

## MAHATMA GANDHI ON SOCIALISM & SOCIALISTS

Qurban Ali

In 1926, Sampurnand and Acharya Narendra Deva draw up a socialist agrarian program, under the aegis of UP Congress Committee (UPCC) and send it to the perusal of AICC. Jawaharlal Nehru got the AICC, to accept this UPCC's Socialist Programme, in 1929. At the 1931, Karachi session of the Indian National Congress, socialist pattern of development was set as the goal for India and resolution on fundamental rights and economic programme was passed by AICC. According to Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, who drafted the Karachi resolution of AICC, the origin of this resolution was UPCC's resolution of 1929. (Pt. J. L. Nehru's Autobiography, P.266).

During 1932 movement, many socialist-minded young men people like Jayaprakash Narayan, Minoo Masani, Achyut Patwardhan, Ashok Mehta, Charles Mescrenhas, Narayan Swami, M L Dantawala, N G Gorey and S M Joshi were lodged in Nasik Jail in 1932-33, in connection with Civil disobedience Movement. While in jail they all felt to form a Congress Socialist Party within the Congress Party (INC) wedded to Marxism. At the same time a group of *'left wing'* Congressmen disillusioned with the policy of Congress, met at Poona in July 1933 for the purpose of organizing a Socialist opposition group. They elected a committee to draft a constitution and programme which subsequently became known as the **"Poona draft"**. The meeting was organized by Purshottam Tricumdas, Yusuf Meherally, Smt. Kamladevi Chattopadhyay and Acharya Narendra Deva. (Selected works of Acharya Narendra Deva, vol.1 page 29). After this meet in Poona, Bombay Presidency Socialist Party, was formed and invited all those who believe in socialist ideology to attend the foundation conference of Congress Socialist Party (CSP) at Patna on 17<sup>TH</sup> May 1934.. SELECTED WORKS OF ACHARYA NARENDRA DEVA, VOL-1 PAGE (xxviii-xxix).

Congress Socialist Party was founded in Patna (Bihar) on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1934, under the Chairmanship of Acharya Narendra Deva and draft proposals were circulated before the Foundation Conference at Patna. To draft the Party's constitution, policy and programme a draft committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of Acharya Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan as Secretary. Members of the committee. Prof. Abdul Bari, Purshottam Tricumdas, Minoo Masani, Sampurnanand, C.C. Banerji, Faridul Haq Ansari, Rammanohar Lohia, Prof. Abdul Aleem, N.G.Ranga.

## **Socialism and Mahatma Gandhi by Prof. Dr. Yogendra Yadav.**

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Socialism is an economic system of society. It includes social ownership of the means of production and co-operative management of society. A socialist economic system would consist of a system of production and distribution organized to directly satisfy economic demand and human needs. So that goods and service would be produced directly for use instead of private profit. In the early 19th century socialism referred to any concern for the social problems of the capitalism irrespective of the solution to those problems. Mahatma Gandhi delivered his thought many times. Mahatma Gandhi asked socialist, "Is your main difference as to method or do you suspect that socialism is based on violence? G. It is not a matter of suspicion but of fact. Violence need not be physical. Your socialistic system is based on coercion." 1\* Mahatma Gandhi asked, "Let us study our Eastern institutions in that spirit of scientific inquiry and we shall evolve a truer socialism and a truer communism than the world has yet dreamed of. It is surely wrong to presume that Western socialism or communism is the last word on the question of mass poverty." 2\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "Socialism and communism of the West are based on certain conceptions which are fundamentally different from ours. One such conception is their belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. I do not subscribe to it, for I know that the essential difference between man and brute is that the former can respond to the call of spirit in him and can rise superior to the passions that he owns in common with the brute and therefore superior to selfishness and violence which belong to brute nature and not to the immortal spirit of man. That is the fundamental conception of Hinduism, which has years of penance and austerity at the back of the discovery of their truth. That is why whilst we had had saints who have burnt out their bodies and laid down their lives in order to explore the secrets of the soul, we have none as in the West who have laid down their lives in exploring the remotest or highest regions of earth. Our socialism or communism should therefore be based on non-violence and on the harmonious co-operation of labour and capital and the landlord and the tenant." 3\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "I plead for a drastic revision of the whole constitution. We are both labouring under a heavy handicap in that Jawaharlal, who has given us the mantra of socialism, is not in our midst, and I consider him to be the natural wearer of the Congress

crown of thorns when I and other elderly men and women have been permitted to take well deserved rest. I feel sure that if he was in our midst, he would have hastened slowly. I suggest your presenting the country with practical socialism in keeping with Indian conditions instead of scientific socialism as your programme has been called. I am glad that the programme you have given me is but draft though prepared by an influential committee appointed for the purpose. It would be wise, if when you settle your programme finally, you will associate with you men who have socialist leanings and have experience of actual conditions.” 4\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, “Khadi is the only alternative to this and not the so-called socialism, which presupposes industrialism. The socialism that India can assimilate is the socialism of the spinning-wheel. Let the village worker; therefore, make the wheel the central point of his activities.” 5 Mahatma Gandhi wrote, “Do read the resolution about ‘loose talk’ dispassionately. There is not a word in it about socialism. Greatest consideration has been paid to the socialists some of whom I know so intimately. Do I not know their sacrifice? But I have found them as a body to be in a hurry. Why should they not be? Only, if I cannot march quite as quick, I must ask them to halt and take me along with them. That is literally my attitude. I have looked up the dictionary meaning of socialism.” 6\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, “In an age where competition is held to be the law of life, and possession in the largest measure of the world’s goods the sum mum bonus, and when everyone counts oneself free to follow any calling one likes, this attempt to hold up varna as the law of life may well be regarded as an idle dream, and an attempt to revive it as childish folly. Be that as it may, it is my firm conviction that it is true socialism. In the language of the Gita, it is equality of the spirit, without which no other equality is possible. The performance of it, no matter how slight, bodes well both for him who performs it and for the rest of mankind.” 7\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, “My concept of socialism implies that people should be self-reliant. That is the only way they can be prevented from being exploited. I have been trying to persuade the workers that if the capitalists have their gold and silver, we have our hands and feet. These too are assets. A capitalist will never be able to carry on without labour. Let no one misunderstand that the Sangh is going to serve the purpose of the capitalists,

thereby making the workers slaves. On the contrary it proposes to release them from slavery, by making them self-reliant. How can this involve enslaving?

I have given deep thought to the whole scheme before putting it before you. This is the only way of reviving the village industries and I am seeking your help for the purpose.” 8\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, “I listened carefully to Mr. Patwardhan’s speech. He argued ably, but either he was deceiving himself or he was acting simply as an advocate. He said that we had descended from ideals to realism. But has not socialism its ideals and if I told him to remove even a comma from their ideals he would reject my proposition. Do you suppose you will realize complete independence at any time even after fifty generations? The socialist creed goes even further. I suggest we must have a measuring rod. The day humanity ceases to believe in ideals, it will descend to the level of the beasts. Today if you believe in truthfulness and non-violence say so. It does not mean you will be sent per cent truthful. I am not cent per cent truthful.” 9\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, “My opposition is to socialism as it is interpreted here in its official programme. I can have nothing to say against the theory or the philosophy of socialism. The programme as it is put here cannot be achieved without violence. The socialists here do not exclude violence under all circumstances whatsoever. They would take to arms openly if they saw there was a chance to usurp power by it. There are in the programme some details into which I need not enter. I wonder if this reply will answer your difficulties. However, you must write about your difficulties more concretely.” 10\*

Mahatma Gandhi answered, “What are the points of similarity and difference between your point of view and socialism?

A. There are quite a few similarities. I too desire that everything should be considered as belonging to God. I too believe that all wealth belongs to the people. But the difference lies in that the socialists advocate collective effort, whereas I believe that the beginning should be made at once in our individual conduct. If we have such faith, we should dedicate to society at least our own property. One cannot be a socialist so long as one retains even cowries for oneself. They want to achieve their aim through legislation. Legislation implies coercion. If they are not saying all these things now, it is because that is not within their

power. They are virtuous because they are weak. Socialists, that are Communists, want to use force, but they are helpless. But we are believers in democracy.” 11\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, “If you have not read everything pertaining to socialism, then take a decision only after reading something more about it. Socialism is one thing and Jawaharlal is another. There has always been a difference between individuals and ideology.” 12\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, “This brings me to socialism. Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught: All land belongs to Gopal, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of the line and he can therefore unmake it. Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e., the people. That the land today does not belong to the people is too true. But the fault is not in the teaching. It is in us who have not lived up to it.” 13\*

Mahatma Gandhi answered, “Q. Is there any difference of opinion between you and Jawaharlal in respect of socialism?

A. There is, but it is a difference in emphasis. He perhaps puts an emphasis on the result, whereas I put on the means. Perhaps according to him I am putting over-emphasis on non-violence, whereas he, though he believes in non-violence, would want to have socialism by other means if it was impossible to have it by non-violence. Of course my emphasis on non-violence becomes one of principle. Even if I was assured that we could have independence by means of violence, I shall refuse to have it. It won't be real independence.” 14\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, “In my view, the key to socialism lies in equal pay for equal work. Everyone's basic needs are more or less the same. The larger part of the world will always consist of labourers; hence the only way for their uplift is to accept the principle of equal wages. There is no other way but to do so. It is likely that all this may appear to be the talk of someone who lives in a dream world. But unless workers make such dreams come true, their real authority, which is only a dream today, will always remain so. Socialism was not born with the discovery of the misuse of capital by capitalists. As I have contended, socialism, even communism, is explicit in the first verse of Ishopanishad. What is true is that when some reformers lost faith in the method of conversion, the technique of what is known as scientific socialism was born. I am engaged in solving the same problem that faces scientific

socialists. It is true, however, that my approach is always and only through unadulterated non-violence. It may fail. If it does, it will be because of my ignorance of the technique of non-violence. I may be a bad exponent of the doctrine in which my faith is daily increasing.

The A.I.S.A. and the A.I.V.I.A. are organizations through which the technique of non-violence is being tested on an all-India scale. They are special autonomous bodies created by the Congress for the purpose of enabling me to conduct my experiments without being fettered by the vicissitudes of policy to which a wholly democratic body like the Congress is always liable. Trusteeship, as I conceive it, has yet to prove its worth. It is an attempt to secure the best use of property for the people by competent hands." 15\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "I have no difficulty in accepting almost all the principles of socialism propounded in the book. I have also read with care the book by Jayaprakash. Can there possibly be any difference between his interpretation and yours? Neither in your book nor in his do I find a clear idea how wills the ultimate revolution in India be brought about. This I could not understand even after discussing it with many others. Only the day before yesterday a report of Meherally's Madras speech came into my hands and I went through it. It explains fully what the socialists are doing. The object is to start a revolt in every sphere. But a revolt has never been possible without violence. In your book, however, I find nothing of the kind. Have we or have not we acquired strength through peaceful ways such as the civil disobedience or non-violent non-co-operation carried on since 1920? You say that the principles of socialism cannot be fully implemented until we have State power. Supposing, you ask, a powerful land-owner turned a complete socialist, could he well and truly act upon his principles? Assuming that he had no punitive power, could an Indian raja who was a socialist be able to implement socialism? I recollect your having written that socialism cannot be practiced in its entirety until the whole world turns socialist. Does this imply that even if we gain complete independence socialism will not be fully or almost fully implemented? I hope you have understood my point. The purpose behind this question is only to ascertain how far it would be possible for me to accept the socialist principles and the means of their implementation." 16\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "No. My differences with the socialists are of a different kind. Do not confuse the two. They differ with Subhas Babu on the question of giving an ultimatum to the Government. I do not know who exactly supports him on the point. That is why in spite

of my having sharp and even fundamental differences with the socialists my attitude towards them is different. Moreover, we cannot put the socialists and Jawaharlal in the same category. Jawaharlal does not lend his name to any socialist group. He believes in socialism. He mixes with the socialists and consults them.

But there is considerable difference between their methods of work. The differences between me and the socialists are widely known. I believe in change of heart and in working for it. They do not. They make fun of the spinning-wheel. But even so the socialists are coming nearer to me every day. Or, you may say that I am moving nearer to them. Or, that we are moving nearer to each other. I cannot say how long it will continue. It is quite likely that one day our ways will part. The same thing happened with Subhas Babu. The Jalpaiguri resolution brought our differences to the fore. There are certainly differences between Jawaharlal and me. But they are not significant. Without him I feel myself a cripple. He also feels more or less the same way. Our hearts are one. This intimate relationship between us has not started with politics. It is very much older and deeper. We shall leave it at that.

Ever since the idea of socialism became popular in India, we have been confronted with the question as to what our attitude should be towards the Princes and millionaires. The socialists say that the Princes and the millionaires should be done away with, that all must become workers. They advocate confiscation of the properties of all these people and say that they should be given the same wages as everyone else from Rs. 5 to eight annas a day or Rs. 15 a month So much for what the socialists say. We too assert that the rich are not the owners of their wealth whereas the labourer is the owner of his labour. He is, therefore from our point of view, richer than the rich. A zamindar can be recognized as the owner of one, two or ten bighas of land. That is to say, of as much as may be necessary for his livelihood. We also want that his wages should not be higher than those of the labourer, that he should maintain himself on eight annas a day and use the rest of his wealth for the welfare of society. But we would not take away his property by force. This is the most important point. We also wish that the Princes and the millionaires too should do manual work and maintain themselves on eight annas a day, considering the rest of their property as national trust." 17\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "I have not studied socialism. I have read no books on the subject; I have read one by Jayaprakash. I have also read one book given by Masani. Sampurnanandji has written a very good book. He sent it to me very lovingly and I read that too. This is all my study of socialism. They say countless books have been written on socialism and communism. I have read nothing at all about communism. I do not know how many of you have read books about it. I believe in socialism and also in communism. I believe in everything, but from my own point of view. I belong to everybody and I belong to none.

A believer in non-violence cannot be anybody's opponent. He would wish to build up the science of non-violence with the help of everyone. His is not the politics of opposing or vanquishing anyone." 18\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "I have claimed that I was a socialist long before those I know in India had avowed their creed. But my socialism was natural to me and not adopted from any books. It came out of my unshakable belief in non-violence. No man could be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice no matter where it occurred. Unfortunately Western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines." 19\*

Mahatma Gandhi spoke, "Thus we shall have to give systematic thought to all these matters. We want to make of khadi an integrated way of life. We have to deal with artisans, spinners and weavers. In the sphere of production our aim is to pay equal wages to all. So far we have extorted forced labour from the spinners. This doctrine of paying the lowest wage and taking maximum work for it has been taken from the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya. We must change this doctrine for a new one. We shall give the same wage to spinners as we give to weavers. Those who produce cotton should also prosper. And yet we want that the burden on the buyer should be light. Thus we wish to create a socialist society. The socialism that India can digest will be of this kind. It will be the socialism of the poor, but of the well-to-do poor. The ideal of khadi is thus the promotion of a wholly socialistic way of life." 20\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "There is very little difference between your socialism and mine as you subscribe so whole-heartedly to non-violence and the constructive programme." 21\*



Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "You need not apologize for sending me the book. I must read it. I glanced at it, as it came into my hands. How does it differ from your description of socialism which you say centres round society and its needs and villageism which you say centres round the village and its wants? Do you mark any difference? Is not village and its welfare the same as society and its needs? Is not the difference this: socialism includes violence as a measure to achieve it, villageism excludes it?" 22\*

Mahatma Gandhi gave interview, "L. F. What do you mean by your socialism? G. My socialism means 'even unto this last'. I do not want to rise on the ashes of the blind, the deaf and the dumb. In their socialism, probably these have no place. Their one aim is material progress. For instance, America aims at having a car for every citizen. I do not. I want freedom for full expression of my personality.

I must be free to build a staircase to Sirius if I want to. That does not mean that I want to do any such thing. Under the other socialism, there is no individual freedom. You own nothing, not even your body. L. F. Yes, but there are variations. My socialism in its modified form means that the State does not own everything. It does in Russia. There you certainly do not own your body even. You may be arrested at any time, though you may have committed no crime. They may send you wherever they like. Does not, under your socialism, the State own your children and educate them in any way it likes? G. All States do that. America does it. L. F. Then America is not very different from Russia. G. But socialism is dictatorship or else arm-chair philosophy. I call myself a communist also. L. F. O, don't. It is terrible for you to call yourself a communist.

I want what you want, what Jayaprakash and the socialists want: a free world. But the communists don't. They want a system which enslaves the body and the mind. G. Would you say that of Marx? L. F. The communists have corrupted the Marxist teaching to suit their purpose. G. What about Lenin? L. F. Lenin started it. Stalin has since completed it. When the communists come to you, they want to get into the Congress and control the Congress and use it for their own ends. G. So do the socialists. My communism is not very different from socialism. It is a harmonious blending of the two. Communism, as I have understood it, is a natural corollary of socialism. At the same time I believe that some key industries are necessary. I do not believe in armchair or armed socialism. I believe in action according to my belief, without waiting for wholesale conversion. Hence, without having to enumerate

key industries, I would have State ownership where a large number of people have to work together. The ownership of the products of their labour, whether skilled or unskilled, will vest in them through the State. But as I can conceive such a State only based on non-violence, I would not dispossess monied men by force but would invite their co-operation in the process of conversion to State ownership. There are no pariahs of society, whether they are millionaires or paupers. The two are sores of the same disease. And all are men “for a’ that”.” 23\*

Mahatma Gandhi said, “Socialism is a term of the modern age but the concept of socialism is not a new discovery. Lord Krishna preaches the same doctrine in the Gita. One need have in one’s possession only what one requires. It means that all men are created by God and therefore entitled to an equal share of food, clothing and housing. It does not require huge organizations for the realization of this ideal. Any individual can set about to realize it.

First of all in order to translate this ideal into our lives we should minimize our needs, keeping in mind the poorest of the poor in India. One should earn just enough to support oneself and one’s family. To have a bank balance would thus be incompatible with this ideal. And whatever is earned should be earned with the utmost honesty. Strict restraint has to be kept over small matters in our lives. Even if a single individual enforces this ideal in his life, he is bound to influence others. Wealthy people should act as trustees of their wealth. But if they are robbed of this wealth through violent means, it would not be in the interest of the country. This is known as communism. Moreover, by adopting violent means we would be depriving society of capable individuals.” 24\*

Mahatma Gandhi advice, “Well, then I fail to understand your desire to serve others which you call socialism when you do not do your own personal work in your homes. If you want my advice, I may tell you that students while they are studying should not involve themselves in any ism. They may by all means read about every school of thought, think over it, put as much of it into practice as possible, but they should not endeavour to become leaders. If we want to banish exploitation and violence from our society, we ought to do body-labour and manual work. And naturally it ought to be undertaken by all. Unemployment is rampant in our villages which were [once] regarded as happy and self-sufficient units; this is because of our subjugation and feelings of high and low as also caste distinctions.” 25\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "My socialism is not of today. I began to live socialism while I was still in South Africa. Even then many laborite socialists, so called, used to come to me with their bedraggled ties of dirty red to invite me to join their ranks. But they remained to join mine instead for they saw that true socialism can be based only on non-violence." 26\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "Since the last two days socialists have been coming to me. I have been socialism in the country; they should forget their internal differences telling them the same things. I say that if they are keen on bringing about, do physical labour and develop character by thoroughly examining their private and public lives. Socialism will not come by occupying positions of power and by delivering speeches from the platform. They must carefully examine every moment of their lives from the time they get up in the morning to the time they retire to bed at night. They must have before them a clear and perfect goal.

