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## JP'S JAIL LIFE

This is a collection of Jayaprakash Narayan's personal letters as a detainee during the emergency and after his release. They had not been highlighted so far because of press censorship in the country. These letters give a glimpse of his jail life and also throw light on his views on many important issues of the day, including his concept of Total Revolution.



# J.P's JAIL LIFE

*(A Collection of Personal Letters)*

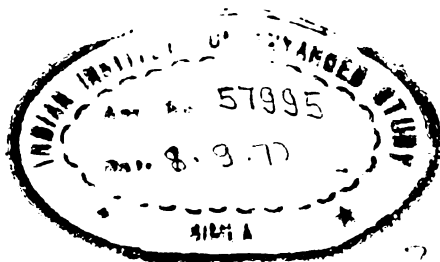
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First Published 1977

Translated into English by Rajarshi Kumar Pandey  
and edited by G.S. BHARGAVA

Printed and published in India  
by Gulab Vazirani for Arnold-Heinemann Publishers (India)  
Pvt. Ltd., AB-9, Safd. Enclave, New Delhi-110016, composed  
by Sunil Composing Company, A-38-1, Mayapuri Phase-I,  
New Delhi and printed at Sachdeva Press, New Delhi-110064

3/2/82

## EDITOR'S NOTE

It was a suggestion by Shri Umashankar Phadnis which enabled this book to be published in English. He prevailed upon Shri Rajarshi Kumar Pandey to translate into English Jayaprakashji's letter to his friends in Bihar. It was brought out as an underground publication in Hindi, with circulation limited only to those who risked reading such literature.

Shri Pandey was able to render into simple English Jayaprakashji's equally simple Hindi in a record time of two weeks. It is what is called free translation. The first few pages of the letter, released by the Janata Party during the election campaign, had a tremendous effect and reinforced our urge to have the entire text published. But it had to wait until my friend Shri G.A. Vazirani undertook the task.

The reaction of the Congress party leaders and some former ministers to Jayaprakashji's revelation of the treatment meted out to him while in detention was depressing. Dr. Karan Singh tried to introduce a red herring by releasing to the Press a letter from Jayaprakashji absolving the Chandigarh Institute doctors from responsibility for what has happened to him. The issue is not that the doctors failed to

treat him but that the authorities did not let him have timely treatment. It is clear from the letter being published here.

Even more importantly, it was inhuman to have subjected political prisoners to solitary confinement. Besides Jayaprakashji, Morarjibhai, Chandra Sekhar, Raj Narain and Jyotirmoy Basu were treated in that manner, whereas even prisoners of war are not kept in solitary confinement, at a stretch, for more than four weeks. It was a shame that no member of the former Central Cabinet felt compelled to object to it. I heard that Prof. P.N. Dhar raised it once with Mrs. Gandhi who overruled him saying that since the prisoners had the warders to talk to it was not solitary confinement. If they do not have bread let them eat cake !

The other letters included here were also circulated in the underground. They are appended here to ensure wider circulation.

*New Delhi*  
*May, 1st 1977*

G.S.B.

# *A Letter to Friends*

August 28, 1976

Dear brothers, sisters and young friends,

I returned to Bihar on July 20, 1976, after a long lapse of time. In the previous year (1975) I left Patna on June 23 for New Delhi. At Gandhi Peace Foundation in New Delhi, where I was staying, I was arrested on June 26 at about 3 a.m. From there I was taken by car to Sohana in Haryana Pradesh and kept at a rest house. On reaching Sohana I realised that Shri Morarji Desai also had been arrested and brought there. He was also detained in the same rest house but we were kept apart and not allowed to meet. I requested the police officer who was a common jailor for both of us to let us meet at least at meal times but the request was turned down.

