

**Correspondence**  
between

**MAHATMA  
GANDHI**

and

**P. C. JOSHI**

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**CORRESPONDENCE  
BETWEEN  
MAHATMA GANDHI  
AND  
P. C. JOSHI**

**MADRAS INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES  
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**PEOPLE'S PUBLISHING HOUSE,  
BOMBAY 4.**

**ONE RUPEE.**

*First Edition, June, 1945.*  
*Second Edition, August, 1945*

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Printed by Sharaf Athar Ali, New Age Printing Press, 190B, Khetwadi  
Main Road, Bombay 4 and published by him for People's Publishing  
House, Raj Bhuvan, Sandhurst Road, Bombay 4.

## INTRODUCTION

I had no intention of publishing my correspondence with Gandhiji but interested elements have misused the fact and used it as a part of their anti-Communist crusade.

The *Forum*, which very pretentiously calls itself "The Indian Weekly News Magazine" but is really the forum for the Congress Socialist view-point, in its issue of 15th April, 1945, wrote under the column "News Chronicle":

### "WHEN P. C. JOSHI FUNKED

Another startling disclosure was made to *Forum* by astute K. Arunachalam, Associate Editor of *Bharat Devi* and author of the famous rejoinder to the Tottenham-Joshi brotherhood. Arunachalam, during his recent trip to Sevagram, where he met the Mahatma, gained knowledge of a true story concerning P. C. Joshi. It seems that the Stalin-quoting boy was given four questions by the Mahatma, appertaining to the political genuflexions of the Communists. Definite and speedy answers were solicited. Result: the death-defying Puran Chandra Joshi, hero of many transactions and inspirer of many documentary booklets, sneaked into the psychological underground and never turned up. All Sevagram bubbled with sumptuous laughter. It is also gathered that the inmates of the Ashram have decided not to grant any 'interview' to these boys in view of the fact that they invariably try to twist and tamper them into their like patterns."

Even the most prejudiced reader of the correspondence will see for himself that the *Forum* and its worthy correspondents put out lies as news.

\* \* \*

The same story is propagated by the anti-Communists from Andhra.

The delegates of some "Andhra Provincial Students and Youth Congress Organisations" are reported to have told the Correspondent of the *Andhra Patrika* that Gandhiji told them: "P. C. Joshi had talked to me for a little time. On that occasion I gave him some written questions and asked him to come again with answers for a discussion on the present political situation. He never turned up with answers. He had not even sent his answers through post." Our readers have the choice of either considering Gandhiji a liar or this brood of anti-Communists!

The other Andhra daily, *Andhra Prabha*, also carries the same tale. In this case the name mentioned is K. L. Sundara Rao, member of the delegation to whom Syt. Pyarelal, Gandhiji's Secretary, is reported to have said: "Gandhiji demanded of Mr. Joshi answers to some questions" and that "Mr. Joshi never showed his face again."

If these young folks are taught to lie against their political opponents what will they not do when they grow up?

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Some other, relatively more responsible, papers got scent of the correspondence and got its contents from their own imagination.

The Hindi daily *Hindustan* under the headings "We Should Not Be Expelled From the Congress" and "Communist Leader's Appeal to Gandhiji" gives the

following news-item, from Lucknow under date December 5 :

"It is learnt that Shri Puran Chandra Joshi, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India has written a letter to Gandhiji, in which he has opposed the expulsion of Communists from the Congress. This correspondence will be published shortly. *The Communists want that Gandhiji should announce that their expulsion from the Congress is wrong.*"

Another Hindi daily, Vishwamitra, on December 1 carried a similar message :

"It is learnt that a correspondence has been going on between Shri Puran Chandra Joshi, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, and Mahatma Gandhi on the question of expulsion of the Communists from the Congress. The correspondence will be published very soon. *It is said that the Communists want Gandhiji to say a few words, so that the impropriety of their expulsion from the Congress may be propagandised for.*"

The above extracts only disclose how servile is a part of our public press that it can't conceive of any one corresponding with Gandhiji except to curry favour in one's own partisan interest. It is beyond their comprehension that a political party can have a political policy of its own and stand on its own legs while seeking fraternal understanding with all.

I have a sheaf of newspaper cuttings before me on this correspondence and along the above lines. I hope the publication will put the liars in their place and end all speculation and honest men will get insight into how we Communists think.

\* \* \*

I do not propose to comment on this correspondence. It speaks for itself.



Very soon after I saw Gandhiji it became clear to me that the Congress Socialists had been repeating to him what they had been whispering throughout the country against us without caring to prove a single allegation however. More, they had organised a country-wide campaign for any Congressman they could get hold of to write to Gandhiji.

In his first letter Gandhiji put some questions, both on questions of policy and also our political morals. I briefly answered all, only to put the policy problems aside till the charges against our political morals were either proved or dismissed.

Gandhiji did not agree with us about this being a people's war at all.

Gandhiji found my answer about our finances "completely satisfactory."

About other questions he wrote "I understand your answers and appreciate them too. If I was free from prejudices, I would have no hesitation in accepting your answers. But my difficulty is real and I ask for your sympathy." If the greatest amongst us pleads prejudice as coming in the way of his accepting what I say, I have nothing more left to say.

\* \* \*

In his last letter Gandhiji says "I dare not condemn you" and names other Communists whom he knows personally. Our real trouble is that every Communist hears the same thing now-a-days from his fellow Congressmen. None has anything definite to say except pay compliments to the Communist he meets but yet goes on repeating charges which have gained currency through sheer repetition and in the background of blind prejudice.

I literally bared my chest before Gandhiji. He

had heard very serious charges against us and we offered him two alternatives.

First, let the accusers dare repeat their charges before the highest democratic tribunal, our great people, anywhere we work and are known and where the accusers too work and live.

Secondly, I requested Gandhiji to refer his anti-Communist file to his three colleagues of the Working Committee who were then out. Syt. Rajagopalachariar told me that I was demeaning myself by offering to stand in the dock. I told him that though I was much younger I was less sectarian than he and that I would consider it an honour and no dishonour to be tried by the respected Elders of our national movement. Mrs. Naidu when she read the correspondence called the charges against our morals silly and expressed herself in public too. Syt. Desai once said that he had heard from Sewagram that the anti-Communist file had been lost and was being looked for. And after a few months that he was awaiting some papers. I waited for eleven long months to be called up and answer things. I waited in vain.

There is no third alternative that I could offer to clear up the issues. Readers will see for themselves that our Party has nothing to hide and that if there is an aggrieved party it is our Party.

\* \* \*

Our aim in publishing the correspondence is not only to answer the insinuations made in the press about this correspondence but to make every serious patriot see for himself the depths to which our political life has sunk today.

*Grave charges are made before the leaders of the nation but the accusers do not care to prove them. Fac-*



*tionalism and irresponsibility go together but have they ever gone to such limits?*

*Charges of the most filthy type, which on their very face read absurd, are very coolly made.*

*If such things can happen within our national movement what has it come to and where will it all end?*

Such charges have been made on a nation-wide scale only once, in 1919-20, against the Congress, by the Government-sponsored *Aman Sabhas*. This should mean a lot to those Congressmen who are old enough to remember those days. I was a mere boy then but my blood used to boil after hearing and reading slanders against the Nehru family, the irreligiosity of Gandhiji, the squandering of the Tilak Swaraj Fund, etc.

Ours, however, is a young party. It would have been the most natural thing for us to get provoked. We may be young but our national movement is old, double the age of our Party and we endeavour to live up to its heritage of patience that comes naturally to an ancient people. If our political opponents can't fight us by political weapons and among the people and above all if lies and slanders are their only weapons, it is they who are doomed. Such is our firm conviction.

And our fervent hope is that every reader of this correspondence will do his bit to get the issue of Congress-Communist relationship discussed with dignity. Slanderers are always a few but if the rest acquiesce they sully the political atmosphere as a whole.

June 30, 1945.

P. C. JOSHI. *ff*

## CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MAHATMA GANDHI AND P. C. JOSHI

### I

P. C. JOSHI TO MAHATMA GANDHI

Bombay,  
6th May, 1944.

DEAR GANDHIJI,

I greet you on behalf of the Communist Party. With the rest of our countrymen we wish you the speediest recovery. We respectfully look forward to the day when you, the most loved leader of the greatest patriotic organisation of our people, will be in a position to give the long awaited lead to the nation against political deadlock which has resulted in famine conditions and Jap aggression and for patriotic unity of all national forces to get food for our people and freedom for our country.

I will be very happy to explain to you the policy our Party is pursuing to-day and report to you the little we have endeavoured to save our nation in your absence.

I am sending Comrade Batliwalla, whom you already know, to pay you a warm homage on behalf of our Party.

With respectful greetings,

P. C. JOSHI.

## II

## MAHATMA GANDHI TO P. C. JOSHI

Juhu,  
11th June, 1944.

MY DEAR JOSHI,

I had expected a prompt reply to the questions I had raised at our meeting.\* Meanwhile some additional questions have arisen which, please, answer when you answer my first questions.

(1) What is the meaning of "people" in "people's war"? Does it mean war on behalf of India's millions, or the negroes in East, South or West Africa, or the negroes of America, or all of them? Are the Allies engaged in such a war?

(2) Are the finances of the Communist Party represented by you subject to public audit? If they are, may I see them?

(3) It is stated that the Communist Party has actively helped the authorities to arrest leaders and organisers of labour strikes during the last two years.

(4) The Communist Party is said to have adopted the policy of infiltrating the Congress organisation with a hostile intent.

(5) Is not the policy of the Communist Party dictated from outside?

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. GANDHI.

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\*Gandhiji was referring to his talk with P. C. Joshi in early June, 1944.

## P. C. JOSHI TO MAHATMA GANDHI

Bombay,  
14th June, 1944.

DEAR GANDHIJI,

Your small chit came as a pleasant surprise that you were so eager to know more about us.

I did not send you a prompt reply because Mrs. Naidu was justly annoyed over my meeting you. She is of the opinion that you should not do any serious political work. From what I saw of you myself I agree with her. I thought I was helping the fulfilment of a big national task, your speedy recovery to normal health, by not writing to you. I had decided to write to you after two weeks or a month, after the doctors had announced that you could take to your normal work.

It is perhaps not out of place to tell you that I did not want to meet you when I did but our plan was to wait for your call in answer to our letter of greetings. Miraben was anxious that I see you, she was worried over the slanders going round about us. I laughed away her fears. But I kept the appointment she had made just to give you an inkling of the way our mind was working. As you can imagine I did not come back a happy person.

I am answering your points in a very brief manner because I think it is a crime to strain you now and reserve fuller explanations for a future occasion if and when you ask for them.

## FIRST QUESTION

*What is the meaning of "people" in "people's war"? Does it mean war on behalf of India's millions, or the negroes in East, South or West Africa, or the negroes of America, or all of them?*

*Are the Allies engaged in such a war?*

Your first question is not very clear to me but I will try my best.

People in people's war means all peoples the world over without exception. It, of course, includes India's millions and also the Negroes wherever they be.

"Allies" is a very general term. There is a difference between the Allied peoples and their governments. There are differences between the Allied Governments themselves. You know as well as I do what Churchill stands for. On the other hand, you can read Stalin's war speeches for yourself; we have brought out a pamphlet of these and it is in the packet presented to Syt. Pyarelal.

We do not decide our attitude towards a titanic world struggle by what Churchill thinks of it or how he seeks to achieve his aim through it. He does not decide the course of history for us.

We decide the character of the war on the basis of our objective analysis of the participants in the war and the basic issue at stake.

This war has split the world into two camps.

On the one side are the Fascist aggressors, Fascism is nothing else except Imperialism in its worst and last form. It is only as Fascism that World Imperialism can exist today. Fascists are fighting the war for the imperialist domination of the world.