And if truth and non-violence are not observed scrupulously the socialism which they are trying to bring about would be just shattered and no trace would be left of their existence. The same thing applies to the Congress. If the Congressmen and the Socialists, beautiful both in name and implication, do not follow their principles in action, there will be a revolt in the country and communism will make inroads. I shall not live to see it. But expand your activities in such a way that the future generations do not curse you." 27\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "The basis of socialism is economic equality. There can be no *Ramarajya* in the present state of iniquitous inequalities in which a few roll in riches and the masses do not get even enough to eat. I accepted the theory of socialism even while I was in South Africa. My difference with the Socialists and others consists in advocating non-violence and truth as the most effective means for any reform." 28\*

Mahatma Gandhi discussed, "Today the rulers are not foreigners but our own country-men. If we do not work in perfect harmony with them, our newly-won freedom will be in danger. Let all people sit together and find a proper solution to problems on which there are differences. But our greatest defect is that, as soon as we differ from somebody ever so slightly, or a misunderstanding arises, instead of meeting the person concerned and trying to find a solution we take him to task publicly. This creates a great mental gulf between people, leading to antagonism. Parties and isms are only results of such differences. One fruit of this

poison we have seen in the coming into existence of Pakistan. Are we not satisfied even with that? You have simply not understood what socialism means.

The Russian type of socialism will not suit India at all. Even in Russia their policies have not succeeded completely. Why don't you try to save the country from the calamity which has befallen it today? So long as this communal virus has not been eradicated, socialism will never come. Note down and remember, all of you, these words of an old man. The people will want to see our work and our sacrifices; they will judge our labour and look for perfection of character in us. But you wish to pay no attention to these things.

On the one hand, hundreds of thousands of our brothers and sisters have become homeless. If now you incite the people and exploit this riot to establish new parties or spread your isms, rest assured God will never forgive this terrible crime of betrayal of the country." 29\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "Some fifty years ago when I used to practice law in South Africa there were many people there who called themselves socialists but in fact they were less socialist than I was. I used to work among the coolies. I had made this work my life's mission and I lived as the coolies lived. I have always considered myself a servant of the workers and peasants but I have never found it necessary to call myself a socialist. My socialism is of a different kind. Even if everyone forsakes me I shall not be worried. I am your friend and, therefore, I tell you that if a cripple cannot obtain something he needs we should ourselves give up that something. I shall first watch the cripple's life and his food and only then shall I think of doing something for myself. This is my socialism. If you want to bring about this kind of socialism, then I shall be the first to come forward to help. It is my firm belief that even a king can become a socialist by being a servant of his people. If we want to make the king as well as the people socialist, how shall we set about it? We can convert others to socialism by setting an example ourselves. It is said that there are two ways of changing the king either by cutting off his head or by depriving him of his throne. My method is to make the king a socialist through love. It is heinous to kill. If you teach thousands of people to kill, the order that you will bring about will not be a socialistic order but an order of murderers. The Viceroy can call himself a Congressman as the speaker calls himself a Congressman. But would the Viceroy be ready to give up his powers if he were asked to do so? Similarly there are many people who call themselves Congressmen but are they indeed Congressmen? Are they true socialists? There are many who have drowned themselves in their wealth and in

the pleasures which wealth can buy. In South Africa although the Whites treated me as an enemy, nevertheless many of them came to me as friends. If socialism means turning enemies into friends I should be considered a genuine socialist. This idea of socialism is my own. All the socialists should learn socialism from me. Only then shall we be able to produce dedicated workers and bring about peasants' rule. I do not believe in the kind of socialism that the Socialist Party preaches. Maybe my preaching to you is a cry in the wilderness, maybe you will not listen to me. There are people who call me names and treat me as a madman. I cannot teach you violence because I do not believe in violence. I can only teach you not to bow your head even if you should lose your life. Therein lays true courage.

Nobody can take away this courage from me. When I die you will all admit that Gandhi was a true socialist? When I talk of trusteeship people call me mad. But there is something in that madness. If you think a little deeply you will understand it. Today I can say with conviction that if there is anyone among all these people who is a socialist it is I.

And this gives me the right to say what I am saying. The public life and the private life of a public servant are interrelated. Socialism cannot be established without moral purity. Socialism has been in vogue ever since the time of Lord Krishna. He played with the cowherds. He lived with them, ate with them; he went along with Sudama to cut firewood in the forest for the wife of his preceptor. There are many such instances. He even became the charioteer of Arjuna to show that there was no one high or low for him. He comported with the cowherd maidens freely for there was no impurity in his eyes. Thus what you call socialism, the thing which you think you should learn from Russia or America or England, has been there in our country for a very long time. Jayaprakash is like a son to me and the other leaders of the Socialist Party are all my friends. I humbly want to tell them that if they adopt the kind of socialism I have described the whole country will be with them. I regret I cannot support the theory of socialism you accept, for I know that those who advocate it do not conform to it in their lives. Their precepts and practice vary. It will not do merely to preach. Rama spent fourteen years in exile in the forest and we worship him. But if he had not done so and merely contented himself with saying that a son should obey his father, who would have remembered him today? Today there is murder, plunder and rape in the air. My voice is not heard. People consider me mad. I am expected to teach how to return two blows for one but I cannot do so. All I can say is: 'Friend, if you want to kill me you may do so, but I will kill no one.' I pray to God that He may keep me filled with this courage to the end. One who

has cultivated such courage cannot be plundered. When Gandhi is dead you will all say Gandhi was a socialist. I say it humbly but with conviction because I have full sixty years' experience to back it." 30\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware in socialism all the members of society are equal none low, none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. That is socialism. In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity. Looking at society all the world over there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high, that one is low, that one is a Hindu, that one a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these there are sub-divisions. In the unity of my conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs. In order to reach this state we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism.

Without changing our life we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawk-like seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the further it must recede from us. Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning; multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste. This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystalline means to achieve it.

Impure means insult in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employee. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. Non-violence is embedded in truth and vice versa. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you has untruth and violence in you.

Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above the existence of such a society is impossible.” 31\*

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, “I have not mixed up socialism with sociology. I must confess I have read very little if anything at all about sociology. Socialism as conceived in the West may go against Indian culture. Then it is faulty but socialism as defined by me in the articles you have read is a living thing and true. It is undoubtedly an economic doctrine but not based on class warfare.” 32\*

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Gandhiji ki Delhi Diary—III, pp. 188

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LETTER TO MOTWANI, July 26, 1947

## INTERVIEW TO “THE HINDUSTAN TIMES”<sup>1\*</sup> May 21, 1934

Q. What are your impressions about the All-India Congress Committee meeting?

A. Considering the revolutionary character of the two resolutions, the criticism was restrained, and the voting showed an extraordinary sense of responsibility and appreciation of facts. The attendance, too, was quite good.

Q. Do you think it will be necessary for you to offer civil disobedience in pursuance of the permission given to you by the All-India Congress Committee?

A. There is the 3rd August next in front of me, but what will happen that day is more than I can say<sup>2\*</sup>. I have no pre-conceived plans. Sufficient unto the day is the work thereof.

Q. How do you look upon the emergence of the Socialist group within the Congress? Have you any message in this connection?

A. I welcome the emergence. And if it acts, as I am sure it will act, with due restraint and in keeping with the special conditions of the country, it can only do good. I understand that it is pledged to nonviolent methods to the exclusion of violent methods.

Q. How do you expect Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai and Abdul Ghaffar Khan to view your advice to the country?

A. I have no doubt that, if they had been out they would have acted precisely as I have. How, being in jail, that is, being ignorant of the outside world at first hand, they would view its proceedings is surely an illegitimate question.

The Hindustan Times, 22-5-1934

1\* Gandhiji got down at Byree and walked to Gandhi Seva Ashram at Champapurhat. It being his day of silence, he wrote down his answers.

2\* Vide footnote 2, “Speech at A.I.C.C. Meeting, Panta- I”. VOL. 64: 20 MAY, 1934 - 15 SEPTEMBER, 1934.

**DISCUSSION WITH M. R. MASANI AND N. R. MALKANI 1 May 25, 1934**

M. Is your main difference as to method or do you suspect that socialism is based on violence?

G. It is not a matter of suspicion but of fact. Violence need not be physical. Your socialistic system is based on coercion.

M. But coercion is used not as an end. It is for the good of the many.

G. Violence is impatience and non-violence is patience. Great reforms cannot be introduced without great patience. In violence lies the germ of future failure. For instance, take 100 persons—5 armed and powerful, who could chop off the heads of the helpless 95 if they would oppose them. That would be complete failure for the five. But suppose that someone of the 95 kills these five and acquires power, without the desire of the remaining 94, you cannot say that the new rule will be good for all. It may only mean one bad rule followed by another bad rule.

M. But one could not snatch power without the desire and active co-operation of the 94.

G. We have assumed absence of desire. M. But with us the desire exists. The socialistic programme can be understood and accepted by all.

G. Talk to the peasant in Orissa about monopoly of trade and socialization of industry and he will not know what you are talking about.

M. But the Gujarati or Deccani peasant can understand the rationalization of land.

G. Well, I have known Gujarati peasants defending and approving the institution of the Bania in villages. They say the Bania is their benefactor in distress and so forth. These people have to be awakened. It is no use having an over-ambitious programme. I am a practical man. I would cut down your programme to what I actually do.

M. The present tendency is towards decentralization in agriculture. Intensive agriculture can only be on a small scale. But the tendency in industry is towards largescale production and later large-scale control. In such cases there is bound to be a conflict between labour and capital. There are some industries which always will tend to be on a large scale.

G. Industries like transport, insurance, exchange must be Stateowned. But I would not insist that all large industries should be taken over by the State. Suppose there is an intelligent and expert individual who volunteers to run and direct an industry, without much remuneration and

only for the good of society, I would keep the system elastic enough to allow such an individual to organize that industry.

M. I too have no objection to such elasticity provided all private profit is eliminated. If any individual promises to work for society, he should be permitted to do so. But I would like to make sure that the industries are run on national lines. I would, therefore, like the industries to be represented on a functional basis in the State, each trade to have its own representation.

G. That would be superfluous in a State which was based on adult franchise. India is mostly agricultural and adult franchise would, therefore, give preponderance to agriculture.

M. In Russia they have a slightly different system. The urban worker's vote is weighted—four agriculture votes are equal to one urban vote. For the rest the system of election is indirect, like our Congress election.

G. Well, I would not give that preference to the urban vote. In the Round Table Conference I urged the adoption of adult franchise and voting by the village community. The proposal was rejected because the Round Table Conference was not representative.

M. But any conference which has representatives of landlords and capitalists will reject adult franchise. They will say one thing but will do the other.

G. Then they have to be persuaded and converted to your views; I do not believe in the so-called class-conflict.

M. But we can convert individuals, never a system. For instance take the Champaran planters. To the last they were not converted. But for the pressure brought on them by the Governor nothing would have been done.

G. I am not sure. Some planters were converted. What part the Government and planters played in the matter I do not know but I do know that the Government could have done nothing, if the planters had not stood by them.

M. But if the Governor had been hostile the planters would have resisted to the last.

G. That is shifting the ground. I simply say that some planters were converted. In India Europeans are of four classes—businessmen, soldiers, civilians and ecclesiastics. Surely you do not suggest that individuals from these cannot be converted. You must eliminate violence. And when you do, you will find that there is not much difference between you and me. Both of us desire the welfare of the starving millions.

1\* In his introductory note to this, N. R. Malkani, who was Gandhiji's acting secretary, stated that these notes had the "advantage of having been passed by Gandhiji". Malkani wrote : "It was Friday, the 25th of May, 1934, and we had to walk five miles in the morning from Sisua to Patpur. . . Gandhiji walked barefooted with a cloth on his head, the right hand on Masani's shoulder, the left on mine; his words instructing us, his hands now soothing and now restraining us; and 'M' in this talk stands to the credit of both Masani and Malkani indifferently . . . ."

The Hindustan Times, 4-8-1935

VOL. 64: 20 MAY, 1934 - 15 SEPTEMBER, 1934 THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

It may surprise many that today India is treading the path shown by the socialists rather than Mahatma Gandhi. But this is a historical fact. In 1934, Minoo Masani had given to Mahatma Gandhi a programme adopted by the Socialists for his comments. Gandhi said while he welcomed the formation of the Congress Socialist Party, he did not agree with its programmes.

**MAHATMA GANDHI'S LETTER TO M. R. MASANI ON SOCIALIST PROGRAMME. June 14<sup>TH</sup> 1934. THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI. VOL. 64 : 20 MAY, 1934 - 15 SEPTEMBER, 1934**

MY DEAR MASANI,

June 14<sup>TH</sup> 1934

I have read the questions you left with me as also the Congress Socialist Party's programme. I welcome the rise of the Socialist Party in the Congress. But I can't say that I like the programme as it appears in the printed pamphlet. It seems to me to ignore Indian conditions and I do not like the assumption underlying many of its propositions which go to show that there is necessarily antagonism between the classes and the masses or between the labourers and the capitalists, such that they can never work for mutual good. My own experience covering a fairly long period is to the contrary. What is necessary is that labourers or workers should know their rights and should also know how to assert them. And since there never has been any right without a corresponding duty, in my opinion a manifesto is incomplete without emphasizing the necessity of performance of duty and showing what that duty is.

You would not want me at this stage to examine your programme clause by clause, but if you so desire and if you do not mind consulting my convenience, I would appoint for you a time when I could discuss with you, and those whom you may wish, the whole of your programme in detail.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a Photostat: G.N. 4126. Also C.W. 4884. Courtesy: M. R. Masani.

The Draft proposals of Socialist programme circulated before the Foundation Conference of the CSP, at Patna were sent to AICC for its approval. Congress Working Committee (CWC) at its meeting in Bombay on 17-18 June, 1934, approved this Socialist programme with some modifications. Socialists didn't like it and Acharya Narendra Deva, Sampurnanand, Sriprakasa and Jayprakash Narayan issued a strongly worded statement from Benaras on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 1934. (SELECTED WORKS OF ACHARYA NARENDRA DEVA, VOL-1 PAGE (245-246). These leaders also met Mahatma Gandhi under the leadership of Acharya Narendra Deva at Benaras on 27<sup>TH</sup> July 1934, and requested Mahatma to use his influence to get the Congress Working Committee

adopt their “Socialist Programme”. Mahatma Gandhi rebuked them but gave assurance that he would read their programme and put it before the working committee. (THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI.VOL.64 PAGE 237 AND 257-259).

**LETTER TO JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN July 20, 1934**

CHI. JAYAPRAKASH, I have your letter. It is clear. I now understand your situation clearly. It is natural for you to wish to have Prabhavati with you. Such being the case I do not wish to keep her at Wardha. I am certain that Prabhavati can do some work in Bihar. But Prabhavati does not have that feeling. She has not enough self-confidence. If she could be persuaded of the virtue of going to Bihar, it would be well. The way is now clear. You can have Prabha anywhere you want. You should both decide something together. I shall have nothing to say about it. I can only give advice when you seek it. Yes, I do want that neither of you should coerce the other. The ideals the two of you pursue are different. No doubt I have had a hand in shaping Prabhavati's ideal and I do not regret it. But if your love draws her to your ideal, it will be all right by me.

It will lessen my responsibility and give you satisfaction. It is a matter of sorrow to me that your life is becoming dreary. Send for Prabha or come and meet her. Take some decision. To what extent it is right for you, considering your communist beliefs, to accept help from me I cannot say. I cannot also say where we disagree and why. We shall argue about it.

Blessings from BAPU

From the Hindi original: Jayaprakash Narayan Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI VOL. 64: 20 MAY, 1934-15 SEPTEMBER, 1934 287.

**ANSWERS TO ZAMINDARS1\*.**

MAHATMA GANDHI ON THE POLICIES OF CONGRESS & CSP,  
July 25, 1934

QUESTION. The Karachi Congress passed a resolution laying down the fundamental rights of the people and, since it recognized private property, nationalist zamindars have supported the Congress. But the new Socialist Party in the Congress threatens the extinction of private property. How would it affect the Congress policy? Do you not think that this will precipitate class war? Will you prevent it?

ANSWER. The Karachi resolution can be altered only by an open session of the next Congress, but let me assure you that I shall be no party to dispossessing the propertied classes of their private property without just cause. My object is to reach your hearts and convert you so that you may



hold all your private property in trust for your tenants and use it primarily for their welfare.

I am aware of the fact that within the ranks of the Congress a new party called the Socialist Party is coming into being and I cannot say what would happen if that party succeeds in carrying the Congress with it. But I am quite clear that if a strictly honest and unchallengeable referendum of our millions were to be taken, they would not vote for wholesale expropriation of the propertied classes. I am working for the co-operation and co-ordination of capital and labour and of landlords and tenants. It is open to you to join the Congress as much as it is open to the poorest by paying the fee of four annas and subscribing to the Congress creed.

But I must utter a note of warning. I have always told the mill owners that they are not exclusive owners of the mills. Workmen are equal sharers in the ownership. In the same way, I would tell you that the ownership of your land belongs as much to the ryots as to you and you may not squander your gains in luxurious or extravagant living, but must use them for the wellbeing of the ryots. Once you make your ryots experience a sense of kinship with you and a sense of security that their interests as members of the family will never suffer at your hands, you may be sure that there cannot be a class war between you and them. Class war is foreign to the essential genius of India which is capable of evolving a form of communism broad based on the fundamental rights of all and equal justice to all. The Ramarajya of my dream ensures the rights alike of prince and pauper. You may be sure that I shall throw the whole weight of my influence in preventing class war.

I do not know what I am going to do after the termination of my self-imposed restriction on August 3, but I shall try my best to avoid going back to prison. But it is difficult to predict anything with certainty in a situation of which I am unaware today. But supposing that there is an attempt unjustly to deprive you of your property, you will find me fighting on your side. We propose to support Congress candidates in the next Assembly elections. But we have our misgiving about the policy they will adopt in the Assembly.

Could you persuade the Parliamentary Board to dispel our fears?

I invite you to discuss this thing with the members of the Parliamentary Board. I know however that no member will talk of expropriation or extinction of private property. They will certainly insist on a radical reform in your relations with the ryots but that should be no new thing to

you. Even Sir Malcolm Hailey<sup>1A\*</sup> and Lord Irwin appealed to you to realize and live up to the spirit of the times., If you will only do this, you may be sure that we shall be able to evolve an indigenous socialism of the purest type.

Socialism and communism of the West are based on certain conceptions which are fundamentally different from ours. One such conception is their belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. I do not subscribe to it, for I know that the essential difference between man and brute is that the former can respond to the call of spirit in him and can rise superior to the passions that he owns in common with the brute and therefore superior to selfishness and violence which belong to brute nature and not to the immortal spirit of man. That is the fundamental conception of Hinduism, which has years of penance and austerity at the back of the discovery of their truth. That is why whilst we had had saints who have burnt out their bodies and laid down their lives in order to explore the secrets of the soul, we have none as in the West who have laid down their lives in exploring the remotest or highest regions of earth.

Our socialism or communism should therefore be based on non-violence and on the harmonious co-operation of labour and capital and the landlord and the tenant. There is nothing in the Congress creed or policy that need frighten you. All your fears and misgivings, permit me to tell you, are those of a guilty conscience. Wipe out the injustice that you may have been consciously or unconsciously guilty of and shed all fear of the Congress and Congressmen. Once you turn a new leaf in the relations between zamindars and ryots, you will find us on your side jealously guarding your private rights and property. When I say “us”, I have Pandit Jawaharlal also in mind, for I am sure that on this essential principle of non-violence there is no difference between us.

He does indeed talk of nationalization of property, but it need not frighten you. The nation cannot own property except by vesting it in individuals. It simply ensures it's just and equitable use and prevents all possible misuse, and I do not think you can have any possible objection to holding your property for the benefit of the ryots. The ryots have themselves no greater ambition than to live in peace and freedom and they will never grudge you your possession of property provided you use it for them. You have been almost avoiding us and the villages. Why not have candidates belonging to the rural classes? You may be sure that we are going to penetrate the villages and establish healthy relations with you.