I was at the rest house for only three days. During those three days, doctors who examined me discovered that I was down with a heart ailment. That was the first time that I was found to be suffering from a heart disease. I had never been a heart



patient before. My health had also been generally satisfactory before I was imprisoned. But within three days of my arrest and detention, when I was medically examined, it was found that something was physically wrong with my heart. So, the doctors sent me to the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, for further examination. Apparently the doctors wanted a second opinion on their diagnosis. Some of the experts at the Medical Institute, like Dr Sujay B. Roy (who has since passed away) and Dr. M.L. Bhatia were known to me. I had also undergone treatment under Dr. Bhatia. I was kept at the Medical Institute for two days and then flown to Chandigarh in an Indian Air Force plane. My new place of detention was the Post-graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research at Chandigarh from where I was ultimately released on November 12, 1975.

My life under detention at Chandigarh is a long story. I would like to say only this much now that during the 130 odd days of detention I remained completely isolated (solitary confinement). The total isolation was very painful to me. Of course, doctors, nurses and police officers used to see me but they would only enquire after my health. Beyond that there was no other communication between us. There was no one with whom I could converse freely. The loneliness caused a kind of mental torture. I urged the authorities to allow one of the many thousands arrested with me to stay with me so that I would have a congenial companion with whom to exchange ideas while in detention. But the Govern-

ment did not think it proper to let me have such a facility. In this respect, the behaviour of the Indira Government has been worse than that of the foreign government. In 1943 when I was a prisoner in connection with the 1942 Movement I was kept alone and separately in Lahore. When I asked for a companion in detention the foreign government ultimately acceded to my request and allowed Ram Manohar Lohia, my colleague, to meet me for an hour daily. But the present government behaved differently and strangely. In response to my repeated requests for a companion, I was told that my personal servant, Shri Gulab Yadav, could stay with me in detention. I was in need of a companion, not a personal servant. Secondly, if Gulab lived with me he, too, would be a prisoner because he would not be allowed to leave the place of detention. Why should he suffer imprisonment without committing any crime? The proposal was therefore not acceptable to me. Thus, I remained alone throughout the four and half months of my detention.

There was a long corridor leading to the room where I was kept as a detainee in Chandigarh. Armed sentries were posted on either side of the room. I wanted to take walks in the open, which would have been good for my heart condition. But I had to wait for it until, after a lot of persuasion, on September 18, 1975, I was transferred to the hospital rest house located in the campus. I did not enjoy the facility for long because very soon I began to suffer from acute pain in the stomach. I never had such pain in the past. I got some relief from the

medicines given by the doctors attending on me but the pain recurred on October 8 and I continued to suffer from it until the last week of October. For diagnosis and treatment of the pain I was again taken on October 31 to the same room where I had been first kept in Chandigarh and remained there till I was released on November 12. I was nearly dead when I was out of detention.

The Government released me when it became clear that the disease I was afflicted with could not be diagnosed and that the chances of my survival were slender. It was announced that I had been released on parole. I did not ask for parole. On enquiry I was told by the officers at Chandigarh that "parole" was a euphemism and that I was being released unconditionally. After my admission into Jaslok Hospital, Bombay, on December 4, 1975, the order of detention was formally revoked. I came to know of the damaged state of my kidneys only a week before my release. I did not have kidney ailment before my arrest. Nor was I told during the four months' detention in Chandigarh that my kidneys were malfunctioning. Suddenly on November 5, 1975, I was informed that both my kidneys had stopped functioning. I could not understand how and when I became a victim of the kidney disease. I was taking all the medicines prescribed to me at Chandigarh. I was also sticking to the diet given to me in detention. So the total collapse of my kidneys was beyond my comprehension. A number of my friends have expressed a doubt which I share that my kidneys may have been

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deliberately damaged. The doctors at Chandigarh were nice to me. So I cannot suspect them. Also, no doctor (who has taken the Hippocratic oath) will be a party to such a heinous scheme. But the physicians who examined and treated me in Bombay were of the opinion that if I had received treatment fifteen days earlier the functioning of the kidneys could have been partially restored. God alone knows how my kidneys were so totally affected. But this much is certain that I had been released only when the Indira Government was convinced that I would not survive for more than a few days.