On the other side are the freedom-loving peoples of the world. In some countries their Governments are reactionary and imperialist. In others they themselves are colonial slaves who though not yet free, have been able to raise national movements as yet weak like the Negroes or already very powerful like our own. In this camp is heroic China which through its

7 years' national resistance to Jap Fascists has saved the whole East from going under the Jap keel. In this camp also stands the great U.S.S.R. where alone real freedom and full democracy prevails, where alone the people are united as they nowhere are, where there is a people's army the like of which has never been raised before, where there is a people's State whose strength has come as a revelation to all other peoples and governments. It is their Red Army led by their Government which has destroyed Hitler's dream of world domination and stopped the Fascist pincers meeting on our sacred soil. If the words Freedom and Democracy mean anything for today and tomorrow, this is the camp of Freedom and Democracy.

Every people has to choose for itself which camp they would line up with, whose victory they desire. The fate of the peoples of each country and of the whole world depends upon which side wins.

If the Fascist side wins it is fascist-imperialist slavery for every country of the world and the end of freedom of all.

If the Allied side wins it means the cause of freedom itself saved. Every nation fights for its own and world liberation by fighting in this camp. The enslaved nations of the East are, of course, in a very difficult situation. How can they fight with the fire of patriotism burning in their bosoms when they are themselves in chains? The simple issue is that they have to fight the battle of their own national liberation in a new context, with a new strategy.

Let us rule out the alternatives first.

If the patriotic leaders of the colonial people oppose this war they directly aid the Fascist enslavement of their own country and help the Fascist imperialists to conquer the rest of the world with the added strength

of their resources and sign the death warrant of their own nation.

If the patriotic leaders of a colonial people remain neutral, they indirectly aid the Fascist aggressors by condemning their own people to a course of passivity and leaving the resources of their own country in the hands of an alien government which cannot but be incompetent and soulless.

Is the position then : let us fight the fascists now, we will fight for our freedom when the war is over ? Must we acquiesce in our present slavery and line up behind the present alien Government ? This would not be a patriotic policy but its opposite, (such as M. N. Roy's policy). This would be the way to liquidate our own national movement, let our country go to pieces under alien rule and weaken what is one sector of the battle front for the rest of the peoples of the world.

The more clearly we distinguish between the two camps which are at war, the more correctly will we be able to shape our national policy in the special conditions of to-day. National resistance to the fascist aggressor, together with the rest of the progressive forces which are fighting fascism is the only path of national liberation from imperialist domination for us to-day.

Imperialist bureaucrats know that if the Indian people and their patriotic parties are given the chance and freedom to rouse the spirit of resistance and patriotism of the entire people against the aggressor, it would mean the beginning of the end of their rule. That is just the reason why they do everything to prevent a national settlement and the establishment of a National Provisional Government.

But that is just the reason why we must go all out to unite all our patriotic forces in our land to de-

send it against the aggressor—irrespective of what the bureaucracy thinks and does. The more we unite our patriotic parties the weaker and more isolated becomes the alien government and the more irresistible our national and other demands, the greater our capacity to save and serve our people.

The more our patriotic parties engage themselves in those tasks which any war-time Government should successfully lead but an alien government cannot, the more speedily we get the united intervention of all the peoples of the world behind our national demand for National Government in the common interest of fighting the common enemy.

The above is the direction towards which our patriotism should lead us. As we see it, it is starting on the path of resistance and breaking our way to the realisation of the National Government and win the right to fight for a Free India in a Free World. The faster and more united we march along this road the sooner comes National Government; the more we get delayed or derailed the worse will be our own fate.

The peoples of Europe under their reactionary governments went through the purgatory of Fascism before they found that it was a people's war and they could win it. To-day what is happening in Europe is not what Churchill desires but what its own enslaved peoples decide and do. And Churchill cannot keep a Darlan or a Badoglio in power; he has to chuck the feudal-militarist Mihailovitch for the alliance of the Communist Tito. With a 50-year old national movement behind our back and limitless possibilities of expanding it and the imperative need to knit it still closer together, we do think that you, the trusted leader of our people, can also make Churchill eat his words and settle with India.



It is a vast and very complicated issue that you have raised through your first question. Neither preconceived doctrines nor any doctrinaire answer will help you to understand our point of view.

May I suggest that you take the trouble to study the resolution we passed after 9th August (*People's War*, Vol. I, No. 12), our resolution on your fast (*People's War*, Vol. II, No. 32), our May Day Manifesto (in Vol. II, No. 44) and the Editorial we wrote on your release (Vol. II, No. 46).<sup>\*</sup> They will tell you how we concretely apply our policy of people's war. A basic formulation like the slogan "people's war" helps clarity of understanding among those who conform to a common ideology but its living application should prove its soundness to others too and the course of action that it suggests should help them to estimate its patriotic worth.

#### QUESTION 2

*Are the finances of the Communist Party represented by you subject to public audit? If they are, may I see them?*

The finances of no political organisation are subject to public audit in the sense that any member of the public can come and be allowed to examine them. But we are very happy that you want to see them because slanders have been poured into your ears on this count. We honour and trust you and are naturally glad that you are trying to see for yourself if you can trust us too.

Our Treasurer P. Sundarayya is at Bezwada leading 1,000 Party members in removing the silt from the canal so that 50,000 acres may get more water and the

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<sup>\*</sup>Included as appendices to the correspondence.

peasants of Kistna may grow more food for famished Malayalees (the P.W.D. had pleaded its helplessness). Our Accountant Leila, his wife, has gone to Bezwada. But both Sundarayya and Leila should be here any day and I will arrange that they reach Bombay within 48 hours.

If you desire to examine the accounts personally they will present themselves with all the Registers where and when you desire. If you decide to appoint a representative he should be such whom we also know to be an honest man and not already prejudiced against us.

You will not find our accounts as well kept as by a commercial firm but I am sure you will give us a pass after considering that we are yet learning how to keep accounts because under years of illegality our tradition has been that to keep registers and "proper" accounts is criminal folly.

You will find some anonymous donors, but I believe that you also accept anonymous donors. But to dispel any suspicion that "anonymous" may be code for Government cash I am prepared to give you (not your representative) the names.

I can also present before you some of our comrades who on their own right are worth lacs and who have pledged their entire property to the Party. I am sure they will come to you as a pleasant surprise because they are sons of well-known houses whose fathers did not put patriotism above their property. A two-minute chat with each will convince you that they are selfless youngsters, the like of which the capitalist and feudal classes (from which they come) do not normally produce.

If you have yet any doubts left and in any case, I give you some references which should meet all your

doubts. The following know quite a lot about who gives us cash, how and where we spend it, and that the Government does not pay us a pie :

—Iftikharuddin and his Begum

—Shaukat Ansari and Zohra

—N. M. Joshi.

You can ask Dr. and Mrs. Subbarayan as to what they think is going to happen to their property when Mohan and Parvati (their children and our comrades) get it and in fact what they know happens to the property of the whole-time workers of the Party.

I cannot resist the temptation to make a counter-request to you. I will give you a list of rural and urban areas where we have worked hard among the people and they know us well. You send to any of them Syt. Pyarelal with me when I go out on tour. The only announcement will be to come and listen to me on Party policy. He will find not less than 10 thousand and upto 50,000 and more assembled and tempo and enthusiasm which will remind him of 1920 days. I will make at the end an appeal for the Party Fund and he will find the vast majority paying and in a manner and in amounts that will bring tears into his eyes.

We collect money from the same source as you do —our great people. What helps us to do it is also the same weapon : their patriotic service. Why should you not think that others too can do what you do ? In fact we take great pride in the fact that we are carrying on the tradition you started of mass collections for the country's cause and utmost personal self-sacrifice.

Normally children follow their parents. We are such sons and daughters of our nation that we endeavour to get our fathers, mothers and even grand-mothers

follow us into our Party. We have numerous examples where whole families have gone Red.

You will naturally ask why should honest Congressmen who have talked to you believe such stories against us? I would wish you to realise that after your arrest most of the Congressmen believed that "struggle" was Congress sanctioned and truly "national." They naturally went very bitter when they found us not joining up. This was exploited by the "organisers" of the struggle—the C.S.Pers and Forward Blocists who spread the slander that we were paid by the Government. The more the collapse of the struggle became apparent the wider was the slander circulated to stop Congressmen listening to us. The original and active slanderers were the saboteur-leaders because we alone actively campaigned against sabotage and in the background of the then political set-up it got easy currency.

Not one honest man who knows us and has seen us at work will mouth the slander. The pity is that most of the Congressmen who know us personally and well, have not met you and our own work is not so intensive on a country-wide scale as to make all Congressmen everywhere see through the slander. We have no doubts that sooner rather than later we will live down the slander.

### QUESTION 3

*It is stated that the Communist Party has actively helped the authorities to arrest leaders and organisers of labour strikes during the last two years.*

I know it is easy enough to make such a vile charge but very difficult to prove it. I will not answer it like a lawyer asking the accusers to prove their case, which cannot always be done.

I will answer it in broader, political, i.e. more effective terms.

First, I believe if you find that we are not paid by the Government you will easily believe that we are not likely to hand over labour leaders to the police.

Secondly, our Party except in Ahmedabad and Jamshedpur, is as much the unquestioned leader of the working class as the great Congress is of the Indian people as a whole. We answer our opponents openly in mass meetings and challenge them to come and put their point of view to the workers.

Almost all the labour leaders are our Party members; the few that are not are our friends and allies and I cannot imagine any one knowing the least bit about the labour world making such a charge except the Congress Socialists.

Shri N. M. Joshi is the oldest trade union leader alive today. He is the General Secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress. He is not a Communist, we have fought him in the past, he does not agree with us on all points even today. He knows our place in the labour movement better than anybody else and all that we say and do among the workers and how we deal with our critics and opponents. A few minutes with him should tell you what is what.

We gave up our strike policy because we considered it anti-national in the conditions of today, aiding the Jap aggressors on the one hand and intensifying the economic crisis for our own people on the other. That we successfully prevented the Indian working class from resorting to strikes even in a period of their worsening material conditions is the measure not only of our influence over it but its capacity to *understand* national interests as its own.

## QUESTION 4.

*The Communist Party is said to have adopted the policy of infiltrating the Congress organisation with a hostile intent.*

There is no question of our "adopting the policy of infiltrating the Congress organisation." We have been in the Congress ever since we were born as a Party. I remember the late Mr. Langford James, Prosecutor in the Meerut Conspiracy Case making this charge and how we all laughed at him. The game was to create a scare, to isolate non-Communist Congressmen from us. The British agents played that tune once. Jap-agents do it now. Both represent the nation's enemies and seek to confuse the national ranks.

Whether our intent is hostile or not, it is for our fellow Congressmen to judge and for us to prove otherwise through our practice. We have won the love and respect of Congressmen in the past and hope to enjoy it more and more. Our comrades have been elected to the A.I.C.C. and to leading places in the Provincial Congress Committees.

We are inside the Congress on our right, as patriotic sons and daughters of the people who join the common national organisation, so that we may be able to fight our hardest and best in realisation of the common goal of national emancipation and no slanders can ever provoke us to give up this stand and forego the glorious privilege.

## QUESTION 5

*Is not the policy of the Communist Party dictated from outside?*

The Communist Party decides its own policy

as it understands the interests of its own people and of the peoples of the world. As long as the Communist International was there, we were dubbed as 'Moscow Agents'. It is rather surprising to come across the same insinuation even after its dissolution. I am enclosing some documents on the subject which speak for themselves.

The Communist Party is one great revolutionary brotherhood. It exists in every country of the world. All have the same ideology and are moved by the common aims of fighting for the liberation of their own and all peoples. I can send you the journals and documents of the Communist Parties of Britain, U.S.A., South Africa, Australia, which have nailed down Amery & Co. as slanderers and provocateurs after August 9 and which have unfalteringly demanded the release of the Congress leaders and settlement with India on the basis of a real National Government.