The Pioneer, 3-8-1934

1\* According to the source, this appeared as “reported by Mahadev Desai” and “revised by Gandhiji”. Gandhiji answered the questions which “the zamindars read out to him”

1A\* Governor of U.P

VOL. 64: 20 MAY, 1934 -15 SEPTEMBER, 1934

**DISCUSSION WITH MAHATMA GANDHI WITH SOCIALISTS' DEPUTATION\*1 BENARES, July 27, 1934**

The deputationists, who were invited by Gandhiji for a free and open discussion, are reported to have told him that the Congress programme as it stood fell far short of the socialist demand and that he should use his influence with the Congress executive to adopt the socialist programme as envisaged in the Patna resolution of the Socialists' Conference. Gandhiji is understood to have deprecated frequent and unwarranted socialist attacks on the Congress executive and its programme and plainly told socialists that they should either be prepared to abide by the Congress decision without attempting to create unnecessary splits in Congress ranks or take over charge of the Congress machinery including its executive. He and other members of the executive were prepared to hand over control and make room for them if they so desired.

The socialists, who were evidently taken aback, came out disappointed in the main, but somewhat mollified by the assurance that Gandhiji gave them that he would put their suggestions before the Working Committee and after full consultation with them get the Committee to pass a resolution clearly defining the Congress attitude towards socialism, confiscation of property, etc.

1.\*The Bombay Chronicle, 28-7-1934.Collected works Gandhi (Mahatma).

After this meeting Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Acharya Narendra Deva about their Socialist Programme from Benaras itself.

**LETTER TO NARENDRA DEVA, BENARES, August 2, 1934.**

DEAR NARENDRA DEVA,

I was thankful for the two hearty meetings\*1 with the socialist friend during the all too few days I have been with you and enjoyed your hospitality. I promised to study your draft programme and let you have my criticism on it. I cannot say I have studied it as carefully as I would have liked to. The following therefore is meant as a cursory criticism by no means exhaustive. I think that it is wrong to call the party 'Congress Socialist Party' unless you apply for permission to make it part of the Congress organization.

But it would be quite proper to call it 'All- India Socialist Party of Congressmen'. I am sure you realize the significance of the distinction. I miss in your draft constitution acceptance of the Congress objective of attainment of 'purna swaraj' by legitimate and peaceful means. If it is an intentional omission I can understand it. For your object seems to be far different from that of the Congress. You perhaps claim that it is far ahead of the object of the Congress. Even so you cannot then call yourself a Congress party.

The object of the Congress is to form an independent State. What that State will be we can but dimly guess. Some of its features we have already determined. Experience teaches us daily new things to add. But your enunciation of the socialist object frightens me. The implications of all the three principles are too vast for my comprehension. They make an intoxicating programme. I fear all intoxicants.

I now take by way of illustration what appear to me to be objectionable items in your programme. Items 7 and 8 are contrary to the present policy of the Congress. Though I have all my life identified myself with the masses and renounced possession of private property, I do not contemplate the elimination of the princes and the landlords nor do I contemplate redistribution of land to peasants. I aim at reformation of the princes and the landlords. It is possible, without a violent redistribution of land, to secure for tenants rights which virtually amount to ownership. I like item 11, which 7 and 8 and some others seem to me to contradict. To everyone "according to his needs" should be, in my opinion, a perfect formula if you can find place for "just" before "needs". That alone sums up all you can wish for for the most helpless and forlorn among the millions of our. . . 1. Your fifth method, as I conceive it, is a negation of nonviolence. I fail to find any justification for refusal to enter at any stage into negotiations on the constitutional issue with the British Government. The Congress did not adopt that policy even in the heyday of non-co-operation. I am sure this is a hasty interpolation. Your "general strikes of workers and peasants" without any qualification is too dangerous for a sober, non-violent programme. Your immediate demands are attractive with the exception of a few items. But I find nothing in your methods to show that you have any hope of immediate attainment.

I draw your attention to glaring omissions:  
Removal of untouchability  
Communal unity.

Khaddar as symbol of identity with the masses and immediate occupation till a better is found for the millions who are unemployed for six or four months in the year. Total prohibition of intoxicating drugs and drinks. I plead for a drastic revision of the whole constitution. We are both labouring under a heavy handicap in that Jawaharlal, who has given us the mantra of socialism, is not in our midst, and I consider him to be the natural wearer of the Congress crown of thorns when I and other elderly men and women have been permitted to take well deserved rest. I feel sure that if he was in our midst, he would have hastened slowly. I suggest your presenting the country with practical socialism in keeping with Indian conditions instead of scientific socialism as your programme has been called. I am glad that the programme you have given me is but draft though prepared by an influential committee appointed for the purpose. It would be wise, if when you settle your programme finally, you will associate with you men who have socialist leanings and have experience of actual conditions.

Yours sincerely,  
Bapu

1 The Leader had reported that the meeting was held at Central Hindu School.

2 What follows is reproduced from The Leader.

3 Vide pp. 253-4.

From a facsimile: Mahatma, Vol. III, between pp. 344 and 345.

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru also expressed his anger against the Congress Working Committee CWCs resolution in a letter dated 13 August 1934 to Mahatma Gandhi. He stated that “it was nothing but the trump of opportunism in the Congress and blamed the CWC. Which had deliberately encouraged vagueness in the definition of our ideals and objectives.”

## APPENDIX V

### LETTER FROM JAWAHARLAL NEHRU1 ANAND BHAWAN, ALLAHABAD, August 13, 1934

MY DEAR BAPU,

After just six months of absolute seclusion and little exercise I have felt rather lost in the anxiety, excitement and activity of the past 27 hours. I feel very tired. I am writing this letter to you at midnight. All day there have been crowds of people coming. If I have the chance I shall write to you again, but I doubt if I shall be able to do so for some months. I am, therefore, going to indicate to you briefly how I have reacted to the various major Congress decisions of the last five months or so. My sources of information have naturally been strictly limited but I think that they were sufficient to enable me to form a fairly correct idea of the general trend of events. When I heard that you had called off the C. D. movement I felt unhappy. Only the brief announcement reached me at first. Much later I read your statement and this gave me one of the biggest shocks I have ever had. I was prepared to reconcile myself to the withdrawal of C.D. But the reasons you gave for doing so and the suggestions you made for future work astounded me. I had a sudden and intense feeling, that something broke inside me, a bond that I had valued very greatly had snapped. I felt terribly lonely in this wide world. I have always felt a little lonely almost from childhood up. But a few bonds strengthened me, a few strong supports held me up. That loneliness never went, but it was lessened. But now I felt absolutely alone, left high and dry on a desert island. Human beings have an enormous capacity for adapting themselves and so I too adapted myself to some extent to the new conditions. The keenness of my feelings on the subject, which amounted almost to physical pain, passed off; the edge was dulled. But shock after shock, a succession of events sharpened that edge to a fine point, and allowed my mind or feelings no peace or rest. Again I felt that sensation of spiritual isolation, of being a perfect stranger out of harmony, not only with the crowds that passed me, but also with those whom I had valued as dear and close comrades. My stay in prison this time became a greater ordeal for my nerves than any previous visit had been. I almost wished that all newspapers might be kept away from me so that I might be spared these repeated shocks. Physically I kept fairly well. I always do in prison. My body has served me well and can stand a great deal of ill-treatment and strain. And being vain enough to imagine that perhaps I might yet do some effective work in this land to which fate had tied me, I looked after it well. But I wondered often enough if I was not a square peg in a round hole, or a bubble of conceit thrown about hither and thither on an ocean which spurned me. But vanity and conceit triumphed and the intellectual apparatus that functions within me refused to admit defeat. If the ideals that had spurred me to action and had kept me buoyed up through stormy weather were right—and the conviction of their rightness ever grew within me—they were bound to triumph though my generation might not live to witness that triumph. But what had happened to those ideals during these long and weary months of this year when I was a silent and distant witness, fretting at my helplessness? Setbacks and temporary defeats are common enough in all great struggles. They grieve but one recovers soon enough. One recovers soon if the light of those ideals is not allowed to grow dim and the anchor of principles holds fast. But what I saw was not setback and defeat but that spiritual defeat which is the most terrible of all. Do not imagine that I am referring to the council-entry question. I do not attach vital importance to it. Under certain

circumstances I can even imagine entering a legislature myself. But whether I function inside or outside the legislature I function as a revolutionary, meaning thereby a person working for the fundamental and revolutionary changes, political and social, for I am convinced that no other changes can bring peace or satisfaction to India and the world. So I thought. Not so evidently the leaders who were functioning outside. They began to talk the language of an age gone by before the heady wine of N. C. O. and C. D. had fired our heads. Sometimes they used the same words and phrases but they were dead words without life or real meaning. The leading figures of the Congress suddenly became those people who had obstructed us, held us back, kept aloof from the struggle and even co-operated with the opposite party in the time of our direct need. They became the high priests in our temple of freedom and many a brave soldier who had shouldered the burden in the heat and dust of the fray was not even allowed inside the temple precincts. He had many like him had become untouchables and unapproachables. And if he ventured to raise his voice and criticize the new high priests, he was shouted down and told that he was a traitor to the cause because he spoilt the harmony of the sacred precincts. And so the flag of Indian freedom was entrusted with all pomp and circumstance to those who had actually hauled it down at the height of our national struggle at the bidding of the enemy; to those who had proclaimed from the housetops that they had given up politics—for politics were unsafe then—but who emerged with a jump to the front ranks when politics became safe. And what of the ideals they set forth before them, speaking as they did on behalf of the Congress and the nation? A pitiful hotch-potch, avoiding real issues, toning down, as far as they dared, even the political objective of the Congress, expressing a tender solicitude for every vested interest, bowing down to many a declared enemy of freedom, but showing great truculence and courage in facing the advanced and fighting elements in the Congress ranks. Is not the Congress being rapidly reduced to a magnified edition of that shameful spectacle, the Calcutta Corporation during the last few years? Might not the dominant part of the Bengal Congress be called today “the society for the advancement of Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sirkar”, a gentleman who rejoiced to entertain Government officials, Home Members and the like, when most of us were in prison and C. D. was supposed to be flourishing? And the other part probably a similar society for a similar laudable object? But the fault does not lie with Bengal alone. Almost everywhere there is a similar outlook. The Congress from top to bottom is a caucus and opportunism triumphs. The Working Committee is not directly responsible for this state of affairs. But none the less the Working Committee must shoulder the responsibility. It is the leaders and their policy that shape the activities of the followers. It is neither fair nor just to throw blame on the followers. Every language has some saying about the workman blaming his tools. The committee had deliberately encouraged vagueness in the definition of our ideals and objectives and this is bound to lead not only to confusion but to demoralization during periods of reaction, and to the emergence of the demagogue and the reactionary. I am referring especially to the political objectives which are the special province of the Congress. I feel that the time is overdue for the Congress to think clearly on social and economic issues but I recognize that education on these issues takes time and the Congress as a whole may not be able to go as far at present as I would like it to. But it appears that whether the Working Committee knows anything about the subject or not it is perfectly willing to denounce and to excommunicate people who happen to have made a special study of the subject and hold certain views. No attempt is made to understand those views, which, it is notorious, are held by a very large number of the ablest and most self-sacrificing people in the world.



Those views may be right or wrong but they deserve at least some understanding before the Working Committee sets out to denounce them. It is hardly becoming for a reasoned argument to be answered by sentimental appeals or by the cheap remark that the condition in India are different and the economic laws that apply elsewhere do not function here. The resolution of the Working Committee on the subject showed such an astounding ignorance of the elements of socialism that it was painful to read it and to realize that it might be read outside India. It seemed that the overmastering desire of the Committee was somehow to assure various vested interests even at the risk of talking nonsense. A strange way of dealing with the subject of socialism is to use the word, which has a clearly defined meaning in the English language, in a totally different sense. For individuals to use words in a sense peculiar to themselves is not helpful in the commerce of ideas. A person who declares himself to be an engine-driver and then adds that his engine is of wood and is drawn by bullocks is misusing the word engine driver. This letter has become a much longer one than I expected and the night is already far spent. Probably I have written in a confused and scrappy way for my brain is tired. But still it will convey some picture of my mind. The last few months have been very painful ones for me and, I take it, for many others. I have felt sometimes that in the modern world, and perhaps in the ancient world also, it is oft preferred to break some people's hearts rather than touch other's pockets. Pockets are indeed valuable and more cherished than hearts and brains and bodies and human justice and dignity. There is one other subject I should like to mention. That is the Swaraj Bhawan Trust. I understand that the Working Committee recently considered the question of the unkeep of the Swaraj Bhawan and came to the conclusion that it was not responsible for it. As however it had already made a grant about three years ago and this had not been paid yet, although expenses were incurred on the strength of it, a fresh grant was sanctioned. This will probably be enough for some months. In regard to the future, the Working Committee was evidently anxious not to be saddled with the burden of maintaining the house and grounds. This burden amounts to Rs. 100 a month, which includes taxes, etc. The trustees, I understand, were also a little frightened of the burden and suggested that parts of the house might be let in the ordinary way to raise money for the maintenance. Another suggestion was made that part of the grounds might be sold off for this purpose. I was surprised to learn of these suggestions, as some of them seemed to me to be contrary to the letter of the trust and all of them against its spirit. As an individual trustee I have only one voice in the matter but I should like to say that I have the strongest possible objection to any such misuse of the trust property. The very idea of the wishes of my father being flouted in this way is intolerable to me. The trust represented not only his wishes but also in small way a memorial to him and his wishes and his memory is dearer to me than a hundred rupees a month. I should, therefore, like to assure the Working Committee and the trustees that they need have no anxiety on the score of the money required for maintenance of the property. As soon as the funds, now granted by the Working Committee for some months, are exhausted, I shall make myself personally responsible for the maintenance and no further grant need be made by the Working Committee. I would also beg the trustees to respect my feelings in this matter and not to break up the property or to hire it for the sake of hiring it out. I shall endeavour to maintain the Swaraj Bhawan property till such time as it is put to some worthy use. I have not the figures by me but I believe that even thus far the Swaraj Bhawan has not been, in any sense, a financial burden on the Working Committee. The grants that have been paid to it will probably not be much in excess of reasonable rent for the quarters occupied by the office of the A.I.C.C. This rent could have been reduced by

occupying smaller and cheaper quarters. At the same time in the past the A.I.C.C. has paid as much as Rs. 150 a month for rent of an upper floor only in Madras. Perhaps some part of this letter might pain you. But you would not have me hide my heart from you.

Yours affectionately,  
JAWAHAR

[PS.] I received your short note in Alipore Jail and I sent an answer. But the Superintendent suppressed that answer. A Bunch of Old Letters, pp. 112-7. God Good Physically I kept fairly well. I always do in prison. My body has served me well and can stand a great deal of ill-treatment and strain. And being vain enough to imagine that perhaps I might yet do some effective work in this land to which fate had tied me, I looked after it well. But I wondered often enough if I was not a square peg in a round hole, or a bubble of conceit thrown about hither and thither on an ocean which spurned me. But vanity and conceit triumphed and the intellectual apparatus that functions within me refused to admit defeat. If the ideals that had spurred me to action and had kept me buoyed up through stormy weather were right—and the conviction of their rightness ever grew within me—they were bound to triumph though my generation might not live to witness that triumph. But what had happened to those ideals during these long and weary months of this year when I was a silent and distant witness, fretting at my helplessness? Setbacks and temporary defeats are common enough in all great struggles. They grieve but one recovers soon enough. One recovers soon if the light of those ideals is not allowed to grow dim and the anchor of principles holds fast. But what I saw was not setback and defeat but that spiritual defeat which is the most terrible of all. Do not imagine that I am referring to the council-entry question. I do not attach vital importance to it. Under certain circumstances I can even imagine entering a legislature myself. But whether I function inside or outside the legislature I function as a revolutionary, meaning thereby a person working for the fundamental and revolutionary changes, political and social, for I am convinced that no other changes can bring peace or satisfaction to India and the world. So I thought. Not so evidently the leaders who were functioning outside. They began to talk the language of an age gone by before the heady wine of N. C. O. and C. D. had fired our heads. Sometimes they used the same words and phrases but they were dead words without life or real meaning. The leading figures of the Congress suddenly became those people who had obstructed us, held us back, kept aloof from the struggle and even co-operated with the opposite party in the time of our direct need. They became the high priests in our temple of freedom and many a brave soldier who had shouldered the burden in the heat and dust of the fray was not even allowed inside the temple precincts. He had many like him had become untouchables and unapproachables. And if he ventured to raise his voice and criticize the new high priests, he was shouted down and told that he was a traitor to the cause because he spoilt the harmony of the sacred precincts. And so the flag of Indian freedom was entrusted with all pomp and circumstance to those who had actually hauled it down at the height of our national struggle at the bidding of the enemy; to those who had proclaimed from the housetops that they had given up politics—for politics were unsafe then—but who emerged with a jump to the front ranks when politics became safe. And what of the ideals they set forth before them, speaking as they did on behalf of the Congress and the nation? A pitiful hotch-potch, avoiding real issues, toning down, as far as they dared, even the political objective of the Congress, expressing a tender solicitude for every vested interest, bowing down to

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and this had not been paid yet, although expenses were incurred on the strength of it, a fresh grant was sanctioned. This will probably be enough for some months. In regard to the future, the Working Committee was evidently anxious not to be saddled with the burden of maintaining the house and grounds. This burden amounts to Rs. 100 a month, which includes taxes, etc. The trustees, I understand, were also a little frightened of the burden and suggested that parts of the house might be let in the ordinary way to raise money for the maintenance. Another suggestion was made that part of the grounds might be sold off for this purpose. I was surprised to learn of these suggestions, as some of them seemed to me to be contrary to the letter of the trust and all of them against its spirit. As an individual trustee I have only one voice in the matter but I should like to say that I have the strongest possible objection to any such misuse of the trust property. The very idea of the wishes of my father being flouted in this way is intolerable to me. The trust represented not only his wishes but also in small way a memorial to him and his wishes and his memory is dearer to me than a hundred rupees a month. I should, therefore, like to assure the Working Committee and the trustees that they need have no anxiety on the score of the money required for maintenance of the property. As soon as the funds, now granted by the Working Committee for some months, are exhausted, I shall make myself personally responsible for the maintenance and no further grant need be made by the Working Committee. I would also beg the trustees to respect my feelings in this matter and not to break up the property or to hire it for the sake of hiring it out. I shall endeavour to maintain the Swaraj Bhawan property till such time as it is put to some worthy use. I have not the figures by me but I believe that even thus far the Swaraj Bhawan has not been, in any sense, a financial burden on the Working Committee. The grants that have been paid to it will probably not be much in excess of reasonable rent for the quarters occupied by the office of the A.I.C.C. This rent could have been reduced by occupying smaller and cheaper quarters. At the same time in the past the A.I.C.C. has paid as much as Rs. 150 a month for rent of an upper floor only in Madras. Perhaps some part of this letter might pain you. But you would not have me hide my heart from you.

Yours affectionately, JAWAHAR

[PS.] I received your short note in Alipore Jail and I sent an answer. But the Superintendent suppressed that answer. A Bunch of Old Letters, pp. 112-7. 1 Vide "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 17-8-1934 and "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 19-8-1934. well and can stand a great deal of ill-treatment and strain.

