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**LEADERS
CONFERENCE**

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LEADERS CONFERENCE

An authentic account of the Leaders Conference held at New Delhi on 19th and 20th February 1943 in respect of Mahatma Gandhi's Fast. Also Gandhiji-Linlithgow correspondence, public statements, bulletins and day to day developments of the fast, etc., etc.

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LONG LIVE GANDHIJI
(3-3-1943)

One minute caricature by Devy. Rumanian Artist, formerly of Walt Disney Studio.

THE PRELUDE

Early on 10th February, 1943, came the official announcement from New Delhi that Mahatma Gandhi had resolved to go on fast for three weeks. All India was deeply stirred by this grave report. This was not the first fast of its kind for Mahatma Gandhi, but who could forget the serious risk to his life which even the previous Poona fast, over a decade ago, for the Harijan cause had caused? The entire Indian public was plunged in grief and anxiety, for the question uppermost in everyone's mind was: "Can Mahatma Gandhi, at the advanced age of 74, stand a fast for 21 days?"

Along with the official announcement were also published the letters which passed between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy. It was clear from the correspondence that both sides were firm in their respective resolves. Neither was the Viceroy prepared to accept any of the alternatives offered by Mahatma Gandhi nor would the Mahatma go against his pledge. The country was faced with an unseen future—dark, full of fears and anxieties. Reports pouring from all parts of the country showed only one thought in the minds of the people—something, nay everything, should be done to save the life of Mahatma Gandhi.

Fortunately, there were at the time in New Delhi a number of prominent Leaders including Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State, who had come for the Budget Session. On the very next day telegrams were sent to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. C. Rajagopalachari appealing to them to give a lead to the country on this distressing occasion. Mr. K. M. Munshi proposed a Conference of Leaders, and both approved of the idea. Immediately afterwards an informal meeting was held at Hon. Pandit H. N. Kunzru's residence where it was decided to hold the Conference as early as possible. A list of over 150 Leaders representing various communities, creeds and interests was prepared and express telegraphic invitations were sent to them in following terms:

In pursuance to general desire to consider situation arising Gandhiji's fast earnestly request you join Conference here on nineteenth Friday afternoon Kunzru Ghuznavi Srinivasan Joshi Kazmi Banerjee Choudhry Santsingh and selves convening Reply Birla House.

C. Rajagopalachari, K. M. Munshi, G. L. Mehta.

This was confirmed by post on the same day. The letter was as under:

New Delhi,
13th February, 1943.

Dear Sir,

In response to the general desire to consider the situation arising out of Gandhiji's fast, we have earnestly to request you to join a Conference which is being convened at 28, Ferozeshah Road, New Delhi, on Friday, the 19th February, 1943, at 3-30 P.M. and will continue on Saturday, the 20th February, 1943, and to give us the benefit of your advice and assistance in its deliberations.

A line in reply c/o "Birla House", Albuquerque Road, New Delhi, will be highly appreciated.

Yours Truly,
G. L. MEHTA,
on behalf of

1. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
2. Mr. K. M. Munshi
3. Mr. N. M. Joshi
4. Mr. G. L. Mehta
5. Sir A. H. Ghuznavi
6. Mr. K. Srinivasan
7. Pandit H. N. Kunzru
8. Dr. P. N. Banerjee
9. Mr. Abdul Rashid Chowdhary
10. Sardar Sant Singh
11. Mr. M. A. Kazmi

Convenors.

The response to this was overwhelming. Telegrams and letters began to arrive from all parts of the country wholeheartedly supporting the object of the Convenors. Those who could not come to Delhi for unavoidable reasons sent messages wishing complete success to the Conference and endorsing the demand for the immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi. In the meantime, reports from Poona about Mahatma Gandhi's health which were daily coming in, added to the anxiety in the public mind. At the end of the first week, his condition was described by the Doctors as having deteriorated to such an extent as to cause anxiety.

Only two days prior to the Conference, it was officially announced that the three Indian Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council had resigned—Mr. M. S. Aney, Sir Homi Mody and Mr. N. R. Sarker. The reason which led to their resignation was explained by them in a public statement in which they said:-

“Our resignations from His Excellency the Governor-General's Council have been announced, and all that we desire to do is to say by way of explanation that certain differences arose on what we regarded as a fundamental issue (the issue of the action to be taken on Mahatma Gandhi's fast) and we felt we could no longer retain our offices.”

It was in this tense atmosphere that the Conference of the Leaders met on Friday the 19th at 3-30 P.M. at 28, Ferozeshah Road, New Delhi. Such health bulletins as were available from Poona showed that Mahatma Gandhi's condition was rapidly approaching a crisis—no one could tell how it would end.

Over 200 persons representing practically every section in the country were present at the Conference—Hindus, Muslims, Parsees, Sikhs, Christians, Europeans. There were political Leaders, prominent Businessmen, big Industrialists, members of the Legislature and many others.

In order to give a quiet setting to the Conference, suited to the gravity of the occasion, it was decided to hold it in a specially erected Shamiana. Only the invitees and the Press were allowed into the Conference but as a large number had gathered outside to greet the Leaders and watch the proceedings, special arrangements had been made through loudspeakers to broadcast the speeches to the gathering outside. The Leaders were loudly cheered when they arrived to take part in the Conference—particularly Mr. M. S. Aney, who received a big ovation.

The Conference began with prayers for two minutes.

●

SMUTS SAID THIS

It is sheer nonsense to talk of Mahatma Gandhi as a "Fifth Columnist." He is a great man. He is one of the great men of the world and he is the last person to be placed in that category. He is dominated by high spiritual ideals. Whether these ideals are always practicable in our difficult world is another question.

●

WELCOME SPEECH

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

This gathering is a source of great consolation, if not strength, on the present grave occasion. The struggle now is between positive force I will not call it brute force, it is too stale--and the force of public opinion.

Every heart would be gladdened if by any means Mahatmaji could be released now and his fast could terminate. I don't think there can be any difference of opinion on that point, though there may be difference of opinion as to the policies and programmes from time to time pursued by Mahatmaji or other people. In the whole of this country there is nobody who would stand against his release but everybody would want it and be gladdened by it. What is it that prevents such a thing happening? It is positive force as I have called it. If nothing else can prove and expose the present situation, this can, that Mahatmaji is kept in prison though every body in India wants him to be released. The character of the present Government needs no further evidence to be thoroughly understood.

What then have we met for? We have met as far as I understand in the spirit of the scripture to which Mahatmaji is attached, that we should do whatever we can do, not minding the results or caring for the fruition of our labours. If fruition comes let us welcome it. If it does not come, let us have the feeling that we have done our utmost. We have met, therefore, to try to give expression to this universal feeling in this country that Mahatmaji should be enabled to end his fast. We have not met to exploit the situation for any particular view or any political or economic or other ends.

No party can achieve its ends better without him than with him. I was going to say that nobody could achieve his ends without him, but I have put it at its lowest. We all want him and nobody will be hurt by his release. The vast majority of the people of India feel we have no hope for the country for a good long time if he should be allowed to extinguish himself on this occasion.

Mahatmaji has undertaken what he called a fast to capacity. He has judged his capacity. He is a strange man, a unique man, a strange leader of all of us. He goes in some matters by the minimum and in other matters by the maximum. He has judged his capacity and taken the pledge to undergo a fast for 21 days. I have known him for some time. A large number of you know him also. His physical capacity today to bear the fast is not what it

was before. A 21 days fast is a terribly over-estimated limit he has placed over himself, but having placed it he is not in a position to revise it. He has spoken of death and about going to the seat of Judgment. As far as I can see it would be folly to imagine he has any alternative, such as Lord Linlithgow has, of changing his plan.

What is it that Government apprehends? Government apprehends that releasing him will create difficulties. I have said and I say now that the moment he is released the work of Government will be eased and will not be made difficult. But people have a knack of following the difficult path when the easy path is open to them. Government want to face the difficulties of not releasing him rather than take advantage of the situation by releasing him. That is the traditional way of prestige and authority.

The documents published present a number of legalistic arguments. We can meet them all, but I am not going to tire you by refutation of arguments. But I wish to disabuse people's minds of one particular illusion.

The Indian people love Mahatmaji so much that they are incapable of argument in the matter. But foreigners of whom there is now a large number in this country may be prejudiced by the legalistic arguments and the illusion created by the correspondence. The fallacy runs throughout the correspondence that Mahatmaji may be taken to have been convicted of an offence and he must go through his punishment. This is an absolute untruth. Remember he has been arrested and detained without trial and he has applied for his *habeus corpus* to the Judgment Seat above above, because no one below will receive his application. And he would have a rightful claim before a court of law, had not bad laws been passed. Laws can be passed to make any writ lawful here and that is why he has applied for a different kind of writ for the same *habeus corpus*.

What is it that Gandhiji wants? He asks that he should have the opportunity to review his position and give his advice to the country. He has not been convicted and imprisoned. He has the right to speak to his people. The only thing he asks is, he should have the right to review the position as a free man. That is what is denied to him. As a student of British jurisprudence, I can understand the refusal of such a right if he had been convicted, but he has not been. He has asked for one of two things: Make me a free man, or try me and put me in prison after trial, or come and convince me that I should continue in prison in spite of all that I have said. Neither of these things is done. He is simply kept behind the bars. Judgment is passed against him that he is responsible for a situation which he cannot control and is not allowed to control.

There is therefore need for disabusing ourselves of any illusion arising out of the case presented by the Government papers.

Can any member of Government say: Mahatmaji when out will stand for violence, secrecy or sabotage? It would be a falsehood. What is the nature of the difficulty you apprehend? You want to govern easily, without political agitation and carry on without arguments about rights and wrongs. And I think it is disgraceful to do so.

Sir Mohamed Usman might say that Mahatmaji would create political trouble. He might give the trouble of agitating for freedom. But that trouble was the minimum that Government should have. It should meet that trouble and answer it. The trouble which might be expected when he was out was lawful trouble, healthy trouble. Sir Mohamed Usman like the parrot in the fable said: "There is no doubt about it." One day however if the Viceroy asks Sir Mohamed Usman: "Was it not a mistake that I committed in asking for your advice?" He may say: "There is no doubt about it." And finally some day later on if the Government should ask the parrot. "Were we not fools in buying you?" The parrot would very truly say: "There is no doubt about it." Advisors who flatter were a danger to those whom they advised. Better to depend upon one who said "Don't do it," when the man he was advising was about to do wrong. Better to depend upon one like Mr Aney. I am not enthusiastic because Mr. Aney has disassociated himself from the Government. I would have liked him to remain in the Government and give all the good advice he could. But he found that impossible and he came away. It is a normal consequence of the prevailing system.

..

I welcome you all again. We have fixed two days for the Conference. We will give the first day to those who have not been able to attend the Conference, but who have been kind to send their messages. My friend Mr. Munshi will read them out to you. To-morrow Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru will preside over the Conference and we will have the opportunity of hearing those who have honour in the Conference with their presence.

MESSAGES—"RELEASE GANDHIJ"

1. **Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Benares.** Many thanks for the invitation to Conference. Regret health circumstances make it impossible for me to undertake journey to join your deliberations. I am praying for your success. May God bless your efforts and save Mahatmaji for good of motherland and mankind.

2. **Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri, Madras.** Owing to infirmity I am unable to accept your kind invitation to attend the Leaders' Conference on the 19th.

In a crisis like the present, people are apt to form opinions without much reasoning. They may find arguments later on, but it is largely through feeling that they arrive at judgments. The Government of India will do good to themselves and to the country if they release unconditionally the Mahatma and other leaders and thus make possible a fresh effort to resolve the deadlock. Let me wish the patriots at the Conference high courage and wisdom.

3. **Metropolitan of India, Calcutta** In 1924, Mahatma Gandhi had entered on his fast to persuade men to enthrone God in their hearts as the essential condition of peace for it is only thus that the warring wills of men can be brought under the supreme control of the sovereign of God. That condition holds today, as 20 years ago, and I pray that his spirit will guide every member of your conference to the recognition of this truth and that they will in a spirit of genuine goodwill and fellowship seek to give to the various communities in this great country that which is fair and equitable.

4. **Sir Chunilal B. Mehta, Bombay.** I very much regret that owing to pressing engagements, it would not be possible for me to attend the Conference. I wish every success to the Conference and trust that it would succeed in securing release of Mahatma Gandhi at an early date.

5. **Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Simla.** I am not in a position to avail of the invitation extended by you. I am very much concerned about Bapuji's health but, after all, he is a Mahatma and God will save him. Wish Conference success.

6. **Mr. Mahomedbhoj I. M. Rowjee (Vazir of H. H. Aga Khan), Bombay.** The fast undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi has shaken the whole country to its very depth, and one shudders to think of its consequences if it continues as contemplated.

Mahatma Gandhi is a national asset and a towering international personality, and our country cannot afford to lose him at any cost.

I wish all success to your Conference and pray to God that Mahatmaji may be honourably and speedily released and spared for future guidance of our motherland.

7. Sir Padampat Singhania, Cawnpore. All members present at the Conference will spontaneously accept the undeniable importance of Gandhiji's personality and the great value and significance which his words possess, and after testing his leadership of the country, no Government could have any doubt about this or his bona fides. His correspondence with the Government clearly shows that since he is not a free man, he is not in a position either to opine freely about the present situation or offer any suggestion. I also feel that his detention is absolutely illegal and that since he has been detained without tangible reason, he has no other alternative but to impose a penance on himself.

If he wants to be a free man, either Government should make him free or he should fast, not because he hankers after his physical freedom but because he does not himself surrender his person to any one. Since this is the position, I feel that all the parties represented in the Conference will unanimously make a request to the Government that Gandhiji should be released unconditionally.

8. Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Bombay. Please convey my apology for my unavoidable absence at the Conference. Indian public have been taken aback to note that His Excellency the Viceroy cannot see his way to effective effort to convince Mahatma Gandhi that Government mean to end the deadlock in the country. Mahatma Gandhi's insistence that if he had been given an opportunity to interview the Viceroy after the All-India Congress Committee's Resolution last August, there was every likelihood of the Government and the Congress getting closer, appears to have been overlooked. Instead, Government appear to have preferred to allow him to go on fast, with the result that the feelings of the Indian public have been vitally hurt.

9. Mr. N. C. Kelkar, Poona. I regret I shall be unable to attenuate the Conference but I believe that the Government would be wise to release him unconditionally.

10. Hon. Raja Bahadur Govindlal Shivrul Motilal, Bombay. I would have considered it a duty to attend the Conference but owing to a death in the family, I am leaving today for Hyderabad and cannot reach Delhi in time. I wish the Conference every success and request the Government to release Mahatma Gandhi unconditionally.

11. Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar, Madras. Extremely sorry unable attend Conference. Kindly excuse. Hope Rajaji and other leaders will devise means to bring about better understanding on all sides.

12. Sir Sivaswami Iyer, Bangalore. Ill health prevents attendance. Support countrywide demand Gandhiji's release. Need to avert untoward consequences in best interests of the country.

13. Mr. Tulsidas Kilachand, Bombay. Regret my inability. Wish conference fullest success in their efforts to secure immediate unconditional release of Mahatmaji.

14. Dr. Bhagawan Das, Benares. May the Conference succeed in inducing the British Government to set free unconditionally the one person who is the present world's only man of peace, recognized as such in every country.

15. Mr. Ramdeo A. Poddar, Bombay. I have no doubt that owing to the large interests invited to the Conference, good will come out of it the large interests invited to the Conference, good will come out of it and the country may be relieved of the anxiety it has for the precious life of our revered leader, Mahatma Gandhiji. May your efforts be crowned with success.

16. Dr. Khare, Nagpur. Wish success conference obtaining release Gandhiji.

17. Mr. Pranalal Devkar Nanji, Bombay. Fully sympathise with object of meeting, and heartily support demand for release of Mahatmaji.

18. Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai, Ahmedabad Fully agree with purpose of your conference. Earnestly pray that your deliberations will result in early release of Mahatmaji and thus save his life. Country has reasons to feel grateful to you and other convenors for taking initiative.

19. Begum Hamid Ali, Aligarh. I earnestly desire a strong and united action demanding the release of Gandhiji and other political prisoners.

20. Mrs. Ammu Swaminathan, Madras. Regret inability to attend. Earnestly pray all our efforts meet with success.

21. Mr. Hoshang N. E. Dinshaw, Karachi. Wholeheartedly associate object of conference and wish you success.

22. Mr. Shantikumar Morarji, Bombay. Having succeeded in obtaining permission to visit Gandhiji leaving for Poona. Regret therefore inability attend conference but wish your efforts all success in securing immediate unconditional release of Mahatmaji.

23. Raja Narendra Nath, Lahore. Mahatmaji's fast matter of gravest concern to country. His life which is in danger must be saved. The conference should concentrate itself solely on the question of his unconditional release and press on the Government the same.

24. **Mrs. Muthulakshmi, Madras.** Pray conference succeed Mahatmaji's unconditional release.

25. **Mr. Jamshed N. R. Mehta, Karachi.** My fullest sympathy for the cause is with you.

26. **Syt. Thakkar Bapa, Poona.** Wish conference complete success.

27. **Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy, Calcutta.** Mahatmaji's life national asset. Must be saved. Support unconditional release which I hope will lead to better atmosphere in India and a future peace and political settlement.

28. **Mr. K. M. Thakersey, Bombay.** Object of meeting has my personal sympathies. Wish conference success.

29. **Mr. Ramananda Chatterji, Calcutta.** Regret absence owing to fracture. Wish conference every success.

30. **Lala Duni Chand, Lahore.** I very much wanted to attend the conference in order to devise means to save the most precious life of Mahatmaji. But I have not received permission to do so. You can understand my feelings. I have, however, consolation that Rajaji and others will leave no stone unturned to induce the Government to release Mahatmaji unconditionally.

31. **Rani Laxmibai Rajwade, Poona.** Hope conference will insist upon immediate unconditional release of Mahatmaji and other leaders.

32. **Mr. Satyamurti, Madras.** Bed-ridden. Excuse absence. Wishing conference complete success.

33. **Sir Sitaram, Meerut.** Regret inability attending. Wish success to your efforts to save Mahatmaji's life.

34. **Mr. M. A. Master, Bombay.** Consider my duty to attend which deeply regret cannot do owing unavoidable circumstances. Wish minimum conference will do will be to ask with one voice immediate and unconditional release of Mahatmaji. Submit Sir Tej Bahadur and convenors Rajaji and Mr. Gaganvihari as spokesmen of entire commercial community to use all their influence and persuasion with Viceroy to get the same accepted. Wish conference speedy success.

35. **Mr. Jalaluddin Hashmi, Calcutta.** Please do all that is possible to save Gandhiji's life.

36. **Sir Wazir Hussain, Lucknow.** Offer whole-hearted support Conference endeavour humanitarian cause.

37. **Mrs. Hansa Mehta, Bombay.** Wish Conference success solving impasse. Gandhiji's health primary importance.

38. **Mr. S. A. Brelvi, Bombay.** Pray as result of Conference Gandhiji will be released. His life must be saved at all costs. Delay not of days but even of hours may prove tragic. Therefore consider it imperative take immediate steps remove misapprehension in Government circles that Gandhiji's reference to capacity implies possibility of his agreeing to give up fast if life is in danger.

39. **Kunwar Guru Narain, Maurawan.** Gandhiji's life must be saved. Whole-heartedly support move and wish success.

40. **Sardar Bahadur Baldeo Singh, Lahore.** Thanks your telegram. Regret inability attend. Have full sympathy and wish you success.

41. **Pandit K. Santanam, Tillaivilagam.** Wish Conference all success.

42. **Messrs. Santosh Kumar Bannerji and Promathanath Bannerji, Calcutta.** Greatly regret inability to attend. Wish Conference all success so that Mahatmaji's life and also the country can be saved from calamity.

43. **Mr. Mirza Yarjung, Hyderabad.** Sorry cannot attend Conference. Wish success unity.

44. **Mr. Kamal Nayan Bajaj, Wardha.** Mother and I wish every success to the Conference. We trust that the Conference will be bold enough to express in very clear terms the real feelings and sentiments of the country.

45. **Mr. Muniswamy Pillay, Ootacamund.** Strongly support immediate unconditional release Gandhiji.

46. **Mr. Narayanlal Bansilal Pitti, Bombay.** Wish success to your efforts.

47. **Mr. Satrugnaprasad Sinha, Muzaaffurpur** Pray get Mahatma Gandhi release.

48. **Mr. Rathindranath Tagore, Shantiniketan.** Praying for the success of your endeavours on this issue India speaks with one voice we must not lose Mahatmaji.

49. **Mr. Pashabhai Patel, Bombay.** We pray for the success of your efforts in saving the life of our beloved Bapu.

50. **Mahant Ramdas Oria, Rishikesh.** For humanity and world peace kindly get released Mahatma Gandhi. He is an international asset.

51. **Mrs. Radhabhai Subbaroyan, Madras.** Mahatmaji's immediate release absolutely necessary. Wish Conference efforts full success.

52. **Mr. Ali Zaheer, Lucknow.** Fullest sympathy with objects of Conference.

53. **R. B. G. A. Natesan, Madras.** Feel strongly unconditional release of Gandhiji will greatly relief present political tension.

54. **Sheikh Wahaod, Russe Ikonda** Associate with you requesting Mahatmaji's release

55. **Artist Kartick Paul, Krishnanagar.** I pray for the success of your Conference.

There were telegrams from Sir N. Law, Calcutta, Maharaj Partap-singh, Sanahwal, Mrs. Kale, Nagpur, Mr K. R. Venkataramier, Madura, Mr. Hari Ram Seth, Lucknow, Mr Ispahani, Calcutta, Mr. Manilal Gandhi, Johannesburg, Sir N. N. Sarker, Calcutta, Mrs. Luxmi Lucknow, Mr. Girishchand, Nanpara, Kumararajah Sir Muthiah Chettiar of Chettinad, Madras, Mr. Hosmani, Haveri, and Mr Shateelah Hamidali, Aligarh, regretting their inability to attend and wishing the Conference every success in its efforts to secure unconditional release of Mahatmaji.