As the war approaches its climax, you will hear more and more about the Communist Parties in action. In the packet that is with Sjt. Pyarelal there are pamphlets on Finland, Yugoslavia, France, China which will tell you how each one of our brother parties analyses its own national and the broader international situation, what programme it puts before its own people and how it is fighting for it.

As you were fair to me when you told me that you approached us with suspicion, I will not be fair to you if I withheld that your questions pained us because they embody the slanders that the enemies of Communism are circulating the world over and are only believed by persons with pre-conceived prejudices. We are a new and rising force, born in the ranks of our own people and shot up through the flame of patriotism which not us but our elders like you, in every

country of the world, ignited. We know it is not easy to go out of one's way to understand the new and rather difficult to believe that one's own sons can carry forward the heritage, but we do expect you to consider the following :

(1) As a great leader of the people, you have known misrepresentation, endured slanders and yet become our national leader.

(2) From the time of Marx itself, no ideology has been more misrepresented than ours. No peoples' leaders have ever been slandered and for so long as Lenin and Stalin, and yet, one-sixth of the world that is the U.S.S.R., growing Communist Parties in every country of the world are living monuments to their work.

(3) We fought our own prejudices to come to Communism, we have been fighting slanders all our Party-lives in seeking our way to our people. We have learnt for ourselves that prejudices cannot stand truth and slanders cannot kill a patriotic organisation.

(4) You hardly know us, Nehru knew us much more.

We knew you did not like us nor think much of us. We used to meet Nehru, to have our say on the international and national issues that came up before the Congress. Today, he is behind the bars. Without him and without your other colleagues of the Working Committee, you have to understand the whole situation and evolve a way out for the nation. After the Congress and the League, we have grown to be the third Party in the country. It would be unfortunate if you were to misjudge us. But we would continue to stand on the strength of our patriotic policy before the people and the judgment of our people has given us unbounded self-confidence and courage to struggle to find out



our failings and the will to correct them but you will fail in the fulfilment of your own duties as the greatest leader of the Nation, whose task it is to understand all points of view and evolve a lead that will carry us all to our common cherished goal.

The Congress Socialists suggest that we have grown by basking in the Government's favour and explain this by pointing to the absence of the Congress from the field.

Would the Government pay the Party which has been consistently campaigning for your and other Congress leaders' release, which has been fighting the slanders against the Congress being pro-Jap, which has been popularising the anti-Fascist stand of the Congress, which has been demanding settlement on the basis of National Government?

In these 2 years, 4 of our comrades have been hanged.\* (You can read their story in *People's War*, Vol. I, No. 40). About 400 are behind the bars and 100 are life-prisoners. Is this the way the Government is helping us?

Congress has been banned before. Did the Liberals grow stronger in 1920? In an enslaved country, only that Party grows which serves the people, and which has a patriotic policy to put before them. The rest wither away.

I had promised you a document on food and another on the League position, but I am not going to send any till you become really better. I feel very guilty for having to inflict on you what has already become a long letter.

With respectful greetings,

P. C. JOSHI.

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\*The four peasant leaders of Kayyur, Malabar.

## IV

## P. C. JOSHI TO MAHATMA GANDHI

Bombay,  
26th July, 1944.

DEAR GANDHIJI,

I had duly received your questions and sent an answer too. I am glad you have read it and as you have written to Mohan, I am expecting an answer any day. The way the news about your chit to me and our answer is going round makes us blush about the political morals of our fellow countrymen. If you are interested in checking up Mohan will tell you something.

As you can easily imagine and as I wrote to you I have not sent you the Memos I promised. They will be waste of my time and no use to you as long as you have prejudices about us.

You will find us willing for any service that needs a stout heart and presupposes deep love of the people.

With respectful greetings,

P. C. JOSHI.

## V

## MAHATMA GANDHI TO P. C. JOSHI

As at Sevagram, (C.P.)  
Camp Panchgani,  
30th July, 1944.

DEAR FRIEND,

I had duly received your letter of 14th June and also your letter of 26th of July sent with Shri Kumaramangalam.

Your answer to my first question provokes further question for your reply. I understand that although

the chief actors among the Allied powers are by no means inclined towards real democracy, you think that by the time the War ends their designs will be confounded and that the people all the world over will suddenly find self-expression and overthrow the present leaders. In the peoples, according to answer, I am entitled to include us, other Asiatics and Negroes, for that matter perhaps also the proletariat of Japan and Germany. If such is your belief, I must confess that I do not share it but I keep myself open to conviction. Meanwhile I suggest that the title 'Peoples' War' is highly misleading. It enables the Government in India to claim that at least one popular party considers this as people's war. I suggest too that Russia's limited alliance with the Allied powers cannot by any stretch of imagination convert what was before an imperialistic war against the Nazi combine, into a peoples' war.

Holding the view I do, it is superfluous for me now to answer your argument that "this war has split the world into two camps." Between Scylla and Charybdis, if I sail in either direction, I suffer shipwreck. Therefore I have to be in the midst of the storm. I suggested a way out. Naturally, it has been rejected because the powers that be, do not want to relax their grip on India. As I am composing this letter to you, I have read and re-read your argument. Every paragraph offends, for to me, it lacks reality. Please believe me that my prejudice against your party has nothing to do with my examination of your answer to the first question.

Q.—2. Your answer as far as it goes, I hold to be completely satisfactory. I will not ask you for further proof about your finances.

After I have dealt with your answers, I will put my difficulties before you. Your answers to the other

questions do not admit of a categorical reply. I understand your answers and appreciate them too. If I was free from prejudices, I would have no hesitation in accepting your answers. But my difficulty is real and I ask for your sympathy. When I make the admission that I have prejudices, it is an appeal to you to have patience with me and to disarm my prejudices in the best manner you can. I can only give you my assurance that I am ready to see anybody you want me to see, to read anything you want me to read and to examine every argument or fact produced by you as dispassionately as I can. I give you this further assurance that I have not acted upon my prejudice, nor shall I do so unless the prejudices harden into a confirmed belief that your party represents a force of Evil and is really an obstacle in the way of the fight for freedom. I am not likely to have that belief easily and, if I have it, you shall have ample notice so as to enable you to wean me from it. I know your worth. You have very able young men and women, as selfless as I would claim to be. You are all hard working and possess great energy and you impose strict discipline on your workers. All this I prize and admire. I would not easily lose such a force because of any preconceived notions of mine.

If I have been inordinately long in dealing with your answers which you sent me so promptly, it was because, as you are aware I was preoccupied and also because I was examining the evidence that was pouring in upon me unsolicited against your party. I asked them to let me use their names and they have given me the permission. I take the latest first i.e. Babu Manoranjan Chaudhary. I did not even know that he was coming and when he did ask for an appointment, it was in connection with my acceptance of the

Rajaji formula. But really he took the greater part of my time to tell me that the Communists had done great injury to the national cause. I am using a milder term than was really used before me. He has left papers which I have not been able to study. And he has also left with me a printed book which I have glanced through personally and it makes bad reading. The printed book can be seen by any deputy you may choose to send. Probably you have seen it yourself.

The other is Sjt. Kaleshwar Rao of Bezwada. He also sent me a long letter from which I quote the salient passages (see encl.). Add to this the numerous letters I have received from correspondents, known and unknown, all impeaching the party. I understand too that Shri Jaiprakash Narain is also 'disillusioned.'

You have referred me to Mian Iftikharuddin and Shaukat Ansari. Both of whom I know well and for whom I have great regard. Unfortunately, Iftikharuddin is in Jail. I have never talked about Communism to Shaukat, because I know him and his wife Zohra apart from their politics. But no general assurance from them will obliterate the evidence that has forced itself upon me and of which I have given you a bird's eye view. I will ask you not to dismiss all this evidence as so much prejudice. I would ask you not to be angry with your critics, however ignorant they may be. You will have legitimate cause for anger, if their criticism is malicious and conceived with a hostile intent. Lastly, I ask you to believe me that I want to impress the services of everyone of you for the cause of independence to be fought along the lines that I have chalked out for myself and the whole country. And if I am convinced that I am going astray and that yours is the correct method, I would like to be won over by you to your side and I will sincerely and gladly serve

as an apprentice wanting to be enlisted as a unit in your ranks.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. GANDHI

#### ENCLOSURE

"They enacted dramas in the commune in the theme of every one of which there was shooting, execution and bloody murder. The student members were made to act as executioners or murderers with hands painted red. They made it a rule to get cooked flesh every day in the commune and every member must sit at the common table. Hereditary vegetarians like Brahmins and Vaisyas including students were purposely taught to eat flesh so as to feel no abhorrance to violence. One Brahmin M.A. told me that he took to flesh eating because Gandhi was insisting on non-violence. Another Vaisya B.Sc. told me that he got freedom from the use of wretched Khaddar from that time which he had been using for more than twenty years. He became an ardent champion of flesh eating. They held classes in the yard there. They were anti-Gandhi, anti-Truth, anti-Non-violence, anti-Congress high command and anti-God and anti-Khaddar and anti-village industries and advocated sexual anarchy in their speeches. In one of those meetings one of their leaders declared Gandhi as the Rasputin of India. . . . There is a book written by Engels, which they studied, in which he advocates group marriages or twin marriages (two wives for two husbands jointly) and condemns monogamy as the bourgeois invention to suppress women's freedom." . . . "They act as spies and informers with the police against the ordinary Congressmen particularly against the nationalist students, youth and ryot workers whom they consider as

their chief rivals. They got secret instructions from their party leader to use sticks and beat their opponents in order to suppress them, besides handing them over to the police even by giving false information."

## VI

P. C. JOSHI TO MAHATMA GANDHI

Bombay,  
16th August, 1944.

DEAR GANDHIJI,

I had intended to send my reply to your letter of 30th July through Sajjad Zaheer. But he is leaving today instead of on Friday and I have been very busy the last week writing for this number of *People's War*. I am sending you an advance copy of this issue which contains my article. I hope you will read the article before you meet and talk to him. I am also enclosing some statistics about Bengal and the Punjab which, I am sure, you will find useful.

As far as our reply to your letter is concerned, I shall send it to you when you come to Bombay, as you are due here on the 19th.

With respectful greetings,

P. C. JOSHI.

## VII

P. C. JOSHI TO MAHATMA GANDHI

Bombay,  
12th September, 1944.

DEAR GANDHIJI,

Your letter of 30th July was duly delivered to me by Shri Hutheesing. Within 2 days of its receipt by

me one of us who deals with Mr. Kanji Dwarakadas over labour problems was told in a casual conversation over the telephone that he understands that we had received your second letter and that you had accepted our explanation regarding our finances, but that you were now inquiring about our morals. I hope you understand our own reactions to the way the problem of correspondence with us is being dealt with by your Secretariat. In several papers messages have appeared that give the substance of your questions to us but not our answer to you and make insinuations. We have kept the Press at arm's length so far.

In public life there is a code and in our national movement we all take a particular pride in the fact that we observe a higher code than in the public life of other countries. I am saying this not only because we feel bad about it but because it brings discredit to our national movement of which you are the living symbol.

I may as well give in the very beginning, our reaction to your letter as a whole. If my own father had written to me what you have written, I would NOT have answered his letter and I would never again have gone to meet him. I am writing to you because you are the nation's Father, it will be unpatriotic on my part to get angry with you, even when you insult and humiliate us. I know you don't mean it but your ignorance of our views and your prejudices against our Party are so great that you don't even realise what you are writing. I would request you to show the copy of your letters to me to Mrs. Naidu and Syts. Bhulabhai Desai and C. Rajagopalachariar and hear for yourself if they do not also agree with me that I am perfectly justified in so sharply reacting to your letter.