VOL. 64: 20 MAY, 1934 - 15 SEPTEMBER, 1934 THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

In reply to the criticism of Nehru, Gandhi wrote on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1934. .  
VOL. 64: 20 MAY, 1934 - 15 SEPTEMBER, 1934. THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

## MAHATMA GANDHI'S LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

August 17, 1934

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Your passionate and touching letter 1\* deserves a much longer reply than my strength will permit. I had expected fuller grace from the Government. However your presence has done for Kamala and incidentally for Mama what no drugs or doctors could have done. I hope that you will be allowed to remain longer than the very few days you expect.

I understand your deep sorrow. You are quite right in giving full and free expression to your feelings. But I am quite sure that from our common standpoint a closer study of the written word will show you that there is not enough reason for all the grief and disappointment you have felt. Let me assure you that you have not lost a comrade in me. I am the same as you knew me in 1917 and after. I have the same passion that you knew me to possess for the common goal. I want complete independence for the country in the full English sense of the term. And every resolution that has pained you had been framed with that end in view. I must take full responsibility for the resolutions and the whole conception surrounding them.

But I fancy that I have the knack for knowing the need of the time. And the resolutions are a response thereto. Of course here comes in the difference of our emphasis on the method or the means which to me are just as important as the goal and in a sense more important in that we have some control over them whereas we have none over the goal if we lose control over the means.

Do read the resolution about 'loose talk' dispassionately. There is not a word in it about socialism. Greatest consideration has been paid to the socialists some of whom I know so intimately. Do I not know their sacrifice? But I have found them as a body to be in a hurry. Why should they not be? Only, if I cannot march quite as quick, I must ask them to halt and take me along with them. That is literally my attitude. I have looked up the dictionary meaning of socialism. It takes me no further than where I was before I read the definition. What will you have me to read to know its full content? I have read one of the books Masani\*2 gave me and now I am devoting all my spare time to reading the book recommended by Narendra Deva.

You are hard on the members of the Working Committee. They are our colleagues such as they are. After all we are a free institution.

They must be displaced, if they do not deserve confidence. But it is wrong to blame them for their inability to undergo the sufferings that some others have gone through.

After the explosion I want construction. Therefore now, lest we do not meet, tell me exactly what you will have me to do and who you think will best represent your views.

As to the trust, I was not present. Vallabhbhai was. Your attitude betrays anger. You should trust the trustees to do their duty. I did not think there was anything wrong. I was too preoccupied to concentrate on it. I shall now study the papers and everything. Of course your feelings will be fully respected by other trustees. Having given you this assurance, I would ask you not to take this matter so personally as you have done. It more becomes you generous nature to give the same credit to your co-trustees for regard for Father's memory that you would take for yourself. Let the nation be the custodian of Father's memory and you only as one of the nation.

I hope Indu is well and likes her new life. And what about Krishna?  
Love.

BAPU

1\*Dated August 13; vide "Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru", 13-8-1934  
Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1934. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and  
Library. Also A Bunch of Old Letters, pp. 117-9

2\*M. R. Masani ; the reference is perhaps to What Marx Really Meant;  
vide "Letter to Brijkrishna Chandiwala", 16-8-1934

**Almost after three years of this discourse Gandhiji wrote to another Socialist stalwart Dr. Sampurnanad about his views on Socialism.**

**MAHATMA GANDHI'S LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND**

July 27, 1937. Collected works Gandhi (Mahatma).

BHAI SAMPURNANAND,

I had taken your book\*1(Samajvad) to Tithal, and had started reading it there. I finished it last Saturday, i.e., on July 24. I used to read it whenever I had a few minutes to spare. I have read it carefully from cover to cover. I liked the book, the language is sweet but it might also be regarded a bit difficult for those totally unacquainted with Sanskrit. The glossary of English-Hindi and Hindi-English equivalents given at the end is useful for the student. It is laudable that arguments in favour of socialism have been put forward without any disparagement of others.

I have no difficulty in accepting almost all the principles of socialism propounded in the book. I have also read with care the book \*2 (Why Socialism?) by Jayaprakash. Can there possibly be any difference between his interpretation and yours? Neither in your book nor in his do I find a clear idea how the ultimate revolution in India will be brought about. This I could not understand even after discussing it with many others. Only the day before yesterday a report of Meherally's Madras speech came into my hands and I went through it 3\*(Vide also "Letter to Mahadev Desai", 27-7-1937, and "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 30-7-1937). It explains fully what the socialists are doing. The object is to start a revolt in every sphere. But a revolt has never been possible without violence. In your book, however, I find nothing of the kind. Have we or have not we acquired strength through peaceful ways such as the civil disobedience or non-violent non-co-operation carried on since 1920? You say that the principles of socialism cannot be fully implemented until we have State power. Supposing, you ask, a powerful land-owner turned a complete socialist, could he well and truly act upon his principles? Assuming that he had no punitive power, could an Indian raja who was a socialist be able to implement socialism? I recollect your having written that socialism cannot be practiced in its entirety until the whole world turns socialist. Does this imply that even if we gain complete independence socialism will not be fully or almost fully implemented? I hope you have understood my point. The purpose behind this question is only to ascertain how far it would be possible for me to accept the socialist principles and the means of their implementation.

You may reply to this letter at your leisure. I am in no hurry.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From Hindi: C.W. 9940. Courtesy: Kashi Vidyapith.

1. Samajvad.

2. Why Socialism?

3. Vide also "Letter to Mahadev Desai", 27-7-1937., and "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 30-7-1937.

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON SUBHASH & SOCIALISTS AT GANDHI SEVA SANGH MEETING, BRINDABAN-I, May 5, 1939**

Here are some questions received from Annada Babu. He says he is asking the questions not for himself but for others mainly on Subhas Babu and on Socialists. Are not your differences with the socialists and Jawaharlalji also fundamental? Would you take up a similar attitude with regard to them?

No. My differences with the socialists are of a different kind. Do not confuse the two. They differ with Subhas Babu on the question of giving an ultimatum to the Government. I do not know who exactly supports him on the point. That is why in spite of my having sharp and even fundamental differences with the socialists my attitude towards them is different. Moreover, we cannot put the socialists and Jawaharlal in the same category. Jawaharlal does not lend his name to any socialist group. He believes in socialism. He mixes with the socialists and consults them. But there is considerable difference between their methods of work. The differences between me and the socialists are widely known. I believe in change of heart and in working for it. They do not. They make fun of the spinning-wheel. But even so the socialists are coming nearer to me every day. Or, you may say that I am moving nearer to them. Or, that we are moving nearer to each other. I cannot say how long it will continue. It is quite likely that one day our ways will part. The same thing happened with Subhas Babu. The Jalpaiguri resolution brought our differences to the fore. There are certainly differences between Jawaharlal and me. But they are not significant. Without him I feel myself a cripple. He also feels more or less the same way. Our hearts are one. This intimate relationship between us has not started with politics. It is very much older and deeper. We shall leave it at that. I shall come now to Gangadharrao's question. Q. The socialists say that while you are tolerant and liberal, we others are intolerant and narrow-minded. For instance you might be prepared to take them on the Working Committee but we would not agree to it. What is the reason for this?



A. How can I say? How can I answer that? You should search your own hearts for the reason. I can only say that in this matter you must follow me. You must be as gentle of speech as I am. The socialists come to me frowning, but they leave smiling. This does not mean that I do not express to them my differences with them. I tell them frankly what is in my heart. I do not flatter them, but try to enter their hearts. I have faith in their honesty. I try to understand their point of view. I find time to talk to them. You should treat them with the same courtesy. I can go so far to help you. Now one more question remains. But it is very important. Other things are of only passing importance. You are all in Gandhi Seva Sangh. I have read its constitution. It contains many things. You believe in certain principles. If the question Annada raised had been raised on the Congress platform it would have been a different matter. But when it is raised on the Sangh platform I feel a little grieved. Why should you entertain such doubts? The differences between me and Subhas Babu are of a passing nature. But if this leads to bad blood between us, the country will be ruined. Differences of opinion should never lead to bitterness. You are all believers in religious tolerance. I would suggest that you must broaden the definition of religious tolerance. We must also include in it the moderates and the radicals. We must see equality between the moderates and the radicals. We should have respect even for those who call themselves radicals. We must look at the views of the radicals from their angle and those of the moderates from theirs. We should see our dharma with our eyes and those of others with theirs. This is religious tolerance. This means that we must emphasize the points on which there is agreement between us. We should not stress the points of difference. Just because I respect Islam and Christianity I do not become a Muslim or a Christian. What I mean to say is that I respect these religions as much as I respect my own religion. But I would not be converted to either Islam or Christianity. What is the sense in my reading the Koran or the Bible, if I remain intolerant? This is not the correct meaning of the expression 'religious tolerance'. In politics too let us take our differences in the same light. Let us regard the socialists too in the same way. If we take this attitude our differences would be only temporary and we would try to end the quarrels as far as possible. If we do not do so, we shall become narrow minded. We shall get entangled in small quarrels. Man shapes himself after the dharma he follows. If we forget larger issues and remember only the small points which cause differences, the country will be completely ruined. Why is it so difficult to discover the points of agreement? The royal road of non-violence consists of mutual trust and willingness to understand another's point of view with an unprejudiced mind. In this connection I take up once again the matter of that circular<sup>1</sup>. I have read it again. The central point in it is the same. The central point

is the Sardar. Many people have a feeling that the Sardar does not work properly. Deep down in their hearts they feel that he has been unfair in the cases of Nariman, Khare and Subhas. But they should frankly 1 Vide footnote 1, "Speech at Gandhi Seva Sangh Meeting, Brindaban" 3-5-1939 VOL. 75: 30 JANUARY, 1939 - 30 MAY, 1939

**THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS AT GANDHI SEVA SANGH**  
**MEETING, BRINDABAN-II, May 6, 1939.**

I have here some slips which the President has passed on to me. One of them is from Appasaheb Patwardhan. I shall first deal with his question.

Q.I am either unable to understand your theory of trusteeship or my reason cannot grasp it. Will you kindly explain it?

A.It is the same thing whether you are unable to understand it or your reason does not accept it. How can I explain such an important principle in a few minutes? Still I shall try to explain it in brief. Just imagine that I have a crore of rupees in my possession. I can either squander the amount in dissipation or take up the attitude that the money does not belong to me, that I do not own it, that it is a bequest, that it has been put in my possession by God and that only so much of it is mine as is enough for my requirements. My requirements also should be like those of the millions. My requirements cannot be greater because I happen to be the son of a rich man. I cannot spend the money on my pleasures. The man who takes for himself only enough to satisfy the needs customary in his society and spends the rest for social service becomes a trustee. Ever since the idea of socialism became popular in India, we have been confronted with the question as to what our attitude should be towards the Princes and millionaires. The socialists say that the Princes and the millionaires should be done away with, that all must become workers. They advocate confiscation of the properties of all these people and say that they should be given the same wages as everyone else—from Rs. 5 to eight annas a day or Rs. 15 a month. So much for what the socialists say. We too assert that the rich are not the owners of their wealth whereas the labourer is the owner of his labour. He is, therefore, from our point of view, richer than the rich. A zamindar can be recognized as the owner of one, two or ten bighas of land. That is to say, of as much as may be necessary for his livelihood.

CWVG.VOL. 75: 30 JANUARY, 1939 - 30 MAY, 1939

## **MAHATMA GANDHI ON JAYAPRAKASH'S ARREST**

### **A BRAVE STATEMENT**

Shri Jayaprakash Narayan sent me a copy of his statement 1\* before the court which is printed below. It is worthy of him, brave, brief and to the point. It is an irony of fate, as he himself has said, that his patriotism should be penalized. What tens of thousands think and thousands say in their talks, Shri Jayaprakash has said in public and before the very men who are producing war material. It is true that, if his words take effect and they are repeated, the Government would be embarrassed. But such embarrassment should set them thinking about their treatment of India instead of punishing a patriot for his open thinking.

The concluding portion of the statement proves the author's intense humanitarianism. He has no malice in him. He wants to end Imperialism and Nazism. He has no quarrel with Englishmen or Germans and says truly that, if England were to shed imperialism, not only India but the freedom-loving people of the whole world would exert themselves to see the defeat of Nazism and the victory of freedom and democracy.

SEVAGRAM, March 26, 1940

Harijan, 30-3-1940

1\*Vide Appendix "Jayaprakash Narayan's Statement", 30-3-1940.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI VOL. 78 : 23  
FEBRUARY, 1940 -15 JULY, 1940 Page 93-94

### **JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN'S STATEMENT 1\***

I have been charged with trying to impede the production of munitions and other supplies essential to the efficient prosecution of the war, and with trying to influence the conduct and attitude of the public in a manner prejudicial to the defense of British India and the efficient prosecution of the war. I plead guilty to these charges.

These charges, however, do not constitute a guilt for me but a duty which I discharge regardless of the consequence. That they also constitute an offence under certain laws of the foreign Government, established by force in this country, does not concern me. The object of these laws is diametrically opposed to the object of nationalist India of which I am but an humble representative. That we should come in conflict is only natural.

My country is not a party to this war in any manner, for it regards both German Nazism and British Imperialism as evils and enemies. It finds that both the sides in this war are driven by selfish ends of conquest and domination, exploitation and oppression. Great Britain is fighting not to destroy Nazism, which it has nurtured, but to curb a rival whose might can no longer be allowed to grow unchallenged. It is fighting to maintain its dominant place in the world and to preserve its imperial power and glory. As far as India is concerned, Great Britain is fighting to perpetuate the Indian Empire.

Plainly, India can have no truck with such a war. No Indian can permit the resources of his country to be utilized to buttress up imperialism, and to be converted through the processes of the war into the chains of his country's slavery. The Congress, the only representative voice of nationalist India, has already pointed out this sacred duty to the people of this country. I, as an humble servant of the Congress, have only tried to fulfil this duty. The British Government on the other hand, in utter disregard for Indian opinion, has declared India a belligerent power and is utilizing Indian men, money and materials for a war to which we have pledged our uncompromising opposition.

This is in the nature of an aggression against India, no less serious in the circumstances than German aggression against Poland. India cannot but resist this aggression. It therefore becomes the patriotic duty of every Indian to oppose the attempt of the British Government to use the country's resources for its imperialist ends. Thus the charge framed against me of trying to impede the efficient prosecution of the war is only the fulfilment of a patriotic duty.

That the British Government should consider what is a duty for patriotic India to be an offence, only proves further its imperialist character.

Regarding the speech for which I am being prosecuted, I cannot say how far it succeeded in achieving its ends. But nothing would please me more than to learn that it did have some success in impeding the effective prosecution of the war. I shall deem the heaviest punishment well earned if I am found to have succeeded in this. As for the charge of endangering the defence of British India, I think the irony of it cannot be lost upon us. A slave has no obligation to defend his slavery. His only obligation is to destroy his bondage. I hope we shall know how to defend ourselves when we have achieved our freedom.

I consider it fortunate that I have been prosecuted for a Jamshedpur speech. This important industrial centre, which I consider the most important in the country, is peculiarly backward politically and from the point of view of the labour movement. I shall derive some satisfaction in prison, where I expect inevitably to find myself, from the thought that my arrest and incarceration for a speech delivered there has attracted to that city the notice of the political and labour leaders of my country.

It seems scandalous to me that the country's most vital resources should be so wasted in a war to which we are so firmly opposed. And it seems no less scandalous to me that while labour throughout the country should be reacting vigorously to the conditions created by the war, Jamshedpur labour should carry on as if nothing extraordinary has happened. May, at least, the demand for a war bonus gain some momentum from this prosecution.

Before concluding I should like to add that, lest as an Englishman you should misunderstand me, I should make it clear that in impeding the prosecution of the war I have no desire to help Germany or to see Germany victorious. I desire the victory neither of Imperialism nor of Nazism. Yet, as a Congressman and a socialist I have nothing but goodwill for the British and German people. If India's opposition to Britain's imperialist war ensures a Nazi victory, it is for the British people to decide whether they would have Nazi hegemony or victory with real democracy at home and in India. If the people of Great Britain remove their present rule and renounce imperialism with its capitalist rulers, not only India but the freedom-loving people of the whole world exert themselves to see the defeat of Nazism and the victory of freedom and democracy. In the present circumstances, however, India has no alternative but to fight and end British imperialism. Only in that manner can it contribute to the peace and progress of the world.

I am conscious, Sir, that I have made your task easier by this statement. I do not regret it.

In the end I thank you for your courtesy and consideration during the trial.

Harijan, 30-3-1940

1\* Vide "A Brave Statement", 26-3-1940.

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FEBRUARY, 1940 - 15 JULY, 1940 Page No. 440-441

## **MAHATMA GANDHI'S LETTERS TO PRABHAVATI AND JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN**

LETTER TO PRABHAVATI SEVAGRAM, March 31, 1940

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your wire and letter, also the one from Jayaprakash. I had expected a longer sentence. In a way I welcome this imprisonment 1\*. It will surely give him rest. See that he takes proper care about his food. As for you, you should engross yourself in the work there. Know the names and addresses of all your women friends and arrange for their spinning-wheels, etc.

See that they get lessons in reading and writing in their homes. Send Harijan Sevak and other literature to those who can read. Train them in sanitation. Create in them a desire to discard the purdah. But don't be in a hurry about this.

I am all right.

Pass on the letter to Jayaprakash.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 3544

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI VOL. 78 : 23  
FEBRUARY, 1940 -15 JULY, 1940, Page No. 101

## **LETTER TO JAYAPRAKASH SEVAGRAM, March 31, 1940**

CHI. JAYAPRAKASH,

I have your letter. I shall not ignore your view. I shall publish your resolution, and write about it.2\*

I accept your views that I should not at any rate be caught napping. They are all lax about District Boards, etc. They have not been able to decide anything. I am myself full of doubts after listening to their comments. I have no personal experience and therefore I cannot say things emphatically. I shall get more elucidation about this from Narendra Dev.3\*

I shall encourage Prabha to stick to the work she has undertaken.

Preserve your health.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 2219

1\* Vide "A Brave Statement", 26-3-1940.

2\* Vide "Jayaprakash's Picture", 14-4-1940.

3\* Acharya Narendra Dev (1889-1956); President, All-India Kisan Sabha, 1939 and 1942; leading member of the Socialist Party of India and Praja Socialist Party; Vice-Chancellor, Lucknow University, and later, Banaras Hindu University.

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FEBRUARY, 1940 -15 JULY, 1940, Page No. 101-102

### **QUESTION BOX ARE YOU NOT MOVED?**

Q. You have written about Shri Jayaprakash Narayan.<sup>1\*</sup> But are you not moved by his sentence? Is it not a call to arms? Will you even now wait till your impossible conditions are fulfilled?

A. I fear I must wait till my conditions are fulfilled. You should allow me to know more than you of the way in which satyagraha works. Of course I am moved by the sentence pronounced against that brave co-worker. I wish I could move you as I am moved. If you were, you would silently and more persistently spread the charkha cult by yourself spinning full heartedly and by taking its message to your neighbors. Jayaprakash having gone to jail, has had his reward. He had the inner urge. He deserved the reward. Believe me, it will produce its own effect. If I become impatient and resort to precipitate action, the good done by Jayaprakash's imprisonment is likely to be undone partly or wholly. I will not be party to producing an anarchical condition in India, nor will any good purpose be served by my inviting individuals to follow Jayaprakash's example and court imprisonment. This jail-going in satyagraha does not admit of arithmetical application. Only one person's going may be most appropriate. Suffice it to say that Jayaprakash's imprisonment is engaging my serious attention. I wish all Congressmen would follow with redoubled zeal the task set before them.

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FEBRUARY, 1940 -15 JULY, 1940 Page No. 105

### **ON JAYAPRAKASH'S PICTURE (OF SOCIALISM)**

The following draft resolution was sent to me by Shri Jayaprakash Narayan. He asked me, if I accepted his picture, to put it before the Working Committee at Ramgarh.