After my release from Chandigarh, I entered the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, and remained there for five or six days. The doctors there advised me to continue the treatment. The Government also wanted it. But my brother, Shri Rajeshwar Prasad, had no confidence in Delhi. I also wanted to be treated at Jaslok Hospital, Bombay. So my brother took me to Bombay and got me admitted there on November 22, 1975. At Chandigarh, my condition had been deteriorating day by day. My hands and legs were swollen. The lower portion of my eyes was so puffed that it hung over my face, giving me the look of a person about to die. It was the skill and diligence of the doctors at the Bombay hospital which saved my life. But the doctors said that I owed my recovery to my own will power. I think it was really God's wish that I should stay alive. I do not know what he expects of me now.

As I said earlier, both my kidneys have been damaged and there is no possibility of their being restored to normal functioning. Now I am being kept alive with the aid of dialysis and I have to live the rest of my days like this. The machine is used to purify my blood. As the kidneys are not functioning the blood does not get purified in the normal way. So it is purified through dialysis. It is a continuous seven-hour process. It is an extremely delicate and tiring treatment. During the seven hours, all the blood in my system is made to pass through a tube into the machine where it is purified and again pumped into the body through another tube. I am required to undergo this treatment after every three days and will have to do so for the rest of my life. My health is comparatively better now. I have regained some strength and have my usual morning and evening walks. Most surprisingly, my heart is better now. This is the reason why I am able to withstand dialysis once in every two days.

My treatment at the Jaslok Hospital was throughout free. It was an expensive treatment and the hospital has incurred a large expenditure on account of me during the seven to eight months I was there. I am thankful to Seth Mathuradas Ansoomal, chairman of the board of trustees of the hospital. He is an old friend of mine and has taken deep interest in my treatment. I am thankful to the other trustees also and shall continue to be so all my life. I am obliged to the director of the hospital, Dr. Shantilal Mehta, Chief Nephrologist, Dr. M.K. Mani, surgeon, Dr. Kamath and

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heart specialist, Dr. A.B. Mehta, and other doctors, who worked very hard to give me this new life. The founder of the hospital, late Shri Seth Lokumal Ghanshyam Chenrai, was a friend of mine. I hardly met a philanthropist like him. He had no children. He invested all his property in the hospital. The Jaslok Hospital is a lasting symbol of his munificence and large-heartedness. I regarded it as my own during the months I was treated there. Its directors and doctors treated me as one of them and bestowed attention and care on me.

It was not possible nor would it be proper that my life-long treatment should continue at the Jaslok Hospital. So some of my friends decided that arrangements be made for the continuance of the dialysis treatment at my residence. That involved a large sum of money for the purchase of a dialyser and other instruments. Veteran Sarvodaya leaders, Shri Ravishankar Maharaj, Dada Dharmadhikari, and Kedarnathji Tathswami Anand, (who has since passed away) made an appeal for contributions for a fund for the purpose. Many wealthy persons were willing to donate generously for my health aid fund but my friends decided to accept small donations of one rupee per head from the public. Acharya Vinoba Bhave was the first to donate one rupee for the fund. After that donations flowed in from all corners of the country. Friends in jail had cut the expenditure on their meals and donated one rupee each. Thus, a sum of about Rs. 300,000 was raised in no more than three weeks. The amount was taken as sufficient and so it was

announced that no more donations would be accepted. Some amounts were also returned.