I will not take up the political part of your letter



where you think that our policy is pro-Government. I do not hope to convince you through letters on this point, and you yourself say that our policy is not the basis of your prejudices against us.

We cannot discuss political issues objectively as long as prejudices persist.

I am not waiting for the day when the New Delhi archives fall into the Nation's hands, they will tell you what the Government thinks of our present political policy!

Most of the newspapers have been given relief about paper quota against recent heavy restrictions. We also applied to the Government. I am enclosing copies of letters which will tell you that the Government has not given our Journals and Publishing House the relief which most of the "nationalist" ones have already secured. This much about your fear "I suggest that the title 'People's War' is highly misleading. It enables the Government in India to claim that at least one popular Party considers this as 'People's War'".

I will discuss political issues with you only when you feel you have no more prejudices left and you consider us to be as honest as you claim yourself to be.

We have been thinking hard what should make you so hostile towards us and the root lies in your own mistaken understanding of what Communism is. You are fundamentally a religious person and have an ethical code. You relate your fundamental religious beliefs to your political work. You seem to think that Communism means that "the end justifies the means" and therefore that the Communists are capable of any opportunist policies and any vile trick if they think these will serve their ends. Such a belief about the

tenets of Communism makes you lend your ears to any slander against us.

By the way this is an outmoded slogan against us and educated persons in Europe gave it up after the twenties. I used to hear it often about ten years back. I meet hundreds of intellectuals and non-Communist patriots but I hear it no more.

I do not want you to take my word for anything, but I do want you just to spend a little time studying Communism from the ethical angle itself. You know the Dean of Canterbury, you have stayed with him. He is your friend and also ours. He is an intensely religious person. His religious beliefs have led him to become our friend. He is not a Party Member but a very good sympathiser. He is on the Editorial Board of the *Daily Worker*, British Communist daily. He has written on problems from a religious-ethical angle. I would earnestly request you to read his book "Socialist Sixth of the World" and his pamphlet, "Marxism and the Individual," (printed in India as the second part of "The Heritage We Acclaim"). They will help you to see that we Communists are very "religious" in the best sense of the word, even though we profess adherence to no religion. We try to conform to a moral-ethical code which religions preach but whose followers never practise and more than that, our moral code is more strict and demands greater material sacrifices and life-long self-education, and very hard practical work in the daily service of the people.

I would like to hear from you what you think of the Dean's writings and if they have helped you to understand us better. You have been gracious enough to promise that you will read whatever I recommend. We regularly send our weekly to you. I would request you to glance through it and every week read any bit

that catches your eye and after 3 months let me know again if you still think we are woolly in the head and unpatriotic. Send me back any single para that you think helps the Government and hurts the people.

You accept my answer about our finances and hold the position to be "completely satisfactory." I sent you categorical answers on the other points and I enclosed documents and yet you think that you cannot give a "categorical reply." You appreciate them but say: "If I was free from prejudices I would have no hesitation in accepting your answers." It hurts us more than you can imagine to read that our nation's leader pleads prejudices as standing in the way of examining slander against a young patriotic party.

Mud-slinging at political opponents is an old weapon of those who have lost faith in the people and given up all moral values. Just as the bureaucracy attempted to use that weapon against you, challenging your integrity and accusing you of pro-Japanism. Some C.S.Pers and Boseites are using it against us. You are getting letters and documents against us as part of a well-organised campaign against us by these parties. They have tried out in their own localities all the slanders that they are now regaling to you and failed. After your release they are trying to prejudice you.

In this they are helped by the prejudices of many honest Congressmen against us. You yourself, it seems, are puzzled as to why some honest Congressmen should be so passionately anti-Communist. The reason is not far to seek. Since 9th August we stuck to our convictions and refused to join the sabotage campaign because we were convinced that these were against the interests of our country. We campaigned among people and invited their wrath upon our heads. A section of Congressmen misinterpreted our policy as being against

the Congress and the nation. Subsequent events have shown it was not so. Their subjective anger against us, political intolerance and refusal to concede patriotism to those differing from them makes them sad victims of C.S.P. propaganda. The situation is often so tragic that while our entire Party defends the Congress against charge of pro-Japanism, they slander us as the enemies of the people.

I will quote but one instance of political intolerance in Congress ranks and that in connection not with ourselves. Quite a good part of the middle ranks of the Congress think even now that Mr. Jinnah is an agent of the Government and you are ill-advised in negotiating with him. They cannot for their life believe that there are patriots inside the League also. This same kind of blind prejudice is displayed towards us. Yet we are confident that we will win the confidence of honest Congressmen more and more by working with them and as they will be helped by life itself to live down their prejudices.

If you enquire into the bona fides of the persons who have written to you you will find that they are those who organised or supported the post-9th August sabotage campaign or have been intensely prejudiced against us by these people.

They are bitter against us because we opposed sabotage and exposed them not only in words but in practice.

After your letters from jail and later statements they cannot attack us politically and thus are reduced to mean tricks.

I have yet to come across a person whom anyone will call a patriot who will utter to my face the slanders that seem to have reached you and who will have the courage to repeat them before the Congress and League

leaders of his own district.

I would have expected you to tell the persons who seem to give you so much "evidence" (which I consider to be slanders) that if all that they say about the Communists is right, it should be the easiest thing for them to wipe us out in their district and that they need not bother you about "Communists" who on their own report are a gang of unpatriotic degenerates. This is how I would like the National Father to act, who has a very large family to look after.

You have referred me to two cases. I will take them one by one :

A) *Re: B. Manoranjan Chowdhury.*

He had seen me before he met you. He came to our office with the uncle of my wife who was an old friend of his but sat in the waiting room fearing that I would not meet him. When the Uncle told me that he wanted to meet me, I invited him in for a talk. He congratulated me for marrying "the best Bengali girl" and made me blush. He told me that in his own district Noakhali the "best workers" are inside the Party! He complimented me for building up "the best organised Party" in India! And a lot more in the same strain. In the end he told me that he does not agree with us on all points though he admires my "powerful writing"! I had not met him before and was just polite and pleasant to him.

This person comes to you without an appointment (He was a scout for Dr. Shyamaprosad and his courier).

He asked for an interview over the Rajaji formula, but took the "greater part" of your time telling you that we had "done great injury to the national cause." (He was preparing the ground for Dr. Shyamaprosad to meet you and testing out what standing the thrice-

cursed Communists had with you).

He has left papers with you which you have not been able to study.

He has left with you a printed book. You have not given me its title, but I guess that it is likely to be Kalyani Bhattacharya's "War Against the People." I have not read the book but only glanced at it and seen through the cartoons. When I received it I sent a wire to our Bengal Committee if it should be answered in the *People's War* and I got the answer that I need not bother because it had been withdrawn from circulation as all decent Bengalees who read it felt disgusted over it.

What does the book say? It states that I am Maxwell's boy and insinuates that our girl comrades in Bengal are like prostitutes. What is the evidence of facts? None, but through the book the allegation is made that Maxwell pays me and my Party; the rest of the book consists of verbal decoration around this theme. You have yourself seen through the "paid-Government-agent" slander. I will take the answer to our food policy being pro-government later, but what is the positive call to the people that this book itself gives?—food riots, "revolution," just what a Jap agent in Bengal would advocate. The book was banned after a while and so far as I know, not one Bengali journal protested against ban!

I will take the author of the book first. She did not write the book herself; I know it for a fact that Dr. Shyamaprosad got it written and paid for its publication.

Now I come to the contents of the book. It is an answer to a series of articles I wrote on the first Bengal famine, in the *People's War*; they created a sensation in Bengal and Syt. Bhulabhai Desai told a comrade of

ours that I have helped him to get a clear picture of Bengal famine for the first time. The articles were later reprinted into a pamphlet which became the best seller and went into two editions within two weeks. In those articles I exposed Shyamaprosad as being a hoarders' man in policy and a communal factionalist in practice. And this pamphlet of Kalyani Bhattacharya was his "reply" to mine.

I don't expect you to study the Bengal famine and its after-effects; you are busy dealing with the basic national political issue by meeting Mr. Jinnah and if it comes off, I know you would have done your bit for Bengal.

I will give you a reference that you will find amply satisfying, you know X. I got most of my factual data from him, when he saw the articles he agreed with my analysis. During my next visit to Bengal he invited me to stay with him for a while and we became still more friendly. He is an eminent intellectual and he is not a Communist. He is a Bengali, a patriot, a scientist and a statistician. Please send him Kalyani Bhattacharya's pamphlet and ask him what he thinks of the pamphlet and also what he thinks of what we write in the *People's War* on Bengal's food. After you have read his answer you will understand why I am so indignant.

By the way, several of his students and relatives are in the Party. He and his wife, know several of our Party boys and girls. I would like you to send *by hand* copies of your two letters to me and my answers. I am confident that he and his wife will tell you that you are letting your leg be pulled.

I could give you any number of references in Bengal, of the best sons and daughters of Bengal from every walk of life but I think one is enough.

Dr. Shyamaprosad and his men are campaigning against you in Bengal. We are not only supporting you but putting faith and courage into Congressmen to get and fight Dr. Shyamaprosad. And yet you ask me to "explain" etc. and you lend your ears to Dr. Shyamaprosad and his men!

If you trust Dr. Shyamaprosad more than me, I would request you to put us both to the test of the verdict of the people. I will go down to Bengal and let both of us organise mass rallies under our own banners, and on our own political policies. He through his Hindu Mahasabha and I, through our Party. In Calcutta our meeting will be twice the size of his and in the districts four to ten times his meeting. I am a non-Bengali and a bad speaker while Dr. Shyamaprosad is a great demagogue. I will make your delegate see mass rallies in the villages of Bengal the like of which only you could see if and when you go to that unfortunate province.

*B) Re. Extract from Kaleshwar Rao's Letter*

If you showed it to ANY honest person who knows anything about Communism and has at all seen the Indian Communists at work in any part of India he will tell you that it cannot but be all lies.

Rajaji has been to our Commune and dined with us. When I told him about our food jocularly that we are trying to beat the old man (i.e. you) at his own game, he told me that my food was more *Satwik* than yours!

Gelder has eaten with us on a Saturday when we get our weekly mutton-curry and also on week days when we have the plainest of vegetarian meals. He is a great admirer of yours. You casually ask him what he thinks of our food and the way we live.

Mrs. Naidu has been a poetess and a great lover



of our culture. She knows our poet comrades, she has seen our boys and girls dance and sing. You ask her what sort of culture we go in for and what we are doing for Indian culture.

Our Central Cultural Squad is rehearsing a new programme. While you are in Bombay you can drop in any time, unannounced. I am confident that it will make your heart swell with pride to hear them sing and dance, and you will like to hug all the boys and girls. They rehearse from 8-12 noon, and 2-7 p.m.

All the foreign correspondents assembled in Bombay to cover your meeting are anxious to see the squad at work to catch a bit of Indian folk-culture. When any of them comes to you at Wardha later you ask them what they think of what they heard and saw performed.

All the above is only to help you to see how much Kaleshwar Rao has wronged us by writing that letter to you.

But you are a lawyer too. I would ask you to call our Andhra Party leader, Sundarayya and Kaleshwar Rao and you talk to them both together on the letter and I hope that in 15 minutes you will find out who is a true son of Andhradesh and who a better votary of truth.

If you find you cannot come to any conclusions I would ask you to "organise" a proper trial before the Andhra people. You could appoint as the "judge" either Rajaji or Mrs. Naidu, respected national leaders and NOT prejudiced against us. I guarantee an attendance of 50,000 peasants, men and women of all generations with their children and perfect discipline and order. Let Kaleshwar Rao make the "Prosecutor's" speech and produce his witnesses. Sundarayya will produce no witnesses but only make a speech. And

let the "Judge" record for you the verdict of the "jury", the people who gave birth to both Kaleshwar Rao and Sundarayya.