The Congress and the country are on the eve of a great national upheaval. The final battle for freedom is soon to be fought. This will happen when the whole world is being shaken by mighty forces of change. Out of the catastrophe of the European War, thoughtful minds everywhere are anxious to create a new world—a world based on the co-operative



goodwill of nations and men. At such a time the Congress considers it necessary to state definitely the ideals of freedom for which it stands and for which it is soon to invite the Indian people to undergo the uttermost sufferings.

The free Indian nation shall work for peace between nations and total rejection of armaments and for the method of peaceful settlement of national disputes through some international authority freely established. It will endeavour particularly to live on the friendliest terms with its neighbours, whether they be great powers or small nations, and shall covet no foreign territory.

The law of the land will be based on the will of the people freely expressed by them. The ultimate basis of maintenance of order shall be the sanction and concurrence of the people. The free Indian State shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom, provided that there shall be no freedom to overthrow by violence the constitution framed by the Indian people through a Constituent Assembly.

The State shall not discriminate in any manner between citizens of the nation. Every citizen shall be guaranteed equal rights. All distinctions of birth and privilege shall be abolished. There shall be no titles emanating either from inherited social status or the State.

The political and economic organization of the State shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom. While this organization shall conduce to the satisfaction of the national requirements of every member of society, material satisfaction shall not be its sole objective. It shall aim at healthy living and the moral and intellectual development of the individual. To this end to secure social justice, the State shall endeavour to promote small-scale production carried on by individual or co-operative effort for the equal benefit of all concerned. All large-scale collective production shall be eventually brought under collective ownership and control, and in this behalf the State shall begin by nationalizing heavy transport, shipping, mining and the heavy industries. The textile industry shall be progressively decentralized.

The life of the villages shall be reorganized and the villages shall be made self-governing units, self-sufficient in as large a measure as possible. The land laws of the country shall be drastically reformed on the principle that land shall belong to the actual cultivator alone, and that no cultivator shall have more land than is necessary to support his family on a fair standard

of living. This will end the various systems of landlordism on the one hand and farm bondage on the other.

The State shall protect the interests of the classes, but when these impinge upon the interests of those who have been poor and downtrodden, it shall defend the latter and thus restore the balance of social justice.

In all State-owned and State-managed enterprises, the workers shall be represented in the management through their elected representatives and shall have an equal share in it with the representatives of the Government.

In the Indian States, there shall be complete democratic government established, and in accordance with the principles of abolition of social distinction and equality between citizens, there shall not be any titular heads of the States in the persons of Rajas and Nawabs. This is the order which the Congress envisages and which it shall work to establish.

The Congress firmly believes that this order shall bring happiness, prosperity and freedom to the people of all races and religions in India who together shall build on these foundations a great and glorious nation.

I liked it and read his letter and the draft to the Working Committee 2\*. The Committee, however, thought that the idea of having only one resolution for the Ramgarh Congress should be strictly adhered to, and that the original, as framed at Patna, 3\* should not be tampered with. The reasoning of the Committee was unexceptionable, and the draft resolution was dropped without any discussion on merits. I informed Shri Jayaprakash of the result of my effort. He wrote back suggesting that he would be satisfied if I could do the next best thing, namely, publish it with full concurrence or such as I could give it.

I have no difficulty in complying with Shri Jayaprakash's wishes. As an ideal to be reduced to practice as soon as possible after India comes into her own, I endorse in general all except one of the propositions enunciated by Shri Jayaprakash. I have claimed that I was a socialist long before those I know in India had avowed their creed. But my socialism was natural to me and not adopted from any books. It came out of my unshakable belief in non-violence. No man could be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice no matter where it occurred. Unfortunately Western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines.

I have always held that social justice, even unto the least and the lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. I have further believed that it is

possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress of the wrongs suffered by them. That means is non-violent non-co-operation. At times non-co-operation becomes as much a duty as co-operation. No one is bound to co-operate in one's own undoing or slavery. Freedom received through the effort of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn. In other words, such freedom is not real freedom. But the lowliest can feel its glow as soon as they learn the art of attaining it through non-violent non-co-operation.

It therefore gladdens me to find Shri Jayaprakash accepting, as I read his draft, non-violence for the purpose of establishing the order envisaged by him. I am quite sure that non-violent non-co-operation can secure what violence never can, and this by ultimate conversion of the wrong-doers. We in India have never given non-violence the trial it has deserved. The marvel is that we have attained so much even with our mixed non-violence.

Shri Jayaprakash's propositions about land may appear frightful. In reality they are not. No man should have more land than he needs for dignified sustenance. Who can dispute the fact that the grinding poverty of the masses is due to their having no land that they can call their own?

But it must be realized that the reform cannot be rushed. If it is to be brought about by non-violent means, it can only be done by education both of the haves and the have-nots. The former should be assured that there never will be force used against them. The have-nots must be educated to know that no one can really compel them to do anything against their will, and that they can secure their freedom by learning the art of non-violence, i.e., self-suffering. If the end in view is to be achieved, the education I have adumbrated has to be commenced now. An atmosphere of mutual respect and trust has to be established as the preliminary step. There can then be no violent conflict between the classes and the masses.

Whilst, therefore, I have no difficulty in generally endorsing Shri Jayaprakash's proposition in terms of non-violence, I cannot endorse his proposition about the Princes. In law they are independent. It is true that their independence is not worth much, for it is guaranteed by a stronger party. But as against us they are able to assert their independence. If we come into our own through nonviolent means, as is implied in Shri Jayaprakash's draft proposals, I do not imagine a settlement in which the Princes will have effaced themselves. Whatever settlement is arrived at the nation will have to carry out in full.

I can therefore only conceive a settlement in which the big States will retain their status. In one way this will be far superior to what it is today; but in another it will be limited so as to give the people of the States the same right of self-government within their States as the people of the other parts of India will enjoy. They will have freedom of speech, a free Press and pure justice guaranteed to them.

Perhaps, Shri Jayaprakash has no faith in the Princes automatically surrendering their autocracy. I have. First because they are just as good human beings as we are, and secondly because of my belief in the potency of genuine non-violence. Let me conclude, therefore, by saying that the Princes and all others will be true and amenable when we have become true to ourselves, to our faith, if we have it, and to the nation. At present we are half-hearted. The way to freedom will never be found through half-heartedness. Non-violence begins and ends by turning the searchlight inward.

SEVAGRAM, April 14, 1940

Harijan, 20-4-1930

1\* On March 15; vide "Discussion at Working Committee", 15-3-1940.

2\* On March 1; vide Appendix "A Resolution", 1-3-1940.

3\* Vide "Letter to Jayaprakash Narayan", 31-3-1940.

(THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI Page No.142-145.VOL.78 : 23 FEBRUARY, 1940 - 15 JULY, 1940)

## **MAHATMA GANDHI ON SOCIALISM 1\***

Truth and ahimsa must come alive in socialism. This can only be possible when there is a living faith in God. Mere mechanical adherence to truth and ahimsa is likely to break down at the critical moment. Hence have I said that truth is God.

This God is a living Force. Our life is of that Force. That Force resides in the body, but is not the body. He who denies the existence of that great Force denies to himself access to its inexhaustible power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship which, tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway. Many find themselves in this plight. The socialism of such people does not reach anywhere, what to say of the millions.

If such be the case, why is there no socialist who believes in God? If there are such socialists why have they not made any progress? Also there have been many believing in God; why is it they have not succeeded in bringing socialism? There is no effective answer to this. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that it has perhaps never occurred to a believing socialist that there is any connection between his socialism and his belief in God. Equally, men of God perhaps never felt any need for socialism. Superstitions have flourished in the world in spite of godly men and women. In Hinduism which believes in God, untouchability has, till of late, held undoubted sway.

The nature of this Divine Force and its inexhaustible power have been matters of incessant quest. My claim is that is the pursuit of that quest lies the discovery of satyagraha. It is not, however, claimed that all the laws of satyagraha have already been formulated. I cannot say either that I myself know all the laws. This I do assert that every worthy object can be achieved through satyagraha. It is the highest and the most potent means, the most effective weapon. I am convinced that socialism will not be reached by any other means.

Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.

NEW DELHI, July 13, 1947

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 20-7-1947

1\* A translation of this was also published in Harijan, 20-7-1947.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI VOL. 96: 7  
JULY, 1947 - 26 SEPTEMBER, 1947. Page No. 37-38.

## MAHATMA GANDHI ON LOHIA & JP

Mahatma Gandhi's Correspondence about Dr Lohia's arrest in 1945-46  
from Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi. VOL. 88: 30 AUGUST, 1945  
- 6 DECEMBER, 1945 371

686. LETTER TO SIR EVAN M. JENKINS  
SEVAGRAM,  
November 25, 1945

DEAR SIR EVAN,

I write this in continuation of my letter<sup>1</sup> of 10th October. Since then I have seen other such accounts in the papers and now I have with me a young man (Shri Prabhu Dayal Vidyarthi) who came to meanwhile he was yet in his teens, without being recommended by anybody, as a poor youngster. This was in the year 1935. Ever since then he has never been out of my observation. He was arrested in connection with the 1942 disturbances, and has lately been discharged. He came to Wardha in a dilapidated condition. I was then at Poona. He reported his arrival and I telegraphed to him to come there so that I could look after him better and, if necessary, get Dr. Mehta's assistance at his sanatorium where I was staying. He narrates tales of terrible torture, into the details of which I do not wish to go at this stage.<sup>2</sup>

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

It is difficult to disbelieve all the accounts that have appeared in the Press and the two incidents mentioned above. I suggest that His Excellency goes deeper into the matter and not reject the statements as an exaggeration undeserving of any attention. I take comfort from the fact that in your letter of 1st November in reply to mine of 10th October, you tell<sup>3</sup> me that though His Excellency believes the story to be exaggerated, he is making further investigations. I plead for investigation into all other such statements and, if he proposes to do so, I am prepared to send you such details as I possess about the two cases mentioned here and others about which I may be able to speak with some confidence.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

1. *Vide* "Letter to E. M. Jenkins", 10-10-1945

2. Writing to the Secretary of State on March 5, 1946, the Viceroy said :  
"It has now been established that Vidyarthi was never brought to Delhi

and that his allegations are a complete fabrication. Devdas Gandhi has admitted this . . . .” *The Transfer of Power*, “Memorial to Lord Elgin”, 8-11-1906

3. *Vide* footnote 1, “Letter to Sir Evan M. Jenkins”, 7-11-1945  
Gandhiji’s Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 63

12. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL  
CAMP: KHADI PRATISHTHAN  
SODEPUR (NEAR CALCUTTA),  
December 8, 1945

DEAR MR. ABELL,

I thank you for yours of 1st instant.<sup>1</sup> I shall send you in due course fuller details about Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia and have written to Shri Prabhu Dayal Vidyarthi to proceed to New Dehli and report himself.<sup>2</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

1. The addressee had asked Gandhiji to send directly to the Home Member the details about Vidyarthi and Lohia.

2. A telegram was however sent on December 9. *Vide* also “Letter to Sir Even M. Jenkins”, 25-11-1945

Gandhiji’s Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 63-4

86. LETTER TO RAM MANOHAR LOHIA  
SODEPUR,  
KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
December 17, 1945

BHAI RAM MANOHAR,

I am sorry that your father passed away suddenly yesterday. We used to meet often. I had sent Pyarelalji and Prabhavatibehn to see his charkha activity. In my view he died in the manner he wanted. He had been engrossed in his work.

Yours,  
M. K. GANDHI

DR. RAM MANOHAR LOHIA  
AGRA

From the Hindi original: C.W. 11065. Courtesy: Hardev Sharma. Also  
Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

91. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL  
CAMP: KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR (NEAR CALCUTTA),  
December 18, 1945

DEAR MR. ABELL,

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

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

*Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi Vol. 89: December 7, 1945 -  
February 24, 1946 and Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government,  
1944-47, p.*

234. LETTER TO LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE

VALMIKI MANDIR, READING ROAD,  
NEW DELHI,  
*April 2, 1946*

DEAR LORD LAWRENCE,

Our mutual friend Sudhir Ghosh tells me<sup>1</sup> that you would like me to  
reduce to writing the points I told him to discuss informally with you and  
Sir Stafford.

One is universal among all independence-minded people, as distinguished



from the dumb millions, whether Congressmen or other. It is the immediate release of *political* prisoners irrespective of the charge of violence or non-violence.

They cannot be a danger to the State *now* that the necessity for independence has become common cause. It seems to be ridiculous to keep, say Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and Dr. Lohia, both learned and cultured men of whom any society would be proud, nor is there any occasion for treating any person as an underground worker. To leave the question of discharge for disposal by the incoming national government would be a step no one will understand or appreciate. Independence will lose its grace.

The other affects the masses. I refer to the salt tax. As a means of raising revenue, it is insignificant. As a means of harassing the masses, it is a measure of which the mischief is indescribable. The masses will hardly appreciate independence, if the burden of the salt monopoly continues to affect them. I must not weary you with argument. I mention the two measures as a preparation of the Indian mind for independence. They will produce a psychological effect.

I may mention that I discussed both the measures in a different setting with Mr. Casey<sup>1</sup>, and I am now in correspondence with the present Governor of Bengal. I may add that I have today heard from Mr. Abell in regard to the salt tax that “the Government do not find themselves able to accept the suggestion.”<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely

M. K. GANDHI

THE RT. HON'BLE  
LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA  
NEW DELHI

VOL. 90: 25 FEBRUARY, 1946 - 19 MAY, 1946

Gandhiji Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 156-7

296. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI<sup>2</sup>

April 13, 1946

Today is the last day of the National Week which I have also called the Sacred Week. It was on this day that the tragedy of the Jallianwala Bagh was enacted. The 6th of April [1919] saw the birth of satyagraha in India. The awakening among the masses resulting from it was so phenomenal that the Government could suppress it only by having recourse to the method of frightfulness. It culminated in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, when Gen. Dyer with a party of fifty sepoy opened fire on an unarmed people and the wounding of thrice that number. There was only one exit and it was held by the firing party so that the innocent men and women who were trapped there had no alternative but to be shot down like rabbits in a hole. It is true some excesses were committed by the mob before the massacre. But they were nothing as compared to the savage reprisals taken by the Government.

You know Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and Dr. Lohia<sup>2</sup>. Both of them are daring men of action and scholars. They could easily have become rich. But they chose the way of renunciation and service. To break the chains of their country's slavery was their one passion. Naturally the alien Government regarded them as dangerous to its existence and put them into prison.

We, however, have different scales to weigh merit, and we regard them as patriots who have sacrificed their all for the love of the country which has given them birth. That they would be found wanting in the scales of non-violence is irrelevant today. What is relevant is that independence of India is today common ground between the British and ourselves. Their freedom, therefore, is no longer considered dangerous by the Government. Viewed in that light, their release as also the release of the I.N.A. men yesterday, must be regarded as an earnest of the honesty of the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy. We must be thankful to them for this earnest, and prayer of thankfulness should ascend to heaven for the wisdom with which God seems to be endowing them.

The Satyagraha Week which is closing today is devoted always to communal unity and khaddar. Communal unity is not confined to Hindus and Muslims only, it extends to all including Englishmen. It must not become a menace to anybody or group. That is the message of non-violence.

The National Week is a week of self-introspection and prayer. Prayer is not for the impure in heart.

1 This sentence is from *The Hindustan Times*.

2 Ram Manohar Lohia

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*Harijan*, 21-4-1946, also *The Hindustan Times*, 14-4-1946

319. LETTER TO RAMMANOHAR LOHIA

DELHI,

April 17, 1946

BHAI RAMMANOHAR4,

Bhai Humayun5 is bringing this letter. I had thought that you would proceed further after meeting me in Delhi. And when you went to Calcutta I thought that you did so because you regarded it your foremost duty to perform your father's *shraddha*. I am sure that we shall meet somewhere at some mutually convenient time.

Does anyone attend to the social service programme of your father?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

DR. RAMMANOHAR LOHIA

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Peppers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

4. R M Lohia (1910-67): one of the founders of the All-India Congress Socialist Party. Secretary of the Foreign Department of A.I . C. C. (1936-38); resigned from Congress in 1948; General Secretary, Praja Socialist Party (1953-54); Member, Lok Sabha (1963-67). He was released from jail along with Jayaprakash Narayan on April 12.

5. Humayun Kabir (1906-69); Minister of education in the Government of India, 1957-65; Chairman, University Grants Commission; later resigned from Congress and founded the Bangla Congress and joined BKD later.

### 251. DR. LOHIA'S CHALLENGE

It would appear from newspaper reports that Dr. Lohia went to Goa at the invitation of Goans and was served with an order to refrain from making speeches. According to Dr. Lohia's statement, for 188 years now, the people of Goa have been robbed of the right to hold meetings and form organizations. Naturally he defied the order. He has thereby rendered a service to the cause of civil liberty and especially to the Goans. The little Portuguese settlement which merely exists on the sufferance of the British Government can ill afford to ape its bad manners. In free India Goa cannot be allowed to exist as a separate entity in opposition to the laws of the free State. Without a shot being fired, the people of Goa will

be able to claim and receive the rights of citizenship of the free State. The present Portuguese Government will no longer be able to rely upon the protection of British arms to isolate and keep under subjection the inhabitants of Goa against their will. I would venture to advise the Portuguese Government of Goa to recognize the signs of the times and come to honourable terms with its inhabitants rather than function on any treaty that might exist between them and the British Government.

To the inhabitants of Goa I will say that they should shed fear of the Portuguese Government as the people of other parts of India have shed fear of the mighty British Government and assert their fundamental right of civil liberty and all it means. The differences of religion among the inhabitants of Goa should be no bar to common civil life. Religion is for each individual, himself or herself, to live. It should never become a bone of contention or quarrel between religious sects.

200 THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI NEW  
DELHI, June 26, 1946  
*Harijan*, 30-6-1946

472. LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF  
PORTUGUESE INDIA  
August 2, 1946

DEAR FRIEND,

It was kind of you to write to me in reply to what I had written in *Harijan*<sup>1</sup> about Goa affairs.<sup>2</sup> I suppose you know that I have visited Mozambique, Delagoa and Inhambane. I did not notice there any Government for philanthropic purposes. Indeed, I was astonished to see the distinction that the Government made between Indians and the Portuguese and between the Africans and themselves. Nor does the history of the Portuguese Settlement in India prove the claim set forth by you. Indeed, what I see and know of the condition of things in Goa is hardly edifying. That the Indians in Goa have been speechless is proof not of the innocence or the philanthropic nature of the Portuguese Government but of the rule of terror. You will forgive me for not subscribing to your statement that there is full liberty in Goa and that the agitation is confined only to a few malcontents. Every account, received by me personally and seen in the papers here in this part of India, confirms the contrary view. I suppose the report of the sentence by your Court Martial of eight years on Dr. Braganza<sup>1</sup> and his contemplated exile to a far off Portuguese Settlement is by itself a striking corroboration of

the fact that civil liberty is a rare article in Goa. Why should a law-abiding citizen like Dr. Braganza be considered so dangerous as to be singled out for exile?

Though the politics of Dr. Lohia probably differ from mine, he has commanded my admiration for his having gone to Goa and put his finger on its black spot. Inhabitants of Goa can afford to wait for Independence, until much greater India has regained it. But no person or group can thus remain without civil liberty without losing self-respect. He has lighted a torch which the inhabitants of Goa cannot, except at their peril, allow to be extinguished. Both you and the

inhabitants of Goa should feel thankful to the Doctor for lighting that torch. Therefore, your description of him as “stranger” would excite laughter if it was not so tragic. Surely the truth is that the Portuguese coming from Portugal are strangers, whether they come as philanthropists or as Governors exploiting the so-called weaker races of the earth.