You might have heard that Shrimati Indira Gandhi had sent Rs. 90,000 from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund to Shri Radhakrishnan, Secretary, Gandhi Peace Foundation, for my health aid fund in the last week of May 1976. At the first instance, I advised Radhakrishnanji to accept the contribution. This was due to the simplicity of my nature. But when I realised that the amount was taken out of the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund I felt it was not worth accepting. A sum of Rs. 330,000 had been already collected by way of small donations from the public and the necessary implements for the dialysis treatment already purchased. There was thus no need for the amount sent by the Prime Minister. So I returned with thanks the entire amount to Shrimati Indira Gandhi. Had Indiraji given a small contribution out of her own funds, I would have accepted it. The organisers of the health aid fund had made it a policy not to accept large donations. Therefore, there was no alternative for me but to return the Prime Minister's donation. While doing so, however, I had expressed my deep obligation for her good wishes. I sent the letter to the press for publication but the censor did not allow it.\* Later, a statement by some supporters of the Prime Minister, abusing me for daring to

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\*JP's letter and the statement by Mrs. Gandhi's supporters are included in the appendix.

return her donation was published in the newspapers.

In this connection, I would like to tell you that the money collected towards the health aid fund has been entrusted to a committee consisting of six persons. Its president is a well-known personality of Bombay, Shri Shantilal Shah ; the other members are Sarvashri M.M. Joshi, Moinuddin Harris, Prabhubhai Sanghavi, Narain Desai and my younger brother, Rajeshwar Prasad. According to them Rs. 180,000 has been spent on the dialysis equipment and other instruments. The rest of the amount has been kept aside and is being used for the day-to-day expenses in connection with the treatment. It is so expensive that a sum of Rs. 3,000 is required for a month. Sometimes, I feel that my life is not so valuable that the people should spend so much money on it. But it is a great thing that the people have so much love and affection for me. I thank heartily the thousands of friends who have contributed to the health aid fund. I am obliged to them for their love. I also express my deep sense of gratitude to all those friends who had sent their good wishes for my recovery when I was struggling for survival. It is due to their affection that I am alive today.

I may tell you that the doctors in Bombay were not in favour of my going to Patna. They were afraid that my condition might deteriorate and that I might not get proper treatment. But I was impatient to return to Bihar. I wanted to be with you and am now with you. One of the doctors, Dr. M.K. Mani, had accompanied me. I had undergone dialy-



sis thrice in his presence and Dr. Mani has since returned to Bombay after having been satisfied that the treatment was being given properly. Two friends, Shri Thomas Abraham and Shrimati Janaki Pandey, have learnt the technique of administering dialysis treatment and have been treating me since I returned to Patna. Shri Abraham who is from Kerala has been my secretary for years. Shrimati Pandey who is a north Indian has been working in the Sarvodaya movement for a number of years. They got their training in Bombay and now you may call them my physicians.

Now I am with you and I wish to be with you. I am sorry that when I arrived in Patna from Bombay on July 20, thousands of people from all over the State who came to see me had to go back disappointed. The Bihar Government was responsible for it. I am very sorry for that. Under Section 144, Cr. P.C. an order was promulgated in Patna to stop people from coming to see me. It was repeatedly announced through loudspeakers that whoever went to the airport to see me would be arrested under the Defence of India Regulations (D.I.R.) and would have to undergo imprisonment for two-to-three years. Despite these Hitlerite tactics, people thronged the airport and were chased away or arrested. People were not allowed to stand on the footpaths even. My own cousins and my sister's son-in-law were among those arrested and kept in police custody for hours. Their crime was that they were going to the airport to receive me. It came to my notice that students who defied the police order

or shouted "Jaya Prakash Zindabad" were beaten mercilessly. It never happened even in the British regime that people going to see a patient were arrested by the police. But I think that this shameful behaviour of the Government will reinforce the will and determination of those struggling against tyranny. This incident makes me feel that in free India people are still treated as slaves. It is the duty of young people, especially students, to fight against and destroy this new slavery.