Similar telegrams for unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi and for the success of the Conference were received from the following Associations, Institutions, and Public Bodies:

1. Amar Samati, Cawnpore.
2. Indore State People, Indore.
3. Public Meeting, Jhang.
4. Saivdal Sammelan, Jodhpur.
5. Hindu Sangh, Cawnpore.
6. Kangra Catholics, Mangalore.
7. Residents, Meleod Road, Lahore.
8. Hindu Mission Society, Kandy.
9. Putlighar Sewak Sabha, Amritsar.
10. Public Prayer Meeting, Karachi.
11. Assam Hindu Sabha, Gauhati.
12. Citizens Meeting, Lucknow.
13. Indian Christian Leaders, Bombay.
14. Hindu Sabha, Bareilly.
15. Young Christian Association, New Delhi.
16. Citizens Public Meeting, Cawnpore.
17. Collectorate Bar, Agra.
18. Indian Christian Association, Allahabad.
19. Forward Scout Troops, Sewa Samiti, Cawnpore.
20. National Christian Council, Nagpur.
21. Transval Hindu Sewa Samaj, Johannesburg.
22. Frontier Provincial Sanatan Dharam Sabha, Peshawar.

23. Central Sikh Dewan, Lucknow.
24. Nationalist Christian Party, Bombay.
25. Anjuman Watan, Cawnpore.
26. Gandhi Sewa Samiti, Cawnpore.
27. Youth Council, Madras.
28. South Calcutta Public, Calcutta.
29. Citizens Meeting, Madura.
30. All Parties Meeting, Amalner.
31. Mass Public Meeting, Murshidabad.
32. Bandar Taluk Communist Committee, Masulipatam.
33. Taluq Kisan Sabha, Masulipatam.
34. Taluq Youth League, Masulipatam.
35. Anti-Fascist Writers Artist Association, Calcutta.
36. Hindu Maha Sabha, Trivandrum.
37. Nationalist Group, Johannesburg.
38. Communist Party, Lucknow.
39. U. P. Kisan Sabha, Lucknow.
40. Palghat Communists, Palghat.
41. District Students Federation, Ghoramara.
42. Kisan Samiti, Ghoramara.
43. District Communist Party, Ghoramara.
44. Jain Pritinidhi Sabha, Delhi.
45. Ganeshar Aluminium Workers Union, Madras.
46. Indian Chambers, Calcutta.
47. Kall Export Merchants, Madras.
48. Fruit Merchants Association, Rawalpindi.
49. Bombay Stock Exchange, Bombay.
50. Beopar Mandal, Rawalpindi.
51. Wholesale Piece Goods Association, Rawalpindi.
52. Traders Association, Montgomery.
53. Dry Fruit and Karyana Association, Rawalpindi.
54. Merchants Association, Lucknow.
57. Arthi Association, Rawalpindi.
58. Butter Merchants Association, Bombay.
59. Booksellers and Stationers Association, Cawnpore.
60. Chemical Merchants Association, Bombay.
61. Building Material Merchants Association, New Delhi.
62. Indian Merchants Association, Karachi.
63. Buyers Shippers Chamber, Karachi.
64. Kariana Merchants Association, Karachi.

65. Commission Agents Association, Karachi.
66. Import Grain Merchants Association, Karachi.
67. Piece Goods Merchants Association, Karachi.
68. Gunnies Merchants Association, Karachi.
69. Iron Steel Hardware Association, Karachi.
70. Bullion Merchants Association, Karachi.
71. Sona Chandi Shroff Mahajana Association, Karachi
72. Provision Merchants Association, Karachi.
73. Cotton Trade Association, Karachi.
74. Insurance Offices Association, New Delhi.
75. Southern India Chamber of Commerce, Madras
76. Bengal Students Federation, Calcutta
77. Punjab Muslim Federation, Lahore.
78. Students, Government Law College, Bombay.
79. Ashutosh College Students, Calcutta
80. Scottish College Science Students, Calcutta.
81. Sanskrit College, Rawalpindi.
82. Rani Bhawani School Students, Calcutta.
83. Saraswati Institution Students, Calcutta.
84. Science Students, Calcutta.
85. Vivekanand Institution, Teachers, Howrah.
86. Students Federation, Dharamvaram.
87. V. D. J. H. Technical Institution, Lahore.
88. Medical College, Students, Agra.
89. Calcutta University Staff and Students, Calcutta.
90. Christ Church Hostels Students, Cawnpore.
91. Bengal Students Federation, Calcutta.
92. Dayanand High School Students, Cawnpore.
93. Medical Profession and Medical Students, Calcutta.
94. Marwari College Students, Cawnpore.
96. Agra University Students Union, Agra.
97. Rajput College Union, Agra.
98. Bombay Students Union, Bombay.
99. Meston Hostel, Lucknow.
100. Students Union, Annamalaiagar.
101. Medical Students, Ahmedabad.
102. Carmichael Medical College Students, Calcutta.
103. Hardinge Hostel, Calcutta.
104. Law College Students, Calcutta.
105. Assamese Students Literary Club, Calcutta.

106. Dayanand Anglo-Vedic Intermediate Students, Cawnpore.
107. First Year Students, Dayanand College, Cawnpore.
108. Mysore Students, Mysore.
109. Punjab Students Federation, Lahore.
110. Lahore Students Union, Lahore.
111. St. Christopher's College Staff, Madras.
112. All Assam Students Federation, Jorhat.
113. Women Christian College Students, Madras.
114. Students Federation, Palghat.
115. All India Women's Conference, Delhi.
116. Irwin College Students, New Delhi.
117. Indraprastha College Students, Delhi.
118. Teachers and Students, Ripon College, Calcutta.
119. Delhi Polytechnic Students, Delhi.

17,000 DELHI CITIZENS' APPEAL

A manifesto signed by over 17,000 citizens of Delhi was handed over to the Conference. It read as under:

"As citizens of Dehi we consider it our duty to urge for the immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi, whose present state of health is causing the deepest concern and anxiety to every man and woman.

"We are convinced that without his guidance there can be no submission of the present deadlock and that his immediate release will be in the interest of public peace and security."

The manifesto was also signed on behalf of the Delhi Students Federation, Provincial Shop Assistants Federation, Birla Mills Textile Union, Delhi Cloth Mills Union, Communist Party of Delhi, and Delhi Press Workers Union.

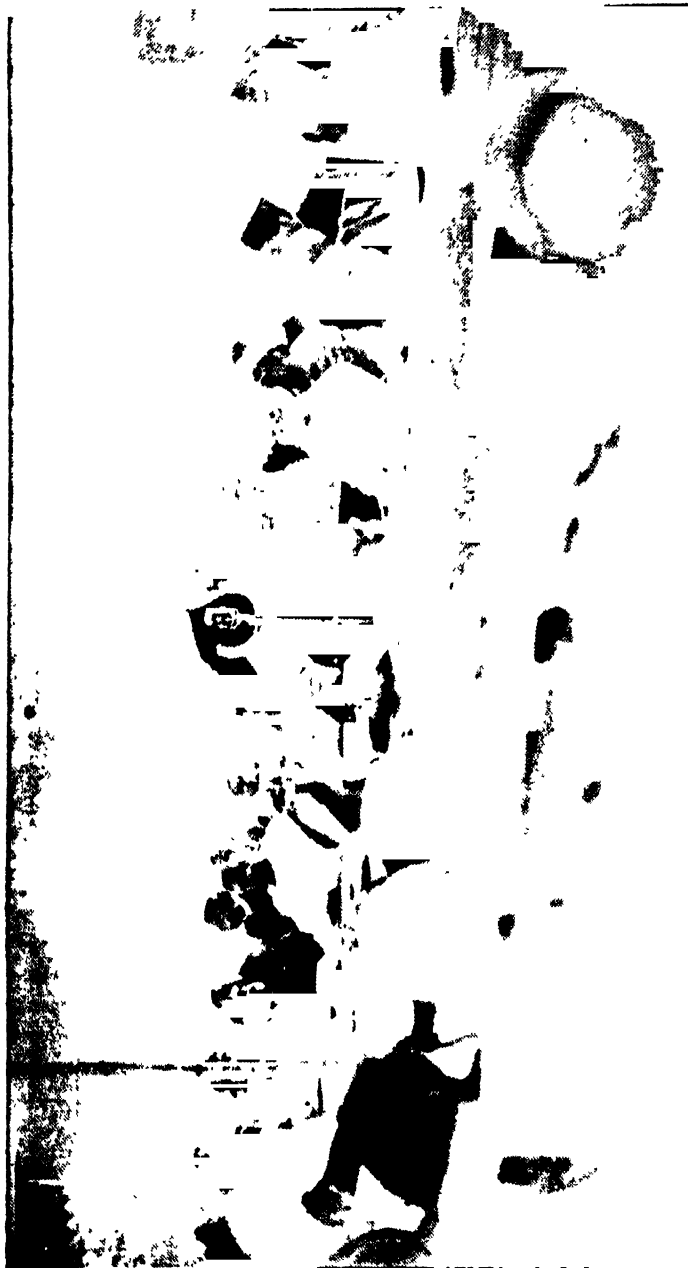
Special mention must be made of the statement of Khwaja Hasan Nizami that he had signed on behalf of himself and a Lakh of his followers.

THE COMMITTEE

After these messages were read out by Mr. K. M. Munshi, the Conference appointed a Committee to draft the resolution to be placed before the conference on the next day.



Mr. K. M. Munshi reading the Message.



Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru delivering the Presidential Address

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU

I am overwhelmed by the gravity of the occasion and I feel sure that all of you are equally overwhelmed by it. I think I can say that I have joined you all on this occasion in demanding the unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi with a clear conscience. No one knows better than Mahatma Gandhi that by conviction, I have always been opposed to civil disobedience. In fact, in a letter which he wrote to me shortly before his arrest, he referred to this fact, and I have no hesitation in saying that I very much regretted the resolution which was passed in Bombay. I may as well say that no one has followed the course of events since the 9th of August with greater regret than I have followed. I have no hesitation in expressing my candid, frank and unambiguous opinion that it is to me a matter of the deepest regret that acts of sabotage had taken place in this country. It is, however, impossible for me at the present moment, when facts have not been sifted by an independent Judicial Tribunal, to accept the verdict of the Executive Government, as if it was a Judicial Body. Who were the men who took part in this movement? What authority they had from Mr. Gandhi to take part in this movement, whether some of them exploited the discontent that was already there, whether some men availed themselves of the occasion to take this line of action on the 9th August—these are questions which can be discussed before a Tribunal. I think a Tribunal would form its own conclusions. But, in the meanwhile, we are told that we must accept the verdict of the Government. Speaking for myself, I am unwilling to place the Government in the place of the judges of the land. I have no sympathy with the rebels. None of you would have any sympathy with the rebels. But to punish the rebels and to ask them to take the consequences of their conduct is one thing and to condemn the Congress entirely as a body of rebels and to treat Mahatma Gandhi as an arch rebel is another thing. I have, however, no doubt that while those gathered in the conference dissociate themselves from acts of rebellion, while we make an appeal to Mahatma Gandhi himself and to all those who have been interested in political movements to do everything they can to restore an atmosphere of calm and peace, we also expect that if Mahatma Gandhi is released unconditionally, it will be the first preliminary step towards reconciliation which is the immediate need of this country. I have been reading the speeches delivered by distinguished Members of the Government in the Legislature. They talked of Mahatma Gandhi as being a rebel. I wonder whether they forgot

their English history. I believe there is a rebel now called Field-Marshal Smuts—happily still alive—who is rendering the greatest possible service to the Empire at this juncture. I believe there is another rebel called Mr. de Valera whom the British Government has always been anxious to retain in the British Empire. I have been a close student of English history and there are many parts of English history which I admire very sincerely. But I believe that one lesson which is reinforced by English history is that the British Government have always settled with rebels rather than with loyalists. Therefore, I am not very much down-hearted when Mahatma Gandhi is put down by the Home Member and Sir Mohamed Usman as a rebel. I still live in the hope that there will be a settlement with these rebels and that when the settlement will take place, men like you and like me will be ignored. That has been the consistent course of English history. On logical grounds and on petty legal grounds, it is possible for every one of you to hold and you do not want the genius of the Home Member to say that Mahatma Gandhi is a rebel and, therefore, has lost all the rights or citizenship. I regret, however, that the whole approach to the Indian problem, since the failure of the Cripps Mission, for which no one was more to blame than Cripps himself, has not been in the spirit of statesmanship but of petty-fogging policemen. I have no hesitation in saying that there has been complete absence of statesmanship in India on the part of those who hold the reins of power. Moved by these considerations, I do not think it is necessary for me to make a long speech. But one thought occurred to me yesterday as I was intending to come over to Delhi. My mind goes back to the English history of 1920-21, when the Irish Treaty was settled and I wondered what attitude Mr. Churchill adopted at that time. I then took out from my Library a book which, I have no doubt, many of you have read, *World Crisis and Aftermath*, by Winston Churchill. Mr. Churchill said then that in Ireland he had supported the linking of a tremendous onslaught with the fairest offer. I know that the onslaught in the case of India has come, but the fairest offer is yet to come. Frankly, I do think that the time has come when these petty arguments about rebellion should come to an end, when Governors should cease to remind the Hindus, day in and day out, that they are rebels. I always wonder to myself what the Government have done for the Mahomedans if the Hindus have been a body of rebels. I should have felt differently if, on an occasion like this, the British Government had said to the Mahomedans, "The Hindus have deserted us, now you come and take charge of the Government." Have they done this? No. I should pity the Mahomedan who thought that the Government was favouring his community, merely because some judgeships of High Courts or other jobs are thrown in their way. This is not statesmanship. This is manoeuvring for position. I think the time has come when this spirit of manoeuvring should come to an end. The time has come when the British Government, remem-

bering their history and traditions and remembering also the change in the situation and the irrepressible urge for freedom in this country, should win over the rebels. There is far greater need in this country for statesmanship than mere law-and-order form of the Government, and I feel and hope my voice would reach outside this pandal, that those of us who have assembled here are actuated by one and one motive, and one and one purpose, and that is, that we must see to it that the Mahatma's life is saved. I cannot understand those who say that Gandhi's life is 'the biggest thing' and then they put an extinguisher on his life. I am not a believer in fasts. My views on this question are such that many pious and orthodox Hindus would be shocked to learn them. I may differ from the Mahatma on the question of fast, but I take facts as they have developed. Here is a man, whose appeal to the imagination of the country is beyond doubt, who is going to end his life. It is open to you to criticize it, but you cannot alter the fact. If this event should materialize, that is to say, if unfortunately he should die within the next 24 or 48 hours, I tell you, the task of reconciliation between the British nation and the Hindus, I should like to say Indian nation, will become extremely difficult. I do not wish to raise any controversial issue, but the task of reconciliation not only between Hindus and Mahomedans but amongst all the different sections of the country would become next to impossible. I have read the correspondence which has been issued, and the only interpretation I can place is that so far as Mahatma Gandhi is concerned, his adherence to the doctrine of non-violence is as great as it ever was. What exactly is the responsibility which can be fixed on the Congress for the rebellion is not a question which you or I can discuss at this conference. It should be settled by a tribunal. At the same time, I realize that the feeling in the country is growing every day, that there are also men—I am not talking of the rebels—who occupied very high positions until the other day and who were praised to the skies by some Governors and who are now being kept in detention without any independent judicial finding. The Mahatma has not been convicted; he has been detained. He has every right to ask for a trial. If it is discreditable to the Congress that the present situation should have arisen, it is not less discreditable to the Government. I was here almost a year ago when Sir Stafford Cripps came, and after the failure of the Cripps Mission, for which Sir Stafford Cripps was far more responsible than any other person, then came the Allahabad meeting of the Congress. It was abundantly clear that the situation was rapidly deteriorating. Then came the proceedings of the 14th July, to which a reference is made in the correspondence which has been issued. What was the constructive step the British Government took, to prevent such mischief, barring the fact that they added more Indian Members to the Executive Council, some of whom have had, under the pressure of the situation, to resign? They took no other step. Could not Mr. Gandhi have been invited to discuss

matters with Government? This is not governing the country in the spirit of statesmanship, this is governing the country in the spirit of policeman. I, therefore, say that if the Congress and if Mahatma Gandhi are to be held responsible for the situation, no less are Government to be held responsible. I am not going to develop this point any further. I do not wish any further to deviate from the main issue, and that issue before you is that we shall do the best that we can, under the circumstances to save the Mahatma's life in the hope and belief—in my case, it is more than belief—that if he is released, the task of reconciliation will be taken in hand by him, and if it becomes necessary, I hope and trust all of us will rise above petty considerations and, in the interests of the country, subordinate them to our chief end which we have been striving to achieve for so many years. I do not wish our hope should be delayed and frustrated. I do ask in your name and on your behalf—and I believe I can speak on behalf of the country—that Mahatma Gandhi should be forthwith released before it is too late. We make on this occasion an appeal to the civilized conscience of Great Britain and of the United Nations, and we do say that if it is intended that this country should settle down to constructive work, then it is absolutely necessary that Mahatma Gandhi should be released. But if you will ask me if I have any hope, frankly, I am not in a very hopeful frame of mind, because if the Government intended to release him, then they would not have accepted the resignations of the three Members. Nevertheless, we have got to do our duty. We have got to show that we are anxious for a general reconciliation for the settling down of the country to constructive work, and because these are hopes and aspirations, we are insistent that Mahatma Gandhi should be released at once. I will say no more.

I have read in the *Hindustan Times* the proceedings of the Conference which took place yesterday and learnt that they appointed a Committee. The Resolution has been drafted, and I have just read it, and I find myself in complete agreement with it. I am glad that that Resolution is going to be moved by my friend, Dr. Jayakar, who, it so happens, has always been working with me in matters of this character. It should not be understood that this Resolution represents adequately our feelings in the matter. I shall now call upon Dr. Jayakar to move the Resolution.

THE RESOLUTION

DR. M. R. JAYAKAR

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have been asked to move the resolution which reads as follows:

"This Conference representing different creeds, communities and interests in India, gives expression to the universal desire of the people of this country that, in the interest of the future of India and of international goodwill, Mahatma Gandhi should be released immediately and unconditionally. This Conference views with gravest concern the serious situation that will arise if the Government fail to take timely action and prevent a catastrophe. This Conference, therefore, urges the Government to release Mahatma Gandhi forthwith."

I understand that copies of this resolution, which was adopted by a Committee of the Conference yesterday, were supplied to the Press, but, under the rigorous censorship prevailing in New Delhi now, the publication of the full text has been withheld and only its substance has been released to the Press. I shall not be surprised if a similar fate overtakes the speech which I propose to deliver today.

The resolution puts forward the grounds on which we demand the release of the Mahatma. They are: (1) The interests of the future of India; (2) of international goodwill and (3) the serious situation that will arise if the Government fail to take timely action and prevent a catastrophe. These grounds do not, in my opinion, exhaust the pleas on which the Mahatma's release can be justly demanded. When I was asked this morning to move this resolution, I made it clear that I was not inclined to base the plea upon the mere mercy of the Viceroy, for I thought that such an appeal would be both misplaced and ineffective. I was also doubtful whether it would be in keeping with the dignity and self-respect of the Mahatma and his colleagues who are in jail today. I propose to urge certain other grounds in the course of my speech, which will necessarily be detailed, in the light of the circumstances which have given rise to the present demand. My plea is mainly based upon fairness and justice, for reasons which I shall make clear to you. But, before I do so, may I at once state that the Mahatma's fast has nothing to do with the plea which I am going to urge. I personally have no faith in fasts for a political purpose, whatever their value may be as religious ministrations or medical cures. I have no doubt that you have your own view about fasts, but may I ask you to leave them aside for the moment and judge the situation in the light of what I propose to say. Your views about the efficacy or otherwise of fasts should not colour your decision on the matter at issue. The right view of the

Mahatma's fast will depend on your estimate of the present conditions prevailing in India. You will, I am sure, have no difficulty in agreeing that his fast is not for the purpose of obtaining his release, as the view in some quarters in New Delhi is. The true explanation of the fast is that it is a protest against the present frustration from which India is suffering. It typifies such frustration and, according to the views which the Mahatma has espoused all his life, it is the one remedy, sovereign in his eyes, of drawing attention to the present frustration in India. The circumstances which have led to this sense of frustration have their beginning in the events surrounding the failure of the Cripps' Mission. You know the reasons why it failed and among them must be included Sir Stafford Cripps' own inability to correctly estimate and deal with the circumstances, as they stood at the time of his visit a year ago. After the failure of his mission, it appears that the Government firmly resolved not to relieve the deadlock, which was caused by the failure but to take advantage of the prevailing disappointment to strengthen their hold upon India and, under the plea of war conditions, to usurp more power and to represent to the world that such usurpation was necessary for the purpose of successfully carrying on the war. This reached a climax, last summer, when the Mahatma started a demand for self-rule in the form of "Quit India". It was a result of his conviction that the British Government had reached the end of its usefulness and was not capable of any further good. Its might and force were typified by the actions of the present Prime Minister, Secretary of State and the Viceroy and, in a mood of great dejection and frustration, the Mahatma used this *mantram* "Quit India". The utterances of British statesmen helped to deepen the gloom, for instance, Mr. Churchill's speech warning India that there were now a larger number of white forces in India than ever before. One fails to understand the significance of this utterance unless it was intended to convey to the Indian mind the familiar truth that people may have brains and wisdom on their side, but the gun-powder was in the hands of England. It reminds one of the famous visit of Lord Bryce some years ago, the great authority on Constitutional Law and History. He was led about in India by the British officials. At the time of his leaving the shores of India, he quietly whispered to the official, who was attending on him, "I smelt gun-powder everywhere". This was many years ago. But apparently the British Prime Minister's mind has made no progress since then towards the adoption of a more civilized view of Indian affairs.