What has hurt me most in his letters and your sending it to me is where he challenges our sex-morals. I would like you to know that it is only in our Party that we seek to guide, criticise and mould the entire life, both personal and political, of our members. The punishment inside our Party for sexual depravity is summary expulsion. I would also like you to know that we have perhaps a higher percentage of women in the Party than there were even in the Congress itself and that we have a larger number of women whole-time workers from elderly Mas to young unmarried girls than the Congress ever had. I hope you will now see that when any slanderer attacks our sex-morals we feel as strongly as a common person will when he hears his mothers and sisters filthily abused.

What worth should be placed on Kaleshwar Rao's statement and how reckless he is in his allegation can be seen from his total distortion of Engels' book. Engels' book "Evolution of Family, Property and State" is a scientific study of the history of human marriage and the development of property and State. In it Engels, who with Marx was the co-founder of Communism shows how historically marriage has tended to be more and more monogamic and how the earlier forms of marriage were discarded by society in its progress. In this connection he mentions Community marriage as a form which once existed in the infant period of human society. To allege that Engels justified Community marriage is a base perversion, for which it is difficult to find parallel. At this rate any historical research will be impossible. Engels, on the contrary, laid it down that the progress in human

marriage is registered by its evolution as a monogamic marriage—a statement which gives the lie to Kaleshwar Rao's distortion about Community marriage.

Wavell paid tribute to your "intelligence", "experience", and "acumen" and recognised "much ability and high mindedness" in those who represent the Congress. You rightly answered back that why then does he not trust you.

You write to me "I know your worth. You have very able young men and women, as selfless as I would claim to be. You are all hard-working and possess great energy and you impose strict discipline on your workers. All this I prize and admire." And just as Wavell does to you, you don't trust my word over issues that in any decent society are taken for granted.

Please realise what I must be feeling inside me when I find that you treat me and our Party in the same way as Wavell treats you and the Congress.

Secondly, have you ever cared to recall the words of the Communist delegates in the historic August A.I.C.C. meeting? What did they beseech you to do? To delete the operative clause (the sanction clause) and replace it by acceptance of self-determination and immediate negotiations with the League; this in fact is just what you have done NOW.

What did they warn against? Just what happened immediately after your arrests what they had forecast in their speeches and what you repudiated the moment you got the chance from within the jail itself but which the people outside did not know. You repudiated sabotage from within the jail, we fought against it outside, when all those who swore by you had been swept off their feet. You asked Rajaji to go ahead with Jinnah and without knowing anything about your acceptance of the formula we popularised self-determination and

Congress-League unity when the majority of Congressmen and Leaguers themselves lacked faith.

In conclusion, I did not answer this letter earlier because I was expecting you in Bombay. I did not send it as soon as you reached here because I did not want to intrude upon your time when we want you to give your single-minded attention to bring about an agreement with Mr. Jinnah. I am, therefore, sending it on what is reported to be the last day of your talks with him.

I want you to read this letter at your leisure. I am writing to you for the last time on the subject of our bona fides. It is too humiliating to read what you send us and we see no reason why we should put up with it after having bared our breasts before you.

I will make to you an offer which in normal conditions we will consider below the prestige of our Party to suggest. You place your whole anti-Communist file before any patriot of eminence who inspires mutual trust, e.g. Mrs. Naidu, Rajaji or Bhulabhai. These three are your old colleagues and known to us not to be prejudiced against us. Let me have a copy of the file and let them ask me for explanations on any point. I am sure after reading their report you will consign the anti-Communist file to flames.

I hope you will agree that I could do nothing more to convince you.

I expect an answer to this but if you are not satisfied, I hope you will at least spare us the silly stories that petty slanderers for political reasons send you. If you want our views on any political issue or you want us to undertake any particular service of the people you have only to send the word.

The more we find you failing to discharge your duty towards us as the nation's father, the harder we

shall work to discharge our duty as the nation's sons. And one day, we shall have your blessings.

I hope you know that we do not have personal capacity inside the Communist Party. The letters that I have written to you have been written on behalf of the leadership of our Party which we are proud to say knows no factions and cliques.

With respectful greetings,

P. C. JOSHI.

### VIII

#### MAHATMA GANDHI TO P. C. JOSHI

Bombay,  
15th September 1944.

DEAR JOSHI,

Many thanks for your letter.

I do not mind the warmth into which you have been betrayed. I must apologise for the offence my language has caused you. You will believe me when I tell you that I wrote in all good faith. I could not come close to the party if I did not disclose even my prejudices. I had expected appreciation for my friendly approach and frankness. Nevertheless I must continue my study of the party and its leaders.

I have accepted your advice. I placed your letter in Shri Bhulabhai's hands and asked him to instruct and guide me.

I shall not worry you directly with letters. I shall try to know you through the common friends you mention. Sarojini Devi is with Shri Bhulabhai. Rajaji is with me. I shall show your letter to him when it comes back from Shri Bhulabhai.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. GANDHI.

## IX

## P. C. JOSHI TO MAHATMA GANDHI

Bombay,  
28th September, 1944.

DEAR GANDHIJI,

Your letter of 15th September was acknowledged in a slip to the Volunteer who brought it. I did not answer it earlier because I did not want you to give your mind to anything except your meeting with Jinnah Saheb. The talks have unfortunately broken down and I am, therefore, writing a few words.

I am sorry if the warmth of my letter appeared to you uncalled for. We were very much grieved to read what you had written and felt what I would call *justly* indignant. A Communist is nothing if not brutally frank. I did not expect you to tell me to appreciate your frankness; the whole nation knows it and if we did not share it I would not have entered into correspondence with you and written to you all that I did nor made the offers which I did.

We are anxiously awaiting the advice that Rajaji, Bhulabhai and Sarojini Devi give you on the slanders against our Party. In fairness to us and in the interests of the country you should not let the matter rest but make up your mind. We have no doubt that your next letter to me will put the slanderers in their place and call upon me to make good the promise to write to you on food, Muslims and international issues.

Our greatest desire is that you may lead the nation to its destined goal aright, we may have no chance to differ with you on practical issues. Our own earnest endeavour always is to earn the unstinted blessings of

our great people whom we recognise as our real parents.  
With respectful greetings,

P. C. JOSHI.

X

P. C. JOSHI TO MAHATMA GANDHI

Bombay,  
1st February, 1945.

DEAR GANDHIJI,

My last letter to you was dated 28th September, 1944. You had promised in an earlier letter that you will refer the question of our moral bona fides and your what I may call the anti-Communist file to your worthy colleagues. I hope they have reached their conclusions and reported to you. But I have not heard anything from you yet.

You perhaps do not know that your name is being used against us in the recent Congressmen's Conferences and even otherwise by persons who pretend to know your mind, etc. I know that most of what they attribute to you could never have been said by you. But my own lips are sealed till my correspondence with you is concluded over the questions you asked me and they were very serious questions, doubting our elementary patriotic and moral bona fides. I hope with the help of your Working Committee colleagues, you have reached the conclusion that we are not unworthy children of our great people.

Great things are happening in the world but our country is going to pieces. We are anxious to write to you on the big political issues but as I wrote to you before, it will be waste of your time and mine till you are convinced about our intellectual honesty and moral integrity.

I understand from Dr. Mahmud that you think that you are the aggrieved party. This is exactly the opposite of what we feel. I, of course, meant no offence but only expressed my indignation at my Party being slandered and offered to go into the dock straightaway. I do not know what else I could do. Sjt. Bhulabhai and Mrs. Naidu had promised to speed up the matter but I have not heard from them at all. Rajaji told me that he had already told you all that he had to.

May I request you for an answer as soon as you can and to get your colleagues speed up their report to you.

I could send Mohan to pick up the answer and answer any further questions he feels himself qualified to tackle. I am going to Bengal for three weeks to-day. Could your answer be ready by the time I am back? Mohan will be very busy in my absence and will find it very difficult to come there in February, unless you specially want him to; but any date after 7 March will be best.

With respectful salutations,

Yours sincerely,  
P. C. JOSHI.

## XI

### MAHATMA GANDHI TO P. C. JOSHI

Sevagram,  
5th February, 1945.

BROTHER JOSHI,

Received your letter. Shall I reply in the national language?\*

I did not write to you because you yourself had

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\*This is a translation of the original letter, written in Hindi.



asked me not to do so. Yes, you are right, complaint was mine. I wanted to come near you. To clear up that I asked, I wrote. In that there was no reason for anger.

I have given everything to Bhulabhai. There was some difficulty about one thing. Rajaji refused, because he is considered a partisan. I have already expressed my view. You must have seen it. I want to come still nearer to the Communists. But complaints continue coming to me. I have told everything to brother Habib. Mohan need not come. But if he wants, he can come.

Yours,  
M. K. GANDHI.

## XII

### P. C. JOSHI TO MAHATMA GANDHI

Bombay,  
1st May, 1945.

DEAR GANDHIJI,

It is nearly three months since we last exchanged letters and eleven months since we began our correspondence. As you must know, a number of untrue statements concerning our correspondence have appeared in newspapers hostile to my party. I have not answered these as we were still exchanging letters, but I am naturally anxious that we should come to some understanding as soon as possible.

I would therefore like to send Mohan to discuss this matter with you. He would be able to come to Mahabaleshwar to see you on the afternoon of either Thursday May 10 or Thursday May 17, whichever date is more convenient for you. Could you please let me know through the bearer which date would suit you

best and the time you would like him to come to your residence ?

With respectful greetings,

P. C. JOSHI.

### XIII

#### MAHATMA GANDHI TO P. C. JOSHI

Mahabaleshwar,  
3rd May, 1945.

DEAR JOSHI,

I have your kind note.

You need not await the *finale* of our correspondence for answering untrue reports that may appear in the papers. That, however, apart Mohan may come on the 24th inst. if Thursday is only day he can spare. I am taking medical treatment at least till 10th and on 17th I have a meeting which may last 3 days.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. GANDHI.

### XIV

#### MAHATMA GANDHI'S REPLY

*In answer to a request from Mohan Kumaramangalam on behalf of P. C. Joshi for permission to print the correspondence that had passed between Mahatmaji and P. C. Joshi, and also requesting Mahatmaji to hasten the decision of Sjt. Bhulabhai Desai on the questions given to him, Mahatmaji replied :*

“ I was glad to meet you any time and so I said ‘yes’ to Joshi. But these two questions could have been answered in two lines. My correspondence with Joshi

was never confidential. In any event it can be published at once. I think I said as much in one of my letters. I can't hasten Bhulabhai. I have sent him the papers I could. He could give his opinion any day he chose. My fear is that it won't be an award. It would be the opinion of a distinguished lawyer on the papers in my possession. But my own opinion is not formed. I want to pass no hasty judgment. Many honest Congressmen come to me or write to me from the various provinces that Communists have no principles save of keeping their party alive and beating their opponents with any stick that came to their hands. I am not going to base my opinion on this evidence either. I dare not condemn you, Batliwala, Joshi or Habib of Lucknow. He was with me for over a month I think. He came for his father.\* I like him very much. On the whole I agree with Rajaji that you should refuse to put yourself in the dock. I do not want to pass judgment against a political party. I tell friends to be guided by their own knowledge and not by my judgment which may be erring for want of complete evidence."

Mahabaleshwar,  
24th May, 1945.

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\*Dr. Mahmud, former member of the Working Committee of the Congress.

## APPENDICES

## I

**SOLVE NATIONAL CRISIS THROUGH NATIONAL UNITY!***(From "People's War," Vol. 1., No. 12)**Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, passed at its meeting, September 20th, 1942.*

In the following we reprint the full text of the main political resolution passed by the Plenum of the Central Committee (C. C.) of the Communist Party, which was in continuous session during the last two weeks.

It was the first open session of the highest organ of the Party after its legalisation in August last. It was attended by thirty Communist leaders from all over India, which included, apart from the members of the Central Committee, specially invited provincial leaders

The message of greetings to the jailed comrades adopted by the session makes special mention of prominent leaders and C. C. members who still continue to be incarcerated. They are Comrades R. D. Bharadwaj, S. A. Dange, Soli Batliwala and S. V. Ghate. The Session sent a message of greeting to Comrade Ajoy Kumar Ghosh, prominent member of the Polit-Bureau who was unable to attend the session due to illness.

The main political report on the resolution was made by Comrade G. Adhikari which was followed by a co-report by Comrade P. C. Joshi. In this moment of the gravest national crisis and peril, the resolution as well as the report struck the confident and courageous note that it is also the hour of greatest opportunity for the patriots and the people of our country.

It condemns imperialist repression against the Congress and the people. It points out that at a time when the imperialist bureaucracy is riding rough-shod over the people, it is really isolated from all sections of the people and is tottering.

It sharply brings out the fact that the so-called struggle for freedom unleashes the forces of disruption and anarchy which strengthens the bureaucracy and opens the gates to the fascist invader.

It sees in the growing forces of national unity the powerful weapon with which the patriots and the people can smash the game of the bureaucracy and win National Government to organise

total national resistance to Fascist aggressors and achieve freedom.

Its ringing call is for :

—A political explanatory campaign to turn patriots away from the suicidal path of sabotage and to isolate and expose the Fifth Columnists, to stop national disruption.

—A countrywide campaign for National Unity, for the release of national leaders, for forcing the hands of the bureaucracy, for National Government.

—A campaign among the Hindu and Muslim masses for Congress-League unity, the key to national unity and national salvation.

### *Imperialist Repression*

1. This Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, condemns unequivocally the military and police rule of blood and terror let loose by the imperialist bureaucracy against the people, following the arrest of the national leaders on the 9th August, 1942. The main responsibility for plunging the country into a grave and perilous crisis, which not only undermines the cause of the defence and freedom of India, but also that of the freedom-loving peoples of the United Nations, must be fastened on the shoulders of the British Government. The national leadership had declared their readiness to undertake the full responsibility for uniting and organising the people for the armed defence of the country, in alliance with the United Nations and thus to take their full share in the war of world freedom against fascist aggression, provided that Indian independence was recognised and a provisional Government set up, enjoying the confidence of the people and supported by the major political parties. But the British Government instead of pursuing the policy of winning the friendship and alliance of the Indian people, have persistently refused to part with power. Taking advantage of our national disunity, of the frustration and desperation of our national leadership, they have launched a war against the people, and are provoking a country-wide conflict which is being fully utilised by Fifth Columnists and Jap agents. Mr. Churchill speaking as the head of the British Government, has threatened to continue this dihard imperialist policy to its logical conclusion.

### *A Fifth-Column Incendiary Policy*

2. The policy of the British Government is an incendiary and fifth-column policy. It prepares for the Indian people the

ghastly fate of Burma and Malaya. It stabs the cause of the British and American peoples, of the Soviet and Chinese peoples, in the back. The Communist Party warns the British Government that if it persists in this policy, if it persists in its attempt to crush the Congress, it will only succeed in creating a common disaster for the British and the Indian peoples. The only way out of this perilous situation which grows more critical every day, is to stop this offensive of repression against the people and the Congress, to release Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leaders, to lift the ban on the Congress and to open negotiations with the Congress and the other political parties especially the Muslim League, for the establishment of a Provisional National Government, fully empowered and determined to unite and mobilise the people for the defence and freedom of the country in close alliance with the United Nations. The Communist Party of India, which is pledged to forge national unity to solve this national crisis, appeals to the workers and the progressive peoples of Britain and America to bring pressure upon the British Government to concede these just national demands of the Indian people and thus clear the path of our common victory in this war of liberation.

### *Campaign of Sabotage and Anarchy*

3. The arrest of Congress leaders and the regime of repression which the mad bureaucracy is intensifying every day has called forth a country-wide upsurge of people's indignation and mass conflict. Bands of honest but blind patriots are seeking to lead this mass upsurge by organising it as a Congress struggle for freedom of the country. The technique of the struggle is, in the main, to organise sabotage of communications (cutting telegraph wires and removing rails, etc.), to stop production, and to paralyse the apparatus of administration by all means. They hope by these methods to bring about the fall of the Government and the transfer of power to the people. What they are achieving, however, is exactly the opposite. By giving this pernicious direction to the anger of the people, they are only organising the destruction of the national defence and economy of our own country and are giving free scope to the forces of anarchy. This state of things suits the Fifth Column elements and Fascist agents the most, who are attempting to seize the leadership of the movement and to planfully re-inforce the efforts at destroying the defensive capacities of the nation. Secondly, as the movement spreads,

there is dislocation in national economy and growing anarchy. This hits the people and helps the would be aggressor. It disunites the people more and more and thereby strengthens the hands of the bureaucracy. Thirdly, the indiscriminate and merciless repression by the police and military, firing, lathi-charges, whipping and collective fines, further aggravates the situation. As a result of this, a section of the people is angered and is driven to more mad acts of sabotage, while the bulk of the people begin to feel demoralised and helpless. They give way to a mood of despair and frustration, which nourishes pro-Japanese sentiments and saps the will of the people to resist aggression.

Thus between the desperate activities of the blind patriots which are being taken advantage of more and more by the fifth columnists, on the one hand, and the mad repression of the bureaucrats on the other, the defensive capacities of the nation as well as people's morale, strength and unity are being undermined, making the country ripe to fall under the axe of the fascists.

#### *Where It Leads*

4. How did this situation arise? It arose because the national leadership instead of going all-out to unite the people to rouse them to do everything which strengthens the country's defences against the fascist aggressors and forging mass sanctions for securing National Government for national defence, chose the opportunist path of inactivity, of non-embarrassing non-co-operation with defence measures, hoping thereby to win the national demand as gift from imperialism. The Communist Party had warned against this policy, which amounted to leaving the initiative and the fate of the nation entirely in the hands of imperialism. This only strengthened the obstinate attitude of the bureaucracy to deny power to the Indian people and led to the growing moods of frustration and defeatism among the nationalist masses. Instead of drawing from this the requisite lessons about the urgency of unity, the national leadership took one more step in the direction of its own opportunist policy. It advanced from non-co-operation and neutrality to a plan of active opposition to measures of national defence in the name of launching a struggle for the national demand.

The path along which the present national upsurge is directed is one of national suicide, not of national salvation and freedom. It destroys the nation's indispensable defences inevitably leading to conditions of civil commotion and disorder, anarchy, and even

loot and arson. It makes the national movement the prey of bureaucratic provocation in the name of struggle. Finally, it creates a mass basis for Fifth Column activity in the name of patriotism. It is a path, in short, which strikes at the very root of that people's unity which alone can be the means of securing National Government and ensuring successful national defence. Thus the policy of the national leaders instead of leading the people unitedly to compel the bureaucracy to concede National Government as an instrument of national defence and freedom, has left it free to hit at the people. It is leading the nation to a state of moral and political disruption and paralysis which far from helping the people to get their freedom can only clear the path of the invader. Such is the disastrous culmination of policies of not relying upon the strength of the people, i.e., on national unity, and leaving the initiative in the hands of the imperialist bureaucracy.

#### *Favourable Factors*

5. The situation can yet be retrieved. The Imperialist bureaucracy stands isolated and weakened as never before. The more it beats and represses the people, the more it earns the hatred and disgust of all sections of the nation. It has failed miserably in its efforts to build an anti-Congress front. Its political, economic and military policies are utterly bankrupt and it is quite incapable of uniting, leading and saving the nation in the crisis, created by the menace of invasion.

Secondly, a mighty potential basis for building national unity is there already. This broad unity, however, is by no means fully behind the present struggle launched by the Congress, on the other hand, sections oppose it. But it can be mobilised fully behind the main demands of the Congress which are national demands, viz., recognise India's independence, negotiate for an all-round settlement, set up a National Provisional Government for mobilising the people for a people's defence against the aggressors in alliance with the United Nations. Such a national unity, broadest ever achieved, is within reach and if actually realised, will at once foil the game of the imperialist bureaucracy and bring it to its knees.

Thirdly, the demand of freedom and National Government for India is gathering ever-growing support among the working-masses and the peoples of Great Britain and America. The growing strength of the anti-fascist national front in the countries of



the United Nations, led by their Communist Parties and backed by the power and prestige of the Soviet Union, will stand behind our united strength to defend the country in alliance with them and make our national demand irresistible. Such are the favourable factors and such is the potential opportunity present in the perilous situation itself.

### *Unity—The Way Out*

6. The Communist Party declares that the way out of the national crisis does not lie either in the direction of continuing the present brutal repression to crush the Congress as the imperialists, the loyalists, and the Royists suggest, nor in the direction of intensifying the offensive against the apparatus of national defence and production as the Forward Blocists, Congress Socialists and many Congressmen propose. The path of the crazy imperialists and that of the blind patriots together would lead to the same result, namely to disruption and anarchy, to national frustration and desperation, which will serve only the interests of the fascist invaders and of no one else. The only way out is the path which the proletariat and its vanguard—the Communist Party—is putting before the people, the path of achieving the broadest possible national unity, based on Congress-League Unity.

The slogan of national unity is not a mere formula, or just a phrase to be flung in the face of those who advocate the path of so-called struggle. It is a revolutionary policy of rallying the broadest possible sections of the people for the defence of their common interests and the achievement of their most pressing demands. In the present world situation, it is the most potent and powerful and the only weapon which the people of India have to forge and wield in order to wrest power from the hands of the British imperialists, and to successfully defend the country against foreign aggression. Militarily, politically and economically, the rule of the British imperialists is at present weaker than ever before. It is fast disintegrating under the hammerblows of the growing anti-fascist unity of the peoples of the United Nations. Its last and only weapon of withholding power from the people now is to keep them divided. The disunity of the Indian people is the main basis of its remaining strength in India and which it utilises to drive a wedge between India and the peoples of the United Nations. That is why complete national unity in the present circumstances must generate such a force before which the bureaucratic opposition must collapse. This is the decisive

significance of national unity, of Congress-League Unity, to-day ! It is going to be the final blow that must compel India's present masters to sue for terms to the Indian people. Congress-League unity is not going to bring about a "change of heart" in Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery. It is going to transform the relative strength of the British imperialists and the Indian people. It is going to be the irresistible sanction of the Indian people behind their demand for a National Government.

### *The Main Task—Unity Campaign*

7. The central tasks to which the Party must address itself to-day are three-fold :

- (a) Organise a countrywide campaign for national unity ;
- (b) Carry on persistent political explanation among workers, Kisans, student militants and Congressmen, how the present struggle leads to destruction and anarchy and is suicidal ;
- (c) Continuous and widespread agitation among Hindu and Muslim masses for Congress-League Unity.

The main slogans of the unity campaign are : Release Mahatma Gandhi and the National leaders, stop repression, check destruction, sabotage and anarchy, lift the ban on the Congress, negotiate for an all-round settlement, set up a provisional National Government for India's defence. The campaign may vary in form and in slogans from place to place, regard being paid to the varying development of the political situation. The aim should be to make the campaign as broad as possible and effective. It may begin as a campaign for signatures on a joint manifesto framed so as to secure the broadest local support. It may develop through a series of discussions and private meetings. It should further develop as a campaign for restoring peace and civil liberties, and culminate in the formation of an all-parties' defence committee for pressing for the withdrawal of collective fines, for tackling the problem of food supply and profiteering and for strengthening the morale of the population for resisting the fascist aggressors.