You have talked of the abolition of caste distinctions. What I see has happened is that not only no caste distinction has been abolished but at least one more caste, far more terrible than the system “caste”, has been added by the Portuguese rulers.

I, therefore, hope that you will revise your views on philanthropy, civil liberty and caste distinctions, withdraw all the African police, declare yourself whole-heartedly for civil liberty and if possible even let the inhabitants of Goa frame their own government, and invite from Greater India more experienced Indians to assist the inhabitants and even you in framing such Government.

*Yours, etc.,*  
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.] Since your letter was sent to the Press, I am publishing this in *Harijan*.

M. K. G.  
*Harijan*, 11-8-1946

1 *Vide* “White Man’s Burden”, 26-6-1946.

2 In his letter of July 18 the addressee had *inter alia* observed: “If to authority is committed the preservation of the people’s physical health against pestilence and the use of narcotics and toxics, with the same

reason it must look after the mental health not leaving it a prey to unsettling ideas. I don't believe that there is lesser liberty in the existence of a benevolent censorship trying to educate without party spirit than in other forms of State intervention."

398. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING  
NEW DELHI,  
October 2, 1946

It is as though God had sent us a special message in the form of this song. In truth the springs of India's life are drying up. It would be folly to suppose that because there is a Congress Government at the Centre all is well. I shall not dwell on the stabbings that are going on, shocking as they are. To illustrate to you how the springs of our life are drying up, I shall say something on what is going on in Goa. Goa is a small island. It is an integral part of India. News has come that Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia has been arrested immediately on his arrival there and placed in solitary confinement. A few days ago Shri Kakodkar was arrested for having raised his voice for civil liberty and sentenced to imprisonment for nine years. It is being said that he may be deported. Dr. Lohia is a learned man. I may not agree with his views but this does not mean that I can remain untouched by his case. You must all be as much pained as I am by the arrest of Dr. Lohia and the happenings in Goa. I carried on some correspondence with the authorities in Goa, but it was anfractuous.

To tell any Indian that he cannot enter Goa is as insulting as to tell me that I may not enter any particular part of India. Goa is as much a part of India as Kashmir or any other State. It is intolerable that Dr. Lohia should be treated as foreigner and denied the right of entry into Goa. Let us see what steps Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who has donned the crown of thorns, and Lord Wavell take to see that this highhandedness on the part of the Goa authorities is stopped. [From Hindi]

*Hindustan*, 3-10-1946

466. TELEGRAM TO RAM MANOHAR LOHIA  
NEW DELHI  
October 15, 1946

DOCTOR RAM MANOHAR LOHIA  
RAMNIVAS THALAKWADI  
BELGAUM  
YOU HAVE TO RE-ENTER GOA BUT BEFORE DOING SO COME

HERE. NO HURRY. WIRE REPLY.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

366. LETTER TO RAM MANOHAR LOHIA

August 22, 1947

CHI. RAM MANOHAR,

I will write tomorrow about Nepal.

Smoking can be given up all at once. Those who smoke moderately cannot keep to a limit. If we workers do not have such will power, what works can we expect to do? It is now that we have to do real work.

Have you understood the Goa problem fully?

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Mahatma*, Vol. VIII, between pp. 120 and 121

**Gandhi ji about Dr Lohia's arrest in 1940**

From the Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi SEVAGRAM, via WARDHA, June 9, 1940.

QUESTION BOX ARRESTS Q. You must know that arrests after arrests are being made under the defense of India Act. Now your favourite Dr. Lohia is taken up. I suppose you still see no reason for civil disobedience even as a protest against these arrests. Or maybe you think that these arrests are legitimate. A. The question is apposite. Dr. Lohia is no more my favourite than any other Congressman. True he has come nearer to me than he was. Every arrest evokes my mental protest. But I am not in the habit of reducing all my thoughts to writing. I believe that our thoughts too produce effects, though not known to us or to the world. I felt that any public protest by me would be ineffective.

All things are legitimate and illegitimate in war time. I regard war itself

as illegitimate. Therefore all repression is bad from my standpoint. But I have as yet no effective remedy against war. Even, therefore, as I suffer war, I suffer these repressive acts of war makers. One strange thing about India is that, so far as I know, it is not the people who are likely to help the Nazis that are being put under restraint, but those who are patriots hungering for the freedom of the country. In a free country they will be fighting against designs upon their country. Here their chief fault is that they are lovers of their country and its freedom. If the authorities have anything else against them, they should publish it. Repression is on the increase.

They know that the Congress is the most powerful instrument for preventing violence. The Congress has taken no step which might, in spite of its efforts to the contrary, result in violence. It is therefore difficult to understand these acts of repression. They seem to be part of a concerted plan, for they are prevalent in almost all provinces. One reflection I put before Congressmen for what it is worth. Imprisonment has no terror for them. Civil disobedience means certain imprisonment. The difference is that in the one case it is courted, in the other it comes uninvited.

Therefore any step the Congress can take will be not to secure the discharge of the persons arrested but to take wind out of the Government sails by offering more victims than they can take. Therefore the question is whether the Congress should take that step or not. VOL.79:16 JULY, 1940 - 27 DECEMBER, 1940 139 144.

### **DR. LOHIA AGAIN**

By courtesy of Shri Achyut Patwardhan I have a copy of Dr. Lohia's statement before the court and the judgment of the presiding magistrate. The whole of Dr. Lohia's statement is sound, but I resist the temptation to give it in full. Here, however, is its pertinent part: 1. The Viceroy's note on this letter was: "P. S. V. Perhaps an acknowledgment to an acknowledgment might be held to be superfluous! But we can afford to be magnanimous and to say that I received his letter and was grateful for it. This letter is clearly an invitation to expand and perhaps a sign of distress. But there is nothing doing."

In all our activities we have to be non-violent. Non-violence is dictated not only by the circumstances in our country but by considerations that operate throughout the world. It is not only a practical necessity, it is an ethical desirability. Whatever little confusion there might be on this point



due to faulty reporting is set aside by the reporter himself. I am reported to have said:

‘When we have recourse to weapons we become weak of hearts. Those who rely on weapons do not rely on their hearts. They turn into slaves of their own weapons. They have no strength left in themselves. I am an opponent of the old cult of the lathi, and its modern equivalent the cult of the aero plane. There is an inner contradiction between these cults and the enduring of human life, a contradiction which is daily becoming more fierce. The next twenty years will show which wins and the dualism cannot last longer. Should human life endure, there can be only one form of organization. Adult democracy must obtain throughout the world, and there will be no place in it for imperialism, nor for capitalism.

I have given an indication in my speech of this form of government as it will affect the Indian people. It was with a view to bring into the foreground this principle of adult democracy that I suggested an immediate peace plan to Mahatma Gandhi. I claim no originality for this plan whose items are:

1. All peoples will be free. Those newly acquiring freedom will determine their constitution through a constituent assembly.
2. All races are equal, and there will be no racial privileges in any part of the world. There will be no political bar to anyone settling wherever he likes.
3. All credits and investments owned by the Government and nationals of one country in another will be scrapped or submitted for impartial review to international tribunals. They will then be owned not by individuals but by the state. When these three principles will have been accepted by the people of the world, a fourth will automatically come into operation.
4. There will be total disarmament.

I am happy in the knowledge that Mahatma Gandhji has endorsed this peace plan. Let me in conclusion state that I have no ill will towards any people. I have lived among the German people and liked their thoroughness of enquiry, the scientific bent of their mind and their efficiency in action. I am unhappy that they have today to carry on their shoulders a system which results in war and conquest. I have no intimate knowledge of the British people. I dare say that they have their virtues. I may be permitted to quote from my speech:

‘I do not want the destruction of Britain. The British have done evil to us, but I do not want to do evil to them.’ Again, I am unhappy that the British people have to carry on their shoulders today a system which has enslaved the people of the world. Of Dr. Lohia this is what the court has to say: “The accused is a highly intellectual and cultured gentleman perhaps with a doctorate degree of some European University, a man of high principles and morals whose honesty of purpose nobody can doubt. He does not mind suffering for his convictions and does not care much for his sentence or its duration.

We certainly do not punish him for holding certain political views about the present Government, for the very claim of the Government that it is democratic and run on public opinion entitles the public to criticize it according to his [sic] light by constitutional means, but we must protect such Government from embarrassment in her relations with the masses who are bound to be disaffected by a speech like the one the accused has delivered in Dostpur, and particularly when the British nation and Empire is in grip with the most unscrupulous enemy.

I, therefore, consider that his detention in jail for a long duration or until the present cloud is drifted away is very desirable and to that end in view I sentence him to two years R. I. He is recommended for B Class”. Then why has he been rewarded with rigorous imprisonment? The duration of the term I understand. He must be kept from the supposed mischief. I wonder whether the fact of the imprisonment will not aggravate the mischief. Of this, the Government must be the judge.

But the people will remember that love of one’s country and outspokenness are a crime in a country where the state is irresponsible to the people. Dr. Lohia and other Congressmen’s imprisonments are so many hammer-strokes that must weaken the chain that binds India. The Government is inviting the Congress to start civil disobedience and deliver the last blow it would fain have reserved for a better day better for the British. It is a pity. SEVAGRAM, August 21, 1940 Harijan, 25-8-1940 VOL. 79: 16 JULY, 1940 - 27 DECEMBER, 1940 141

## **SOCIALISM1\***

Truth and ahimsa must come alive in socialism. This can only be possible when there is a living faith in God. Mere mechanical adherence to truth and ahimsa is likely to break down at the critical moment. Hence have I said that truth is God. This God is a living Force. Our life is of that Force. That Force resides in the body, but is not the body. He who denies the existence of that great Force denies to himself access to its inexhaustible power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship which, tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway. Many find themselves in this plight. The socialism of such people does not reach anywhere, what to say of the millions. If such be the case, why is there no socialist who believes in God? If there are such socialists why have they not made any progress? Also there have been many believing in God; why is it they have not succeeded in bringing socialism? There is no effective answer to this. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that it has perhaps never occurred to a believing socialist that there is any connection between his socialism and his belief in God Equally, men of God perhaps never felt any need for socialism. Superstitions have flourished in the world in spite of godly men and women. In Hinduism which believes in God, untouchability has, till of late, held undoubted sway. The nature of this Divine Force and its inexhaustible power have been matters of incessant quest. My claim is that is the pursuit of that quest lies the discovery of satyagraha. It is not, however, claimed that all the laws of satyagraha have already been formulated. I cannot say either that I myself know all the laws. This I do assert that every worthy object can be achieved through satyagraha. It is the highest and the most potent means, the most effective weapon. I am convinced that socialism will not be reached by any other means. Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.

NEW DELHI, July 13, 1947 [From Gujarati] Harijanbandhu, 20-7-1947  
1\*A translation of this was also published in Harijan, 20-7-1947 CWMG  
VOL. 96: 7 JULY, 1947 - 26 SEPTEMBER, 1947 204.

### **DISCUSSION WITH SOCIALIST WORKERS June 7, 1947**

Today the rulers are not foreigners but our own country-men. If we do not work in perfect harmony with them, our newly-won freedom will be in danger. Let all people sit together and find a proper solution to problems on which there are differences. But our greatest defect is that, as soon as we differ from somebody ever so slightly, or a misunderstanding arises, instead of meeting the person concerned and trying to find a solution we take him to task publicly. This creates a great mental gulf between people, leading to antagonism. Parties and isms are only results of such differences. One fruit of this poison we have seen in the coming into existence of Pakistan. Are we not satisfied even with that? You have simply not understood what socialism means.

The Russian type of socialism will not suit India at all. Even in Russia their policies have not succeeded completely. Why don't you try to save the country from the calamity which has befallen it today? So long as this communal virus has not been eradicated, socialism will never come. Note down and remember, all of you, these words of an old man. The people will want to see our work and our sacrifices; they will judge our labour and look for perfection of character in us. But you wish to pay no attention to these things. On the one hand, hundreds of thousands of our brothers and sisters have become homeless. If now you incite the people and exploit these riots to establish new parties or spread your isms, rest assured God will never forgive this terrible crime of betrayal of the country.

[From Gujarati] Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 4-

CWMG VOL. 95: 30 APRIL, 1947 - 6 JULY, 1947 382.

## SPEECH AT DELHI PROVINCIAL POLITICAL CONFERENCE

DELHI, July 2, 1947. If you want to hear the few things that I have come to tell you please maintain silence. Yesterday your Vice-President came and invited me to this conference. I had not known till then that Jayaprakash was the President of the conference. When people persisted I was in a fix. It would not be right to refuse. Drawn by your love, I was forced to come. The police tie us up in iron chains, but the bond of love, in the words of Mirabai, though fragile and tenuous, is stronger than any iron chain. And drawn by this bond I came here punctually at a quarter past eight. Here I shall speak out a few things. It has become a fashion these days to call oneself a socialist. It is a mistaken notion that one can serve only if one carries a label of some 'ism'. I have been studying the question since the time when Jayaprakash perhaps had not even been born.

Some fifty years ago when I used to practice law in South Africa there were many people there who called themselves socialists but in fact they were less socialist than I was. I used to work among the coolies. I had made this work my life's mission and I lived as the coolies lived. I have always considered myself a servant of the workers and peasants but I have never found it necessary to call myself a socialist.

My socialism is of a different kind. Even if everyone forsakes me I shall not be worried. I am your friend and, therefore, I tell you that if a cripple cannot obtain something he needs we should ourselves give up that something. I shall first watch the cripple's life and his food and only then shall I think of doing something for myself. This is my socialism. If you want to bring about this kind of socialism, then I shall be the first to come forward to help.

It is my firm belief that even a King can become a socialist by being a servant of his people. If we want to make the king as well as the people socialist, how shall we set about it? We can convert others to socialism by setting an example ourselves. It is said that there are two ways of changing the King. Either by cutting off his head or by depriving him of his throne. My method is to make the king a socialist through love. It is heinous to kill. If you teach thousands of people to kill, the order that you will bring about will not be a socialistic order but an order of murderers.

The Viceroy can call himself a Congressman as the speaker calls himself a Congressman. But would the Viceroy be ready to give up his powers if he were asked to do so? Similarly there are many people who call themselves Congressmen but are they indeed Congressmen? Are they

true socialists? There are many who have drowned themselves in their wealth and in the pleasures which wealth can buy. I firmly hold to truth and love. By love I do not mean the kind of bond that binds husband and wife or father and son, for this depends on self-interest. By love I mean that bond which binds the devotee to God.

In South Africa although the Whites treated me as an enemy, nevertheless many of them came to me as friends. If socialism means turning enemies into friends I should be considered a genuine socialist. This idea of socialism is my own. All the socialists should learn socialism from me. Only then shall we be able to produce dedicated workers and bring about peasants' rule. I do not believe in the kind of socialism that the Socialist Party preaches. Maybe my preaching to you is a cry in the wilderness, maybe you will not listen to me. There are people who call me names and treat me as a madman.

I cannot teach you violence because I do not believe in violence. I can only teach you not to bow your head even if you should lose your life. Therein lies true courage. Nobody can take away this courage from me. When I die you will all admit that Gandhi was a true socialist. When I talk of trusteeship people call me mad. But there is something in that madness. If you think a little deeply you will understand it.

Today I can say with conviction that if there is anyone among all these people who is a socialist it is I. And this gives me the right to say what I am saying. The public life and the private life of a public servant are interrelated. Socialism cannot be established without moral purity. Socialism has been in vogue ever since the time of Lord Krishna. He played with the cowherds. He lived with them, ate with them; he went along with Sudama to cut firewood in the forest for the wife of his preceptor. There are many such instances. He even became the charioteer of Arjuna to show that there was no one high or low for him. He comported with the cowherd maidens freely for there was no impurity in his eyes.

Thus what you call socialism, the thing which you think you should learn from Russia or America or England, has been there in our country for a very long time. Jayaprakash is like a son to me and the other leaders of the Socialist Party are all my friends. I humbly want to tell them that if they adopt the kind of socialism I have described the whole country will be with them. I regret I cannot support the theory of socialism you accept, for I know that those who advocate it do not conform to it in their lives. Their precepts and practice vary. It will not do merely to preach. Rama spent fourteen years in exile in the forest and we worship him. But if he

had not done so and merely contented himself with saying that a son should obey his father, who would have remembered him today?

Today there is murder, plunder and rape in the air. My voice is not heard. People consider me mad. I am expected to teach how to return two blows for one but I cannot do so. All I can say is: 'Friend, if you want to kill me you may do so, but I will kill no one.' I pray to God that He may keep me filled with this courage to the end. One who has cultivated such courage cannot be plundered. When Gandhi is dead you will all say Gandhi was a socialist. I say it humbly but with conviction because I have full sixty years' experience to back it.

[From Hindi] Gandhijiki Delhi Diary—III, pp. 188-90 CWMG VOL. 95: 30 APRIL, 1947 - 6 JULY 1947.

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(Compiled by Qurban Ali from Archives, mainly from Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi)

<http://www.mkgandhi.org/momgandhi/chap50.htm>

## **MAHATMA GANDHI on Socialism**

### **Socialism**

Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught: 'All land belongs to Gopal, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can therefore unmake it.' Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e., the People. That the land today does not belong to the people is too true. But the fault is not in the teaching. It is in us who have not lived up to it.

I have no doubt that we can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that without violence. (H, 2-1-1937, p. 375)

No man should have more land than he needs for dignified sustenance. Who can dispute the fact that the grinding poverty of the masses is due to their having no land that they can call their own? (H, 20-4-1940, p. 97)

### **Western Socialism**

I have been a sympathetic student of the Western social order and I have discovered that, underlying the fever that fills the soul of the West, there is a restless search for truth. I value that spirit. Let us study our Eastern institutions in that spirit of scientific inquiry and we shall evolve a truer socialism and a truer communism than the world has yet dreamed of. It is surely wrong to presume that Western socialism or communism is the last word on the question of mass poverty. (ABP, 3-8-1934)

Socialism was not born with the discovery of the misuse of capital by capitalists. As I have contended, socialism, even communism, is explicit in the first verse of Ishopanishad. What is true is that when some reformers lost faith in the method of conversion, the technique of what is known as scientific socialism was born. I am engaged in solving the same problem that faces scientific socialists.

It is true, however, that my approach is always and only through unadulterated non-violence. I may fail. If it does, it will be because of my ignorance of the technique of non-violence. I may be a bad exponent of the doctrine in which my faith is daily increasing. (H, 20-2-1937, p. 12)

## **My Socialism**

I have claimed that I was a socialist long before those I know in India had avowed their creed. But my socialism was natural to me and not adopted from any books. It came out of my unshakable belief in non-violence. No man could be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice, no matter where it occurred. Unfortunately, Western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines.

I have always held that social justice, even unto the least and the lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. I have further believed that it is possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress of the wrongs suffered by them. That means non-violent non-cooperation.

(H, 20-4-1940, p. 97)

Whilst I have the greatest admiration for the self-denial and spirit of sacrifice of our Socialists friends, I have never concealed the sharp difference between their method and mine. They frankly believe in violence and all that is in its bosom. I believe in non-violence through and through....

My socialism means 'even unto this last'. I do not want to rise on the ashes of the blind, the deaf and the dumb. In their (i.e., Indian) socialism, probably these have no place. Their one aim is material progress.

For instance, America aims at having a car for every citizen. I do not. I want freedom for full expression of my personality. I must be free to build a staircase to Sirius if I want to. That does not mean that I want to do any such thing. Under the other socialism, there is no individual freedom. You own nothing, not even your body. (H, 4-8-1946, p. 246)

## **Equality in Socialism**

Socialism is a beautiful word and, so far as I am aware, in socialism all the members of society are equal—none low, none high. In the individual body, the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.

In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity.

