity the unmanning of the whole people. I am hoping, therefore, that the British will study the Ordinance and insist on the withdrawal of what to me is inhuman exercise of political power.

He added that he always asked Indians to fight for liberty without hatred against the English. As a result of his visit to England, he felt it more incumbent on him now to impress on his fellow-countrymen that they should have no bitterness against the English.

The Hindustan Times, 7-12-1931

143. INTERVIEW TO “BRISTOL EVENING NEWS”

PARIS,
December 5, 1931

My last words to England must be: Farewell and beware! I came a seeker after peace. I return fearful of war. I do not want war, but I fear that circumstances are driving me towards it. I should not be surprised to find myself in prison within a month of my return to India...¹

The Bombay Chronicle, 29-12-1931

144. ANSWER TO QUESTION²

December 5, 1931

Q. Why do you refuse to enter God's house if Jesus invites you? Why does not India take up the Cross?

A. If Jesus has reference to God, I have never refused to enter the house of God; every moment I am trying to enter it. If Jesus represents not a person, but the principle of non-violence, India has accepted its protecting power.

Young India, 31-12-1931

¹ The paragraphs that follow in the source were almost wholly taken from Gandhiji's speech at the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference on December 1.

² Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "The Jesus I love". The question was asked at a Paris meeting.

145. SPEECH AT RECEPTION¹

PARIS,
December 5, 1931

I do not at all regret having attended the Round Table Conference. I should have been ashamed of having gone there if I had compromised by an iota India's demand. I am thankful that God gave me the strength to speak the right word at the right moment, and I am not ashamed of anything that I have said or done there. I am returning home much stronger and wiser. For I know now the people we have to contend against. I know that we have to go through still more suffering to vindicate our position.

Young India, 31-12-1931

146. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING²

PARIS,
December 5, 1931

We had started a battle and in its midst signed a truce for negotiations which were not successful. But nothing is lost now because I have ascertained the character and tactics of those with whom we have to fight so that in future we shall make no mistakes. In battles, misfortunes are normal and so we must continue with greater zest and determination and must face suffering for the freedom of our country. To those of you who are living in Paris and in other parts of Europe, my plea is that you strive always to present to the world all that is best in India and her cause. Strive always to draw the attention of the world to the real nature of India's struggle. I cannot tell you just at this moment the temper of our people in the country. But I can tell you that, when I get back, they will be ready to put up a

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Letter from Europe". The reception was organized by the Indians residing in Paris. Desai says the speech was made in Hindi.

² The meeting organized by the local intellectuals, was held in the afternoon and was attended by about 2,000 persons. Entry was by tickets. The full text of the speech is not available. What follows was addressed to the Indians in the audience. The questions put to Gandhiji at the end of the meeting were mostly Frenchmen.

fresh fight. What we want for our country is control of the army and the purse and it can certainly be obtained if only we are prepared to suffer and be perfectly non-violent. I shall ask our countrymen once again to obtain it by suffering. Disobedience is not violence, but disobedience means further suffering.

Q. When do you think India will be definitely freed?

A. I am not sufficiently all-knowing to answer this question, or to make any prediction which is known only to God.

Q. If India were suddenly freed, would she not, considering the ignorance of the majority of the people, be at the mercy of a handful of intellectuals?

A. Possibly, but in any case it would be preferable for her to be led for a certain time by a group of intellectuals rather than to be under the thumb of demagogic leaders as in the West.

Q. Won't you do anything to lighten the misery of Lancashire?

A. Yes, of course, I shall try my best.

Q. If India were freed, would you set up economic barriers? Would you permit commercial exchange with France?

A. No, I should not oppose commercial exchange. But I must tell you that, when India is free, she will give commercial privileges to England rather than to any other country. All the same permit me to say that France will interest us quite a good deal.

Q. Does the happiness of man reside in knowledge or in ignorance?

A. In neither, It resides in each man himself and in the search of perfection and truth.

Q. Are all men capable of seeking perfection?

A. Yes, they have it in themselves.

Q. Are you satisfied with Mr. MacDonald's Declarations?

A. I must say that, although I am not satisfied, I have great hope despite the fact that I may seem to be returning empty handed.

Q. A few years ago, I saw you dressed in European clothes. Why have you abandoned them ?

A. I am poor, and like thousands of Indians, I do not allow myself to wear European clothes. First, because they are too dear. Secondly, because they are quite unsuited to the climate of my country and, lastly, because it provides work for our Indian workers if we wear Indian clothes.

Q. Supposing there were a fresh warlike mobilization in Europe, do you think that it would be possible to avoid war by the non-co-operation of military forces and of the people?

A. Non-co-operation in the case of war is everywhere possible and it is by this that universal peace will be obtained. According to the other things, women, who are usually called the feeble sex, will then have the opportunity of showing their power by supporting non-co-operation and non-violence.

Q. Would it be right to allow oneself to be killed without putting up a fight?

A. In either case it would be a question of sacrificing one's life. For one who has decided to do this it would be better to remain passive under the law of non-violence than arm oneself with "exterior" arms and kill another besides being killed oneself. In an emergency of this kind, one should arm oneself internally, the internal spiritual forces are stronger and induce a more certain and lasting life. It is not by arming yourself that you will guarantee peace to the world. External arms, guns, cannons, and gas have only evil and passing results. One puts down one's arms only when a respite is essential with the intention of resuming later. By using non-violence as their only weapon thousands of men will arm themselves intellectually and spiritually, with the principles which are in action during day and night and will attain this end and succeed in arousing the sympathy of the Englishmen.

Q. If India were free, what would be her attitude towards Soviet Russia?

A. I am so preoccupied with my own country that I must admit that I am rather ignorant of what concerns the Russian people. All the same I can tell you that, when India is free, she might well imitate what there is of good in Russia. If Russia becomes a little more spiritual, all would be perfect with her.

The Bombay Chronicle, 26-12-1931

147. SPEECH AT MEETING¹, PARIS

December 5, 1931

I first came to Paris in 1890 at the time of the Exhibition at which the Eiffel Tower the “chief attraction”. At once I fell in love with many things in the city: The Cathedral, of which the memory is still fresh in my mind . . .² In my spare time I tried to read works concerning France. I read, in parts, Rousseau and Voltaire. I tried to understand, more comprehensively, your great revolution. From all this I came to the conclusion that if you choose you can give to the world a message even more grand than that proclaimed by your great countrymen.

As it seems to me, the world is tired of sanguinary wars; the world is disgusted with the falsehoods, hypocrisy and deceit that are the necessary concomitants of the way of violence; and it has begun to understand (albeit only vaguely as yet) the disastrous consequences of questionable economics. I am convinced that the economic crisis which has gripped the countries of the world, including the United States, is a consequence of the World War, which we very mistakenly, call the “Great War”. Thus it seems to me that India’s struggle for independence is a movement in which every Frenchman and every Frenchwoman should take a direct interest.

That nation, comprising 350 million inhabitants and representing one-fifth of mankind, has been trying to secure its liberty by methods wholly devoid of violence. Falsehoods, duplicity, hypocrisy and deceit have no place in the method we are practising in India. Everything is open and above board. Once you have grasped the secret, that is, Truth, you will then be more open, more truthful. In the dictionary of the man who bases his life on truth and non-violence there is no place for fear and despair.

This movement is not passive; it is essentially active. It is more active than any campaign involving lethal weapons can be. Truth and non-violence are perhaps the most active forces in the world. The man who brandishes lethal weapons and wants to use them to destroy his

¹ A summary of this speech in the Magic City Hall appeared in “Answers to Question”, 5-12-1931

²Omission as in the source

supposed enemies is obliged to interrupt his labours to give himself some rest, some sleep during his day of twenty-four hours. During that time he is essentially inactive. While it is not so with the man who uses the method of truth and non-violence. These forces reside in the human heart and are constantly struggling to come out, to find expression, whether one is asleep or awake, resting or actively working.

I shall not take your time by recounting to you all the incidents of the war of India's independence. It commenced in 1920. I have only given you a brief idea of the method employed so that you may be able to understand the source of the upsurge that has touched the very last stratum of India's masses.

I am not aware of any movement, in the history of the past hundred years and more, which has trained such vast masses of poor and illiterate people. The human race is essentially idolatrous. Since that is so, I want to say that man requires a visible, tangible manifestation of the thing he believes in and, as a corollary, is looking for miracles to happen so that he can judge the worth of his beliefs. If the movement in India succeeds, it will be the miracle the world is looking forward to, the miracle that will prove the power of truth and non-violence and strengthen the faith of people in our methods.

Before I end this short, preliminary explanation, I want to tell you of a vivid example of the efficiency and power of these methods. In the beginning of last year, during the salt march, women came forward to participate in the movement, not only women who had received a European education, but women from the villages, who could not even sign their names. At the very beginning we had made it clear that neither sex nor age would be any bar to one's participation in the movement. Women and the aged participated in the movement as much as children.

Here I must ask you to believe me that we never had to make any effort to draw either the women or the children to us. I shall say that where attempts were made to obtain the co-operation of women it was only women in cities to whom we appealed. But we never appealed to children. But, in some way, one can say, the air of India is charged with electricity—not the same sort of electricity that illumines the streets of Paris, but a sort of spiritual electricity that goes right up to the hearts of children. Our parents are moving forward with such energy, such confidence, such ardour, that participation of the children is spontaneously brought about and the authority of the parents cannot stop them.

If you are convinced of the importance of the factors that could make the youth throw themselves into the movement I invite you to meditate on them till you can engender a wave of public opinion in favour of this cause.

I stop here, for I think this is enough by way of an introduction.

[From French]

Regeneration, Numero Special Consacre a Gandhi et a l'Inde, janvier, 1932

148. DISCUSSION WITH ROMAIN ROLLAND¹

VILLENEUVE,

December 6, 1931

GANDHIJI: I would have to take Scarperl² literally and what I would want to do is to speak in their presence to the people the very things I should speak out.

ROMAIN ROLLAND: Then you should have with you American reporters.

G. It would be against my nature to make these arrangements beforehand.

R.R. They will surround you with people, English and American, who are Fascists. Your voice must break the cordon for the people of Italy.

G. I would make it a condition also that I would not like to speak to them about neutral matters. This visit has come to me unsought. Let us take it for granted that in Italian Press every word will be distorted. In Free England too my words were distorted and message boycotted. In France too wild things have been written in *Figaro*.

R.R. The other danger. You will speak, but others will speak against you and you will not understand it.

G. I would do my duty and leave the results.

R.R. You have a duty to speak to the poor people.

G. I feel that it is impossible for any person to take these meticulous precautions.

R. R. Always you must have someone with you.

G. The immediate effect will be that Italian Press will

¹ For an account of Gandhiji's visit to Villeneuve; *vide* Appendix II.

² It had been suggested that Gandhiji should visit Italy and see the Pope and Mussolini.

misrepresent me, but the distant effect of a good word spoken or a good thing shown must be good. We must run the risk provided we are sure that I would not fall a prey to temptation.

R. R. You will meet intellectuals—people with intellectual mask, but not the people like Formichi, Gentile, etc.

G. I saw your great pain and I realized with what enormous labours you had reached your conclusions on the situation. On the other hand I have been built differently. Whatever conclusions I have reached have not been through historical studies at all. History has played the least part in my make. A scoffer would say that I have been empirical in my methods and all my conclusions are based on my so-called experience. I call it so-called because there is a danger of self-delusion. I know many lunatics who believe in certain things as if they were their own experiences. But he has some belief as regards his wife and children, and it is impossible to dislodge him from what he calls his experience and the dividing line between his experience and mine may be very thin. Nevertheless my experience has precedents. Saints have based their institutions on experiences and, after all, the world now believes that the experiences they had recorded were correct and also that they had been tested by the historical and analytical methods. My experience has not altogether been baseless and the whole experience regarding non-violence and non-cooperation has a foundation of this character and so, whilst I was listening to yesterday's penetrating discourse, I said, "How can I react to this?" I said: "I should say such is my faith and I must work for it." It was an awful problem. Whilst non-violence may work in India, it may not answer at all in Europe. It does not baffle me for the simple reason that I should not be able to deliver the message of non-violence to Europe, except that it may percolate through India. I may never be able to deliver such a message, but God may have many things in store for me. I have met many enlightened Englishmen and also foreigners and I have said that you must not move unless you have faith to such an extent that you would have faith in you even if the world was against you; and you will then have ways and means coming to your rescue. It is, therefore, my firm belief that non-violence alone will save Europe; otherwise I see nothing but perdition. A process of disintegration is going on in front of me. Things in Russia may be a puzzle. I have spoken least about Russia, but deep down in me I am full of the profound distrust of things happening in Russia. It seems to be a challenge to non-violence. Just

now it seems to be working well, but the basis is force. I do not know how long that force is going to be effective in keeping that society, that country to this narrow path. The Indians who are under the influence of Russian methods are betraying intolerance of an extreme type. The result is that those who are under it are under a system of terrorism. So I follow the Russian experiment with a fundamental distrust. I have cross-questioned every Englishman and American who has been to Russia. They have seemed to me to be impartial observers. The other day Lord Lothian and Bernard Shaw went to Russia. Lothian's testimony is decidedly that he does not know how far force is going to remould society. Bernard Shaw has written enthusiastically. In his conversation with me, I missed that enthusiasm and I did not draw him out completely. On the contrary he was interested in Indian matters. So I see that even for Europe there is need for non-violence. It needs no big organization. It somehow or other organizes itself. There ought to be at the head someone who is non-violent in character, with faith immovable as a mountain, and so long as this man has not come to the surface we must wait and watch and pray.

R.R. I sent you letters addressed to Runham Brown. Non-resistance will be successful in the distant future. But the question is immediate. In 20 years European civilization may perish. I have doubts about the method of non-violence. In 20 years' time everything would be decided. What should we do in the interval?

G. I said somewhat to this effect. The world is really idolatrous. Islam is idolatrous, and so is Protestant Christianity. It wants to see something through one of the five senses. That is what I call idolatry. It wants an ocular demonstration and, if India can successfully give the demonstration, the thing becomes easy. I am clear India should not need 20 years and, if India can come to real freedom through non-violence the world would know non-violence, and then the whole world would take it. I want to develop world opinion so that England will be ashamed to do the wrong thing. But whether that can come about, or whether this war others will fight or not, I do not, know. But I am certain that out of intense non-violence only good can come. There is no doubt about it that English opinion has undergone a revolutionary change not to a satisfactory degree. I attribute it to a non-violence. Some brilliant Englishmen—Gilbert Murray [for instance] do not agree and don't make admission. I do not want it. The thing is there and anyone can see that but for the

fight of non-violence, the so-called R.T.C. would not have met. So I have a hope that after we have gone through...¹ I should have no difficulty in covering the rest of the ground. I know the difference, but I cannot lose faith. I have to build on the self-dedication of the few who have given their lives to it. The same thing happened to me in South Africa. The same thing happened in India where I did not know that I could give a definite battle. We would be able to give that battle. Beyond that I am not able to suggest anything further. If you can deal with the Indian situation in the correct manner, the European will be and cannot but be corrected.

R.R. Non-resistance has been applied in some cases, but our difficulties are double and triple. Indians have been ill-treated, but I do not think that they have been as ill-treated as [people in] Italy. Forced exploitation through work by children. There must be a gospel to preach to the miserable people.

In Russia you must know what the conditions were. What could non-violence do in Russia? Have we the right to ask them to be non-violent to Europe? Should we force them to yield to Europe?

G. With reference to European proletariat, the relations between employers and employed were fairly happy. But I said that the remedy did not come through giving battle to capitalists but in giving battle to themselves. They would then become their own employers. They look to capital to find their labour. If the capitalists gave them all the capital, they would not be happy and they could not make use of it even for one full year. I said to them, therefore, "revive your cottage industry". It is being adopted in Wales. Brave, Stalwart minds and majority of them unemployed and unemployment will increase as oil wells increase. Not one of them should be living upon doles.

R. R. The danger in Europe is in a large middle class which lives in comfort at the expense of others. After the War France was told Germany would pay. In France they are trying to prepare an Asiatic Army and go back to the times of the Roman Empire.

India is right—you are acting in the interest of mankind. Poverty has not yet come to France, though it has come to Germany. Our part is to be with the oppressed.

G. There, too, does not the remedy lie with the oppressed? If they ceased to co-operate with the exploiter, deliverance would come.

Those who have no deep religious feeling are tempted by

¹ A few words that follow are not clear in the source.

salaries and material comforts. World's greatest works are chemical industries which have for their object violence. The gospel of poverty and self-abnegation must be preached.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

149. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

VILLENEUVE,
December 6, 1931

Replying to questions he said that he had nothing to add to what he had said before his departure from London. He flatly denied the report from London in a Geneva newspaper that the Indians would resort to violence if their wishes were not realized. He said personally he would give his life to prevent this.

Asked with regard to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's statement in the House of Commons, Mr. Gandhi said that he would like to hear the views of the Congress before making pronouncement on the statement. His message to the people of India was that they should come to no hasty conclusion, but await his statement for the people.

Amrita Bazar Patrika 8-12-1931

150. EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO LORD IRWIN

[VILLENEUVE,
On or after *December 6, 1931*¹]

If the situation in India does not force a quarrel, co-operation might still be continued. Anyway, I can give you the assurance that I shall do nothing in haste or without first approaching the Viceroy.

Halifax, p.317

151. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

VILLENEUVE,
December 7, 1931

DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

I am reducing in writing the gist of our last conversation. You were good enough to say that neither the Prime Minister's declaration nor your speech in the House of Commons were the

¹ According to the source the letter was written from Villeneuve where Gandhiji arrived on December 6.

last word on Safeguards or Reservations, and that it would be open to any member of the proposed Working Committee to suggest amendments or the removal of any of them as also to press forward the important investigation of the financial transaction to be taken over by the National Government. You also said that whatever you would be sending to the Working Committee for consideration would not be merely formal, but that the Working Committee recommendations would receive the greatest consideration from His Majesty's Government. If this is the correct impression, I would like you, if you don't mind, to confirm it by Air Mail. My address in India would be Ahmedabad.

Yours sincerely,

The Hindu, 1-2-1932

152. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

C/O M. R. ROLLAND,
VILLENEUVE,
December 7, 1931

DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

I had told you I wanted to write to you about the police arrangements that were made by the Government regarding myself. I get the time to do so only today. Whilst all the detectives and the constables who were told off for the work showed extreme care and courtesy in the discharge of their duties, Sergeants Evans and Rogers who came in daily contact with me became as it were members of the family. They looked after me with brotherly care and affection. You were kind enough to send them at my request as far as Brindisi. They are proving themselves extraordinarily useful even in these foreign parts. I shall always be glad to hear that they are doing well.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : C.W. 9385. Courtesy : India Office Library

153. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS¹

LAUSANNE,
December 8, 1931

Q. How can East and West be brought together to work for peace?

A. This question was asked me some 5 years ago. And this was my answer: I, who belong to a subject nation, did not know how I could work for peace except by working for freedom, and if India could be help-ed to win freedom through peaceful means, it would be a very good com-bination for peace. I have said this after having attempted the deliverance of my country through absolutely non-violent and truthful means.

Q. Must we admit that, parallel to the use of non-violence in India, there should be a movement here also for use of non-violence for political ends?

A. If you are convinced that the means adopted in India are day by day bringing about the results we desire, and if you are convinced that India is doing so through spiritual means, then do so here too. Though there is greater difference in Europe.

Friends have told me there were special difficulties in Europe to adopt non-violent means. Europe consists of martial races unlike India. Here all know how to wield arms. All the male population has at one time or another wielded arms. It is difficult for you to understand the efficacy and beauty of non-retaliation. Why not punish the wrong-doer—and in an exemplary manner?—that is what is asked everywhere here. Thus non-violence is quite foreign to Europe. For people belonging to such a country it is difficult to strike out a new path. Your economic life is so constructed that it is not possible, generally speaking, for an ordinary man to get out of the ordinary rut unless he faces poverty. And the fourth difficulty is that in Catholic Europe the iron discipline allows very little free play to the intellect. These are the four difficulties we have not to face in India which you have to face. If India becomes free through non-violent means, it won't enter upon war. But if she does, God will give me strength to fight India single-handed.

¹ Although the source does not mention the occasion of the questions, these were presumably put at the very first meeting Gandhiji addressed at Lausanne.

Q. What do you think of Einstein's call to military people not to take part in war?

A. My answer can only be one. That, if Europe can take up this method enthusiastically like me, I can only say Einstein has stolen the method from me. But if you want me to elaborate the thing, I would like to elaborate the method a little deeper. To refuse to render military service when a particular individual's time comes is to do the thing after all the time for combating the evil is practically gone. The disease is deeper. I suggest to you that those who are not on the Register for military service are equally participating in the crime. He or she, therefore, who supports a State so organized is, whether directly or indirectly, participating in the sin. It is fraught with immediate danger. Seeing that each man, old or young, takes part in this sin by contributing to the State (by paying the tax to the State) I said so long as I ate wheat supplied by the Navy, whilst I was doing everything short of being a soldier, it was best for me to be shot; otherwise I should go to the mountains and eat food grown by nature. Similarly, all those who want to stop military service can do so by withdrawing all military co-operation. Refusal of military service is much more superficial than non-co-operation with a whole system which supports the State. But then your opportunity becomes so swift and so effective that you run the risk of not only being marched to jail, but of being thrown on the street. This was the position of Tolstoy.

Q. Are we not allowed to accept the State? Should we even refuse local self-government (including public works, schools, etc.)?

A. Now you have touched the tenderest spot in human nature. This question touched me as author of non-co-operation in the initial stage. And before I could make up my mind, I said to myself: I co-operate with the State in two ways. There is no State, run either by Nero or Mussolini, which has no good points about it. We have in India what is called the Grand Trunk Road. It provides facility for millions of travellers; well-equipped hospitals, grand palaces built for schools. These we may consider to be good points. But I said, if the whole thing crushes the nation, I should not have anything to do with them. They are like the snake with a jewel but with poison fangs. So I came to the conclusion that British rule in India had stunted the nation and so I denied myself all the privileges. The gentlemanly way was to deny them.

The plea of self-defence is a wretched plea. You organize your country and society to prey upon ill-organized communities and nations. It is a bad thing. . . .¹ What Einstein has said would occur only once in a year and only with a very few people. But your first duty is to non-co-operate with the State.

Q. Is there so deep a difference between a man in India and subjects of other countries which are free? Could not we say that our position is different from yours before we can quarrel with our State ?

A. Difference there undoubtedly is. As a member of a subject nation I could best help by shaking rid of my subjection. Here I am asked how best to get out of military mentality. You are enjoying amenities on condition that you render military service to the State. There you have to rid the State of military mentality. But you are in a hopeless minority. A State that rests on military violence is a bad State. You will then say that a majority of people are like that. They are. In examining the efficacy of the method I am able to draw a distinction between a free State and a subject State. If you want the minority to become a majority, you will have to deny the privileges.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

154. *SPEECH AT MEETING IN LAUSANNE*

December 8, 1931

FRIENDS,

Let me say how overwhelmed I have felt by the kindness of which I have been the recipient ever since I have been in your beautiful city. If earthly beauty can make a paradise, you are indeed living in a paradise. I come from a land where God has showered His choicest gift in the shape of earthly beauty. There is nothing grander you can find in all the earth than the beauty you can find in the uttermost extremity of India—Travancore—and yet as the train was slowly gliding by your beautiful lake and as we passed the villages so beautifully clean, I could not but be entranced by the sublimity of the

¹ Some words here are not clear in the source.

² The source does not specify which meeting this was. But Mahadev Desai in his "Letter from Europe", published in *Young India*, 31-12-1931, says this was the Conscientious Objectors' meeting organized by Pierre Ceresole and his friends and was held in a church. The speech and the answers to questions that followed were translated by Edmond Privat and Prof. Bovet.

beauty. And when I came here, I enjoyed and drank deep the beauty of your affection. I could trace your affection in the many searching and relevant questions put to me, where I had heart-to-heart talks and, now to crown all in this house of God, you have commenced your bombardment by a question which has been occupying me—the whole of my being—for nearly 50 years.

You have asked me why I consider that God is Truth. In my early childhood or youth, I was taught to repeat what in Hindu scriptures is one thousand names of God. Among the several little things one of the religious teachers my family had was a little pamphlet which contained these thousand names of God. But these thousand names of God were by no means an exhaustive list. We believe—and I think it is the truth—that God has as many names as there are creatures and, therefore, we also say that God is nameless and since God has many forms we also consider him formless, and since he speaks to me through many tongues we consider him to be speechless and so on. And so when I came to study Islam, I found that Islam too had many names, but I had not come to recognize God for my personal satisfaction as Truth. I would say for those who say God is love, God is love. But deep down in me I say God may be love, but God is Truth. It is possible for the human tongue to give the fullest description of God, for myself I have come to the conclusion that God is Truth. But two years ago I went a step further and said Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements: God is Truth and Truth is God. And that conclusion I came to after a continuous, relentless search after Truth which began so many years ago. I found that the nearest approach to Truth is through love. But I found also that love has many meanings, in the English language at least, and human love in the sense of passion becomes a degrading thing also. I found too that love in the sense of ahimsa or non-violence has only a limited number of votaries in the world. And as I made progress in my search, I made no dispute with “God is love”. It is very difficult to understand “God is love” (because of a variety of meanings of love) but I never found a double meaning in connection with Truth and not even atheists have denied the necessity or power of Truth. Not only so. In their passion for discovering Truth, they have not hesitated even to deny the very existence of God—from their own point of view rightly. And it was because of their reasoning that I saw that I was not going to say “God is Truth”, but “Truth is God”. Therefore I recall the name of Charles Bradlaugh—a

great Englishman who lived 50 years ago. He delighted to call himself an atheist. But knowing as I do something of his life. I never considered him an atheist. I would call him a godfearing man although he would reject the claim, and I know his face would redden. I would say: No Mr. Bradlaugh, you are a truth-fearing man, not a god-fearing man, and I would disarm his criticisms by saying "Truth is God" as I have disarmed criticisms of many a young man. Add to this the great difficulty that millions have taken the name of God and have committed nameless atrocities in the name of God. Not that scientists do not very often commit cruelties in the name of Truth. I know today in the name of Truth and science inhuman cruelties are perpetrated on animals when men perform vivisection. To me it is a denial of God whether you recognize Him as Truth or by any other name. So I know that there are these difficulties in one's way no matter how you describe God. But human mind is a limited thing, and you have to labour under limitation when you think of a being or entity who is beyond the power of man to grasp. But we have another thing in Hindu philosophy viz., God alone is and nothing else exists. Now the same truth you find emphasized and exemplified in the *Kalama* of Islam. There you find it clearly stated—a Mussalman has to recite it at all his prayers—that God alone is and nothing else is and that is the same about Truth. And the name that Sanskrit has for Truth literally means that which is—*Sat*. For these and several other reasons that I can give you I have come to the conclusion that the definition. "Truth is God" gives me the greatest satisfaction. And when you want to find Truth is God, the only inevitable means is love, non-violence—and since I believe that ultimately means and ends are convertible terms I should not hesitate to say that God is love.

Q. What is Truth ?

A. A difficult question, but I have solved it for myself by saying that it is what the voice within tells one. How then, you ask, different people think of different and contrary truths?

Seeing that the human mind works through innumerable media and that evolution of the human mind is not the same for all, it follows that what may be truth for one may be untruth for another and hence those who have made these experiments have come to the conclusion that there are certain conditions to making experiments. Just as for science there is an indispensable course common for all, even so it is true for persons who would make experiments in the spiritual realm—they

must submit to certain conditions. And since everybody says it is his inner voice which speaks, you must listen to the voice, and you will then find out your limitations as you go along the path. Therefore, we have the belief based upon uninterrupted experience that those who would make diligent search after Truth—God—must go through these vows: the vow of truth—speaking and thinking of truth, the vow of *brahmacharya*, of non-violence, poverty and non-possession. If you do not take these five vows you may not embark on the experiments. There are several other things which were prescribed, but I must not take you through all those. But those who have made these experiments know that it is not proper for everyone to claim to hear the voice of conscience and it is because we have at the present moment everybody claiming the right of conscience without going through any discipline whatsoever that there is so much untruth being delivered to a bewildered world. All therefore that I can in all humility present to you is that Truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility. If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth, you must reduce yourself to a zero. Further than this I may not tonight go along this fascinating path.

Q. What do you think of Christianity?

A. A delicate question. Christianity is very good; many Christians are very bad.

The economic crisis can be relieved if people love poverty. I would ask you to emphasize the word 'love' here. There would be no economic crisis if they really loved poverty. Economic crises arise because our eyes lust after the property of our neighbour. Forced poverty is to be found on earth simply because many have more than they are entitled to. There would be no poverty on earth if we made a sacred resolution that we would have no more than we need for our creature comforts. And it would not do for a millionaire to sluggishly say that he owns millions because he needs those for his creature comforts. On the contrary, a man who is poor will continually examine himself and find out what are the superfluous things he keeps for himself and, if you conduct yourself in a sportsmanlike spirit from day to day, you will be astounded at the fewness of things you require.

I would like very much, being in the House of God, to say: cast out the beam from your eye before you dare to see a mote in your neighbour's eye. If we would but be good enough to take care of

ourselves, I have very little doubt that the world would take care of itself.

Q. What is your message to the women of Europe ?

A. I do not know if I have the courage to give the message without incurring their wrath. I would direct their steps to the women of India who rose in one mass last year and I really believe, if India would drink in the nectar of non-violence, Europe would do it through women. Woman I hold is the personification of self-sacrifice, but unfortunately today women do not realize what a tremendous advantage they hold over men. As Tolstoy would say, they are labouring under the hypnotic influence of man. If they would realize the nobility of non-violence, they would not consent to be called the weaker sex.

Tolstoy and Ruskin renewed my faith in things which I had only darkly felt.

Q. What is the difference between non-resistance and your resistance without violence ?

A. It has been often said that the doctrine of non-violence I owe to Tolstoy. It is not the whole truth, but there again I derive the greatest strength from his writings. But as Tolstoy himself admitted, the non-resistance method I had cultivated and elaborated in South Africa was different from the non-resistance Tolstoy had written upon and recommended. This I say in no derogation of Tolstoy's fame. He is not an apt pupil who will not build upon foundations laid by his teacher for him. He only deserves a good teacher who would add to the legacy that teacher would leave for him. I should be an unworthy son to my father if I should not add to my inheritance, and so I have always regarded it as a matter of pride that, thanks be to God, what I had learned from Tolstoy has fructified a hundredfold. Tolstoy talked of passive resistance largely, but non-resistance elaborated in Transvaal was a force infinitely more active than resistance that an armed man can devise and, I am glad to recall the fact that in a long letter he wrote to me unsolicited he said that his eyes were fixed upon me wherever I was. And if you will study the movements in South Africa and India, you will find how this thing is capable of infinite expansion.

Q. Is not non-resistance submission ?

A. Passive resistance is regarded as the weapon of the weak but the resistance for which I had to coin a new name altogether

for want of a phrase in the English language and not to have this mixed up with non-resistance, namely, 'satyagraha', is not conceived in any shape or form as a weapon of the weak but as a weapon of the strongest. But its matchless beauty is that it can be wielded by the weak in body, [by the] oldest and even by children if they have strong hearts and, since resistance through satyagraha is offered through self-suffering, it is a weapon open pre-eminently to women. And we found in actual experience in India last year that women in many instances surpassed men in suffering. And children also—thousands—played a noble part in this campaign. For the idea of self-suffering became contagious and they embarked upon amazing acts of self-denial. Supposing that women of Europe and children of Europe became fired with love of humanity and said our men are doing wrong by arming, they would take them by storm and reduce militarism to nothingness in an incredibly short time. And the underlying idea is that children, women and others have the same identical soul, same potentiality. The question is of drawing out the limitless power of Truth. But I must again call a halt to this fascinating subject.

Q. What is the value of vegetarian diet?

A. Priceless value for me, not for beef-eating Europe. But I do feel that spiritual progress does demand at some stage—an inexorable demand—that we should cease to kill our fellow-creatures for satisfaction of our bodily wants. The beautiful lines of Goldsmith occur to me as I tell you of my vegetarian fad:

No flocks that range the valley free
To slaughter I condemn;
Taught by the Power that pities me
I learn to pity them.

Q. What about liquor?

A. Liquor is as we say in invention of the devil. In Islam it is said that when Satan began to beguile men and women, he dangled before them this red water. I have seen that it has not only robbed men of their money but of reason; they have for the time being forgotten the distinction between wife and mother, lawful and unlawful. See barristers rotting in gutters, taken home by the police. I have found on two occasions captains of steamers dead drunk, incapable of keeping charge of their boats, and someone else had to take charge before they came to their senses. For both flesh and

liquor the sovereign rule is: we must not live in order to eat and drink and be merry but eat in order to make our bodies temples of God and to use them for the service of man. Liquor may be a medical necessity; when life is extinct, it may be possible to prolong it. It is possible to keep perfect health without flesh or meat. If you want to develop cruelty in a soldier, he would not have it unless he takes flesh or meat. You may not know that Japan, when she took to imitating Western civilization, made beef-eating compulsory.

Q. Is non-co-operation in military matters balanced by service in non-military matters?

A. That must be the last question. It is a good question. This was very exhaustively dealt with at the first meeting of a few friends. Briefly, I entirely agree that both these services go hand in hand. Non-co-operation in military service and service in non-military matters is not compatible. Friendly relations may be cultivated. Definitely military service is an ill-chosen word. Because you are all the while giving military service by deputy because you are supporting a State which is based on military service. In the Transvaal we had this law. There were some who were debarred—Indians, Bantus, Zulus—by law. But they were obliged to pay money. They were commuting that service. You will have to extend the scope of non-co-operation, how I shall not say. There is no limit to extending service to our neighbours across our State-made frontiers. God never made those frontiers.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

155. *SPEECH AT MEETING IN LAUSANNE*

December 8, 1931

I know I had in this great Continent of yours quite a large number of friends. In order to make that pilgrimage to Villeneuve to see Romain Rolland I had to miss one steamer and, having come here, I shall say the same thing I said to Paris citizens. I observe that throughout the West there is a sickness of heart; you seem to be tired of the military burden under which the world is groaning—and I see that you are tired of shedding the blood of fellow-men. The last War,

¹ Gandhiji addressed three meetings in Lausanne. The source does not mention which one this was. But from a very brief report in *The Hindustan Times*, 11-12-1931, it would appear this was the one held at People's Hall.

falsely called great, has taught you and humanity many a great lesson. Human nature during that War did not by and means shine at its best. No fraud, no lie, no deceit was considered to be too much in order to win the War. Foulest charges were flung by a set of partisans belonging to one nation against another and these were reciprocated with double vehemence. No cruelty was considered too great. Nothing was considered base or mean in order to compass the destruction of the enemy. Suddenly as in a flash the friends of yesterday became the enemy of today. No honour was safe, nothing was spared, and historians tell us that there never was so much blood spilled as during the last War. This civilization of the West was weighed in the balance and found wanting and you have hardly risen from the deadly effects of that War. On the contrary, you are slowly and surely realizing the evil effect of war in a more and more concentrated form. Most of the nations are on the brink of insolvency—a direct result of the War. You are suffering not only from material bankruptcy but moral and we are yet too near the time of the War to be able to measure the frightfulness bequeathed to us, nor was evil confined to Europe. It has broken the bounds and travelled round to Asia and no one knows whether he is standing on his feet or head.

At this time there is a message of hope coming from India. India is trying to attain its liberty through non-violent and truthful means. She has been endeavouring to follow out these means during the last ten years. Tens of thousands have taken part in this movement. Those who have studied the movement have come to the conclusion that it is making a steady headway. I suggest to you that if India can give an ocular demonstration of the fact that India can win liberty without shedding a drop of blood, it would be a great lesson for the world. You have been trying to discover a moral equivalent for war. It is possible that the method that India has adopted is the exact equivalent for war. I know it is as yet too early to say anything with confidence about this method. But my plea tonight is that you should study the Indian movement and methods. I invite you not to study the movement as biased friends but as candid critics. Approach it as behoves good students, study the movement with impartiality and, if you come to the conclusion that it is honestly conducted with non-violence and peaceful means, throw yourselves heart and soul into the movement. There is no doubt in my mind that you can do so. You can mould the public opinion of Europe—world opinion—so that it becomes irresistible. Naturally a movement of non-violence

creates a favourable public opinion; it speaks through self-suffering of a whole people. But I must not go any further. I have endeavoured yet just to whet your appetite. The limit of this meeting is 45 minutes and as is my wont I want to leave a fair portion of my time for questions. I would therefore invite you to put whatever questions you like.

Q. [You are reported to have said that] if necessary the masses of India will resort to violence. [Is that correct?]

A. I have no hesitation in saying that it is a baseless fabrication. It is a matter of deep grief that journalists so debase themselves as to give currency to lies. I do not for a moment suggest that the editor of the paper was giving currency to a lie. But the reporter himself was a journalist and the blame lies on his shoulder, but I would now suggest for the honour of journalism that, having heard the statement attributed to me, you should correspond with the reporter and deal with him as one would deal with a servant who behaves faithlessly.

Q. Mr. Gandhi, did you really advise people to enlist in army and to shoot in the air?

A. This is another fabrication. A question like this was put to me in Paris and I said that a soldier who enlisted himself and flattered himself that he was shooting in the air did no credit to his creed of non-violence. In my scheme a man who did this would be guilty of untruth and also of cowardice—cowardice inasmuch as he enlisted in order to escape imprisonment and untruth inasmuch as he having enlisted did not fire. This discredits the cause of war against war. War Resisters have to be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion. Their strength lies in absolute adherence to the morality of the question.

I wish I had influence enough on Hindu society and I should suggest complete surrender to Muslims and Sikhs. It is a most difficult thing to deal with men who are afraid of one another. We have become so emasculated and so unnerved that Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs fear and suspect one another and persons seized with fear and distrust do not spare one another. That is our pitiful position.

The method of non-co-operation and non-violence is not only advisable, but one who is convinced of the injustice of war is bound to offer non-violent non-co-operation even if he or she be the only person.

Q. What is your opinion about mechanism? Why do you suppress it?

A. By mechanism you mean this tremendous activity based on machinery. What I want to suppress is the supremacy of machine over man. At the present moment the craze for everything to be done by machine has become so great that we are becoming slaves of machinery. Machinery is used for two purposes: (i) for compassing destruction, and (ii) for mass production. I drew your attention to the fact that this economic distress was due to the late War, but this mass production is no less responsible for this economic distress.

Q. Love for God or love for man ?

A. This is a question which begs itself. Love for God is not to be distinct from love for man. But if there was a conflict between the two loves I would know there was a conflict in the man himself. I should therefore invite him to carry on a search within himself. But when you find love for man divorced from love for God, you will find at basis a base motive. Real love for man I regard to be utterly impossible without love for God.

Q. How is one to fight hypocrisy and slander?

A. By not noticing either.

The movement has never been outside the inspiration of God—apart from that inspiration I regard myself unfit to conduct a movement of world-wide character. I have never considered myself responsible for any of the achievements of the movement. But, being a weak instrument in the hands of God, I have always considered myself responsible for any evil effects of the movement. But I did not go in search of the movement; it came directly to me from God. I know from experience that without a living faith in God conduct of the movement would be impossible.

Q. Why don't you come to Germany which is suffering so much?

A. I would have loved to come, but the time-table is against it. My heart was in Germany: is in Germany. But I have been simply powerless.

Q. Can Egypt gain her liberty?

A. *J'ai mes doutes*. If India becomes independent, Egypt becomes independent automatically. India becoming independent is such a huge and far-reaching event that every country will pulsate with a new life. It will be a great and glorious thing.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai.

156. DISCUSSION WITH ROMAIN ROLLAND

VILLENEUVE,
December 9, 1931

GANDHIJI: I believe and don't believe in the sincerity of MacDonald, as in a sense he means to stand by the declaration he has made, but he must also know that the declaration does not mean responsibility at the Centre and yet he says it contains responsibility at the Centre and wants you to believe what is not true. There is another sense also in which he has appeared to me as insincere—not open but evasive in his conversation—and so I could not form an altogether good opinion of him. He carries a responsibility on his shoulders which he can ill afford to bear. He is overworked, and in me he has a difficult subject to deal with. He finds me a fighter; on the other hand, my demand seems to be pitched so high that he cannot circumvent me and so he gives me the idea of an insincere man. It may be weakness and not insincerity.

ROMAIN ROLLAND: He wrote beautifully about India.

G. His views are favourable even today, but then he had no responsibility. Today he has.

R. R. : His statement was impertinent. Your last speech at R.T.C. has much moved many people.

G. “Extraordinary speech openly inspired by Bolshevik ideas.” That was the speech at the Federal Structure Committee on commercial discrimination. It did create consternation among my friends.

I said, I or Congress would not discriminate against a person because he was an Englishman, but there would be discrimination on other grounds, and I presented him with the formula : any interest in conflict with the national interest or not legitimately acquired, I said, would be taken over by the State and I said that it would apply to Europeans of India. This, I said, would not be done by an executive order but by the order from the Federal Court.

[The Ordinance] is an inhuman document, worse than the Rowlatt Act. The menace to the Government of India from its own subordinates is of a different character. They disregarded instructions of a liberal nature, which are rare, but they are ready to carry out all instructions of a destructive character. Whereas the Central power is not able to exact discipline. I have called the Civil Service of India the

greatest political freemasonry. The Secret Service is nothing before this snake-like coil of Civil Service. . . .