As a matter of fact, the entire country is under a dictatorship. After coming to Patna I feel that the whole State of Bihar has been reduced to a vast prison. Arrests are continuing, especially after my arrival here. I was told that every person who had taken part in any movement had been taken into custody. The Government is afraid that my presence might spur the people to resist its tyranny. So the attempt is to keep me away from the people and the people from me. There is always a large posse of police at my house. Visitors are asked to give their names and addresses. Many people came to see me and to enquire after my health. But the presence of police and the fear of being landed in unpleasant situations caused many others not to come to me. It was not so in Bombay. I do not know why the Government of Bihar is so unsure of itself and fearful of the people. I wish normal conditions would return soon.

Last year was a year of turmoil in our lives and in the life of our nation. Till June 25, 1975, India was the largest democratic country in the world. On

26th June, 1975, it was changed into an authoritarian State. Democracy has not yet gone out fully and completely but it is gasping for breath. Freedom of the Press has been taken away. Freedom of the judiciary is no more. The fundamental rights of the people have been eroded in the name of emergency and civil liberties have been abolished. The term of the present Parliament expired last March (1976) but the election has been postponed and the term of Parliament extended. So far the elections have been postponed by one year but the life of Parliament can be extended again and again similarly. Till June 25, 1975, the mandate was with the people and the people's franchise used to shape the destiny of the country. But this right has been taken away from June 26, 1975, and a dictatorship has taken the place of democracy. Now the Constitution is being arbitrarily amended to establish a dictatorship. People who were opposing the dictatorship or who have raised their voice against the dictatorship are being silenced and thrown into jail. Thousands of people have been made detainees under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) and DIR. Their crime was that they raised their voice against the corrupt government and were not prepared to bow before a dictator.

What has happened in Bihar and the rest of the country after my arrest and that of thousands of other leaders? Young people, especially students, pitted themselves against the dictatorship, facing cruel and savage repression in the process. People who came to see me after my release from jail told

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me of the morale and determination displayed by the youth in the face of the repression. There were strikes, *bandhs* and *hartals* when the news of my arrest was received ; demonstrations were held in many places. The Government tried to crush the public upsurge with the force of arms. The incidents were not reported in the newspapers due to imposition of censorship. The people of India were thus kept in the dark about what was happening here. But a time will come when the true story of the struggle will be written and the whole world will acknowledge the sufferings we have had to undergo to defend and preserve democracy in our country. I congratulate every one who played a part in the struggle. It gives me pleasure to know that the youth remained calm and composed in the face of the gravest provocation. So far as I know there had been no violent incident by students or the public during that period.

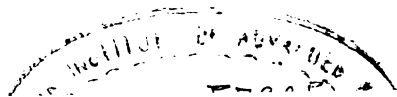
The organisers of the movement adopted peaceful methods of protest and resistance to injustice and the sporadic incidents highlighted in a section of the press were the exception rather than the rule. Supporters of Indiraji say that the people did not react vehemently to my arrest and that of other leaders. They mean to say that there was no violence on a mass scale, which they identified with public resentment at the arrests. From that, they have jumped to the conclusion that our movement was a failure. But I regard it as a great victory for our movement. I am proud that the students and the youth taking part in the movement conducted them-

selves resolutely but calmly. This proves that they had no intention or scheme of violent activities, although Indiraji's propagandists have been saying repeatedly that violence on a large scale and disruption of civic life were on our agenda and that the emergency was imposed to stop them.

Even today, the Prime Minister claims that my movement threatened to disrupt the unity of the country and endanger democracy and so emergency had to be imposed. It is not true. You may remember that the movement in Bihar was initiated by students and the youth. I joined it later and, after patient persuasion, brought my young friends round to my way of peaceful action. The movement was started with certain specific demands. The chief among them were : removal of corruption, curb on inflation, solution of the problem of employment and basic changes in the system of education.