Looking at society all the world over, there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high, that one is low, that is a Hindu, that a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these there are sub-divisions. In the unity of my conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs.

In order to reach this state we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our life, we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and, hawk-like, seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the further it must recede from us.

### **The Means**

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will count for ten and every addition will count for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is zero in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value. Time and paper and occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed.

One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. Non-violence is embedded in truth and vice versa. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same.

This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.

Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world, which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above, the existence of such a society is impossible.

(H, 13-7-1946, p. 232)

The Socialists and Communists say they can do nothing to bring about economic equality today. They will just carry on propaganda in its favour and to that end they believe in generating and accentuating hatred. They say, 'When they get control over the State, they will enforce equality.'

...I claim to be a foremost Communist although I make use of cars and other facilities offered to me by the rich. They have no hold on me and I can shed them at a moment's notice, if the interests of the masses demand it. (H, 31-3-1946, p. 64)

### **By Education**

But it must be realized that the reform cannot be rushed. If it is to be brought about by non-violent means, it can only be done by education both of the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. The former should be assured that there never would be force used against them. The 'have-nots' must be educated to know that no one can really compel them to do anything against their will, and that they can secure their freedom by learning the art of non-violence, i.e., self-suffering.

If the end in view is to be achieved, the education I have adumbrated has to be commenced now. An atmosphere of mutual respect and trust has to be established as the preliminary step. There can then be no violent conflict between the classes and the masses. (H, 20-4-1940, p. 97)

### **Faith in God**

Truth and ahimsa must incarnate in socialism. In order that they can, the votary must have a living faith in God. Mere mechanical adherence to truth and ahimsa is likely to break down at the critical moment. Hence I have said that Truth is God.

This God is a living Force. Our life is of that Force. That Force resides in but is not the body. He who denies the existence of that great Force denies to himself the use of that inexhaustible Power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship which, tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway. The socialism of such takes them nowhere, what to say of the society in which they live.

If such be the case, does it mean that no socialist believes in God? If there be any, why have they not made any visible progress? Then, again, many godly persons have lived before now; why have they not succeeded in founding a socialistic state?

It is difficult completely to silence these two doubts. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that it has perhaps never occurred to a believing socialist that there is any connection between his socialism and belief in God. It is equally safe to say that godly men as a rule never commended socialism to the masses.

Superstitions have flourished in world in spite of godly men and women. In Hinduism itself untouchability has, till of late, held undoubted sway. The fact is that it has always been a matter of strenuous research to know this great Force and its hidden possibilities.

Satyagraha Sure Method

My claim is that in the pursuit of that search lies the discovery of Satyagraha. It is not, claimed that all the laws of Satyagraha have been laid down or found. This I do say, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of Satyagraha. It is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reached by any other means. Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral. (H, 20-7-1947, p. 240)

I believe in private enterprise and also in planned production. If you have only State production, men will become moral and intellectual paupers. They will forget their responsibilities. I would therefore allow the capitalist and zamindar to keep their factory and their land, but I would make them consider themselves trustees of their property. (ibid, p. 12)

Nationalization

I believe in the nationalization of key and principal industries as is laid down in the resolution of the Karachi Congress. More than that I cannot at present visualize. Nor do I want all the means of production to be nationalized. Is even Rabindranath Tagore to be nationalized? These are day dreams. (MS, p. 10)

I believe in private enterprise and also in planned production. If you have only State production, men will become moral and intellectual paupers. They will forget their responsibilities. I would therefore allow the capitalist and the zamindar to keep their factory and their land, but I would make them consider themselves trustees of their property.

Even without control of the State there can be nationalization. I can start a mill for the benefit of the workers. (ibid, p.13).

## **GANDHIAN SOCIALISM: Isms and Individuals**

If socialism means turning enemies into friends, I should be considered a genuine socialist. Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi had a remarkable capacity to absorb potent ideas and radical proposals in original combinations that transformed them into refined instruments for the progressive realization of his own fundamental commitments. A Karma Yogin of deep reflection and fearless resolve, his wide if unsystematic reading was subordinated to a ceaseless winnowing on the basis of insights and values tested in his own life and in the bold social reforms he sought to initiate in South Africa and India.

He willingly called himself a 'socialist' and a 'communist' in appropriate contexts, but his convictions were distilled from the moral stamina of the Indian masses and the spiritual heritage of humanity rather than from the secular theorists and sectarian ideologies of the past century and a half. His classical socialism was metaphysically prior to the ideological State socialism of the twentieth century, and his non-violent communism was ethically superior to the qualified Marxism of contemporary Communist nation-states.

Since social and political institutions possess neither cognitive flexibility nor fidelity to conscience, Gandhi was wholly convinced that all social systems essentially depend upon and cannot rise beyond the enlightened individuals, however few, who participate in them. Neither political organizations nor social philosophies can be stronger in practice than their finest incumbents and fervent advocates.

Systems which truly seek to elevate the prevailing condition of humanity can succeed only to the limited extent that their avid supporters meet the minimal ethical and intellectual requirements which nurture and sustain freedom. Gandhi's seminal concepts of satya and ahimsa lay at the inmost heart of his evolving social and political philosophy. He patiently nurtured his own philanthropic vision of the radical transformation of the existing social order and political system, but he was even more ardently concerned to test his own revolutionary approach to political action and social change within the pressing limits of the prevailing conditions of Indian politics and society.

Immediate resistance to injustice and coercion as well as a long-term programme of social and political reconstruction must alike be legitimated in terms of the twin absolutes of truth and non-violence. "His concept of satya, with ahimsa as the means, determined his doctrine of satyagraha or active resistance to authority, while the concept of ahimsa, with satya as the common end, enabled him to formulate his doctrine of sarvodaya or non-violent socialism."<sup>1</sup> Gandhi repudiated both State and reformist socialism because the first attempted to impose socialism from the top, whilst the second tolerated and sometimes even condoned violence as an inescapable means to attain its ends. His own conviction that any sharp distinction between means and ends was theoretically dubious and practically unhelpful confirmed his belief that violence, in any form and for any end, had to be rejected in principle and in practice.

Mahatma Gandhi found Marxist communism unacceptable both as a political philosophy and as a basic principle of social organization. He was not burdened by the social and philosophical inheritance that weighed heavily upon Karl Marx, and to the degree that he understood Marxist principles and rationalizations, he rejected many of them, especially utilitarian conceptions of social amelioration arising from capitalist economics.

Marx was indeed a moralist rather than a moral philosopher. The Communist Manifesto is the hypnotic portrait of a bourgeois civilization and an industrial system iniquitous in its basic structure, standing condemned in the eyes of the compassionate spectator while also awaiting inevitable destruction by the dedicated revolutionary. Traditional moral philosophy in Western Europe has been a daring enquiry into the elusive nature of the good, a rather rigorous intellectual discipline that thrives upon methodological doubt and a philosophical suspension of commitment.

In this sense, Marx was hardly a didactic moral philosopher. Like Gandhi, he readily reversed the traditional primacy of the *vita contemplativa* over the *vita activa* to such an extent that he dismissed contemplation without action as sterile, though he himself, unlike Gandhi, was a tortured philosopher and a solemn propagandist rather than a Promethean actor on the world's stage. Marxism shares with Augustinianism an awesome totality of scope, a hubristic attempt to provide an all-inclusive view of reality.



Marx's macro-conception of society as a flawed system in desperate conflict, "a split self writ large", is indeed metaphysical rather than scientific. The Hermetic-Hegelian axiom that man is the microcosm of the macrocosm is dramatically employed to draw individuals out, not from their spiritual restlessness, but from their social complacency. Marx's historicism and reductionism prevented him from pursuing his early philosophy to its logical conclusion and from asking fundamental questions about the ends of life and the deepest human urges that were frustrated under the competitive, acquisitive craze of the capitalist system.

This prevented him from considering whether the ethical regeneration of man would automatically take place with a total change of system from capitalism to communism. His millennial dream was a powerful myth centered on the distant future, without any tangible basis in the historical reality he was so concerned to reveal. "Perfectionism and idealization, moralism and violence, ideologies and 'isms', are all the strange bed-fellows and destructive enemies of a living ideal of human perfectibility."<sup>2</sup>

Though sporadically aware of socialist and communist movements and governments across the globe, Gandhi's concrete experience of them was largely in the context of Indian coteries and political parties. When in 1924 baseless rumours circulated that he would be invited to visit Soviet Russia, he wrote that he had no intention of going there because his own work in India was still in an experimental stage and foreign excursions would be premature. Until his efforts succeeded in India, he saw no reason to move beyond that sphere of dharma. Though he did not claim to understand fully Bolshevism as a political philosophy, he was clear and decisive in his reaction to it. I am yet ignorant of what exactly Bolshevism is. I have not been able to study it. I do not know whether it is for the good of Russia in the long run. But I do know that in so far as it is based on violence and denial of God, it repels me. I do not believe in short-violent-cuts to success.

The Bolshevik friends who are bestowing their attention on me should realize that however much I may sympathize with and admire worthy motives, I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes.<sup>3</sup>

Four years later he was asked whether the social economics of Bolshevism constituted an appropriate model for India. Replying that the abolition of the institution of private property was an economic application of the ethical principle of aparigraha or non-possession,<sup>4</sup> he

insisted that it had to be undertaken voluntarily as a result of moral choice. Reiterating his rejection of violence to achieve even the most laudatory ends, he also pointed to the nobility of many Bolsheviks.

... there is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifice of countless men and women who have given up their all for its sake, and an ideal that is sanctified by the sacrifices of such master spirits as Lenin cannot go in vain: the noble example of their renunciation will be emblazoned forever and quicken and purify the ideal as time passes.<sup>5</sup>

Since Gandhi traced ignorant wrongdoing by individuals to repressive systems and erroneous views, he rejected any social philosophy or political methodology that condoned violent retaliation against an individual or class of people. Systems may have to be dismantled and views transformed, but individuals who identify with them have to be morally persuaded by appeals to conscience rather than by coercion, including the disguised coercion of claims of national interest and historical inevitability. Communism as an ideology was repugnant to Gandhi, though he readily sympathized with its declared ideals and ultimate ends. "For experience convinces me that permanent good can never be the outcome of untruth and violence. Even if my belief is a fond delusion, it will be admitted that it is a fascinating delusion."<sup>6</sup>

When he encountered the shibboleths of socialism and communism among discontented intellectuals, some of whom were associated with the Indian National Congress, he was, generally speaking, unimpressed. In addition to his philosophical objections to any overt sanction of violence, he viewed the specious doctrine that nothing positive could be achieved without first gaining the power of the State as little more than a convenient excuse for avoiding useful work at hand – self-transformation through deliberate commitment to chosen values and the ungrudging willingness to sacrifice one's own social advantages for the sake of others, especially the disfranchised poor.

He found socialists and communists alike wrangling interminably over details, engaged in endless political squabbles and petty grievances, and generally more prone to speechify than to work actively for others. Late in life, Gandhi generously appealed to communist workers to follow the essential principles they espoused, to abandon the fatalistic belief that India could be saved by external sources, and to take satyagraha seriously.

Your principles are fine indeed. But you do not seem to follow them in practice, for you do not seem to know the difference between truth and falsehood or justice and injustice. What is more saddening about you is that, instead of having faith in India and drawing inspiration from its unrivalled culture, you wish to introduce Russian civilization here as if Russia was your motherland. I disapprove of relying on any outside power, however much that may materially benefit us, for I believe in the principle that your eating is not going to satisfy my hunger, that I can satisfy my hunger only by eating myself.... You also use the word 'satyagrahi' as part of your jargon. But anybody who uses this word should realize that by doing so he accepts a great responsibility. A satyagrahi should rely wholly on truth. He cannot then afford to be ambiguous in his attitudes. He cannot jump on to a bandwagon. In brief, he cannot depart from his principles in the smallest degree. A satyagrahi cares for nothing but truth. He will give no pain or do no injustice whatever to anybody either in thought, word or deed. And he must always have perfect clarity in his thoughts.<sup>7</sup>

These fundamental criticisms of communism and socialism were largely similar because Gandhi discerned little difference in their actual weaknesses. This was partly because he saw little theoretical distinction between true communism and real socialism.

My communism is not very different from socialism. It is a harmonious blending of the two. Communism, as I have understood it, is a natural corollary of socialism.<sup>8</sup>

Nonetheless, though he sometimes called the same principles 'communist' or 'socialist' depending on the context, he made subtle distinctions in practice. Unlike his non-violent socialism, Gandhi did not try to translate his spiritual communism into a national movement. He tended to restrict his communism to the self-consciously constituted ashram or community wherein it was devoid of ideological content and was sustained upon the basis of voluntary vows of truthfulness, non-possession, non-stealing, sexual restraint and non-violence.

Each of these pledges was given a precise, if broad, application and enshrined as an ideal, at once practicable and elusive even for the most committed adherents. The ashram was the vital centre of his communist experiments, several of which are candidly described in *Ashram Observances in Action*.

Gandhi rejected violence in any form, and though his periodic criticisms of capitalism, socialism and communism varied, they were all rooted in the sacrosanct principle that ends cannot be divorced from means and that violent means could never produce non-violent ends. Though sophisticated forms of capitalism may renounce raw violence as a basic tool of government, they readily employ the entire gamut of legalized coercion to protect private ownership and thereby maintain material and social inequities. In addition, crude applications of utilitarian principles easily become the basis of indirect coercion of the minority by the majority. Yet whether the State uses its resources coercively to safeguard private property or appropriates property to itself through violent means, the fundamental principle of non-violence is violated.

... from what I know of Bolshevism it not only does not preclude the use of force but expropriation of private property and maintaining the collective State ownership of the same. And if that is so I have no hesitation in saying that the Bolshevik regime in its present form cannot last for long.<sup>9</sup>

His essential views remained unchanged throughout the next twenty years. With the independence of India, however, the Indian communist movement emerged as a distinct political force, and Gandhi was impelled to express himself in stronger terms.

Hardly one man in a thousand can be found who practices communism in everyday life. Communists have come to consider it their supreme duty, their supreme service, to create disaffection, to generate discontent and to organize strikes. They do not see whom this discontent, these strikes, will ultimately harm. Half knowledge is one of the worst evils. The best is either full knowledge or ignorance. We are thus caught in isms and take pride in them and consider it a fashion to belong to this or that ism.<sup>10</sup>

He could never look to the State, however conceived and constituted, as an instrument for imposing communist or socialist ideals. Rather, the State should exist solely to carry out the will of the people, and the masses should be enlightened – not dictated to – by the responsible leadership of the morally educated and politically committed.

The socialists and communists say, they can do nothing to bring about economic equality today. They will just carry on propaganda in its favour and to that end they believe in generating and accentuating hatred. They say, when they get control over the State, they will enforce equality. Under my plan, the State will be there to carry out the will of the people,

not to dictate to them or force them to do its will. I shall bring about economic equality through non-violence, by converting the people to my point of view by harnessing the forces of love as against hatred. I will not wait till I have converted the whole society to my view but will straightaway make a beginning with myself.<sup>11</sup>

Gandhi could not endorse any apocalyptic theory of revolution from the top down, even one in which the intelligentsia would be used to make the proletariat politically self-conscious. His political and social reformation had to emerge from the awakened masses, and any assistance by intellectual classes could be effective only if they lived amidst the poor, identified with them and worked alongside them. Preaching to workers was too easily the first step towards forming a new class of exploiters which replaced the ruling elite without radically altering the inherently unjust and inequitable social structure. A revolution from the bottom upwards – because all who desired to share in it had to start anew at the bottom by renouncing every vestige of class and privilege – could not only produce a genuinely socialist society but also avoid the brutal class war which many feared, some actually desired and armchair ideologists saw as inevitable. Class war was wholly unacceptable on the principle of non-violence, and it was unnecessary and even irrelevant in a large-scale social revolution from the bottom upwards. Gandhi could not countenance the possibility of class war even on theoretical grounds because it violated his unshakeable conviction that ends never rise morally above their means. He rejected it in daily practice owing to the triple criteria of his holistic socialism and communism. First of all, social reform must include everyone, oppressor as well as oppressed, capitalist as well as exploited. Secondly, such inclusion must be voluntary and not coerced. And thirdly, it must clearly distinguish between the inequities that will necessarily remain even in the best societies while utterly abolishing eradicable inequalities.

Inequalities in intelligence and even opportunity will last till the end of time. A man living on the banks of a river has any day more opportunity of growing crops than one living in an arid desert. But if inequalities stare us in the face the essential equality too is not to be missed. Every man has an equal right to the necessaries of life even as birds and beasts have. And since every right carries with it a corresponding duty and the corresponding remedy for resisting any attack upon it, it is merely a matter of finding out the corresponding duties and remedies to vindicate the elementary fundamental equality. The corresponding duty is to labour with my limbs and the corresponding remedy is to non-cooperate with him who deprives me of the fruits of my labour. And if I would recognize

the fundamental equality, as I must, of the capitalist and the laborer, I must not aim at his destruction.<sup>12</sup>

There was no moral defeatism in the recognition of existing inequalities, so long as one did not resign oneself to glaring inequities, which could be readily ameliorated. Lest this crucial point be blurred, he warned in 1946:

Let no one try to justify the glaring difference between the classes and the masses, the prince and the pauper, by saying that the former need more. That will be idle sophistry and a travesty of my argument. The contrast between the rich and the poor today is a painful sight. The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign Government and also by their own countrymen – the city-dwellers.<sup>13</sup>

Socio-economic reform necessitates a radical change in perspective on the part of organized workers and propertied owners alike. If the latter had to see economic ownership in a new light, so too the industrial workers had to realize their inalienable power, which was not the blind force of destruction but the latent strength of creativity.

By the non-violent method we seek not to destroy the capitalist, we seek to destroy capitalism. We invite the capitalist to regard himself as trustee for those on whom he depends for the making, the retention and the increase of his capital. Nor need the worker wait for his conversion. If capital is power, so is work. Either power can be used destructively or creatively. Either is dependent on the other. Immediately the worker realizes his strength, he is in a position to become a co-sharer with the capitalist instead of remaining his slave. If he aims at becoming the sole owner, he will most likely be killing the hen that lays golden eggs.<sup>14</sup>

If class revolution fails to alter the prevailing state of society, however much it may elevate the formerly oppressed and denigrate the overthrown masters, non-violent conversion will fail to sustain a viable political and economic system without a *modus operandi* which merges the requirements of social reform with those of economic improvement.

This core method was, for Gandhi, the ethical idea of trusteeship, a powerful concept which, if put into practice, could obviate potential class conflict, link fundamental social reform with economic stability, and utilize every existing talent and capacity. Its intrinsic power to include all classes and make them contribute constructively to an emerging social order attracted Gandhi, who was strongly convinced that its honest and

consistent application could demonstrate the practicability of the principle of non-violent social reformation.

Hermes, September 1985

Authored by the Avatar

**Footnotes:**

1 Authored by the Avatar, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, Oxford University Press (New York, 1973). Second edition: Concord Grove Press (Santa Barbara, 1983), p. 252.

2 Authored by the Avatar, *Parapolitics – Toward the City of Man*, Oxford University Press (New York, 1979). Second edition: Concord Grove Press (Santa Barbara, 1985), p. 17.

3 "My Path", *Young India*, December 11, 1924.

4 "The Students' Interrogatives", *Young India*, November 15, 1928.

5 "My Notes", *Navajivan*, October 21, 1928; *Young India*, November 15, 1928.

6 "My Path", loc. cit.

7 "Talk with Communist Workers", *Bihar Pachhi Dilhi*, June 8, 1947, pp. 202-204.

8 "Interview to Louis Fischer", *Harijan*, August 4, 1946.

9 "My Notes", loc. cit.