To go back to the narrative: Indians all understood what the cry "Quit India" meant, *viz.*, that it was a plea, put in brief and telling language, for obtaining complete power from the hands of England, in other words, a cry for full freedom. The Indian mind has always delighted in expressing great truths in the form of short

aphorisms and this was an instance of this national habit. Its import was well understood amongst us in and outside Congress ranks. Unfortunately, the Congress Working Committee coupled this demand for freedom with the threat of civil disobedience or direct action. I never had a belief in the efficacy of civil disobedience from the very commencement; in fact, it was the one feature of Congress doctrines which led me, many years ago, to resign my membership of the Congress. I never had any doubt that, situated in India as we are, civil disobedience is often a call for public disorder, the bounds of which cannot be easily foreseen and the extent of which cannot be easily restrained. In my opinion, therefore, the threat of civil disobedience was a mistake and, in that sense, it may be said, in fairness and justice, that it was possible for the Mahatma and his colleagues, having regard to their past experience, to anticipate what its effects would be in the conditions through which India was then passing. If, therefore, the charge of the Government of India against the Congress rested only upon such anticipation and was based upon the well-known legal principle that a person must be taken to intend the natural consequences of his act which he could have anticipated with ordinary care and prudence, the Congress might be said to be responsible for the effects of their action. But, as I shall show later, in the course of my speech, the charges of the Government against the Mahatma and the Congress extend a great deal beyond this view. I was one of those who wrote to the Press at that time, pointing out the great danger of this form of outburst and appealing both to the Viceroy and the Mahatma to meet and come to a settlement before it was too late. But neither side paid heed to this counsel. One feature, however, of the threat of civil disobedience, be it noted, was that the Congress surrounded it with three limitations which might be regarded as safeguards or precautions: (1) that the Mahatma would do nothing in the matter before exhausting every possible means, that he was prepared, as now appears clearly from his letter of 14th August, to see the Viceroy and appeal to him for an independent examination of the Congress case. (2) That the "omissions" in the Congress case, to use the Mahatma's own expression, were filled in, for instance, by his statement that the war effort was not to be impeded and that the British and American troops would remain in India to prosecute the war actively. (3) That no big constitutional changes were demanded during war-times, but that the Congress would be content with an unequivocal declaration of India's independence, accompanied by an immediate transfer of power into Indian hands, which would apparently lead to an augmentation and regulation of India's war effort. Again, some of us wrote to the Press, urging the Viceroy to send for the Mahatma and have a talk. I have no doubt that it was a mistake, as subsequent events have proved, that the Viceroy omitted to take such action in the matter. What prevented him from doing so, except a sense of prestige? He knew the Mahatma

well. They called each other friends. A former Viceroy had done this on previous occasions and with very good results. I was concerned with two of them and you know that on both the occasions Lord Irwin successfully brought the negotiations to an end. The Mahatma and the Viceroy of those times dealt with each other on a footing of mutual confidence and esteem, the controversy was carried on at a very high level of trust and confidence. In the light of these talks, to which I was a witness, it does seem very unfortunate that the present Viceroy should have thought it right to suggest that the Mahatma had undertaken the fast to find an "easy way" out of the difficulty. It was a suggestion unworthy of the Viceroy and certainly unworthy of the Mahatma and we do not require a prophet to tell us how the antagonism grew in consequence of this unfortunate expression. Controversies between high-placed persons ought not to descend to the level of those carried on by meaner men. Was it such a sin to desire the independence of India that the Mahatma became an untouchable, unworthy of an invitation from the Viceroy? It will be said that such a visit would have led to no results. That depended upon the tact and courtesy of the Viceroy. A previous Viceroy had won under similar circumstances and there was no reason why the present one should not have succeeded. In any event, that opportunity was lost and the Mahatma was clapped in jail and several thousands of our countrymen are now prisoners of the British Government detained without trial. This was done under the Defence of India Act, but that is no justification, for that Act has been put to unjustifiable uses and has been found extremely convenient by the executive to perpetrate injustices when the ordinary law would not have permitted. Is there anything for which the Defence of India Act has not been used? Yes—perhaps private marriages, though marriage processions have been banned under its terms. During the times which ensued, Government assumed very wide powers, which were quite capable of being exercised excessively by overzealous officials in whose hands they were placed. The Mahatma's contention is that the Government practised "leonine violence" which has contributed to the present disturbances and sabotage. Government retort and say, "No; this was the direct result of your teaching and your resolutions." Millions of people in this country, however, believe that the officials of Government used the power to strike terror in the hearts of the Indian people, and this has led to reprisals on the part of the people. There are the two sides of the controversy. Mutual allegations and recriminations are on foot and any person accustomed to weigh evidence and take a calm view will only remark that the matter is eminently such that it should be carefully sifted by an independent tribunal and the truth found out. One thing is clear, however, that, while the Mahatma and the Congressmen—the accused in the case, if I may say so—were in jail, the accuser went on making the gravest allegations against the Congress. I can only say that the gravity of the accusations is such

NO CHANGE OF POLICY



"The Government of India have no intention on their part of allowing the fast to deflect their policy."

—*Communiqué.*

that if the allegations against the Congress are proved to be true, many of us will have no difficulty in believing that the Congress is public enemy No. 1 and deserves to be suppressed.

May I ask you to consider the character of the allegations in some details as they have emerged in the correspondence? The Government case is: (1) That the violence was the result of concerted plan known to the All-India Congress Committee; (2) that secret instructions were circulated in the name of the All-India Congress Committee for practising violence; (3) that well-known Congressmen have organized the present violence and, further, they have taken part in it, including the use of bombs, etc.; (4) this perhaps is the worst, that an underground organization exists even now, managed by Congressmen, for the purpose of perpetrating sabotage and acts of violence. You will agree with me when I say that, apart from the Mahatma and the Congress, the public are deeply interested in finding out the truth in this matter. It concerns all of us not to permit an organization to exist or to thrive, which is proved to be guilty of any of these crimes. The accusations, therefore, are of the greatest character and as they have been hurled *ex parte* while the accused are behind prison bars and unable to defend themselves, public justice requires that they should be proved to the satisfaction of the public before a tribunal whose capacity, impartiality and independence are above doubt. It does seem extraordinary that, while those against whom these allegations are being made are in detention and unable to defend themselves, the Government have gone on heaping one accusation on another and exhibit no intention to give the perpetrators any chance of convincing themselves of their error and making amends, or any opportunity of disproving these allegations before an independent tribunal.

The correspondence which has passed between the Viceroy and the Mahatma makes it clear that the latter's chief complaint is that these accusations are untrue and have been made *ex parte* and behind the back of the accused. He, therefore, pleads that the Viceroy should give him an opportunity to be convinced of his error and, if this is done, he would make ample amends. He suggests that this might be done either by the Viceroy sending for him or sending someone to place the evidence before him or in some other way which will give the Mahatma the opportunity to find out his error. The Viceroy's reply is that official records prove this and so he is satisfied. Mr. Gandhi replies: "That may be so, but official records are admittedly censored and in past transactions such records were admitted to be untrue and exaggerated." Apparently the Mahatma was referring to previous negotiations with Lord Irwin to which I was a witness and the Mahatma's statement about the accuracy of official records cannot be said to be inaccurate. The Viceroy replies: "I am convinced that these records are true." The Mahatma rejoins: "That may be so. What has convinced you, as the head of the administration, on the evidence

of the official records, may not convince me, who will examine them very critically." That leads the Viceroy to retort: "You have not an open mind," to which Mr. Gandhi replies: "An open mind is perfectly consistent with disbelief in the official records," and so the controversy goes on in the bandying of words. The public are not much interested in wordy warfare at this critical time, but it does seem that the Viceroy was relying on a very narrow technical defence, ignoring the larger aspects of the question and the chances of a political settlement. It is pertinent to remember in this connection a few things which the correspondence has shown: (1) That the Mahatma's faith in non-violence is still in tact; (2) he deprecates violence. He says in his letter of the 19th of January that he is prepared to proclaim his belief in non-violence from house-tops. He further says, "I have condemned violence on the part of the Congress on previous occasions and have done so by doing penance," suggesting thereby that the Mahatma would do so again if convinced of the Congress error. The Mahatma further says: "If you want me to admit my own errors, convince me of them by satisfactory evidence. If, however, you want me to admit the error on behalf of the Congress, place me in the midst of my colleagues of the Working Committee. But, in either case, if the evidence satisfies me, I shall make amends. I cannot, while in jail, express my opinion of events which I cannot influence or control. I shall do it as a free man." Lastly he adds: "I do plead with you to end the deadlock." I am here quoting from my memory, not the exact words, but the purport of the letters. I should have thought that these assertions on the Mahatma's part opened a clear way to the pursuit of peaceful negotiations without the loss of government prestige. This is the ground on which I base the demand for Mr. Gandhi's freedom and it will explain why I call it a plea for fairness and justice.

The Congress is the most important political organization in the country. It has been accused of most serious crimes. If true, they mark it as an enemy of the country. These accusations, however, have been denied by no less a person than the leader of the movement, whose reputation for truth, honesty and integrity is very high in the world. He wants an opportunity to be convinced by evidence being placed before him. Government have locked him in jail without trial. Six months have passed, giving enough time to the Government to collect evidence and prepare their case. During these six months, the accused has had no opportunity of knowing what evidence is in the possession of the Government, who have gone on hurling one accusation upon another until the pile is high. The Mahatma wants this to be ended, things brought to justice and the deadlock to terminate. We say, therefore, release the Mahatma and give him a chance of looking into the evidence which, the Government say, they have in their possession. There is no risk in doing so, for the Mahatma has reiterated his belief in non-violence, and it is unthinkable that he will use his freedom for reviving civil disobedience. If he does so, he will

be immediately out of court before the world and Government can send him to jail again. In any event, it is clear case for giving the Mahatma the freedom he desires for examining the proof. I will go further and suggest, let the whole question be determined by an independent tribunal of impartial men either of Indian or international reputation. But it is no answer to the Mahatma's case to say "you must believe what I believe. You must believe the evidence which has satisfied me. On such evidence you must admit your guilt while you are in detention. If you do not do so, we will keep you in further detention until you show signs of repentance." This is virtually the attitude of the Government and it is such that no Indian with any sense of justice will approve. It is but just and fair that Mr. Gandhi and the Working Committee should be given an opportunity of considering the evidence. The surprising thing is that Government were willing to release Mr. Gandhi conditionally, but this is of no avail to him, if he desires his freedom for the purpose of considering the evidence and making counter-charges against Government if necessary. It is, therefore, inevitable that his freedom should be unconditional. Freedom on parole or under conditions will not serve the purpose he has in view. The Viceroy suggests in his correspondence that sooner or later the Government case would be placed before the public. To that the Mahatma replies: "This is no consolation to me, for, by the time you decide to do so, men might die and evidence might disappear." This is perfectly true and, I shall say with all the responsibility of my words that, if the Government, to suit their own convenience, do not desire to bring the Congress to justice for some time, that would furnish no justification for continuing to keep thousands of men in jail without trial. There is a limit of time which the Law sometimes provides for permitting speedy action, though unjustified. Six months is an adequate limit of time and should be enough for enabling the Government to make up their mind whether they will bring the offenders to justice or release them. It is said, "these are not ordinary times, there is a war going on," but that is no justification, for I am quite sure that you will agree that the risk of keeping the Mahatma in jail and the possibility of his death is, for the purpose of the war, far greater than the risk, if any, of releasing him for the purpose which he has in view. There is no doubt, as his correspondence proves, that he is asking for the ending of the deadlock, clearly suggesting that he wishes to use his freedom, when obtained, for this purpose. This will explain to you why I placed my plea on grounds of justice and equity and not on mercy alone.

But, says the Home Member, "we cannot treat with a rebel such as the Mahatma. As a rebel, he has forfeited all rights of citizenship; he is an outcaste from society and can only enter it again on confessing his guilt." The Home Member, about whom the less we say the better, forgets that even a rebel has his rights. Even an outlaw has

his rights. What "society" does the Home Member have in view when he says that the Mahatma is an outcaste from it? Did he mean the "society" of the I.C.S. officials in India or of the Gymkhana Club which they frequently visit? If he meant this 'society,' the answer is that the Mahatma never coveted any entrance into this "society" He was well out of this. If, on the other hand, the Home Member intended to refer to Indian "society," the society of the Mahatma's countrymen, may I say, with all respect to the Home Member, that the Mahatma never forfeited his place in it and is still a valued member of it and will find no difficulty in entering it the moment he is free. But it is needless to waste more words on the utterances of the Home Member. From past experience, one has not learnt to associate with the Home Member any wisdom or statesmanship. He reminds me of an old Sanskrit saying:

प्रासादशिखरस्योपि काको न गरुडायते ।

"A crow may rise to the pinnacle of a royal palace, he will still remain a crow, and can never be an eagle."

DR. SHYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE

After the speech delivered by the President and the very elaborate, lucid, passionate and true, in every word, speech delivered by the mover of this Resolution, it is not necessary for the speakers that will follow to make long speeches. I associate myself with the Resolution which is moved. Indeed, where can be that Indian, where can be that free Britisher or any foreigner, who would not associate himself with the Resolution which is moved. But the point is, "Is the voice of India reaching those people, the British people?" Dr. Jayakar said: "Do they realize the feelings which have been roused from one end of the country to the other." This Conference is of a representative character. We have here persons belonging to different communities, creeds and interests, who have not seen eye to eye in respect of many a matter, but we feel convinced that it will be the highest catastrophe that one can imagine, if Mahatma's life is not saved. We are not thinking of him as a leader of any political organisation. His voice has been the voice of the oppressed community and of oppressed humanity. I have no desire to discuss the details of the correspondence, but there is one amazing feature in the letter to him by the Viceroy and the Home Secretary to which I feel bound to make a reference. The Government of India is prepared to set him free, provided he undertakes fast outside. The Government is not concerned with his fast if it is undertaken outside, where he can die also. On this condition, the Government is prepared to release him. I have no desire to refer to the charges and counter-charges which have been brought forward in the correspondence. I know a little too much of the oppression, the

deliberate oppression that is being carried out in my Province—Bengal. The only thing that Government can do is to have an Indian Tribunal. That may come later, but this must come quickly. Today, Dr. Jayakar has referred to the Defence of India Rules. The Resolution was not allowed to be published in the papers by the powers that be. That speech will not see the light of the day, nor any other speeches. But at the same time, as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru has said, we must do our duty. Every moment is precious. The last thing I would say is: Let us put forward our demand free of controversy and concentrate on taking immediate steps, so that the life of the greatest man in the world, can be saved. But there must be public sanction behind it. It is an open secret, it is nothing short of that. It is not an attack on Mahatmaji alone, it is really a symbol of an attempt to do away with any form of agitation in this country. There must be sanction behind our demand. If Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr. Jayakar, at this late hour, are prepared to lead the public on a united front, even then the voice of India may reach the English and other Nations. We are told that Mr. Phillips has come here to understand the Indian situation. I do not know how long he will take to appreciate the Indian situation. If Mr. Phillips is here really to establish good relations between India and his own country, this is the time when he can act. If the catastrophe happens, if the dead body of Mahatma Gandhi lies between India and England, if he is to die before his time, India will never forge this. I hope the united voice of the people of this conference will reach the Viceroy and will enable him to act before it is too late.

RAJA SIR MAHARAJ SINGH

We have met on a very solemn and, indeed, sad occasion. Who knows, as I ventured to say yesterday, that the sands of time, which are slowly passing out, may pass out within the next 24 or 48 hours, though God forbid. One aspect of the conference is its representative character. There are ladies and gentlemen belonging to different creeds and communities, Hindus, Muslims, Indian Christians, Sikhs, Parsis and persons who may be of no specified belief. We have also Britishers here. I am glad to see Mr. Arthur Moore. I also see the American allies. We are not concerned with the ethics of fasting and politics. I am here to represent, as far as one man can represent, a population of eight millions. I urge that so far as it is humanly possible, the valuable life of Gandhiji should be saved. We may be told that we have been guided by sentiments and emotions. But sentiments and emotions are part and parcel of human nature. When a tragedy is impending in our domestic circles, are we not guided by sentiments and emotions, and when a very great tragedy is about to befall us, have we not a clear duty to be sentimental and emotional? But reasons have been given, and adequate reasons, by previous

speakers in support of this Resolution. I would only like to refer to 'two sentences in Mahatma Gandhi's correspondence with the Viceroy. He writes in one of his letters that he has unequivocally and publicly condemned violence on the part of Congressmen in the past and that he has also done public penance more than once, but that was when he was a free man. I have not the slightest doubt that if Mahatma Gandhi had been released, he would have unequivocally condemned violence. He would not have favoured the sabotage and other disturbances that have occurred, and, surely from the Government point of view, that would have been an enormous attempt. People say that his passing away will lead to sabotage. I cannot say, I do not know, but one thing I know, along with the previous speakers, with whom I fully associate myself, and that is that there will be increased embitterment between the Government and the people. The death of Mahatma Gandhi under detention would leave a trail of racial bitterness which it would be difficult to remove.

SIR SULEIMAN CASSUM MITTHA

I strongly support the Resolution so ably moved by Dr. Jayakar. Mahatma Gandhi is revered by millions in India and I very much hope that he will be released immediately and unconditionally.

MASTER TARA SINGH

After the speeches so ably delivered by eminent persons before me, there is not much left for me to say, but I must associate myself and my community with this demand of unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi. I know there is not a single Sikh who does not associate himself with this demand. I am sorry, very sorry, to learn that the Government and its officials suspect him of violence. I went out of Congress a few years back, because I believed in violence. Today he is said to be violent and I am non-violent. Government think, he is a hypocrite. Then certainly, I can say, that every Indian is a hypocrite. I, there is one person who is above suspicion, he is Mahatma Gandhi. I, therefore, request Lord Linlithgow to be considerate. I say so because I have no power except to protest. There is no other way left open to me. I am with you in any step that the conference may take, but the step must be decided. It is said that Mahatma Gandhi's release will cause trouble to Government. I do not believe this, and even if it does, would his death cause less trouble to humanity? I am in favour of his release, but it is not on any political grounds. He is the man who has, at this critical juncture, kept virtue above everything else.

DR. MAKENZIE

My friend, Dr. Hodge, occupies an unusual position in this conference. We come in a sense representing nobody but we are Christian

Missionaries who are in close touch with a very large number of Indian people throughout India. We are completely outside the sphere of political controversies and I shall be understood and excused if in relation to the present situation I make no charge against anybody. Our concern is of a different kind and let me say quite briefly what that concern is. Firstly, we are concerned for the preservation of Mahatma Gandhi's life. This is the first concern, and on this we are all agreed. Secondly, we are concerned for the restoration of goodwill in this country. I speak as completely outside political parties or political programmes. But, we are concerned as Christians that goodwill should be restored; and, thirdly, arising out of this, we are concerned that this Conference should not disperse here by merely passing a resolution and go home. We do hope that out of this there may come a movement that will bring together all classes and all parties in a united endeavour to help India to the high position we all seek for her. This is very deep in our minds. Mr. Chairman has yesterday received a letter from me, in which I explained that everything should be done to save Mr. Gandhi's life, and that simultaneously an appeal should be made to Mr. Gandhi to abandon his fast. The letter also urged the Conference to condemn acts of violence done in the name of the Congress and in violation of Mr. Gandhi's principles. I suggest that another conference should be convened, to which people, of all castes and creeds, should come with open minds, not committed to any principles and policies, but with the sole intention of reaching an agreement on India's problems.

SMT. SARALADEVI CHOUDHARY

I was rather amazed at my name being called by the President to support the resolution. I very heartily support it, in the name of the womanhood of India and hope that Government would release Mahatma Gandhi immediately and unconditionally.

MR. ALLAH BUKSH

I am supporting this resolution not on any humanitarian grounds, nor on any sentimental grounds, nor do I consider that it would be right because a person is able to save his life. These things are far from my notion, but what I feel is this. I feel, as pointed out by Dr. Jayakar, that justice demands that Mahatma Gandhi should be released unconditionally. I am not moved by any sentiments or emotions. The question whether the fast is the proper remedy or not, I need not go into at this juncture, but there is no doubt that justice at present has been denied to the Mahatma. Are we here just to pass a resolution and disperse, or should we chalk out a programme? The Government would find some excuses. They have removed a person who had control over all these acts of sabotage. Also other persons have been removed and then Government accuses that these acts are being done by the Congress people. The greatest insult is that Government

say that there was secret correspondence, secret organisation, etc. This is a white lie and I fully associate with the resolution which has been so ably moved by Dr. Jayakar, that Mahatma Gandhi should be released immediately and unconditionally.

MAHARAJ KUMAR OF VIZIANAGRAM

Lord Linlithgow has very little respect for resolutions and I am glad that this Conference is not agreeing to wait in deputation. We should cut out this resolution and march first to the American Embassy to see Mr. Phillips and tell him that there will be no goodwill between America and India if he does not interfere, as he is not here merely as a spectator. After that, we should march, on foot, to the Viceroy's House and force Lord Linlithgow to come out and receive us, and, in answer to the nation's demand, we must have Mahatma Gandhi released.

SIR ABDUL HALIM GHUZNVI

This Conference is demonstrative of the tempest of agony that is raging in the minds of the vast millions of people in this country. The anxiety and concern felt over Mahatma Gandhi's life increases day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute. India shudders to think of the consequences of the Mahatma's inability to stand this fast. The resolution before the Conference states that it views with the gravest concern the serious situation that will arise if the Government fail to take timely action and prevent a catastrophe. To any man who knows and can feel what the Mahatma means to the people of India, this is self-evident.