R. R. The German youth is quite different from what he was before War. Before War they believed in the concrete value of power. They have seen it crushed. The new youth lives in a state of relativism—no wonder they come from Einstein's place. To the German youth France seems to be a country of old values, so that German youth is ready to follow new ideals. They are angry with France which is a dead weight on the past. We can't judge Europe by the victor.

G. The Indian youth may not be capable of heroic self-sacrifice, but it is coming under the influence of non-resistance.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai.

157. SPEECH AT INTERNATIONAL SANATORIUM

VILLENEUVE, GENEVA,
December 9, 1931

It is a matter of joy to me that I am able to make this hurried visit. That you are in a beautiful building situated in pleasant surroundings must be a matter of recreation for you. As you have very properly remarked, this sanatorium should not be for merely healing the body but for promotion of international friendship. After all one finds that healing of the body plays a subordinate part in human experience. One may live down injury to the body but not the injury to the soul. And so it is a matter of keen joy to me that you are looking after things of the spirit also. I wish you many years of service, complete restoration to health and life of the inmates and useful international service thereafter.

Q. Does psychological influence promote healing?

A. I am afraid illness will remain with mankind so long as mankind exists. But I do believe that at present we are making a fetish of illness. If I had my way, I would reduce medical treatment to a minimum. I have enforced that rule not only in my life, but in the lives of hundreds of my companions. I believe that most of the illnesses we suffer from yield to hygienic treatment and I think that in life, which is beset with dangers, we should count with grave dangers also. And this has given us much consolation in illness. The rule is: let us not think of having services which millions in all parts of the earth cannot command. For instance, the favoured students and professors of medicine can have access to this, but not the millions

who are suffering like you. I do not want to say this by way of criticism of the sanatorium, but I do want to say that I am not personally in love with sanatoria like these. Therefore I know full well that if millionaires of the earth emptied their wealth it would not be enough to build millions of sanatoria for people needing them. In reducing hygienic laws we should reduce them to such proportions that the poorest may observe them in their own lives and their own health.

That brings us to psychological influence which promotes healing. I believe in this to a great extent. I believe a healthy mind presupposes a healthy body and, if you are to analyse medical students as you are illnesses that the flesh is heir to, you will find that most are avoidable and mind has a great part to play in creating illness and promoting it. Whereas, instead of pampering ourselves, if we were tolerant, we might be able to shed these illnesses. This is a subject which, as some of you know, I have been studying or experimenting in as a quack for 35 years. I could therefore keep you engaged for hours in reciting my experiences.

Q. What is the moral significance of manual work?

A. I think so much of it that in institutions I have founded manual work is a sacred obligation for the inmates and he who does not do manual work steals food. He is not entitled to eat his portion of food, unless he has done sufficient manual work and I have not the slightest shadow of a doubt that when man shirks manual work, he stunts his moral growth. I have no doubt that, if we recognize the significance of manual work, many of the monstrosities would die a natural death. The law of bread labour was that that man was entitled to bread who worked for it. You find that law enunciated by Jesus when he said: thou shalt earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow; and if this was literally followed, there would be very little illness on earth and little of hideous surroundings on earth.

Q. Is it not possible to live in Europe without compromise in accordance with your ideas?

A. Not impossible but difficult. But, however difficult the thing may be, it is necessary to make a heroic effort in order to translate the ideal into practice.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai.

158. LETTER TO AMINA AND GULAM RASUL QURESHI

[After *December 9, 1931*]¹

CHI. AMINA AND QURESHI,

I was very eager to meet both of you; but my desire could not be fulfilled. The saying that it is always God's will that prevails is indeed true. This is my advice to both of you. You two should bring credit to Imam Saheb's place to which you succeed. Both of you should improve your Urdu. I should also like you to study the Koran. I hold that those who make a deep study of Islam cannot be narrow-minded. I do not wish that you should have a mere, literal knowledge of the Koran. You should penetrate behind its letter to its spirit. I have come across a biography of Hazrat Ali which I am reading these days. It is not well written, but I see that it does not take me long to reach the essence of a thing and so I find the biography quite interesting. And I derive much comfort from it. Write to me from time to time. You should both observe self-control.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 10780. Courtesy: Gulam Rasul Qureshi

159. SPEECH AT MEETING²

GENEVA,

December 10, 1931

I have heard a great deal of the magnificent scenery of your country, but seeing surpasses my expectations and the affection I have received has added to the joy of seeing the scenery of your country. I wish I had more time at my disposal to make the acquaintance of individuals and to see the beautiful spots of this country of yours. But I must not detain you by inviting you to share my joy. I know that all of you who have come to this meeting have

¹ From the contents it appears that this letter was written after the death of Abdul Kadir Bawazeer on December 9, 1931.

² The meeting, which was held during the lunch hour in the Victoria Hall under the auspices of the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom, was attended by about 2,000 people.

been deprived of your luncheon hour and I must not waste that precious time of yours by talking to you of my joy. I want to talk to you about that to which my life is dedicated and that particularly is being tried on a scale not tried on this earth before. I refer to the means adopted in India for attaining independence. History shows that when a people have been subjugated and desire to get rid of the subjection, they have rebelled and resorted to use of arms. In India, on the other hand, we have resorted to means that are scrupulously non-violent and peaceful and strangers have testified and I am here to give my testimony that in a great measure we seem to have succeeded in attaining our goal. I know that it is still an experiment in making. I cannot claim absolute success as yet, but I venture to suggest to you that experience has gone so far that it is worth while to study the experience. I further suggest that, if that experience becomes a full success, India will have made a contribution to world peace for which the world is thirsting. You have in this great country of yours the Central Office of the League of Nations. That League is expected to perform wonders. It is expected to replace war and by its own power arbitrate between nations who might have differences between themselves. But it has always seemed to me that the League lacks the necessary sanction. It depends, as it has to, largely if not exclusively, on the judgment of the nations concerned. I venture to suggest to you that the means we have advocated in India supply the necessary sanction not only to a body like the League, but to any world organization for this great cause of the world. But I must not detain you in taking you through different phases of this movement. I must satisfy myself by just introducing to you this movement and by telling you of the progress the movement makes if it is successful. I have a series of questions and in order that I might give as much time as I can give you, I have given you only a brief introduction. I have already taken up 10 minutes. I am taking up only a few questions M. Privat has chosen.

The question about what I had and had not said in London.

This is what has been put in my mouth: "I have no sympathy for terrorism and violence. But if necessary, India will resort to violence, call that what you like."

I referred the para to the Editor for correction and the correction confirms in its entirety the report he had sent. But I see that he has not reproduced passages from speeches from which

he says he has quoted. My speeches at the Round Table Conference have been all officially reported and I can only tell you that throughout those speeches there can't be found a single word in corroboration of this statement. Then it is stated that I made a similar statement in some other speeches also. Meanwhile I must ask you to believe me when I say that I never made the statement that masses would, if necessary, resort to violence. I regard myself in my lucid moments as incapable of making a statement of that character. Non-violence is not a policy but a creed. I would pray to God that He may give me faith to lay down my life rather than countenance violence in any shape or form and, as this matter has attained some local importance, I respectfully call upon the correspondent to give his name and reproduce the report. And though tomorrow I shall be outside your jurisdiction, I shall take care to give the fullest satisfaction though I may be outside India. And I want to do so as I want to attain your goodwill. My movement and I have to stand or fall by the declaration I have made, viz., that I must stand by non-violence wholly unadulterated. At the same time I tender you my apology for having taken up a few minutes on a personal explanation.

Q. Why did you make such a solemn protest because newspapers had reported you advising soldiers to shoot in the air?

A. Whether I made a solemn protest I do not know, but I made my position clear. I do not want a single soldier, after having taken an oath to serve the army, to mislead the people by shooting in the air. I regard myself as a soldier, as a soldier of peace. I know the value of discipline and truth and I would consider it unmanly for a soldier who has taken an oath to deny himself the consequences when he defies the order by shooting in the air. In my opinion, when a soldier comes to the conclusion that it is inhuman and beneath the dignity of man, he should lay down arms and pay the penalty of insubordination.

Q. How could workers obtain justice without violence? If capitalists use force why should not workers use pressure?

A. This is the old law, the law of the jungle—blow against blow—and I have told you that I am endeavouring to make this experiment essentially to substitute the law of the jungle, which is foreign to man. You may not know that I am supposed to be the chief adviser to a labour union in Ahmedabad, which has

commanded the testimony of labour experts. Through this labour union we have been endeavouring to enforce methods of non-violence for solving questions arising between the employers and the employed. Therefore, what I am now about to tell you is based upon actual experience—in the very line about which the question has been asked. In my humble opinion, labour can always vindicate itself provided it is united and self-sacrificing. No matter how oppressive capitalism may be, I am convinced that those who are connected with labour and guiding labour have no idea of the resources that labour can command and capitalism can never command. If labour would only understand and recognize that capital is perfectly helpless without labour, labour would easily come to its own. We have unfortunately come under the hypnotic suggestion and influence of capital that capital is all in all on earth. But a moment's thought would show that labour has at its disposal a capital that capitalists never possess. Ruskin taught in his age that labour had unrivalled opportunity. But he spoke above our heads. At the present moment an Englishman is making the same experiment. He is an economist and also a capitalist, but through economic researches he has come to the same conclusions that Ruskin arrived at intuitively and he has brought back a vital message. He says it is wrong to think that a piece of metal constitutes capital; it is also wrong to think that so much produce is capital. He adds that, if we go to the source, it is labour that is capital and that living capital cannot be reduced in terms of economics and it is inexhaustible. It is upon that law and truth we are conducting the labour union in Ahmedabad and fighting the Government and it is that law the recognition of which delivered 1,700,000 people in Champaran from age-long tyranny. I must not tarry to tell you what that tyranny was,¹ but those who are interested in that problem will be able to study every one of the facts which I have put before them. Now I tell you what we have done. There is in the English language a very potent word—all languages have it: 'No'. And the secret is that when capital wants labour to say 'Yes', labour roars out 'No'. And immediately labour comes to recognize that it has choice before it of saying 'No' when it wants to say 'No', it has nothing to fear and it would not matter in the slightest degree that

¹ For details of the Champaran struggle for the abolition of forced labour on the indigo plantations,

capital has guns and poison gas at its disposal. Capital will still be perfectly helpless if labour will assert its dignity making good its 'No'. Then labour does not need to retaliate, but stands defiant receiving the bullets and poison gas and still insists upon its 'No'. But I tell you why labour so often fails. Instead of sterilizing capital as I have suggested labour should do (I say this as a labourer myself), it wants to seize capital and become capitalist itself in the worst sense of the term. And therefore the capitalist who is properly entrenched and organized, finding in labour a desire for the same objective, makes use of labour to suppress labour. And if we were really not under the hypnotic spell, every one of us—man and woman—would recognize this rock-bottom truth without the slightest difficulty. Having achieved brilliant successes in various departments of life, I am saying this with authority. I have placed before you something not superhuman but within the grasp of every labourer. You will see that what labour is called upon to do is nothing more than what Swiss soldiers are doing, for undoubtedly the Swiss soldier carries his own destruction in his pocket. I want labour to copy the courage of the soldier without copying the brute in the soldier, viz., the ability to inflict death, and I suggest to you that a labourer who courts death without carrying arms shows a courage of a much higher degree than the man who is armed from top to toe. Though this is a fascinating subject, I must reluctantly leave this point and go to the fourth question.

Q. Since disarmament chiefly depends on the Great Powers, why force it on Switzerland which is small and neutral and non-aggressive?

A. In the first place, from this neutral ground of yours I am speaking to all powers and not only to Switzerland. If you want to carry this message to other parts of Europe, I shall be absolved from all blame and seeing that Switzerland is neutral territory and non-aggressive, Switzerland does not need this army. Secondly, it is through your hospitality and by reason of your occupying this vantage ground. Is it not better for you to give the world a lesson in disarmament and show that you are brave enough to do without an army?

Q. Why do you ignore the sacred traditions of military development? Don't you know that the mere presence of the Swiss army saved us from the horror of being overrun by foreign armies?

A. Will the questioner forgive me if I say that a double ignorance underlies this question? He deplors the fact that, if you

give up the profession of soldiering, you will miss the education you receive in service and sacrifice. None need run away with the idea that because you avoid military conscription you are not in for a conscription of a severer and nobler type. When I spoke to you about labour, I told you that labour ought to assimilate all the noble qualities of soldiering: endurance and defiance of death and sacrifice. When you disarm yourself, it does not mean that you will have a merry time. It is not that you are absolved from the duty of serving your homes when you give up soldiering; on the contrary, your women and children would be taking part in the defending your homes. Again I am not talking to you without experience. In the little institution¹ that we are conducting, we are teaching our women and children also how to save that institution—as we are living among thieves and robbers. Everything becomes simple and easy the moment you learn to give up your own life in order to save the life of others. And lastly it is really forgotten that safety which an individual derives from innocence is safety which no amount of arms will give you. The second part of the ignorance lies in the second part of the question. I must respectfully deny the truth of the statement that the presence of the Swiss army prevented the War from affecting Switzerland. Although Belgium had its own army, it was not saved and, if the rival armies had wanted a passage through Switzerland, believe me, they would have fought you also. You might have fought in turn, but you would have fought much better non-violently.

Q. How could a disarmed neutral country allow other nations to be destroyed? But for our army which was waiting ready at our frontier during the last War we should have been ruined?²

A. At the risk of being considered a visionary or a fool, I must answer this in the manner I know. It would be cowardly of a neutral country if you allowed an army to devastate your country. But a moment ago I told you that there was one thing in common between the soliders of war and soldiers of non-violence and, if I had been a citizen of Switzerland or President of the Federal State, what I would have done would be to refuse passage to this army by

¹ The reference is to the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati.

² The question is taken from Mahadev Desai's "Letter from Europe" published in *Young India*, 31-12-1931.

rufusing all supplies. Secondly, re-enacting a Thermopylae in Switzerland you would have presented a living wall of men, women and children and invited them to walk over your corpses. You may say that such a thing is beyond human experience and endurance. Then I can tell you that it was not beyond human experience last year. We showed that it was quite possible. Women stood lathi charges without showing the slightest cowardice. In Peshawar thousands stood a hail of bullets without resorting to any violence whatsoever. Imagine such men and women standing in front of an army wanting safe passage. It would be brutal enough, you would say, to walk over them, but you would still have done your duty and allowed yourself to be annihilated. An army that dares to pass over corpses would not be able to repeat that experiment. You may, if you would, refuse to believe in such courage on the part of the masses of men and women, but then you would have to admit that non-violence is made of sterner stuff. It was never conceived as a weapon of the weak, but of the stoutest hearts.

Q. The International Red Cross is a special gift to the world. What do you think of it? It has saved thousands of lives.

A. I am ashamed to have to own that I do not know the history of this wonderful and magnificent organization. If it has saved persons by the million, my head bows before it. But having paid this tribute, may I say that this organization should cease to think of giving relief after war but of giving relief without war. If war had no redeeming features, no courage behind it, it would be a despicable thing and would not need a speech to destroy it. But what is here being prescribed to you is infinitely nobler than war in all its branches including the Red Cross organization. Believe me there are millions wounded by their own folly. There are millions of wretched homes on the face of the earth. Therefore the non-violent societies of tomorrow would have enough work chartered out for them when they take up international service and may Switzerland give the lead to the world.

Q. Can you give any message to individual organizations?

A. I venture to say that if, in answering all the questions asked, I have not given a message, I must confess I am not able to give any other message.

Q. What is the difference between your message and the Christian which we prefer to keep?

A. I do not profess to give any original message at all. My message is as old as this earth and I do not know that it is at all

different from the Christian message. If you mean by it non-violence, I should be sorry to discover that you have given up the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. Nothing will give me greater pleasure than that the Christians of Europe were translating in their lives the message of Jesus. The second question betrays ignorance. Shall I answer it in Biblical language—you cannot save yourself unless you are prepared to lose yourself.¹

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

160. DISCUSSION WITH ROMAIN ROLLAND

[On or after *December 10, 1931*]²

Q. Cruelty or wickedness in man is not caused by will, but by morbid taste. What would non-resistance do to preserve society from these half-responsible people?

A. I do not need to use violence at all. But I would need to keep them under restraint. I would use some social force. I would not call it violence. My brother becomes a lunatic and I put irons on his hands.

There is no use of violence when the motive is lacking. Nor would he feel the violence. On the contrary, when he comes to his senses, he would thank me for it. In his lunacy he would feel the violence, offer resistance to it. I would not mind the resistance because my action would be dictated by unadulterated love; there is not even the selfishness of loving behind it. If I am tying his hands, it is not in order to save myself from being hurt. If I felt that I should hurt myself by trying to save him, I should subject myself to being hurt. In the same way I should treat these half-crazy men, treat them as sick men, put them in an infirmary and put them [not] under heartless jailors but under medical men who have studied their conditions and surround them by kind nurses. That is only dealing with the system.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai.

¹ *St. Mark VIII, 35 and St. Luke IX. 24.*

² The source mentions no date, but this was recorded after the meeting in Geneva on December 10.

161. INTERVIEW TO SUKHOTINA TOLSTOY¹

ROME,

[December 13, 1931]²

SUKHOTINA TOLSTOY: I have been long looking forward to an opportunity of meeting you. If my father had been alive, he would have been delighted to hear of your non-violent battle for freedom.

GANDHIJI: I am sure. And are you the daughter who wrote that famous letter³ of your father to me?

That was another daughter, a fact which led to inquiry about Tolstoy's children.

S. T. Six of us are still living. The two daughters accept my father's principles, but the four sons do not. You know my father allowed every one of us the fullest liberty of thought and action and, whilst these brothers of mine revered my father, they were not prepared to accept his principles.

I was a friend of Romain Rolland.

G. Why was? Are you not a friend now?

S. T. No, I used to be a great friend of his until two years ago. He wrote to me fairly frequently and I also used to write to him.

G. But now ?

S. T. But now I find that he is in sympathy with Bolshevism and Bolshevik methods. I do not quarrel with their goal, but their doctrine that the end justifies the means seems to me to be frightful. How can Romain Rolland, a believer in non-violence, have any sympathy with them?

G. Supposing what you say is true, is it not all the more necessary that you should write to him and tell him what you feel about his views? Don't you as a friend of two years ago owe it to him to write freely and fully? After all, he is the one true and honest man in Europe after Tolstoy. Like your father he is old, worn-out, and unhappy over the tendencies of the present age and he has your father's childlike simplicity of never taking correction amiss, no matter whether it came from a wise man or a fool.

S. T. I know that he is all that. In the War he was the only man who stood out bravely against it and he has the same bravery even now. I also know that he has written the best book on my father that has ever been written. But somehow I have hesitated, I actually wrote a letter, but never posted it. If you like, I shall post it now.

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Letter from Europe".

² According to an entry under this date in "Diary, 1931"

³ Vide "Tolstoy's Letter to Gandhiji", 7-10-1909

G. Do I want you to do so.

s. t. Then I will say that you asked me to do so.

G. Yes, you may. I shall also write to him?¹

Young India, 14-1-1932

162. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, ROME²

[December 13, 1931]³

The beauty of non-violent war is that women can play the same part in it as men. In a violent war the women have no such part in it as men. In a violent war the women have no such privilege, and the Indian women played a more effective part in our last non-violent war than men. The reason is simple. Non-Violent war calls into play suffering to the largest extent, and who can suffer more purely and nobly than women? The women in India tore down the *pardah* and came forward to work for the nation. They saw that the country demanded something more than their looking after their homes. They manufactured contraband salt, they picketed foreign-cloth shops and liquor shops, and tried to wean both the seller and the customer from both. At late hours in the night, they pursued the drunkards to their dens with courage and charity in their hearts. They marched to jails and they sustained lathi blows as few men did. If the women of the West will try to vie with men in becoming brutes, they have no lesson to learn from the women of India. They will have to cease to take delight in sending their husbands and sons to kill people and congratulate them on their valour.

Young India, 14-1-1932

163. LETTER TO BRISCOE

December 14, 1931

DEAR MR. BRISCOE,

I have read your letter to Devdas. I was sorry not to have been able to visit Ireland and to see Mr. De Valera. I had looked forward to that visit but a peremptory call from India made it impossible.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

¹ Vide "Letter to Romain Rolland", 20-12-1931.

² Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Letter from Europe".

³ From a reference in "Diary, 1931"

[PS.]

Do please thank Mrs. Wood for all the trouble she had taken.

M. K. G.

From a photostat: C.W. 4520 Courtesy : R. Briscoe

164. AN AUTOGRAPH

[On or before *December 15, 1931*]¹

Be true.

From a photostat: G.N. 2333

165. LETTER TO DEVI WEST

S. S. "PILSNA",
December 15, 1931

MY DEAR DEVI²,

I often wanted to write to you but never could get the time. We are today on the Red Sea. I am slowly overtaking the arrears of sleep and correspondence it between. I was delighted to hear from Muriel that you had decided to join her. You will be a great acquisition to Kingsley Hall and I know you will be happy there. You must write to me regularly.

We are a party of nine all travelling deck. The weather is still cold but pleasant. I had your farewell letter.

Love.

BHAI

From a photostat: C.W. 4437. Courtesy: A.H. West

¹ On the same sheet, below Gandhiji's autograph, there is also one of Madan Mohan Malaviya bearing this date.

² Ada West, sister of A.H. West

166. CABLE TO CROFT

PORT SAID
December 17, 1931

CROFT
INDIA OFFICE
LONDON

THANKS WIRE, "GIORNALE D'ITALIA" STATEMENT WHOLLY
FALSE. NEVER GAVE ANY INTERVIEW² PRESSMEN ROME.
LAST INTERVIEW² I GAVE WAS TO REUTER VILLEN-
EUE WHERE I ASKED PEOPLE INDIA NOT COME
HASTY DECISION BUT AWAIT MY STATEMENT. I SHALL
TAKE NO PRECIPITATE ACTION AND SHALL MAKE

¹ Sir Samuel Hoare, later Viscount Templewood, in his *Nine Troubled Years* (Collins, 1954), says that when he heard the report of "a fictitious interview" Gandhiji was said to have given to Gayda of *Giornale d' Italia*, he was so "horrified and amazed" that he at once telegraphed for its confirmation. "The answer came", says Templewood, "from Gandhi himself, to the effect that he had made no such statement, and that the reported interview was a fake." Presumably the answer in question was this cable.

The cable which had been sent to Gandhiji "from an authoritative quarter" according to a *Times* report was as follows:

'Press reports state that, on embarkation, you issued to *Giornale d' Italia* a statement which contained expressions such as following:

(1) Round Table Conference marked definite rupture of relations between Indian nation and British Government.

(2) You are returning to India in order to restart at once struggle against England.

(3) Boycott would now prove powerful means of rendering more acute British crisis.

(4) We will not pay taxes, we will not work for England in any way, we will completely isolate British authorities, their politics and their institutions, and we will totally boycott all British goods.'

Some of your friends here think you must have been misreported and, if so, denial desirable."

Notwithstanding Gandhiji's disclaimer, Gayda persisted in his claim that the interview was genuine. Gandhiji repeated this disclaimer in 1934 when he was again asked about the interview.

² Vide "Interview to the Press", 6-12-1931

MAKE AMPLE PREVIOUS ENTREATY AUTHORITIES
SHOULD DIRECT ACTION BECOME UNFORTUNATELY
NECESSARY. PLEASE GIVE THIS WIDEST PUBLICITY
POSSIBLE.

GANDHI

From a photostat : C. W. 9398. Courtesy : India Office Library

167. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

PORT SAID,

December 17, 1931

DEAR AGATHA,

Just one line to say I have been thinking of you constantly.
May your work prosper.

With Love,

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1449

168. INTERVIEW TO REUTER

PORT SAID,

December 17, 1931

Mahatma Gandhi arrived here at noon, and met several deputations, including one of the Wafdist. He posed for photographers, and gave autographs. Interviewed by Reuter, he repudiated the interview to the *Giornale d'Italia* in which he was alleged to have said that he was going back to India to renew the struggle and said that he did not give any journalist at Rome an Interview. He added:

I have reached no decision, and naturally, cannot until I arrive in Bombay and consult the members of the Working Committee.

The Hindustan Times, 19-12-1931

169. LETTER TO ULRICH HAMBURGER

S. S. "PILSNA",

December 18, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

As your letter was received on the eve of my departure from London I could not invite you to see me. In my opinion all the

principal religions of which we have any knowledge are from God. But this fact need not disturb your faith. You are not called upon to judge which is truer. It should be sufficient for you to live up to your faith. And if you see anything worth taking from other religions, surely there is nothing to prevent you from taking it.

Yours,

ULRICH HAMBURGER, ESQ.
DOWNING COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGE

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

170. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

WHILE NEARING ADEN,
December 17, 1931

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I have been getting from you occasionally, not letters exactly, but little notes. As I myself did not write often, I cannot blame you. However, there were strong reasons for my not being able to write. In London, I could neither sleep nor have regular meals. I used to carry my tiffin with me and ate wherever I could. This time I seldom wrote to anybody and, as for writing for *Young India* and *Navajivan*, I had to stop it altogether. You had no excuse for not writing to me or writing only brief notes. But the saying that habits die hard is true in your case. There is, however, another saying which applies to people who are prepared to try hard: "A mere string can make a dent in a black, strong, stone." What, then, cannot one achieve with effort ?

We entered the Red Sea today. There are nine of us. All of us are deck passengers. Deck passengers get no amenities worth the name. But we have everything we require and so need not worry. I mention this merely to describe the conditions on the deck.

We shall reach Bombay on the 28th. Let us see what happens when we arrive there. If the struggle starts again, you need not think you have to come away immediately¹. First watch what form the struggle takes and then come. Do not come until you have been able

¹ From South Africa

to make proper arrangements for the work there. Moreover, all of you keep good health there, and I would not be happy if it suffered by your going to India. You should do what you think is your duty, without regard to what I may wish. I say this now because I cannot say whether I would get any time to write to you afterwards. They may even arrest me as soon as I reach Bombay.

It certainly was not expected that Shanti would be at peace after he got the money. I am therefore not at all surprised to learn that he has gone away. I wonder how you manage things now. Do render all possible service to Sastriji who has gone there. Andrews and Sarojinidevi are already there and you should attend on them too.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4787

171. LETTER TO MARCHIONESS VITELLESCHI

S. S. "PILSNA",

December [19,] 1931

DEAR SISTER,

I had your long letter. If you will think less of yourself and lose yourself in the duty immediately in front of you, you will find your peace.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 2768

¹ In the source the figure looks like 11, on which date Gandhiji was in Villeneuve. The letter has an Aden postmark bearing the date December 23, which indicates that '11' is presumably a slip for '19'.

172. LETTER TO MORRIS OSOFSKEY

S. S. "PILSNA",
December 19, 1931

DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

In reply to your letter I may say that I expect to reach my God through truth and non-violence. I know that the American youth are with India in her struggle for Independence.

Yours

MR. MORRIS OSOFSKEY
2085 WALTON AVENUE
BRONT, NEW YORK (U.S.A.)

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

173. LETTER TO MURIEL LESTER

S. S. "PILSNA",
December 19, 1931

DEAR MURIEL,

This is the first letter I am trying to write with the left hand. After a month's disuse it feels funny writing with the right [*sic*] hand.

I hope you got my note posted at Port Said. I have now gone through your accounts. I observe that your current expenses are just now £1700 per year including repayment of loan instalment. Your receipts are nothing like your expenses. But I know that God will help you in some way or other. One rule I have found absolutely necessary—never to go into debt. It kills prayer. But I must not be dogmatic. I simply give my opinion as inmate¹ as you have promised to regard me and as I began to regard myself when I came to you. You will always share your difficulties with me.

I have read Mrs. Hobhouse's leaflet with interest.

You will please tell all the fellow-inmates that if I don't write

¹Of Kingsley Hall in London's East End, where the addressee who ran the institution had arranged for Gandhiji's stay

to them separately, it is because I have little time left at my disposal. I often think of them. My love to them all and to Doris¹ and her children.

Please remember me to Mr. Morris, the blind friend.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

174. LETTER TO MADELEINE ROLLAND

S. S. "PILSNA",
December 20, 1931

DEAR SISTER,

what shall I say of you and your good brother's affection for me? The visit to Villeneuve was truly a pilgrimage for me. I wish I could have stayed longer than I did. However, the memory of the few days' communion with you will be among my richest treasures.

Now one word about your brother's health. You must shed the fear of fresh air, no matter of what season it is. If damp air is feared, a drier region has to be chosen. The artificial drying does no good at all unless one uses most expensive machinery for continuous drying of continuously admitted fresh air. They do this in the British House of Commons, I am told. But I feel sure that if you keep the windows continually open in the unused part of the room, it can do no harm. As it is, you are not getting the benefit of the magnificent air of Villeneuve. I have now done. You will pardon this writing prompted by love.

You will now write freely and fully whatever you feel.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, pp. 242-3

¹ Addressee's sister who was running an infants' school in London

175. LETTER TO ROMAIN ROLLAND

S. S. "PILSNA",
December 20, 1931

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

I beg you to write to the daughter of Tolstoy and satisfy her curiosity concerning Bolshevism.¹ The General and Mrs. Moris were extremely kind to us all. We felt as if we were one of the family as soon as we entered the house. Mussolini is a riddle to me. Many of his reforms attract me. He seems to have done much for the peasant class. I admit an iron hand is there. But as violence is the basis of Western society, Mussolini's reforms deserve an impartial study. His care of the poor, his opposition to super-urbanization, his efforts to bring about co-ordination between capital and labour, seem to me to demand special attention. I would like you to enlighten me on these matters. My own fundamental objection is that these reforms are compulsory. But it is the same in all democratic institutions. What strikes me is that behind Mussolini's implacability is a desire to serve is people. Even behind his emphatic speeches there is a nucleus of sincerity and of passionate love for his people. It also seems to me that the majority of Italian people love the iron government of Mussolini. I do not wish that you should take the trouble of replying to me immediately. Take your time, I beg of you. It is not necessary to say that I do not propose to write publicly on this subject at this moment. I have simply put these questions before you as before someone who knows infinitely more than I do about the subject, and now I think, if you come during the cold season between January and March, you can easily bear the climate and probably derive some good out of it. You can certainly come by air, but I would rather you came by sea. If you take up this proposition seriously, an eventual programme can be submitted to you.

With deep love,

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy : C.W. 9441 .Courtesy : R.K.Prabhu

¹ *Vide* "Interview of Sukhotina a Tolstoy", 13-12-1931

176. LETTER TO CARL HEATH

S.S. "PILSNA",
December 20, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of friendly farewell. I treasure the thought that among the many friends of India's cause I can count those whose names you have kindly sent me.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : G.N.1026

177. THE INDIAN ARMY

[December 21, 1931]¹

However honest the Prime Minister's declaration on the closing day of the Round Table Conference was, it fell far short of the national demand, and hence was utterly unacceptable if there was no room for expansion. And yet the pity of it is that it represents the English mind.

The true test of responsibility is control of Defence and Finance . The declaration is unequivocal about both these matters. There is to be no Indian control, certainly not of Defence, and virtually not of Finance.

The reason for this extraordinary state of affairs is the great ignorance that prevails in England about India. Many of the best Englishmen believe that we are incapable of defending ourselves or managing our Finance. If this is so, we are certainly far away from the Complete Independence we want.

But I claim that we are quite able to look after our own Defence and Finance. What is the army in India ? Roughly, it consists of sixty thousand British soldiers and a hundred and sixty thousand Indian soldiers—all hirelings. Indian soldiers are chosen for their being devoid of any national instinct whatever. They are almost trained to regard themselves as foreigners who should look down upon the

¹ According to an entry in "Diary, 1931" Gandhiji wrote an article for *The Indian News* (Which, from 1932, changed to *The India Review*) on this date . Presumably this was the article.

ordinary citizen with whom they have nothing in common. The whole of this army is used for external aggression, and the protection of British interests and British lives within Indian borders.

This army I regard as a menace, within, to nationalism, and without, to the independence of India's neighbours. Surely India managed somehow to live and to preserve her culture before the British advent. India's defence lies in the cultivation of friendly relations with her neighbours and her ability to resist, through non-violent non-co-operation, her exploitation by any nation.

The first act of a National Government should be to disband this menace, unless it were reduced to manageable proportions and the control handed honourably and peacefully to the National Government by the British Government. This is the least expiation the British Government owe to the people of India for having brought into being an army designed to crush their legitimate aspirations.

Should the British Government not see the obvious duty of doing this elementary thing, the Nationalist Party must continue to fight till hard experience had demonstrated the necessity. The Indian Army of the future will not be mercenary but voluntary, and largely in the nature of police.

But the British people have been taught to think that the army in India is the crowning act of British rule for which India should be forever thankful. The Editor of *The Indian Review* has to dispel this colossal ignorance by hard study of facts and figures showing how the army is composed and how, from its conception, it has been used for the spoliation of India and her neighbours.

The India Review, 16-1-1932

178. LETTER TO JOHN S. HOYLAND

S. S. "PILSNA",
December 21, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I was able to read two days ago your good book¹ on the Cross. There are in my opinion several inaccuracies inevitable in a condensation like your book. But there is one I would like to correct.

¹ *The Cross Moves East*

You have said that the movement in India was not kept to the high level at which it was kept in South Africa. My own experience and opinion are to the contrary. You have instanced the consideration shown to the South Africa Government when it was in distress. The instance is not to the point. In South Africa there was no question of displacing the Government. Therefore when European movement to displace the Government took place, as satyagrahis, Indians were bound not to join the insurgents.

In India the movement is to displace the Government. Therefore there never can be any question of showing tenderness to it. It would be wrong to show tenderness to it conceived as it is as an evil. But instances of chivalry shown within the limits of satyagraha can be multiplied *ad lib*. The suspension after Chauri Choura is the most outstanding one. I would not have pursued the subject but for the imperative demand of truth. You have written the book from the highest motive, i. e., of religion. The inaccuracy I have pointed out betrays not only that of fact but also of judgement. I wonder whether you have caught what I am driving at. If I have not made myself sufficiently clear, do please write to me.

Now about the hymns.¹ I have gone through them. They cannot be printed as my translation. For they have undergone drastic changes at your hands and that rightly. In the circumstances they must be published if at all as being your original work based on my literal translation of the hymns. If you will shoulder that responsibility I have no objection to your publishing them, if you think that they helpseekers. Mirabehn and Mahadev will be writing to you separately their own opinion. At the time of writing I have not discussed the matter with them.

Yours,

JACK HOYLAND

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ From the *Ashram Bhajanavali* translated by Gandhiji during his detention in the Yeravda Prison in 1930; *vide* "Ashram Bhajanavali",

179. LETTER TO FRANCISCA STANDENATH

December 21, 1931

DEAR SAVITRI¹

Our meeting this time was not quite happy. You jarred on me by your harsh judgments of people and your pride in your righteousness. This latter defect is a terrible handicap on progress. I do not want you to brood over what I am writing. I would like you just to think over what I am writing and forget all about it if you think that I am misjudging you. Even so, it is better that I tell you what is in my mind rather than that I should harbour a judgment about you. I would be untrue to you if I did not tell you what I thought about particular actions of yours.

Never mind whether I can write to you or not. Both you and Satyavan² should continue to write to me. It does happen nowadays that I do not even get the time to read the letters I receive. All the same I should be anxious if I did not hear from those who like you are in close contact.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. courtesy: Pyarelal

180. LETTER TO HORACE ALEXANDER

S. S. "PILSNA",
December 21, 1931

MY DEAR HORACE,

I must not use the ordinary language to express my feelings towards you. Your silent affection and self-effacement grew on me as I watched you daily holding yourself in readiness for any service. And then the knowledge that you found time for coming so often to London though you had a cripple companion³ who so relied on you!!!

¹ Names given by Gandhiji to the addressee and her husband Frederick Standenath, both of whom had come to the Sabarmati Ashram in 1928 to study Gandhian philosophy

² *ibid*

³ Addressee's wife, Olive

Experiences such as these make life livable and enrich one's faith in God. I often feel your presence with me.

I hope you were able to publish that statement of mine. I had expected a copy at Villeneuve.

We are all enjoying ourselves as deck passengers. I have experienced no discomfort whatsoever. The sea has been quite smooth. We reach Aden tomorrow.

Love to you and yours.

BAPU

From a photostat: S. N. 23027

181. A RETROSPECT

[December 23, 1931]¹

Never since taking up the editorship of *Young India* have I, though not being on a sickbed or in a prison, been unable to send something for *Young India* or *Navajivan*, as I was during my stay in London.

The uninterrupted series of engagements keeping me awake till over midnight made it physically impossible for me to write anything for these journals. Fortunately, Mahadev Desai was with me and though he too was overworked, he was able to send a full weekly budget for *Young India*.

Nevertheless the reader will expect me to give my own impressions of the London visit.

Though I approached the visit in fear and trembling, I am not sorry for having gone there. It brought me in touch with the responsible Englishmen and women as also with the man in the street. This experience will be of inestimable value in future, whether we have to put up a fight again or not. It is no small matter to know with whom you are fighting or dealing.

It was a good thing that Muriel Lester, the soul of Kingsley Hall settlement, invited me to stay at her settlement and that I was able to accept the invitation. The choice lay between Kingsley Hall and Mr. Birla's Arya Bhavan. I had no difficulty in making my choice nor had Mr. Birla. But great pressure was put upon me by Indian friends, and that naturally, to stay at Arya Bhavan. Experience

¹ The date is inferred from the entry under this date in "Diary, 1931".

showed that Kingsley Hall was an ideal choice. It is situated among the poor of London and is dedicated purely to their service. Several women and some men, under the inspiration of Muriel Lester, have dedicated themselves to such service. Not a corner of the big building is used for any other purpose. There is religious service, there are entertainments, there are lectures, billiards, reading-room, etc., for the use of the poor. The inmates live a life of severe simplicity. There is no superfluous furniture to be found in all that settlement. The inmates occupy tiny rooms called cells. It was no joke to accommodate five of us in that settlement. But love makes room where there is none. Four settlers vacated their cells which were placed at our disposal. Bedding, etc., had to be borrowed. Fortunately, we had all armed ourselves with sufficient blankets and, being used to squat on the floor, most of the articles borrowed could be returned. But, there was no doubt, my presence at the settlement put a severe tax on its times, space and other resources. But the good people would not hear of my leaving it. And to me it was a privilege to receive the loving, silent and unseen services of the members and a perennial joy to come in vital contact with the poor of the East End of London. Needless to say I was able to live exactly as in India, and early morning walks through the streets of East London are a memory that can never be effaced. During these walks I had most intimate talks with those members who joined me and others whom Muriel allowed. For she was a vigilant guardian of my time whilst I was in the settlement. And she would get easily angry if she heard that my time was being abused by people when she was not by me.

During my stay in East London, I saw the best side of human nature and was able to confirm my intuitive opinion that at bottom there was neither East nor West. And as I received the smiling greetings of the East Enders, I knew that they had no malice in them and they wanted India to regain her independence. This experience has brought me closer to England if such a thing was possible. For me the fight is never with individuals, it is ever with their manners and their measures. But this intimate contact with the simple poor people of the East End, including the little children, will put me still more on my guard against any hasty action.

I may not omit my all too brief experience of Lancashire and its operatives and employers whom, to my agreeable surprise, I found to be so free from prejudice and receptive of new facts and arguments drawn from them. Here, of course, the ground was prepared for me by

Charlie Andrews. I must mention too the never-to-be-forgotten visit to Mr. C. P. Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*, the most impartial and the most honest paper in Great Britain. A great British statesman told me the *Guardian* was the sanest and the most honest journal in the world. Nor can I easily forget the communions at Canterbury, Chichester, Oxford, Cambridge and Eton. They gave me an insight into the working of the British mind which I could have got through no other means. These contacts have brought about friendships which will endure for ever. I do not omit the two detectives and their companions and the many constables who were told off to look after me. To me Sergeants Evans and Rogers, the two detectives, were no mere police officers. They became my trusty guides and friends looking after my comforts with the punctilious care of loving nurses. And it was a matter of great joy to me that they were permitted at my request to accompany me as far as Brindisi.

Last, but not least, was my pilgrimage to Romain Rolland, the sage of Villeneuve. Could I have left India just to visit him and his inseparable sister Madeleine, his interpreter and friend, I would have undertaken the voyage. But that could not be. The excuse of the Round Table Conference made this pilgrimage easily possible, and chance threw Rome in my way. And I was able to see something of that great and ancient city and Mussolini, the un-questioned dictator of Italy. And what would not I have given to be able to bow my head before the living image at the Vatican of Christ Crucified ! It was not without a wrench that I could tear myself away from that scene of living tragedy. I saw there at once that nations like individuals could only be made through the agony of the Cross and in no other way. Joy comes not out of infliction of pain on others, but out of pain voluntarily borne by oneself.

II

I am, therefore, returning home not filled with disappointment but with hope enriched. This hope is based on the fact that what I saw in England and on the Continent not only did not shake my faith in truth and non-violence, but, on the contrary, strongly confirmed it. I found, too, many more kindred spirits that I had expected.

Of the Round Table Conference there is nothing new I can report. I spoke out plainly what I thought about its composition and its achievements. One thing, however, I would like to say here. It would be wrong to think that the British Ministers are humbugs and

that they do not mean what they say. I have come away with the impression that they are honest in their professions but they are labouring under a heavy handicap. The delegates, whilst seemingly unanimous over fundamentals, betrayed amazing differences on details of fundamental importance. The minorities, question became a hopeless tangle, not wholly through the fault of the Ministers. But, after all, this was a temporary handicap. Their greatest handicap lay in their being spoonfed on one-sided and often hopelessly false statements and anti-nationalist opinions received by them from their agents in India ever since the commencement of the British Raj. For the Ministers this information is generally gospel truth. They, therefore, believe us to be incapable of handling our own Defence and Finance, they believe that the presence of British troops and British civilians is necessary for the well-being of India. Perhaps, there is no nation on earth equal to the British in the capacity for self-deception.

In confirmation of what I am writing, I would commend to the reader the speech delivered by Sir Samuel Hoare at the House of Commons at the debate on the White Paper. In spite of warnings to the contrary, each time I saw the Secretary of State for India I came away with a higher opinion of his honesty and frankness. Of all the British Ministers I found him to be the most straightforward and frank. He is also a strong man, but he is a hard man. I believe him to be capable of advising or approving of ruthless repression and of hitting the hardest. And he would honestly think that he was merciful even as a surgeon is merciful who applies the knife when he must with a steady and strong hand. This Secretary of State is a hard-working conscientious man who would slave away even though he might have a temperature. He knows his mind at a given moment. He has behind him all the British parties and the large majority known in modern British history. His speech, therefore, is the best British type. And yet it falls hopelessly short of the Congress demand and is based, as Congressmen would say, on utterly wrong data which unfortunately he believes in common with many honest British statesmen.

How can this British mentality be changed or, in other words, how can power be wrested from such unwilling hands? No argument will carry conviction to these statesmen; they are all seasoned hard-headed soldiers. They like and appreciate facts, deeds. They will understand an open rebellion and, if they cannot suppress it, they will at once admit that we are capable of defending ourselves and administering our own affairs. And I have come away with my view

confirmed that they will also understand and perhaps more quickly appreciate a non-violent rebellion. But the unfortunate fact is that they do not believe in our corporate non-violence. And, what is more, they believe that corporate non-violence on a mass scale is impossible. No argument can remove this disbelief. Only actual experience can induce faith.

Nor do they believe that the Congress is really the party that can deliver the goods. Even General Smuts could not convince them that the Congress was such a party. How could he in the teeth of reports of the contrary from their agents in India?

Thus it appears to me that a further fiery ordeal is a necessity of the case. The British mind is not ready for anything radically more than the Prime Minister's declaration.

III

But I can come to no hasty conclusion. This is being written on 23rd December on s.s. *Pilsna* in ignorance of the situation in India. I do not know what possibilities there still are for further negotiation. Nor do I know how far the situation in Bengal, United Provinces, Gujarat, and the South permits of peaceful negotiations. This much is clearer to me than ever before that our true battleground is not London, it is India. We have to convert not the British Minister but the British civilians in India. The strongest Secretary of State for India cannot move much beyond the advice of his local agents. India Office is a clog on the wheel of India's progress. The real power resides in the 250 District Collectors, not even in the Viceroy. These Collectors have powers nowhere enjoyed on earth even by real dictators. The latter do not have behind them the machinery of a mighty Government which the Collectors can move at will.

But thus stated the problem becomes incredibly simple. Each district has the key to the situation in its own hands. We have to work out our own salvation in India by negotiation if at all possible, by direct action if it becomes imperatively necessary. I know that I shall not light-heartedly invite the nation to the ordeal, nor shall I hesitate, if I find no way out, to advise action. I shall strain every nerve to discover a way out.

Young India, 31-12-1931

182. TELEGRAM TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL¹

[On or after *December 23, 1931*]

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI
BARDOLI
YES NOON.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 18408

183. TELEGRAM TO REVASHANKAR JHAVERI²

[On or after *December 23, 1931*]

MORALITY³
BOMBAY
NINE INCLUDING SWISS COUPLE.⁴

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 18409

184. STATEMENT TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF AMERICA⁵

[*December 24, 1931*]⁶

I have never been able to reconcile myself to the gaieties of the Christmas season. They have appeared to me to be so inconsistent with the life and teaching of Jesus.

How I wish America could lead the way by devoting the season to a real moral stock-taking and emphasizing consecration to the service of mankind for which Jesus lived and died on the Cross.

From a photostat: S.N. 18411

¹ This was in reply to the addressee's telegram of December 23, which read: "Your arrival being Monday suggest asking silence earlier Sunday" (S.N. 18407).

² This message is noted along with the message to Vallabhbhai Patel; *vide* the preceding item.

³ Telegraphic address of Revashankar Jhaveri at Mani Bhawan.

⁴ Edmond Privat and his wife.

⁵ This was given to James Mills

⁶ From the entry under the date in "Diary, 1931"

185. TALK ON BOARD s.s. "PILSNA"¹

December 25, 1931

I shall tell you how, to an outsider like me, the story of Christ, as told in the New Testament, has struck. My acquaintance with the Bible began nearly forty-five years ago, and that was through the New Testament. I could not then take much interest in the Old Testament, which I had certainly read, if only to fulfil a promise I had made to a friend whom I happened to meet in a hotel. But when I came to the New Testament and the Sermon on the Mount, I began to understand the Christian teaching, and the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount echoed something I had learnt in childhood and something which seemed to be part of my being and which I felt was being acted up to in the daily life around me.

I say it seemed to be acted up to, meaning thereby that it was not necessary for my purpose that they were actually living the life. This teaching was non-retaliation, or non-resistance to evil. Of all the things I read what remained with me for ever was that Jesus came almost to give a new law—though He of course had said He had not come to give a new law, but tacked something on to the Old Mosaic law. Well, He changed it so that it became a new law—not an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but to be ready to receive two blows when one was given, and to go two miles when you were asked to go one.

I said to myself, "This is what one learns in one's childhood. Surely this is not Christianity." For, all I had then been given to understand was that to be a Christian was to have a brandy bottle in one hand and beef in the other. The Sermon on the Mount, however, falsified the impression.

As my contact with real Christians, i.e., men living in fear of God, increased, I saw that the Sermon on the Mount was the whole of Christianity for him who wanted to live a Christian life. It is that Sermon which has endeared Jesus to me.

I may say that I have never been interested in a historical Jesus. I should not care if it was proved by someone that the man called Jesus never lived, and that what was narrated in the Gospels was a figment of the writer's imagination. For the Sermon on the Mount would still be true for me.

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's report: "The Jesus I Love". The talk was given at 4.30 a.m. Half a dozen persons attended.

Reading, therefore, the whole story in that light, it seems to me that Christianity has yet to be lived, unless one says that where there is boundless love and no idea of retaliation whatsoever, it is Christianity that lives. But then it surmounts all boundaries and book-teaching. Then it is something indefinable, not capable of being preached to men, not capable of being transmitted from mouth to mouth, but from heart to heart. But Christianity is not commonly understood in that way.

Somehow, in God's providence, the Bible has been preserved from destruction by the Christians, so-called. The British and Foreign Bible Society has had it translated into many languages. All that may serve a real purpose in the time to come. Two thousand years in the life of a living faith may be nothing. For though we sang, "All glory to God on high and on the earth be peace," there seems to be today neither glory to God nor peace on earth.

As long as it remains a hunger still unsatisfied, as long as Christ is not yet born, we have to look forward to Him. When real peace is established, we will not need demonstrations, but it will be echoed in our life, not only in individual life, but in corporate life. Then we shall say Christ is born. That to me is the real meaning of the verse we have sung.¹ Then we will not think of a particular day in the year as that of the birth of Christ, but as an ever-recurring event which can be enacted in every life.

And the more I think of fundamental religion, and the more I think of miraculous conceptions of so many teachers who have come down from age to age and clime to clime, the more I see that there is behind them the eternal truth that I have narrated. That needs no label or declaration. It consists in the living of life, never ceasing, ever progressing towards peace.

When, therefore, one wishes "A Happy Christmas" without the meaning behind it, it becomes nothing more than an empty formula. And unless one wishes for peace for all life, one cannot wish for peace for oneself. It is a self-evident axiom, like the axioms of Euclid, that one cannot have peace unless there is in one an intense longing for peace all round. You may certainly experience peace in the midst of strife, but that happens only when to remove strife you destroy your whole life, you crucify yourself.

¹ The proceedings had opened with the singing of a hymn celebrating Christ's Nativity: "While shepherds watched their flocks by night."

And so, as the miraculous birth is an eternal event, so is the Cross an eternal event in this stormy life. Therefore, we dare not think of birth without death on the Cross. Living Christ means a living Cross. Without it life is a living death.

Young India, 31-12-1931

186. NOTES

THE LATE IMAM SAHEB

In the death of Imam Saheb Abdul Kadir Bawazeer, I have lost an old friend and co-worker, India has lost a sincere worker and Islam a gem. Who does not know of Imam Saheb's courage and patriotism? Despite his weak health, he was in the forefront of the assault at Dharasana and, despite his frail constitution, he made the pilgrimage of jail. Imam Saheb was a devout Muslim; he never missed his *namaz* or *roza*. He became known as Imam Saheb because he performed the function of a religious teacher in the Transvaal. He became a fakir for the sake of his country. After serving a term of imprisonment in the Transvaal, he came to live with me in Phoenix along with his family and began to live the life of a fakir. When I returned to India, he too returned. He brought with him his Malay wife too. He lost one wife after another. Later his elder daughter Fatima died, and now Imam Saheb himself has passed away. He leaves behind his daughter Amina Begum and her husband Qureshi. Both are engaged in serving the country. Imam Saheb was one of the trustees of the Ashram: he took full interest in its affairs, he observed its rules and freely associated with everyone there. To me this is a great loss and the fact that he passed away before I reached India adds further to my grief.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 27-12-1931

187. TELEGRAM TO JAMES MILLS¹

[December 27, 1931]²

I NEVER APPEALED FOR FUNDS FOR ABYSSINIAN RED CROSS OR OTHERWISE IN SAME CONNECTION. I DO NOT FEEL COMPETENT TO EXPRESS OPINION ON PROBLEM OR SUGGEST MEANS REACHING PEACEFUL SOLUTION, CAN ONLY PRAY AND HOPE FOR PEACE.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

188. INTERVIEW TO REUTER

S. S. "PILSNA",

December 27, 1931

As I approach the shores of India, I am weighed down with a sense of the tremendous responsibility even as I was upon approaching London. Only this time the responsibility is a thousandfold greater.

I shall therefore take no hasty step. I shall exhaust every resource at my disposal before advising India once more to go through the fire of suffering.

I am constantly praying for God's guidance. I know He will not fail me if I remain true to my creed. Thank God, my faith in truth and non-violence for the national purpose has become strengthened by my European visit, if there was any room for further strengthening. I have no other end to serve in this life.

The Hindu, 28-12-1931

¹ In reply to the addressee's telegram, which read: "In view League Council meeting Wednesday Associated Press of America would appreciate your views on Italo-Abyssinian problem and necessity and means of reaching peaceful solution. Is report reaching London correct you appealed for funds for Abyssinian Red Cross? Reply paid 300 words address Associated London James Mills."

² *Vide* "Diary, 1931"

189. MESSAGE TO AMERICA

[Before *December 28, 1931*]

Tell America, as the exponent of that liberty we hunger for, not to forget our sad people in her prayers.

Home Department, Political, File No. 141, pp 15-7, 1932. Courtesy: National Archives of India

190. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

S. S. "PILSNA",
[*December 28, 1931*]¹

Real disarmament cannot come unless the nations of the world cease to exploit one another.

Gandhiji added that without sanctions, the League of Nations could not keep peace among the nations, as was evident in the present Sino-Japanese conflict in Manchuria.

Q. Do you think that the application of your principle of non-violence would bring permanent peace?

A. Non-violence would be futile unless the root cause is dealt with, and the root cause in this case is the greed of nations. If there were no greed, there could be no occasion for armaments. The principle of non-violence necessitates complete abstention from exploitation in any form. Immediately the spirit of exploitation is gone, armaments will be felt as a positive unbearable burden.

Gandhiji believed that Europe had advanced materially since his last visit fifteen years ago, but he doubted whether it had made much progress spiritually.

I think, however, that there is a greater longing for peace on the part of the people. Deep down everywhere, I noticed intense dissatisfaction and unrest on the part of the people with things as they are. That, to my mind, is not a dangerous, but a healthy sign. Whether the Government of Europe will translate this unrest into real action in the right direction remains to be seen.

¹ According to the source, the interview was given just before Gandhiji landed in Bombay.

Q. As a result of that unrest, do you visualize during in the next score of years a gradual disappearance of monarchies for more democratic forms of Government, as evidenced by the recent change in Spain?

A. Sudden changes such as those in Spain offer no material for a reasonable forecast. By habit, too, I am not given to peeping into the future.

The Indian National leader said it was indisputable that England had failed as a first-class power, but he had faith enough in the English people to feel that they would turn their present economic distress to good account and become an example to other nations in spiritual progress.

For England's sake and for the sake of the world, I hope, England will not regain the material supremacy she enjoyed before the war, because that supremacy might be used to oppress other nations.

The Mahatma saw the British Empire disintegrating and ultimately becoming a series of separate independent units, like Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and India, but he also hoped that these units would be united voluntarily for the good of mankind.

But this opinion may be due to the wish being father to the thought.

Gandhiji said that the strongest impression he carried away from Europe is that Europe cannot for any length of time sustain the artificial life its peoples are living today, because that life, he asserted, is too materialistic and too complicated.

There must be a return to simplicity and proper proportions. The flesh has taken precedence over the spirit. The machine age is ruining Western civilization. Over-production and lack of means of proper distribution may finally spell the doom of capitalistic society. The only solution I see is a return to hand industry and the emancipation of the individual from factory slavery.

Q. Would you recommend great industrial countries like England and the United States to adopt the spinning-wheel?

A. I think it would be an eventful day in the life of those countries if they adopted the spinning-wheel.

Q. Is the world growing better or worse?

A. So long as I believe in a benevolent God, I must believe that the world is getting better even though I see evidence to the contrary.

The Hindu, 1-1-1932

191. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

December 28, 1931

MY DEAR JAWAHAR,

Indu gave me your letter. Somehow or other your arrest did not come upon me as a surprise. I have not yet been able to go to Kamala. I may tonight or tomorrow for certain. You will be glad to know that I have read your second series of letters to Indu, I had some suggestions to make, but of that, when perhaps we have come to our own.

Meanwhile love to you and Sherwani.

A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 104

192. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

BOMBAY,

December 28, 1931

In a brief conversation with pressmen, Gandhiji stated that he had closely studied the Premier's statement and the India debate. He would deal with that subject at the public meeting tonight. One thought of the Government's latest action in arresting Pandit Jawaharlal and Mr. Sherwani and Abdul Ghaffar Khan as a challenge to the Congress, but it was for the Congress President to state that those Government activities amounted to a breach of the Delhi Pact.

Questioned about his attitude towards the Subcommittees set up by His Majesty's Government to carry on the Conference work, Gandhiji said that it was too early to state his attitude. All the material was not before him. It was for the Government to consider how the Committees could work if the atmosphere was uncongenial.

Gandhiji considered the Round Table Conference a debating society. It was not representative in the sense it was claimed to be. It was not a 'Round Table' in the right sense.

Asked whether he was convinced now that the signing of the truce was a great blunder, he said, "No", and added that it was an act of statesmanship. He agreed that the recent developments in Bengal, U.P. and the Frontier were a challenge to the Congress, but the reserved action till the decision of the Congress Working Committee. He added the Round Table Conference was a debating society. Asked if he believed that the Delhi Pact was dead he said it was for the Congress President to say.

The Hindu, 28-12-1931, and *The Hindustan Times*, 30-12-1931

193. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS¹

BOMBAY,
December 28, 1931

Mahatma Gandhi denied the rumour that he was seeking an interview with the Viceroy and discussing with him the situation in the country.

The Mahatma pleaded that he had had no time to study the recent developments in the country and what he had heard from his colleagues till then was only 'titbits'. He, therefore, declined to pass any opinion on the subject. But when asked if, when the Ordinances were in force in the country, it would not be difficult for the Committees of the Round Table Conference to function in India, he vouchsafed the remark:

Well, it is very difficult. But it is for the Government to consider how the Committees shall work and function.

A pressman asked Gandhiji if he did not see a gloomy future for India if she had to go through another fight to which Gandhiji replied promptly:

Even if India has got to go through another fiery ordeal, I would not consider that a gloomy prospect in any sense of the term.

SIR PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI: But you will try your utmost to prevent another fiery ordeal?

GANDHIJI: I will strain every nerve to avoid a fiery ordeal naturally enough. But if it becomes unavoidable, it is unbecoming of a warrior to draw a long face when death is in front of him. To me it may be imprisonment or a lathi charge.

A VOICE: Or deportation.

GANDHIJI: To me imprisonment and deportation are convertible terms. They make no difference.

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI: There may be a difference in climate.

GANDHIJI: Climatic difference I do not mind. (Laughter)

Gandhiji informed the Pressmen that he had given the most careful consideration to the statement of the Premier and had crossed its I's and dotted its I's. But he deferred the statement on it till the Azad Maidan meeting.

To a pressman who doubted the wisdom of the Congress in declaring Truce,

¹ The interview took place at Mani Bhawan. Vallabhbhai Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose and Prabhashankar Pattani were present.

Mahatma Gandhi retorted: It was an act of statesmanship to have signed the Delhi Truce.

The pressman argued that the Government taking cover under the white flag had flung thousands of the youths of the country into the prisons. This evoked the reply from the Mahatma:

More young men today are out than in the jail. I am unable to subscribe to your formula.

Several questions that followed were ruled out by Gandhiji on the ground that the Congress President in his official capacity was the proper man to answer them:

My opinion does not count. It is the opinion of an individual.

SOMEBODY: But the President has been asking the country all these days to wait for you. It shows that your opinion is final.

GANDHIJI: It may be final with the President.

Q. Why don't you go to Bengal. Don't you think it is advisable to go there?

GANDHIJI: It may be quite advisable. But I am a representative and not a free-lance like you. (Laughter) My wishes should be dominated in this instance by Bengal. Subhas Babu is here to advise me on the subject. But you have not yet given him a chance to address me.

Asked if Mr. M. R. Jayakar was right in his surmise, uttered at a recent meeting in Bombay that it would have been better if Gandhiji had accepted the offer of Lord Irwin to take 14 other Congress representatives with him to London, Gandhiji said:

I am convinced after having had this experience that it was a wise decision that the Congress could have come to in sending me alone.

It would have been a first-calls tragedy, if 14 or 15 good servants of the nation had been sent out instead of keeping them here. In other respects also it was a good thing to have sent only one delegate. When the mandate was so absolutely clear, there was no occasion for sending more than one agent unless, of course, the Congress had distrusted its agent. They did the wisest thing in sending one man and, at that, such a wise man like me. (Laughter)

Another reporter requested the Mahatma to give his impression about the R.T.C. "in a nutshell".

GANDHIJI: My experience of the R.T.C. is that it was a debating

society, and certainly not representative in the sense in which it has been claimed to be. Therefore, it was not in the right sense of the term a Round Table Conference.

Q. Is that all?

GANDHIJI: But you wanted my impressions in a nutshell.
(Laughter)

Q. Why are the untouchables so angry with you?

GANDHIJI: I don't know that they are angry with me. I deny that they are angry with me.

Q. What is your attitude towards the untouchables and Depressed Classes?

GANDHIJI: My attitude is that they are bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. I would love to die so that they may live, and live with perfect dignity and self-respect. My attitude is that I myself belong to the Depressed Classes.

The Bombay Chronicle, 29-12-1931

194. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BOMBAY

December 28, 1931

Cheering lasted for several minutes, when Mahatmaji began to address the meeting. He thanked the citizens of Bombay for the welcome they accorded him in the morning. But he took it as a token of their confidence in the Congress and not as a personal honour.

Last night I was expecting that I would be able to speak before you something different than what I propose to do now. But evidently God has willed otherwise. I did not know till I landed this morning that there had been firing in Peshawar, nor did I know that Pandit Jawaharlal and Sjt. Sherwani were jailed or were to be prosecuted. I take these as Christmas presents to me from Lord Willingdon. It was natural that he should have made presents to me on my return home. In the Frontier Province Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, his brother and several others have been arrested and we do not know how many more will be jailed. We may not even get the news from that province. What better presents can there be for a satyagrahi than these?

¹ Held at Azad Maidan within a few hours of Gandhiji's arrival, the meeting, according to the source, was the biggest that any public speaker in Bombay had ever dreamt of. Before Gandhiji spoke, Vallabhbhai Patel in a speech welcomed Gandhiji home.

If we had committed any offence and were punished for that, there would have been occasion for us to regret it. But I am as certain as there is life in me that Khan Abdul Ghaffar is a true believer in the cult of satyagraha and he has understood its meaning. I need say nothing about Pandit Jawaharlal and Sjt. Sherwani. You know them as much as I do.

The question now before us is: What is our duty? Shall we take the hint from the action of the Government and launch a campaign of satyagraha or shall we try some other means? I cannot give you my opinion just at present.

I will only say that, if fate wills that we should go through the ordeal again, and if the Congress Working Committee decides on the renewal of the fight, I shall not hesitate to ask you to join it. But if there is any possibility of avoiding satyagraha, I shall do my utmost to prevent it and advise you to have patience. I think after years of experience India has learnt to hold herself in patience.

I was grieved to learn on board the steamer that in Bengal, two of our young girls are said to have committed a murder. It pained me as a satyagrahi, because our creed is to be ready to die and not to kill. Our fight is based on love. Even if we fight the Government, it is with the weapon of love and there can be no room for hatred in it. When I heard of that incident, I was sorry but that does not mean that there is the least justification for what the Government has been doing in Bengal. A Government has every right to punish the wrong-doers, but it does not behove a Government to victimize people for acts for which they are not responsible. There can be no justification for the Ordinances promulgated in the U.P. or the North-West Frontier Province. We cannot tolerate any of them.

I had hoped that it would be possible to find a way to co-operate with the Government. I will even now do my best to find the way out. But I must admit the signs that I have noticed have considerably weakened my hopes. And if ever we have to fight, we should be prepared to do our utmost. Ours is a fight in which one and all can join. It is a fight to court sufferings. It is a struggle to give life and not to take life. In this struggle even children can play a part.

Last year we faced lathis, but this time we must be prepared to face bullets. I do not wish that the Pathans in the Frontier alone should court bullets. If bullets are to be faced, Bombay and Gujarat also must take their share. I had said in London that, if we had to offer even a

million lives for achieving freedom, I would be prepared for sacrifice without the least compunction. I believe that we must get rid of the fear of death, and when we have to court death we must embrace it as we embrace a friend. But in spite of our readiness to offer our lives, we must see to it that not even a hair of an Englishman is hurt. We must hope that by our sacrifice we shall be able to bring about a change of heart in the same Englishman who strikes us.

By my visit to Europe, my faith in non-violence has immensely increased. I believe that non-violence has the power to melt the stoniest heart. Some people thought that during my visit to Europe I would learn something new, but I honestly say that I learnt nothing new except that my faith in non-violence increased.

Another experience that I got during my visit to London was that the British Cabinet believes—and there is no reason to doubt its sincerity—that we are not fit for self-government. They believe that although the Congressmen speak of non-violence, they do not honestly believe in it. The reason is that in the reports they get from their officials in India, it is represented that Indians are unfit for self-government, and that Congress has no control over the masses. That is why they have been declaring Congress organizations unlawful. Our duty is not to find fault with the Englishmen nor to be angry with them, but to get rid of our shortcomings and to act up to the creed of non-violence.

Maybe that many of you have accepted it as a policy, but so long as the Congress has adopted that creed, we must stick fast to it. By our actions we must prove beyond doubt that we, Congressmen, exist not to harm anyone, but to protect others at the cost of our own lives. Congress stands to achieve freedom by sacrificing lives. Those who do not subscribe to that view had better leave the Congress. If we did that, we shall enhance the influence and reputation that we have earned, and if we lose it, we will not be able to attain freedom.

If we have not so far been able to attain swaraj, it does not mean that we should give up the attempt. India has not only to attain her freedom but also to give the message of peace and non-violence to the world. Even if years are required to achieve that object, it should not dishearten us.

I hear people saying that if Congress gave up satyagraha, it would be able to deal with the Government. I must make it clear that Congress and satyagraha are inseparable. In satyagraha lies the power

of the Congress, and the Government will have ultimately to come to terms with the Congress. I made this clear in London and I repeat it today before you and the whole world. The Congress does not belong to the Hindus alone. It stands equally for Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, Jews and, in fact, all those who have made India their home. Congress stands for those Englishmen also who have made India their home. I made the claim in London on behalf of the Congress that it stands for the whole of India and I repeat it here. Its influence is bound to increase.

We could not solve the communal problem in London. I knew that it could never be solved there. It can be solved by the Congress and it is doing all that it can to solve it. The remedy is to serve all classes and communities. If the Congress serves the Sikhs and Muslims, they are sure to claim the Congress as their own.

One word about the untouchables. I claim myself to be one of them. I have served them for my whole life. I started their service even before I took up Congress work. How can I then do anything that will harm them? The untouchables have been so much oppressed by the caste Hindus that we can find no parallel to it in any other religion. Therefore, if they get angry and do harm to ten or twenty Hindus, it should not give us cause to retaliate. I am not prepared for any concession like reservation of seats, etc., to the untouchables, because I believe that it would be perpetuating untouchability. Let the future legislatures of free India be filled with untouchables alonge, but let them come in as equals. Unless we raise them to our level, our freedom will be futile. So long as a person, whether man or woman, touchable or untouchable, rich or poor, is oppressed and does not enjoy equal rights with other citizens of the country, we cannot enjoy freedom. It will be slavery in the garb of freedom. What I did in London was only to safeguard their rights.

I had a mind to speak on many things. I had to place before you an account of what I did in London in connection with the R.T.C. If I am left free, I may do it on some other occasion or you may know it through other means.

What I have to tell you now is that, if there is to be a fight, be prepared for every sacrifice, but take a pledge that you will not do harm to others. I will do all that lies within the power of a human being to prevent another fiery ordeal, but if I find that there is no other way out, I will not hesitate to call upon you to go through it, whatever the magnitude of sufferings may be. May God give us the strength to suffer and sacrifice in the cause of freedom.

The Bombay Chronicle, 29-12-1931

195. *SPEECH AT WELFARE O INDIA LEAGUE, BOMBAY*

December 28, 1931

When I received the cable from Mr. David just before I left England inviting me to attend this meeting. I felt it was impossible for me to avoid this invitation. And so I cabled him in reply asking to arrange the time with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, because naturally he has to his disposal all the time at my disposal. It is a great pleasure to me to be able to address you this evening.

My intention when I accepted this invitation was to speak to you this evening on what I saw in England. But, on landing in India, all my plans have been upset by the startling news that I have heard about the situation here. I wished to speak to you and to the Congress about the many things I have seen in England and in Europe. They have got their dark side as also the bright side of the picture. There were things I saw from which I had every reason for hope. But there were also things which help out no hopes at all. I would gladly have spoken to you what I saw in England and in Europe. But now with the situation before me as it is, I shall have to speak to you largely about the events that face me and face you as those who want to promote the welfare of this country.

But I want to assure you that, wherever I went in London, in England or in Europe, I was surrounded with the greatest amount of affection and I felt that there was no truth in Kipling's saying that the East and West would never meet. I am not conscious of a single experience throughout my three months' stay in England and Europe that has made me feel that, after all, East is East, West is West. On the contrary, I have been convinced more than ever that human nature is much the same, no matter in what clime it flourishes, that if you approached people with trust and affection, you would have tenfold and thousandfold affection returned to you.

Though I cannot say I have achieved anything from the R.T.C. in terms of the Congress demand, I do not consider my visit to

¹ The meeting, held at Majestic Hotel at 10 p.m., was presided over by Sir Stanley Reed. Among those present were Prabhashankar Pattani, Pheroze Sethna, Nassarvanji Choksy, Vallabhbhai Patel and some members of the Congress Working Committee.

England has been useless. On the contrary, I feel that it was a good thing that I was able to go through this experience, which has further enabled me to put to test the efficiency of the methods that I have been employing for the last 30 years in connection with public questions. But I must close this part of my speech about my experiences, because instead of finding an echo of this experience in India, I find myself face to face with grim facts.

Whilst I could not say that the Round Table Conference or the Prime Minister's declaration has offered anything that would positively satisfy the Congress, I could say that there was an honest effort on the part of the British Ministers to understand the Indian situation, although they could not appreciate the Indian viewpoint as I conceive it. Instead of finding an atmosphere responsive to the expectations raised by the Prime Minister's declarations, supported by the speech of the Secretary of State for India, I find that there is absolutely no atmosphere to answer the granting of limited responsibility to India, as had been defined in the speech of the Secretary of State for India.

I am here to testify that of all the Ministers I had the privilege of meeting I found the Secretary of State for India to be an honest and frank-hearted Englishman. I had no difficulty in understanding what was at the back of his mind and every interview with him brought me nearer to him and we parted as the best of friends, as I did with all the other Ministers.

But when I come here, I find a different order of things altogether. Here is the Frontier trouble. Side by side with the declaration that the Frontier Province is about to be placed on the same footing as the other provinces, you find in that Province today an Ordinance for which I cannot find any parallel whatsoever. If you have not studied it thoroughly, I commend it to you. I have not myself studied it carefully. I have gone through the brief Press reports that are available. But I cannot tell myself that this is a human piece of legislation, if at all it can be called legislation.

This Ordinance gives no protection for life or property. The ostensible aim of this Ordinance is to put down the activities of the brave people of the Frontier with a heavy hand. I know Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his band of Khudai Khidmatgars. But I do not know of anything that has been done by these Red Shirts—the Khudai Khidmatgars—which means the servants of God. I know of the

greatness of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He is a brave Pathan. He is a simple-hearted, sincere and honest man and he walks in the fear of God. Even some of the officials in the North- West Frontier have testified to his honesty. But now he has been deported with a band of his men.

And what is his crime ? His crime is that he wanted independence for his Province and for India, his crime is that he did not attend the Durbar that was held recently to consider the ways and means to give a new form of government to that Province. Beyond that he had done nothing, neither have any of those thousands of followers of his done anything. Was it their crime that they were wearing red shirts ? And on top of this we have received reports that they have been shot down for defying the Ordinance. Civil disobedience should be punished because that is the essence of civil disobedience. A civil resister courts suffering and punishment . But I have not seen or heard anywhere that the penalty for defying law, apart from violence done by the civil resisters, is to meet them with bullets. We have already reports that 14 people have been killed when the troops opened fire on a crowd of Red Shirts and spectators. We have no report of the casualties when the troops fired on a second occasion on a body of 2,000 Red Shirts. The casualties must be severer. More is perhaps to follow.

This is certainly an exceedingly unhappy augury for changing the Frontier Province into an autonomous province. It is a bad augury that one of its bravest men should have been deported at this time and several men killed because they have shown themselves to be brave in defying an Ordinance which is only legalized martial law.

Now I come to the United Provinces. And what do I find there ? Here Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Sherwani have been arrested. And what did they do ? Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wanted to attend a conference that was to be held. But, instead of attending it, what he did was to postpone it to a later date because of some conditions that have been imposed by the Government which he thought were not consistent with self-respect. He postponed it pending the decisions of the Congress Working Committee which is meeting here tomorrow. He wanted to ascertain what step should be taken after consultation with me and the Working Committee members in the light of my experience at the Round Table Conference. But the Government served an order on

him that he should not leave the limits of the Allahabad Municipality without taking permission from the Government authorities. He wrote a letter to the Magistrate intimating his intention to proceed to Bombay to receive me. But he and Mr. Sherwani have been arrested.

But the arrests do not worry me at all. But it is the Ordinance that is now in existence in the U.P. which troubles me very much. It is almost of the same type as the Frontier Ordinance. There are enough Ordinances to the credit of Lord Irwin. But there are already thirteen Ordinances to Lord Willingdon's credit. These thirteen Ordinances outdo all Lord Irwin's Ordinances by their severity.

Now I pass on to Bengal. I might be told in Bengal you cannot possibly complain about the Ordinance because crime has been committed there. Some Bengali youths have run amuck and committed assassination. I have always been shocked by murderous violence. But I am more pained now that I hear that even girls have taken to these deeds of terrorism. But, because a few persons ran amuck, how can the whole Province be emasculated? The effect of it will be to wean away even the sympathizers of the Government as an Ordinance such as prevails there interferes with the everyday life of the people of that Province. I have discussed this Ordinance with many public men in England and there was nothing but condemnation for the same.

This, in brief, is the picture of the situation I find myself face to face with. There does not appear to be any choice for me.

But at the same time I have pledged myself to so many British friends that I would try my level best, in spite of the disappointment at the Round Table Conference so far as the Congress demand is concerned, to continue co-operation with the Government. But, from what I have seen since I landed, I must confess to you that I see very little hope for tendering any co-operation unless I lose all my sense of self-respect.

I would be doing the greatest injustice to myself and to the nation if I advised co-operation now unless I could see some light dawn on the horizon which just now seems to be in impenetrable darkness.

I do not know how you, the members of the Welfare of India League, view these Ordinances. But I assure you that I shall strain every nerve to see, if I could not tender co-operation on honourable lines, to induce Government to withdraw or revise these Ordinances.

The Congress is charged with trying to run a parallel Government by the Governor of the United Provinces. I do not see what is wrong in running parallel Governments, so long as they are run on non-violent lines and in the interest of the people. What is wrong in a private organization of individuals running hospitals ? What even if they run, side by side with Government law courts , arbitration courts where justice could be had at less cost to the people.

The Government should welcome such enterprises and give every encouragement to them. If the Congress is running a peasant organization, as it is running today, for the relief and the welfare of the peasants, what is wrong in that ? I would welcome it if I were the Governor.

The Congress does intend to displace this Government at some time . If the Congress is not able to take charge of the Government, then there is no hope of swaraj coming. The question was put to the Congress : “Are you ready to take over the Defence of the country ? Are you ready to take over the Finance of the country and also take over the obligations of the country ?”

I replied : “It is ready. The Congress is undoubtedly ready to take over charge of Defence of Finance and also of the obligations you might consider India is liable for. But only in a truly businesslike way they should get all the obligations examined by an impartial examiner. Unless the Congress tries its hand at these matters, how can it learn and thrive ?”

So what is there disloyal or seditious in organizations trying to run parallel Governments, based on the goodwill of the people whom the organization claims to serve.

It was the very foundation of the Congress to be able one day to replace the present Government. It has been laid down by such eminent persons like Dadabhai Naoroji and many other Englishmen and Indians. So after its life of more than half a century, if it is not able to run a parallel Government, I would say we should all be ashamed of it.

The Congress has done nothing immoral nothing ungentlemanly. It is not a secret organization. It always spreads out its cards on the table. And if still the Government should mistrust it as they seem to, then all I can say is that we will have to make our power felt or allow ourselves to perish in doing so.

I would request you, members of the Welfare of India League, to direct me in this matter. I have placed before you, so to say,

my puzzle. If the Congress is not trusted, how can it give co-operation? The welfare of India is a common interest between you and me and the Congress. The Congress does not live for anything else than the welfare of India and I have myself no other aim in living this life. It may be that I and the Congress are going the wrong way about it. I am open to correction and conviction. So I would request you all to study the situation in the light of my speech and shall be glad to answer any questions that you may put to me based on my speech for better understanding and for my own guidance.

Q. Will you co-operate with the working of the various R.T.C. Committees, which would commence work in India soon if all the Ordinances are withdrawn ?

A. I have already explained that the Ordinances block the way. Firstly, the Ordinances must go. Secondly, the Congress must be satisfied that its goal can be reached through co-operation with the Committees. I can hold out no hope of the Congress reducing its demands. But if the Congress is satisfied that the door is open for argument and negotiation in regard to its demands, I would advise the Congress to tender its co-operation in the work of the Committees.

Q. Before condemning these Ordinances as you have done, why don't you please proceed to the Provinces where these Ordinances are in force and study the conditions there personally and see if they are not justified?

A. I would be most glad to do so if the Government permitted me to do so. I have tried several times to go to the Frontier Province. But on all these occasions the Government have stood in the way, at least the Government have not shown any encouragement for this move of co-operation. I am divulging no official secret to you when I say that when the Delhi Pact was signed, Ghaffar Khan was on the brain of the Executive I requested Lord Irwin to allow me to go to the Frontier. But Lord Irwin, after consultation with the Commissioner of the Frontier, came to the conclusion that it was a dangerous thing to send me there. (Laughter) I was told that I would create ferment there and whatever I might say would be misinterpreted to the tribesmen. (Laughter) I tried another time in Simla with Lord Willingdon with no better success. I could have proceeded without taking permission, but I did not want to embarrass the Government. If the Government would permit me to proceed to the Frontier tomorrow, I shall rush to that place. So, if those of you here who have got the ear of the Government can procure for me this permission, I shall directly start for the Frontier, I would love to go there tomorrow itself.

Q. Will you not agree to go to the Frontier and Bengal on Government's terms?

A. No, I cannot, If Government will allow me to serve them, it must be on my own terms. I cannot go to the brave Abdul Ghaffar Khan and tell him that it is wrong to long for independence for the Frontier or for India. If you want a bird to fly, you must not clip its wings and then say: you can fly now. That is what the Government want to do. They clip my wings and then want me to fly. The Government must let me grow in strength, if they will let me serve them.

I can really make things easy. The Government knows that Abdul Ghaffar Khan would pay heed to my words. I have lived with the Pathans and moved with them. I have also been assaulted by them and that has ever been a link between they and me. (Laughter) So long as he (Ghaffar Khan) is satisfied that I have not betrayed the cause, he would certainly abide by my advice. It was on my advice that he went and saw the Commissioner some time ago. But the Government will not accept my services.

I also intend to visit Bengal. The situation is different in regard to Bengal. I need not ask for permission to go to Bengal. But once I go to Bengal, I will write to the Government and place my co-operation at their service as I will at the service of the people of Bengal. It will be for the Government to accept my service or not. But I will not go to Chittagong or Hijli without asking the Bengal Government if I may do so without embarrassment to them. I can go to the Frontier. I can go to Chittagong and to Hijli, whether the Government will it or not. I can practise civil disobedience if the authorities issue prohibitory orders. But I will not go to the Frontier, Chittagong or Hijli, at the cost of practising civil disobedience. If I do so, I will be embarrassing the Government greatly which is what I do not want to do. If I decide to offer civil disobedience, I shall choose, as a satyagrahi, a ground that offers to the Government the minimum embarrassment and puts the Government in the wrong.

Q. If you are satisfied that there is a seditious organization existing in Bengal, would you ask for the repeal of the Ordinances?

A. The word 'sedition' is a very elastic term. But I understand the spirit of the question. If these organizations are trying to subvert law and order and trying to usurp the powers of the Government, it is certainly the duty of the Government to deal with

such activities. But all the difference lies in the method of dealing with the same. The same question was put to me in England; "How would you deal with terrorism if the Congress were running the Government" I then replied: "Give me the power and I shall show that." I would deal with an organization of that character in the most sympathetic manner. There is the ordinary law which could alone deal with any kind of crime. Then why have recourse to Ordinances, which only help to estrange the feelings of the people on whom it operates. I yield to none in my condemnation of crimes, but these Ordinances instead of weaning away people from terrorism only accentuate it.

No society would tolerate the taking of innocent lives as was done by the Bengal youths. But why punish 50,000 for the crime of five? If I were the Secretary of State or the Governor-General, I would ask the Bengal Governor to resign his place when he asked for the promulgation of an Ordinance. But I would not rest there. I would dive into the root cause of this discontent and try to cure that first.

The Governor should invite the prominent leaders into his secret chamber and take them into his confidence and discuss the question thread bare and find out the means to check and stop such crime.

Mutual trust is what he wants. The Archbishop of Canterbury told me that he had understood what was at the back of the Indian problem and he had understood it well when he said that it is mutual trust we want.

Bengal has its grievances. The Bengal youths are courageous, emotional and patriotic and so speeches like those delivered in the House of Commons decrying the bravery of Bengal drive them to extremes. As I said before, I yield to none, not even Englishmen, in my condemnation of crime. But it should be dealt within the ordinary course of law.

The Congress creed of non-violence has done a great deal to check terrorism. But the methods of General Dyer would not do. I have no enmity or irritation against General Dyer. I know he was an honest man who believed in what he was doing and who justified his actions in India.

But the Dyer method is wrong. English lives in India must not be saved by Dyer methods.

The atmosphere created by the Ordinances is certainly not conducive to hammering out a Constitution for the country as it is

proposed to do. If you think young India will look at any Constitution evolved in the atmosphere of the Ordinances, it is a forlorn hope.

It is no use saying that Indian loyalists say 'yes' to Government in support of these methods. I tell you even these loyalists when they say 'yes' to the Government, they say at the back of their minds 'no'. As one who is of the people, who lives amongst them, who lives for them, I claim to know the reaction of the Indian mind to these Ordinances better than the Governor-General who issues these Ordinances living in Simla or Delhi, better than all his advisers put together.

Q. Would you not try to stamp out the terrorist movement to the exclusion of all your other activities?

A. The Congress campaign of non-violence, I firmly believe, has done a great deal to check terrorism. I am speaking with evidence. I know of any number of cases in which the Congress message has won to the cause of non-violence ex-revolutionaries. Today, I can vouch for their non-violence as I can vouch for my own. These patriotic young men are engaged in constructive work.

Q. If you were in power, would you allow another organization to run a parallel Government and usurp your place?

A. When I said that I did not see any harm in organizations running parallel Governments, I did not mean usurpation. My friend has put a word into my mouth which I never used. If these organizations run a parallel Government for the good of the people, I would certainly give them all encouragement. See what Dictator Mussolini is doing in Italy. He never interferes with voluntary activities for the betterment of the country.

I am dying for co-operation and shall not rest till I have explored all avenues. I appeal to you, Englishmen and women, to ponder over the facts I have placed before you tonight and do your bit for creating an atmosphere of love and peace in this country.

The Hindu, 31-12-1931

196. TELEGRAM TO VICEROY'

December 29, 1931

I WAS UNPREPARED ON LANDING YESTERDAY TO
FIND FRONTIER AND U.P. ORDINANCES SHOOTINGS IN
FRONTIER AND ARRESTS OF VALUED COMRADES IN
BOTH ON TOP OF THE BENGAL ORDINANCE
AWAITING ME. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER I AM
TO REGARD THESE AS INDICATION THAT FRIENDLY
RELATIONS BETWEEN US ARE CLOSED OR WHETHER
YOU EXPECT ME STILL TO SEE YOU AND RECEIVE
GUIDANCE FROM YOU AS TO THE COURSE I AM TO
PURSUE IN ADVISING THE CONGRESS. I WOULD
ESTEEM A WIRE IN REPLY.¹

India in 1931-32

197. LETTER TO SIR FAZLE HUSIAN

AS AT SABARMATI,

December 29, 1931

DEAR FRIEND,

I found your letter awaiting me on my landing. What I meant was that as against our not pressing for further rights and giving favoured treatment to South Africa in respect of trade, it was possible to get the Union Government to recognize the legitimacy of or legalize the existing trading businesses in the Transvaal with the right to transfer or sell such businesses.²The result of this would be that we

¹ For the Viceroy's reply dated December 31, *vide* "Telegram fro Private Secretary to Viceroy", 31-12-1931

²The position of Indians in South Africa was regulated by the Cape Town Agreement of 1927 which fell due for re-examination in 1932. But in 1931, an ordinance called the Licences (Control) Ordinance was passed by the Transvaal Provincial Council which repealed the existing General Dealers (Control) Ordinance, 1926, and gave the Transvaal municipalities complete control over the issue of Trading Licences to Indian without specifying the grounds on which the licence could be refused. This greatly perturbed the Indian community. Accordingly, the Government of India sent a delegation to South Africa, led by the addressee who was a member of the Governor-General's Executive Council, to settle the various issues.

would have to waive the right to further facilities. If this can be done, the Union Government will be able to tell the public that there will be no further addition to the existing businesses if there was also no diminution in their number. It is likely that if our people can be satisfied with such a guarantee the Union Government may protect existing businesses.

I hope that you will return to India hale and hearty and with an honourable settlement of the very difficult question.

Yours sincerely,

SIR FAZLE HUSAIN
INDIAN DELEGATIONS
CAPETOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

198. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, BOMBAY¹

December 31, 1931

During one or two days more of freedom that I have left, let us say our prayers in peace.

The Hindustan Times, 3-1-1932

The Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Bill which was later passed into an Act, safeguarded Indian's rights to a greater extent than was expected.

This letter is in reply to the addressee's letter dated December 16, 1931, in which he had written, "I understood you then to say that the Union Govt. would not only protect interests which have already grown up and are not safeguarded by the existing law, but will also be willing, if pressed, to provide for a certain amount of expansion. I shall be grateful if you will kindly develop this idea in a letter which might be posted to me to Cape Town by the mail of the 30th."

¹ The meeting was held in the evening in the public garden near Gandhiji's camp. Gandhiji spoke in Gujarati. Earlier the Working Committee had considered the Viceroy's telegram which was received at 4 p.m.

199. DIARY, 1931

LONDON, OCTOBER 14, WEDNESDAY

Spun 180 rounds. Discussion about the army with persons called together by Sir Samuel Hoare; talk with Benthall, talk with Jinnah.

LONDON, OCTOBER 15, THURSDAY

Spun 176 rounds. Talk with Sir Samuel Hoare; with Sapru, Jayakar and others, also students' function. Talk with Latifi.

LONDON, OCTOBER 16, FRIDAY

Spun 162 rounds. The Conference, Press lunch, Mussalmans, India Office, Prohibition meeting, Nawab Saheb. Now it is 1 o'clock.

BIRMINGHAM, OCTOBER 17, SATURDAY

Spun 127 rounds. Speech for gramophone recording;¹ Madgaonkar; reprimanded Maud for renting house;² visit to Nottingham, Birmingham in the evening; Andrews arrived; Devdas returned to Knightsbridge.

BIRMINGHAM, OCTOBER 18, SUNDAY

Spun 129 rounds. Bishop Barnes; the Steiner school; Dr. Parghi, meeting of members of Ashram.³

LONDON, OCTOBER 19, MONDAY

Spun 178 rounds. Left Birmingham in the morning. Shuaib met me three or four times. Sardar Ujjal Singh, talk with Indian Princes.

LONDON, OCTOBER 20, TUESDAY

Spun 176 rounds. Upton Close called; Archbishop of Canterbury, Samuel Hoare, Elmhurst; meeting at Chatham House.

LONDON, OCTOBER 21, WEDNESDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Lord Irwin, meeting of missionaries; the Rani of Cooch-Bihar.

¹ The reference is to the recording of a portion of an article : "God Is", published in *Young India*, 11-10-1928; *vide* "God Is"

² *Vide* "Letter to H.S.L.Polak", 2-12-1931

³ Presumably, the Woodbrooke Settlement ; *vide* footnote 1, "Speech at Birmingham Meeting", 18-10-1931

LONDON, OCTOBER 22, THURSDAY

Spun 153 rounds. Talk with Sir Mirza at the Bikaner get-together; met Sapru and others at Malaviyaji's. Reached Kingsley Hall today at 8.45 p.m.

ETON, OCTOBER 23, FRIDAY

Spun 221 rounds. Spoke in Federal Structure Committee on Federal Court; visited Agricultural Exhibition in the evening. Then had a talk with Sapru and others. Went to Eton at night. Spoke to youths there.

OXFORD, OCTOBER 24, SATURDAY

Spun 162 rounds. Left Eton in the morning; arrived at Oxford. On the way called at the house of Col. Maddock. Then lunched at the residence of Mira's uncle. Spent two hours with the Fellows at Oxford. Later at night in the Indian Majlis. Lala Dunichand's son called.

OXFORD, OCTOBER 25, SUNDAY

Spun 199 rounds. In the morning at Thompsons' met Prof. Murray, Sadler and others. Then met Sir Henry Lawrence, Mrs. Elwin, the Ruskin Society, then discussion with Oxford dons; at night with the Rhode scholars.

LONDON, OCTOBER 26, MONDAY

Spun 162 rounds. Reached London at 10.15. Met Sapru and others. The Committee. Called on Nawab Saheb at night. It is now 12.30 a.m.

LONDON, OCTOBER 27, TUESDAY

Spun 165 rounds. Mrs. Sheridan had slept here. Talked with Menon at night at Polak's.

LONDON, OCTOBER 28, WEDNESDAY

Spun 181 rounds. Met Madame M....¹, Madame Montessori. Mira's illness.

LONDON, OCTOBER 29, THURSDAY

Spun 215 rounds. Could not rise today at 3 o'clock. Was late by an hour. Many persons called. Felt mentally agitated. Talked with Dutta. Met Sapru and others at Malviyaji's. Met Strakosch and Sir

¹ The correct spelling of the name cannot be ascertained; probably a relation of Madame Montessori.

Basil Blackett in the evening . At night met Baba and other youths.

LONDON, OCTOBER 30, FRIDAY

Spun 182 rounds. Vegetarian lunch, meeting with Layton. The Commonwealth of India League.

CAMBRIDGE, OCTOBER 31, SATURDAY

Spun 162 rounds. Met Quaker friends. Met Sardar Ujjal Singh at Cambridge at 5 o'clock.

CAMBRIDGE, NOVEMBER 1, SUNDAY

Spun 192 rounds. Visited Pemberton College in the morning. Present at the meeting held there were Lowes Dickinson, Evelyn Wrench and others. The discussion lasted three hours. Then made a few visits. Saw Andrews's old room, visited King's Chapel. In the evening Nicholson called. At night meeting of the Indian Majlis. Commenced silence at 9.38 p.m.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 2, MONDAY

Spun 186 rounds. Reached London from Cambridge at 10.30. The Committee continued its sitting. Then went to Malaviyaji's. Then Jivraj, Bomanji and others came. Shah came at Bow.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 3, TUESDAY

Spun 161 rounds. MacDonald, Ali Imam; Irwin's portrait; to Malaviyaji's; children's gathering, Baldwin, Hoare, international students, Bomanji.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 4, WEDNESDAY

Spun 173 rounds. The Conference; Sir Daniel Hamilton; to Malaviyaji's, doctor's Turkish general.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 5, THURSDAY

Spun 220 rounds. The Emperor's party; met the members of the Postal Workers' Union; Sidney Walton.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 6, FRIDAY

Sun 172 rounds. Bernard Shaw and his wife called. Sir Darcy Lindsay called. Meeting with Sir John Maynard, Sapru and others; Letter to MacDonald; Jaiji came with me at night.

OXFORD, NOVEMBER 7, SATURDAY

Spun 208 rounds. Reached Oxford at 11 o'clock in the morning. Had talk with Malcolm MacDonald, Prof. Murray. Andrews arrived in the evening; at night had talk with Lord Lothian, Coupland was present.

OXFORD , NOVEMBER 8, SUNDAY

Spun 178 rounds. Discussions all day long. Corbett had come. Sarojini came in the evening. Commenced silence at 3.50 p.m.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 9, MONDAY

Spun 192 rounds. Came to London from Oxford. Wrote a number of letters. Purushottmdas's party; talk with Corbett; prayer and dinner at Rameshwardas's meeting at Friends' House,¹ Reynolds called on me.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 10, TUESDAY

Spun 203 rounds. Sapru and others came. Talked with them. Met Corbett and Mrs. Subbaroyan. London School of Economics, Holborn Restaurant.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 11, WEDNESDAY

Spun 169 rounds. Sir Mirza Ismail called in the morning. Then visited Lady Astor with Muriel. To Malaviyaji's at 2.30 . Thereafter went to Mr. Whitley's, then met Red Cross women at 8 o'clock.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 12, THURSDAY

Spun 183 rounds. Miss Molteno's relative , Dr. Stanley Reed; the Horrabin's committee at Malaviyaji's Letters to Hoarse, MacDonald.²

LONDON, NOVEMBER 13, FRIDAY

Spun 147 rounds. The Minority Committee, Smuts, the Aga Khan and others, Mrs. Benn and others, Smuts, Lansbury, the Westminster School, Birla, representative of the *News Chronicle*. Now It is midnight.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 14, SATURDAY

Spun 171 rounds. Called on Lord Irwin, then saw Benn and Less-Smith; then the Aga Khan and others. Dr. Moonje and others at night at Malaviyaji's . It is early today.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 15, SUNDAY

Spun 221 rounds. To Sastri's at 10 o'clock, then to Malaviyaji's then home. Slept a little today. Had talks with an Italian lady; in the evening went to Sir Samuel Hoare's residence; at night met Catto, Benthall and Carr at Birla's.

¹ This was organized by the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

² This letter actually bore the date November 14.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 16, MONDAY

Spun 166 rounds. The Committee. Lord Reading, Carr and Benthall.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 17, TUESDAY

Spun 178 rounds. The Committee, The Prime Minister, Smuts, Corbett, Lothian, Lady Astor, Benthall and others.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 18, WEDNESDAY

Spun 167 rounds. Rev. Hayes, Philip, the Committee, Women's meeting, Lloyd George for three and a half hours. Now it is 1 o'clock.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 19, THURSDAY

Spun 183 rounds. The Committee, Brockway, speech in the committee on racial discrimination and communal differences.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 20, FRIDAY

Spun 165 rounds. Foley and others called. Met Benthall and others in the evening. Thereafter Vegetarian Society meeting and the post office.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 21, SATURDAY

Spun 183 rounds. Met Findlater Stewart, Purushottamdas, Dinshaw Mulla, Pathak and others. Cable to Vallabhbai.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 22, SUNDAY

Spun 194 rounds. Meeting at Malaviyaji's; met Sen Gupta; slept for one and a half hours in the afternoon. Commenced silence at 3.15.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 23, MONDAY

Spun 207 rounds. Saw Dagenham's Kingsley Hall, met Corbett, Pola, Maud Cheeseman,

LONDON, NOVEMBER 24, TUESDAY

Spun 194 rounds. Met MacDonald, Sankey and Hoare in the morning. In the evening met Dr. Sapru and others. Also LeesSmith. Cable from Vallabhbai. Severe cold.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 25, WEDNESDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Made two speeches in the Committee. Mirza and Dr. Ambedkar came in the evening. Visited a Catholic church.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 26, THURSDAY

Spun 171 rounds. The Committee; Lord Irwin; went to Deepchand Zaveri's residence.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 27, FRIDAY

Spun 174 rounds. Andrews left for S. Africa. Met Samuel Hoare. Went to Bhandari's; then met Lansbury.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 28, SATURDAY

Spun 174 rounds. The Plenary Session. Hoare consulted me about a resolution to thank His Majesty the King-Emperor. I declined to be present. Cables to Vallabhbai and Satis Babu.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 29, SUNDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Met Sir Findlater Stewart. Less-Smith came at night.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 30, MONDAY

Spun 157 rounds. Made a day-long speech in the Committee. Reached home at 3 o'clock in the morning. Meeting at Horrabin's at 8.30.

LONDON, DECEMBER 1, TUESDAY

Spun 184 round. The Conference concluded. Had a talk with Sapru and others. Also with Cart and Benthall.

LONDON, DECEMBER 2, WEDNESDAY

Spun 166 rounds. Felt feverish today. Attended the Quakers' silent worship.

LONDON, DECEMBER 3, THURSDAY

Spun 174 rounds. Meeting at Horrabin's at night. In the afternoon met Lord Lothian, journalists. It is midnight now.

LONDON, DECEMBER 4, FRIDAY

Spun 175 rounds. Met MacDonlad and Hoare.

PARIS, DECEMBER 5, SATURDAY

Spun 151 rounds. Left London in the morning. Am accompanied by Evans, Rogers, Maud, Muriel, Shamrao. Reached Paris in the evening. A big crowd there. A reception by the Indians.

VILLENEUVE, DECEMBER 6, SUNDAY

Spun 167 rounds. Left Paris in the morning. Muriel stayed behind. Arrived at Villeneuve in the evening. Meeting with Rolland, with journalists.

VILLENEUVE, DECEMBER 7, MONDAY

Spun 185 rounds. From 10 to 12.30 with Rolland. Did not go for a walk in the morning because of the rain but had sound sleep. When the sun appeared in the afternoon, I went for a stroll. Wrote letters to Hoare in the evening. Cable from Vallabhbai; replied to it. Cable to Sir Jagdish Bose, to Ghose.

VILLENEUVE, DECEMBER 8, TUESDAY

Spun 170 rounds. Spent two and half hours in the morning with Rolland. Three meetings in the afternoon in Lausanne. Returned at midnight.

VILLENEUVE, DECEMBER 9, WEDNESDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Visited a poor woman's house and International Sanatorium; held prayers at Romain Rolland's house. Presented a shawl from Madame Cama to Madeleine Rolland.

VILLENEUVE, DECEMBER 10, THURSDAY

Spun 204 rounds. Meeting in Geneva, talks with Rolland, speech at a Chillon School, talk with Toma, talk with the Arabs.

ON WAY TO ROME, DECEMBER 11, FRIDAY

Spun 178 rounds. Talk with Rolland; Sir Cowasji met me. Left Villeneuve at 2.30. Girls from Indu's school called. Was provided a State car in Milan. Lrge crowds had gathered on the way.

ROME, DECEMBER 12, SATURDAY

Spun 204 rounds. Arrived at Rome at 8.30 in the morning. Received letter to the effect that the Pope could not receive me. Three of us stayed with General Moris, the others in a hotel. Went to see the Vatican in the afternoon. At 6 o'clock Mussolini. £ 20 to Maud.

ON WAY TO BRINDISI, DECEMBER 13, SUNDAY

Spun 180 rounds. Tolstoy's daughter came in the morning; school for young people, concessions to women, the forum, a gathering at Scarpa's, the Princess called the Amanullah's secretary. Left at 10.40 at night. The Privats are with me.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 14, MONDAY

Spun 137 rounds. Reached Brindisi in the morning. Evans, Rogers returned. s.s. *Pilsna* sailed at 12.30. The deck is no good, hence there will be some inconvenience. It is quite cold here. Vithalbhai is with me.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 15, TUESDAY

Spun 172 rounds. A little conversation with the captain.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 16, WEDNESDAY

Spun 184 rounds. Had a look over the ship accompanied by the captain. Talk with Sir Akbar.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 17, THURSDAY

Spun 190 rounds. Arrived at Port Said at 11'o clock. Sindhis and Egyptians came to fetch me. But as there was to be no halt at Suez, I could not go. The Sindhis presented me a purse of about Rs. 1,500.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 18, FRIDAY

Spun 162 rounds. Left Suez at 5.30. Justice Holland, Lalaka and others met me. Read the *bhajans* revised by Hoyland.¹

ON BORAD SHIP, DECEMBER 19, SATURDAY

Spun 170 rounds. Commenced writing with the right hand from today. Slept thrice during the day. Wrote letters. Read Hoyland's book, *The Cross Moves East*.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 20, SUNDAY

Spun 171 rounds. Today also slept a lot during the day. Read and wrote a little. Talked with Vithalbhai.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECMEBER 21, MONDAY

Spun 170 rounds. We are nearing Aden. Was able to slee a little less during the day today. Wrote an article² for *Indian News*. Wrote letters. Completed the one to Mussolini.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 22, TUESDAY

Spun 175 rounds. Arrived at Aden at 12.30 in the morning; went ashore; there was a meeting; visited Suraj's residence. Met the Resident Col. Riley. Returned to the ship at 4.30. Collected about Rs. 4,000. Today I have pain in the left side of the chest. The steamer weighed anchor at 5 o'clock.

¹ English rendering of hymns from the *Ashram Bhaajanvadi* made by Gandhiji during his detention in Yeravdaa Prision in the previous year; *vide* footnote 2, "Interview to Edmond Demeter", 5-12-1931

² "The Indian Army"; *vide* "The Indian Army", 21-12-1931

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 23, WEDNESDAY

Spun 171 rounds. Did not feel all right today. Ate only figs in the afternoon, took nothing in the evening. Slept well during the day. Completed an article¹ for *Young India*. A Bulgarian artist came to paint my portrait.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 24, THURSDAY

Spun 172 rounds. Talked with the German wife on an Italian journalist. Wrote down something for Mills. Talked with Mrs. Kabraji last night. Took castor oil at 2 o'clock in the morning. Had a good motion.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 25, FRIDAY

Spun 171 rounds, Am reading report of the House of Commons debate on the Prime Minister's speech at the Round Table Conference. Had a talk with Masani in the evening.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 26, SATURDAY

Spun 178 rounds. Talked with Sir Akbar Hydari, saw the Princes of Hyderabad. Talked with Vithalbai.

ON BOARD SHIP, DECEMBER 27, SUNDAY

Spun 182 rounds. Shafi Dawoodi called. Commenced silence at 12 o'clock. Had to speak to Mirabeau about her lack of generosity. Wrote down a message for Mills.

BOMBAY, DECEMBER 28, MONDAY

Spun 184 rounds. Arrived at Bombay in the morning. Great welcome, mammoth meeting, the Welfare League, etc.

BOMBAY, DECEMBER 29, TUESDAY

Spun 189 rounds. Talked with Subhasbabu, representatives of Andhra, Karnatak, etc. The Working Committee, telegram to the Viceroy letter to Sir Fazli.

BOMBAY, DECEMBER 30, WEDNESDAY

Spun 214 rounds. The Stree Seva Dal in Matunga, talked with Raghvir Singh, the Working Committee, the doctor examined me. Visited Sir Chinubhai and enquired about his health. Talked with Jamnadas, with Kaka, with Jayaprakash.

¹ "A Retrospect", vide "A Retrospect", 23-12-1931

BOMBAY, DECEMBER 31, THURSDAY

Spun 177 rounds. The Viceroy's telegram arrived. Sent a reply.¹ Completed drafting of a resolution at 1.30 a.m. in the night. Then spun. Now it is 2.45. Lalji Sheth, Modi called. Recited morning prayers today on the way, then went to visit the Sevikas. Held the evening prayer in the Lady Northcote Orphanage.

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 19337

200. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

[1931]²

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

Go on with your work there without worrying. Find a washerman there if possible. It will be good if all processes (of khadi) are as far as possible carried out there. I have talked to Ghanshyamdasji about the disposal of your khadi. Hence, instead of spending twice on railway freight, you may send it directly to Calcutta or wherever else he suggests. It would be better still if some types of garments could be got made by a tailor from that khadi. But all this may have to be carefully considered. Wherever you feel helpless, you may leave the subsequent processes on the manufactured khadi. After the rolls are ready I would be willing to lift even the unbleached stock. If you can you may try and introduce new spinning-wheels gradually. If you do not have enough self-confidence, do it after Krishnadas returns. Proceed slowly. Try and find customers for khadi there.

The matter regarding Gangabehn must have been settled by now.³

Blessings from
BAPU

Silence Day

I have your letter. What you write about the tannery is right. I have written to the Ashram about it.

From a copy of the Gujarati: Chhanganlal Gandhi Papers. Courtesy: Sabarmati Sangrahalaya

¹ *Vide* "Telegram to Private Secretary to Viceroy", 1-1-1932

² This and the following two letters have been placed in 1931, as in the sources. From the contents too it appears that they belong to this period.

³ The land on which the Vijapur Ashram stood, and which was in Gangabehn's name, was to be transferred to the Ashram Trust.

201. LETTER TO CHANDRAKANTA

Y. M.,
Silence Day [1931]

CHI. KANTA,

I have your letter. Keep writing to your parents. Give me news of Brother.

If God permitted everything to happen as we wished we would really lose our reason. We may have only one wish, to remain totally dedicated to service. It is only to keep ourselves mindful of this that we recite the verses on the qualities of a *sthitaprajna* during prayer. Bear this in mind.

Oh, Partha, when a man has shed all desires that prey upon the mind, and is content to abide in the Self alone, he is called *sthitaprajna*.¹

We want to reach that stage as soon as possible.

Inadvertently I have written this letter in the Gujarati script. Have it read out to you. Let me know if it causes inconvenience; so that I may be more careful. Do not worry if you cannot find time for learning Gujarati.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: Chandrakanta Papers. Courtesy: Gandhi National Museum and Library

202. LETTER TO CHANDRAKANTA

[1931]

CHI. KANTA,

I have your letter. I like it very much. I have no fears about you. But in taking you in I have accepted a great responsibility. You have raised great hopes in me about yourself. That is why I am constantly trying to make you vigilant. Had I no faith in you I would not have allowed you to go alone on the very first day, and would have hesitated even this time about your visiting the villages. Therefore, have no fear on that account. I have complete faith in you. I pray that faith may bear fruit. Continue to write courteously to your

¹*Bhagavad Gita*, II. 55

parents. What you have written is all right. Your firmness combined with courtesy will reassure them. Do not let your health suffer. The body will not have any trouble if you keep your mind cheerful. Never permit unnecessary thoughts to enter the mind. Think only about your work, and remain “calm and untroubled in the face of unhappiness” and “free from attachment in happiness”. You do, remember, don’t you, that we recite this verse every day? Also remember Mirabai’s *bhajan*: “I shall dance singing the glory of my Hari.” Service is the best song of praise to God. There was a letter from Brother. I have also written.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: Chandrakanta Papers. Courtesy: Gandhi National Museum and Library

203. RESOLUTION OF THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE¹

BOMBAY
[January 1, 1932]

The Working Committee has heard Mahatma Gandhi’s account of his visit to the West and considered the situation created by the extra-ordinay Ordinances promulgated in Bengal, the United Provinces and the Frontier Province and by the actions of the authorities including the numerous arrests made among those of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mr. Sherwani and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and by the the shootings in the Frontier Province of innocent men resulting in many deaths and many more being injured. The Working Committee has also seen the telegram from His Excellency the Viceroy in reply to the telegram sent by Mahatma Gandhi to him. The Working Committee is of opinion that these several acts and others of lesser gravity that have taken place in some other Provinces and the telegram from His Excellency seem to make further co-operation with the Government on the part of the Con-gress utterly impossible unless the Government policy is radically chang-ed. These acts and the telegram betray no intention of the part of bureau-cracy

¹ This was drafted by Gandhiji; *vide* “Talk with Welfare of India League Deputation”, 2-1-1932 and “Diary, 1931”, entry under December 31. The text of this was telegraphed to the Viceroy along with the following item.

to hand power to the people and are calculated to demoralize the nation. They also betray want of faith in the Congress from which co-operation is expected by the Government. The Working Committee yields to no one in its abhorrence of terrorism on any account whatsoever resorted to by individuals such as was recently witnessed in Bengal, but it condemns with equal force terrorism practised [by the Government] by its recent Acts and Ordinances. The Working Committee marks the deep national humiliation over the assassination committed by two girls in Comilla and is firmly convinced that such crime does great harm to the nation especially when through its greatest political mouth piece the Congress it is pledged to non-violence for achieving swaraj. But the Working Committee can see no justification whatsoever for the Bengal Ordinance which seeks to punish a whole people for the crime of a few. The real remedy lies in dealing with the known cause that prompts such crime. If Bengal Ordinance has no justification for its existence the Ordinances in the United Provinces and the Frontier Province have still less. The Working Committee is of opinion that the measures taken by the Congress in the United Provinces for obtaining agrarian relief are and can be shown to be justified. The Working Committee holds that it is the unquestionable right of all people suffering from grave economic distress, as the tenantry of the United Provinces is admittedly suffering, to withhold payment of taxes if they fail, as in the United Provinces they have failed, to obtain redress by other constitutional methods. In the arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Sherwani, the President of the United Provinces Congress Committee, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Working General Secretary of the Congress, who were proceeding to Bombay to confer with Mahatma Gandhi and to take part in the meeting of the Working Committee, the Government have gone even beyond the limits contemplated by their Ordinance in that there was no question whatsoever of these gentlemen taking part in Bombay in a non-tax campaign in the United Provinces. So far as the Frontier Province is concerned on the Government's own showing there appears to be no warrant for either the promulgation of the Ordinance or the arrest and imprisonment without trial of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his co-workers. The Working Committee regards the shootings in that Province of innocent and unarmed men to be wanton and inhuman and congratulates the brave men of the Frontier Province upon their courage and endurance, and the Working Committee has no doubt

that, if the brave people of the Frontier Province retain their non-violent spirit in spite of the gravest provocations, their blood and their sufferings would advance the cause of India's independence. The Working Committee calls upon the Government of India to institute a public and impartial enquiry into the events that have led up to the passing of these Ordinances, the necessity of superseding the ordinary courts of law and legislative machinery, and the necessity of several acts committed thereunder. And thereafter, if a proper enquiry is set up and all facilities are given to the Working Committee for the production of evidence, it will be prepared to assist the enquiry by leading evidence before it. The Working Committee has considered the declaration of the Prime Minister made before the Round Table Conference and the debates in the Houses of Parliament and regards the declaration as wholly unsatisfactory and inadequate in terms of the Congress demand and place on record its opinion that nothing short of Complete Independence, carrying full control over the Defence and External Affairs and Finance with such safeguards as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of the nation, can be regarded by the Congress as satisfactory. The Working Committee notes that the British Government was not prepared at the Round Table Conference to regard the Congress as representing and entitled to speak and act on behalf of the nation as a whole without distinction of caste, creed or colour. At the same time, the Committee recognizes with sorrow that communal harmony could not be attained at the said Conference. The Working Committee invites the nation, therefore, to make ceaseless effort to demonstrate the capacity of the Congress to represent the nation as a whole and promote an atmosphere that would make a Constitution framed on a purely national basis acceptable to the various communities composing the nation. Meanwhile, the Working Committee is prepared to tender co-operation to the Government provided His Excellency the Viceroy reconsiders his telegram and adequate relief is granted in respect of the Ordinances and its recent Acts, free scope is left to the Congress in any future negotiations and consultations to prosecute the Congress claim for Complete Independence, and the administration of the country is carried on in consultation with popular representatives pending the attainment of such independence. The absence of any satisfactory response from the Government in terms of the foregoing paragraph the Working Committee will regard as an indication on the part of the Government that it has reduced to nullity the Delhi Pact. In

the event of a satisfactory response not forthcoming, the Working Committee calls upon the nation to resume civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes under the following conditions and illustrative heads: (1) No Province or district or tahsil or village is bound to take up civil disobedience unless the people thereof understand the non-violent nature of the struggle with all its implications and are ready to undergo sufferings involving loss of life and property. (2) Non-violence must be observed in thought, word and deed in the face of the gravest provocation, it being understood that the campaign is not one of seeking revenge or inflicting injuries on the oppressor, but it is one of converting him through self-suffering and self-purification. (3) Social boycott with the intention of inflicting injury on Government officers, police or anti-nationalists should not be undertaken and is wholly inconsistent with the spirit of non-violence. (4) It should be borne in mind that non-violent campaigns are independent of pecuniary assistance; therefore, there should be no hired volunteers, but their bare maintenance and maintenance of the dependents of poor men and women who might have been imprisoned or killed is permissible wherever it is possible. The Working Committee, however, expects workers in the cause to continue the struggle even though they might have to suffer privations. (5) Boycott of all foreign cloth whether British or of other countries is obligatory under all circumstances. (6) All Congressmen and women are expected to use hand-spun and handwoven khaddar to the exclusion of even cloth manufactured in indigenous mills. (7) Picketing of liquor shops and foreign-cloth shops should be vigorously conducted chiefly by women but always so as to ensure perfect non-violence. (8) Unlicensed manufacture and collection of salt should be resumed. (9) If processions and demonstrations are organized, only those should join them who will stand lathi charges or bullets without moving from their respective places. (10) Even in non-violent war boycott of goods manufactured by the oppressor is perfectly lawful inasmuch as it is never the duty of the victim to promote or retian commercial relations with the oppressor. Therefore, boycott of British goods and concerns should be resumed and vigorously prosecuted. (11) Civil breach of non-moral laws and of laws and orders injurious to the people wherever it is considered possible and advisable may be practised. (12) All unjust orders issued under the Ordinances may be civilly disobeyed.

India in 1931-32, pp. 235-7.

204. TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY
TO VICEROY

BOMBAY,
January 1, 1932

I THANK HIS EXCELLENCY FOR THE WIRE
IN REPLY TO MINE OF 29TH INSTANT. IT
GRIEVES ME. FOR HIS EXCELLENCY HAS REJECTED
IN A MANNER HARDLY BEFITTING HIS HIGH
POSITION AN ADVANCE MADE IN THE FRIENDLIEST
SPIRIT. I HAD APPROACHED AS SEEKER
WANTING LIGHT ON QUESTIONS IN WHICH I
DESIRED TO UNDERSTAND GOVERNMENT VERSION OF
VERY SERIOUS AND EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES TO
WHICH I MADE REFERENCE. INSTEAD OF APPRECIATING MY
ADVANCE HIS EXCELLENCY HAS REJECTED IT BY
ASKING ME TO REPUDIATE MY VALUED
COLLEAGUES IN ADVANCE AND TELLING ME
THAT EVEN IF I BECAME GUILTY OF SUCH DIS-
HONOURABLE CONDUCT AND SOUGHT AN INTERVIEW
I COULD NOT EVEN DISCUSS THESE MATTERS OF
VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE NATION. IN MY OPINION,
CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE DWINDLES INTO INSIGNIFICANCE
IN FACE OF ORDINANCES AND ACTS WHICH MUST,
IF NOT MET WITH STUBBORN RESISTANCE, RESULT IN
UTTER DEMORALIZATION OF NATION. I HOPE NO
SELF-RESPECTING INDIAN WILL RUN RISK OF KILLING
NATIONAL SPIRIT FOR A DOUBTFUL CONTINGENCY OF
SECURING A CONSTITUTION TO WORK WHICH NO
NATION WITH STAMINA MAY BE LEFT. LET ME
ALSO POINT OUT THAT AS TO THE FRONTIER
PROVINCE YOUR TELEGRAM CONTAINS A NARRATION OF
FACTS WHICH, ON FACE OF THEM, FURNISH NO
WARRANT FOR ARRESTS OF POPULAR LEADERS, PASSING
OF EXTRA-LEGAL ORDINANCE, MAKING LIFE AND PROPERLY
UTTERLY INSECURE AND SHOOTING UNARMED PEACEFUL
CROWDS FOR DARING TO DEMONSTRATE AGAINST
ARRESTS OF THEIR TRUSTED LEADERS. IF KHAN
SAHEB ABDUL GHAFFAR ASSERTED THE RIGHT OF

COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE IT WAS A NATURAL CLAIM AND A CLAIM MADE WITH IMPUNITY BY THE CONGRESS AT LAHORE IN 1929 AND BY ME WITH ENERGY PUT BEFORE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN LONDON. MOREOVER, LET ME REMIND THE VICEROY THAT DESPITE THE KNOWLEDGE ON GOVERNMENT'S PART THAT CONGRESS MANDATE CONTAINED SUCH CLAIM, I WAS INVITED TO ATTEND LONDON CONFERENCE AS CONGRESS DELEGATE. NOR AM I ABLE TO DETECT IN A MERE REFUSAL TO ATTEND DURBAR AN OFFENCE WARRANTING SUMMARY IMPRISONMENT. IF KHAN SAHEB WAS FOMENTING RACIAL HATRED IT WAS UNDOUBTEDLY REGRETTABLE. I HAVE HIS OWN DECLARATIONS TO THE CONTRARY MADE TO ME. BUT ASSUMING THAT HE DID FOR MENT RACIAL HATRED, HE WAS ENTITLED TO OPEN TRIAL, WHERE HE COULD HAVE DEFENDED HIMSELF AGAINST ACCUSATION. REGARDING THE UNITED PROVINCES, HIS EXCELLENCY IS SURELY MISINFORMED, BECAUSE THERE WAS NO NO-RENT CAMPAIGN AUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS, BUT WHILST NEGOTIATIONS WERE PROCEEDING BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND CONGRESS REPRESENTATIVES THE TIME FOR COLLECTION OF RENTS ACTUALLY ARRIVED AND RENTS BEGAN TO BE DEMANDED. CONGRESSMEN WERE THEREFORE OBLIGED TO ADVISE TENANTS TO SUSPEND PAYMENT. PENDING THE RESULT OF NEGOTIATIONS AND MR. SHERWANI HAD OFFERED ON BEHALF OF THE CONGRESS TO WITHDRAW THIS ADVICE IF THE AUTHORITIES SUSPENDED COLLECITONS PENDING NEGOTIATIONS. I VENTURE TO SUGGEST THAT THIS IS NOT A MATTER WHICH CAN BE SO SUMMARILY DISMISSED AS YOUR WIRE HAS DONE. CONTROVERSY IN THE UNITED PROVINCES IS OF A LONG STANDING AND INVOLVES WELL-BEING OF MILLIONS OF PEASANTRY KNOWN TO BE ECONOMICALLY GROUND DOWN. ANY GOVERNMENT JEALOUS OF THE WELFARE OF THE MASSES IN ITS CHARGE WOULD WELCOME VOLUNTARY CO-OPERATIONS OF A BODY LIKE THE CONGRESS WHICH ADMITTEDLY EXERCISES GREAT INFLUENCE OVER THE MASSES AND WHOSE ONE AMBITION IS TO SERVE THEM FAITHULLY.

AND LET ME ADD THAT I REGARD THE WITHHOLDING OF PAYMENT OF TAXES AS AN INALIENABLE ANCIENT AND NATURAL RIGHT OF A PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXHAUSTED ALL OTHER MEANS OF SEEING FREEDOM FROM AN UNBEARABLE ECONOMIC BURDEN. I MUST REPUDIATE SUGGESTION THAT THE CONGRESS HAS SLIGHTEST DESIRE TO PROMOTE DISORDER IN ANY SHAPE OR FORM. AS TO BENGAL, THE CONGRESS IS AT ONE WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN CONDEMNING ASSASSINATIONS AND SHOULD HEARTILY CO-OPERATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN MEASURES THAT MAY BE FOUND NECESSARY TO STAMP OUT SUCH CRIMES. BUT WHILST THE CONGRESS WOULD CONDEMN IN UNMEASURED TERMS THE METHODS OF TERRORISM IT CAN IN NO WAY ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH GOVERNMENT TERRORISM AS IS BETRAYED BY THE BENGAL ORDINANCE AND ACTS DONE THEREUNDER, BUT MUST RESIST WITHIN THE LIMITS OF ITS PRESCRIBED CREED OF NON-VIOLENCE SUCH MEASURE OF LEGALIZED GOVERNMENT TERRORISM. I HEARTILY ASSENT TO THE PROPOSITION LAID DOWN IN YOUR TELEGRAM THAT CO-OPERATION MUST BE MUTUAL BUT YOUR TELEGRAM LEADS ME IRRESISTIBLY TO THE CONCLUSION THAT HIS EXCELLENCY DEMANDS CO-OPERATION FROM THE CONGRESS WITHOUT RETURNING ANY ON BEHALF OF GOVERNMENT. I CAN READ IN NO OTHER WAY HIS PEREMPTORY REUSAL TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WHICH, AS I HAVE ENDEAVOURED TO SHOW, HAVE AT LEAST TWO SIDES, POPULAR SIDE I HAVE PUT AS I UNDERSTAND IT, BUT BEFORE COMMITTING MYSELF TO DEFINITE JUDGMENT, I WAS ANXIOUS TO UNDERSTAND THE OTHER SIDE, THAT IS, THE GOVERNMENT SIDE, AND THEN TENDER MY ADVICE TO THE CONGRESS. WITH PREFERENCE TO THE LAST PARAGRAPH OF YOUR TELEGRAM I MAY NOT REPUDIATE MORAL LIABILITY FOR THE ACTIONS OF MY COLLEAGUES, WHETHER IN THE FRONTER PROVINCE OR IN THE UNITED PROVINCES, BUT I CONFESS THAT I WAS IGNORANT OF THE DETAILED ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF MY COLLEAGUES WHILST IT WAS

ABSENT FROM INDIA, AND IT WAS BECAUSE IT WAS NECESSARY FOR ME TO ADVISE AND GUIDE THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS AND IN ORDER TO COMPLETE MY KNOWLEDGE, I SOUGHT WITH AN OPEN MIND AND WITH THE BEST OF INTENTIONS AN INTERVIEW WITH HIS EXCELLENCY AND DELIBERATELY ASKED FOR HIS GUIDANCE. I CANNOT CONCEAL FROM HIS EXCELLENCY MY OPINION THAT THE REPLY HE HAS CONDESCENDED TO SEND WAS HARDLY A RETURN FOR MY FRIENDLY AND WELL-MEANT APPROACH, AND IF IT IS NOT YET TOO LATE, I WOULD ASK HIS EXCELLENCY TO RECONSIDER HIS DECISION AND SEE ME AS A FRIEND WITHOUT IMPOSING ANY CONDITIONS WHATSOEVER AS TO THE SCOPE OR SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION, AND I, ON MY PART, CAN PROMISE THAT I WOULD STUDY WITH AN OPEN MIND ALL THE FACTS THAT HE MIGHT PUT BEFORE ME. I WOULD UNHESITATINGLY AND WILLINGLY GO TO THE RESPECTIVE PROVINCES AND WITH THE AID OF THE AUTHORITIES STUDY BOTH SIDES OF THE QUESTION AND IF I CAME TO THE CONCLUSION AFTER SUCH A STUDY THAT THE PEOPLE WERE IN THE WRONG AND THAT THE WORKING COMMITTEE INCLUDING MYSELF WERE MISLED AS TO THE CORRECT POSITION, AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS RIGHT, I SHOULD HAVE NO HESITATION WHATSOEVER IN MAKING THAT OPEN CONFESSION AND GUIDING THE CONGRESS ACCORDINGLY. ALONG WITH MY DESIRE AND WILLINGNESS TO CO-OPERATE WITH GOVERNMENT I MUST PLACE MY LIMITATIONS BEFORE HIS EXCELLENCY. NON-VIOLENCE IS MY ABSOLUTE CREED. I BELIEVE THAT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IS NOT ONLY THE NATURAL RIGHT OF PEOPLE ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY HAVE NO EFFECTIVE VOICE IN THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT, BUT THAT IT ALSO IS AN EFFECTIVE SUBSTITUTE FOR VIOLENCE OR ARMED REBELLION. I CAN NEVER, THEREFORE, DENY MY CREED. IN PURSUANCE THEREOF AND ON THE STRENGTH OF UNCONTRADICTED REPORTS SUPPORTED BY RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO THE

EFFECT THAT THERE MAY BE NO OTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR ME TO GUIDE THE PUBLIC, THE WORKING COMMITTEE HAS ACCEPTED MY ADVICE AND PASSED A RESOLUTION TENTATIVELY SKETCHING A PLAN OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE. I AM SENDING HERewith TEXT OF RESOLUTION. IF HIS EXCELLENCY THINKS IT WORTH WHILE TO SEE ME PENDING OUR DISCUSSION OPERATION OF THE RESOLUTION WILL BE SUSPENDED IN HOPE IT MAY RESULT IN THE RESOLUTION BEING FINALLY GIVEN UP. I ADMIT THAT CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN HIS EXCELLENCY AND MYSELF IS OF SUCH GRAVE IMPORTANCE AS NOT TO BROOK DELAY IN PUBLICATION. I AM THEREFORE SENDING MY TELEGRAM YOUR REPLY, THIS REJOINDER AND THE WORKING COMMITTEE'S RESOLUTION FOR PUBLICATION.¹

India in 1931-32; also Young India, 7-1-1932

205. NOTE INTRODUCING EDMOND PRIVAT AND MADAME PRIVAT

January 1, 1932

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

Mons. Privat and Madame Privat are friends of India living in Switzerland. They have purposely come to India to study the country and the modern movement. I expect all Congressmen who may come in contact with them to assist them and render to them whatever service it is possible to render to them.²

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 8791

¹ For the reply from the Private Secretary of the Viceroy, *vide* "Telegram from Private Secretary to Viceroy", 2-1-1932

² In the source, this is followed by a Hindi version.

206. TELEGRAM TO PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI

BOMBAY,

January 2, 1932

SIR PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI

BHAVNAGAR

PROBABLY LEAVING TOMORROW NIGHT FOR AHMEDABAD
PERHAPS BETTER YOU COME AHMEDABAD.

GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 5922

207. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

[January 2, 1932]¹

MY DEAR JAWAHAR,

I was delighted to receive your letter. You have no cause to envy us poor folk outside. But we do envy you for getting all the glory and leaving the drudgery to the outsiders. But we are plotting vengeance. I hope you are allowed to get some newspapers. In all I am doing you are constantly before my mind's eye.

I saw Kamala the other day. She does need plenty of rest. I shall try to see her once more and insist upon her not leaving her room till she is thoroughly restored. I hope you will approve of the action taken regarding Dr. Mahmud². I am sure that the promise to pay the assessment on Anand Bhawan should be paid [*sic*].

Love to you both.

BAPU

[PS.]

God and Government willing, I go to the Ashram tomorrow to return in two or three days.

A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 104

¹ The source has the date January 29, which is obviously an error. The original at the Nehru Memorial Museum bears the date January 2.

² Dr. Syed Mahmud

208. LETTER TO M. R. JAYAKAR

BOMBAY,
January 2, 1932

DEAR MR. JAYAKAR,

I was grieved to find from your wire that you were suffering from insomnia. Why not take longer rest and get rid of the disease altogether? In your present state I am not going to worry you with my troubles.

Yours sincerely,

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

209. LETTER TO TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU

BOMBAY,
January 2, 1932

DEAR DR. SAPRU,

Many thanks for your wire. I hope you do not still think that I can see the Viceroy, if he makes no response to my

wire.¹ I would like you to study the correspondence² published in the papers. My conscience is quite clear. The Government here simply do not want to see me unless I approach them with straw in the mouth.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Gandhi-Sapru Correspondence; also G. N. 7590

¹ Of January 1, 1932; *vide* "Telegram to Private Secretary to Viceroy", 1-1-1932

² With the Viceroy, from December 29, 1931 to January 3, 1932; *Ibid.*

210. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

January 2, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I get your letters of course, but, on my side, how can I find time to write to you? It is about 11.30 p.m. now. It is likely that I may be arrested tonight; even so I have sat down to write this letter. What advice shall I give you? I have the fullest confidence in you. God will give you the strength to meet any eventuality. Mirabehn will go there after I am arrested. You will have to guide her. If a request for her is received from any quarter, it will be for you to decide. Prabhavati, too, is likely to arrive there in a few days. Tell Lakshmi that I got her letter. I like her decision.

Convey my respects to Mother and Father. How happy I should be to see them! I remember to have told you to give away to the Vidyapith all the books in the Ashram, except those which may be useful in the school. Kaka told me that your impression was different. However that may be, I think it will be wise to give away the books to the Vidyapith.

I believe the journals and magazines will also be better used and preserved there.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8198. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi.

211. TALK WITH WELFARE OF INDIA LEAGUE DEPUTATION ¹

[BOMBAY,]

January 2, 1932

My telegram² was in studiously courteous language and in the friendliest tone. My friends objected to the word 'guidance', but I pleaded with them and got them to agree. You will see that the Viceroy has placed himself completely in the wrong. And arguing

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's article: "The Historic Week"

² Vide "Telegram to Viceroy", 29-12-1931

about the Ordinances was the wrong way of going about the thing. He forgot that I had not approached him as an ordinary citizen, but one who had constant dealings with him and one with whom he had to discuss the future plans as to how best to help in the R.T.C. work. It is irrelevant for him to say that I could not discuss the Ordinances. The second condition is insulting, viz., that I must repudiate my colleagues. The fact is that Government has overreached itself. It is not Lord Willingdon's language. It has been drafted for him. It is a terrible affair that Government of India should act in this light-hearted fashion though they know that any error may lead to a terrible situation arising in this country. If you are convinced that Government of India have committed a grave error in repelling my advances and in banging the door on my face, then you should move heaven and earth to compel the Government of India to reconsider their decision and see me as a friend without putting any conditions. But why should I have got the Working Committee to pass a tentative resolution, you will ask. Is it not that you want to go with a loaded pistol? No, because the Government of India knew that the Congress was an institution with civil disobedience for its creed. The Congress had done enough to lead the country and Government to believe that in connection with a movement for redress of wrongs the Congress would not advise an armed rebellion but a non-violent disobedience. Evidently they overlook the fact that civil disobedience had become a permissible thing. In the Delhi Pact, civil disobedience was not given up, it was only discontinued during the Truce. In Simla, when our final letters were exchanged—letters which were published as part of the second Settlement—I said in my letter that, if all steps fail, we reserve to ourselves the right of civil disobedience. Government's reply finally banging the door is thus a direct breach of the Delhi Pact and of the Simla Pact to which Lord Willingdon was party. You have thus got to see the enormity of the error in which the Government of India have been betrayed. I therefore suggest to you that you follow your telegram by further action and go over to the side of the Congress if a simple thing like an interview cannot be granted.

It grieves me to find the suggestion being made that I was overborne by my extremist colleagues. I am the arch-extremist. I have not found colleagues who have given more loyal allegiance than has been given me during the last four days. There has been no goading on the part of my colleagues, and all resolutions and telegrams have

been drafted by me. They have accepted me as an expert in these matters and left the whole field open to me. We discussed for a long time and the sense was that we may pass the tentative resolution, but not publish it. It was I who said "No". If I suppressed it, I would be unfair to the Viceroy and the nation. Having passed the resolution, I said the Viceroy must be placed in possession of the full facts. They agreed. My colleagues are not wedded to civil disobedience nor to non-violence in the sense that I am. It is not a be-all and end-all with them as with me. But there was no course open to me. A man to whom it is open to declare an armed rebellion may parley, but a man who has no such alternative—how can he parley? That is what has happened, for civil disobedience is my creed, how can I give it up? That is why, though I am miserly in expending national money, I paid for the full text of the resolution being telegraphed along with my reply.

The way to follow out your telegram is not to send me to the Viceroy but to see the Viceroy yourselves. All you have got to tell him is that when you are about to embark on a big constitutional advance it should be absurd for the head of a State to refuse to see a public man.¹

Young India, 7-1-1932

212. MESSAGE TO KAIRA FARMERS²

AHMEDABAD,

[Before *January 3, 1932*]

I had a great longing to peep into Gujarat to see the Ashramites and other companions and to console and sympathize with you in your difficulties, but I am afraid that this will not be possible.

A satyagrahi cannot even dream of a family or friend nor could he afford to wait to see them or bid farewell when the jail or the like invites him. I believe such is my present condition. If, therefore, it is not possible to see you, believe me it was due to the imperative demand of duty. It seems war stares us in the face, and it would be more grim this time.

¹ The Deputation after hearing Gandhiji authorized their president to send another telegram assuring the Viceroy that Gandhiji had an entirely open mind and that it was all the more necessary that he should have an opportunity of fully discussing the situation with His Excellency.

² According to the source the message was in Gujarati.

Exhorting them to bear the brunt of the fight and not to flinch, Gandhiji asks them to cheerfully sacrifice their lands, goods and cattle and to suffer all sorts of privations and to bear all oppressions, including lathi and bullets. But while enduring all these, Gandhiji appeals to them not to be excited in the least and to pity their persecutor and wish him well.

Quoting the famous Gujarati poet, Kavi Shamal Bhatt, that “he who returns good for evil has only truly lived”, Gandhiji goes on:

You have drunk at this fountain of love, and perceived the experiences of others. You must therefore see that you do not offend even the farmer who does not stand by you or who is hostile to you. Pity him too, for it is not his fault that he does not see eye to eye with you in matters of duty.

Gandhi says that they conferred upon Mr. Vallabhbhai the title of Sardar and continues:

In your hands lies his honour and his strength. Not only this, but the reputation and honour of the whole of India lies in your hands. On the resumption of the struggle, the eyes of India and of the whole world are concentrated upon you. Remember all these, and pray for strength befitting a satyagrahi.

Asking the peasants to live harmoniously with their Dharala brethren, Gandhiji concludes:

Remember this, and console yourself. Rest assured that all your confiscated lands will be restored to you. This is not a bait. Believe every word of it, when I say that this only is the true foundation of a satyagrahi.

The Hindu, 4-1-1932

213. TEMPLE-ENTRY SATYAGRAHA

[On or before *January 3, 1932*]¹

Whilst the Working Committee was in session during the last week I had several conversations with representatives from Kerala and other Congress workers about many questions arising in connection with Temple-entry Satyagraha. Instead of correcting the report produced by the interviewers in the form of questions and answers. I

¹ According to the source this article was dictated by Gandhiji under very heavy pressure of work in hourly expectation of arrest and handed over for publication just before his arrest on January 4.

am giving below what I think should be the answer to their questions. The answers will be found so framed as to render unnecessary the questions being stated.

1. It is necessary to bear in mind that the question of removal of untouchability, though it has a political significance of the greatest importance, is essentially and predominantly a religious question to be solved by the Hindus and as such for them it overshadows even the political aspect. That is to say, the duty of touchables in respect of removal of untouchability can never be subordinated to any political exigencies, hence the present political situation must not in any way be allowed to postpone the endeavour to end untouchability.

2. In a religious and righteous cause the reformer has to face all consequences and even take the risk of temporary alienation of the sym-pathy of privileged classes. Those, therefore, who believe untouchability is a curse to be removed at all costs will not abate their effort for fear of finding themselves in a hopeless minority.

3. If the present *pujaris*¹ of temples strike work and refuse to perform the ceremonial required, they should be replaced promptly and, if the particular caste which has supplied the *pujaris* fail to furnish a substitute, I would not hesitate to find the priest from any other caste so long as he has the requisite qualifications and conviction. The fact is that, so far as I am aware, the majority of the existing *pujaris* are too dependent on this service for their maintenance to continue the strike for any length of time. That the right of performing *puja* is hereditary does not affect my opinion because, if the possessor himself of such a right, for any cause whatsoever, refuses to exercise the right, he has only himself to thank.

4. If temple authorities offer to set apart a corner for untouchables, it should not be considered as sufficient. No restriction against untouchables which is not applicable to other non-Brahmin Hindus can be tolerated. But a distant corner may be set apart for those who do not want to mix with the untouchables. These people then become untouchables by choice.

5. We may not force open barricades. That would be a species of violence and it will not do that barricades are inanimate things, for the hands that put up the barricades were animate.

¹ Priests

6. From the foregoing it will be clear that belief in temples should be a condition precedent to offering satyagraha regarding temple-entry. Temple-entry is a religious right. Entry, therefore, by any other person cannot be called satyagraha. At the time of Vaikom Satyagraha, when Mr. George Joseph went to jail, I sent him word that he was wrong.¹ He agreed with me, promptly apologized, and came out of jail. Temple-entry satyagraha is a penance on the part of the touchable Hindu. He is the sinner and he has, therefore, to do the penance by inviting punishment on himself for endeavouring to take these untouchable co-religionists with him to the temple. Therefore, non-Hindus can only offer help other than satyagraha. For instance, whilst the other communities helped the Sikhs at the time of Gurudwara movement in various ways, satyagraha was and could be offered only by the Sikhs who believed in the *akhanda path*.²

In my opinion, untouchables should not alone offer satyagraha. It should be led by touchable reformers. This is a matter of expedience. There may come a time when untouchables may offer satyagraha by them-selves. The idea behind the opinion here expressed is that public opinion amongst touchable Hindus should be sufficiently alive and active before satyagraha is taken up at all. It is a weapon whose use depends for success upon the gathering of public opinion. Therefore, its use is invariably preceded by all the known orthodox remedies.

7. There can be no entry demanded in temples on private *bona-fide* property. When a man allows free use to the public of a temple erected on a private property, but bars the entry of untouchables alone, it ceases to be a private temple.

8. It has been suggested that temple-entry through satyagraha should be postponed altogether and effected by legislative enactment. I wholly dissent from the view. Legislative enactment as a rule, and certainly always under democracy, follows the formation of public opinion, and for the formation of public opinion. I know no swifter remedy than real satyagraha properly handled. The question as to when time is ripe for offering satyagraha in a particular place is one primarily for local Congress Committees to decide.

9. Those who contend that non-Hindus can vote on questions

¹ Vide "Letter to George Joseph", 6-4-1924

² Non-stop reading of the *Granth Saheb*

arising out of untouchability I would refer to the first resolution, since the new constitution passed at Nagpur in 1920. There it is clearly stated that the question of removal of untouchability is one specially and exclusively reserved for Hindus. Therefore, a convention has grown up that Non-Hindus should not interfere by their votes or otherwise with this religious question.

Young India, 14-1-1932

214. TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY

BOMBAY,

January 3, 1932

THANKS YOUR WIRE EVEN DATE.¹ I CANNOT HELP EXPRESSING DEEP REGRET FOR DECISION OF HIS EXCELLENCY AND HIS GOVERNMENT. SURELY IT IS WRONG TO DESCRIBE HONEST EXPRESSION OF OPINION AS THREAT. MAY I REMIND GOVERNMENT THAT DELHI NEGOTIATIONS WERE OPENED AND CARRIED ON WHILST CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE WAS ON AND THAT WHEN PACT WAS MADE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE WAS NOT GIVEN UP BUT ONLY DISCONTINUED. THIS POSITION WAS REASSERTED AND ACCEPTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY AND HIS GOVERNMENT IN SIMLA IN SEPTEMBER LAST PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE FOR LONDON. ALTHOUGH I HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES CONGRESS MIGHT HAVE TO RESUME CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE GOVERNMENT DID NOT BREAK OFF NEGOTIATIONS. THAT IT WAS MADE CLEAR BY GOVERNMENT THAT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE CARRIED WITH IT PENALTY FOR DISOBEDIENCE MERELY PROVES WHAT CIVIL RESISTERS BARGAIN FOR BUT DOES NOT IN ANY WAY AFFECT MY ARGUMENT, HAD GOVERNMENT RESENTED ATTITUDE IT WAS OPEN TO THEM NOT TO SEND ME TO LONDON. ON THE CONTRARY MY DEPARTURE HAD HIS EXCELLENCY'S BLESSINGS. NOR IS IT FAIR OR CORRECT TO SUGGEST THAT I HAVE EVER ADVANCED THE CLAIM THAT ANY POLICY OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE DEPENDENT ON MY JUDGMENT. BUT I DO SUBMIT THAT

¹ Evidently Gandhiji started drafting this telegram on January 2.

ANY POPULAR AND CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT WOULD ALWAYS WELCOME AND SYMPATHETICALLY CONSIDER SUGGESTIONS MADE BY PUBLIC BODIES AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES AND ASSIST THEM WITH ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR ACTS OR ORDINANCES OF WHICH PUBLIC OPINION MAY DISAPPROVE. I CLAIM THAT MY MESSAGES HAVE NO OTHER MEANING THAN WHAT IS SUGGESTED IN LAST PARAGRAPH. TIME ALONE WILL SHOW WHOSE POSITION WAS JUSTIFIED. MEANWHILE I WISH TO ASSURE GOVERNMENT THAT EVERY ENDEAVOUR WILL BE MADE ON PART OF CONGRESS TO CARRY ON STRUGGLE WITHOUT MALICE AND IN STRICTLY NON-VIOLENT MANNER. IT WAS HARDLY NECESSARY TO REMIND ME THAT CONGRESS AND I, ITS HUMBLE REPRESENTATIVE, ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ACTIONS.

India in 1931-32; also Young India, 7-1-1932

215. CABLE TO J. F. HORRABIN

[January 3, 1932]

DEEPLY GRATEFUL YOUR CABLE. SENT FULL CABLE ADDRESSED TOM WILLIAMS. RECEIVED MIDNIGHT [REPLY] FROM GOVERNMENT FINALLY CLOSING THE DOOR UPON THE REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW AND ALL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE GROUND THAT CONGRESS HAD DARED TO THREATEN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE ON FAILURE TO SECURE RELIEF. THE VICEROY'S REPLY FURTHER ACCUSES ME OF WANTING TO IMPOSE CONDITIONS UNDER THE MENACE OF UNLAWFUL ACTION. IN THE SURROUNDING ATMOSPHERE I DETECT NO TRACE OF DESIRE FOR AN HONOURABLE AND EQUAL CO-OPERATION. VICEROY HAS FORGOTTEN THAT IN THE DELHI TRUCE THE RIGHT OF CITIZEN TO CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE WAS TACITLY RECOGNIZED; FOR CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE WAS CONTINUING WHILST THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE PENDING, AND IT WAS DISCONTINUED ONLY DURING TRUCE, AGAIN AT SIMLA THE PRESENT VICEROY ALLOWED UNCHALLENGED MY STATEMENT THAT CONGRESS RESERVED THE RIGHT TO OFFER CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IF OTHER METHODS OF GETTING REDRESS FAILED, NO DOUBT SUBJECT TO PENALTY FOR DISOBEDIENCE, WHICH IS INHERENT IN THE METHOD OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, BUT BECAUSE CIVIL

DISOBEDIENCE WAS CONTEMPLATED UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES VICEROY NOT ONLY DID NOT BREAK OFF NEGOTIATIONS, BUT COMPLETED THEM AND SENT ME TO LONDON WITH HIS BLESSINGS. THE PRESENT ATTITUDE, THEREFORE, IS A CLEAR DEPARTURE FROM THE ATTITUDE IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE CONFERENCE. THE FACT IS THAT GOVERNMENT CANNOT TOLERATE THE RISING POWER OF CONGRESS, AND THE CONSEQUENT RISE OF THE PEOPLE'S SPIRIT. THE INTOLERANCE OF DISSENTING PUBLIC OPINION AND ITS GROWING INSISTENCE CONTINUES UNABATED. I AM CONVINCED THAT IN SUCH AN ATMOSPHERE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FREE CONSTITUTION LEADING TO INDEPENDENCE IS UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE. THE SUPPRESSION OF CONGRESS ORGANIZATION AND THE ARRESTS OF LEADERS SEEM IMMINENT. NEVERTHELESS, SO FAR AS I CAN JUDGE, VAST MASSES OF PEOPLE WILL NOT BE DISSPIRITED, WILL OFFER STUBBORN RESISTANCE TO AUTHORITY, AND YET IN THE MIDST OF GOVERNMENT PROVOCATION, WILL OBSERVE STRICT NON-VIOLENCE. IN SPITE OF TERRIBLE HANDICAP, I HOPE TO SUPPLY YOU WITH REGULAR "BULLETIN" BY WIRE, IF THE AUTHORITIES DON'T PROHIBIT DESPATCH OF SIMPLE VERSION OF FACTS. PLEASE ALWAYS SHARE NEWS WITH MR. ALEXANDER AND OTHER FRIENDS.

GANDHI

The Bombay Chronicle, 4-1-1932

216. CABLE TO LORD IRWIN.

BOMBAY,
January 3, 1932

PRAY BELIEVE ME I HAVE TRIED MY BEST, BUT HAVE FAILED NEVERTHELESS, I DON'T LOSE HOPE, AND GOD WILLING, SHALL RETAIN THE SPIRIT WHICH YOU BELIEVED ACTUATED ME DURING THAT SACRED WEEK IN DELHI. I SHALL NOT BELIEVE YOUR CERTIFICATE.

The Bombay Chronicle, 5-1-1932

217. LETTER TO DR. SCARPA

BOMBAY

January 3, 1932

DEAR DR. SCARPA¹,

Just a line, whilst I am yet free to thank you for your kindness during my all too brief stay in beautiful and historic Rome. I wish I had two months instead of only two days. Please tell the Triestino Agent with my thanks that the Commander and the officers of s. s. *Pilsna* made me and my party thoroughly comfortable.

Yours sincerely,

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

218. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA²

January 3, 1932

It is a matter for deep regret to me to have received this telegram from H.E. the Viceroy and the Government. I cannot help saying that it has heaped error upon error, instead of courageously acknowledging the first error, in practically banging the door in my face by imposing for the coveted interview conditions which no self-respecting man can possibly accept and reopen the door. The telegram has added another error by deliberately and finally shutting the door, by telling me that he cannot see me under threat of resumption of civil disobedience and introducing in the telegram argument that is not germane to my repeated request for an interview. The Viceroy and his Government have committed a flagrant breach of the Delhi Pact by using the so-called threat of resumption of civil disobedience as an excuse for refusing to see me. Surely he must know that the negotiations which resulted in the Settlement were being carried on although civil disobedience was still on, and under the Settlement it was never finally given you, but was only discontinued for the purpose of securing representation of the Congress at the

¹ Minister for external affairs of Italy, at whose invitation Ghandhiji had visited Rome for two days in December 1931

² The message was dictated to the A.P.I. reporter on telephone at about 2 a.m.

Round Table Conference, it being understood that it was likely to be resumed if the Round Table Conference failed to do satisfaction in respect of the national demand. To this I wish to add the Second Settlement that was arrived at in Simla immediately prior to my departure for London. On examining the correspondence that has passed between myself and the Government, it would be seen that notwithstanding the Truce I had reserved to myself the right to take up civil disobedience by way of defensive action in connection with the grievances about which relief might be unattainable through milder methods. Surely if civil disobedience was such a heinous crime, the Government could never have exchanged correspondence on that basis and sent me to London with Viceregal blessings; but I see that with the change of times manners have also changed.

The nation must now respond to the challenge of the Government. It is to be hoped, however, that whilst people belonging to all classes and creeds will courageously and in all humility go through the fiery ordeal considering no price too dear and no sufferings too great, they will observe the strictest non-violence in thought, word and deed, no matter how great the provocation may be. I would also urge them not to be angry with the administrators. It is not easy for them to shed the habit handed down from generation to generation. Our quarrel is not with men but with measures.

We have faith in ourselves and, therefore, in human nature, to feel that, if we suffer long enough and in the proper spirit, our sufferings must result in converting administrators. After all, let us realize that the greater and the longer the sufferings the greater would be our fitness for swaraj, for which we are embarking upon a fiery ordeal. I would remind the nation of the pledge I gave to the Prime Minister towards the end of the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference that there should be no malice in the struggle if it fell to our lot to resume it and that we would do nothing unworthy. I shall trust every Indian to redeem the pledge.

To Englishmen I would say that they must beware of false reports that are often dished up for them from morning to morning and evening to evening as to the doings of the Congress in India. This feeding on false information or starvation due to suppression of correct information is a greater barrier to heart-to-heart co-operation.

The Hindu, 3-1-1932

219. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE¹

LABURNUM ROAD,
BOMBAY,
January 3, 1932

DEAR GURUDEV,

I am just stretching my tired limbs on the mattress and as I try to steal a wink of sleep I think of you. I want you to give your best to the sacrificial fire that is being lighted.

With love,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : G.N. 4632

220. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING²

[BOMBAY],
January 3, 1932

You have been my companions in these prayers for some days, and now that the struggle is resumed again and I may be taken away any moment, I hope you will continue to have your prayers regularly morning and evening. Let it become a daily obligatory ritual for you. Prayer plays a large part in a self-purificatory sacrifice and you will see that it will be a veritable cow of plenty for you, and will make your way clear. The more you apply yourselves to it, the more fearlessness you will experience in daily life, for fearlessness is a sign and symbol of self-purification. I do not know a man or a woman who was on the path of self-purification and was still obsessed by fear. Generally there are two kinds of fear in man's minds—fear of death and fear of loss of material possessions. A man of prayer and self-purification will shed the fear of death and embrace death as a boon companion and will regard all earthly possessions as fleeting and of no account. He will see that he has no right to possess wealth when misery and pauperism stalk the land and when there are millions who have to go without a meal. No power on earth can subdue a man who has shed these two fears. But for that purpose the prayer should be a thing of the heart and not a thing of outward demonstration. It must take us daily nearer to God, and a prayerful man is sure to have his

¹ This was dictated to Mahadev Desai on January 3 at 4 a.m. and signed the next day, "a few moments after his actual arrest", according to a covering letter Mahadev Desai sent along with it.

² Held at 4 a.m.

heart's desire fulfilled, for the simple reason that he will never have an improper desire. Continue this ritual and you will shed lustre not only on your city but on our country. I hope this brief prayer of mine will find a lodgment in your hearts.

Young India, 7-1-1932

221. INTERVIEW TO "THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE"

BOMBAY,

January 3, 1932

What I would ask the nation to do after my arrest, is to wake up from its sleep; and

1. to discard at once all foreign cloth and take to khaddar;
2. to discard all drugs, narcotics, and intoxicating drinks;
3. to discard every trace of violence and give absolute protection to every Englishman, woman or child whether official or otherwise, no matter how provocative the action of officials may be;
4. to withdraw from Government every form of co-operation that is possible for every individual; and
5. to study the resolution of the Working Committee and carry it out to the letter and in the spirit and in that process suffer all hardships that they may be put to, including loss of life and property.

It is difficult to lay down one rule for the whole of India. But it seems to me that, since the Congress has adopted the method of self-purification through non-violence, I should begin by hartal, that is, voluntary suspension of all works for profit and undergo a prayerful fast and then begin simultaneously civil disobedience in such manner as may be possible in each locality such as

- (a) unlicensed manufacture of salt,
- (b) picketing of liquor and foreign-cloth shops,
- (c) breach of orders under Section 144 and the like when there is no likelihood of breach of peace and where orders have been issued not out of any legal necessity, but manifestly for the sake of crushing the spirit of the people or, what is the same thing, or suppressing the Congress.

As to what particular items of programme Bombay should follow he left to Mr. K. F. Nariman and his council.

Questioned if the work of carrying on the behests of the Congress would not prove difficult if, as already contemplated, all listed Congress workers were removed from the field of action, Gandhiji commenced:

The resolution of the Working Committee was framed to cover the difficulty raised. The situation will develop so suddenly that it is not possible to be more definite than the resolution is. After experience of nearly 12 years of satyagraha in a more or less acute form, individuals are expected to know what the change in circumstances will require. Last year's experience shows that in spite of the imprisonment of almost all the leaders, the nation showed marvellous resourcefulness in the emergency as it arose, and kept up the spirit of civil defiance.

When his attention was drawn to the possibility of opposition to the Congress from certain classes of Indians, the Mahatma said that some handicap there naturally must be whenever there is internal opposition, but added:

All these difficulties will dissolve in the fire of suffering without hatred whether towards the administrators or towards our own people, whether they oppose or are indifferent to the movement.

The Bombay Chronicle, 4-1-1932

222. MESSAGE TO INDIAN CHRISTIANS¹

BOMBAY,

January 3, 1932

DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS AND FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN,

I have full trust that in the struggle on which the country is about to embark, Indian Christians, who tender their loyalty to the one whom they call the Prince of Peace, will not be found behind any community in our country in the struggle which is essentially based on peace. I venture to suggest that service in this national struggle is an infinitely greater safeguard for the protection of a minority that has tendered such service than any paper security.

I would like to lay stress upon khaddar and prohibition. When in my wanderings I have met thousands of poor Christian fellow-countrymen. I have realized the necessity for them of khaddar as much as for others. I hope, therefore, that every Christian's home will be adorned by the installation of the spinning-wheel and every Christian body with khaddar, spun and woven by the hands of our poor countrymen and countrywomen.

And then there is the curse of drink. I have never understood how a Christian can take intoxicating drink. Did not Jesus say to Satan

¹ The message was given through the Secretary, Nationalist, Christian Party.

when he want to seduce him: "Get thee behind me, Satan?" Is not intoxicating drink Satan incarnate? How can a Christian serve both Satan and Christ?

The Bombay Chronicle, 4-1-1932

223. MESSAGE TO AMERICA¹

BOMBAY,

January 3, 1932

On the eve of embarking on what promises to be a deadly struggle, I would expect numerous American friends to watch its career and use the influence of the great nation for the sake of oppressed humanity. This Indian struggle is more than national. It has international value and importance. I am convinced that if my countrymen and women retain up to the last the spirit of non-violence, they will have inaugurated a new era upon earth.

The Hindu, 3-1-1932

224. DIARY, 1932

BOMBAY, JANUARY 1, FRIDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Spent the day at the Working Committee. Cloth and bullion merchants as also Bhulabhai and others called. Benthall called at night.

BOMBAY, JANUARY 2, SATURDAY

Spun 189 rounds. Met Modi, [members of] the Welfare League², Sir Ness Wadia. Went to see Venilal. Meherbaba called. Viceroy's reply came.

BOMBAY, JANUARY 3, SUNDAY

Spun 180 rounds. Sir Phi[roze] Sethna, Cowasji, Jehangir and others called. Members of the Chamber met me. Had a talk with them. Cancelled at their instance my departure for Ahmedabad.³

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 19337

¹ The message was given through Mills, an American Press correspondent.

² *Vide* "Talk with Welfare of India League Deputation", 2-1-1932

³ The "Diary" continues in the succeeding volumes, up to January 1, 1933, the portion relating to the period covered in a volume being given at the end of that volume.

225. MESSAGE TO AHMEDABAD WORKERS¹

[January 4, 1932]²

You must keep your fair name.

Give up liquor, wear only khaddar, live harmoniously. Follow the instructions of Anasuyabehn and Mr. Shankerlal Banker.

Educate your children.

Do your work righteously.

Defend your rights without harbouring any malice against your employers.

Give your fullest contribution to the swaraj *yajna*.

The Bombay Chronicle, 5-1-1932

226. MESSAGE TO AMERICA

January 4, 1932

Even as America won its Independence through suffering, valour and sacrifice, so shall India in God's good time achieve her freedom by suffering, sacrifice, and non-violence.

Home Department, Political, File No. 141, pp. 15-7, 1932. Courtesy: National Archives of India

¹ This and the following three items were written by Gandhiji soon after his arrest during the early hours. In *Young India*, 7-1-1932, Mahadev Desai had reported in "The Historic Week" that Gandhiji was arrested, as in the past, "under Regulation XXV of 1827 for removal of inconvenient persons without assignable reasons".

² From *Young India*, 7-1-1932

227. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL¹

January 4, 1932

Infinite is God's mercy. Please tell the people never to swerve from truth and non-violence. Never to flinch, but to give their lives and all to win swaraj.

The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin, p. 67

228. LETTER TO VERRIER ELWIN²

January 4, 1932

MY DEAR ELWIN,

I am so glad you have come. I would like you yourself to tell your countrymen that I love them even as I love my own countrymen. I have never done anything towards them in hatred or malice and God willing I shall never do anything in that manner in future. I am acting no differently towards them now from what I have done under similar circumstances towards my own kith and kin.

With love,

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 9697. Courtesy: Eldyth Elwin. Also *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin*, p. 67

¹ In *Young India*, 7-1-1932, this was reported under the title "The Historic Week" by Mahadev Desai who had explained that Gandhiji gave this "message to the people of India through a note to Vallabhbhai Patel [the Congress President] who he did not know was under arrest at the same time".

² In *Young India*, 7-1-1932, Mahadev Desai had reported that Gandhiji sent this message "to all Englishmen through Verrier Elwin". For the latter's account of the arrest, *vide* "Verrier Elwin on Gandhiji's Arrest",

229. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

YERAVDA PRISON¹,
January 5, 1932

CHI. MIRA²,

This goes as a business letter. Therefore no reference to it in the Press.

Please send me the larger size flask. It will be useful for keeping hot water, saving the labour of warders early morning.

I gave a cheque for Rs. 800 to Mahadev with instructions. I do not think it needed endorsement. See whether he has it and if it needs endorsement.

We are both³ well.

Love to all.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6209. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9675

230. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

January 5, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

I have been writing to you regularly. I am not sure if sometimes I forget about it. But one who follows the path of non-violence would not pay a person in the same coin. He would do a good turn to someone who has done nothing for him or even to one who has done him harm. Hence, even if I am lazy, you should not be. If your yarn snapped 12 times in 47 turns, you could have done 36 more turns if it had not snapped at all. It is my experience that if the yarn snaps once, re-uniting it takes the time required for spinning three turns.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9943. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

¹ Also called Yeravda Mandir; *vide* "Letter to Vimalchandra V. Desai", p. 3. The place-line is not reproduced in subsequent letters. Gandhiji was in Yeravda Prison from January 4, 1932 to May 8, 1933.

² The source has this in Devanagari in this and other letters to Mirabehn.

³ Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was with Gandhiji in Yeravda jail.

231. *LETTER TO VIMALCHANDRA V. DESAI*

YERAVDA MANDIR,
January 8, 1932

CHI. NANU,

I got your letter. I was very glad. Write to me in this way from time to time. See if you can write with pen and ink.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 5758. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

232. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

January 11, 1932

CHI, NARANDAS,

If I wished to write to you at leisure, or write at all, I had no option but to go to jail. I got today the permission to write letters and so I am writing my very first letter to you.

The Sardar's being with me is a novel feature of my imprisonment this time. I still feel tired and my hunger for sleep has not yet been fully satisfied, and so I do no work except a little reading and sacrificial spinning. Both of us keep good health. My diet is almost the same that it was when I was outside. Instead of honey, I take jaggery mixed in hot water. The Sardar's diet consists mainly of tea, bread and vegetables. He used to eat rice when outside, but doesn't eat it here. The rice cooked here may not agree with him. He drinks some milk. His throat complaint persists. You should write to me regularly. I have no precise information as to who have been arrested. Please let me have this information, so that I may know to whom I should write.

I saw Jamna in Bombay. I didn't get time to talk much with anyone. You should now write to me and give me news about her and about others, or those persons themselves should write. I have not written to Kakasaheb, Chhaganlal Joshi, etc., thinking that they are already in jail.

It is surprising that leather for soles of sandals is not available there. It must be available in the Ashram and at several other places. Talk to Surendra about this and ask him to write to me.

I read today about Ba having been arrested. I am glad. If you are permitted to forward my letter to her, do so.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8199. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

233. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

January 12, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letter. Now you can write as usual. Did you notice that you forgot to send with me the carding-bow that I had selected? I asked for the handy thing because the larger size required the other paraphernalia. Whenever you or anyone else comes, the larger size may be brought. Thanks to your foresight, I have still quite an amount of slivers. I am therefore not anxious about the bow. And I am still resting, getting as much sleep as I can. The rest of the information about me from my letter to Narandas.

Where are the Privats? How are they keeping in health? My love to them. Let them write. I hope they had a good time at the Ashram. Have the German friends turned up? And Miss Barker? What about Verrier and Shamrao¹? I hope Pyarelal sent the parcels to Evans and Rogers²? Where is he and where is Devdas? What about Bernard?

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6210. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9676

¹ Shamrao Hivale, Verrier Elwin's friend and co-worker

² In *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, Mirabehn explains: "Evans and Rogers were the two stalwart detectives whom the British Government had placed in continual attendance on Bapu throughout his Round Table visit. Bapu had arranged to send them each a watch with special engraving."

234. LETTER TO MAITRI GIRI

January 12, 1932

CHI. MAITRI,

You have often been in my thoughts. Write to me. I hope that you have fully recovered from your injury.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6233

235. LETTER TO MAHALAKSHMI M. THAKKAR

January 12, 193[2]¹

CHI. MAHALAKSHMI,

I got your letter. I often think about you all and also wish to write. But I got no time at all while I was outside jail. I see that I shall definitely be able to write from here.

The same diet does not suit all persons. In the last resort, every person has to decide for himself the quantity and the type of food he should eat, having regard to his capacity. I have discovered one thing at any rate from my own experience and that of others, namely, that ground-nut does not agree with any person for long, and it must, therefore, be given up. In any case, it should not be given to children to eat. It will not matter if they eat it occasionally. It will do them no harm if they never eat it. Nor is it necessary to eat coconut. Almonds are useful, of course. But, in your case, I think the following diet will be good.

Milk, boiled or unboiled, to a maximum of three seers.

Dates and currants, two or three sour lemons to be taken either with soda, as I take them, or in warm water with honey or jaggery. Once during the day raw carrots or radish (of the less pungent variety) or salad leaves or tender leaves of cabbage. Two or three *tolas* of any of these items should be chewed thoroughly. Eat them with a little salt. If you eat carrots or these leaves, that will probably satisfy your sense of

¹ The source has "1931", which is a slip for "1932"; *vide* "Diary, 1932", the entry under "January 13"; also "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 13-1-1932

hunger. The dates need not be soaked [in water]. They should be put in milk and eaten as they are. If any of them are not clean, they should of course be washed. If they are not soaked [in water] you will be required to chew them and that will probably give you a feeling of satisfaction. Do not start eating almonds and pistachio nuts just now. Try the diet I have suggested. You will probably feel lighter with it and the menstrual flow will become regular. There is no harm in taking curds instead of milk. If the curds are sour you may add some soda according to how sour they are. You should also eat raw tomatoes. This diet will stop gas. If unboiled milk does not agree with you, you should not consider it wrong to take boiled milk. The addition of soda will most probably stop the gas.

I had seen the children in Bombay. I saw them coughing and that had pained me. They also may be given the diet suggested above. Their weight ought to increase. Just now they should not be given dry fruit at all. You should give them more honey. They may take it either with water or with tomatoes. As for milk, it will be better if they drink it unboiled. Ground-nuts and honey never form a good combination. I think I have now answered all your questions. If any question is left out and if you are still free, you may ask it again.

My blessings to all the women. I will write to all of them one after another. Rama should write to me. I now look upon all the women as mere guests. Take care of your health and see that it does not suffer. I had thought that your health was excellent.

Ask Madhavji to write to me. If you think it necessary to send this letter to Calcutta for the sake of the children, you may do so. The person there who looks after them should write to me.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

Since I got your letter late, this letter will be posted tomorrow though I have dated it today.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6811

236. LETTER TO KASHINATH AND KALAVATI TRIVEDI

January 12, 1932

CHI. KASHINATH,

I got your letter. For the present, remain where you are and learn through patience. This is enough today.¹

CHI. KALAVATI,

I got your letter. I have a faint impression that you did take the pledge. Whatever that be, do what Narandas asks you to do.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati and Hindi: G.N. 5284

237. LETTER TO GANGADEVI SANADHYA

January 12, 1932

CHI. GANGADEVI,

You and Panditji were in my mind often enough, but there was no time for letter-writing. How are both of you and how is your health now? Can Panditji still work hard? How is Hariprasad² keeping?

What is the progress on Panditji's farm? What fruits and vegetables are being grown? Is any produce being sent into the city for sale? Can the farm stand on its feet?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2545

¹ What follows is in Hindi.

² Adopted son of Gangadevi and Totaram Sanadhya

238. LETTER TO ABBAS

January 13, 1932

CHI. ABBAS,

Write to me and tell me what improvements you have adopted in your method of carding, etc., whether you have accepted the improvements suggested by Mathuradas¹ and whether anybody has taken up the latter's work. I hope you keep good health. How many attend the class at present?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6305

239. LETTER TO KHUSHALCHAND GANDHI

January 13, 1932

RESPECTED KHUSHALBHAI²,

I got in Bombay your blessing in the form of your letter. I had hoped to return to the Ashram in fulfilment of your blessing, but God had ordained some other blessing for me and so now I send my respectful greetings to you both from here. If you keep good health there and if the Ashram remains, I should very much like you to stay on there. Remember me sometimes. Sardar Vallabhbhai is with me. Both of us keep good health. The cold also is not too much.

Humble greetings from

MOHANDAS

From Gujarati: C.W. 9221. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Gandhi

¹ Mathuradas Purushottam, a khadi expert

² Gandhiji's cousin and father of Narandas Gandhi

240. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

January 13, 193[2]¹

CHI. NARANDAS,

Before posting my letter to you yesterday, I forgot to put into the envelope the letter to Lakshmidas. You will find it with this. I send as many others as I could write. I got a letter from Mahalakshmi yesterday. While replying to her,² I wrote to some others as well. I must now hand this over, so I will not write more.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

Professor Edward Thompson³ will land in Bombay on the 15th. He may come to the Ashram; if he does, put him up. Look after his comforts. If he doesn't come on his own, write or send a wire to him to invite him. He will probably arrive by a P. & O. liner. Mirabehn knows.

BAPU

[PPS.]

There are eight letters besides that for Lakshmidas.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8200. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

¹ The source has "1931", but in his letter dated December 5, 1931 (C.W. 9409) to P. Hartog, E. Thompson mentions his intention of visiting India in "the following year". Again, in 1931 Mirabehn was away from the Ashram on this date, but in 1932 she was there.

² *Vide* "Letter to Mahalakshmi M. Thakkar", 12-1-1932

³ Author of *The Other Side of the Medal, Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India, Life of Rabindranath Tagore*, etc.

241. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

January 15, 1932

DEAR SIR SAMUEL¹,

I had not expected to write to you, at any rate not quite so soon from a prison.

I had promised to let you know before I took any serious step. But the events came upon me with such a sudden rush that there was no time or choice left for me. I have no doubt you have seen the telegrams exchanged between the Viceroy and me.-1-1932 I tried my best to keep up co-operation but failed in my opinion through no fault of my own. I cannot help feeling that the Viceroy was wholly in the wrong in refusing to see me except on impossible conditions. I have just written a personal letter to Lord Willingdon urging him to reconsider his position.

I can assure you that I reached Bombay with every intention of co-operating. Your letter, for which pray accept my thanks, cleared one difficulty. And I had hoped that a heart to heart talk with the Viceroy would clear up the difficulty about the ordinances and administration in the interim. Indeed I had planned things about Hindu-Muslim question and other matters with Sir Akbar Hydari who was on the same boat with me and in ignorance of what was happening in India. I had given, as you might have seen, the day before landing, a hopeful message² to Reuter's representative on board. But the events I saw happening in India did startle me. I at once sought an interview with the Viceroy with the result you know. Let me add this: cruel suggestions have appeared in the Press that my colleagues forced me to the position I took up. There is no warrant whatsoever for them. The initiative for every step was mine and it was a logical outcome of my creed of satyagraha. I cannot wish for more loyal colleagues. In matters of satyagraha they yield to my judgment as to an expert's³. I don't expect you to reply to this letter. I thought I should just tell you what I think about it all. Whatever happens, I shall always retain happy recollections of our meetings.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: C.W. 9556. Courtesy: India Office Library

¹ Secretary of State for India

² *Vide* "Interview to Reuter", 27-12-1931

³ The source has "as if an expert".

242. LETTER TO LORD WILLINGDON

YERAVDA PRISON,
January 15, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

Your wire in reply to mine was a painful surprise to me. Your very cordial letters written by you after I had left for London had led me to expect a message from you awaiting me on my return to Bombay. Such a message would have been in keeping with your past as you had let me see it. Do you remember 1915 when I returned to India from self-imposed exile? You had sent me a message through the late Mr. Gokhale that I should see you before expressing my views on Indian matters. Your astounding wire therefore in reply to mine seeking interview and guidance I could not understand at all. Nor do I understand it even now.

But I do not write this to blame you for your action for which no doubt, in your own opinion, you had the best of State reasons. But I would like you as an Englishman to review the immediate past and see whether you did not commit a grave error of judgment in repelling my sincere and well-meant advance. I ask you to believe me when I tell you that I was desperately anxious to avoid resumption of struggle and to tender my whole-hearted co-operation if it was at all possible. I am anxious to do so even now. But the difficulties are obviously much greater than before, unless you retrace your steps or convince me that I was wholly in the wrong.

Will you not realize that it is impossible to crush the Congress spirit though you have in law killed the Congress organization? Is it wrong for Indians to desire complete independence for their country? Is it wrong to seek to do so through non-violent direct action, when negotiation fails or becomes impossible? Englishmen have negotiated with men whose hands were dyed red as in Ireland but after committing a series of inhumanities. They negotiated with the Boers after trying the method of concentration for women. Even in India the same thing was done last year after trying repressive measures of a particularly strong character against most women who never did the slightest violence. Must such history be repeated again? It seems to me that you invited trouble, so as to enable you to put the Congress out of your way. Even if you succeed in producing a dead calm in India you must know that it can bring no lasting peace to the land. I ask you

therefore to give me and my comrades the same credit for honesty of intention and action that you would claim for yourself and your colleagues and with such a mind reconsider your position and if you feel sure of its correctness try to convince me of the error of my way. Why do you say I want to impose my views on the Government? Argument is not an imposing. The Congress does seek to convert the Government to its views by reason, negotiation and even by direct action, i.e., self-suffering, so long as the Congress is sure of the correctness of its own position. Is not this what every citizen or organization has done all the world over? The congress has indeed struck a new path. It has replaced the method of armed rebellion by self-suffering. If you believe in this profession of the Congress, surely you would welcome the coming in of a method that more becomes man's dignity than the old law of the jungle.

But whether you feel with me as to the method or not I invite you still to try negotiation with the Congress and especially with me as its representative whom you gave no chance of even knowing the Government side of the case. Remember the door was shut by you and not by me. Open it in a gentlemanly manner and you will find me eager to enter in.

My regards to Lady Willingdon. She must not be angry with me that I am causing worry to her husband. I do not want to. If at all, she must be angry with you in that in your anger or distrust, you banged the door in the face of a poor old man who knocked and was denied entrance.

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

From a photostat: India Office Library and Records. Courtesy: The British Library, London

243. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

January 15, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

You have given a fine description of your visit to Kashi. The fact that the Master's¹ pupils are carrying on his work in a worthy manner should make all of us happy. You should now resume your visits among Chharas². If you can cultivate close contacts with them and influence them, it will be a great achievement.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 220. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

244. LETTER TO PADMA

January 15, 1932

CHI. PADMA,

Vasumatibehn told me that you had not fully recovered. Write to me and give me detailed news about your health. Where is Sarojinidevi³ at present? And how is she? Do you get any news about Father? Do you write to him? Tell me what work you do every day.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6128. Also C.W. 3480. Courtesy: Prabhudas Gandhi

245. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

January 15, 1932

BHAI VALJI,

How are you both? Has the health of either improved a little? How is Kamalnayan? Ask him to write to me. Has he made any progress in his studies? Does he feel satisfied? I hope you wander

¹ Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, addressee's music teacher

² An ex-criminal tribe of central Gujarat who gave some trouble to the Ashram people

³ Addressee's mother

about a great deal there. Remember that you have gone there not to read but to improve your health. As you wander in the midst of Nature, you will daily find in her something new to read.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7417. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

246. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

YERAVDA MANDIR,

January 15, 1932

CHI. PRABHUDAS,

You may now write long letters to me. Do write. What progress have you made with regard to the spinning-wheel? Have you completed the writing of the *Ramayana*? Are you writing on any other subject? Has the body been built up? Has your mind become clear and tension free? Has the land been purchased? Who are the other persons with you there? Is the work at Tadikhet going on?

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 33023

247. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

January 17, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

You will know about us from my letter¹ to Mirabehn. If I know who are still in the Ashram, I can write to them. We are eager to hear from you. You can write at any time. If you have not written already write as soon as you get this letter.

I have already written twice².

This is the third time. The letter

¹ *Vide* the following item.

² *Vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 11-1-1932 & "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 13-1-1932

which I wrote to you asking you to send me a few things was in addition. How is Radha? Write to me about the health of all the others.

Blessings to all.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

How is Punjabhai? Where does he stay?

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8201. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

248. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

January 17/18, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

I have the things sent by you. The sandals are too flimsy to last beyond a month or two, that is to say, the soles will be worn out. Sole leather is therefore a necessity. If you cannot procure it, I shall have to fall back upon rubber soles.

Are the Privats still there? Please give or send my love to them. You will send my love also to the Rollands.

We are both still keeping well. My food is the same as outside except that I have added curds for the evening meal. There is daily at least two hours' walk divided between morning and evening. I have not yet gone beyond 200 rounds of yarn. But I feel that by next week I shall have finished my arrears of sleep. I must be sleeping altogether nine hours during 24 hours. I am doing a fair amount of reading.

I had expected an Ashram mail by this time. Do not send me the other carding-bow just yet.

Love.

BAPU

January 18, 1932

[PS.]

I must apologize. I discovered today that you had packed the bow in the matting.¹

From the original: C.W. 6211. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9677

¹ *Vide* also "Letter to Mirabehn", 12-1-1932

249. LETTER TO JAISHANKAR P. TRIVEDI

January 18, 1932

BHAI TRIVEDI¹,

I got the two lots of fruit and vegetables which you sent. Please don't send any more now. Both of us get these things here if we want them. It would be better from every point of view that you should use your time and money for more important work. You mayrest assured that, if I want anything, I will not hesitate to ask you for it. Surely you know this! I had met Manu² in Villeneuve. Send him my blessings.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1001

250. LETTER TO SARALADEVI SARABHAI

January 19, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

I was very eager to meet all of you. Mridu had informed me about your health. I hope you have fully recovered now. Mridu is doing well, I hope. What does Chi. Bharati do?

Sardar and I are well.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 11135. Courtesy: Sarabhai Foundation

251. LETTER TO CHILDREN, KINGSLEY HALL

January 20, 1932

DEAR LITTLE FRIENDS,

I often think of you and the bright answers you gave to my questions when that afternoon we had sat together.³

I never got the time whilst I was at Kingsley Hall to send you a note thanking you for the gifts of love you had sent me. That I do now from my prison. I had hoped to transfer these gifts to the Ashram

¹ Prof. J. P. Trivedi of Poona Agriculture College

² Manshankar, addressee's son

³ *Vide* "Discussion with Children", 19-9-1931

children about whom you should ask aunty Muriel¹ to tell you something. But I was never able to reach the Ashram.

Is it not funny that you should receive a letter from a prison! But though inside a prison I don't feel like being a prisoner. I am not conscious of having done anything wrong.

My love to you all.

Yours,
Whom you call uncle,
GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1016-a

252. LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH

January 20, 1932

CHI. MANIBEHN,

I am glad that you teach the children in the kindergarten. You should write to me from time to time and tell me your experience, which children are well-behaved and which are undisciplined, what difficulties you have to face, etc. Narahari² teaches in Nasik and you teach in the Ashram. This is very good co-operation between you two.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5963

253. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON³

January 21, 1932

MY DEAR CHILD,

Your account of the meeting with the ailing sister⁴ is touching. Give my love to her when you visit her again.

I hope you are at peace with yourself now. The children⁵ must be quite well. Kiss them for me if they will let me kiss them.

¹ Muriel Lester, Principal, Kingsley Hall, was Gandhiji's hostess in London during his visit to England from September to November, 1931.

² Narahari Parikh, addressee's husband

³ The Menon family were in England, at Selly Oak, Birmingham.

⁴ An English girl, poor and bed-ridden, who was a great admirer of Gandhiji

⁵ Addressee's daughters, Nan and Tangai

Maria¹ was with me in Bombay. But I had hardly time to talk to her.

I hope Menon is doing well. My love to him and to all at Woodbrooke settlement². Send my love to Miss Harrison and tell me where she is staying. Do you write to Maud Cheeseman?

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Sardar Vallabhbhai is with me. Both of us are doing quite well.

From a photostat: No. 107. Courtesy: National Archives of India. Also *My Dear Child*, pp. 87-8

254. LETTER TO MAHAVIR GIRI

January 21, 1932

CHI. MAHAVIR,

I got your letter. I feel unhappy that your health has still not improved completely. Do you also wish to go to Darjeeling? None of you need go, if you don't wish to. And if you do go, make up your mind to return with your health fully recouped. I shall feel very unhappy if you become more ill there. If you do not go, consult Dr. Talwalkar and follow the treatment which he advises. If you decide to go, please let me know where you intend to stay, etc. If there is no proper accommodation for you where you go, I think you will be running a risk in going there. I don't regard you as a child. Decide like a grown-up and mature person and persuade Krishnamaiyadevi³ also to think in the same way.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6231

¹ Anne Marie Petersen

² The Quaker Centre, near Birmingham, in whose activities the addressee and her husband took part

³ Addressee's mother

255. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

January 21, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got the post from the Ashram today, after I had waited for it for many days. I was getting worried since I had received no reply. As you posted the packet as a parcel, it was delayed. On previous occasions, too, that is what happened. I see, however, that posting things as parcel costs less. You may, therefore, continue the practice if you wish to. You can do this. Send the many other letters as parcel and send yours separately, by ordinary post. That will save expenditure and I will get one letter immediately. Ordinarily you or anybody else will be able to write to me as often as necessary. Most probably I will get the letters immediately.

You have done nothing wrong in reproducing in the “Ashram Samachar”¹ the extract from my letter.

Anyone from the Ashram will be permitted to visit us. Others too, who have not become prominent in the political field, will be permitted; for instance, Pyare Ali², or Rama (Ranchhodbhai’s). Three or four can come at a time. We are permitted to receive visitors once a week. But we don’t wish to waste money in this manner. You may, therefore, permit people to come as and when you think proper. I wish to tell you what is permissible and what my general view is, and leave the rest to you. Don’t think that I am putting any restriction. How can I judge what the circumstances there require, or measure the depth of people’s feelings or their foolish attachment to me?

Allow Krishnamaiyadevi and others to go to Darjeeling. It will certainly mean expense, but that will be worth incurring. I suppose in Darjeeling they will stay with some friends and we shall have to pay only the fare. Give them the fare for the outward journey. As for the return fare, tell them that you will send a note which they can show and get money from Bhai Jivanlal of the Birla Brothers. That is, you can send them a letter of recommendation when they intend to return. Will Mahavir also go with them? If he does, let him stay there for five or six months. After he has recovered, he can take up some public work in Darjeeling. Similarly, send away the girls when they wish to go.

¹ A handwritten news bulletin of the Ashram

² A business man from Bombay who, along with his wife Noorbhanu, was an ardent follower of Gandhiji

Where is Abbas Saheb? How does he keep? Inquire and let me know. How is Raojibhai's Vimala? Where is Raojibhai Manibhai of Sojitra? Where is Shivabhai?

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

Venilal¹ was very ill in Bombay. How is he now? You say that Navin has come to live there for the present. What exactly do you mean? Where does he stay just now and what does he do?

The letters to the others will be posted on Tuesday. Take this letter to have been written for Dalbahadur Giri's family and for Kusum. My compliments to Kanti², Bal³, Prithuraj⁴ and other warriors. I will write to them later.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8202. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

256. LETTER TO RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE

January 22, 1932

DEAR RAMANAND BABU,

May I ask you for the same courtesy you extended to me during my last incarceration⁵? I did see the current issue of *The Modern Review*.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

SJT. RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE

SHANTINIKETAN⁶

From the original: C.W. 9526. Courtesy: Santa Devi

¹ Venilal Gandhi

² Kanti Gandhi, son of Harilal Gandhi

³ D. B. Kalelkar's second son

⁴ Son of Lakshmidas Asar

⁵ During his last incarceration (May 5, 1930 to January 26, 1931) Gandhiji had written to the addressee: "I have permission to receive *The Modern Review*, among other magazines. Will you please send me copies from the May number? . . ." *The Modern Review* was among the approved periodicals this time too; *vide* "Letter from R. M. Maxwell", 16-1-1932

⁶ The postcard was redirected to: 2/1 Townshend Road, Bhawanipore, Calcutta.

257. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

January 22, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. You did well in paying a visit to the women who are in prison.

There is no such thing as a miracle¹ in this world, or rather everything is a miracle. That the earth is hanging in space without support and that we do not see the *atman* though we know that it dwells in our body—these are great miracles. Compared to them, other miracles are as trivial as the conjuror's mango tree.

“Keeping one's eye single”² means that one should not see with a distorted vision, that one should keep one's eyes pure and not cast lustful glances. The statement has no other meaning.

Sarojinidevi's case is a painful one. If, however, we behave towards her in a spirit of non-attachment, she will keep herself on the right path, no matter whether she continues to live there or lives in Prayag.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10267. Also C.W. 6716. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

258. LETTER TO SIR FREDERICK SYKES³

January 23, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

The cordial conversations I had with you last year embolden me to write this to you. If you would rather that, being a prisoner, I should not write to you, I shall cease to do so and this may be thrown away. If however you don't resent this letter, I may take the further liberty of writing again, should the occasion arise.

Whilst in my opinion all the ordinances are a tragic blunder and so utterly unnecessary, I can understand the Government taking a different view and trying to crush the Congress. The organization may

¹ The addressee had asked Gandhiji what he thought of miracles.

² *Vide St. Matthew*, IV. 22

³ Governor of Bombay

be put out of action for a time. The spirit will never be crushed. But this is another story.

What I want to draw your attention to is the excesses that are being committed under the ordinances.

The breaking up of a peaceful meeting in Ahmedabad by severe lathi charges and running horses through the meeting appears to have been a barbarous procedure, several young men were severely and some women were slightly hurt. One young woman had her hair pulled. This information I glean from the newspapers supplied to me. In Nadiad the treatment is said to have been still more brutal and it is reported to have been the worst in Surat. Boys in two boarding houses are said to have been hurriedly dragged out of them and the houses taken over by the authorities. Such procedure brutalizes those who are engaged in carrying it out. It should be borne in mind that all this treatment is being meted out to those who do not retaliate and have not been known to have done any previous violence.

The authorities have taken possession of the National University buildings in Ahmedabad. The University has a rich collection of carefully selected books. There is a religious section to the library. It is admitted to be a unique library built up by devoted scholars. It contains some rare and valuable manuscripts. There is, too, a little museum which has an art collection. The grounds have valuable trees planted on them. The whole of this constructive effort—a fruit of ten years patient labour—is likely to be ruined without any just cause.

One of the most respectable Indians belonging to the celebrated Tyabji family, Mr. Abbas Tyabji who is 78-year-old and who is an ex-Chief Judge of the Baroda High Court is said to have been locked up in Nadiad along with other prisoners in what can only be described as a cage.

I ask you to investigate these statements. Denials by the parties charged can be regarded as no investigation. Often have such denials been proved to be worthless.

I have picked out but a few of what have appeared to me to be glaring instances of high-handedness. If past experience is any guide, probably the worst cases have not even been allowed to appear in the newspapers. Nor do I get all the newspapers.

I write this as a friend wishing well to the English. I am anxious that on both sides every avoidable cause of bitterness should be avoided. I would like the fight to be conducted honourably on either

side so that at the end of it either party may be able to say of the other that there was no malice behind its actions.

I am,

Your sincere friend,

M. K. GANDHI

SIR FREDERICK SYKES

BOMBAY

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(41), Pt. 1, pp. 15-6; also G.N. 3856

259. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

January 23, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

The long awaited post came from the Ashram only yesterday. I shall now get it regularly I expect. Of course, you were right in going to Bombay. You should be the sole judge finally as to where you would stay and what you would do.

When you write to the Privats, tell them they are constantly in my thoughts. They must on no account impair their health. They should write to me.

I have told you already not to bring or send the hanging bow.¹ You have sent me so many slivers that I shall not need to card for some weeks yet. And I am glad. I have not yet regained my bodily strength. I sleep at least thrice during the day in spite of full sleep between 9 p.m. and 3.45 a.m. I need sleep and rest as yet. I do not spin 500 yards [like]² I did last year. I am doing the amount in two days. I am hoping however soon to be able to do 500 yards per day. I will not strain myself to do it. I shall try to conserve what energy there is still left in me. This is no notice to you to bring or send me more slivers. If I must have them I shall soon tell you. My health is excellent and so is Sardar Vallabhbhai's. I have simply told you how much rest I still need. The London wear and tear was terrific and I suppose the body now demands prolonged rest. The Bombay rush on the top of London's undid the good the voyage had undoubtedly done.

As to the visits, this time there is no difficulty. They have

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", 17/18

² From *Bapu's Letters to Mira*

granted what I asked for last time. Weekly visits may therefore be paid. But this does not mean that someone must come every week. I impose no restrictions. I simply give the warning that we are poor people and therefore we have to be sparing in paying visits of love. There cannot be much business. And love prospers on self-denial. No more of philosophy. I know you will all do what is best. Those who are known to political fame of course cannot visit without special permission.

My love to the sisters, Kamala and to yourself.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6212. Courtesy: Mirabeht. Also G.N. 9678

260. LETTER TO KANTI GANDHI

January 23, 1932

CHI. KANTI,

I was glad to get your letter. Personally I was very happy that all of you were given a taste of the Government's kindness. If the experience does not make us angry but, on the contrary, fills our heart with compassion for the other party, and if we are as ready as ever to welcome more such experience, we shall have realized the true aim of our life. If anybody abused St. Francis, he would smile gently and thank God that He did not inspire that person to assault him, and if anybody assaulted him he would thank God that He did not inspire the latter to kill him outright. If anybody attempted to kill him, St. Francis would say that after all he did not try to torture him. The point is that he who has overcome love for his body and looks upon it only as an instrument will never be affected in his mind by anybody injuring his body.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8905. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

261. LETTER TO BAL KALELKAR

January 23, 1932

CHI. BAL,

I did get your letter, but I could find no time at all to reply. Now that I am here you may ask me whatever you wish to and I will try to answer. I have of course conveyed my congratulations to all of you who have plunged into the struggle with enthusiasm. Though I do not write separately to each one, all of you should write to me about your experiences. The little that I have written in the letter¹ to Kanti applies to you all. That letter contains all that I have to say for the present. Remember that none of us should get elated [with the service we are able to do]. We should always be dissatisfied with what we can do. We come into this world not to incur debts, but to pay them. He who has no debts to discharge no longer needs to be burdened with a body. Such a one is a free soul, and a debtor has no reason to feel elated even when he pays off his whole debt. When he has done that, he only earns his rest. To be free from one's debts is to be free from bondage.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8904. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

262. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

January 23, 1932

CHI. GANGABEHN (SENIOR),

Your letter has set my mind at rest. Everyone is being tested. We should pray in our hearts that God may regard us as fit to make a pure sacrifice. It will be enough if everyone of us does the task that falls to one's lot to the best of one's ability.

How is Kaku? What is he doing at present?

Do you take enough milk and fruit? Don't be stingy about them or shrink from taking them. Regard them as medicine. If you feel better with coffee, you can take that too.

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

Write to Nath¹ and request him to pay a visit from time to time.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro- 6: G. S. Gangabehnne, p. 62. Also C.W. 8788. Courtesy:
Gangabehn Vaidya

263. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

January 23, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

I have your letter.

You have given a good explanation of rhythm beats. I shall find some time and try to follow the method you have suggested. However, the book has not yet reached me.

Your rule about Mathuri² is correct. She need not get up early. Nor should she have to bear any burden either of work or of study. She should be free to sleep and work as and when she likes. Take care about her diet. Her main food should be milk. She may take rice, but very little of it, and should take no pulses at all. It is necessary for her to take vegetables cooked without spices. It would be good if she eats one or two green tomatoes cooked.

Your advice regarding Gajanan³ seems to me all right.

I was interested by your explanation about Panditji, the teacher⁴. I also like your having formed an Association. It seems but proper that you and his other pupils should first do something through your own efforts and then approach the public for help. That is the only right way for you. Please go slow with the scheme while the present conflagration lasts, though you may certainly do what is absolutely necessary.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 221. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

¹ Kedarnath Kulkarni, Kishorelal Mashruwala's guru

² Addressee's daughter, a singer

³ Addressee's nephew

⁴ Vishnu Digambar Paluskar; *vide* "Letter to Narayan M. Khare", 15-1-1932

264. LETTER TO MATHURI N. KHARE

January 23, 1932

CHI. MATHURI,

I got your letter. Your first task is to build up a strong physique. You should not try to learn more than what you can while you play. Our real education lies in learning to be good. Everybody, whether healthy or ill, can do that. Knowledge of letters is like ornaments for the body. Can all people get them?

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 260. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

265. LETTER TO GAJANAN V. KHARE

January 23, 1932

CHI. GAJANAN,

I have your letter. The opinion expressed by Kakashri is correct. It is enough to be prepared to undergo suffering. No one will deter you from plunging into the sacrifice when the need arises. In the mean time you should devote yourself to your own jobs.

How are you progressing with your drawing?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 306. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

266. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

January 23, 1932

CHI. LILAVATI,

I have your letter. We at least could see each other, but what about the other women who could not even see me? However, I should have realized your eagerness and sent a special slip for you. Have it now. I should advise you not to exert yourself beyond your capacity. However, God will look after you all. Remember the first verse¹ of the

¹ »»»» , »»»»/»»»»»» . »»»» , »»»» »»»» . |
•/»»» : »»»»»»»»»» •/»»»» »»»»»» ||

women's prayer. It has universal application. You should not think that it is a prayer which was offered by someone thousands of years ago.

All of us are helpless, as Draupadi was. Before God such distinctions as man and woman lose all meaning. The same *atman* dwells in the man's and in the woman's body. In our infatuated state, we are deluded by the different bodily forms and are even overcome by passion. If we know the soul living within and, realizing that all individual selves are essentially one and the same, devote ourselves to the service of all, no disturbing thoughts would attack us and harass us.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9322. Also C.W. 6597. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

267. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

January 23, 1932

CHI. MANGALA,

I got your letter written in a beautiful hand. Yes, one can get a [walking] stick¹ even in England. Do you know by heart all the chapters of the *Gita*? How many does Pushpa know? Why did she let herself fall ill? Has her nose grown a little? Tell her that, when it is held high, she should not go and get it snapped off. Do both of you rise early? Where is Kamala just now? Does she ever write to you?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4072. Also C.W. 36. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

¹ The reference is to Gandhiji's practice of placing his hand on a girl's shoulder for support while walking.

268. *LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI*

January 23, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA (AUNT),

Yes. If I had not seen you in Bombay, I would not have thought of asking you to write to me. But having seen you there, I did not write a separate letter to you but said in my letter to Anandi that she should ask you to write. You have improved your handwriting.

Write to me from time to time.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9462

269. *LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH*

January 23, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA¹,

I was glad to get your letter. You have improved your handwriting. Do your lessons there with attention. Do you ever remember the Vidyapith? How is Mohan²?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5762. Also C.W. 2985. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

270. *LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH*

January 23, 1932

CHI. BABU,

You seem to be demanding too much. Should I write when you reply or even without your writing? You seem to be still suffering from asthma. Why? How much cod-liver oil did you take? Did you feel better after taking it or not? What are you doing at present? Do

¹ Daughter and son of Narahari Parikh

you have cough? How much was your weight last year? Do you take sun-baths? Do you massage your body with oil? Fresh air, sunshine and oil massage are essential for you.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9904. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

271. LETTER TO VASUDEV

January 23, 1932

BHAI VASUDEV,

I have your letter. The soul is ennobled by self-control. The true nature of the soul consists in a passionless state. That is why control over the emotions is imperative.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 8903-a. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

272. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

January 24, 1932

CHI. RAIHANA,

I had your letter. For how many days was Father kept at Nadiad? Did he suffer any hardship there? What are the arrangements for his food and other necessaries? Last time his beard was infested with lice. This time he should take precautions against that. He should ask for help for the purpose if necessary. Or he may ask for me to be brought there. Is he allowed to see everybody freely? How often are you allowed to see him? Tell him that Sardar and I think of him often and speak of the sacrifices made by him.

Why do you feel uneasy? God will take service from you as He wills. Convey to Mother on behalf of us both repeated *vandematarams* and repeated salaams, *Khuda Hafiz* and all else that may be befitting. How many months old is Sohaila's¹ baby now? I do know that you will keep your word. We shall talk more about it if and

¹ Addressee's sister

when God ordains that we meet. Write to me from time to time. Generally they give me all the letters received for me. There is no restriction, either, as to the number of letters that I can write from here. I am not allowed to write on political matters or to important personages like Father. But I may freely write sermons or love-letters to boys or girls like you. This freedom should be considered adequate.

Now I begin writing in Urdu. Hamida is a brave girl. God will give her great work to do and let her attain greatness. I wish for nothing more than that God should grant long life to Hamida. In this regard you also deserve thanks, for after all Hamida is your pupil, isn't she? Point out to me my mistakes. I hope this is enough exercise for today. *Khuda Hafiz.*

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Convey my blessings to Rohini, Radhabehn and others when you see them.¹

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9636

273. LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI

January 24, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

I did see you in Bombay but could exchange no word with you. Now send me your account for all these months. Your health seemed to be all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1827

274. LETTER TO LALJI K. PARMAR

January 24, 1932

CHI. LALJI,

Mamasahab² tells me in his letter that you are doing no work, that you have stopped weaving because you do not get yarn. How can

¹ This sentence is in Gujarati in the source.

² Presumably V. L. Phadke, who was running a Harijan Ashram in Godhra

one who can spin complain that he has no yarn.? You yourself should spin and, when you have got enough yarn for one cloth-piece, you should weave it. You should also persuade your friends and neighbours to spin. One who is eager to serve always gets an opportunity to do so. Do not waste the training which has been given to you. Write to me.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3295

275. LETTER TO RUKMINI BAZAJ

January 24, 1932

CHI. RUKMINI,

I know I should not expect any letter from you, the more so now that you are a mother. I requested your father-in-law to find a name for the son, and he has passed on the responsibility to me. You should help me now. Suggest some names which both of you would like. Out of these I will select the one which I like best. How is Benarsi? Your father-in-law is what you would describe as an ideal father-in-law. Besides, he is ever ready to help others. But he has not the courage to return from England without having earned enough money there, and he is not likely to succeed in doing it. The only chance now is that, if you press him, he might return. Write to him and tell him that those for whose sake he wants to earn the wealth do not want it. Why, then, should he worry himself so much?

Blessings from

BAPU `

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9059

276. LETTER TO VITHALDAS JERAJANI

January 24, 1932

BHAI VITHALDAS,

Just as I was asking Sardar whether he had any news about you, I got your letter. Your weakness seems to have persisted too long. Do not worry, however. Take complete rest and recover fully before you resume work. Meanwhile your mind is bound to be busy. A person

who has special capacity for some particular work¹ can do much even through his ideas. That is the excellence of karmayoga.

Both of us are quite well.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

My blessings to all friends in the Ashram at Sasvad.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9779

277. LETTER TO HARIPRASAD

January 24, 1932

CHI. HARIPRASAD,

God will reward you well for your devoted services to Gangadevi. But the *Gita* teaches us to perform our job or our service without consideration of the result. Therefore, on your part rendering of service is an end in itself and that is how it should be. I hope you are keeping well. Give me your daily routine.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2550

278. LETTER TO TULSI MAHER

January 24, 1932

CHI. TULSI MAHER,

I have your two letters. What can I write to you? The progress of your work is as regular as the rising and setting of the sun. Keep it up. I am being provided with *datuns*². These days Sardar prepares them.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6539

¹ The addressee was a khadi expert.

² Twigs used for cleaning teeth

279. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

January 23¹/25, 1932

3 p.m., Saturday,

CHI. NARANDAS,

I will write as many letters as I can and hand them over on Tuesdays for being posted. I cannot be as regular as I should like to be. I need rest. My health is very good, though. You will know more about it from my letter to Mirabehn. I was weighed today. The weight was 106_ pounds. The Sardar weighed 144_ lb. Only, I need plenty of rest and take it. Abbas Saheb is your neighbour now. I suppose you go and inquire after him. If he requires any food, send it to him. Hamidabehn, together with Kanjibhai's wife and daughter, is also there. I suppose a woman from the Ashram visits them from time to time.

I cannot think from here what special work may be assigned to Tilakam. He must, of course, pick up Hindi. It is also desirable that he should learn spinning and weaving. Does he work to your satisfaction?

Afternoon, January 25², 1932

I had a painful letter from Champa. Ratilal seems to be harassing her a good deal. It would be desirable if Champa could be separated from him on any pretext. She is not strong enough to bear any more children. It is likely that Ratilal is not able to control himself. We are faced with a very painful moral duty. From what Champa writes, it seems that Ratilal spends the whole day in the bungalow and beats the children whenever he feels the itch. I don't understand what you can do in this matter. If a woman or man agrees to stay with them for a payment, that may help. Consider this and do what you think best.

If someone visits Maganbhai, he should tell him that I got his letter. How can I write to him now? He should also tell Kakasaheb that I remember all that I have to write about. I will write what I can during the time I get.

You will observe that I send to you many letters addressed to persons outside Ahmedabad. I know that this means double expense

¹ The source has "24", but Saturday fell on January 23, 1932.

² The source has "24", but Chapter xiv of *Bhagavad Gita* referred to in the letter was written on January 25, 1932; *vide* "Letters on the *Gita*". 21-2-1932, Chapter xiv; also "Diary, 1932", the last item in the volume.

and increase in your work. If you wish, I can post such letters directly from here to the persons concerned and save both money and time. I have a faint recollection that I had put this question to you on a previous occasion, too, and that you had replied that they should be forwarded through you. Please let me know what I should do.

You will find with this, on a separate sheet, a talk¹ on Chapter XIV. Since I have started writing, I will, as far as possible, continue the series from week to week.

Today's post includes some useful letters (and slips too). If you get time, read them. I have one limitation, or say a gift. I express certain thoughts only in certain circumstances. Without those circumstances, those thoughts would remain unexpressed. If these scattered reflections are not collected, they are likely to be lost. Not that that would be much of a loss, but, since Mahadev, Kaka and others have collected such reflections, I, too, have somewhat fallen a victim to this temptation. As a matter of fact, however, my ship sails as the wind blows. I have no map of the course with me. How can I have one? Having such a map is contrary to the spirit of *bhakti*. How can one who would dance as God wills choose deliberately a course? It is enough if such a one can give single-minded devotion to the task which falls to his or her lot. But this is mere philosophizing. How does it help? "Live as you like, but realize God somehow, anyhow."

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

There are sixty letters besides this.

Lakshman Giri writes from 96 Harrison Road, Calcutta, and requests that the Giri family should be sent away. I write this for your information. You yourself should reply to him from there. I am not replying.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I

¹ Gandhiji, however, forgot to enclose the talk and sent it with the letter dated January 26, 1932; *vide* pp. 40-1. For the series of talks, *vide* "Letters on the *Gita*", 21-2-1932.

280. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Silence Day, January 25, 1932

DEAR SISTERS,

I hope you will understand that it is not possible for me to write to each of you separately. Of course, whenever it is necessary, and I get time, I write to some of you individually. But this time, too, I intend to write a joint letter to the women as I used to do formerly.

During these days, when all of us are passing through a testing time, I hope that all of you will derive great consolation from Draupadi's prayer. Really speaking, all of us are now in the same plight as she was. No human being can save our honour, God alone can do that. It is true that He often sends His help through men. But such a man is only God's tool or instrument. This much in regard to the difficult time through which we are passing.

Now a little from my experiences in England. I may say that in England, too, I received from women almost the same love that I have always received from Indian women. Just as you have kept no secret from me, there in England also I came across women who opened their hearts to me. They came from long distances to accompany me in my early morning walks and to talk to me. The moral which I drew from this is that non-violence is a very wide thing. It includes absolute freedom from impure thoughts.

I also saw that Indian women were in no way inferior to European women. Much of their strength lies suppressed and some of it has had no opportunity to reveal itself. Whenever I observed the European women's superiority, I could also see the causes of it. If the same causes begin to operate in our country, the women here also would become like them. However, we should certainly reflect over the superiority which we observe in European women. We should not feel elated thinking that that strength lies concealed in us; nor should we be complacent on that account. They possess the power of organization and can unite and work very well like the men. They don't think themselves helpless, but fearlessly move about wherever they like. In England, if a woman goes out alone either during day or at night, it is not thought necessary for anybody to accompany her. Nursing in hospitals has become an exclusive province of women, and they do the work very well indeed. The sacrifices made by some women are beyond praise. Muriel Lester who came to stay with us at the Ashram is a daughter of rich parents. Like Mirabehn, she has

given away, as a trust to the Ashram founded by her, all her share of the parental wealth. She and her sister Doris have dedicated their all to public service. Doris runs a school for children. She is helped by about ten women teachers who work for a very small pay. Muriel runs the Ashram where I was staying. Day and night the two sisters think only of service. Both have remained unmarried and now they have reached an age when even the thought of marriage would not occur to them. We can see their purity marked on their faces. In Muriel's Ashram no distinction would ever be made between high and low or between whites and non-whites. One may suppose that she could expect some publicity by acting as my hostess. But what shall one say about her having let Tilakam stay at the place? You may ask Tilakam himself how he was looked after there. He went to it as a pauper. I had agreed to pay the expenses on his account. However, Tilakam gave to the Ashram his full services like the others, so that I did not have to pay a single penny on his behalf. Negroes too she admits into her institution, and treats them with the same respect and love. I have many such happy memories of my stay. But I hope that for the present you will be satisfied with what I have given.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

281. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

Silence Day, [January 25, 1932]¹

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

Since I cannot write to each of you separately, I shall try to write a joint letter to you all every week as before. I now intend to write to you about the things I had been hoping to explain to you when I would meet you. It is in God's hands to fulfil the intention. We should live as He may ordain and feel happy in doing so. This is why we sing that *bhajan* by Narasinh Mehta: "Take to heart neither happiness nor suffering; they are ordained for this body from its very birth." I will now tell you a story. First I wish to tell you about the school run by a lady named Doris. She is the sister of Miss Muriel who came to stay with us at the Ashram. She has dedicated her life to the service of

¹ This being Gandhiji's first letter to the Ashram children from Yeravda Prison, it is presumed that this was written on the same day as the preceding letter to Ashram women.

children, and to that end she has been running a beautiful school for them. It has no male teacher. All the teachers are women. The school is a two-storeyed building with a spacious terrace above, a part of which is covered so that when it is raining the children might play or go to bed under the roof. I liked one thing which I saw there. All the children are made to sleep in the school for half an hour in the afternoon, for which purpose they have small folding bedsteads. You should note that these boys and girls are not more than eight years old. The children are made to do all that they can with their own hands. In the games they play the teacher invariably joins them. The teachers also show them how to wash their faces and hands and how to brush their teeth properly. There is not a single activity of the children which is not supervised by a teacher. All the children belong to poor families and pay no fees. Games, physical exercises and handicrafts also are there. These children became as close to me as you had become. They sent me toys as a birthday gift, which I have carefully preserved and brought for you. But now I don't know when I shall be able to give them to you. This is enough for today.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8896. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

282. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

January 25, 1932

CHI. JAMNADAS,

You came and left without saying much. Now write to me and make the letter as long as you wish. How far are you succeeding in your work? How many pupils does the school have? And how many teachers? Where is Jagannath? Where are his brothers? How is your health?

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9361

283. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

January 25, 1932

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

You must have got my letter. I have had no reply from you. I write this letter, all the same, so that you may not worry. I am eager to get news about Father and others. I hope you don't worry about things.

Both of us are quite well. My diet is practically the same as it was when I was out of jail.

Blessings to you both from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3424

284. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

January 25, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. I don't know whether I shall be able to describe to you all that you want to know.¹

I didn't know that Dhurandhar had become the King's guest.

I very much enjoyed seeing the paintings in Rome, but what opinion can I give after a visit of two hours? What is my competence to Judge? And what is my experience in these matters? I liked some of the pictures very much indeed. If I could spend two or three months there, I would go and see the paintings and sculptures every day and study them attentively. I saw the sculpture of Jesus on the cross. I have already written and told you that it was this that attracted me most.

I didn't feel, however, that the art of that country excelled that of India. The two have developed along different lines. Indian art is entirely a product of the imagination. European art is imitation of Nature. Probably this makes Western art easier to understand. But, maybe, after we have understood it, it keeps us glued to the earth, whereas the more we understand Indian art the more it lifts us above the earth. I have stated these views simply because I must say

¹ The addressee had asked for an account of Gandhiji's visits to places of artistic interest in Rome and elsewhere.

something to you. I put no great value on them. It is likely that my unconscious partiality for India makes me say this, or my ignorance makes me ride the horse of fancy. But anyone who rides such a horse is sure to fall ultimately.

Even so, if you can learn anything from these views you may. If you have risen beyond such things, leave them aside. Parents can freely tell their children, who know less than they, stories from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* in the manner they know best; I am in a similar position in this matter.

You will be able to see from this that I do take interest in art. But I have renounced, have had to renounce, many such interests. I have relished to my heart's content the joy which everything connected with the search for truth gives me, and I would be ready still to relish it in more of such things. Tasks come unsought to a votary of truth. That is why by nature he is equipped to follow the teaching of the third chapter [of the *Gita*]. I believe I had been practising karmayoga even before I had read that chapter.

But I am straying, I am afraid, from the path.

You have done well in putting me questions¹ about the Ashram. Work is given the chief place in the Ashram life, because it is man's duty to do body labour. Anyone who shirks it, eats stolen food. Moreover, the work which we do in the Ashram is as much for service as it is for one's own benefit. We have put the spinning-wheel in the centre of our activities, because for the millions in the country spinning is the only work we can think of as a universal supplementary occupation to agriculture. It subserves moral and economic ends alike.

The Ashram exists not only for the service of the country but, through it, for the service of the world and to help us to attain *moksha*, to see God, through such service.

Not everyone can join the Ashram. It is not an infirmary, not an orphanage. It is meant for men and women who have dedicated themselves to service, to the realization of a spiritual goal. Hence it is not meant for people who cannot do body labour. However, we may admit persons who are filled with the spirit of service but who are disabled in body. Of course we can admit only a small number of such persons. And we certainly cannot ask those who joined the

¹ The addressee had asked what the ideals of the Ashram were and, quoting instances of apparently contradictory approaches to life, sought Gandhiji's opinion.

Ashram as regular members but who may have become disabled afterwards, to leave the Ashram. Outwardly, many of our actions in the Ashram may seem inconsistent but they will cease to appear so when examined more deeply. If you do not understand any point in this, you may ask me again. You may also express any other doubts which you may feel.

It was only rarely that I posed for a photograph while in England. I believe I have not violated my vow in doing that.

It is certainly not my wish, nor is it desirable, that everyone who comes close to me should be like me in every respect. That would mean mechanical imitation. If anybody wishes to take from me what may seem good to him, it will help him only if he takes what he can assimilate. In any case, who can prevail upon Sardar to stop taking tea?¹ And may it not be that tea serves as medicine to him? Some persons who are close to me, who are my co-workers, are even meat-eaters! What do you say to that?

Only those with whom tea does not agree or who refrain from it because they have considered how it is grown will never take it. Though Ba lives with me, she does take tea. She takes coffee too. I would even offer them lovingly to her. Why? I know, of course, that your question was good-humoured joking, but some false ideas and a degree of intolerance prevail among us in such matters and it is necessary to get rid of them. I don't know if you have this weakness, but it is desirable that you should know my views on this subject. There is much else in my other letters of this week; if you get an opportunity, read them and ponder over them.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10269. Also C.W. 6717. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

¹ The addressee had asked how Vallabhbhai could take tea while staying with Gandhiji in the jail.

285. LETTER TO RAMABEHN C. JOSHI

January 25, 1932

CHI. RAMA¹,

I must write to you. I often remember the tears in your eyes on that day. Is your mind at peace now? How are Vimala² and Dhiru³? Does the latter volunteer to work for Gangadevi, who looks after him with such kindness? Have Vimala and Dhiru become quiet now?

Tell Chhaganlal that I was glad to get the newspapers and read them. If he gets an opportunity now in jail to learn the *Gita* by heart, he should utilize it.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5334

286. LETTER TO SHANKERLAL BANKER

Y. M.,

January 25, 1932

CHI. SHANKERLAL,

Somebody has sent from Madras Ramanathan's speech against khadi, Pattabhi's and Varadachari's criticism of it and the rejoinder by Ramanathan. These have been published in the form of a small pamphlet. If the speeches by Pattabhi and Varadachari as published are complete, I would say they were inane. There is nothing much in Ramanathan's speech. But if it was thought necessary to reply to it, the reply should have been telling. Read the pamphlet if you have not done so. One point made by Ramanathan is worth considering. He says that there are very few persons if any, who spin in their spare hours. Those who spin have no other occupation and spinning to them is a full-time occupation. Even if that should be the case, I see nothing wrong in it. But if it is true, it does mean that our chain is broken. Gujarat's experience does not support Ramanathan at all.

¹ Wife of Chhaganlal Joshi

² Addressee's children

³ *ibid*

Gujarat may have shown less work; but we know every one of the spinners. Those who spin for money do so only in their spare time. The others spin for their own use, but they also do so in their spare time. We should have full mastery of our case. We do not want to shield the weak. We need not be ashamed, if the progress has been slow, to admit the fact. I am not going to admit defeat even if the progress has been slow or if its rate is declining; because to me the whole thing is as clear as day-light. And Ramanathan's own statement proves it. He asks if fifty persons working with a machine can do in two hours the work which they would take eight hours to do with hand. Who would be so foolish as to employ fifty persons for eight hours? If machines can thus give work to everybody who would protest against them? But Ramanathan has totally missed the point. He is not so dishonest as to do so deliberately. I therefore believe that he has fallen into ignorance and consequently his reason has become clouded. But be that as it may, we have to draw a lesson even from his speech, which please do. The responsibility for keeping the Charkha Sangh unsullied lies with you, so that one may say I can sit back in peace here. I would therefore keep shooting arrows from here, which you must take.

I have seen the Gulzarilal¹-Desai [note]. You must be keeping good health. Anasuyabehn too should write.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: G. N. 11538

287. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

YERAVDA MANDIR,
January 25, 1932

CHI. PRABHUDAS

It is good you have come on a short visit. As soon as the hot days begin, rush back to the hills. I do have it in mind to write a history of the Ashram². But we have to see whether I will get the

¹ Gulzarilal Nanda and Khandubhai Desai, who were in the Dhulia Jail for Gandhiji's letter to Sir Frederick Sykes, *vide* "Letter to Sir Frederick Sykes", 23-1-1932

² Gandhiji started writing it on April 5 and completed it on July 11, 1932.

necessary time for it and also whether I will be strong enough. I doubt whether my right hand will be sufficiently strong for me to write with. Though I have let it rest for four months, it cannot be said to have improved. Let us see what happens.

You may ask any questions you wish to.

You have said nothing in your letter about the Magan spinning-wheel.

About Almora, send me your questions so that it may be easier for me to reply.

About the history of the Ashram also, if you send me your questions, I will keep them in mind when I start writing.

Has your work regarding the *Ramayana* been completed? It would have been better if you had started writing on other subjects, too.

How do you spend each day there? What is your diet? I hope you do not suffer from constipation.

I had put several questions to you in my letter¹ to which you have still not replied

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original : S.N. 33022

288. LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI

January 26, 1932

CHI. JAMNA,

I got your letter. There are three things you should do to cure weakness and loose motions. Live on curds and fruit only. Fruit may include oranges, *jamun*, pomegranates, *papayas*, pineapple and grapes. Take hip-baths before eating anything and also sunbaths in the rays of the rising sun. You should take only a small quantity of curds at a time. Divide the total quantity into four meals. Go on reducing the quantity progressively if you find that you are not digesting all that you are eating. Do not be afraid that, if you do so, you will become weaker.

If and when you feel very eager to work, there are many types

¹ The reference, presumably is to the preceding item.

of work, both light and heavy, in the Ashram. All of them have equal value if done in a spirit of service.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 850. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

289. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

Tuesday, January 26, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

The yarn which I spun during my last imprisonment was sent there to be woven into khadi. If it has been woven, please let me know what its count was and whether it was strong enough for weaving or was rather weak.

Where are Ramji and others? How many weavers live there? What quantity of yarn is spun and woven in the Ashram every month? Can you say that the quality of yarn has improved in any degree?

Do you know what happened to the books which I had brought with me from England?

Putting this letter under the pad, I discover that I forgot to enclose the talk on Chapter XIV¹. I send it today.

Premabehn says in her letter that you have spoiled your health somewhat by eating ground-nuts. I strongly advise you not to eat them. If at all you wish to eat nuts which contain oil, you may eat only almonds. I would not advise you to eat any other nuts. The maximum quantity of almonds which you can eat is five *tolas*. If you are not taking any other nourishing food, five *tolas* of almonds will not be too expensive. The best course for you, of course, seems to be that you should take the diet of milk, fruit and uncooked vegetables which I have suggested to Kusum, provided, that is, you do not wish to eat *rotli*, etc. Alternatively, , milk or curds and some quantity of uncooked vegetables will form a perfect diet. If, occasionally, you drop *rotli* and milk, that will certainly help. You can live for two or three days on fruit alone. At that time, you should not eat nuts.

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Naradas Gandhi", 23/25,9,1932

Modern researches show that man needs very little of rich foods such as milk, pulses, etc. It has been proved, one may say, that most diseases have their origin in rich, fatty and starchy foods.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8204. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

290. LETTER TO H. W. EMERSON

Y.C.P.

January 27, 1932

DEAR MR. EMERSON,

After the receipt of your very frank and good letter received by me in London, I had not expected the turn the events took on my landing. I suppose I am right in thinking that yours is the brain working behind this repression. If my surmise is correct, I should not perhaps be shocked at anything that is happening. For did you not tell me in Delhi that you could hit hard in fight, as you could be perfectly warm in friendship? I am not going to consider you as an enemy.

Hence this letter. I hope you will not regard it as an impertinence. Did I not tell you in Simla that after all we had to convert the I.C.S. rather than the English people as a whole? I do not despair. Civil Resistance is a method of conversion. Behind it there is no ill will.

Perhaps you have seen my letter to the Viceroy sent some days ago.³ Last week I wrote to the Governor of Bombay.⁴

If the fact of the Government blunder is not recognized and repression must continue its mapped course are some of the things that are said to be happening necessary? One reads in the newspapers that notwithstanding denials, things are the worst in the Frontier Province. If they are not, why this expulsion of Father Elwin⁵, a cultured Englishman, and of Miss Naoroji, who is no immature girl but a woman of high attainments past 30? She is more English than Indian, having been brought up as a child under English influences. She is no politician. She is a polished singer. Love of the country has drawn her to the struggle, as conviction of British misrule in India has drawn Father Elwin to the Indian cause. You ought not to repel the

advances of such men and women. Try and see them. They are no fanatics. I must confess that I am filled with the greatest misgivings about the happenings in the Frontier Province. How I wish my misgivings were wholly unjustified, I would need very strong evidence to allay my worst fears.

I now come nearer home. Horses were run over an absolutely peaceful meeting in Ahmedabad. I observe that one of the injured boys has just died. I know some of the Ashram boys had severe injuries done to them. And I am glad that they had them rather than unknown boys or men. In Madras one youngster has succumbed to lathi blows. There they play hose pipes even on women. Two women are reported to have fainted through the force of the jet of water.

As Mrs. Gandhi is reported to have said justly at her trial, what is the use of women like her or men like Sardar Vallabhbhai and me being pampered prisoners when others who, being misled, as you would say by us, break laws and suffer lathi blows or worse? I do really think that there is much in what *The Daily Express* says when it suggests that I as the author of "all this mischief" should be sent to the gallows.

Does it not strike you that there is something terribly wrong with a Government that has to declare a thousand associations unlawful? How is it possible to crush a movement which has taken such deep root? You have suppressed social and economic activities. You have taken possession of school buildings, hospitals, khadi depots, a library that contains valuable research and religious works. Is that what you meant by hitting hard?

I fear you have undone Lord Irwin's work. I had come with the fullest desire to tender co-operation, if it was at all possible. You should have seen me, reasoned with me and if you had found me wilfully obstinate, you might have taken such course as you had thought necessary. As it is, I cannot help feeling that you took a course which I should not have thought you to be capable of taking.

I plead : retrace your steps. Some day there is no doubt there will be negotiation if not between the present Government and the present Congressmen, then between our successors. Let us not do anything that will make them meet with bitterness in their souls. I can say for myself with the clearest possible conscience that I have done nothing to embitter the relations. If you too can say likewise, I can only say let an impartial authority judge between us. In any case,

breath in me I shall long for co-operation even through my non-co-operation. I do not believe in a make-believe co-operation.

You will please pardon me for this long letter. If it is an infliction, you are to blame, for you allowed me to think that we had become good friends. I have exercised the privilege of a friend.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: India Office Library and Records. Courtesy: The British Library, London

291. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

January 27, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your letter. Mirabehn and others came and saw me. As requested by Mahavir in his letter, send the family to Darjeeling and give them money for the expenses there. Tell Valjibhai that he can send the translations¹ to me. I will see if they permit me to return them revised. My compliments to Surendra. He does not seem to have been hurt much.

The rest next week. You must have received the letter² which I posted today. I sent with it the talk on Chapter XIV which I had omitted.

Blessings from

BAPU

CHI. NARANDAS GANDHI

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM

SABARMATI

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8205. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

¹ Of the discourses on the Ashram vows, which Gandhiji wrote weekly in his letters to Satyagraha Ashram during his detention in Yeravda Prison in 1930. The first in the series was written in July 22, 1930; *vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi". These were first published in Gujarati under the title *Vratavichar* and later under the title *Mangal Prabhat*.

² *Vide* the preceding item.

292. A LETTER

January 28, 1932

MY DEAR,

You are right about the repetition of the prayers by some without knowing the meaning. Effort has been often made to remove the defect. But in a place which has a floating population, the task is difficult. A prayerful repetition is itself not a bad thing. It is like music that has no words. The music has its own distinct effect apart from words. This defence is good only where there is no hypocrisy and the mind is properly attuned.

If I am not mistaken the remains of food is not given to the cattle because it is not good for their health. They are scientifically fed. Burial is not waste. The food turns to manure. The real remedy is that there is no waste. We try to live the life of the poor and hence we should take in our dishes no more than we need. I know there are many difficulties.

Yours,

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8920. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

293. A LETTER

January 28, 1932

BHAI,

What further explanation do you want beyond what I have given in my writings on the *Gita*? Thoughts occur only in a *vikari* mind. The word *vikar* should be understood here in a very wide sense. *Vikar* means change of state. Even pure thoughts do not arise in a state of *samadhi*, and yet it is not a state of utter inertness. God does not think, because he is *nirvikar*¹. Absence of thoughts does not mean a state of inertness, it means pure consciousness. This is a state which cannot be described but can only be experienced. I don't mean to say, however, that I have experienced it. I believe in it through faith. I may even say that I have had a faint glimpse of it.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8907. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

¹ Not subject to *vikar*

294. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

January 28, 1932

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I got your letter. I am not surprised at what is happening today. I had expected it all. Much worse will follow yet. Didn't Sudhanva have to jump into a pan of boiling oil to prove his faith? Sita had to enter the flames, and Prahlad was forced to embrace a red-hot pillar. He whose faith in God is perfect has no limit to his endurance. God provides sufficient food alike to the elephant and the ant according to the need of each. There is a verse in the *Gita*¹ which says: "In whatever way men resort to Me, even so do I render to them." This is what it means: "I give to the people in proportion to the faith with which they worship Me." If you draw water from a well with a cup, you will get a cupful and, if you draw with a pitcher, you will draw a pitcherful.

Chanchalbehn has done good work indeed. I am writing to her. Go and give the letter to her or read it out to her. It should not be published.²

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro- 6: G.S. Gangabehnne, p. 62. Also C.W. 8789. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

295. LETTER TO LAKSHMIBEHN N. KHARE

January 28, 1932

CHI. LAKSHMIBEHN,

Do not forget me altogether. Write to me occasionally. How are you? Why does Mathuri remain weak?

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati. C.W. 279. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

¹ IV, 11

² *Vide* also "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 1-2-11932

296. LETTER TO AMINA G. QURESHI

January 28, 1932

CHI. AMINA,

I got your letter. Noorbanu also gave me news about you yesterday. I am sure that you two will do full honour to the position which Father held. May God grant long life to you both. I do know your courage.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6660. Also C.W. 4305. Courtesy: Hamid Qureshi

297. LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH

January 28, 1932

CHI. MANIBEHN,

Do you feel happy there? Can you hear better now? Does anybody stay in the Vidyapith? How is Narahari?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5965. Also C.W. 3282. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

298. LETTER TO SHAKARIBEHN C. SHAH

January 28, 1932

CHI. SHAKARIBEHN¹,

No woman need spare me while I am here. When I am outside, anybody writing to me may increase my burden. But while I am here you can make up for your previous [self-restraint]. Do, therefore, write to me. Is your mind at peace now? Why is it that Babu² remains weak?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.G. 29

¹ Wife of Chimanlal Shah

² Addressee's daughter, Sharda

299. *LETTER TO SHIVABHAI G. PATEL*

January 28, 1932

CHI. SHIVABHAI,

How are you getting along? Write to me in detail.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 422. Courtesy: Shivabhai G. Patel

300. *LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI*

YERAVDA MANDIR,

January 28, 1932

CHI. PRABHUDAS,

I have your letter. I like the views of Krishnadas. I would like him to stay with you. But the occasion is inopportune. The dissociation of Krishnadas from Wardha is looked upon by official guests, viz., Jamnalal, Vinoba and others as a betrayal of trust. I believe that he cannot give up the work he has undertaken unless he can do so in normal course. Ultimately, his inner self will help him get peace of mind. He would not get that by change of work. My advice therefore is let Krishnadas stick to his views, but he should not put them in practice. It seldom happens that what we like is also good for us. I feel it is true in the case of Krishnadas but such opportunity should be welcomed when it comes in the normal course. I am of the opinion that at present we cannot even ask Jamnalal and Vinoba and cause them inconvenience. I have formed my opinion according to my understanding of the situation based on the facts you have put before me. Let me know if there is a misunderstanding on my part or some facts are left out. If there is no misunderstanding, send this reply to Krishnadas. If the misunderstanding persists, ask me again.

We can ask Jamnalal or Mathuradas for the money for Almora. We should wind it up if we can. And if it is better to postpone it, you may do that. I cannot give any definite decision from here. You will have to run away when the summer comes. We will incur expenses but that cannot be helped. You are rendering whatever service you can. We should put up with it when the public malign us but have to be very cautious when our own heart takes exception to it.

I understand about the other answers. You are disappointed with yourself, I am not. I believe things have not gone out of our hands as long as you can prevent yourself from putting your views into practice. There is no scope for pessimism as long as we refuse to entertain such thoughts and keep on fighting them.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 32943

301. LETTER TO BUDHABHAI

[Before *January 29, 1932*]¹

CHI. BUDHABHAI,

The complaint Parvati has made in her long letter seems to be true. You beat and abused her and then went on a fast as penance. If this is true, it is bad. Even if you regard Parvati as your wife, our dharma treats it as sin for anyone to raise his hand against his wife. Nor should you have abused her. And having accepted her as a sister, how can you even frown at her? She is as free as you or I. She may go wherever she likes and do whatever she likes. As long as she observes dharma, she may either stay with you or separately from you. You should fix a liberal allowance for her maintenance as you would for a younger sister. It is all right if you went on a fast, but do not value it too highly.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 33125

¹ In his letter to the addressee dated January 29, 1932, *vide* (the following item) Gandhiji says that the ill-feeling between him and Parvati still persisted. Evidently this letter was written before the letter of January 29.

302. LETTER TO HARI-ICHCHHA P. KAMDAR

January 29, 1932

CHI. HARI-ICHCHHA,

I hear from Rasik that you gave birth to a child but the baby died after four months. That is what our life is like. All children born do not live, and even those that live will die some day. Need I, therefore, console you? Moreover, the children by the first wife are yours, aren't they? If the baby had lived, you would certainly have had my blessings for it. I would have been happy if you had come to see me. We shall meet now when God wills. Meanwhile, write to me.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

If you wish, you may write to me directly.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7468. Also C.W. 4914. Courtesy: Hari-ichchha P. Kamdar

303. LETTER TO JANAKIDEVI BAJAJ

January 29, 1932

CHI. JANAKIBEHN,

I could only look at you and didn't get time to speak even one word to you. Well, I have time enough now to write. You also should now write to me as long as you are free. In which prison is Kamalnayan¹ lodged? How is he? Ask Madalasa² and Om³ to write to me. How do you keep?

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

As you know, Sardar is with me. We pass our time quite happily. We eat and sleep and pace up and down.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2894

¹ Addressee's son

² Addressee's daughters

⁴ Sushila Gandhi's younger sister

304. LETTER TO NILKANTH B. MASHRUWALA

January 29, 1932

CHI. NILKANTH,

I got your letter. What is Kishorelal's diet? The copy of *Young India* has come with me here. Most probably *Gandhi Vichar Dohan* also is with me. I cannot revise it from here and return it. Let the thing, therefore, be printed as it is. Are all the prisoners kept together? Request Nathji to visit the Ashram off and on. How is his eczema? How often can you see Kishorelal? Where is Tara⁴? How is she?

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

Who is Lakhu? I don't remember him.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9419. Courtesy: Nilkanth B. Mashruwala

305. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

January 29, 1932

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

I got the letter you wrote from Siwan. I also received subsequently your earlier letter. I hope you get my letters. Tell Swarupraniji¹ that she should not feel worried at all because Swarup² and Krishna³ have left. God protects all his creatures. How is her health? My diet is practically the same as it was when I was out of jail. The weight is 106 pounds. Sardar Vallabhbhai is with me. Both of us are quite well. Do you read any newspapers?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3423

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru's mother

² Vijayalakshmi Pandit and her sister

³ *ibid*

306. *LETTER TO VIDYA HINGORANI*

YERAVDA MANDIR,
January 29, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

I learn from Anand's letter that both of you will have by now reached Hyderabad. I am sorry I could not talk to you at length. I hope your mind is at peace. How is your health? Keep writing to me. Where is Dr. Choithram? Do you occasionally go to Jairamdas's? How is everyone there?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Hindi. courtesy: National Archives of India and Anand T. Hingorani

307. *LETTER TO BUDHABHAI*

YERAVDA MANDIR,
January 29, 1932

CHI. BUDHABHAI,

I see that the ill-feeling between you and Parvati still persists. It is not right to stop speaking with Parvati, nor with the children. Sooner or later, you will have to win her over with love and even when she abuses you. Write to me and tell me what the trouble is. What are your present activities? How do you keep?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 33124

308. *LETTER TO DR. B. C. ROY*

December 30, 1932

DEAR DR. BIDHAN,

I have your great and good letter quite worthy of you. I love and accept your correction, and say with you that we are near to each other; and since we are near to each other, let me say that my letter had no complaint behind it. It simply went out as an advice in order to

secure what I thought would be a better working of the organization, and I expected you, as a friend, if my advice did not find any response within your breast, to say plainly to me, 'You do not know the situation, and therefore I do not accept your advice.' Of course, your reply said the same thing, but in an unexpectedly different manner, but that is all dead and gone. After having tendered you my apology, I had dismissed the incident from my mind, but you have revived the memory, and now rendered it sacred by your generous letter.

I am glad of the news you give me about your distinguished patients. It is quite like Baby to have placed her flat at Kamala's disposal.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 18493

309. A LETTER

January 30, 1932

CHI.,

I got your letter. If you wish and if your health permits, you may certainly come. But please don't feel that it is your duty to come. Where one *atman* is united with another, there is little need to express their unity through physical means. I realize daily from experience that we cannot give and receive through physical presence what we can indirectly through the heart.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8921. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

310. A LETTER

January 30, 1932

CHI.,

I got your letter. The Ashram exists in our hearts as much as it does on the bank of the Sabarmati. The Ashram on the bank of the Sabarmati can be seized by the Government or be swept away in the flood or be robbed, but no one can rob or burn the one in our hearts. That is the real Ashram. Live in Bombay with that in your heart, and

observe whatever rules your health permits. The principal vows can be observed whatever the condition of one's health.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8922. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

311. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

January 30, 1932

CHI. MANGALA,

You have improved your handwriting very much indeed. What about *Gitaji*? Have you learnt by heart all the chapters? Who else has done so? *Lakdi*¹ and *ladki*² don't sound very different from each other, so I can say that a *lakdi* is also a *ladki*.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4073. Also G.W. 37. Courtesy: Mangala B. Desai

312. LETTER TO MAHALAKSHMI M. THAKKAR

January 30, 1932

CHI. MAHALAKSHMI,

I have your letter.

It is probable that the gas trouble is caused by milk. Try the following. Take curds instead of milk, but not more than half a seer at a time. Add ten grains of soda bicarb to the curds. You may take one and a half seers of curds during the whole day. You can then take one and a half seers of dates. But they also should not exceed half a seer at a time. As the dates are likely to have been soiled, you should wash them before eating. There is no harm in mixing them with the curds after washing and taking out their stones. Remember that dates will need time to get softened in curds. In addition, take also the raw vegetables I mentioned earlier, but very little of them. You will certainly feel thirsty between meals. You may then take water with

¹ A stick

² A girl beloved by the family

soda bicarb and lemon-juice added to it. This will stop the gas and the body will feel light. Dates never cause gas. Probably it is caused by milk. If the curds cause constipation, take milk once instead of curds. If the milk is fresh and cold, you may soak dates in it also and eat them. They will get soft only if you let them soak for some time. If you eat them soon after putting them in cold milk, you will not find them soft. Dates cannot help you to become fat, but the milk might. One cannot live on dates alone for many days, if one wants to do physical labour. In the letter to Madhavji I mentioned one seer of dates, and this letter is an amendment of that since here I have suggested one and a half seers of curds or milk in place of three seers of milk.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

It is not necessary that you must take the things in the quantities I have mentioned. If you find either of them excessive, you may reduce it. Remember that seer here means 40 *tolas*.

Ask me about anything that is still not clear to you. Why should you refer to Madhavji always as Shriyut and not as Madhavji.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6819

313. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

January 30, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

I could give to you some more reminiscences of Miss Doris's school, about which I wrote to you last week. But I will leave that subject today and write about [Madame] Montessori's schoolchildren. Montessori is an aged lady. She has dedicated her life to children's education. She is an Italian lady. Learn from your teachers where Italy is and how its government is run. Keep the map of Europe before you. In the map it looks like a fat leg which has separated from the rest of the body.

But let us leave that and return to the school of the learned Madame Montessori. The lady happened to be in England, where they were holding a conference of all teachers who followed her method. She invited me to it and explained to me how and what they taught the

children. The most important thing was that the children felt no burden of learning as they learnt everything as they played. Secondly, the aim is to develop all the senses and organs of the child, that is, its hands, feet, nose, ears, tongue, skin and the mind, and they have very carefully planned a teaching programme with that aim in view. In the programme very little place is given to memorizing. Music has an important place, and it accompanies physical exercises also. They teach dancing too, and it gives plenty of exercise to the body. The children do most of the things by themselves and learn without effort to concentrate attention. The thing I liked most in their method was that they trained children to observe silence and concentrate. This is how they do it. The children sit with closed eyes, the teacher speaks in a voice no louder than a whisper into one's ear and children strain their ears to hear what she says. As soon as any child hears it, it goes over on its toes and sits by the side of the teacher. Till all the children have done this one after another, everyone is to remain sitting and keep silent. You, too, should try this.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

314. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

January 30, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. Has the trunk of books which I brought with me arrived there? Does anybody live in the Vidyapith? Does anyone take care of the books or is everything falling into ruin? Many of the monthlies too are worth preserving. It is desirable that there should be one whole-time person to look after the books assisted by two others. If this is not possible, we should not have allowed the library to grow so large. It is the duty of the Vidyapith to make this arrangement. It is not our job. It is because this was not our work that we started the Vidyapith, otherwise we would have turned the Ashram itself into a Vidyapith. The work does not lie within the Ashram's sphere of activities at all. Its work is primarily internal, and the Vidyapith's is primarily external, and so it ought to be. The aims of both are the same but their activities are different. In the Ashram, therefore, we should keep only such books as we require for our purpose. Other

books that we may need, we should borrow from the Vidyapith. All this, however, when we settle down again to our normal activities. Just now everything is being swept away by a flood, and that is all to the good. When the flood has subsided, don't we have a wide expanse of water, clear as crystal?

I remember the Nag Panchami festival, and I adhere to the reply which I gave on that occasion. Haven't I compared the breaking of heads to the explosion of crackers? Anyone who knows the nature of the *atman* will believe that to be literally so. If the *atman* never perishes, what does it matter that the houses it inhabits perish or that the garments which it puts on wear out and decay? Moreover, the *atman* is eternally perfect and so it can never lack a house to inhabit. If we but know the truth, it needs none. But all this is true only with reference to oneself. So long, therefore, as our own heads are being broken, we should think that crackers are exploding. Don't ask me how the *atman* can make a distinction between one's own and another's. So long as the body endures, we must assume this distinction in all our actions. As we die to ourselves, the distinction between one's own and another's loses its force for us, but so long as we go on killing others, the distinction becomes stronger. As the children gradually understand this truth, they too, like the young men in the Ashram, will become wise. But that requires patience on our part. In this connection, read my letter¹ to the children.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10270. Also C.W. 6718. Courtesy: Premabehn Katak

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

315. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

January 30, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

Why don't you write to me? How are you? In what form are you? With whom have you made friends? Which of them do you like most? Where do you live?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9420. Courtesy: Ravindra R. Patel

316. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

January 30, 1932

DEAR SISTERS,

I wish to write to you today about a lady. Her name is Maude Royden. She is an old woman. She has remained unmarried. She was the first woman in England to obtain the highest degree in theology. Besides her, there has been only one other woman who has obtained that degree. I am saying this not to show that theology is a very difficult subject, though it certainly is that. My point is that few women have been attracted to it. It does not help one to acquire status or importance in the world. Not only has Maude Royden studied the subject so deeply, but she has also dedicated her life to the service of the poor. Like Miss Muriel, she too makes no distinction between whites and non-whites. Through her own efforts she got a church built, which gives shelter to the poor and in which they hold their meetings. These services have brought the lady great honour. People valued her learning very little, but her services to the poor have made the lady very famous. She is also a powerful speaker, and in her character she is above all reproach. She relies on herself in all her activities and does not regard herself a weak and helpless woman. She has travelled widely and gathered much experience. Perhaps she may even come here to help us in our work. The main question before her will be whether she can be free from her present work.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

317. A LETTER

January 30, 1932

CHI.,

Ashram inmates should in no case be invited to a wedding celebration; how can people aspiring to observe *brahmacharya* have anything to do with weddings? Therefore you must keep yourself away in every respect from that wedding. Be firm in your reply.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 8923. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

318. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

January 31, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

It seems but yesterday that you all came.

I am glad you are coming in such close touch with Radha. She has in her the making of a good woman. You tell me you are not able to keep your evening prayer hours. If so, you should shift the hour and keep it regularly, just giving a few seconds to the thought at the Ashram prayer time. This is merely by way of suggestion. You know best how to manage the thing.

Please tell Nargisbehn to write to me and tell me all about the other three sisters.

We are still keeping well. I still need as much sleep as I can get or would take.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6213. Courtesy : Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9679

319. LETTER TO TARAMATI MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

January 31, 1932

CHI. TARAMATI,

I hope you are not upset because of the absence of Mathuradas. How is Dilip? Do write to me. Did you visit Mathuradas? Where is he? What does he get to eat? How is his health?

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

320. LETTER TO NIRMALA GANDHI

YERAVDA MANDIR,

January 31, 1932

CHI. NIMU,

Why are you tardy in writing to me. Do you feel lost because of Ramdas having gone to jail? How do you spend your time? How is the child? Does he give trouble? Does he also suffer from constipation? How do you keep? Do you go out for walks?

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Mrs. Sumitra Kulkarni Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

321. LETTER TO K. RAMACHANDRA

January 31, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I am sorry for the complication that has arisen there with reference to the temple-entry question. I have no doubt whatsoever that whilst a non-Hindu may sympathize with the reform movement, he cannot and ought not to take part in any direct action.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. K. RAMACHANDRA
SRI WICKRAMA
WELLAWATTE
COLOMBO

From a microfilm: S.N. 18494

322. LETTER TO GOPALA MENON

January 31, 1932

MY DEAR GOPALA MENON,

I have your letter of the 26th instant. Now that the fast is off for the time being, I shall watch what work Kerala is going to put in.

The taking of signatures to the memorial is, I hope, proceeding apace. You should report the number taken from day to day. You must have fixed a time limit.

The work of educating public opinion should continue side by side with constructive work amongst the Harijans.

Yours sincerely

From a microfilm: S.N. 18495

323. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

Night, January 28/February 1, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I feel that my right hand will not give good service for long, and so I intend to use both hands. It will take more time, of course. But I should not want time here. I will give less time to other work. I have written a letter to Chanchalbehn whose son Visu died the other day. That letter should not be published or talked about. My actions are governed by mutual trust. I do nothing without the knowledge of the authorities. I will talk to them about this letter. There seems nothing wrong to me in writing a letter of condolence. But it would be wrong if such a letter were published. That would be propaganda. That is why I have asked Gangabehn¹ to show that letter to Chanchalbehn and then bring it back with her. No letter of mine is intended for publication in newspapers. There is nothing wrong, though, in your publishing in the "Ashram Samachar" extracts from them containing moral discussions or news about our health.

Parnerkar does not seem to have calmed down. I believe that the problem before him is certainly a moral one. Call him to you and comfort him. Ultimately, of course, you will do what you think best.

I don't look upon the orchard as a white elephant. It is a useful investment. The money that is spent on it will not, in the long run, have been wasted. An orchard always increases the value of the land, helps the soil to retain moisture and cools the air. This is a universal experience. The choice of trees to be planted may of course require thinking. I have only stated a general principle. Obtain Prof. Trivedi's opinion. He has seen the plot of land. Send him a list of the plants and the number of each. Ask him if he can throw some light. Write also to Prof. Higginbottom. Pattanisaheb must have employed a curator. You may seek his assistance, too. It is possible, however, that under the present pressure of work, you will not get time to think about all this. If that is so, ignore my suggestions. Totaramji is everybody to us and we should be content with what he can do.

Where is Somabhai? And Bhansali? Have you any news of Lilabehn? How is Hasmukhram?

¹Vide "Letter to Gangabehn Vaidya", 28-1-1932

Afternoon, January 29, 1932

I got your second letter today. Do not send by post the leather for repairing the soles of sandals. Anyone who may come to see us may bring it along with him. I see great risk in keeping . . .¹ alone with . . .². She may have exaggerated in her letter, but . . . is not responsible for himself. How can one say when he will have a fit of madness? If you keep . . . with him, a responsible person should stay with them. If . . .³ can control . . ., he may stay with them. Or somebody else. The position would have been different if. . . had strength of her own to stay with Moreover, . . . is a slave of passion. If, under the urge of passion, he assaults. . . and she becomes pregnant, that too would be a painful matter. Think over all this and do what you think best. I have written this because I know that you can bear the burden of every kind of responsibility.

Do they permit food to be supplied to Abbas Saheb from outside? Do we supply any? How is Mridula's condition? Is the newspaper report about Ranchhodbhai correct?

I am writing to both Budhabhai and Parvati. Is Nanibehn there?

Night, February 1, 1932

Anyone who proposes to come and see me should first see Dahyabhai or know from him if he has any message to send. This should be done so that both may not come here and Dahyabhai may be able to send a message if he wishes to.

There are 57 letters this time, not counting yours and the talk on the *Gita*.

Blessings from

BAPU⁴

At night, February 1, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

Please ask the women and find out whether they understand the purport of the accompanying summary and let me know. On further reflection I see that I should make a third attempt and give a

¹ The names have been omitted.

² *ibid*

³ *ibid*

still easier summary. I do not know whether I shall be able to do that, but it may help me if I see some criticism of what I am about to complete.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8206. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

324. LETTER TO JANAKIDEVI BAJAJ

Silence Day [January-February, 1932]¹

CHI. JANAKIBEHN,

How are you? Have you kept up your courage? How is Madalasa? Do not worry about Kamalnayan. Haven't you learnt from Vinoba's *Talks on the Gita* that one should not worry about anything?

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 83

325. LETTER TO MARCHIONESS CARLA VITELLESCHI

February 2, 1932

DEAR CARLA,

I got your letter. Yes, you are right. Had I not felt for you as for my own daughter, I would not have spoken to you as strongly as I did that morning. I am now glad of the step you have taken. I am quite sure that your place is by your husband's side. You must shake off your uncertainty and wavering nature.

You may write whenever you feel like it.

May God give you light and peace.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

¹ As given in the source

[PS.]

Not remembering your full name I am addressing the envelope by your maiden name.

MADAM CARLA
HOTEL DES INGENIEURS
52 RUE BLANCHE
PARIS-MONTMARTRE, FRANCE

From a photostat: G.N. 2511

326. LETTER TO PREMLILA THACKERSEY

February 2, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

There is a stream of gifts from you. I understand the love behind them. But have mercy on me. Both of us get here all that we want. The money which they spend on us here is also people's money. I will not hesitate to ask you for anything that I need. I sent a message through . . .¹ requesting you not to go on sending fruits, etc. But parcels continue, and that is why this letter. I ate for many days the honey which you had given me for the voyage. It was excellent.

Vandemataram from

MOHANDAS

LADY VITHALDAS THACKERSEY
YERAVDA HILL

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4821. Courtesy: Premlila Thackersey

327. LETTER TO NANIBEHN JHAVERI

YERAVDA MANDIR,

February 2, 1932

CHI. NANIBEHN JHAVERI,

I have your letter. Your handwriting has improved a great deal. You have also come up, and are coming up, nicely. Have patience.

¹ Omission as in the source

It is ignorance to think 'I do, I do.'

Even as that of the dog walking under the cart.

Believing that we are the doers can lead to much trouble, for we do nothing at all. We sing:

I move as He moves me,

I am pierced by the rapier of love.

Does the song¹ also not convey the same meaning?

Do you remember the words: "I bring attainment and possession of what has been attained"²? May God protect you.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Manavtana Prahari—Pannalal Jhaveri, pp. 25-6

328. LETTER TO P. G. MATHEW

February 3, 1932

MY DEAR MATHEW,

Your letter. You are as shy as ever I see. Do shake it off and write freely.

I am glad you are looking after Tilak and took charge also of Bharatan.

You must try and write a few lines to me in Hindi. Parsuram tells me you have made progress.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1548

¹ By Mirabai

² *Bhagavad Gita*, IX. 22

329. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

February 3, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

I have your letter. Your handwriting is good. Your weight is far too little. You can sit in the sun after 8 a.m. Before that, you must cover yourself. As the heat increases and if you don't feel cold, you can remove the clothes and massage the body. By doing this you will not feel the chill. You may not take cod-liver oil during Gangabehn's treatment but you can massage the body with it. They say that too helps.

How much milk do you take?

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9905. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

330. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

February 3, 1932

BHAI VALJI,

No one in the Ashram can keep a parrot in a cage.

If someone happens to do it, the manager will free the parrot which is bound to fly away once it gets an opportunity.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 7418. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

331. A LETTER

February 3, 1932

BHAI,

Whatever you do, do it not only with truth and ahimsa but in the spirit of surrendering all to God and of pure service.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 8932. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

332. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

Unrevised

February 4, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letter. I propose to post this directly. The account Damodardas gave me of your health disturbed me. He tells me, and your letter confirms that you are working at feverish heat.¹ You ought to slow down. You can't keep up till midnight always and get up at 4 a.m. If work till midnight is a necessity, you should rest fully immediately after prayer.²

And if a weekly visit to Yeravda will soothe your nerves, you must come every week. I have put no embargo. I simply pointed out my own feeling in the matter. A prisoner is a prisoner. As it is, the authorities allow weekly visits and I can as yet see no reason not to avail myself of the permission. But it is at best a precarious privilege not worth making much of. Self-control is the best thing for a prisoner and his friends and dear ones. But self-control to be self-control must brace one up. It becomes mechanical or superimposed when it unnerves or saddens one. You will come sparingly only if you see the beauty of self-restraint and having seen

¹ "I was busy collecting all the authentic news I could regarding the civil disobedience movement. This I selected and edited and sent abroad in cyclostyled copies."—Mirabehn

² "4 a.m. was the usual prayer time."—Mirabehn

it, exercise it naturally. If it depresses you, know that the effort is strained and unnatural for you. In that case, you should come without the slightest hesitation.

I have gained 1 lb. in weight. It is now 107 lb. Vallabhbhai is steady at 144_ lb. Honey will come in useful.

I had a brief note from the Privats.

Who are the ladies in the household now?

My love to Nargisbehn, Jalbhai and Kamala. Is Kamala not going to Panchgani?

Do not expect another letter from me through the Ashram post.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6214. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9680

333. LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI

February 4, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA¹,

There are indeed some persons who shed tears when they are happy and smile when they suffer. Our effort should be not to shed tears or smile in either condition.

On what subjects have you written compositions? Which poems do you like best in the text for the seventh form?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9463

334. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

February 5, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

After all I have an excuse for writing to you again.

Do you know what happened to the toys that Doris's children had sent me and which I had asked you to keep for our children? If you know where they are and if they can be easily traced, let the children have them.

¹ Mahadev Desai's step-sister

Another thing is about the case containing books. Do you know if Pyarelal or Mahadev sent the case to the Ashram or the Vidyapith? Perhaps Manilal knows. If you have no time to think of this, much less to attend to it, do not bother.

I hope you got my letter¹ directly that I wrote to you yesterday. This though being written today (Friday) will be posted only on Tuesday.

Remember, please, that you will share with the Ashram the letters. I may write to you directly.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6215. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9681

335. LETTER TO M. G. BHANDARI

February 5, 1932

DEAR MAJOR BHANDARI²,

I observe that you have over two hundred civil resistance prisoners in the extension. Many of these are intimate co-workers. I knew that you had already several from Poona but as they were important public men, I did not ask for meeting them. But with regard to the large number now admitted, an occasional meeting with them is a human want I may not resist. Exactly the same question occurred last year and after talks with Major Martin and then Major Doyle, permission was given to me to see these prisoners occasionally and in small batches of two or three. I repeat the request and I hope that the authorities will have no objection to my seeing these fellow-prisoners and workers, subject of course to the same restrictions as last year.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 5131

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", 4-2-1932

² Superintendent, Yeravda Central Prison

336. LETTER TO ABBAS

February 5, 1932

CHI. ABBAS,

I got your letter. Your description of a bamboo spinning wheel is very fine. The wheel seems very cheap. Personally, I find the portable Gandiva¹ very convenient and easy to work. Has your speed of spinning improved appreciably? I understand what you say about carding. Has any improvement been effected in the ginning machine? What is the highest count of the yarn from which we can weave khadi now?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6306

337. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

February 5, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

I got the letter written by Kanu on behalf of you all.

By now you ought to have acquired a sense of duty. You ought to follow all the rules laid down for you. No one should resign the responsibility which he has undertaken. The authority going with it should be for us a means for doing greater service and learning greater self-control, and, therefore, no one should resign his post of service in a hurry. The atonements fixed by you for a breach of the various rules are good. See that you now stick to them. I will complete today the description of Miss Doris's school by telling you something which I had left out in my previous letter². Once the children had arranged a social gathering. In England it is common for people to meet and have tea with something to eat. At this gathering there was an exhibition of things made by the children. The children were to play the games for the guests to see and were to serve tea to the gathering. And they did all this without any confusion and without the least noise. The items displayed included dances, physical exercises and some dramatic pieces. It was a very fine sight to watch these small

¹ A type of spinning-wheel

² *Vide* "Letter to Ashram Boys and Girls", 25-1-1932

children serving tea to the whole gathering. Remember that all these children were under eight years of age. It was no small thing for them to go round with tea-cups and bread, etc., in a tray and serve guests. And I did not notice any child spilling anything. Excellent also were their drawings, their sewing and knitting work, etc. They had made an album for me, which I have of course brought for you. But all these things remain with me. One of you should write a letter to these children. He may write it in Gujarati or in Hindi, and somebody may translate it for you into English and you may send the original letter together with the translation.