10 "Talk with Communists", *Dilhiman Gandhiji*, I, pp. 142-143.

11 "Answers to Questions at Constructive Workers' Conference, Madras", *Harijan*, March 31, 1931; *The Hindu*, January 26, 1946.

12 "Questions and Answers", *Young India*, March 26, 1931.

13 "Answers to Questions at Constructive workers' Conference, Madras", loc. cit.

14 "Questions and Answers", loc. Cit.

**MAHATMA GANDHI ON SOME PROMIENT SOCIALIST AND HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH THEM.**

**Professor Abdul Bari**

PROFESSOR ABDUL BARI, was born in an ordinary family at Keowar in Old Shahbad Distt of Bihar. He became an extra ordinary soldier of the National Movement. Prof. Bari Participated in Non Co-operation movement in 1920.

He became Member of All India Congress Committee and attended Bombay AICC in 1923. He Participated in 'Salt Satyagraha' started by Gandhiji in 1930. He was the founder member of Congress Socialist Party (CSP) and its first National Committee and drafting Committee, also he was Chairman of The Reception Committee of the foundation Conference

held at Patna on 17th May, 1934. He was the first President of Bihar CSP. In 1937, he got elected to Bihar Legislative Assembly and became its Vice-Chairman, 1937-39. During the Quit India Movement he was arrested and imprisoned at Hazaribagh jail. He was President of Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee (P.C.C) from 1946 to 28th March, 1947 till his death. In the wake of the partition in 1946, communal riots spread in Bihar also and it was then that Prof Bari was at his secular best trying to extinguish the fire of communalism. Later when normalcy restored in the state, Mahatma Gandhi visited riot affected areas of Bihar. Gandhi ji came and stayed in Bihar for about a month.

Prof. Bari was in Hazaribagh on 28th March, 1947 and he was coming to Patna to meet Gandhi ji but he was brutally killed on Patna-Fatuha road by some un-identified miscreants in the night only. After Prof. Bari's gruesome murder Gandhi ji visited his native place Koelwar and met the bereaved family. Gandhi ji was visibly moved at the pathetic sight of abject poverty of this great freedom fighter's family. There was no money with the family even for Prof. Abdul Bari's burial. The Congress Party announced a monthly amount of Rupees two hundred and fifty to Mrs. Bari, but after a couple of months even that paltry sum of money ceased to be given.

The Bihar government decided to give 200 acre of land in Bettiah to the family but even that remained a lip service. Professor Abdul Bari's life is a saga of sacrifice for the freedom of the Motherland.



## **MAHATMA GANDHI'S SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING PATNA, March 29, 1947.**

At the outset Gandhiji told the audience that he would be leaving for Delhi the next day and hoped to return in about four or five days. Gandhiji then feelingly referred to the death on the previous evening of Prof. Abdul Bari, President of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, under tragic circumstances. Prof. Bari was a disciple and co-worker of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Dr. Rajendra Prasad has built for himself a unique and undisputed position and influence in the province by his service and sacrifice.

Prof. Bari had also by his service in the cause of the workers in Jamshedpur and other places endeared himself to the people and risen to occupy the position of the President of the Provincial Congress Committee. A fearless fighter, Prof. Bari was with the Congress during the different phases of its struggle for freedom. Gandhiji referred to his visit earlier in the day to Prof. Bari's house to console the members of the bereaved family and ask them not to grieve and to hearten them for the work that had specially descended upon the weak shoulders of his children.

Gandhiji said that as he entered the house he was struck with its simplicity and the simple life Prof. Bari had led. The house was located in an ordinary narrow lane and what he saw inside the house fully bore out what everyone had said about Prof. Bari, that he was a poor man and that though he had opportunities he scrupulously maintained his integrity as far as public finances were concerned. At a time when the administration of the country was in the Congress hands and crores of rupees had to be administered, men of Prof. Bari's honesty would have been of invaluable help.

He had hoped on his return from the third tour just finished, to be more closely associated with him and to make an effective appeal to him to modify, if not altogether get rid of, his short temper which went ill with the very high office, in fact the highest in the province of Bihar, especially when there was a nationalist ministry at the head of affairs which naturally had to be influenced by the premier provincial Congress organization. Gandhiji said that he had had full faith in Prof. Bari and had known that his word carried great weight with him. But God had willed otherwise and He had deprived Bihar of the great service of a very brave man with the heart of a fakir. But men like Bari never died, and it was for those who remained to carry on the noble work he had left behind.

Gandhiji then referred to the circumstances of Prof. Bari's death and said that.

**1 Extracted from "Gandhiji's Bihar Tour Diary"**

In an unfortunate altercation that had ensued between him and one Gurkha member of the anti-smuggling force and a former member of the Indian National Army, the latter shot him. He warned the audience that there was no politics of any kind in the death and that it would be wrong and unjustified to associate the whole I. N. A. organization with the death of Prof. Bari because of what one single individual did. Harijan, 13-4-1947.(*COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI.VOL. 94: 17 FEBRUARY, 1947 - 29 APRIL 1947*).

**MAHATMA GANDHI TO SAMPURNANAND.CWMG.**

GANDHI JI'S LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND, July 27, 1937.

BHAI SAMPURNANAND,

I had taken your book\*1(Samajvad) to Tithal, and had started reading it there. I finished it last Saturday, i.e., on July 24.I used to read it whenever I had a few minutes to spare. I have read it carefully from cover to cover. I liked the book, the language is sweet but it might also be regarded a bit difficult for those totally unacquainted with Sanskrit. The glossary of English-Hindi and Hindi-English equivalents given at the end is useful for the student. It is laudable that arguments in favour of socialism have been put forward without any disparagement of others.

I have no difficulty in accepting almost all the principles of socialism propounded in the book. I have also read with care the book \*2 (Why Socialism?) by Jayaprakash. Can there possibly be any difference between his interpretation and yours? Neither in your book nor in his do I find a clear idea how the ultimate revolution in India will be brought about. This I could not understand even after discussing it with many others. Only the day before yesterday a report of Meherally's Madras speech came into my hands and I went through it 3\*(Vide also "Letter to Mahadev Desai", 27-7-1937, and "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 30-7-1937).It explains fully what the socialists are doing. The object is to start a revolt in every sphere. But a revolt has never been possible without violence. In your book, however, I find nothing of the kind. Have we or have not we acquired strength through peaceful ways such as the civil disobedience or non-violent non-co-operation carried on since 1920? You say that the principles of socialism cannot be fully implemented until we have State power. Supposing, you ask, a powerful land-owner turned a complete socialist, could he well and truly act upon his principles? Assuming that he had no punitive power, could an Indian raja who was a socialist be able to implement socialism? I

recollect your having written that socialism cannot be practiced in its entirety until the whole world turns socialist. Does this imply that even if we gain complete independence socialism will not be fully or almost fully implemented? I hope you have understood my point. The purpose behind this question is only to ascertain how far it would be possible for me to accept the socialist principles and the means of their implementation.

You may reply to this letter at your leisure. I am in no hurry.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From Hindi: C.W. 9940. Courtesy: Kashi Vidyapith.

1.Samajvad.

2.Why Socialism?

3.Vide also “Letter to Mahadev Desai”, 27-7-1937., and “Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru”, 30-7-1937.

Collected works Gandhi (Mahatma).

LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND SEGAON, WARDHA, July 19, 1938

BHAI SAMPURNANAND,

What is this news item about a Congress platoon of 10,000 to be formed in Farrukhabad? If an armed platoon is envisaged, is it compatible with the Congress creed of non-violence?

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From Hindi: C.W. 10132. Courtesy: Kashi Vidyapith, Varanas

Collected works Gandhi (Mahatma).1976.

LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND September 8, 1938.

BHAI SAMPURNANAND,

I agree with everything that you have said. The Congress has merely given a new name to the language. It has not made any other difference. No honest person would reject a word because of its Hindu or Muslim origin. What can we say of others? And it has become fashionable these days to oppose anything done by the Congress or Congressmen. Do you want to know my views on the subject or something else? Because, I have spoken and written at length on this subject.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From Hindi: C.W. 10133. Courtesy: Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi.

LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND February 2, 1939

BHAI SAMPURNANANDJI,

I received your letter but could not acknowledge it promptly. I hope you have also written to Dr. Zakir Husain what you wrote to me. Your letter regarding the flag and Bande Mataram was received at a time when I was traveling. What you have said in it is correct. I am working on the same lines.

The problem of those who have entered Councils is becoming difficult day by day. But after all it is nothing but a symptom of the malaise. I see clearly that the Congress is going downward each day.

Selfishness, infighting, untruth and violence have crept into the Congress and are on the increase. I fear we are destroying ourselves because of our inner failures. Let us see what God wills.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From the Hindi original: Sampurnanand Papers. Courtesy: National Archives of India

LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND, SEVAGRAM, May 31, 1940

CHI. SAMPURNANANDJI,

I have your letter. I have a fear that if there is disorder I may prove ineffective. Because no one will listen to me. I tell those who ask me that everyone should be at his post-using the lathi if they must but with non-violence if they have the faith.

I do not worry whatever may happen. We can but make the effort and say: "God's will be done."

You can not take office like that. If there is disorder, of what good will the office be? Still, if I can find a way I shall. There is no sign from Simla.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From the Hindi original: Sampurnanand Papers. Courtesy: National Archives of India.

VOL.78: 23FEBRUARY, 1940 - JULY, 1940

LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND\*1, SEGAON, WARDHA, January 29, 1940.

BHAI SAMPURNANANDJI,

Your letter. You have been very close to me for so long. I understand what you say. I write with an open heart as far as possible, yet the soldiers' burden must continue. What you write regarding the charkha is enough. The work of adult literacy has been well accomplished. I could not deal with an earlier letter for want of time.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

LETTER TO SAMPURNANAND\*1, December 30, 1946.

BHAI SAMPURNANANDJI1,

How can I ignore your letter? I trust the silver jubilee\*2 (the institution was founded by Gandhiji in 1921) will be celebrated in fine style. May Kashi Vidyapeeth bring forth true workers.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

1 U. P. Congress leader who succeeded G. B. Pant as Chief Minister of U. P.; earlier Minister of Education and Finance

2 On January 27, 1947; the institution was founded by Gandhiji in 1921.

From a copy of the Hindi: C. W. 10428. Courtesy: Kashi Vidyapeeth

**YUSUF JAFFAR MEHARALLY**, an Indian Freedom Fighter and Socialist leader was born at Bombay on September 23, 1903. He was educated at Calcutta and Elphinstine College Bombay, and did B.A., L.L.B. He was in the vanguard of India's struggle for independence. He founded Young India Society in 1925. In 1928, he organized youth congress and boycotted Simon commission. He coined the term 'Simon Go Back'. In 1929, he launched National Militia, and the Bombay Youth League and founded '*Vanguard*'. He played leading role in peasants' organisations and trade unions.

During Mahatma Gandhi's famous Dandi March Yusuf Meherally met Gandhi ji on 22nd March, 1930 at Amod and the following dialogue took place between the two. Meherally asked: "Would you suggest any method by which the Muslims could be still more attracted to the Congress fold and protected from the pernicious propaganda of communalists?"

Gandhiji replied: "Congressmen must serve the Muslims to get their representation to the Congress. ... Soon the Congress will stand higher in the affection of Muslims than it ever did before. The masses are sound at heart. They only require a correct and courageous lead. I repeat that the

best way of winning over the Musalmans is by seeking occasions of service and assuring them that the resolution of the Congress on the communal question means what it says."

Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi-Vol. 48: 21, NOVEMBER, 1929-2 APRIL 1930).

INTERVIEW TO YUSUF MEHERALLY [AMOD, March 22, 1930] 2\*

Q. What part do you expect the youth movement to play in the present struggle?

A. The Youth League can do a great deal. They can supply recruits in large numbers in the civil disobedience campaign. They can, moreover, help to carry the message of independence to every nook and corner of the land. They can usefully picket foreign cloth and liquor shops. Those of its members who are unable to participate actively in the present campaign can render good service in the realm of social reforming, popularizing *khaddar* and *swadeshi* articles, in pushing forward prohibition propaganda, etc. Indeed at this juncture great things are expected from the youth of the country and I have no doubt they will fully rise to the occasion.

Q. Will you advise students to leave schools and colleges immediately?

A. Yes. I wish to point out that the present appeal to the students differs from that of 1921. In the latter case, the students were asked to quit their Government-controlled educational institutions and join national educational institutions. The present call is: Suspend your studies and join in the fight for freedom. When victory is won and you happen to be alive, you will resume your studies in schools of our own Government. For to my mind it is a fight to the finish. The greatest service that the youth can now render is to empty schools and colleges and swell the ranks of satyagrahi volunteers.

Q. Would you advise Youth Leagues to call out even those students whose examinations are a month or even a week ahead?

A. Yes. If the students themselves feel the call they should come out at once. As I said, I consider it a fight to the finish. If they have not the faith, they won't do it.

Q. Would you approve of the suggestion mooted in Youth League circles that the houses of "blackleg" M.L.C.'s who have not resigned their seats and those of selected other officials be picketed, and they be harassed in other ways as much as possible?

A. I should say no. During the N.C.O.1 days three specific instances of this type came to my notice. They did no good. I know they did harm.

Q. Would you suggest any method by which the Muslims could be still more attracted to the Congress fold and protected from the pernicious propaganda of communalists?

A. The best way to increase Muslim interest in the Congress is for Congressmen to serve them. Convince them that the Congress is as much theirs as anybody else's. My present programme—the breaking of the salt laws—should appeal to all the communities in India, for it affects them all alike. I am an optimist. I have no doubt that soon the Congress will stand higher in the affections of the Muslims than it ever did before.

The masses are sound at heart. They only require a correct and courageous lead. I repeat that the best way of winning over the Mussalmans is by seeking occasions of service and assuring them that the resolution of the Congress on the communal question means what it says.

Q. In case you are not arrested in the next few days, are the other Provinces not to embark on satyagraha?

A. If I am not arrested till I reach Jalalpur, I expect that the Provinces will be free to start civil disobedience soon after I have committed the breach of Salt Act.

2\*According to the source this was published in the Vanguard, 22-3-1930. Gandhiji, however, arrived in Amod on the evening of the 22nd.

1\*Non-co-operation The Hindu, 25-3-1930 THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI VOL. 48 : 21 NOVEMBER, 1929 - 2 APRIL, 1930.

**ROHIT MEHTA**, popularly known as Rohitbhai, born on August 3, 1908 at Surat (Gujarat) in the family of Hasmanram. The bright child was destined to do un-usual things from the early age. At the age of 22, he led a student strike in the Gujarat College in Ahmedabad against the dictatorial behavior of its then principal G. Findlay Shirras. His two other associates were Jayanti Dalal, writer and Nirubhai Desai, who later became a famous journalist and author. Shirras had ordered that no student shall participate in any political activity. The strike continued for three months at the end of which the young Rohitbhai was rusticated from the college and the Bombay University. Interestingly this episode was

reported to Mahatma Gandhi and he intervened in the matter by calling Rohitbhai through a telegram.

(TELEGRAM TO ROHIT MEHTA, BY MAHATMA GANDHI. BORSAD, July 2, 1931, ROHIT MEHTA VALLABHBHAI ROAD. AHMEDABAD."YOUR PRESENCE HERE NECESSARY TOMORROW FOR REPLYING PRINCIPAL'S LETTER JUST RECEIVED. GANDHI. A I.C.C. File No. 16-B, 1931. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

Principal Shirras had said in it that the presence of the five students which had "in the past been disturbing to the work of the college would result in similar disturbance in the future. . . . I am confirmed in my impression from the notices recently spread in the college under the signatures of two of them, and from the similar notices in the vernacular Press. . . ." For Gandhiji's reply to this letter, vide "Letter to G. Findlay Shirras", 3-7-1931.THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI, VOL. 53: 2 JULY, 1931 - 12 OCTOBER, 1931).

LETTER TO G. FINDLAY SHIRRAS BORSAD, July 3, 1931  
DEAR PRINCIPAL SHIRRAS,

I thank you for your prompt reply to my letter of 30th ultimo as also for the correction about non-admission of students. I have now seen two of them and they tell me that they are not aware of their having created any disturbance in the work of the college unless you have in mind the strike\*3 that took place in the college and in which practically the whole college was involved.

They tell me that if they have been guilty of any conduct which would be considered dishonorable or which would amount to insubordination they are prepared to make proper amends. They assure me that they have never desired or promoted any indiscipline in the college. They have undoubtedly held strong nationalistic views as they do even now.

They took an energetic part in the national movement. What they tell me is that so far as their conduct in the college is concerned it was free from any reproach. I understand too that there is nothing to be said against their private character, which I personally, as one having had a great deal to do with students during the past nearly 40 years of public life, attach the greatest importance to. They tell me too that they have issued no notice to which any exception can be taken. I would therefore thank you to let me know the definite charges which you have in mind and which impelled



you to refuse them admission. I would also thank you to furnish me with copies of the notices you hold to be objectionable.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat G. N. 821

3\* which commenced on January 3, 1929.

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THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

LETTER TO G. FINDLAY SHIRRAS BORSAD, July 4, 1931

DEAR PRINCIPAL SHIRRAS,

I thank you for your further letter of 3rd instant. It was good of you to have taken in Syt. C. H. Desai and I would like you to extend the same liberal treatment to the other students.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a Photostat: G. N. 824

1 Gandhiji was in Borsad between June 28 and July 5, 1931. Silence Day fell on July

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THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

### **DINKAR MEHTA**

DINKAR KRISHNALAL MEHTA, son of Shri Krishanlal and Vijayabahen, was born On 17th October, 1907 at Surat, Gujarat. He was Educated at Gujarat Vidyapeeth. Graduate in Social Sciences from Gujarat Vidyapith. Dinkar, was married to Nalinibahen (deceased).He participated in Bordoli Satyagrah in 1928, and jailed. In 1930, he participated in Salt Satyagrah ‘Dandi March’ as a member of advanced party. He became Joint Secretary of Surat District Congress Committee in 1934.

He was one of the founder members of the Congress Socialist Party, and became Joint Secretary of CSP, in 1938. Later in 1939, he Joined communist Party and became secretary of its Gujarat Unit. He worked underground during 1940-42. Comrade Dinkar Mehta was formerly a member of the Central Committee of the CPI (M) and the Secretary of the united Communist Party in Gujarat and the CPI (M) since its formation. For decades Dinkar Mehta headed the Communist movement in Gujarat. In early sixties he was Member Bombay State Legislative Council, MLC. Dinkar Mehta was elevated to the Mayor ship of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation as a candidate of the Mahagujarat Janata Party in 1966. He was Editor ‘Azad Hind’ weekly. Dinkar Mehta passed away in 1989.

MAHATMA GANDHI'S LETTER TO DINKAR MEHTA, July 20, 1931.

I believe that there is not good reason for the antipathy some people have towards the Congress. There will always be private property. So long as there are persons some personal property is bound to remain. I do not wish to see the destruction of capitalists and Indian States. I wish to see them reformed. In this struggle for purification anything that cannot be purified will automatically be destroyed. As imperfect human beings, we can only hope and pray that everything may be purified and all impurity may be wiped out.

We do not know what is absolutely impure. As a sentiment, everyone should accept the principle of economic equality. But in practice there will never be such equality. There will always be some people who have more wealth and some who have less. It will be sufficient if those who have more consider themselves trustees, not owners of their wealth. We should spread and foster such a sentiment. The Congress means its collective membership. It is self-evident that the Congress cannot go further than the collective sentiment of its members.

Complete observance of truth and non-violence means economic, political and moral equality.

[From Gujarati] Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. XIV, pp. 458-9. VOL. 53: 2 JULY, 1931 - 12 OCTOBER, 1931. THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI.