

THE  
COLLECTED  
WORKS  
OF  
MAHATMA  
GANDHI

VOLUME THIRTY-THREE



THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

THE  
COLLECTED  
WORKS  
OF  
MAHATMA  
GANDHI  
XXXIII  
(1927)



What has brought Valunjker and Gangubai? Remember me to them. I am glad for your sake that they are there.

With love,

Yours,  
BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5227. Courtesy: Mirabehn

### 314. LETTER TO SHAPURJI SAKLATVALA

NANDI HILLS (MYSORE STATE),  
May 10, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

Shrimati Anasuyabai has sent me your letter herself and your joint letter to her, Gulzarilal<sup>1</sup> and Desai. I have read them both carefully. I had your own letter also. I could not reply to you earlier for want of your address.

As soon as I heard from Anasuyabai, I put myself in communication with Motilalji. I am daily expecting his reply. You shall know it as soon as I receive it. I thank you for the confidence you repose in me and it will be a joy to me if I can render any personal service to you; but I am afraid my longing and ability to render service have to stop there.

So far as our ideals are concerned, we stand apart.<sup>2</sup> Whilst Anasuyabai and Shankerlal Banker as also Gulzarilal and Desai are absolutely free agents, they have exercised their choice of accepting my guidance in framing their labour policy and administration. I must therefore shoulder my share of the responsibility for what is happening about labour in Ahmedabad. I have certainly advised them to keep Ahmedabad labour aloof from the other labour movements in India so long as Ahmedabad labour chooses to remain under their guidance. My reason is exceedingly simple. Labour in India is still extremely unorganized. The labourers have no mind of their own, when it comes to matters of national policy or even the general welfare of labour itself. Labourers in various parts of India have no social contact and no other mutual ties. It is provincial and even in the same city it is highly communal. It is not everywhere wisely guided. In many places it is

<sup>1</sup> Gulzarilal Nanda, sometime Home Minister, Government of India

<sup>2</sup> The addressee was of the opinion that the energies of all leaders should be harnessed towards an early inauguration of labour and industrial organizations all over the country.

under selfish and highly unscrupulous guidance. There is no absolute cohesion amongst provincial labour leaders, and there is little discipline among sub-leaders. The latter do not uniformly tender obedience to their provincial chiefs. Leaders in different provinces have no single policy to follow. In these circumstances, an all-India union can only exist on paper. I hold it to be suicidal therefore for Ahmedabad to think of belonging to it. My own conviction is that Ahmedabad is rendering a service to labour all over India by its abstention, or as I call it self-restraint. If it can succeed in perfecting its own organization, it is bound to serve as a model to the rest of India and its success is bound to prove highly infectious. But I am free to confess that there is as yet no assurance of success in the near future. The energy of the workers is sorely tried in combating disruptive forces that ever continue to crop up. There is the Hindu-Muslim tension; there is the question of touchables and untouchables in Hinduism, etc. Add to this extreme ignorance and selfishness among the labourers themselves. It is a marvel to me that labour in Ahmedabad has made the progress it has during the last 12 years of its corporate existence. If then Ahmedabad remains isolated it does so not selfishly, but for the sake of labour as a whole.

One word as to the policy. It is not anti-capitalistic. The idea is to take from capital labour's due share and no more, and this not by paralysing capital, but by reform among labourers from within and by their own self-consciousness; not again through the cleverness and manoeuvring of non-labour leaders, but by educating labour to evolve its own leadership and its own self-reliant, self-existing organization. Its direct aim is not in the least degree political. Its direct aim is internal reform and evolution of internal strength. The indirect result of this evolution, when, if ever it becomes complete, will naturally be tremendously political. I have not therefore the remotest idea of exploiting labour or organizing it for any direct political end. It will be of itself a political power of first-class importance when it becomes a self-existing unit. Labour, in my opinion, must not become a pawn in the hands of the politicians on the political chess-board. It must by its sheer strength dominate the chess-board. And that can only happen if I can retain the intelligent and voluntary co-operation of the workers in Ahmedabad and if our joint effort ultimately succeeds. This is my dream. I hug it because it gives me all the consolation I need; and the policy I have outlined, you will recognize, is a direct outcome of my implicit belief in and acceptance of non-violence. It may be all a delusion; but it is as much a



reality with me as life itself so long as I do not see it as delusion but see it as the only life-giving force. You will now see why I cannot, even if I had the power, respond to your appeal for dividing the funds collected by me in accordance with your suggestion. But I may tell you that I have not even the power. The funds have been collected purely for khadi work and it would be criminal misappropriation on my part to divert them to any other use.

This letter may not please you. I shall be sorry if it does not. But I regard you as a fellow-seeker after Truth and if my reading of you is correct, there is no reason why my having told you the whole truth and nothing but the truth should not please you immensely. It is not given to all of us to agree with one another on all our opinions; but it is given to every one of us to tender the same respect for the opinions and actions of our fellows as we expect for our own.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SAKLATVALA, ESQ.

From a photostat: S.N. 12491

### 315. LETTER TO ISABEL BAMLET

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,<sup>1</sup>  
May 10, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter for which I thank you.

For me the problem of life is not quite so simple as it appears to you. I am sure you do not want me to enter into the reason for my conclusions. You believe in God's guidance and so do I. Let me walk as He may seem to me to guide me.

I may without using your name make the main contents of your letter as a text for an article<sup>2</sup> in the pages of *Young India* edited by me. I suppose you will have no objection.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

I. BAMLET, ESQ.  
C/O IMPERIAL BANK OF INDIA  
CALCUTTA

From a photostat: C.W. 4443. Courtesy: Mrs. Carlisle Bamlet

<sup>1</sup> Permanent address

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 12-5-1927, sub-title, "Most Economical".