I never wanted to assume the leadership of the movement. But I had to do it when a peaceful procession of students was charged with lathis and many were injured on March 13, 1974. A professional miscreant (or *agent provocateur*) had fired a gun to create disorder and to discredit the movement. The incidents on that day charged the atmosphere with tension. To defuse the situation I organised a silent procession on April 8, 1974, which had a salutary effect on the minds of the public, especially the youth. The silent procession was an attempt to divert the students' attention from the provocative actions of the authorities and to draw them towards peaceful methods. But the Bihar Government did not promote

such a process. It decided to crush the student movement. If the State Government had called a meeting of leaders of the "Chhatra Sangharsha Samiti" and discussed their demands sympathetically with them, elements prone to violence would have been isolated. Instead of adopting such a responsive attitude, the Government set about to crush the movement and let loose repression. The result was counter-productive. The people began to lend their wholehearted support to the students and the youth and made it a wide-based popular movement. Meanwhile, the Congress dominated Bihar Vidhan Sabha, instead of criticising the Government's repressive policy, actually endorsed it. So the students demanded the dissolution of the legislative assembly. There was spontaneous support from the general public for the demand. The slogan 'You quit power because you are not my representative' was on everyone's lips. So far as I was concerned, I tried to make the students understand that they should not emulate the Gujarat agitation. For your information, I may tell you that when the leaders of the 'Chhatra Sangharsha Samiti' came to see me I explained to them that the demand for the dissolution of the Vidhan Sabha and resignation of the Government would be improper at the stage because I still hoped that good sense would prevail with the authorities and that the latter would change their policies. But it did not happen. Contrary to my expectation or hope, the Government intensified its repression and the bullet and the lathi became symbols of authority. So at the request of the youth I accepted the leadership of their movement.



I realised that because of the Government's repressive policies, the demand for the dissolution of the Vidhan Sabha had gained momentum and so decided to give up my resistance to the demand. A signature campaign was launched to press the campaign for the dissolution of the Assembly. Demonstrations and rallies were held all over the State and there was Bihar *Bandh* for three days—October 3, 4 and 5. You might remember that on June 5, 1974, there was a large public demonstration in Patna in which people from all over the State joined. It asked for the dissolution of the Vidhan Sabha and resignation of the Government. A petition supporting these demands, and signed by 5,000,000 persons was presented to the then Governor of the State. But the Government did not respond positively. Ultimately there was a mass rally in Patna on November 5, 1974, to disperse which the police used tear gas and *lathis* indiscriminately. Hundreds of people were hurt. I was also lathi-charged. If Shri Nanajee Deshmukh, Shri Haider Ali and officers of the Bihar police deputed to secure my personal safety had not physically intervened, receiving the Central Reserve Police (CRP), lathi blows aimed at me, I would have been a dead man on that day. It happened at the instance of the Central Government because I don't think the Bihar Government would have dared to go to such a length.

Similar treatment was meted out to me in three other States, besides Bihar. You might have heard that on October 24, 1974 when I visited Ludhiana in Punjab lakhs of people had assembled to hear me.

While I was alighting from the train at Ludhiana railway station some one came from behind and tried to grab me. It resulted in the fracture of a bone in my neck and caused me excruciating pain for many days. On another occasion, when I was going to Kurukshetra in Haryana to address a meeting, my car was stopped near Panipat by some rowdies who then followed me till the destination. Similarly, on April 2, 1975, in Calcutta when a meeting was arranged in front of the University Hall some armed Congressmen surrounded my car and began to attack it with lathis. The organisers of the meeting, Shri Kshitish Rai Chaudhry and Shri Samar Guha, MPs, were injured. I have no doubt that all these incidents were at the instigation of the Central Government and the consent of Indiraji. What have I done to be treated like this? I am one of those who participated actively in the struggle for the freedom of the country. Is it proper to say that I have no right to move freely and without danger in the country, to address meetings and explain my views to the youth, students and others? In every democratic country such a right is available to every citizen. How can such legitimate public activities be a crime in democratic Bharat?

Despite these incidents the movement spread throughout Bihar. In this connection you might remember the historic People's march which I had led in Delhi on March 6, 1975. People from all over the country participated in it. On that occasion I had submitted a set of demands, called the People's Charter, to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the



Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. You will see that we had then demanded protection of the people's social-economic rights, amendment of the election law to ensure free and fair elections in which the power of money would not be decisively felt, changes in the system of education and eradication of political corruption. But the Government did not heed the voice of the people. There was another mass rally in Calcutta on June 5, 1975, in which 200,000 people took part. These rallies were entirely peaceful from the movement's point of view. There was no violence on the part of the participants. If there had been incidents of violence, they were provoked and caused by the Government and its supporters. The participants in the movement had taken them in their tolerant stride. You might have heard about the notorious Indira brigade, members of which had opened fire at the mass rally in Patna on June 5, 1974. Nevertheless, Indiraji charged our movement with causing violence and creating disorder. It was like the proverb "ulta chor kotwal ko dante" ("the thief blames the constable").

After the imposition of the emergency on June 25, the Government published a booklet called "Why Emergency?" to justify its action. In that publication facts were twisted to show that the emergency had been provoked by the Bihar movement. But the fact is that the movement awakened the people of Bihar and other parts of the country and that made the authorities jittery. I had visited several parts of the country to let the people know the message of total revolution. In the course of that tour I

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had found the common people responsive to the idea of a clean break with the past. Thousands of people attended the meetings addressed by me. Struggle committees were formed in different parts of the country. The nation-wide movement was not for immediate or partial political change but for a total societal change. But the people in power took it as a challenge to their authority and set out to suppress the movement with all the means at their disposal.

Meanwhile came the historic judgment of the Allahabad High Court setting aside the election of Indiraji after upholding two allegations of corrupt practices. One of the allegations was that Indiraji had utilised the services of Shri Yashpal Kapoor, a public servant, for her election campaign. It was an offence under the Representation of the People Act. The other allegation was that the U.P. Government had arranged election meetings for Indiraji and that the expenses for them were also borne by the U.P. Government. This was also a corrupt practice according to the then prevailing law. There were other allegations also, but only these two were proved and so the Allahabad High Court declared Indiraji's election to the Lok Sabha void. After the judgment Indiraji should have stepped down of her own accord. Had she done so her prestige would have risen and she would have grown in people's estimate. In effect however, she decided to remain Prime Minister at any cost to the nation.

One of the aims of my movement was to fight against corruption. When the High Court declared

Indiraji guilty of corrupt practices, it became difficult for me to remain silent. So in a statement to the press I demanded that Indiraji must step down as Prime Minister pending recourse to the legal provision of an appeal to the Supreme Court against the Allahabad judgment. My point was that a person declared as corrupt remaining as Prime Minister was against the prestige of the post. Therefore, I demanded that Indiraji should not hold the post until she was cleared of the charges by the Supreme Court. Even today I hold the same view that Indiraji should have submitted her resignation and should have stepped down. But not to mention resignation, Indiraji and her supporters hired participants for demonstrations in her favour. In the circumstances, it was decided by the participants in our movement to launch a campaign throughout the country from June 29, 1975 to July 5, 1975 to urge Indiraji to honour the Allahabad judgment in spirit. In the course of the week there was a programme to hold meetings and demonstrations up to the district level throughout the country. The aim was to explain to the people the significance of the Allahabad High Court judgment and to create public opinion in favour of Indiraji's resignation. Leaders of the different opposition parties were to hold meetings in the different States. There was a programme to hold a meeting in Delhi. It was also decided to organise a peaceful demonstration in front of Indiraji's residence. Satyagrahis were to be enrolled to court arrest, if necessary during the campaign. Nothing more than this was planned or contemplated.

Such peaceful agitations are not new in free India. There was nothing extraordinary in them. The only new factor was that after the judgment of the Allahabad High Court, people from the different corners of the country began to demand that with the charges of corruption against her having been sustained, the Prime Minister should quit, especially in the light of the conditional stay order appended to the Allahabad judgment.