### *Congress-League Unity*

The slogans for Congress-League unity campaign should be :

- (a) Congress-League agreement, to set up a Provisional National Government for the successful defence of the country and freedom ;

- (b) The positions already taken by the Congress as well as by the Muslim League on the question of the right of Muslims in certain areas to self-determination, can with a given goodwill on both sides, afford a basis for settlement here and now.

On the basis of these two slogans, the campaign for unity must be run among the Muslim as well as Hindu masses. To the Hindu masses we must explain that what is just in the Pakistan demand, namely, the right of separation, must be conceded. It will give us unity now and lead to freedom. It will give us greater unity tomorrow and serve as a solid foundation for the freedom thus achieved. Similarly, we must get the Congress-minded people to recognise the urgency of the Congress conceding the right of self-determination of the Muslim nationalities and thus hasten the achievement of Congress-League unity. To the Muslim masses, we must show that Muslim independence can only come by joining with the Hindus and the Congress for joint action. Hence they must get the League leadership to move for Congress-League unity.

#### *Tasks Among the Working Class*

It is above all the strength and unity of the working class movement which must be the indispensable and firm basis for achieving the unity of the entire people, for the solution of the national crisis and the winning of National Government. Therefore, our first and foremost task must be to re-establish firmly the leadership of the Unions and the Party in the industrial centres and stamp out the efforts of provocateurs and of misguided patriots to drag the working class into the suicidal campaign of sabotage and anarchy. For this :

- (a) We must conduct a political explanatory campaign among workers, through street-corner and basti (chawl) meetings as well as through public meetings.
- (b) Establish vigilance committees of militants in bastis (chawls) and mills to counteract panic-mongering, check rowdiness and the activities of irresponsible provocateurs intent on sabotage or stoppage of production.
- (c) We must concentrate more energy and attention on Union work and pay meticulous attention to the day-to-day and outstanding grievances such as dearness allowances, bonus, victimisation, etc. Unite the workers to win these demands, fully utilising the existing legal

machinery. Do not leave provocateurs and political adventurers to take the initiative and thus bring about dislocation of industry through this end.

- (d). We must make the working class conscious of the leading role it has to play in restoring and maintaining peace, in developing the drive for national unity, for winning the national demand and thus leading the people as a whole.

### *Tasks Among the Kisans*

Among the Kisans, in the rural areas, we must conduct a sharp political campaign against the saboteurs and promoters of anarchy and should seek to build unity to restore peace and to win back civil liberties. In villages and rural areas, where collective fines have been imposed, we must strive to develop all-parties' unity committees to restore and maintain peace and carry on an agitation for the withdrawal or remission of the collective fines. Our slogans in the rural areas should be unity for restoring peace, unity for release of leaders, the winning of national demands and the saving of the nation ; unity for solving food shortage and price problems and problems relating to accumulated arrears of rent and debt. We must concentrate more energy and attention on the day-to-day work of the Kisan Sabhas.

### *Among the Students*

The first task is to carry on a political explanatory campaign among the militants who are being gripped by the mass frenzy for destruction, sabotage and anarchy. We must explain to them that to pursue the policy of permanent strikes, to go in for destruction and anarchy is not to play their part in the freedom movement. It only gives the bureaucracy the chance to drive them out of colleges, to disrupt institution life and to smash the student movement. This results in honest student patriots being driven into the hands of Fifth Columnists to be utilised as tools for undermining the nation's morale and defences. Our main slogan for the student movement is : "Maintain the unity of the student movement, revive institution life, build unity movement for the national demands."

### *Conclusion*

The Committee recognises that the entire Party Membership and its lower units have already been working on the basis of

the line of work and agitation laid down in this resolution and have already won some significant successes. But the national crisis is by no means over and difficult turns are yet ahead. *The Central Committee, therefore, calls upon every member and unit to spare no effort and sacrifice in order to fulfil the tasks set forth in this resolution.*

19th September, 1942.

CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS,  
THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA,  
190B, KHETWADI MAIN ROAD,  
BOMBAY 4.

## II

### ALL TOGETHER...FOR THE RELEASE OF GANDHIJI TO END THE NATIONAL CRISIS

(From "People's War", Vol. 1., No. 33)

*Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, passed at its meeting, February 15, 1943.*

A situation of the utmost gravity faces our people to-day. The reckless act of the bureaucracy on August 9, drove the vast masses of our patriots away from the path of National Defence. The treacherous Fifth Column sought shelter in the bosom of patriotism. The conflict between the Government and the people aggravated every problem in the land. Economic dislocation and crisis deepened into a crisis of the barest necessities of life of the people, of food itself.

Starvation and famine face the nation at a time when the ruthless Jap invader is at our doors.

*Now Or Never!*

No longer could the nation's leaders behind prison bars continue to be helpless witnesses to this disaster. Gandhiji's fast is a desperate call to the entire nation to wake up before it is too late and unite to save itself from utter extinction.

The same hands that locked the jail gates on the nation's leaders on August 9, refuse to unlock them now. The life of the nation's foremost leader is in peril. His call for settlement, the only way out, is spurned.

The crisis is deepened a hundredfold.

It is "Now or Never" for our entire nation. We either get Gandhiji out and solve the crisis; or we sink in it deeper still irrevocably, and helplessly get carried on by it from the arms of one enslaver into those of another.

Whether we can get Gandhiji out or not today—on this depends whether our entire nation passes from crisis to salvation or to death.

### *A Rebuff to Slanders*

Gandhiji's statements have swept away every obstacle, every prejudice, that stands in the way of our great patriotic parties uniting among themselves and with the peoples of the United Nations.

He has answered back all the slanders hurled against our national movement by the bureaucracy and has reaffirmed the staunch anti-Fascist stand of the Congress. He has categorically disowned sabotage and anarchy on behalf of the Congress. He has revealed that the Congress was on the eve of new negotiations with the League prior to August 9; he has indicted the Viceroy for blocking Rajaji's efforts to interview him after his talks with Jinnah.

He has opened the door wide for settlement with the League, for united negotiations with the Government.

### *Viceroy's Challenge*

The Viceroy's "No" to Gandhiji shows the length to which wooden-headed reaction can go. They don't want settlement with the Indian people; they want our downright surrender.

Every patriotic party, every patriot should wake up and see where this policy leads our nation. The Viceroy's "No" to Gandhiji is not a mere private quarrel between the Congress and the Government. It is an ultimatum delivered to every patriotic party, to our entire nation—either surrender or nothing.

Accentuation of the misguided struggle against the means of our National Defence; new lease of life to the Fifth Column just at a time when its whole political basis has been knocked off clean by Gandhiji's statements; deepening of the food crisis into famine and food riots—this is what awaits our nation if the Viceroy's "No" is allowed to stand.

India's gates would be left wide open and the Jap invaders could walk in any time it suited them.

### *Bureaucracy On Last Legs*

The glorious traditions of our patriotic national parties, the sound patriotic instincts of our great people, cannot look on in passivity and silence before this shameful prospect. Out of this very prospect itself, out of the present die-hard stand of the Viceroy has opened out the biggest opportunity for our nation.

Never before has the reactionary Bureaucracy isolated itself so completely from every section of Indian public opinion, from every section of international public opinion. All the slanders of Amery and Co. against the Indian people, fabricated to isolate them from their international allies, are being blown up. All the barriers of misunderstanding and prejudice between the Congress and the League are being removed.

The movement for the immediate and unconditional release of Gandhiji as the only way of ending the crisis has already begun to sweep all over the land. All patriotic organisations and associations are coming into it. From the threatened province of Bengal has come the most inspiring example of a united lead—the demand of the Bengal Legislative Assembly for Gandhiji's release, a demand supported by all parties including the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha. The coming Delhi Conference should rally the biggest mobilisation of united Indian public opinion.

### *Unite To Stop Sabotage*

At this critical hour in the destiny of our beloved Motherland, the Communist Party appeals to every patriotic brother party, to every patriotic son and daughter of India :

All unite and win Gandhiji's release to end the crisis ! In the name of Gandhiji, stop sabotage and smash the Fifth Column !

We appeal to all our brother Congress patriots. From behind prison bars, Gandhiji has disowned sabotage and anarchy; he has given the call for unity with the League. In the sacred name of the Congress, in the name of Congress-League unity, stop sabotage and anarchy, smash the Fifth Column which has been running amuck with the Congress banner the last six months. This is the way you can act as true soldiers of the Congress, this is the way you can get the League to join you in winning Gandhiji's release.

### *Call To League Patriots*

We appeal to all our brother League patriots. On your

shoulders rests the biggest responsibility to-day. There are now few barriers, of prejudice or misunderstanding left between you and the Congress. Gandhiji has disowned the campaign of sabotage and anarchy, he has stretched out on behalf of the Congress his hand of friendship towards you through the prison bars.

Nothing but these bars stand between you and your great brother party ; between you and National Government which you so ardently desire and urgently need; between you and the satisfaction of your just demand for self-determination. The Viceroy has already said "No" to this just demand of yours.

### *For Self-Determination*

The Viceroy demands surrender of the Congress. To tolerate this demand is to help the bureaucracy to crush the biggest brother party of yours in the country through which alone you can realise your fight of self-determination.

To tolerate this is to allow the bureaucracy to smash all Parties after smashing the Congress.

The Viceroy has turned down even Gandhiji's proposal to consult the Congress Working Committee members. To allow the Viceroy's policy to stand, to allow the Congress call to you to go unheeded, is to miss your biggest chance of winning freedom for the Muslim masses and salvation for all. In the name of the Muslim masses of the threatened provinces, in the name of the traditions and aspirations of your own great organisation, throw in your entire weight to get Gandhiji out.

### *Forward All !*

We appeal to the Hindu Mahasabha patriots, to every one of our brother patriots throughout the length and breadth of India, to unite with each other and win Gandhiji's release and end the crisis. We specially appeal to the working class, Kisan and student organisations to rally behind the campaign for Gandhiji's release and to isolate those who try to exploit Gandhiji's fast for creating anarchy. One simple step forward and we force the bureaucracy to bend and save our entire nation from untold disaster. To fail to take this simple step means death and destruction for all.

All together demand Gandhiji's release !

Forward to National Unity to win National Government for National Defence and Freedom !



## III

## ALL TOGETHER...AGAINST JAP AGGRESSION, FOR FOOD AND FREEDOM

*May Day Call (1944) of the Communist Party of India.*

### *Our Destiny In Our Hands*

On this May Day, under the banner of Indian patriotism, we appeal to all our fellow-patriots and their great organisations for

Unqualified resistance to Jap invaders.

United relief for Bengal.

United struggle in all our towns and villages against the hoarders and for people's food.

All together for food for our people and freedom of our country !

A United India under its own National Government is destined to play together with China the same liberationist role in Asia as played by the Red Army in Europe.

Our Destiny and more is in our keeping.

On this May Day, the Communist Party warmly greets all fellow-fighters for freedom and appeals to their organisations for a common patriotic policy to save the country in this grave hour of national peril.

For two long years the threat of Fascist aggression hung over our heads. For the last two months it has become a grim reality.

Foiled in China, pressed back from the Pacific, the Japanese invading forces have crossed our borders. Decisive battles are being fought, and the fate of North Assam and East Bengal hangs in the balance. Will the invaders be hurled back to the Chindwin or will they march forward to Dimapur and Silchar ?

The Allied armies enjoy all-round superiority. But which country has ever been successfully defended against the Fascist aggressors through military might alone ?

The greatest weakness of the situation is that the British rulers still think in terms of military defence alone.

### *Weakness of the Home Front*

Tojo's strength comes from the weakness of the British position in India under which the Indian people feel helpless. He hopes to exploit not only the helplessness but also the hunger of

our people. Sixty million Bengalees right behind the front lines are in the grip of epidemics like Malaria, Cholera and Small-pox, the legacy of the last famine, and face a situation drifting towards a second famine.