- This Conference makes bold to say that the desire for the release of Mahatma Gandhi is universal among the people of India. There are people who disagree with Mahatma Gandhi in his practical politics. I, for one, never agreed with the Mahatma's political theories, But not one soul in India wants him to die—and worst of all, die behind the prison bars. He is an illustrious son of this soil, a unique leader, who, by sheer sufferings and sacrifices, is enshrined in the hearts of millions of people inhabiting this land. Humane considerations alone demand that such a towering personality should not be allowed to perish behind the bars. He is not an asset to India alone. I am not exaggerating when I say that he is an asset to the world—a world of blood and feud, war and turmoil, darkness and fear in the midst of which he stands as a beacon of light leading to a non-violent, truthful and peaceful world.

It is implicit in the letters of Mahatma Gandhi to His Excellency the Viceroy which found publication after he undertook this fast that there has been not an iota of change in his faith in non-violence. For that reason, I believe it is that he has ever stated that he would, in

the event of his release, review the situation *de novo*. I have no doubt in my mind that if he is released he would not hesitate for one moment to strive to bring about the end of the orgy of violence and disorder that is going on in the country now in the name of a freedom movement. If that is so, in my opinion, there is no better contribution to the war effort of this country than the immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi. That Mahatma is an anti-Fascist and a confirmed anti-Fascist long before the Allies entered the war is clear to anyone who would only care to peruse his writings and speeches. That, however, is irrelevant to the issues before this Conference. Let me make myself clear. I urge the immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi purely on humanitarian grounds. A heart which is devoid of humane feelings is no human heart—it is a stone heart. What sort of a heart is it that will not feel and be moved by the tragedy that faces the country on the unfortunate consequences of the Mahatma's inability to stand this fast.

If the Government of India have the slightest respect for democracy in the name of which they call upon Indians to lay their lives fighting the dictators, they should now recognise that Indian public opinion in one voice demands the release of Mahatma Gandhi forthwith. This is no time to stand on false prestige.

On behalf of myself and as President of the Central National Mahommedan Association of India, I pledge my complete and whole-hearted support to any decision that this Conference may come to in order to secure the immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi—before it is too late. I hope and pray that it will never be too late to save his life.

MR. N. M. JOSHI

I support this resolution in the name of the working classes and the Trade Union Congress. No single man has done so much for the poorer classes of this country than Mahatma Gandhi. I strongly protest against the use, by Government, of the word "political blackmail".

MAULANA AHMED SAID

There is nothing left for me to say, in further support of the resolution, after the two veterans of law, namely, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr. M. R. Jayakar, have spoken. They have left absolutely no room for addition of any further words—their speeches are so very compact and finely-grained. However, I shall say a word or two. Mahatma Gandhi is the most harmless person and Government should not apprehend any danger or trouble by releasing him. He is the

one man who is the most non-violent and able to have control over things that cause trouble to Government. He should be released at once and without any conditions. In conclusion, I must apologise for having spoken in our own language.

MR. ABDUL QUAYUM

I rise to support this resolution, and in doing so, I think I am voicing the sentiments and feelings of three millions of Pathans who reside in the North-West Frontier of India. Not only this, but I stand here as a representative—an elected representative—of the Khudai Khidmatgars. Gandhiji has the greatest influence in my province and I shudder to think of the results which are likely to take place if anything unfortunate happens to Gandhiji's life. I tell you this because you may not be knowing what is happening outside owing to censorship. Three or four thousand Mussalmans are rotting in prisons. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, in a meeting, was hit at and his leg was fractured. Now he is rotting in the jail. I am here to make another suggestion. We should be prepared for all eventualities. I am one of those who believe that mere resolutions and mere making of speeches will not do. We may have to face a situation that will be critical if the worst happens. I call upon this Conference, representative as it is of the various parties, creeds and interests in India, to devise ways and means for chalking out some programme. Mahatma Gandhi's life is very much valuable, indeed, at this juncture. Imperialism is playing its own role of "Divide and rule". But this policy of Government must not succeed; we must sink our differences and establish goodwill and good relations.

MR. ZAHIRUDDIN

I agree with every word of Dr. Jayakar. No harm can come out by the release of Mahatma Gandhi, but only good will be the result. If Mahatma Gandhi dies at this time, not only India but the whole world will suffer for it. Therefore, the best thing for Government to do is to release him unconditionally. I again concur with every word and point of the resolution.

MR. RANDIVE

No Government in the world would have resisted such a universal demand for the release of Mahatma Gandhi. As Rajaji says, no wise government would have resisted such a demand and I entirely agree with him. Government is really afraid of releasing Mahatma Gandhi, so that he may not unite the Hindus and Mohammdans together. It might lead to a united movement for the demand of transfer of power into the hands of Indians. I believe that the release of Gandhiji would release forces for unity for national demand.

MR. HUMAYUN KABIR

I do not wish to take more than a minute or two and would only say that the Bengal Assembly has expressed the demand by passing a resolution almost unanimously. Mahatma Gandhi is the one man to achieve ends without violence. I wholeheartedly support the resolution, on behalf of the six crores of people in Bengal.

MR. G. L. MEHTA

Although whatever we say here in this Conference seems to be so hollow and ineffective compared to the sacrifices made by Gandhiji, I think that we have, as previous speakers have said, to do our duty and I wholeheartedly associate myself with the resolution, not on my behalf only but on behalf of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. If I may say so, the entire commercial community is with me in the demand for the immediate release, unconditionally, of Mahatma Gandhi. Ladies and gentlemen, since Gandhiji's fast, the Federation Office and this Conference have been flooded with telegrams and letters every day from all over the country, showing deep reverence to Gandhiji. In season and out of season, we have been told that we have to suffer a foreign government, as we cannot unite. It is absolutely clear that, without a dissentient voice today, the whole of India, as represented in this Conference, demands the freedom of its beloved leader. The Prime Minister said, a few days ago, that the Indian commercial community is at the back of the Congress. Well, I am not very apologetic about it as we are integral parts of India. If Mr. Churchill can boast of his saying that he has not become the first Minister to liquidate the British Government, powerless as we are, we can make our humble contribution to the freedom of our country. This Conference is of the largest representative character. We are proud to be a part of the national movement. Our interest is on the side of law and order. We are convinced that Gandhiji is a force working for social justice and social harmony. This is why there are some of the biggest commercial magnates present in the Conference today. In the end, I wholeheartedly associate with this resolution.

PANDIT H. N. KUNZRU

The people who have assembled here today do not represent any one party or community, but all creeds, communities and interests, as the resolution says. Now, why has this great gathering assembled here today? Surely, not to support violence. It has assembled here only in recognition of the fact that this is the saddest occasion in the memory of the oldest person present here. The presence of so many distinguished gentlemen and ladies here from all parts of India is also due to the fact that they recognise that Mahatma Gandhi is our greatest

national asset. He is something more than that. He is something the like of whom one does not see for centuries. To save his life is to serve the interest of international goodwill. Ladies and gentlemen, I have already said that Mahatma Gandhi is our greatest national asset. I am sure that no one here will deny that Mahatma Gandhi is the embodiment of all that is best. The British Government is under the disillusionment that they have the strength, notwithstanding the fact that India is stirred to her very depth. Now, what is happening in the provinces? They are either stamping out the spirit of freedom or trying to keep it under control. However they are absolutely and gravely mistaken if they cherish any such notion. There is no one amongst us who is not thinking, at every moment, what might be happening at Poona and in memory of the ordeal that the Mahatma has gone through, will not be prepared to devote his life. Mahatma Gandhi has been asked by the Viceroy to clear himself of the charges that would be soon brought out before the world against him. If the Viceroy wants to do that, surely he must observe the elementary principles of justice by releasing him so that he might be in a position to defend himself. And, secondly, if the British Government abhor violence, then they ought to be prepared to allow us to publish the evidence that we have against the officials for having done excesses in the name of law and order. We shall then see who emerges stronger from the trial. The fact is that even if the Government does succeed in proving that some members of the Congress have done certain acts of violence, they themselves will have to be convicted of having done violence on more than one occasion. The position is one which calls for statesmanship and is not a matter of charges and counter-charges. The British Government could bring charges against the Irish Government also. If they attach any value to their history, they should take a leaf out of the history of Anglo-Irish negotiations in the year 1920. Ladies and gentlemen, I do not want to detain you any more. But perhaps you will allow me one word with regard to the independence and patriotism of those members of the Viceroy's Executive Council who have resigned their posts rather than be a party to the policy, the vindictive and unwise policy, which the British Government is pursuing at present. Nobody can charge them with not being alive to the importance of law and order, they made by siding with His Excellency the Viceroy in suppressing the violence. They showed that they were not against the British Government or those who represented any extreme party. But, when they found that the plea of law and order was being misused, that it was being resorted to unfairly and to the detriment of the ultimate and highest interest of this country, they had the courage to withdraw from the Government. I am sure that their patriotism has the appreciation of you all. They felt that Mahatma Gandhi emerged better from the wordy contest between the Viceroy and himself and that in view of the position taken by Mahatma

Gandhi, it was their duty as Indians and men holding the most responsible positions, to press for his unconditional release. They kept their positions of membership of the Government as patriotic Indians but Government by declining to accept either of the alternatives placed before them by Mahatma Gandhi and keeping him in detention, showed how difficult it is for anybody to ask for even his elementary civil rights. I give my highest support to the resolution which is before us. We hope that Government will have the wisdom, in view of the strong and universal public feelings exhibited through this Conference, to release Mahatma Gandhi, but should they fail to do so they must realise that they will be responsible if the gulf between India and Britain yawns for ever.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU

The resolution has been amply supported and it is not necessary for me to make a long speech or any speech at all. I now put this resolution before you all and those of you who are in favour of it will please raise their hands.

[The resolution was passed unanimously.]

I take it that it is your desire and will that this resolution should be communicated to the Viceroy formally. The resolution, together with the names of the supporters, would, therefore, be sent to the Viceroy at once.

MR. K. M. MUNSHI

I rise to perform what is to me the only pleasant duty in connection with this Conference; that is, to propose a hearty vote of thanks to the President, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. He agreed to preside over the Conference no sooner we invited him to do so. As President he has given us a bold lead. As a leading elder statesman in this country he has justified the trust which the country as one reposed in him at this critical moment.

I used the words "only pleasant duty" advisedly. From the beginning it was most unpleasant for me to have associated myself with the idea of this Conference. I have participated in the proceedings with a sense of shame and humiliation. Here we are—representative men of all parties of the country—men who represent the united voice of the country, engaged in appealing to the foreign representative of an alien government to release the greatest man of the times, one who—had India been free—would not only have been the peer of Stalin and Roosevelt but at their head. But the duty has to be done; we have to voice the feeling which moves the country at the moment.

I confess I cannot speak on this occasion with equanimity. Gandhiji, to me, is not only a father; nor only the architect and

instrument of modern Indian nationalism; but the torch-bearer of the Moral Order in a world filled with savagery. In order to find a parallel to the tragedy which is now being unfolded at the Aga Khan Palace at Poona we must go back 1942 years. A similar tragedy was enacted on the Calvary.

The Amerys and Linlithgows of the world have always found it necessary to provide crucifixion for men whom the world worships. Gandhiji has been charged with instigating or conniving at violence. He is a bold man indeed who can level such a base charge against him. I know, as you do, that Gandhiji is above harbouring thoughts of violence, leave aside contemplating any act involving it. I remember an occasion in my life when I so much as protested in private correspondence against the ban that he had publicly laid on the use of violence against the Muslims in Hindu-Muslim riots and against the Axis Powers in a war of self-defence. That little protest of mine met with his disapproval. And he preferred to put me out of the Congress rather than permit me to remain in it and be disloyal to the creed of non-violence. Is the non-violence of such a man to be judged by Mr. Churchill or Mr. Amery or Lord Linlithgow who could not be found guilty of non-violence in thought, word, or deed?

There is one aspect of the question which has not been placed before you, and which, even at this late hour, I would venture to present. Asia is a submerged continent. For centuries Europe has dominated it by depriving it of free development. Gandhiji is the voice of Asia, the voice of a free Asia struggling, by non-violent means, to be true to its soul and assert its freedom and dignity. The conflict between Europe and Asia can be solved peacefully only by the non-violent technique which he has evolved. In this sense Gandhiji is the leader of all Asia, and, if his life is extinguished, the only Messiah of goodwill between Europe and Asia would have been allowed to die without fulfilling his mission. A gulf of unmitigated bitterness will then spring up between the two continents; a bitterness which will not be allayed by soft words or empty promises, or even by the iron heel of repression. It is in the interest, therefore, of international goodwill that we seek—not as a matter of favour but as one of right—the release of Gandhiji.

With these words I place before you the resolution recording our hearty vote of thanks to the Chair, and I trust you will carry the resolution unanimously.

S. SANT SINGH

I wholeheartedly second the vote of thanks proposed by Mr. Munshi to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, for having taken the trouble to come all the way from Allahabad to Delhi, in order to preside over this Conference.

CONFERENCE — GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENCE

“IN ADVANCE FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION”

28, Ferozshah Road,
New Delhi, 19th February, 1943.

Dear Sir Gilbert,

The Conference of Leaders invited to consider the situation arising out of the fast declared by Mahatma Gandhi, met this afternoon and they appointed a Committee to draft a Resolution to be adopted by the Conference. The Committee consisted of the following persons:—

Rt. Hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru; Dr. M. R. Jayakar; Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerji; Sri Rajagopalachariar; Mr. Allah Buksh; Mr. G. L. Mehta; Mr. K. M. Munshi; Sir Jagdish Prasad; Mr. N. M. Joshi; Mr. Bhulabhai Desai; Sir Maharaj Singh; Master Tara Singh; Sir Ardeshir Dalal; Pundit H. N. Kunzru; Sir A. H. Ghuznavi; Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai; Mr. K. C. Neogy; Raja Maheshwar Dayal; Dr. Bannerji; Mr. H. A. Lalljee; Mr. N. C. Chatterji; Mr. Ranadive; Dr. Moonje; Mr. Kiron Shankar Roy; Khwaja Hasan Nizami; Mr. Zahiruddin; Mrs. Sarala Chaudhurani; Dr. Shaukat Ansari; Mr. M. A. Kadmi; Mr. Zafar Hossain; Mrs. K. Sayani; Mr. Abdul Halim Siddiqi and Mrs. Hanna Sen.

They have unanimously adopted the enclosed Resolution for being placed before the Conference tomorrow morning. But, in view of the alarming reports received about the condition of Mahatma Gandhi, the Committee resolved to send the Resolution to His Excellency, in advance, for immediate action. I, accordingly, do so, with the request that you may kindly place it before His Excellency.

Yours sincerely,
C. RAJAGOPALACHARI.

Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.,
Private Secretary to H.E. the Viceroy,
New Delhi.

“ADOPTION” AWAITED

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi, 20th February, 1943.

Dear Mr. Rajagopalachariar,

I write to acknowledge with thanks the advance copy which you

have been kind enough to send me of the Resolution proposed to be considered by your Conference today, which I have duly laid before His Excellency, who asks me to thank you for your courtesy in communicating it to him in advance. You will no doubt inform me in the event of its adoption.

Yours sincerely,
G. LAITHWAITE.

C. Rajagopalachariar, Esq.

“UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED”

28, Ferozshah Road.
New Delhi, 20th February, 1943.

Dear Sir Gilbert,

I send you herewith a copy of a Resolution unanimously adopted by the Conference at its today's Session. I also send herewith a list of persons who moved and supported the Resolution. I further send herewith a list of a few prominent persons who either attended the Conference or have associated themselves with it. I shall thank you to place the letter and the enclosures before His Excellency the Viceroy.

Yours sincerely,
TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU.

Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.,
Private Secretary to H.E. the Viceroy,
New Delhi.

List of persons who moved and supported the resolution:—

1. Dr. M. R. Jayakar.
2. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee (Hindu Mahasabha).
3. Raja Sir Maharaj Singh, C.I.E., M.L.A. (Indian Christian).
4. Sir Suleiman Cassum Haji Mitha, C.I.E. (Muslims).
5. Master Tara Singh (Sikhs).
6. Dr. Mackenzie (British Christian Missionaries).
7. Srimati Saraladevi Chaudhurani (Women's League).
8. Mr. Allah Buksh (Azad Muslims).
9. Sir Vijaya of Vizianagram (Zamindars).
10. Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, M.L.A. (Central) (Muslims).
11. Maulana Ahmed Sayeed Saheb (Jamiat-ul-Ulema).
12. Mr. N. M. Joshi, M.L.A. (Central) (Labour).
13. Mr. Abdul Qaiyum, M.L.A. (Central) (Khudai Khidmatgars).
14. Mr. Gaganvihari L. Mehta, (President, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry).
15. Mr. Zahiruddin (All-India Momins).
16. Mr. Humayun Kabir (Students' Federation).

17. Hon'ble Pandit H. N. Kunzru (Servants of India Society).
18. Mr. K. M. Munshi.
19. Sardar Sant Singh, M.L.A. (Central), (Sikhs).
20. Mr. Randive (Communists).

"NO NEW FACTOR"

New Delhi, 20th February, 1943.

Dear Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru,

His Excellency asks me to say that he has received and considered the Resolution adopted by the Conference under your chairmanship, of which you were good enough to send him a copy today. The attitude of the Government of India in the matter of Mr. Gandhi's fast is set out clearly and in detail in the *communiqué* which they issued on February 10, a copy of which I enclose for convenience of reference. No new factor has emerged since that date, and, as the Government of India's *communiqué* brings out clearly, responsibility in connection with his fast rests solely with Mr. Gandhi, with whom, and not with Government, the decision to bring it to an end must rest.

Yours sincerely,

J. G. LAITHWAITE.

COPY OF THE CABLEGRAM

28, Ferozshah Road,

New Delhi, 21st February, 1943.

Dear Sir Gilbert,

I am desired by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, President of the Leaders' Conference, to enclose a copy of a telegram decided upon by the Committee of the Conference and cabled by Sir Tej Bahadur, under the Committee's instructions, to:

1. The Prime Minister, London;
2. Mr. Arthur Greenwood, Leader of the Opposition; and
3. Mr. Percy Harris, Leader of the Liberal Party.

I shall thank you to place the enclosure before the Viceroy, for his information.

I may further add that Sir Tej Bahadur will be leaving Delhi this evening.

Yours sincerely,

K. M. MUNSHI

Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.,
Private Secretary to H.E. the Viceroy,
New Delhi.

“MANY THANKS YOUR COURTESY”

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi, 22nd February, 1943.

Dear Mr. Munshi,

His Excellency the Viceroy desires me to acknowledge with many thanks your courtesy in sending him a copy of the telegram which the Committee of the Leaders' Conference have decided to cable to London.

K. M. Munshi, Esq.

Yours sincerely,
W. H. J. CHRISTIE.

THE CABLES

NEW DELHI, February 21.

Three hundred public men from different parts of India, representing various communities, creeds and interests including Commerce and Industry, Landed Interests, Workers, Communists, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis and British Missionaries, met yesterday at New Delhi and unanimously passed a resolution urging immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi whose condition is fast approaching a crisis. We fear that unless immediately released he will pass away. We wish to explain to British public opinion that the Mahatma is fasting only to be able to review the situation as a free man and to advise the people accordingly and not on the issue of independence. We are convinced that the terms of his letter of September 23 recently published by the Government amount to an unequivocal disapproval on behalf of himself and the Congress of all acts of violence. The Chairman of the Conference, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, submitted the resolution to the Viceroy yesterday afternoon and immediately afterwards he received a reply from the Viceroy declining to interfere as no new factor had arisen to alter the previous decision and enclosing the official communication of February 10. We deeply deplore that the advice of so many representative and responsible men should have been summarily turned by the Viceroy.

We firmly believe that if the Mahatma's life is spared a way will be opened to the promotion of peace and goodwill as surely as his death as a British prisoner will intensify public embitterment. The charges brought by the Government against the Mahatma do not rest upon an examination by any impartial Tribunal or independent body of men. We firmly believe that much of the trouble which has arisen was preventable by timely action on the part of Government last summer and that the Mahatma should have been allowed to see the Viceroy to find a solution as he desired.

Millions of our countrymen feel that the responsibility for saving

the Mahatma's life now rests only with the Government. We, therefore, urge that the Mahatma should be forthwith released. As under the existing constitution the ultimate responsibility is of the British Parliament for the peace and tranquillity of India we request that this cable may be brought to its notice in order that it may do justice in the matter. We are convinced that wise and liberal statesmanship will solve the Indo-British problem more speedily and effectively than stern repression.

Right Honourable Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Ex-Law Member, Government of India;

C. Rajagopalachariar, Ex-Prime Minister, Madras;

Allah Buksh, Ex-Premier, Sind, President, Azad Muslim Conference;

N. C. Chatterjee, Working President, Bengal Hindu Mahasabha;

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, Member, Central Legislative Assembly, President, Central National Mahomedan Association of India;

Mrs. Saraladevi Chaudhuri, President, Women's Hindu-Muslim Unity Committee, and General Secretary, Indian Women's Association;

Dr. Ashraf, Socialist;

Dr. Shaukatullah Ansari, General Secretary, All-India Independent Muslim Parties' Federation;

B. T. Ranadive, Central Committee, Communist Party of India;

S. P. Mookerjee, Working President, All-India Hindu Mahasabha, and Ex-Finance Minister, Bengal;

Dr. B. S. Moonje, General Secretary, All-India Hindu Mahasabha;

Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth, Ex-Minister, United Provinces, and President, Oudh Hindu Sabha;

Bhulabhai J. Desai, Leader of Opposition, Central Legislative Assembly;

P. N. Banerjee, Leader, Nationalist Party, Central Legislative Assembly;

H. N. Kunzru, Deputy Leader, Progressive Party, Member, Council of State, and President, Servants of India Society;

Mrs. Hannah Sen, Vice-President, All-India Women's Conference;

P. Subbaroyan, Member, All-India Congress Committee, and Ex-Minister for Law, Madras;

J. R. D. Tata, Chairman, Tata Sons;

N. M. Joshi, Member, Central Legislative Assembly, and General Secretary, All-India Trade Union Congress;

Sir Ardeshir R. Dalal, Managing Director, Tata Iron and Steel Co.,
Sachchidananda Sinha, Vice-Chancellor, Patna University;

G. L. Mehta, President, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry;

Kiran Shankar Roy, Member, Bengal Legislative Assembly;

Mohammad Ahmad Kazmi, Member, Central Legislative Assembly;

Sewa Singh Gill, Zamindar;

Humayun Kabir, Vice-President, Krishak Praja Parliamentary Party, and Secretary, Hindu-Muslim Unity Association;

Right Honourable Doctor M. R. Jayakar, Ex-Judge, Judicial Committee, Privy Council;

K. M. Munshi, Ex-Home Minister, Bombay; and

Sir Jagdish Prasad, Ex-Member, Viceroy's Executive Council



LONDON, February 22.