The Address is:
C/o Miss Doris Lester
Children's House
London East

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8927. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

338. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

February 5, 1932

DEAR SISTERS,

Only a few of you are now left there. But there is an ebb and flow in all things in the world. Mother *Gita* teaches us to remain unaffected by rise and fall, sunshine and cold, or happiness and misery. We are at present getting an object-lesson in the Mother's teaching. If all of you learn it well, our trust in the *Gita* will have borne fruit. I have observed that in certain respects people in Europe act according to the teaching of the *Gita* without knowing it. Just now I remember only one thing, and I will describe it to you. Whenever I went out of London I used to put up with friends, who may be said to be well-to-do. I saw that the servants at their places lived not as servants but as members of the family. They did not put an excessive burden of work on the servants, but worked side by side with them. If anybody had to get up early in the morning, he would not disturb the servant from his sleep but attend to the work himself. At several places I found the servants to have been with the family for many years. In almost every family they

introduced me to their servants. Their love of cleanliness was wonderful. On seeing all this, my respect for the friends increased very much. Is it any wonder that these servants should be well paid? I at any rate feel that we ought to admit that we have not reached this level in our relations with our servants. Don't you agree? This is the yoga of cultivating equality. Arjuna told the Lord how difficult it was, and He replied that, though difficult, it could be learnt through patient effort and cultivation of disinterestedness. We should try and learn it.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8928. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

339. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

February 5, 1932

CHI. GANGABEHN (SENIOR),

I got your letter. I see that you are devoting your time to good work. Write to me regularly from wherever you may be. If God protects even ants, surely He will not leave us unprotected. He is the Creator, the Destroyer and the Preserver. That is why He preserves even while destroying.

I have nothing particular to say about ourselves. We eat and walk and sleep, that goes without saying. In between we read, spin, etc.

Wherever you may be, do not forget to pray daily.

If you can recite no other prayer, you can do at least the *Ramadhun*.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-6: G. S. Gangabehnne, p. 63. Also C.W. 8790. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

340. A LETTER

February 5, 1932

CHI.,

It seems, you are destined to remain delicate all your life. That certainly ought not to be. I see that you have given up worrying about your health. From one point of view, it is good. But giving up worrying should not mean that you should make no attempt to improve it. Daily doses of medicines are not the right remedy. Change of diet and exercise are bound to cure constipation. Which food and which exercises will suit you is for you to find out.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8930. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

341. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

February 5, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. Sardar has really given up tea. I knew that he had given up the morning tea. He used to have a cup at ten. Now he has given up that too. I knew this after he had done so. I didn't say a single word to him. He has acted of his own free will.

It was not my intention to state that I had sent English toys for the children. If that is what I did, I made a slip. What I wished to say was that I had brought some toys. Now I don't know when I would be able to give them. They were in Mirabehn's custody. Perhaps she will remember where they are kept.

The books were in a trunk. Either Mirabehn or Pyarelal would know about them. If you lift and feel the weight of the trunk which has not been opened, you will know whether it contains books or something else. Perhaps Mahadev knows about it.

This is what is meant by seeming inconsistency. An apparent inconsistency either in my life or in the affairs of the Ashram can be explained. There is only an appearance of inconsistency in the action of a person who wraps up his body in winter and keeps it uncovered in summer. He obeys the same principle both when he

covers the body and when he leaves it uncovered. Many such seeming inconsistencies can be properly explained. Other inconsistencies are such in fact. They are due to my or Ashram's weaknesses. They should be regarded as moral deficiencies and every effort should be made to overcome them. Which inconsistencies are really such and which are only apparent ones can be decided only when we examine all of them one by one. If you wish to ask me about any inconsistencies which you may have noticed, please do.

No one hates another without a cause. Hence, non-violence lies in loving a person, feeling compassion for him and serving him even when he has given us cause for hating him. There is no non-violence in loving a person who loves us; that is but the law of the world. Non-violence may be described as making a gift. Giving love in return for love is no more than doing one's duty.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10271. Also C.W. 6719. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

342. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL

February 5, 1932

CHI. PUSHPA,

I should pull your nose from here for having spent so many days before finding time to write to me. Here, take it. Just now it is eight o'clock at night on Friday. Write to me and tell me whether you felt the nose pulled. For you, the handwriting in your letter was good. Make it still better. How far have you come up in the *Gita*?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3978

343. LETTER TO RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE

February 6, 1932

DEAR RAMANANDA BABU,

Many thanks for *The Modern Review*.¹ Do please send me *The Golden Book of Tagore*. It will be allowed. My love to Gurudev when you meet him.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

SJT. RAMANAND CHATTERJEE

“[THE] MODERN REVIEW”

UPPER CIRCULAR ROAD, CALCUTTA

From the original: C.W. 9501. Courtesy: Santa Devi

344. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

February 6, 1932

DEAR MARY²,

I was delighted to hear from you. Yes, I am permitted to write and receive non-political letters such as yours is.

The paper³ on which you wrote your letter is nothing new to me. Ahmedabad used to be the home of such paper. It is prepared there even now but in very small quantities. There are several such places in India. The second chapter of the *Gita* has presented difficulties to many. I would commend to your attention my introduction⁴ to the *Gita*. I have dealt with the difficulty in that introduction. If you have not read it, get a copy from the Ashram. It was published in *Young India*. In the first instance, forget that God is speaking through the *Gita*. God never speaks save through defective human agency. In the second instance, it is not to be treated as a historical book. Thirdly, it

¹ *Vide* “Letter to Ramanada Chatterjee”, 22-1-1932

² Of Mission Boarding School near Hyderabad; popularly known as Marybehn, she became interested in Gandhiji’s speeches and writings during her furlough in England in 1931 at the time of Round Table Conference; she became acquainted with Gandhiji on board s.s. *Pilsna* while returning to India.

³ Hand-made

⁴ *Vide* “Anasktiyoga”

was written by him in whose time war was not taboo and was not considered inconsistent with ahimsa, just as even now generally speaking, killing of animals for food or in self-protection is not considered inconsistent with ahimsa, though in point of fact it is. The author of the *Gita* therefore chose for driving his lesson home an illustration which we are entitled to consider as defective. Personally I have no difficulty in understanding the second chapter. The central teaching of the *Gita* is in Biblical language 'Be careful for nothing'. Results are not for us to control. Having known the path of duty it must be pursued in total disregard of consequence. Arjuna's reasoning was defective and arose from attachment to earthly ties. He was not averse to war, he was averse to fighting kinsmen. The religious answer to this attachment would be, there is no kinsman and no-kinsman¹. All are—the whole creation is— kinsmen or no one is. If therefore it is lawful to wage war at all, it makes no difference whether it is kinsmen who are concerned or strangers. But this physical, outward war is merely a shadow of the war that is going on within—between God and Satan, forces of evil and good. And do we not always have difficult and delicate problems of conscience arising within us? The *Gita* says, "Surrender all to God, He will take care of you and your doubts; do not vex yourself about anything but simply perform the service that comes to you in the name of and for the sake of God. Cultivate uttermost selflessness and all will be well." The result of this selfless detachment must be uttermost truth and non-violence. Thus² read, the second chapter instead of being a hindrance becomes, in my opinion, a help. If this does not satisfy you and you will pursue the subject further, pray do not hesitate to write.

We are keeping the early morning hours³. I mean Sardar Vallabhbhai and I.

I am glad you liked your brief stay at the Ashram. Of course you will go there, whenever you feel like it.

¹ Perhaps a slip for 'non-kinsman'

² The source has "This".

³ Of prayer

Thanks for the offer of books. I have a fair stock and friends and strangers continue to send books which they think I should read. Even apart from the *Gita* difficulty, do write whenever you feel like it.¹

Yours,

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 5981. Also C.W. 3309. Courtesy: Mary Barr

345. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

February 6, 1932

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

You came and met me but we could not talk. I had been worrying about Venilal, so I had gone to see him once accompanied by Ba. How is he now? Write to me in detail. Where is Umiya², and how is she? How are the other girls? How are your relations with Kasumbi³? Do write to me about how your work is going on.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./III

¹ In her book, *Bapu—Conversations and Correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi*, Mary Barr explains: "I replied to the above letter and after that there was a long pause without anything from him. I . . . felt sure that he would have replied if he had received my letter. So I wrote again, a mere postcard asking if he had my second letter. His answer was equally brief and open." *Vide* "Letter to F. Mary Barr", 6-2-1932

² Addressee's daughter

³ Addressee's wife, Kasumba

346. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

February 6, 1932

CHI. MANGALA,

I suppose the broken point of the thorn has come out now. Try and get over the mistakes which you make when reciting the *Gita* verses. Do you know the meaning of the verses? Have you learnt any Sanskrit?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4074. Also C.W. 38. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

347. LETTER TO MATHURI N. KHARE

February 6, 1932

CHI. MATHURI,

I certainly like your getting up early in the morning, but a girl of weak health like you must be free to sleep whenever she wants to. You should do only as much as you can without getting tired or bored.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 261. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

348. LETTER TO SHIVABHAI G. PATEL

February 6, 1932

CHI. SHIVABHAI,

I got your letter. One must never forget prayer. As the body craves for food when it is hungry and does not forget about it, so the soul should yearn to pray. The prayer may consist of nothing more than Ramanama, but one ought not to forget it in any circumstances. To the extent that you forget it occasionally, to that extent it is an external thing to you. Prayer must become so intimately a part of

one's being that at last one's every breath is accompanied by Ramanama. As an eyelid goes on doing its work, one will go on repeating Rama's name with every breath.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9507. Also C.W. 423. Courtesy: Shivabhai G. Patel

349. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

February 6, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

If a boy or girl does not know what to write, he or she must be stupid. Surely, you are not stupid, are you? If you even describe the events of the day on which you write, you can fill the whole letter. Try this when you reply to this. You will have enough material to write about.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5763. Also C.W. 2986. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

350. LETTER TO RAMJI G. BADHIA

February 6, 1932

BHAISHRI RAMJI,

Your letter made me very happy. Your decision to follow Shankerlal's advice is certainly very good. I expect much from you. I felt relieved to know that Jivanlal's health was all right.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./III

351. LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI

February 6, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA,

I cannot answer from here your question about foreign cloth, for it is a political subject. You may, therefore, ask Narandasbhai about it, and if you are not satisfied by his answer we shall discuss the question when we meet.

Tell Mahadev that he cannot afford to lose weight in this manner. One may eat the food that [one's body]¹ requires. What does Mahadev read at present?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9464

352. LETTER TO NANIBEHN JHAVERI

YERAVDA MANDIR,
February 6, 1932

CHI. NANIBEHN JHAVERI,

I am writing letters. Sardar is going through the newspapers and reading out important items to me. I have just learnt about you and other ladies having been arrested and later released. I would not write to you thinking you would be in jail and the next thing I learn from the papers is that you are free and far away. Now, if you get this letter, do let me have all your experiences.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Manavtana Prahari—Pannalal Jhaveri, p. 26

¹ Some words are missing here in the source.

353. LETTER TO NIRMALA GANDHI

YERAVDA MANDIR,
February 6, 1932

CHI. NIMU,

So, I have at long last got a letter from you. You have no such reason as I have, of preoccupation with other work for not writing. So, doesn't your not writing to me mean only lethargy on your part? The thought that my own daughter is suffering from constipation is unbearable to me. Ramdas is only a few yards away from me but, as for our meeting, if at all it is there, I do not know when that will be held. The Superintendent here told me that he is fine.

Do not be tardy again in writing to me. What is Navanit doing these days?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Mrs. Sumitra Kulkarni Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

354. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

[After February 6, 1932]¹

I got yours today. I was wondering what had happened to you. I did not receive your letter in reply to mine. Do write again and 96

repeat your questions. I think I shall receive it safely. We are all doing well, engaged in various studies and spinning. We have more books than we can cope with. Love from us all.

BAPU

Bapu-Conversations and Correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi, p. 15

¹ *Vide* footnote 1, "Letter to Jaisukhlal Gandhi", 6-2-1932

355. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

February 7, 1932

CHI. RAIHANA,

I was glad to get your letter. Of course I make many mistakes. Be patient. Leave off correcting when you get tired of doing so. I will try to write every week. Having started the practice, I will not give it up. May God grant a long life to my teacher. Tell Father that both of us remember him several times during the day. Tell him that he must come out of the jail palace a young man. It is a good thing that Ravishankar is there to look after him. Blessings from me to Hamida and other girls and women.¹

I hope this much will be enough for today. I should not trouble you too much. If I do not learn Urdu quite well, the fault will be my teacher's. The poor pupil is helpless.

To Mother many many salaams, *vandematarams* and love from us both, to Sohaila blessings, to the baby kisses and to you a slap. Do not think about your disease. Why should one who has fallen in love with God, worry about disease or anything else? Do you know the *bhajan*, "I will go dance now, singing praises of God"? I heard it once from that lawyer-daughter of Uma Nehru. She is quite a good singer. But why speak of *bhajans* to you? You are yourself a veritable mine of them.

Many blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9637

356. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

Wednesday, February 3/8, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your packet just this evening.

Lady Vithaldas, Bhai Trivedi, Vidya Hingorani and Damodar came in the afternoon and saw me. I got the leather for the sandals. I have heard that Ramdas, Chhaganlal, Surendra, Somabhai and others, in all 190 persons, have arrived here. Most probably some of them will see us.

¹ Up to this the letter is in Urdu.

For your scabies, you should eat green leaves and tomatoes. Baths with [potassium] permanganate will certainly help.

At the bottom of the letter from C.P. Scott's son you write that you have sent by book post a biography of the late Scott. The book does not seem to have been received here. If you remember to have sent it, write to me again so that I may inquire further.

You have stated in the "Ashram Samachar" that I spin 500 rounds in two days. I spin, not 500 rounds, but 500 yards, in two days. I spin 375 rounds in two days and it is my ambition to spin as many in one day. But I do not think I shall be able to fulfil it as quickly as I had hoped.

Night, February 6, 1932

I had a letter from Tilakam. The food does not seem to have agreed with him. Read my letter to him, and if he agrees, carry out my suggestions. Pulses do not agree with people who are used to meat. If they start with milk, they experience no difficulty. They ordinarily eat *rotli*, etc., even with meat. As a substitute for meat, they generally take pulses, but a stomach used to meat cannot digest pulses. In any case such persons must not eat any kind of nuts such as ground-nuts, etc. Milk and curds are but pure forms of non-vegetarian food.

February 8, 1932

You will find with this an article on the subject of the existence of God. It is a translation of a portion of an article published in *Young India*.¹ I had read that portion² for a gramophone record. The record is on sale now. Anand³ heard it. He took down the extract and sent a copy to me for translation. The Hindi article mentioned above is a translation of that extract. The translation should not be published now. Anand wants the Hindi translation to help him to make a Sindhi translation. Send it to him and ask him not to publish it just now. The inmates of the Ashram can read it. You may even publish it in the *Ashram Patrika*. If you do, publish it as an original article. Let Parasram correct its Hindi. I leave it to you to decide whether or not you should publish it in the *Patrika*. If your publishing it is likely to be misconstrued or if someone is likely to reproduce the article

¹ *Vide* "God Is"

² On October 17, 1931; *vide* "Diary, 1931"

³ Anand Hingorani, who has since published its Sindhi version under the title "*Iswara Ahe? Ha, Ahe.*"

elsewhere, drop the idea. It will be enough if the inmates of the Ashram who are there read it, think over it and understand its meaning.

I read in the papers news about a few things having been seized from the Ashram. I expect I shall get more details from you.

I have some free time today and so I wish to describe a few details of the routine here.

Both of us get up at 3.40. After brushing, we pray. After that, we take warm water with honey and lemon juice and then read till the stroke of five. From five to six, we walk. At six, if I feel the call of nature I answer it, and then sleep for about 20 minutes. I get up at 6.45, when the bell for opening the cells is given, and read up to seven. The Sardar, after answering the call of nature, walks about and sits down to breakfast when milk is brought. As he eats the breakfast, he reads from the newspaper, which has arrived by then. During the day, I read, write and spin. In between I take a nap twice. The Sardar walks about much longer than I do. He generally reads from the newspapers which are supplied to us. I have two meals a day. The Sardar occasionally eats salad or something else like that at twelve. I again take warm water and honey at that time. When the honey is exhausted, I add jaggery and lemon-juice. I once happened to remark that Mirabehn or Pyarelal used to prepare fruit for me to eat. Since then the Sardar has monopolized that duty. It is he who prepares dates and tomatoes for me and does it with great love. I have accepted this loving service without the slightest hesitation. Having mentioned the service rendered by Mirabehn and Pyarelal, it would be a useless attempt on my part to decline the Sardar's help. He takes milk and bread in the morning. At four in the afternoon, he takes bread, curds and some vegetables and, generally salad. I used to take milk in the morning, with dates, tomatoes and, from the fruit sent by Lady Thackersey or Prof. Trivedi, some oranges, *chikus*, etc. At present, I eat dates and tomatoes and, in the morning, take half a pound of milk, and in the evening the same quantity of curds. But I see that I shall have to reduce the quantity of milk still further. My health is good, of course. Do you know that my weight has increased? I see that now I do not need very nourishing food, especially when I enjoy solitude and peace of mind. This was my experience last year. While in jail, I could live without milk and maintain my weight. After my release, I lost weight in a short time for want of milk and, therefore, resumed it. In England, it was only with that that I could keep up my strength. Here I may not perhaps need milk. On the contrary milk may even do me harm. Of course I will do no violence to my body. My aversion to milk

remains. But I will give the body what it requires. Let no one, therefore, worry after reading this. I will also mention some other work which the Sardar does. It is he who trims the envelope which you send and prepares it [for use again]. There are many such happy details which I can mention. But are not these enough? Just as we walk about between five and six in the morning, so do we again in the evening. Between six and seven, I read. Meanwhile, the Sardar prepares dates, babul sticks for brushing teeth, etc., for me and then joins me in the cell. At seven, the prayers begin. After prayers, reading and writing again, till 8.30. By nine, we are in bed. Both of us sleep in the open. From among newspapers, we get *The Times [of India]*, *The [Bombay] Chronicle*, *The Tribune*, *The Leader*, and *The Hindu*. From among weeklies, we get *Social Reformer*, and from among monthlies, *The Modern Review*. As for books, I get some from outside and I have brought some with me. They supply enough fare to both of us.

I have read the following books so far: Durant's [*The Case for*] *India*, Crozier's *A Word to Gandhi*, Brailsford's [*Rebel*] *India*, Al HajSalmin's *Imam Hussain and Khalifa Ally*, Samuel Hoare's *Fourth Seal*, R. MacDonald's travelogue, *Survey of Matar Taluka*¹, Ramanathan's *Speech on Khadi*, Will Hayes' *Essence of Hinduism*², Ruskin's *St. George's Guild*, Shah's *Federal Finance*, Rothenstein's *Ruin of Egypt*, Hayes' *The Book of the Cow*, A. E's. *Candle of Vision*, Kinley's *Money*, and *Shankh ane Kodi* (Gujarati). I am now reading the biography of Munshi Zaka Ullah written by Andrews and Shah's book, *Sixty Years of Economic Administration of India*. The Sardar has read Hoare's and MacDonald's books and is now reading the book on Egypt. He gives plenty of time to newspapers and, in addition to the two hours which he gives to walking, as I have mentioned, he must certainly be spending two hours more in walking at other times.

Besides this, there are 36 letters.

Blessings from

BAPU³

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8207. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

¹ By J. C. Kumarappa

² Among the list of books given at the end of "Diary, 1932" the name appears as "Hayes' Indian Bibles".

³ For the text of the *Gita* discourse (Ch. xvi) which followed, *vide* "Letters on the *Gita*"

357. *LETTER T O AGATHA HARRISON*

February 8, 1932

MY DEAR AGATHA,

I have your letter. I was wondering how you were doing. I was therefore glad to hear from you. I may not say more beyond sending my love. Sardar Vallabhbhai is with me and we are both keeping well.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

MISS AGATHA HARRISON
2 CRANBOURNE COURT
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD
LONDON S.W. 11

From a photostat: G.N. 1450

358. *LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI*

Y. M.,

February 8, 1932

MY DEAR ANAND,

I was so glad to see Vidya. She was looking very well indeed. I am now sending for your help, not for publication, a rendering of my speech¹ on God. It is only a fragment of a fuller thing in *Y. I.* which you should see, if you have not already.

Love to you both.

BAPU

From a microfilm. Courtesy: National Archives of India and Anand T. Hingorani

¹ *Vide* "God Is" and "God Is", *fn.* 3.

359. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

February 8, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

I have two letters from you lying before me. I now understand the riddle of *nama hasude* [sic]. It is a good way Narayanrao has found for honouring himself. It is not for nothing that he is a Raosaheb.

Whom did Gajanan ask? No responsible person here knows about the matter. Let me know the date and the hour too. I waited for him very long.

I do not remember whether or not I had before me the *mantra*, *Hiranmayena*¹, etc., when it occurred to me that “Truth is God”. When such things occur to me, they spring straight from the heart as if they were original intuitions. For me, these truths have the certainty of personal experience.

If Gajanan is hereabouts, he may still accompany somebody who may be coming to see me. I have referred to Narayan’s visit in the general letter.

I hope there is no hurry about the *Bhajanavali*. I wish to offer some suggestions.

Do you think that Rambhau has made good progress? Who are taking music lessons with interest at present?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 226. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

¹ *Isopanishad*, 15; vide “Ashram Bhajanavali”

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

ROMAIN ROLLAND'S LETTER TO AN AMERICAN FRIEND¹

December, 1931

How I should have liked to have you here during the visit of the Indians! They stayed five days—from Sunday night until Friday afternoon, the eleventh—at the Villa Vionette. The little man, bespectacled and toothless, was wrapped in his white burnoose, but his legs, thin as a heron's stilts, were bare. His shaven head with its few coarse hairs was uncovered and wet with rain. He came to me with a dry laugh, his mouth open, like good dog panting, and flinging an arm around me leaned his cheek against my shoulder. I felt his grizzled head against my cheek. It was, I amuse myself thinking, the kiss of St. Dominic and St. Francis.

Then came Mira (Miss Slade), proud of figure and with the stately bearing of a Demeter and finally three Indians, one young son of Gandhi, Devdas, with a round and happy face. He is gentle and but little aware of the grandeur of his name. The others were secretaries—disciples—two young men of rare qualities of heart and mind: Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal.

As I had contrived shortly beforehand to get a severe cold on my chest, it was to my house and to the chamber on the second floor where I sleep at Villa Olga—you will remember it—that Gandhi came each morning for long conversations. My sister interpreted with the assistance of Mira, and I had also a Russian friend and secretary, Miss Kondacheff, who took notes on our discussions. Some good photographs by Schlemmer, our neighbour from Montreux, recorded the aspect of our interviews.

Evening at seven o'clock, prayers were held in the first floor salon. With lights lowered, the Indians seated on the carpet, and a little assembly of the faithful grouped about, there was a suite of three beautiful chants—the first an extract from the *Gita*, the second an ancient hymn of the Sanskrit texts which Gandhi has translated and the third a canticle of Rama and Siva, intoned by the warm, grave voice of Mira.

Gandhi held other prayers at three o'clock in the morning for which, in London, he used to wake his harassed staff, although he had not retired until one. This little man, so frail in appearance, is tireless, and fatigue is a word which does not exist in his vocabulary. He could calmly answer for hours the heckling of a crowd, as he did at Lausanne and Geneva, without a muscle of his face twitching. Seated on a table, motionless, his voice always clear and calm, he replied to his adversaries open or masked—and they were not lacking at Geneva—giving them rude truths which left them silenced and suffocated.

¹ Vide "Discussion with Romain Rolland", 6-12-1931

The Roman bourgeoisie, and nationalist, who had at first received him with crafty looks, quivered with rage when he left. I believe that if his stay had lasted any longer the public meetings would have been forbidden. He pronounced himself as unequivocally as possible on the double question of national armaments and the conflict between capital and labour. I was largely responsible for steering him on this latter course.

His mind proceeds through successive experiments into action and he follows a straight line, but he never stops, and one would risk error in attempting to judge him by what he said ten years ago, because his thought is in constant evolution. I will give you a little example of it that is characteristic.

He was asked at Lausanne to define what he understood by God. He explained how, among the noblest attributes which the Hindu scriptures ascribed to God, he had in his youth chosen the word 'truth' as most truly defining the essential element. He had then said, "God is Truth." "But", he added, "two years ago I advanced another step. I now say," Truth is God'. For even the atheists do not doubt the necessity for the power of truth. In their passion for discovering the truth, the atheists have not hesitated to deny the existence of God, and, from their point of view, they are right." You will understand from this single trait the boldness and independence of this religious spirit from the Orient. I noted in him traits similar to Vivekananda.

And yet not a single political ruse catches him unprepared. And his own politics are to say everything that he thinks to everybody, not concealing a thing.

On the last evening, after the prayers, Gandhi asked me to play him a little of Beethoven. (He does not know Beethoven, but he knows that Beethoven has been the intermediary between Mira and me¹, and consequently between Mira and himself, and that, in the final count, it is to Beethoven that the gratitude of us all must go.) I played him the Andante of the Fifth Symphony. To that I added "Les Champs Elyses" of Gluck—the page for the orchestra and the air for the flute.

He is very sensitive to the religious chants of his country, which somewhat resemble the most beautiful of our Gregorian melodies, and he has worked to assemble them. We also exchanged our ideas on art, from which he does not separate his conception of truth, nor from his conception of truth that of joy, which he thinks truth should bring. But it follows of itself that for this heroic nature joy does not come without effort, nor even life itself without hardship. "The seeker after truth hath a heart tender as the lotus, and hard as granite."

Here, my dear friend, are a few hints of those days of ours together on which I have taken much more detailed notes. What I do not dwell on to you is the hurricane of intruders, loiterers and half-wits which this visit loosed on our two villas. No, the

¹ Mirabehn joined Mahatma Gandhi at the suggestion of Romain Rolland.

telephone never ceased ringing, photographers in ambuscades let fly their fusillades from behind every bush. The milkmen's syndicate at Leman informed me that during all the time of this sojourn with me of the "King of India" they intended to assume complete responsibility for his "victualling". We received letters from "Sons of God". Some Italian wrote to the Mahatma beseeching him to indicate for them the ten lucky numbers for the next drawing of the weekly national lottery!

My sister, having survived, has gone to take ten days' rest at a cure in Zurich. She returns tomorrow. For my part, I have entirely lost the gift of sleep. If you find it, send it to me by registered mail!

Bapu's Letters to Mira, pp. 180-3

APPENDIX II *TELEGRAM FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY*

December 31, 1931

HIS EXCELLENCY DESIRES ME TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR TELEGRAM OF THE 29TH INSTANT IN WHICH YOU REFER TO BENGAL AND UNITED PROVINCES AND N.W.F.P. ORDINANCES. IN REGARD TO BENGAL IT HAS BEEN AND IS NECESSARY FOR GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES TO PREVENT DASTARDLY ASSASSINATION OF THEIR OFFICERS AND OF PRIVATE CITIZENS. HIS EXCELLENCY WISHES ME TO SAY THAT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT DESIRE TO HAVE FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH ALL POLITICAL PARTIES AND WITH ALL SECTIONS OF THE PUBLIC AND IN PARTICULAR TO SECURING CO-OPERATION OF ALL IN GREAT WORK OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS WHICH THEY ARE DETERMINED TO PUSH FORWARD WITH MINIMUM DELAY CO-OPERATION, HOWEVER, MUST BE MUTUAL AND HIS EXCELLENCY AND HIS GOVERNMENT CANNOT RECONCILE ACTIVITIES OF THE CONGRESS IN UNITED PROVINCES AND N.W.F.P. WITH THE SPIRIT OF FRANK CO-OPERATION WHICH THE GOOD OF INDIA DEMANDS. AS REGARDS THE UNTIED PROVINCES, YOU ARE DOUBTLESS AWARE THAT WHILE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WERE ENGAGED IN DEVISING MEANS TO GIVE ALL POSSIBLE RELIEF IN THE EXISTING SITUATION THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED A NO-RENT CAMPAIGN, WHICH IS

¹ *Vide* "Telegram to Viceroy", 29-12-1931

NOW BEING VIGOROUSLY PURSUED BY THE CONGRESS ORGANIZATIONS IN THAT PROVINCE. THIS ACTION ON THE PART OF THE CONGRESS BODIES HAS COMPELLED GOVERNMENT TO TAKE MEASURES TO PREVENT A GENERAL STATE OF DISORDER AND SPREADING OF GLASS AND COMMUNAL HATRED WHICH THE CAMPAIGN, IF CONTINUED UNCHECKED, WOULD INEVITABLY INVOLVE.. IN THE N.W.F.P., ABDUL GHAFAR KHAN AND BODIES HE CONTROLLED HAVE CONTINUOUSLY ENGAGED IN ACTIVITEIS AGAINST GOVERNMENT AND IN FOMENTING RACIAL HATRED. HE AND HIS FFRIENDS HAVE PERSISTENTLY REFUSED ALL OVERTURES BY THE CHIEF COMISSIONER TO SECURE THER CO-OPERATION AND, REJECTING DECLARATION OF THE PRIME MINISTER, HAVE DECLARED IN FAVOUR OF COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE, ABDUL GHAFAR KHAN HAS DELIVERED NUMEROUS SPEECHES OPEN TO NO OTHER CONSTRUCTION THAN AS INCITEMENT TO REVOLUTION AND HIS ADHERENTS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO STIR TROUBLE IN THE TRIBAL AREAS. THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER, WITH THE APPROVAL OF HIS EXCELLENCY'S GOVERNMENT, HAS SHOWN UTMOST FORBEARANCE AND TO THE LAST MOMENT CONTINUED HIS EFFORTS TO SECURE ASSISTANCE OF ABDUL GHAFAR IN CARRYING INTO EFFECT, WITH THE LEAST POSSIBLE DELAY, INTENTIONS OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNEMNT REGARDING CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS IN THE PROVINCE. GOVERNMENT REFRAINED FROM TAKING SPECIAL MEASURES UNTIL THE ACTIVITIES OF ABDUL GHAFAR KHAN AND HIS ASSOCIATES AND, IN PARTICULAR, THE OPEN AND INTENSIVE PREPARATION FOR AN EARLY CONFLICT WITH GOVERNMENT, CREATED A SITUATION OF SUCH GRAVE MENACE TO PEACE OF THE PROVINCE AND OF THE TRIBAL AREAS AS TO MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FURTHER TO DELAY ACTION. HIS EXCELLENCY UNDERSTANDS THAT ABDUL GHAFAR KHAN WAS IN AUGUST LAST MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR LEADING CONGRESS MOVEMENT IN THE PROVINCE AND THAT THE VOLUNTEERS ORGANIZATIONS HE CONTROLLED WERE SPECIFICALLY RECOGNIZED BY ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE AS CONGRESS ORANIZATIONS. HIS EXCELLENCY DESIRES ME TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT HIS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PEACE AND ORDER MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO HAVE ANY DEALING

WITH PERSONS OR ORGANIZATIONS UPON WHOM REST THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTIVITIES ABOVE OUTLINED. YOU HAVE YOURSELF BEEN ABSENT FROM INDIA ON BUSINESS OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE AND IN THE LIGHT OF THE ATTITUDE WHICH YOU HAVE OBSERVED THERE HIS EXCELLENCY IS UNWILLING TO BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE PERSONALLY ANY SHARE IN THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OR THAT YOU APPROVE OF THE RECENT ACTIVITIES OF CONGRESS IN THE UNITED PROVINCES AND THE N.W.F.P. IF THIS IS SO, HE IS WILLING TO SEE YOU AND TO GIVE YOU HIS VIEWS AS TO THE WAY IN WHICH YOU CAN BEST EXERT YOUR INFLUENCE TO MAINTAIN THE SPIRIT OF CO-OPERATION WHICH ANIMATED THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE. BUT HIS EXCELLENCY FEELS BOUND TO EMPHASIZE THAT HE WILL NOT BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS WHICH YOU MEASURES WHICH GOVERNMENT OF INDIA WITH THE FULL APPROVAL OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT HAVE FOUND IT NECESSARY TO ADOPT IN BENGAL, THE UNITED PROVINCES AND THE N.W.F.P. THESE MEASURES MUST IN ANY CASE BE KEPT IN FORCE UNTIL THEY HAVE SERVED THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THEY WERE IMPOSED NAMELY PRESERVATION OF LAW AND ORDER ESSENTIAL TO GOOD GOVERNMENT; ON RECEIPT OF YOUR REPLY HIS EXCELLENCY PROPOSES TO PUBLISH THIS CORRESPONDENCE.

India in 1931-32

APPENDIX III

TELEGRAM FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY¹

January 2, 1932

HIS EXCELLENCY DESIRES ME TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF YOUR TELEGRAM OF 1ST JANUARY WHICH HAS BEEN CONSIDERED BY HIM AND HIS GOVERNMENT. THEY MUCH REGRET TO OBSERVE THAT UNDER YOUR ADVICE THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE HAS PASSED A RESOLUTION WHICH INVOLVES GENERAL REVIVAL OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE UNLESS CERTAIN CONDITIONS ARE SATISFIED WHICH ARE STATED IN

¹ *Vide* "Telegram to Private Secretary to Viceroy", 1-1-1932

YOUR TELEGRAM AND THE RESOLUTION. THEY REGARD THIS ATTITUDE AS THE MORE DEPLORABLE IN VIEW OF THE DECLARED INTENTIONS OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO EXPEDITE THE POLICY OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM CONTAINED IN THE PREMIER'S STATEMENT. NO GOVERNMENT, CONSISTENT WITH THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY, CAN BE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS SOUGHT TO BE IMPOSED UNDER THE MENACE OF UNLAWFUL ACTION BY ANY POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, NOR CAN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACCEPT THE POSITION IMPLIED IN YOUR TELEGRAM THAT THEIR POLICY SHOULD BE DEPENDENT ON THE JUDGMENT OF YOURSELF AS TO NECESSITY OF MEASURES WHICH GOVERNMENT HAVE TAKEN AFTER THE MOST CAREFUL AND THOROUGH CONSIDERATION OF THE FACTS AND AFTER ALL OTHER POSSIBLE REMEDIES HAD BEEN EXHAUSTED. HIS EXCELLENCY AND HIS GOVERNMENT CAN HARDLY BELIEVE THAT YOU OR THE WORKING COMMITTEE CONTEMPLATE THAT HIS EXCELLENCY CAN INVITE YOU, WITH THE HOPE OF ANY ADVANTAGE, TO AN INTERVIEW HELD UNDER THE THREAT OF RESUMPTION OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE. THEY MUST HOLD YOU AND THE CONGRESS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH MAY ENSUE FROM ACTION WHICH THE CONGRESS HAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR INTENTION OF TAKING AND TO MEET WHICH GOVERNMENT TAKE ALL NECESSARY MEASURES.

India in 1931-32; also Young India, 7-1-1932

APPENDIX IV

*VERRIER ELWIN ON GANDHI'S ARREST*¹

Gandhi was staying in a house called Mani Bhuvan and he invited us to stay with him there. There was great excitement in the city; the Viceroy had finally rejected the Congress offer of peace; Nehru was already in jail, and arrest of other national leaders was expected at any moment.

But when we reached Mani Bhuvan and climbed to the roof, we found a great serenity in astonishing contrast to the crowds and turmoil outside. The roof was a very pleasant place. Low tents had been erected, and there were palms and plants; at

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Varrier Elwin", 4-1-1932

least 300 people could gather there. It was cool and you could see the stars. Bapu was sitting at the wheel quietly spinning. He had already begun his weekly silence. I carried on a one-sided conversation with him, and he wrote down his questions and replied on a scrap of paper which I still have. I must have begun by asking if there was anything I could do.

He wrote:

“I have sent for you for that very purpose. I have told Mahadev all I have been revolving in my mind. When he comes he will tell you or I shall briefly write what is wanted.

How are you keeping in health?

He [Mahadev]¹ should be coming shortly. If he does not during the time I finish this I shall write out what I want to say.

You are sleeping here? If so is your bedding, etc., arranged?”

Then Shamrao and I retired to the smaller tent and Bapu lay down about three yards from us, while some thirty others lay on the roof under the canvas shelter. Mrs. Gandhi and Mirabehn gave us a surprisingly satisfying supper of dates, nuts and fruit. But I could not sleep. As I wrote at the time, ‘I felt I had to keep vigil, and for hours I was under those splendid stars that rose, tier upon tier above me, while beside me Bapu slept like a child committed to his Father’s hands. I thought of Christ going up to Jerusalem, his eyes filled with determination and courage: and I seemed to see the Spirit of Christ travelling the centuries like a bright sword turned against all wrong and injustice. Among these sleeping friends so dear to us, brave, pure-hearted, sincere, the spirit of love was manifest and unconquerable.

At last I lay down between Shamrao and Bernard on my hastily improvised bed on the floor, just beside Bapu, and fell into a deep sleep, when suddenly like the coming of a dream there was a stir and a whisper: ‘The police have come.’

We started up and I saw what I shall never forget—a fully uniformed Commissioner of Police at the foot of Bapu’s bed, and Bapu just waking, a little bewildered, looking old, fragile and rather pathetic with the mists of sleep still on his face.

‘Mr. Gandhi, it is my duty to arrest you.’

A beautiful smile of welcome broke out on Bapu’s face and now he looked young, strong and confident. He made signs to show that he was keeping silence.

The Commissioner smiled and with great courtesy said, ‘I should like you to be ready in half an hour’s time.’

It was five minutes past three. Bapu looked at his watch and the Commissioner said, ‘Ah, the famous watch!’ and they both laughed heartily. Bapu took a pencil and wrote, ‘I will be ready to come with you in half an hour.’

¹ As given in the source.

The Commissioner laid his hand on Bapu's shoulder with a gesture so full of affection that I thought it was an embrace, until I realized that it was the formal token of arrest. Bapu then cleaned his teeth and retired for a moment. The door was guarded, and all of us who were on the roof sat round in a circle. I looked out on to the road where some had been keeping all-night vigil and where a little crowd, very quiet and orderly, had collected, but there were no special police precautions.

When he was ready, Bapu sat in the midst of us for the prayers and we sang together the song of the true Vaishnava. Then Bapu took pencil and paper and wrote a few messages, some last instructions to his followers and a letter¹ to Sardar Vallabhbhai, which was as follows: . . .

He then wrote a short note² and gave it to me: . . .

Then Bapu stood up to take farewell. It was a strange sight: the police at the door, Mirabehn and Devdas bustling to and fro with the baggage which was already packed, Bapu surrounded by his friends, many of them weeping. Mrs. Gandhi with tears running down her cheeks said, "Can't you take me with you?" Everyone in turn touched his feet, and when I said goodbye he pulled my ear with a smile. He was in very good spirits: he might have been going to a festival rather than a jail.

Then, followed by the whole company, he went downstairs. Shamrao and I watched from the roof. The tiny figure got into the car and the crowd surged round it. It was a wonderful tribute to India's non-violence that there were only a few policemen and they were able to be in the midst of the crowd without fear of danger. Just at that moment a message came to say that Sardar Vallabhbhai, the Congress President had also been arrested. And then the crowd scattered as the car bearing the very soul of India drove away through the dark and deserted streets.

The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin, pp. 65-8

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 4-1-1932

² *Vide* "Letter to Verrier Elwin", 4-1-1932

APPENDIX V

*LETTER FROM R. M. MAXWELL*¹

Secret

HOME DEPARTMENT (POLITICAL),

No. S. D. 310
CASTLE,

BOMBAY

January 16, 1932

FROM

R. M. MAXWELL, ESQUIRE, C.I.E.

ACTING SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY
HOME DEPARTMENT

TO

THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF PRISONS
BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

SIR,

I am directed to inform you that the Governor in Council has been pleased to issue the following orders with regard to the privileges to be allowed *for the present* to the State Prisoners, Messrs Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Vallabhbai Patel and regarding the arrangements to be made for their periodical medical examination.

2. PERIODICALS AND NEWSPAPERS: Both the prisoners should be allowed the following periodicals and newspapers: *The Times of India*, *The Bombay Chronicle*, *The Leader* (Allahabad), *The Tribune* (Lahore), *The Hindu* (Madras), *The Indian Social Reformer*, *The Modern Review*, *Young India* and *Navajivan*.

3. LETTERS: Both the prisoners may, as requested by them, be allowed to write letters once a week; or oftener with the previous permission of the Superintendent of the Prison. All correspondence to and from the prisoners should be censored by the Superintendent of the Prison. Vernacular letters which cannot be translated in the Prison should be sent to the Oriental Translator to Government for translation unless the District Magistrate can arrange to have them translated in his office. All objectionable correspondence should be withheld. In doubtful cases a reference should

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Ramananda Chatterjee", 22-1-1932

be made to Government. Any letters which the Superintendent considers should be seen by the Police should be forwarded by him to the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, C.I.D., Poona.

4. HEALTH AND PERIODICAL MEDICAL EXAMINATION: The two prisoners will remain in the medical care of the Superintendent of the Prison, but arrangements should be made in consultation with the Surgeon General with the Government of Bombay for their full medical examination with as little delay as possible by the Civil Surgeon, Poona, in conjunction with the Superintendent and for a report of the examination to be submitted to Government at once. Similar arrangements should be made for subsequent medical examination by the same two officers of Mr. Gandhi once a month and of Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel once in three months. A copy of the report should in each case be submitted to the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor. The Superintendent should also consult the Civil Surgeon, Poona, if at any time either prisoner appears to be suffering in health or is attacked by any serious illness.

I am to request that you will communicate to the prisoners, through the Superintendent, the orders in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 so far as they pertain to them with the omission of the instructions regarding censorship of correspondence in paragraph 3.

I am also to request that you will invite the attention of the Superintendent to the first sub-section of Section 5 of the Bombay Regulations and ask him to furnish the Government with a report required by this sub-section.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

ACTING SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

HOME DEPARTMENT

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40), Pt. I