In the rest of the country food prices are higher than our fathers could ever imagine and the Government food plans are in the hands of the hoarders.

Manufacturers and merchants in their profit-hunt are getting round all control measures and openly engage themselves in activities which are classed in every other country as industrial sabotage.

The Government multiplies the economic chaos by initiating inflation, on the one hand, and introducing confiscatory measures, in the name of deflation on the other.

The front has been pierced, the people are helpless and the economic rear is on the verge of collapse.

### *Rouse the People Against the Japs*

The people have to be roused not to bend the knee to the aggressor but the foremost patriotic leaders of the country are behind the bars.

Bose is coming with the Jap Army and the only effective answer to him can be that Nehru stands behind the Allied armies.

In every town and village hoarding and profiteering have to be smashed and food won for the people, but the greatest and broadest organisation of the people, the National Congress, stands banned.

No situation could be worse than this for the Indian people and better for the Jap invaders.

We share the righteous indignation of our fellow-patriots against the unchanged policy of the imperialist bureaucracy.

We, however, realise that if Indian patriots only curse the bureaucracy and themselves play no positive role they will be guilty of doing nothing.

The Japs can exploit a break-through only if we keep quiet, the hoarders can produce famine conditions only if we sit silent. To drift is not to put our patriotism into practice when our people need it most, but it is to yield to frustration when we can least afford to do so.

*All Aid to Assam*

We welcome the ringing call of the Congress leaders of Assam. It is in the best traditions of our national movement. They have pledged themselves to fight panic and rouse the spirit of resistance among their own people. They have appealed to us for solidarity. We must not fail them.

The attack on Assam is the first thrust against our common motherland; solidarity with the people of Assam is our first fraternal duty.

On this May Day we appeal to our fellow patriots to join hands for a countrywide demonstration of our anti-Japanese hatred and solidarity with our brothers-in Assam.

*Help Bengal All the More*

From disease-ridden, famished and famine-threatened Bengal comes, like a cry of anguish, the call for more money, medicines and men, through no less a person than Dr. B. C. Roy, eminent physician and Congress leader. All the patriotic organisations have united themselves inside the Bengal Medical Relief Co-ordination Committee under his leadership.

On this May Day we appeal to our fellow patriots for another round of the country-wide "help Bengal" campaign.

All that we can do for our brothers and sisters in Bengal will yet be too little, but the knowledge that the country is behind them will give them strength and inspire them to struggle harder against their own hoarders.

The cause of Bengal is above all differences. All that we do to unite behind Bengal will be added inspiration to Bengal's patriots to get still closer together among themselves, establish a United Ministry and raise such a powerful united people's movement that it will pull down the architects of famine, the hoarders, and embody anew the best tradition of Bengal's patriotism. In the spirit of Tagore's letters to Noguchi it will denounce Bose as a traitor, its confident challenge to Tojo's mercenaries will be :

"No part of Bengal, the homeland of most of India's martyrs, will become your foothold but it is there only to be your graveyard."

Amery has once again repeated his charge against the Congress leaders. The bureaucracy is behaving as if the situation at the front was normal and nothing was wrong inside the country. This unbearable attitude either provokes or demoralises most of

the patriots. They are led to argue: "Our actions can make no difference, the British Government is not prepared to listen and the bureaucracy does not let us do anything." Nothing could be further from reality.

### *U.S.S.R. Turns the Scale*

Our taking up an unqualified anti-Jap stand, our rendering all possible assistance to Bengal may look matters of symbolic or small consequence in themselves. But they acquire a decisive and historic importance when we realise that this is the least we can and must do to rouse the spirit of our people, to raise the banner of Indian patriotism alongside the freedom-loving nations of the world and to get their support for our cause and against the selfish policy of the British Imperialists.

The mighty victories of the Red Army are making history not only for the Soviet people but for every people. At Stalin-grad the Red Army stopped Hitler's hordes from coming to India. Through its present counter-offensive it is inflicting crippling blows at the Hitlerite would-be conquerors of the world. The moment the Allies open the Second Front the mortal blow will be struck and therefore the entire military, naval and air strength of Britain and America will be available for war in Asia, against Hitler's double, Tojo.

Soviet victories are not mere military victories that will release for us unlimited military aid, they have inspired the growth of a new people's movement in Nazi-occupied Europe. The Soviet Government has encouraged and recognised the democratic forces and is actively helping all European countries to win united national governments which together with the U.S.S.R. will build a new peaceful people's Europe.

Old Europe was the traditional base of World Imperialism. Europe is now passing out of the hands of fascist imperialists into those of its own peoples. A people's Europe will be the moral and political ally of the Indian people and not of the British imperialists, whose pre-war (1917-1939) efforts to use it as a pawn in their own game of power-politics ended in yielding it to Hitler Fascism.

### *Unity at Home Means More International Support*

When the real counter-offensive in Asia begins against the Japs, the British and American peoples will themselves realise that many more lives of their soldier-sons are being lost simply



because they do not have the active support of the Indian people, that most of the goods, arms and ammunition produced by their own labour is not being put to the best use because India is run by foreign bureaucrats and not by its patriotic leaders. How long will they stand the unnecessary sacrifice of their own sons, the wastage of the goods of their own tireless labour? The common people are the same the world over, freedom-loving and peaceful.

The more they see that all India's patriots and parties are ranging themselves against the Jap Fascists, the more rapidly they will see through the slanders of Amery and Co., levelled against the patriotic leaders of the nation.

All the major British Trade Unions have demanded Congress Leaders' release and establishment of National Government. Even Pethick Lawrence, Labour Party spokesman in the House of Commons has to echo the demand, raised a year back by the British Communists, that Amery must go.

The more the people of Britain and America see us fighting on the food front, the more easily they will trust us. What to us is the problem of feeding our own people is to them the problem of holding the rear behind the front manned by their soldiers. The last Bengal famine was an indelible scar on the face of the bureaucracy, the second will mean the end of their day if we can show in practice that we continued to fight the hoarder while the bureaucrats relied upon them, i.e., that we—all India's patriots—can and will rescue our country out of the chaos to which the bureaucrats have reduced it.

The more the Indian patriots discharge their own patriotic duty the sooner the British and American peoples will see that with an enslaved India as the base, the war against Fascist Japan can't be fought and won.

The longer we sit still the more hoarders will play hell with our people, reproduce Bengal's tragedy all over our land and the further the Japanese invaders will penetrate.

We greet the efforts of Mrs. Naidu, the only member of the Congress Working Committee out of jail, in rousing patriotic opinion, by repudiating the policy of the Congress Socialists who had monopolised the name of the Congress, by calling upon all Congressmen to work for national unity and food for the people.

A real move forward was taken by our major patriotic organisations, the Congress and the League, when they forged a united front on the floor of the Central Assembly

U.P. Congressmen have gone the farthest in assuring their

League brothers that the right of self-determination is implicit in the Congress position.

We welcome all these moves. We, however, regret that they are yet halting, each party is waiting for the other to make the next gesture. The imperative need for coming together is universally recognised but old suspicions are dying hard. The gravity of the situation created by the Japanese attack and the worsening economic situation is not yet fully recognised as a dire emergency. That is why there is so much waiting, so many signs of helplessness rather than the crusader's confident spirit of faith in fellow fighters, of hope in our own capacity to rouse our 400 million people.

Our vast country is unconquerable if all the patriots rouse the people against the Japs.

Our ancient nation shall not go to pieces if all our patriots unite in the defence of our motherland and in the service of the people.

We shall win a National Government as soon as Congress and League unite and make a joint determined effort to get the support of the United Nations.

Against the peril that faces us this is the only way, for the goal we all desire this is the only path.

#### IV

### WELCOME

*(Editorial from "People's War," Vol. II, No. 46, May 14, 1944).*

Gandhiji, the beloved leader of the greatest patriotic organisation of our people, the mighty National Congress, is back in our midst.

We share the nation's feeling of relief, an unbearable load is off our chest. We offer Gandhiji our respectful greetings.

Like all our countrymen, we are anxious about his health. We have no doubt that once again his iron will, the best of our doctors' skill and the whole nation's heart-felt desire will triumph over old age and disease. Gandhiji will win back normal health and resume his post at the head of our national forces.

Every son and daughter of India, every patriotic organisation of our land, is looking to the greatest son of our nation to take it

out of the bog, in which none is safe, into which all are sinking and from which none can get out on his own.

Gandhiji's first statement will make history not only for our country, but for free-lom-loving humanity. The imperialist bureaucrats have gone out of their way to underline that he has been set free only on medical grounds. They obviously want to carry on with deadlock. They prevented the free alliance and brotherly co-operation between India, Britain and the United Nations. They mean to stick to their outworn guns that are pointed the wrong way. Despite them, Gandhiji has to steer a course through which our nation may emerge free in a free world.

We look forward to the first pronouncement of Gandhiji that will authoritatively restate the Congress policy for the day. His letters to Linlithgow killed the imperialist slanders against the Congress. His comrade-in-arms, Sarojini Devi, spoke for him as only she can, till she was gagged. His faithful followers, the Congress leaders of Assam and U.P., have carried forward his banner. But Congressmen as a whole are not of one mind. They are justifiably bitter against the Government, but unfortunately confused about what to do. Gandhiji alone can unite and rouse them to action. We hope that Gandhiji will see that there is no time to lose when the Japanese aggressors aided by their puppet Bose have already marched inside the borders of our Motherland.

The more unqualified and inspiring Gandhiji's call to our people to resist the Fascist aggressors, the more speedily the peoples of Britain and America will demand that Wavell settle with him. It is becoming apparent to all honest men abroad that Mountbatten and Stilwell on their own are not succeeding against the Japs. Everyone knows that Gandhiji can ensure the whole-hearted support of India to Allied Arms. The lead that Gandhiji will give our nation now will determine how broad and swift will be the rally of democratic forces abroad for immediate settlement with India.

Within the country, the second biggest political organisation—the League—is as fed up with the deadlock as is the Congress. Every Leaguer is looking to Gandhiji, to see what he does to accept their right of self-determination and negotiate with their leader Mr. Jinnah, so that they too may throw in their full weight against the bureaucracy and establish united front for National Government. But Mr. Jinnah would not offer his hand of co-operation unless he felt assured that Gandhiji is prepared to concede self-determination to Muslim nationalities. Only Gandhiji

can rise above past prejudices, recognise after due discussion, but sooner than most, the inherent justice of the League demand, and promptly forge the irresistible weapon of **National Unity** on the basis of self-determination for Muslim nationalities and National Government for the whole country.

Gandhiji made the Congress powerful by making Congressmen serve the people in times of need. Today, not in one locality but all over the country, not one section of the people but all, are in dire distress because of the rise not only in food prices, but in all necessaries of life. We look to Gandhiji to denounce hoarding and speculating as a sin against the nation and to lead Congressmen into food work as the best way to serve the people, and to tell Congressmen that not to unite with all to get people their food is not patriotism but sectarianism.

Gandhiji made the Congress the biggest common patriotic organisation that any enslaved nation has ever been able to raise by focussing attention on that single task before the nation that was of the utmost importance for the time being and for which the people could do something on their own despite the rule of an alien bureaucracy. Bengal is not only threatened by the Jap marauders, but by a second famine; millions are dead and tens of thousands are dying today of disease and hunger. We look to Gandhiji to rouse the people outside Bengal to save Bengal, and themselves to escape the fate of Bengal by looking after their own food and taking care of the hoarder amongst them.

Our greetings to Gandhiji are an ardent appeal to instil his own boundless patriotic faith in his followers of the Congress, to do all he can to unite the Congress and the League, to launch the final patriotic crusade of our ancient nation for food for our people, freedom for our country and for brotherly alliance with the freedom-loving nations of the world. We 25,000 Indian Communists, pledge to him our wholehearted support.