The Government of India decided last August that Mr. Gandhi and other leaders of the Congress must be detained for reasons which have been fully explained and are well understood. The reasons for that decision have not ceased to exist and His Majesty's Government endorse the determination of the Government of India not to be deflected from their duty towards the peoples of India and of the United Nations by Mr. Gandhi's attempt to secure his unconditional release by fasting.

The first duty of the Government of India and of His Majesty's Government is to defend the soil of India from invasion by which it is still menaced, and to enable India to play her part in the general cause of the United Nations. There can be no justification for discriminating between Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders. The responsibility therefore rests entirely with Mr. Gandhi himself.

Persons present at the Committee

C. Radhakrishnan

Bhulabhai Desai

T. T. Babasaheb

Sachchidananda Sinha

M. R. Jayakar

K. R. Lakshmi

J. B. K. S. S. S.

P. N. Banerjee

A. R. D. S. S.

D. B. S. Moonie

Maheshwari Desai

T. G. P. S. S.

K. R. S. S.

a. S. S. S.

M. A. K. S. S.

B. S. S. S.

Meeting on 21st February 1943.

K. J. J. J.

Hoosien by A. K. J. J.

H. N. Mungun

Amaldeep Singh

N. K. Chatterjee

Syama Prasad Mukherjee

J. K. J. J.

K. K. J. J.

G. J. J. J.

B. T. Ramani

D. Shankar Mah Anand

K. N. Ashraf

H. K. J. J.

M. K. J. J.

S. S. J. J. Chatterjee

A few amongst others who attended

Malay - Singh

Dr. D. B. B. B.

W. C. C. C. C.

Abdul Latif

Jana Singh

Ans. Anwar

M. A. B. B. B. B.

1. K. C. C. C. C.

J. C. C. C.

P. K. C. C. C.

G. C. C. C. C.

J. C. C. C. C.

C. C. C. C.

the Conference on 19th and 20th.

Lalch and Madani

Banda S. S. S.

Gyanendra E. Kiziyang

Jainkashada

R. S. S.

Frank S. S.

John McLevie.
Greenwich

Brigade Brigada

V. V. Kalikar

Academy

IF AND WHEN

"The Committee resolves that the President is hereby authorised

(1) to carry on further correspondence with the Viceroy, if necessary;

(2) to call a meeting of the Committee when an occasion arises."



THANKS

"The Committee thanks the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry for giving full facilities to the Conference."

“LEGENDS”

My brother and I paid our good-bye visit to Gandhiji on Saturday the 6th. We had been spending about an hour and a half by his bedside each day since the end of the fast. The widely published report that I spent a few hours with Gandhiji on Friday is totally incorrect. I wish it had been possible to visit him for a few more days during his convalescence, more particularly because the visits were a great comfort to my mother, whose growing infirmity of mind and body has become painful and alarming to watch.

I think Gandhiji is now well on the way to recovery. He is expected to take another fortnight to be able to get out of bed. But one is thankful now to be able to look back with relief upon these four weeks of history. I do not wish to attempt a public assessment of the results of the fast. I am content, along with the rest, to let the future unfold itself.

But there are a good few legends. I shall here refer to two of them. It has been reported in the Press that Gandhiji had a heavy mail-bag during the fast. Actually no mail-bag, heavy or light, made its appearance at the Aga Khan's Palace. They will only reach him in due course, if at all, as he is still a prisoner. Then there is the sweet lime juice story. I do not exactly know the fruit called 'sweet lime'. But a foreign correspondent very naturally asked me whether he would be right in drawing the inference that something sweet like honey or glucose had been added to the juice. To my knowledge the plain word 'orange' is used in English to mean both *mosambi* and *santra*. And it was *mosambi* juice, miscalled sweet lime juice, that was added in minute quantities to the water with no admixture of anything else. The change from lemon juice to orange juice was made, in accordance with the terms of the fast, when for two days it had become impossible for Gandhiji to drink water and it took him five minutes to gulp one ounce of water. I believe he took an average of less than six ounces of juice mixed in 60 ounces of water per day during the fast.

—DEVADAS GANDHI



AND A FACT

Syt. Nanji Kalidas, a merchant of Porbunder (Kathlawar) donated a sum of Rs. 5,00,000 (five lakhs) for the establishment of schools for girls (*Kanya Gurukuls*) on the occasion of the successful termination of Mahatma Gandhi's fast.

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GANDHIJI-LINLITHGOW CORRESPONDENCE

(including letters to and from the Home
Department, Government of India)

GANDHIJI'S IMMEDIATE APPROACH

August 14th, 1942.

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

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

The Government of India should have waited at least till the time I inaugurated mass action. I have publicly stated that I fully contemplated sending you a letter before taking concrete action. It was to be an appeal to you for an impartial examination of the Congress case. As you know, the Congress has readily filled in every omission that has been discovered in the conception of its demand. So could I have dealt with every difficulty if you had given me the opportunity. The precipitated action of the Government leads one to think that they were afraid that the extreme caution and gradualness with which the Congress was moving towards direct action might make world opinion veer round to the Congress, as it had already begun doing, and expose the hollowness of the grounds for the Government's rejection of the Congress demand. They should surely have waited for an authentic report of my speeches on Friday and on Saturday night after the passing of the resolution by the All-India Congress Committee. You would have found in them that I would not hastily begin action. You should have taken advantage of the interval foreshadowed in them, and explored every possibility of satisfying the Congress demand. .

The resolution says: "The Government of India have waited patiently in the hope that wiser counsels might prevail. They have been disappointed in that hope." I suppose wiser counsels here means abandonment of its demand by the Congress. Why should the abandonment of the demand, legitimate at all times, be hoped for by a

Government pledged to guarantee independence to India? Is it a challenge that could only be met by immediate repression instead of patient reasoning with the demanding party? I venture to suggest that it is a long draft upon the credulity of mankind to say that the acceptance of the demand "would plunge India into confusion." Anyway the summary rejection of the demand *has* plunged the nation and the Government into confusion. The Congress was making every effort to identify India with the Allied cause.

The Government resolution says: "The Governor-General-in-Council has been aware too for some days past of dangerous preparations by the Congress Party for unlawful and in some cases violent activities directed among other things to interruption of communications and public utility services, the organization of strikes, tampering with the loyalty of Government servants, and interference with defence measures including recruitment." This is a gross distortion of the reality. Violence was never contemplated at any stage. A definition of what could be included in non-violent action has been interpreted in a sinister and subtle manner, as if the Congress was preparing for violent action. Everything was openly discussed among Congress circles, for nothing was done secretly. And why is it tampering with your loyalty if I ask you to give up a job which is harming the British people?

Instead of publishing behind the backs of principal Congressmen the misleading paragraphs, the Government immediately they came to know of the "preparations" should have brought to book the parties concerned with the preparations. That would have been the appropriate course. By their unsupported allegations in the resolution they have laid themselves open to the charge of unfair dealing.

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

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

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

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

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

Then the resolution proceeds: "The suggestion put forward by the Congress Party that the millions of India uncertain as to the future are ready, despite the sad lessons of so many martyr countries, to throw themselves into the arms of the invaders is one that the Government of India cannot accept as a true representation of the feeling of the people of this great country." I do not know about the millions but I can give my own evidence in support of the Congress statement. It is open to the Government not to believe the Congress evidence. No imperial power likes to be told that it is in peril. It is because the Congress is anxious for Great Britain to avoid the fate that has overtaken other imperial powers that it asks her to shed imperialism voluntarily by declaring India independent. The Congress has not approached the movement with any but the friendliest motives. Congress seeks to kill imperialism as much for the sake of the British people and humanity as for India. Notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, I maintain that the Congress has no interests of its own, apart from that of the whole of India and the world.

The following passage from the peroration in the resolution is interesting: "But on them lies the task of defending India, of maintaining India's capacity to wage war, or safeguarding India's interests, of holding the balance between the different sections of her people

without fear or favour." All I can say is that it is a mockery of truth after the experience of Malaya, Singapore and Burma. It is sad to find the Government of India claiming to hold the "balance" between the parties for which it is itself demonstrably responsible.

One thing more. The declared cause is common between the Government of India and us. To put it in the most concrete terms it is the protection of the freedom of China and Russia. The Government of India think that the freedom of India is not necessary for winning the cause. I think exactly the opposite. I have taken Jawaharlal Nehru as my measuring rod. His personal contacts make him feel much more the misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia than I can - and may I say than even you can. In that misery he tried to forget his old quarrel with imperialism. He dreads much more than I do the success of Fascism and Nazism. I have argued with him for days together. He fought against my position with a passion which I have no words to describe. But the logic of facts overwhelmed him. He yielded when he saw clearly that without the freedom of India that of the other two was in great jeopardy. Surely you are wrong in having imprisoned such a powerful friend and ally. If notwithstanding the common cause the Government answer to the Congress demand is hasty repression, they will not wonder if I draw the inference that it was not so much the Allied cause that weighed with the British Government, as the unexpressed determination to cling to the possession of India as an indispensable part of the imperial policy. This determination led to the rejection of the Congress demand and precipitated repression. The present mutual slaughter on a scale never before known to history is suffocating enough. But the slaughter of truth accompanying the butchery and enforced by the falsity of which the resolution is recking adds strength to the Congress position.

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

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

VICEROY REPLIES—BUT BRIEFLY

August 22, 1942.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

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

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

Yours sincerely,

LINLITHGOW.

AFTER ONE MONTH

To
The Secretary, Home Department,
Government of India,
New Delhi.

September, 23, 1942

Sir,

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

In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, I claim that the Congress policy still remains unequivocally non-violent. The wholesale arrest of the Congress leaders seems to have made the people wild with rage to the point of losing self-control. I feel that the Government, not the Congress, are responsible for the destruction that has taken place. The only right course for the Government seems to me to be to release the Congress leaders, withdraw all repressive measures and explore ways and means of conciliation. Surely the Government have ample resources to deal with any overt act of violence. Repression can only breed discontent and bitterness.

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

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

Note:—A formal acknowledgment was sent to this letter.

AGAIN AFTER SIX MONTHS

New Year's Eve, 1942.

(Personal)

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

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

Your arrest of me, the *communiqué* you issued thereafter, your reply to Rajaji and the reasons given therefor, Mr. Amery's attack on me and much else I can catalogue go to show that at some stage or other you must have suspected my *bona fides*. Mention of other Congressmen in the same connection is by the way. I seem to be the *fons et origo* of all the evil imputed to the Congress. If I have not ceased to be your friend why did you not, before taking drastic action, send for me, tell me of your suspicions and make yourself sure of your facts? I am quite capable of seeing myself as others see me, but in this case I have failed hopelessly. I find that all the statements made about me in Government quarters in this connection contain palpable departures from truth, I have so much fallen from grace that I could not establish contact with a dying friend; I mean Prof. Bhansali, who is fasting in regard to the Chimur affair and I am expected to condemn the so-called violence of some peoples reputed to be Congressmen, although I have no data for such condemnation save the heavily censored reports of newspapers. I must own that I thoroughly distrust these reports. I could write much more but I must not lengthen my tale of woe. I am sure that what I have said is enough to enable you to fill in details.

You know I returned to India from South Africa at the end of 1914 with a mission which came to me in 1906, to spread truth and non-violence among mankind in the place of violence and falsehood in all walks of life. The law of Satyagraha knows no defeat. Prison is one of the many ways of spreading the message, but it has its limits. You have placed me in a place where every reasonable creature comfort is ensured. I have freely partaken of the latter purely as a matter of duty, never as a pleasure, in the hope that some day those that have the power will realize that they have wronged innocent men. I had given myself six months. The period is drawing to a close, so is my patience. The law of Satyagraha as I know it

prescribes a remedy in such moments of trial. In a sentence it is "crucify the flesh by fasting." That same law forbids its use except as a last resort. I do not want to use it if I can avoid it. This is the way to avoid it, convince me of my errors and I shall make ample amends. You can send for me or send someone who knows your mind and can carry conviction. There are many other ways if you have the will. May I expect an early reply? May the New Year bring peace to us all.

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

"ENTIRELY PERSONAL REPLY"

January 13, 1943.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

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

I was glad to have your letter, for, to be as open with you as our previous relations justify, I have been profoundly depressed during recent months first by the policy that was adopted by the Congress in August, secondly, because while that policy gave rise, as it was obvious it must, throughout the country to violence and crime (I say nothing of the risks to India from outside aggression) no word of condemnation for that violence and crime should have come from you, or from the Working Committee. When you were first at Poona I knew that you were not receiving newspapers, and I accepted that as explaining your silence. When arrangements were made that you and the Working Committee should have such newspapers as you desired I felt certain that the detail those newspapers contained of what was happening would shock and distress you as much as it has us all, and that you would be anxious to make your condemnation of it categorical and widely known. But that was not the case; and it has been a real disappointment to me, all the more when I think of these murders, the burning alive of police officials, the wrecking of trains, the destruction of property, the misleading of these young students, which has done so much harm to India's good name, and to the Congress Party. You may take it from me that the newspaper accounts you mention are well-founded—I only wish they were not, for the story is a bad one. I well know the immense weight of your great authority in the Congress movement and with the party and

those who follow its lead, and I wish I could feel, again speaking very frankly, that a heavy responsibility did not rest on you. (And unhappily, while the initial responsibility rests with the leaders, others have to bear the consequences, whether as law-breakers, with the results that that involves, or as the victims.)

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

Yours sincerely,

LINLITHGOW.

“CHALLENGING AN OPINION”

January 19, 1943

(Personal)

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of course I deplore the happenings which have taken place since 9th August last. But have I not laid the whole blame for them at the door of the Government of India? Moreover, I could not express any opinion on events which I cannot influence or control and of which I have but a one-sided account. You are bound *prima facie* to accept the accuracy of reports that may be placed before you by your departmental heads. But you do not expect me to do so. Such reports have before now, often proved fallible. It was for that reason that in my letter of December 31, I pleaded with you to convince me of the correctness of the information on which your conviction was based. You will, perhaps appreciate my fundamental difficulty in making the statement you have expected me to make.

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

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

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

To sum up—

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

- (2) If you want me to make any proposal on behalf of the Congress you should put me among the Congress Working Committee members. I do plead with you to make up your mind to end the impasse.

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

I have no mental reservation.

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

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

VICEROY'S REJOINDER

January 25th, 1943.

(Personal.)

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Many thanks for your personal letter of January 19, which I have just received, and which I need not say I have read with close care and attention. But I am still, I fear, rather in the dark. I made clear to you in my last letter that however reluctantly, the course of events and my familiarity with what has been taking place, has left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement, and you as its authorised and fully empowered spokesman at the time of the decision of last August, as responsible for the sad campaign of violence and crime, and revolutionary activity which has done so much harm, and so much injury to India's credit, since last August. I note what you say about non-violence. I am very glad to read your unequivocal condemnation of violence, and I am well aware of the importance which you have given to that article of your creed in the past. But the events of these last months, and even the events that are happening today show that it has not met with the full support of certain, at any rate, of your followers, and the mere fact that they may have fallen short of an ideal which you have advocated is no answer to the relations of those who have lost their lives, and to those themselves who have lost their property or suffered severe injury as a result of violent activities on the part of Congress and its supporters.

And I cannot, I fear, accept as an answer your suggestion that "the whole blame" has been laid by you yourself at the door of the Government of India. We are dealing with facts in this matter, and they have to be faced. And while, as I made clear in my last letter, I am very anxious to have from you anything that you may have to say or any specific proposition that you may have to make, the position remains that it is not the Government of India, but Congress and yourself that are on their justification in this matter.

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

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

Yours sincerely,
LINLITHGOW.

GANDHIJI REITERATES

January 29th, 1943

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

I must thank you warmly for your prompt reply to my letter of 19th instant. I wish I could agree with you that your letter is clear. I am sure you do not wish to imply by clearness simply that you hold a particular opinion strongly. I have pleaded and would continue to plead till the last breath, that you should at least make an attempt to convince me of the validity of the opinion you hold that the August resolution of the Congress is responsible for the popular violence that broke out on August 9 last and after, even though it broke out after the wholesale arrest of principal Congress workers. Was not the drastic and unwarranted action of the Government responsible for the reported violence?

You have not even said what part of the August resolution is bad or offensive in your opinion. That resolution is in no way a retraction by the Congress of its policy of non-violence. It is definitely against Fascism in every shape or form. It tenders co-operation in war effort under circumstances which alone can make effective and nationwide co-operation possible. Is all this open to reproach? Objection may be raised to that clause of the resolution which contemplated civil disobedience. But that by itself cannot constitute an objection since

the principle of civil disobedience is impliedly conceded in what is known as the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact." Even that civil disobedience was not to be started before knowing the result of the meeting for which I was to seek from you an appointment.

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

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

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

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

If then I cannot get soothing balm for my pain I must resort to the law prescribed for Satyagrahis, namely, a fast according to capacity. I must commence after the early morning breakfast of February 9, a fast for 21 days ending on the morning of March 2. Usually during my fasts, I take water with the addition of salts. But nowadays my system refuses water. This time, therefore, I propose to add juices of citrus fruit to make water drinkable. For, my wish is not to fast unto death, but to survive the ordeal, if God so wills. This fast can be ended sooner by the Government giving the needed relief.

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

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

P.S. The following was inadvertently omitted:

The Government have evidently ignored or overlooked the very material fact that the Congress by its August resolution asked nothing

for itself. All its demands were for the whole people. As you should be aware, the Congress was willing and prepared for the Government inviting Q.-A.-Jinnah to form a national government subject to such agreed adjustments as may be necessary for the duration of the war, such Government being responsible to a duly elected assembly. Being isolated from the Working Committee except Shrimati Sarojini Devi, I do not know its present mind. But the committee is not likely to have changed its mind.

“POLITICAL BLACKMAIL”

February 5, 1943.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

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

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

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

3. I have read with some surprise your statement that the principle of civil disobedience is implicitly conceded in the Delhi Settlement of March 5, 1931, which you refer to as the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact." I have again looked at that document. Its basis was that civil disobedience would be "effectively discontinued" and that certain "reciprocal action" would be taken by the Government. It was inherent in such a document that it should take notice of the existence of civil disobedience. But I can find nothing in it to suggest that civil disobedience was recognized as being in any circumstances legitimate. And I cannot make it too plain that it is not so regarded by my Government.

4. To accept the point of view which you put forward would be to concede that the authorized government of the country, on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, should allow subversive and revolutionary movements described by you yourself as open rebellion, to take place unchallenged; that they should allow preparations for violence, for the interruption of communications, for attacks on innocent persons, for the murder of police officers and others to proceed unchecked. My Government and I are open indeed to the charge that we should have taken drastic action at an earlier stage against you and against the Congress leaders. But my anxiety and that of my Government has throughout been to give you, and to give the Congress organization, every possible opportunity

to withdraw from the position which you have decided to take up. Your statements of last June and July, the original resolution of the Working Committee of July 14, and your declaration on the same day that there was no room left for negotiation and that after all it was an open rebellion, are all of them grave and significant, even without your final exhortation to "do or die". But with a patience that was perhaps misplaced, it was decided to wait until the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee made it clear that there could be no further toleration of the Congress attitude if the Government was to discharge its responsibility to the people of India.

5. Let me, in conclusion, say how greatly I regret, having regard to your health and your age, the decision that you tell me that you now have it in mind to take. I hope and pray that wiser counsels may yet prevail with you. But the decision whether or not to undertake a fast with its attendant risks is clearly one that must be taken by you alone, and the responsibility for which and for its consequences must rest on you alone. I trust sincerely that in the light of what I have said you may think better of your resolution; and I would welcome a decision on your part to think better of it, not only because of my own natural reluctance to see you wilfully risk your life, but because I regard the use of a fast for political purpose as a form of political blackmail (*himsa*) for which there can be no moral justification and understood from your own writings that this was also your view.

Yours sincerely,
LINLITHGOW.

"APPEAL TO THE HIGHEST TRIBUNAL"

February 7th, 1943.

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

I have to thank you for your long reply dated the 5th instant to my letter of January 29 last. I would take your last point first, namely, the contemplated fast which begins on 9th instant. Your letter, from a Satyagrahi's standpoint, is an invitation to fast. No doubt the responsibility for the step, and its consequences, will be solely mine. You have allowed an expression to slip from your pen for which I was unprepared. In the concluding sentence of the second paragraph you describe the step as an attempt "to find an easy way out". That you, as a friend, can impute such a base and cowardly motive to me passes comprehension. You have also described it as "a form of political blackmail". And you quote my previous writings on the subject against me. I abide by my writings, I hold that there is nothing inconsistent in them with the contemplated step. I wonder whether you have yourself read those writings.

I do claim that I have approached you with an open mind when

I asked you to convince me of my error. "Profound distrust" of the published reports is in no way inconsistent with my having an open mind.

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

If the wife of a member of the Working Committee is actively engaged in "planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism," she should be tried before a court of law and punished if found guilty. The lady you refer to could only have done the things attributed to her after the wholesale arrests of August 9 last, which I have dared to describe as leonine violence.

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

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

Lastly you read in my letters a meaning which is wholly inconsistent with my declaration, in one of them, of adherence to unadulterated non-violence. For, you say in your letter under reply that "acceptance of my point of view would be to concede that the authorised government of the country on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, should allow movements to take place that would admit preparations for violence, interruption of communications, for attacks on innocent persons, for murders of police officers and others to proceed unchecked." I must be a strange friend of yours whom you believe to be capable of asking for recognition of such things as lawful.

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

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

I am,

Your sincere friend,

M. K. GANDHI.

“FREE FOR DURATION OF FAST”

February 7th, 1943.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

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

maintaining your present intention to release in due course to the Press.

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

Should you for any reason find yourself unable to take advantage of these arrangements a decision which the Government of India would greatly regret, they will of course suitably amend the statement of which a copy is now enclosed before it issues. But they wish me to repeat, with all earnestness, their anxiety and their hope that the considerations which have carried so much weight with them will equally carry weight with you and that you will not pursue your present tentative proposal. In that event no occasion will of course arise for the issue of any statement of any kind.

Yours sincerely,
R. TOTTENHAM.

“PERSONAL CONVENIENCE NOT NEEDED”

February 8th, 1943.

Dear Sir Richard,

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

If the temporary release is offered for my convenience I do not need it. I shall be quite content to make my fast as a detenu or prisoner. If it is for the convenience of the Government, I am sorry, I am unable to suit them, much as I should like to do so. I can say this much that I, as a prisoner, shall avoid, as far as is humanly possible, every cause of inconvenience to the Government save what is inherent in the fast itself.

The impending fast has not been conceived to be taken as a free man. Circumstances may arise, as they have done before now, when I may have to fast in terms of my correspondence above-mentioned. I shall have to survey the situation *de novo* and decide what I should

do. I have no desire to be released under false pretences. In spite of all that has been said against me, I hope not to belie the vow of truth and non-violence which alone makes life liveable for me. I say this if it is only for my own satisfaction. It does me good to reiterate openly my faith when outer darkness surrounds me, as it does just now.

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

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

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI.

CORRESPONDENCE CLOSES

February 9th, 1943.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

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

Yours sincerely,
R. TOTTENHAM.

HEALTH BULLETINS

(The Government of Bombay issued daily *communiqués* on Mahatma Gandhi's health which are reproduced below.)

BOMBAY, Feb. 13.

Although Mr. Gandhi has had some trouble with nausea and in consequence disturbed sleep, his general condition is as satisfactory as can be expected on the fourth day of his fast.

BOMBAY, Feb. 14.

Mr. Gandhi continues to be troubled with nausea and broken sleep and his condition is not so satisfactory as yesterday.

BOMBAY, Feb. 15.

Mr. Gandhi has found some difficulty in taking water and had a rather restless day yesterday (Sunday). His condition has shown some deterioration.

BOMBAY, Feb. 16.

During the past 24 hours, Mr. Gandhi's condition has further deteriorated.

POONA, Feb. 17.

Mr. Gandhi had a better day on the whole on Tuesday, but his general condition continues to cause anxiety.

POONA, Feb. 18.

Although Mr. Gandhi had a total of 9 hours sleep, he is not refreshed nor mentally alert. There is other evidence of uraemia which is progressive. The heart action is feebler. Anxiety as to his condition deepens.

BOMBAY, Feb. 19.

Mr. Gandhi's sleep was broken, as he was troubled by excessive salivation. Nevertheless, he is a little more interested in his surroundings today. There is little change in the general condition except increasing weakness.

Dr. B. C. Roy, Dr. M. D. D. Gilder and Dr. (Miss) S. Nayar have requested the Government to publish the following:

"Mahatmaji's condition continues weak and causes anxiety. We would request those interested in his welfare not to tax his strength further by seeking interviews at present, which must naturally be restricted as much as possible."

The Government doctors in attendance concur in the above advice.

BOMBAY, Feb. 20.

Mr. Gandhi's condition has changed considerably for the worse. His condition is very grave.

BOMBAY, Feb. 21.

Mr. Gandhi had a bad day yesterday and only four and a half hours' sleep at night. During the day he is apathetic and at times drowsy. Heart sounds are weak and volume of the pulse small. He is extremely weak so that even the swallowing of water exhausts him. He drank forty ounces of water mixed with two ounces of sour lime juice as usual. He is too weak to be weighed, but had lost fourteen pounds up to the 19th instant.

The uraemic condition deepens and, if the fast is not ended without delay, it may be too late to save his life.

BOMBAY, Feb. 22.

After a restless day, on February 21, Mr. Gandhi entered a crisis at 4 p.m. He was seized with severe nausea and almost fainted, and the pulse became nearly imperceptible. Later, he was able to take water with sweet lime juice. He rallied from the crisis and slept for about 5½ hours during the night.

Today is his day of silence. He appears to be comfortable and is more cheerful. The heart is weaker.

BOMBAY, Feb. 23.

Mr. Gandhi had only broken sleep during the night, but has dozed off and on during the day. He appears comfortable. There is no appreciable change to record.

BOMBAY, Feb. 24.

Mr. Gandhi's general condition shows a slight improvement. The uraemic symptoms are less prominent. He is cheerful and his strength shows no further deterioration.

BOMBAY, Feb. 25.

Mr. Gandhi has made no further progress. There is no appreciable change in his condition.

Following the crisis on Sunday, the 21st, nausea compelled him to drink sweet lime juice and water. This was continued on Monday and Tuesday and good results were manifested. Yesterday he reduced the quantity considerably as he wishes to take the minimum quantity, enabling him to drink water.

BOMBAY, Feb. 26.

Mr. Gandhi's condition shows no appreciable change. He is cheerful.

BOMBAY, Feb. 27.

There is very little change in Mr. Gandhi's condition. He is somewhat apathetic and not quite so cheerful.

BOMBAY, Feb. 28.

Mr. Gandhi's general condition shows improvement. He is alert and in good spirits.

BOMBAY, March 1.

Today is Mr. Gandhi's day of silence. His strength is maintained and he is in good spirits. He is easily tired by visitors.

BOMBAY, March 2.

There is no change in Mr. Gandhi's condition. He is in good spirits.

BOMBAY, March 3.

After prayers Mr. Gandhi broke his fast at 9-30 this morning with orange juice slightly diluted with water. He showed signs of strain. He is weak, but cheerful.

From 18th February onwards, the *communiqués* were signed by:

- (1) Dr. B. C. Roy,
- (2) Dr. M. D. D. Gilder,
- (3) Major-General R. H. Candy,
- (4) Lt.-Col. M. G. Bhandari,
- (5) Dr. Sushila Nayar,
- (6) Lt.-Col. B. Z. Shah.

" THE MIRACLE "

The miracle has happened.

Gandhi lives in spite of the
fast, the doctors & their fears,
in spite of ~~the~~ ^{his} age and the
defective organs

B. C. Roy

AGA KHAN PALACE

—DAY BY DAY

FEBRUARY 11.

Lt.-Col. M. G. Bhandari, I.M.S., Inspector-General of Prisons, and Lt.-Col. B. Z. Shah, I.M.S., are understood to have visited Mahatma Gandhi this morning and examined him on the second day of his fast.

It is learnt that Mahatma Gandhi, who commenced his three weeks' fast on Wednesday noon, was well and cheerful till he retired to bed last night.

The *United Press* learns that Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy will be staying with Gandhiji during his fast in view of the fact that the Government have already permitted Gandhiji to have his own medical attendants during the period of his fast. Dr. Roy is likely to reach Poona on February 14 or 15. Dr. Roy was also with Gandhiji during his fast in 1931.

In response to a request from Dr. Sushila Nair, conveyed to the Government of Bombay, by Mr. Gandhi, for additional medical assistance during the period of Mr. Gandhi's fast, Dr. Gilder was transferred this morning (Thursday) to Mr. Gandhi's place of detention.

FEBRUARY 12.

Lt.-Col. M. G. Bhandari and Lt.-Colonel B. Z. Shah again examined Mahatma Gandhi this morning. His condition is reported to be as good as can be expected on the third day of his fast. Dr. M. D. Gilder, who was brought to the Aga Khan Palace yesterday, Dr. Sushila Nayar, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Mira Ben are attending on him.

It is understood that Mahatma Gandhi has discontinued his daily walks in the palace garden and his daily evening visit to the spot where the late Mahadev Desai was cremated.

FEBRUARY 13.

Except for the routine change of guards and the usual visit of doctors to Mahatma Gandhi there was no other activity discernible at the Aga Khan Palace this morning.

The weather at Poona suddenly warmed up yesterday and Mahatma Gandhi, who was lying indoors, was shifted to the verandah for a couple of hours.

The District Magistrate of Poona, Mr. W. G. Hulland, called on Mahatma Gandhi yesterday, while the Inspector-General of Prisons called thrice at the palace. It is believed that these visits were in

connection with the granting of permission to those friends and relatives of Mahatma Gandhi seeking interviews with him.

It is learnt that inquiries from friends all over the country about Mahatma Gandhi's health are daily pouring in and asking whether they could come and see him during the fast.

Mrs. Mahadev Desai with her son and Mr. Kanu Gandhi arrived at *Parna Kuti* yesterday.

In addition to the arrival of Dr. B. C. Roy from Calcutta, Dr. Bharucha from Bombay is also expected. Dr. Gilder, a former Minister of Bombay, has already been taken to Gandhiji to keep close watch on Gandhiji's health.

The daily official medical examination by Lt.-Col. Bhandari and Lt.-Col. Shah also took place this morning, and it is stated that Mahatma Gandhi's condition was found to be as satisfactory as possible on the fourth day of the fast and that "there is nothing to worry about."

It is learnt that Dr. Rajendra Prasad has sent a message to Mr. Bajaj making inquiries about Mahatma Gandhi's health.

Dr. B. C. Roy, accompanied by his assistant, Dr. Anil Kumar Chakravarty, left Calcutta for Bombay on Saturday evening *en route* to Poona to attend on Mahatma Gandhi during his fast. Inquired by the *United Press* as to how long he would stay in Poona, Dr. Roy said that it would depend on the condition of Mahatma Gandhi.

"I cannot give any opinion until I have seen Gandhiji," said Dr. Roy when approached by the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* representative as to the likelihood of Mahatma Gandhi surviving the ordeal. "But this time," Dr. Roy added, "Mahatma Gandhi is much older than he was in 1938, when he undertook the previous fast. Naturally, the case on the present occasion is more difficult and there is cause for anxiety."

FEBRUARY 14.

Col. Bhandari, Inspector-General of Prisons, together with Lt.-Col. Shah, Superintendent of Yeravda Mental Hospital, paid another visit to the Aga Khan Palace this morning on the fifth day of Mahatma Gandhi's fast. The doctors examined Mahatma Gandhi.

Dr. B. C. Roy, it is reported, is arriving here tomorrow instead of today.

The Surgeon-General to the Government of Bombay is in Poona.

Some of the friends or relatives of Mahatma Gandhi who have arrived in Poona are awaiting Government's permission to visit the Mahatma.

Mr. Amritlal V. Thakkar of the Servants of India Society and the All-India Harijan Sevak Sangh arrived in Poona on Sunday.

FEBRUARY, 15.

Dr. G. S. Mandlik, a ear, nose and throat specialist, was called in this afternoon to examine Mahatma Gandhi. Besides, Lieut.-Col. Bhandari and Lieut.-Col. Shah visited Mahatma Gandhi thrice during the course of the day.

A Poona report says that Mrs. Durgaben Mahadev Desai, her son, Narayan Desai, and Mr. Kanu Gandhi, grand-nephew of Mahatma Gandhi, have received permission from the Government of India today to stay with Mahatma Gandhi. All the three have left for Aga Khan's Palace, and it is presumed they will stay inside for the duration of the fast.

Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy arrived in Poona tonight by the Poona Mail from Bombay and immediately motored to the Aga Khan Palace to see Mahatma Gandhi.

Lt.-Col. Bhandari and Lt.-Col. Shah paid the usual visit to the Aga Khan Palace this morning and examined Mahatma Gandhi. The Surgeon-General to the Bombay Government is already here and, it is understood, paid a visit to the Aga Khan Palace this morning along with Lt.-Col. Bhandari and Lt.-Col. Shah.

The District Magistrate, Mr. Hulland, is also understood to be among those who called on Mahatma Gandhi today.

FEBRUARY 16.

More doctors called in at the Aga Khan Palace this evening. Dr. K. Gajjar, Specialist in Pathology, and his assistant arrived here this evening from Bombay and drove straight to the Aga Khan Palace to examine Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy and the Surgeon-General to the Government of Bombay were also present there.

Mr. Shantikumar Morarjee saw Mahatma Gandhi this evening.

It is learnt that a full report of today's examination and of Gandhiji's health on the seventh day of his fast was forwarded to the Government of Bombay this afternoon.

Six doctors were present when Mahatma Gandhi was again examined this morning. Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, who arrived in Poona last night, was in the Aga Khan Palace for nearly three hours in the morning.

It is learnt that Mahatma Gandhi was quite cheerful and talked with the doctors for some time, though his voice has become weak and low. He has lost some weight during the week's fast and most of the time he is reposing on bed.

"Gandhiji sometimes baffles medical science. It is, therefore, difficult for me to make a categorical statement on this point," said Dr. B. C. Roy to the *United Press* special correspondent at Poona when asked after his brief examination last night of Gandhiji's health as to how long he thought Gandhiji could pull on if the fast continued.

In this connection Dr. Roy recalled his experience of Gandhiji's fast in 1931 when he felt that Gandhiji must put some weight in order to avoid danger. He said that Gandhiji wanted seven days' time, and to his utter amazement he was found to have acquired the required weight when he was weighed on the seventh day.

Full medical examination was held again by Dr. Roy yesterday.

Mrs. Leelavati Munshi, wife of Mr. K. M. Munshi, has been permitted by the Government to see Mahatma Gandhi at Poona.

FEBRUARY 17.

Mahatma Gandhi is lying on a hospital cot so that he could be wheeled from place to place without any difficulty. He has given up reading newspapers. Visitors, whose numbers are strictly controlled, are not permitted to have long talks with him, the time allowed for each visitor being only from fifteen to twenty minutes. Dr. M. D. Gilder is reported to be by his bedside practically all the time and ensures that no visitor excite Mahatma Gandhi by his talk. The only activity in which Mahatma Gandhi participates is the prayer that is regularly held both at dawn and at dusk when the fellow detenus at the Aga Khan Palace gather round him and sing devotional songs.

It is believed that from tomorrow, if not from today onwards, a regular bulletin on Mahatma Gandhi's health signed by six doctors including the Surgeon-General to the Government of Bombay will be issued for the information of the public.

Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy and the other doctors examined Mahatma Gandhi again this morning and the report of the pathologist is awaited. A heart specialist examined Mahatma Gandhi this morning.

The first stage of the fast is now over with the conclusion of one week and the second phase, which is said to be a difficult period, commences today.

Doctors who attend on him are reluctant to make any comments pending the receipt of the pathologist's report.

Mahatma Gandhi was given a massage last night by a nature-cure specialist and it is thought that the treatment will be repeated.

Dr. Roy, who was with Gandhiji today for about five hours, will examine him again tomorrow morning.

"Gandhiji is always helpful," said Dr. B. C. Roy to a representative of the *United Press* when asked by the latter about Gandhiji's attitude to doctors and their instructions.

It is learnt that with the beginning of the second week's fast nausea had slightly subsided and consequently he could have little better sleep now and also kept cheerful.

The District Magistrate, Poona, Mr. Hulland, also paid another visit to Gandhiji in the morning.

It is also understood that Dr. Roy has sent for some medicine from Bombay through a special messenger for Gandhiji's use.

Mr. Amritlal V. Thakkar, Vice-President of the Servants of India Society, Miss Amtul-Salam, a former inmate of Sevagram Ashram and Lady Vithaldas Thackersay saw Mahatma Gandhi this evening. Each one of the interviewers was permitted to stay with him for ten minutes.

FEBRUARY 18.

Doctors who emerged from the Aga Khan's Palace after an exhaustive examination of Mahatma Gandhi looked worried. It is understood that Mahatma Gandhi did not show any inclination to talk since morning nor is he showing the same interest in those visiting him.

The specialists who examined Mahatma Gandhi submitted a report to the Government which is under consideration. Mr. C. H. Bristow, Adviser to the Governor of Bombay, has left for Poona today presumably to see Mahatma Gandhi to ascertain the condition of his health first-hand.

Interviews lasting only three minutes were allowed to Mrs. Krishna Hutheesingh, sister of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mrs. Lila-vati Munshi and Miss Goshiben Captain when they visited Mahatma Gandhi this evening. The ladies seemed deeply moved as they emerged from the Aga Khan Palace and were hardly able to speak. It is understood that Mahatma Gandhi, who was wrapped in a khaddar shawl, had a kind word or two to each one of them.

A minute or two after the interviewers were ushered in by Dr. M. D. D. Gilder in the Mahatma's presence, he recognized them and appeared to strain himself to smile.

Inquiries made by the *United Press* reveal that Gandhiji's condition on the eighth day of his fast has shown a slight improvement and that unlike the last few days he had fairly good sleep last night. The intensity of consequent suffering is also stated to be a little less last night than was during the past week.

In this connection a leading personality credited with the knowledge of Gandhiji's mind told the *United Press* special correspondent that the general interpretation given to Gandhiji's statement in his letter to his Excellency the Viceroy that it was a fast "according to capacity" and, therefore, he could give it up any moment if capacity was found to be at its end was wrong. It is stated that on certain previous occasions, like that of the Communal Award fast, Gandhiji declared that the fast would be unto death unless a satisfactory settlement was reached, but on this occasion the fast is according to capacity, which means up to three weeks, which he thought before he embarked on it to be his capacity this time, and it is, therefore, to continue till the end of the stipulated period of three weeks.

FEBRUARY 19.

Mr. Ramdas Gandhi, son of Mahatma Gandhi, and his family saw Mahatma Gandhi this (Friday) morning.

Mr. Vaikunth L. Mehta and Mr. Vithaldas Jairajani of the All-India Spinners' Association had each three minutes' interview with Mahatma Gandhi on Friday evening.

Due to general weakness, Mahatma Gandhi is not able to speak much. But Mahatma Gandhi insisted on drinking water from the glass himself and declined assistance, though his hands were shaking.

It is understood that Mahatma Gandhi was told today of the resignations of the three members from the Executive Council and also about the Conference of Leaders taking place in Delhi today. His only reaction was a feeble smile.

Meanwhile, it is stated that inside the Aga Khan's Palace, time hangs heavily, with deepening anxiety of the inmates about Mahatma Gandhi's condition. In addition to the proposed restrictions on interviews, it is understood that no more persons will be permitted to stay in the Aga Khan's Palace with him.

Two of the inmates of the palace are reported to be slightly ill. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu is "keeping house" and does all the cooking herself, besides attending on Mahatma Gandhi.

Some inmates of the Palace played devotional songs on stringed instruments.

The doctors continue to keep constant vigil by the side of the Mahatma.

The *United Press* understands that during the morning visit of doctors to the Aga Khan's Palace, Gandhiji was busy taking bath and massage. Medical examination could not, therefore, take place in the morning.

At 2 p.m. the doctors drove to the Aga Khan's Palace and held an exhaustive examination.

In pursuance of doctors' advice, many persons, including Mr. Kamalnayan Bajaj, who had secured the Government's permission to see Gandhiji and had arrived in Poona have abandoned the idea of seeing him and are returning.

FEBRUARY 20.

Mr. Devadas Gandhi and other members of Mahatma Gandhi's family have arrived at the Aga Khan's Palace and are by his bedside.

Mr. Kamalnayan Bajaj and his mother, Mrs. Jankidevi Bajaj, also saw Mahatma Gandhi today for a few minutes.

Mr. S. A. Brelvi, Editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, interviewed Mahatma Gandhi this afternoon.

It is learnt that Mr. G. D. Birla is arriving in Poona on Sunday. It appears that Gandhiji expressed his desire to see the circle of his friends whom he had not met for months. ..

It is stated that Gandhiji is spending most of his time in bed in silence listening to the reading of the *Bhagavat Gita* and evening prayers and divine songs to the accompaniment of *sitar* played by the inmates of the Aga Khan's Palace.

(Dr. Gajjar, Pahologist, who arrived here from Bombay at the instance of the Government, left for Bombay after his report was fully scrutinized by the group of doctors attending on Gandhiji.

FEBRUARY 21.

Madame Sophia Wadia, Mr. B. F. Barucha, Mr. Shankerlal Banker, Mrs. Anusuya Ben and Mr. R. D. Birla saw Mahatma Gandhi this evening and each were permitted to stay with him for less than three minutes. Dr. M. D. D. Gilder, who has been present throughout all the interviews, sees to it that no interviewer exceeds the three-minute limit. The interviewers, it is understood, are cautioned by Dr. Gilder before they are ushered in the Mahatma's presence that they should do all the talking and should not expect any reply from Mahatma Gandhi, as it is a great strain on him. Interviewers are also cautioned not to speak on any topic that might cause the least excitement to Mahatma Gandhi. It is understood that in spite of the precautions taken Mahatma Gandhi did speak to some and Dr. Gilder intervened saying, "Bapu, you are breaking the contract," the contract being that Mahatma Gandhi would not speak.

It is understood that Gandhiji takes water through a glass tumbler or permits others to bring the tumbler to his lips. Nothing more is available in regard to his health than what is contained in the Government *communiqué*.

It is understood that for long spells Mahatma Gandhi was observed to be in meditation.

The one name he now and then whispers, it is learnt, is that of Mahadev Desai, his late secretary, Mrs. Mahadev Desai and his son are by his side most of the time and he is much comforted.

During all the twelve days since he started his fast, his first inquiry in the morning has invariably been whether fresh flowers were placed at the spit where Mr. Mahadev Desai was cremated, a task which he had been regularly performing. His fellow detenus are spending most of the time in prayers.

Mr. Devadas Gandhi and Mr. Ramdas Gandhi, sons of Mahatma Gandhi, and other members of his family were by his side for a long time.

A large number of telegrams to Mahatma Gandhi, the contents of which are not known, are pouring into the Aga Khan Palace at all hours.

Despite medical advice not to put strain on Gandhiji by seeking interviews, a stream of visitors, most of whom were his relations, called on Gandhiji between 4-30 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Saturday. Mr. Devadas Gandhi, who had secured permission, drove to the Aga Khan's Palace almost immediately after his arrival and was by the side of his father more than the usual time specified for each visitor.

A number of friends are also paying visits to Dr. Roy's residence at Koregaonpeth to inquire about Gandhiji.

Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi, who has been at the bedside of Mahatma Gandhi all through, is standing the strain very well. Mr. Samaldas Gandhi, nephew of Mahatma Gandhi, and other members of the Gandhi family including some of his grandchildren are in Poona to see him.

FEBRUARY 22.

A number of visitors called at the Aga Khan's Palace today. Among those who came today were members of the late Seth Jamnala Bajaj's family.

It is understood that every possible precaution is being taken by Dr. M. D. D. Gilder, who is constantly by Gandhiji's bedside, that no business talk is indulged in by visitors, which might disturb Gandhiji's mental condition. They are only allowed to pay their respects to "Bapuji" and asked to leave after three minutes.

Mr. Mathurdas Tricumjee, Gandhiji's nephew and former Mayor of Bombay, who has been ailing and is under medical treatment at Miraj, was brought here this morning in an ambulance car. It appears

that he received an urgent communication from the Government to proceed to Poona as Gandhiji expressed a desire to see him. He is meeting Gandhiji this evening.

Immediately after Mr. Mathuradas' arrival, Mr. Devadas Gandhi was seen driving to the office of the Inspector-General of Prisons, presumably to make arrangements for the permission.

Doctors who examined Mahatma Gandhi this afternoon for another two hours looked less worried than yesterday.

Today being his weekly silence day the number of visitors to Gandhiji was considerably curtailed and those who called on him were given a very short period though he is understood to have been showing a little more interest in them today.

Mr. Mathurdas Tricumjee, his wife and his son, Shrimati Kusum-devi, an old inmate of the Sabarmati Ashram, Miss Amtul Salam and Swami Anand paid visits to Gandhiji. Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai sent flowers.

All the doctors are staying outside the Aga Khan's Palace in order to keep a close vigil on Mahatma Gandhi's condition and every development is stated to be reported to them by 'phone.

It is stated that Mahatma Gandhi is taking his daily dose of water in glass tube, which is assisted by his attendants although he tried to help himself as much as he could.

It is understood that the question of issuing bulletins twice daily instead of once as hitherto done, is receiving consideration of the Government. Doctors are said to be in concurrence with the suggestion.

Meanwhile the three-line statement issued by Mr. William Phillips, President Roosevelt's Personal Envoy in India, that phases of the Indian situation are being handled by high officials of the Governments of the United States of America and Great Britain created little enthusiasm in local circles here, which feel "whatever is to be done must be done before it is too late."

It is understood that Mr. Horace Alexander of the Friends Ambulance Unit has obtained permission to visit Gandhiji.

FEBRUARY, 23.

Those who interviewed Mahatma Gandhi this evening found him cheerful. His mind was quite clear and he recognized without difficulty even those relatives who have not seen him for a long time. His voice was distinct though feeble and he greeted every visitor with a smile.

Doctors examined Gandhiji for four hours in the morning and in the afternoon today.

The doctors attending on him took the usual precautions to see that he did not strain himself but it is understood that Mahatma Gandhi insisted on speaking for nearly four minutes to Mr. Horace Alexander of the Friends' Ambulance Unit who conveyed to Mahatma Gandhi a message of love and friendship on behalf of his numerous English friends.

In his talks with the *United Press* special representative, Mr. Alexander recalled his days with Gandhiji in the Sabarmati Ashram and said: "It is but right that I should come for a short interview." Mr. Alexander and his co-worker, Mr. Symonds, are expected to stay here for some days before their departure for Calcutta.

Among the visitors today to the Aga Khan's Palace were Mrs. Hansa Mehta, Mrs. Jaishree Raijee and Mrs. Shantikumar Morarjee.

Swami Anand, an old associate of Gandhiji, Mr. Devadas Gandhi and the family members of the late Seth Jamnalal Bajaj saw Gandhiji again today and were with him for a considerable time. Mr. Mathurdas Tricumjee with his family also paid a second visit to the Aga Khan's Palace.

Gandhiji was a little more interested in the visitors today and cracked jokes with them with a smile on his face. He is understood to have passed a quiet day.

A Bengali visitor is reported to have lost Rs. 25 some time back in a bet with Gandhiji on the question of the latter's ability to understand a certain Bengali word.

FEBRUARY 24.

With the beginning of the third week today the prospect of Gandhiji successfully terminating the fast appears to be brighter though daily increasing weakness with its corresponding risk can by no means be ignored.

A large number of visitors, mostly inmates of the Sevagram Ashram, saw Mahatma Gandhi this evening. Mahatma Gandhi, it is stated, was quite cheerful and communicative to those who saw him.

Doctors who held today their morning and afternoon examination of Gandhiji's condition came out of the Aga Khan's Palace with a more confident look on their faces. Friends having experience of Gandhiji's previous fasts appear to hold the opinion that there are various phases of a three weeks' fast and that Gandhiji has yet to

carry out the "accumulated liabilities" of the last two weeks' fast to the third week.

It is understood that Gandhiji had a few hours' sleep on Tuesday night and appeared to be more comfortable this morning due to the rest he had yesterday. He is taking regular massage and sponge bath every morning. This daily process appears to tire him to some extent but it is considered necessary to keep him comfortable.

Since Gandhiji finds it difficult to drink and retain water which is adjusted to one taste, it is understood that it is being made sweet and sour alternately by the mixing up of usual dose of sour and sweet lime juice.

Some of the Ashramites played devotional songs on stringed instruments and before they started Mahatma Gandhi asked the Superintendent of the Camp if it would be in order for the visitors to sing. When some children who had accompanied their parents to the Aga Khan's Palace came into his room, Mahatma Gandhi asked for some gur to be brought and distributed it to the youngsters.

Shrimati Goki Ben, Mahatma Gandhi's aged sister, also saw him.

With the progress of the fast the number of journalists are daily increasing in Poona. Today three more forents of the New York *Times* and *Herald-Tribune*, as also a photographer of the American *Times* arrived here.

FEBRUARY 25.

Mahatma Gandhi passed the sixteenth day of his fast today fairly well. He saw a number of visitors this evening.

Mahatma Gandhi is in good spirits today. He had a sponge bath and massage this morning.

Although fully conscious all the time, he rarely speaks except in the evenings when visitors see him.

Among those who came to see Mahatma Gandhi were Mr. K. Srinivasan, Editor of the *Hindu*, Mr. G. L. Mehta, President of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Dr. P. Subbaroyan, Mr. Jannadas Dwarkadas and a number of inmates from Sevagram Ashram and relatives of Mahatma Gandhi.

It is reported that Mahatma Gandhi told some of the interviewers that he was feeling better.

Headlines from the day's newspapers and other important news of the day were read out to him today. Those who saw him this evening found him propped up on a pillow and he was able to turn from side to side.

Despite the sixteen days' fasting and his extreme state of weakness, he showed keen interest in the conversation and during evening prayers today he asked for some of his favourite hymns to be sung.

With six more days to go, a more optimistic view is taken in medical circles in Poona of Mahatma Gandhi being able to terminate his fast successfully. The fast ends at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, March 3.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai and Mr. K. M. Munshi are seeing Mahatma Gandhi on Friday.

Mr. K. Srinivasan left for Madras tonight.

A number of inmates of the 'Wardha and Sabarmati Ashrams arrived here this morning.

The daily influx of American journalists to Poona is taken here as an indication of the increasing interest taken by the American Press in Gandhiji's fast. A few more American journalists arrived here this morning. It is understood that two British journalists are also arriving here shortly.

A batch of five persons believed to have arrived here from Nasik were arrested by the police today for attempting to take out a procession to the Aga Khan's Palace.

FEBRUARY 26.

Mahatma Gandhi is in good cheer. Everybody is anxiously waiting for March 3 for him to break his fast. Since yesterday he has reduced the dose of lime juice which he had been taking as he feels he can do with reduced quantity. One ounce of juice is diluted in ten ounces and more of water and he sips it through a tube.

It appears that Gandhiji spent a fairly good night last night. As he does not feel it necessary, the quantity of lime juice is understood to be considerably reduced. It is also understood that Gandhiji's grandnephew, who is staying at the Aga Khan's Palace, is taking down notes of the talks between Gandhiji and visitors.

Though he is to undergo six more days of fast the doctors here appear to be optimistic about successful termination of the fast.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari told Pressmen after seeing Gandhiji that he found him quite cheerful and confident of pulling through the fast. He said that he was very pleased to see Mahatma Gandhi and so was Mahatma Gandhi to see him. He is expected to see Gandhiji again.

Mr. Rajagopalachari told Pressmen that he had telegraphed to the Government for permission to see Mahatma Gandhi again as often as he desired till the breaking of the fast. He could not of

course discuss politics with him, in view of his present state of health, although he had much to talk about.

"Russia is far too occupied to take interest in us. China has already shown her great interest in a satisfactory solution of the Indian impasse and at the present moment she is helpless herself," said Mr. Rajagopalachari in an interview to the Press when asked what he thought about the attitude of Russia and China about the present situation in India.

Earlier Mr. Bhulabhai Desai and Mr. K. M. Munshi paid visits to Gandhiji. Among other interviewers today were Mrs. Janaki Devi Bajaj, Mrs. Urmila Devi, sister of the late Mr. C. R. Das, Mr. Walchand Hirachand and Swami Anand. Mrs. Krishna Hatheesingh is arriving here in the course of the day to see Mahatma Gandhi. According to one report current here Mr. J. R. D. Tata is also expected here shortly. Mr. Anand Hingorani of Karachi, publisher of Gandhiji's writings, has also arrived here and is awaiting the Government permission to see Gandhiji. Mr. M. S. Aney has also arrived.

Mr. Rathindranath Tagore, who has arrived in Poona with family to be near Mahatma Gandhi during the fast, said in an interview: "Although I know that in the present condition it would not be wise or proper to seek an interview with Mahatma Gandhi, my wife and myself could not keep ourselves so far away from him at this critical time. We felt we should come to pay our silent homage of love and reverence to him; for he is as dear to us as a father. We wish no more than to be near him at this time. We cannot also forget the strong ties of love and friendship which bound my father with Mahatmaji. Nor can we be unmindful of the deep debt of gratitude which the Visva-Bharati owes him."

Mr. Rajagopalachari is staying here till the end of the fast.

Mr. Munshi and Mr. Desai are likely to leave for Bombay after meeting Gandhiji.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari had talks with Mr. Horace Alexander* today. It appears that in the course of their talks which lasted for more than an hour Mr. Alexander acquainted Mr. Rajagopalachari with the gist of the talks he had with Gandhiji, whom he met a few days ago, as well as his impressions about Gandhiji's condition.

FEBRUARY 27.

Mr. M. S. Aney saw Mahatma Gandhi this afternoon and later called on Mr. Rajagopalachari.

Mr. M. S. Aney was with Mahatma Gandhi for nearly 25 minutes. No politics was discussed at the meeting. Mr. Aney, it is understood, will again meet Mahatma Gandhi.

Mr. Rajagopalachari had another interview with Gandhiji this evening. He was at the Aga Khan's Palace for more than half an hour.

The *United Press* learns that Mr. Rajagopalachari has secured Government permission to meet Gandhiji as often as possible.

The general impression amongst those who saw Mahatma Gandhi today is that he looked more tired. It is stated that he has given up taking water mixed with sweet lime juice and the quantity of sour lime juice taken with water has been reduced to about two and a half to three ounces a day. He was able to drink more water today.

It is learnt that Prof. Bhansali will be arriving here to see Mahatma Gandhi. Prof. Bhansali had telephonic conversation with some of Gandhiji's relatives who are here now.

It now appears that due to urgent previous engagements Mr. J. R. D. Tata is not coming to Poona at the moment.

Mr. K. M. Munshi had his second interview with Gandhiji this morning.

Mr. Rathindranath Tagore also saw Mahatma Gandhi today

The *United Press* learns that Prof. Tan Yun Shan, Director of Cheena Bhavan, Santiniketan, is arriving here tomorrow or the day after to meet Gandhiji.

The Sevagram Ashramites, Dr. Das, Ashadevi and Chimanlal Shah, appeal to the public to "desist from seeking Mahatma Gandhi's *darshan* or interview with him," so that he may have his energy for the remaining five days of his fast. They request all to pray to the Almighty to spare Mahatma Gandhi's life.

FEBRUARY, 28.

With two more days to break his fast, Mahatma Gandhi is reported to be keeping well today, the nineteenth day of the fast. Though he is weak, he is stated to be "holding on very well." Today he is not so apathetic as yesterday, and is comparatively more cheerful. Nausea was absent and he was able to drink water without difficulty.

Srimati Saraladevi, niece of Poet Tagore, saw Mahatma Gandhi this morning. Mrs. Radhabai Subbaroyan, Mrs. Ambujammal, daughter of the late S. Srinivasa Ayyangar, and Srimati Janammal of Madras have arrived here today to see Mahatma Gandhi this afternoon.

By far the largest number of visitors saw Mahatma Gandhi this evening, and most of them were his personal friends or his own relatives. There were also a number of children and babes in arms

who filed past Mahatma Gandhi's room and had a couple of minutes with him.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari again paid a visit to the Aga Khan's Palace today.

It is stated that Gandhiji looked much better today than he ever did since his condition gave rise to anxiety during the second week of the fast and his subsequent rally. He looked newly shaven and bright and spoke for a minute or two with almost all the visitors.

It is reported that one of the visitors had presented Mahatma Gandhi with a rosary which Mahatma Gandhi used for meditation. The rosary was found hanging on the side of his cot. An English book of medium bulk was also found by his side.

It is not known whether the facilities afforded to Mahatma Gandhi to receive visitors will be continued on March 3 and subsequent days. It is understood that if such facilities are available both Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and Mr. M. S. Aney, who are here, would see Mahatma Gandhi.

POONA, March 1.

As stipulated, the period of Mahatma Gandhi's fast is coming to an end at the appointed hour on Wednesday morning at 8, when he is expected to take a sip of orange juice.

It is now heard that the last critical phase of the fast which threatened to affect his condition is now over and there is no further apprehension of its recurrence during next two days. It is stated that he is having a good quantity of water and, despite growing exhaustion, he is mentally alert.

Visitors will be allowed at the Aga Khan's Palace for the last time tomorrow (Tuesday), the 21st day of Mahatma Gandhi's fast.

It is, however, learnt that his two sons, Mr. Devadas and Mr. Ramdas, have been granted permission, should they so desire, to be present at the Aga Khan's Palace on Wednesday morning when Mahatma Gandhi breaks his fast.

Dr. B. C. Roy, who is attending on Mahatma Gandhi, has tentatively decided to leave for Calcutta on Wednesday evening. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari intends leaving Poona tomorrow.

The *United Press* learns that Mr. M. S. Aney will have a second interview with Mahatma Gandhi tomorrow afternoon and that he has secured permission for the same.

It is understood that Professor Bhansali, who wanted to arrive here to see Mahatma Gandhi, has been advised by doctors not to

undertake the journey in view of weak state of his health. He is, therefore, not likely to come here.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and Mr. G. D. Birla saw Mahatma Gandhi during the course of the day.

MARCH 2.

The gates of the Aga Khan's Palace opened to visitors for the last time today, the 21st and last day of the fast.

The weather was close and stuffy and Mahatma Gandhi was wheeled from his room to the verandah, so that the visitors—the largest since the fast commenced on February 10—could have *darshan* of the Mahatma.

Among those who saw Mahatma Gandhi today were Mr. M. S. Aney, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Mr. Rathindranath Tagore and his family, Miss Gladys Owen, Father Lash of the Christ Seva Sangh, Mr. A. V. Thakkar of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, Prof. Tan Yun Shun of the Sino Kalabhavan, Viswabharati University, Mrs. Lilavati Munshi, Lady Vithaldas Thakersy and members of the Bajaj family.

While most of the visitors had to be content with *darshan* of the Mahatma, Mr. Rajagopalachari and Mr. Aney are understood to have had a quiet talk with Mahatma Gandhi lasting more than 45 minutes.

From tomorrow, no visitors except doctors will be permitted to see Mahatma Gandhi, it is understood.

At 9 o'clock tomorrow morning (Wednesday) Gandhiji will break the 21-day fast with a small glass of orange juice and a teaspoonful of glucose. The juice will not be diluted this time as now he takes it for nourishment.

Unlike the occasion of breaking his previous fast this time there will be no outsiders present when the fast is ended except his fellow detenus, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi, Dr. M. D. D. Gilder, who was specially transferred to the Aga Khan's Palace from the Yeravda Central Prison to attend on Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Pyarelal, Miss Sushila Nayar, Mahatma Gandhi's personal physician, and Miss Miraben. Besides these, there will be three others who are not detained at the Aga Khan's Palace but whom the Government have been kind enough to permit to stay with Mahatma Gandhi for a month—they are Mr. Kanu Gandhi, Mrs. Durgaben Desai, wife of the late Mr. Mahadev Desai and her son, Narayan Desai.

Mr. Devadas Gandhi and Mr. Ramdas Gandhi, sons of Mahatma Gandhi, will not be present when the fast terminates, but it is gathered they have been allowed by the Government daily to visit their father for four more days.

This is the 17th fast which Mahatma Gandhi has undergone and the fifth major fast. But none of them have caused greater anxiety and alarm to the doctors as well as to the public than the present fast, when, as Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy put it, "he was very near death." On the 11th day of the fast, the doctors' bulletin announced: "Mr. Gandhi's condition has changed considerably for the worse. His condition is very grave." The next day, the bulletin warned: "If the fast is not ended without delay, it may be too late to save his life." The same day, February 21, saw a crisis when Mahatma Gandhi was "seized with severe nausea and almost fainted and his pulse became imperceptible." From this crisis the Mahatma rallied with amazing rapidity and this evening, after remaining without food for 21 days, he almost tried to sit up by himself but he was helped by Dr. Gilder.

When the grave tone of the medical bulletins was recalled to Dr. B. C. Roy today, the doctor exclaimed: "Mahatmaji fooled us all."

This is the third time he has fasted in this city and great relief is expressed in all quarters at his surviving the ordeal.

It is believed that it would take at least eight to ten weeks for him to recoup his lost strength.

After the last 21-day fast in 1932, it is stated, it took Mahatma Gandhi six weeks to regain his normal strength. This time he is naturally expected to take much longer time because with advancing age the power of recuperation declines.

According to doctors, Mahatma Gandhi has been taking four to six ounces of citrus juice on an average daily diluted in water, the quantity of water depending on his capacity to take it.

Medical opinion stated that this quantity of citrus juice could not be of much nutritive value and explained that a person who was resting and did no muscular work required from 1,800 to 2,000 calories a day to keep the human system going while the calories contents in four ounces of citrus juice were about 80. The addition of citrus juice which contained alkaline salts was only to enable Mahatma Gandhi to take water and retain it, which he was finding difficulty to do on account of nausea.

MARCH 3.

It is understood that Mahatma Gandhi will be given fruit juice several times a day and his normal diet will be restored gradually.

On the termination of Mahatma Gandhi's fast the arrangements for his detention and that of other persons detained at the Aga Khan's Palace which obtained before the fast have now been resumed, says a *communiqué*. Such extra medical attendance and nursing as may be necessary will continue for the present.

It was a brief but impressive ceremony, performed with due solemnity and devotion, that preceded Mahatma Gandhi's breaking of the fast at 9-34 a.m. (I.S.T.) today (March 3). Mahatma Gandhi was in a meditative mood and was lying on the cot in the same room where he fasted.

The earliest to arrive at the Aga Khan's Palace was Dr. B. C Roy and at 9 a.m. the Surgeon-General to the Government of Bombay, Major-General R. H. Candy, Lieut.-Colonel M. G. Bhandari and Lieut.-Colonel B. Z. Shah drove in.

The inmates of the Palace sung Mahatma Gandhi's favourite hymn *Vaishnava Janato* and two stanzas from Poet Tagore's *Gitanjali*, and *Lead Kindly Light*. Portions from the Gita and the Koran were also recited.

After communal prayers, those present observed a five-minute silence in meditation. With folded hands Mahatma Gandhi was seen to close his eyes and was in meditation.

Prayers over, Shrimati Kasturba, wife of Mahatma Gandhi, handed him a glass containing six ounces of orange juice. Before sipping it the Mahatma in a feeble voice thanked the doctors for the great care and attention which they bestowed on him and said that more than anything else it was their love and affection to him that must have saved his life. Further, the Mahatma told those present, there must be something higher than the doctors' powers that saved him. He is reported to have taken twenty minutes to sip the juice.

Some of the doctors and Khan Saheb Kateli, Superintendent of the Camp, who wore a European dress, were seated on chairs, while the rest squatted on the carpet.

Looking worn out and grave, the Mahatma reclined propped up by pillows on the bed.

It is presumed that Dr. M. D. D. Gilder would now remain with Mahatma Gandhi.

"He must be looked after like a young child," said Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy later to a large number of Indian and Foreign journalists, who, after hours of waiting and searching, finally ran down their quarry at Koregaon Park. Dr. Roy was beaming with smiles and so were the usually sphinx-like guards at the Aga Khan's Palace.

Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy left for Bombay this afternoon *en route* to Calcutta.

Simultaneously with the breaking of his fast by Mahatma Gandhi,

a prayer meeting was held near the Poona railway station attended among others by Mr. M. S. Aney.

A large number of friends and relatives were present at Poona in anxious expectation of being present at the Aga Khan's Palace during the time of the breaking of the fast by Gandhiji. But it is understood that they were kept out in the absence of permission for all of them. They, however, joined in the prayers held in the Dharamsala compound facing the railway station, for long life of Gandhiji. Mr. Rathindra Nath Tagore, son of the late Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, and Prof. Tan Yun Shan of the Visva-Bharati, who interviewed Gandhiji when he had been on fast, were among those who participated in the Dharamsala prayers.

Now that the fast is over, medical circles are busy discussing the reaction of the fast on Gandhiji's health during the next few days. According to their considered view Gandhiji's kidney and liver have been certainly affected due to long duration of the fast at the old age of 74 and they are inclined to regard the next two or three weeks as very "delicate period" when tissues will be rebuilt and, therefore, extremely careful nursing and complete rest for some time will be absolutely necessary.

Mr. M. S. Aney had a second interview with Mahatma Gandhi on Tuesday afternoon and had 25 minutes talk with him. The *United Press* understands that during the major part of their discussion Gandhiji did all the talking despite Mr. Aney's warning not to put strain on himself.

Mr. Aney also spent some time with Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, who, in her characteristic humour reminded Mr. Aney that she was older than him and gave him tea and fruits. It appears that Mr. Rajagopalachari who came to the Aga Khan's Palace in the meanwhile also joined in Mrs. Naidu's small tea party. Prior to his leaving Poona on Tuesday night Mr. Rajagopalachari called on Mr. N. C. Kelkar and was closeted with him and Mr. Aney for some time.

It is understood that Gandhiji expressed his desire that Dr. B. C. Roy should pay him another visit and accordingly Dr. Roy has applied to the Government for the necessary permission. If permission is granted Dr. Roy is expected here again by the end of this month.

When Mahatma Gandhi was fasting his mail bag was by far the biggest he had so far received. He received hundreds of telegrams from all over the country praying for safe ending of the fast or urging him to give it up. It is doubtful if Mahatma Gandhi could have gone through them. The doctors who attended on Mahatma Gandhi did not escape public attention. Gratuitous advice as to how the patient should be treated poured in from professional medical men,

quacks, religious heads and others. One man from far south sent a packet of *vibhuti* (sacred ash) and implored those attending on Mahatma Gandhi that the talcum should be rubbed over Mahatma Gandhi.

[All the above news are reproduced from the *Hindustan Times* supplied by the A.P.I. and U.P.]

This poem was recited by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu at this morning's function:

*This my prayer to meet My Lord,
Strike and strike, cut the root of penury in my heart,
Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows,
Give me the strength to make my life fruitful in service,
Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my knee
to insolent might,
Give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles,
And give me the strength to surrender my strength to Thy will---
My Lord.*

--RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

SOME STATEMENTS DURING THE DAYS OF FAST

"Mahatma Gandhi is the symbol of national consciousness of this great country, and in his suffering is reflected the humiliation of the country. He has an intrepid spirit with an impregnable will and a superhuman passion for truth and non-violence. In the correspondence between the Viceroy and Mahatmaji that has just been released, Mahatmaji asserts that he is today as complete and as ardent a votary of truth and non-violence as at any time before. He believes that Congressmen are followers of non-violence, and leaflets and circulars emanating from the so-called Congress organizations suggesting a programme of subversive activities are unauthorized. He pleads with the Viceroy to take steps to end the present impasse.

"We are relieved to know that he has declared his intention not to fast unto death. It is a fast undertaken under limited conditions and with proper care. We hope and pray that he will be able to survive this ordeal. His immediate unconditional release is essential for allaying public apprehension and easing the present tension. The independence of India is her birthright. The cause of the Allied nations, the peace of the world and the good name of Great Britain demand it. We do hope that Gandhiji will be released and his advice sought and National Government established."

—SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN,
Vice-Chancellor, Benares University.

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"If Mr. Gandhi should die, hatred engendered in India will be a grave and lasting consequence. The general point as to whether the Congress Party can be proved guilty of instigating violence lies at the heart of the Indian problem. 'Proofs' so far adduced would satisfy no court of law.

"Yet it is from this issue that continued imprisonment of leaders of India's largest party and continued deadlock in India and Mr. Gandhi's fast all spring. Congress leaders, if guiltless of violence and imprisoned, must be regarded as doughty honourable champions of freedom; if guilty of violence and sabotage they are clearly whatever their logical rights may be, an obstacle to the war effort of the United Nations. In this strange wordy contest both sides are, according to their lights, right. It must be remembered the Viceregal policy is a short-term policy of war expediency, whilst Mr. Gandhi's policy rests on the long-term issue of freedom. Sooner or later the lattee issue has to be faced.

"If Mr. Gandhi dies it will be vitiated for a long time to come. The Government statement while clearly wishing to fasten responsibility for violence on the Congress, obviously fails to do so."

—LIONEL FIELDEN,
Ex-Controller of Broadcasting, India.

"Mahatma Gandhi's fast has perturbed the whole of India and is a constant source of anxiety. He should not be allowed to die at this stage and this can only be done by standing united.

"I strongly support the object of the Leaders' Conference. In resigning their offices, the three Executive Councillors have done what every patriot would do for his country."

—DR. KHAN SAHEB,
Ex-Premier, Frontier Province.

"Phases of the situation in India requiring discussion are being handled by the high officials of the Government of the United States and Great Britain."

--WILLIAM PHILLIPS,
Personal Representative to President Roosevelt.

[The statement was handed out to Press correspondents without further comment, but it is assumed that the "situation" mentioned in it had definite reference to that created by Mahatma Gandhi's fast.]

"A national appeal to Mahatma Gandhi himself to break his fast is the only way now, which is likely to prove more effective than any other to save his life.

"We must face boldly the stark situation as it stares us in the face. We must now turn our faces from the alien, unsympathetic doors of the Viceregal Lodge to the bedside of Mahatma Gandhi himself and request him to break his fast in the very national interests, to serve which he must have undertaken it.

"We have tried our best up to this time to persuade the Government to release Mahatma Gandhi and spare his life. It is no use now hoping against hope that the fast or its moral or human appeal would bring about any change of heart on the part of Government. Millions of us have disagreed with the Government and even resented this attitude on their part, but now the sands of time are running so fast that we cannot waste even a moment in resenting and protesting."

—V. D. SAVARKAR,
President, Hindu Mahasabha.

"With the end of Mahatma Gandhi's fast, fresh negotiations with the leaders of the Congress and other communities in India should be opened up immediately and the release of Mahatma Gandhi might

be the first step. The future course of the war in the East would depend on the action Britain was now prepared to take."

—LORD STABOLGI,
Chief Labour Whip, House of Lords.

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"If I decided to lay down my office, it was on an overriding consideration in connection with the latest policy of the Government of India regarding the greatest man of India, who embodies our national aspiration for freedom and stands foremost in the sphere of our progressive social activities, and whose life is ever so vital for bringing about a real and lasting reconciliation between the various communities in India and between India and Great Britain. Our humble power could not be of much avail in saving his life. I am, however, confident that where we have failed Almighty God will step in to help us and save him for us. It is my prayer at this hour that he may yet live for many years to serve the country's cause. It is also my earnest hope today that the political technique for winning national freedom may be readjusted in full appreciation of the realities of the present situation.

"At the same time I will appeal to the British Government to reorientate their present policy and take a realistic and helpful attitude in solving the present deadlock."

—NALINI RANJAN SARKAR,
Ex-Member, Viceroy's Executive Council.

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"We, Chinese people, regard Gandhiji as the living Buddha of modern India and have the profoundest love and the greatest veneration for him. We can imagine how deeply the people of China are concerned about Gandhiji's health. I must honestly pray with my Indian brethren that God may spare Mahatmaji to us for many years to come and he will live in this world for the full span of life of 120 years as he himself had once said."

—TAN YUNG SHAN,
Professor, Vishva Bharati, Santiniketan.

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"The country has been agitated over Mr. Gandhi's fast. I for one think he had been more a politician than a saint in this world crisis, yet it would have been a calamity for the Empire if his fast had been fatal. We can ill-afford to despise anyone willing to sacrifice for his ideal. If the Mahatma lives he can yet be of great influence in bringing India to better realizations of the issues at stake. Let us also search our hearts and see if we cannot even at this late hour do something to bring about a better atmosphere in this great country."

—SIR WILLIAM ROBERTS,
President, European Association, Lahore.

GANDHIJI—NOT PRO-JAPANESE

The following extracts from Mahatma Gandhi's writings show quite clearly where his sympathies actually lie in the war between the Allies and the Axis Powers and, particularly, how he would have reacted to any Japanese aggression:

PRICE OF FOREIGN AID

Question: If the Japanese really mean what they say and are willing to help to free India from the British yoke, why should we not willingly accept their help?

Answer: It is folly to suppose that aggressors can ever be benefactors. The Japanese may free India from the British yoke, but only to put in their own instead. I have always maintained that we should not seek any other Power's help to free India from the British yoke. That would not be a non-violent approach. We should have to pay a heavy price, if we ever consented to take foreign aid as against the British.

—*Harijan*, April 26, 1942.

I do not want to help the Japanese—not even for freeing India. India during the past fifty or more years of her struggle for freedom has learnt the lesson of patriotism and of not bowing to *any* foreign power.

—*Harijan*, June 14, 1942.

A RIDICULOUS SUGGESTION

Pandit Nehru told me yesterday that he heard people in Lahore and Delhi saying that I have turned pro-Japanese. I could only laugh at the suggestion, for, if I am sincere in my passion for freedom, I could not consciously or unconsciously take a step which will involve India in the position of merely changing masters.

—*Harijan*, June 7, 1942.

IF THE JAPS COME

Question: (1) If the Japs come, how are we to resist them non-violently?

(2) What are we to do if we fall into their hands?

Answer: (1) These questions come from Andhradesh where the people rightly or wrongly feel that the attack is imminent. My

answer has already been given in these columns. Neither food nor shelter is to be given nor are any dealings to be established with them. They should be made to feel that they are not wanted. But of course things are not going to happen quite so smoothly as the question implies. It is a superstition to think that they will come as friendlies. No attacking party has ever done so. It spreads fire and brimstone among the populace. It forces things from people. If the people cannot resist fierce attack and are afraid of death, they should evacuate the infested place in order to deny compulsory service to the enemy.

((2) If unfortunately some people are captured or fall into the enemy's hands, they are likely to be shot if they do not obey orders, *e.g.*, render forced labour. If the captives face death cheerfully, their task is done. They have saved their own and their country's honour.

--*Harijan*, June 14, 1942.

NO EXCHANGE WANTED

Question: You do not hear the radio messages. I do most assiduously. They interpret your writings as if your leanings were in favour of the Axis powers and you had now veered round to Subhas Babu's views about receiving outside help to overthrow the British rule. I would like you to clear your position in this matter. Misinterpretation of your known views has reached a dangerous point.

Answer: I am glad you have asked the question. I have no desire whatsoever to woo any Power to help India in her endeavour to free herself from the foreign yoke. I have no desire to exchange the British for any other rule. Better the enemy I know than the one I do not. I have never attached the slightest importance or weight to the friendly professions of the Axis powers. If they come to India they will come not as deliverers but as sharers in the spoil. There can therefore be no question of my approval of Subhas Babu's policy. The old difference of opinion between us persists.

--*Harijan*, June 21, 1942.

FILLING IN A GAP

There was obviously a gap in my first writing. I filled it in as soon as it was discovered by one of my numerous interviewers. Non-violence demands the strictest honesty, cost what it may. The public have therefore to suffer my weakness, if weakness it may be called. I could not be guilty of asking the Allies to take a step which would involve certain defeat. I could not guarantee fool-proof non-violent action to keep the Japanese at bay. Abrupt withdrawal of the Allied troops might result in Japan's occupation of India and China's sure

fall. I had not the remotest idea of any such catastrophe resulting from my action. Therefore I feel that in spite of the acceptance of my proposal, it is deemed necessary by the Allies to remain in India to prevent Japanese occupation, they should do so, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by the national government that may be set up after the British withdrawal.

—*Harijan*, June 28, 1942.

REMAINING AS FRIENDS

It has been pointed out that not to consent to the Allied troops remaining in India during the period of the war is to hand over India and China to Japan, and to ensure the defeat of the Allied powers. This could never have been contemplated by me. The only answer, therefore, to give was to suffer the presence of troops but under circumstance the reverse of the existing. They will remain under permission of Free India and not at all in the role of masters but of friends.

—*Harijan*, July 5, 1942.

SYMPATHY WITH CHINA AND RUSSIA

Question: Why should not the Congress declare that as long as India is herself in bondage, she can be neither a friend nor an enemy of any country? What is the value of her sympathies with China, Russia, etc., when she has no freedom to assist them in her own way? Has Russia thought of India?

Answer: You are right. India's sympathy can give no effective help as her enmity can do no harm to any person or nation so long as India is herself not free. Nevertheless Pandit Jawaharlal with his international outlook and generosity has accustomed us to express our sympathy to nations in distress without expectation of like return. We lose nothing by expressing sympathy even though we realise that it can cut no ice. If Russia has no thought of India today, in the long run she is bound to recognise the utterly unselfish character of our sympathy. It would not be forgotten that sympathy without ability to render effective help has its own moral value. We receive with appreciation sympathy from those who we know are unable to render us effective help in our struggle.

—*Harijan*, July 26, 1942.

TO EVERY JAPANESE

Our appeal to Britain is coupled with the offer of Free India's willingness to let the Allies retain their troops in India. The offer is made in order to prove that we do not in any way mean to harm

the Allied cause, and in order to prevent you from being misled into feeling that you have but to step into the country that Britain has vacated. Needless to repeat that if you cherish any idea and will carry it out, we will not fail in resisting you with all the might that our country can muster. I address this appeal to you in the hope that our movement may even influence you and your partners in the right direction and deflect you and them from the course which is bound to end in your moral ruin and the reduction of human beings to robots.

The hope of your response to my appeal is much fainter than that of response from Britain. I know that the British are not devoid of a sense of justice and they know me. I do not know you enough to be able to judge. All I have read tells me that you listen to no appeal but to the sword. How I wish that you are cruelly misrepresented and that I shall touch the right chord in your heart! Any way I have an undying faith in the responsiveness of human nature.

—*Harijan*, July 26, 1942.

LETTER TO GENERALISSIMO

"My appeal to the British power to withdraw from India is not meant in any shape or form to weaken India's defence against the Japanese or embarrass you in your struggle. India must not submit to any aggressor or invader and resist him. I would not be guilty of purchasing the freedom of my country at the cost of your country's freedom. That problem does not arise before me as I am clear that India cannot gain her freedom this way, and a Japanese domination of either India or China would be equally injurious to the other country and to world peace. The domination must therefore be prevented, and I should like India to play her natural and rightful role in this. I feel that India cannot do this while she is in bondage."

MEANING OF WITHDRAWAL

Question: What is the meaning of your appeal to the British power to withdraw from India? You have written much recently on the subject. But there seems to be confusion in the public mind about your meaning.

Answer: So far as my own opinion is concerned, British authority should end completely irrespective of the wishes or demands of various parties. But I would recognise their own military necessity. They need to remain in India for preventing Japanese occupation. That prevention is common cause between them and us. It may be necessary for the sake also of China. Therefore, I would tolerate their presence in India not in any sense as rulers but as allies of free India. This of course assumes that after the British declaration of with-

drawal there will be a stable government established in India. Immediately the hindrance in the shape of a foreign power is altogether removed the union of parties should be an easy matter. The terms on which the Allied Powers may operate will be purely for the Government of the free state to determine. The existing parties will have dissolved into the National Government. If they survive they will do so for party purposes and not for dealings with the external world.

—*Harijan*, June 21, 1942.

WHAT ABOUT NON-VIOLENCE?

Question: But what about your non-violence? To what extent will you carry out your policy after freedom is gained?

Answer: The question hardly arises. I am using the first personal pronoun for brevity, but I am trying to represent the spirit of India as I conceive it. It is and will be a mixture. What policy the National Government will adopt I cannot say. I may not even survive it much as I would love to. If I do, I would advise the adoption of non-violence to the utmost extent possible and that will be India's great contribution to the peace of the world and the establishment of a new world order. I expect that with the existence of so many martial races in India, all of whom will have a voice in the government of the day, the national policy will incline towards militarism of a modified character. I shall certainly hope that all the effort for the last twenty-two years to show the efficacy of non-violence as a political force will not have gone in vain and a strong party representing true non-violence will exist in the country. In every case a free India in alliance with the Allied Powers must be of great help to their cause, whereas India held in bondage as she is today must be a drag upon the war-chariot and may prove a source of real danger at the most critical moment.

—*Harijan*, June 21, 1942.

“A DEAD WEIGHT TO ALLIES”

The following is taken from an account of an interview which Mr. Preston Grover of the *Associated Press of America* had with Mahatma Gandhi at Sevagram:-

Question: “What specific things would be done by India to save China?” asked Mr. Grover, “if India is declared independent?”

Answer: “Great things, I can say at once, though I may not be able to specify them today,” said Gandhiji. “For I do not know what government we shall have. We have various political organisations here which I expect would be able to work out a proper national solution. Just now they are not solid parties, they are often acted

upon by the British power, they look up to it and its frown or favour means much to them. The whole atmosphere is corrupt and rotten. Who can foresee the possibilities of a corpse coming to life? At present India is a dead weight to the Allies."

Q. "By dead weight you mean a menace to Britain and to American interests here?"

A. "I do. It is a menace in that you never know what sullen India will do at a given moment."

Q. "No. But I want to make myself sure that if genuine pressure was brought to bear on Britain by America, there would be solid support from yourself?"

A. "Myself? I do not count—with the weight of 73 years on my shoulders. But you get the co-operation—whatever it can give willingly—of a free and mighty nation. My co-operation is of course there. I exercise what influence I can by my writings from week to week. But India's is an infinitely greater influence. Today because of widespread discontent there is not that active hostility to Japanese advance. The moment we are free, we are transformed into a nation prizing its liberty and defending it with all its might and therefore helping the Allied cause."

Q. "May I concretely ask—will the difference be the difference that there is between what Burma did and what, say, Russia is doing?" said Mr. Grover.

A. "You might put it that way. They might have given Burma independence after separating from India. But they did nothing of the kind. They stuck to the same old policy of exploiting her. There was little co-operation from Burmans, on the contrary there was hostility or inertia. They fought neither for their own cause nor for the Allied cause. Now take a possible contingency.. If the Japanese compel the Allies to retire from India to a safer base, I cannot say today that the whole of India will be up in arms against the Japanese. I have a fear that they may degrade themselves as some Burmans did. I want India to oppose Japan to a man. If India was free she would do it, it would be a new experience to her, in twenty-four hours her mind would be changed. All parties would then act as one man. If this live independence is declared today I have no doubt India becomes a powerful ally."

Q. Mr. Grover raised the question of communal disunion as a handicap, and himself added that before the American Independence there was not much unity in the States.

A. "I can only say that as soon as the vicious influence of the third party is withdrawn, the parties will be face to face with reality

and close up ranks," said Gandhiji. "Ten to one my conviction is that the communal quarrels will disappear as soon as the British power that keeps us apart disappears."

Harijan, June 21, 1942.

REPLY TO SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

In an interview by the representative of the United Press of London regarding Sir Stafford Cripps's statement published in the Press, Gandhiji said:

"I have read Sir Stafford Cripps's statement to the United Press representative in London. It is not conducive to the proper understanding between different parties, if ascertainable facts are not admitted by all. Sir Stafford knows that I was disinclined to proceed to New Delhi. Having gone there, I intended to return the same day that I reached there. But Maulana Saheb would not let me go. I wish that I could have induced the Working Committee to take up its stand on pure non-violence. But it did not and could not. With it, rightly, politics were all important and it could not, not having the conviction, allow its deliberations to be affected by the issue of non-violence. The deliberations, therefore, of the Working Committee at New Delhi were carried on without any interference or guidance on my part. Therefore, the negotiations had nothing to do at any stage, with the question of non-violence. I would not have brought out this fact, if it was not relevant to a calm consideration of the situation that faces British and Indian statesmen.

"Nor do I like Sir Stafford's description of my appeal for withdrawal of the British power as a walk-out. The appeal has been made in no offensive mood. It is the friendliest thing that I could do. It is conceived in the interest of the Allied cause. I have made it in a purely non-violent spirit and as a non-violent step. But this is merely personal to me. It is necessary to remember in considering my proposal that it is essentially a non-violent gesture. Such non-violence as India has or may have becomes impotent without the withdrawal of the British power—even as that part of India which will put up an armed fight becomes impotent. The step that I have conceived overcomes all difficulties, shuts all controversy about violence and non-violence and immediately frees India to offer her best help to the Allied cause and more especially to China which is in imminent danger. I am convinced that the independence of India, which the withdrawal of the British power involves, would ensure China's freedom and put the Allied cause on an unassailable basis."

Harijan, June 28, 1942.

INDEPENDENT TESTIMONY

If the British wish to imply that Gandhiji is pro-Japanese they may do so; it only makes a settlement in India more difficult. Gandhiji is not pro-Japanese or pro-Axis. He is pro-British, he is pro-Chinese, he is pro-American. He wants us to win the war. But he does not think we can win it unless we enlist the support of Indians by purifying our war aims.

-Louis Fischer.

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