Some people say that when Indiraji preferred an appeal to the Supreme Court, it was improper to demand her resignation from Prime Ministership till the appeal was heard and disposed of. It was more so in retrospect, since the Supreme Court ultimately overruled the Allahabad High Court judgment. But it should be remembered that the Supreme Court verdict followed amendment of the Representation of the People's Act, with retrospective effect. The amendment had changed the corrupt practices into a veritable code of conduct. It was unprecedented in the history of independent India. Had the law remained unamended, the Supreme Court might have upheld the Allahabad judgment. Indiraji had no faith even in her own party members. Many Congress MPs. also wanted her to resign to maintain traditions of democracy. But she refused to do so as she was afraid that once she resigned she would not return to power. Having imposed the emergency she got the leaders of Opposition parties and some members of the Congress party like Shri Chandra Shekhar, Shri Ramdhan and later Shri Mohan Dharia arrested. In that way she forced the MPs. of

her party to support her in power. The emergency became a necessity for personal reasons.

That our movement had created an atmosphere of violence in the country was an oft-repeated charge by Indiraji. It was totally false and baseless. In the beginning some political elements, who had since become the greatest supporters of Indiraji tried to give a violent turn to the Bihar movement. But they did not succeed. Despite much provocation, the movement has been peaceful till now. Today, the Congress Party spokesmen vilify me. But in 1974 a responsible Congress leader had acknowledged the fact that had Jayaprakash not been in the movement, the whole of Bihar would have been up in arms. Mass satyagraha, sit-ins or dharna and fasts were the principal facets of our movement. There were several instances of lathi (baton) charge and firing by the police against the movement and scores of satyagrahis were injured in such incidents. At least 150 persons were shot dead. But so far as I know, there was no violence by the satyagrahis. Their slogan was: 'whatever the provocation we will not take to force'. I am especially happy that the young people who joined the movement lived up to the spirit of that slogan. There was a solitary instance of violence in Chupra district where a police constable died as a result of retaliation by the public. There was mass condemnation of the incident and I sent a sum of Rs. 5,000 to help the constable's widow. When a satyagraha was launched to induce Bihar legislators to resign I stressed on this point that the image of peaceful persuasion should not be

tarnished. Where there was a departure from this principle my friends and I condemned it and also saw to it that the movement did not get out of control. Perhaps you might have heard that in the course of the satyagraha at the gate of the Vidhan Sabha in Patna, the shirt of an M.L.A. was torn. I had apologised for it to the whole House in a letter written to the Speaker, Shri Harinath Mishra, and that letter was read out in the Vidhan Sabha. Despite this if any one says that that movement created an atmosphere of violence, he or she is not telling the truth. The fact is that our movement provided a peaceful outlet for the anger and frustration of students and the youth; otherwise their dissatisfaction could have broken out in a violent form.

The main charge against me has been that I tried to incite the police and the military to revolt. This is also a false allegation. I never asked the police and the army to revolt against the government and join our movement. At all my public meetings I tried to highlight the fact that the police should not obey illegal orders. I had said this before the emergency was proclaimed. It is laid down in the Police Act that if a police man obeys an illegal order he is liable to be prosecuted. I said what has been mentioned in the Police Act. During the emergency and earlier during the satyagraha it was common for the constabulary to beat up the satyagrahis mercilessly. Having witnessed such incidents I said it was wrong for the police to obey illegal orders asking them to use excessive force against peaceful protestors. I think

it is not a crime. So far as the army is concerned, I have said again and again that it should be loyal to the nation, the national flag and the Constitution. If the government of any party, in furtherance of its interests, utilises the services of the army to maintain a dictatorship, it is the duty of the army to protect democracy as our Constitution is democratic. I had to say this when I realised that Indiraji might try to use the army to do away with democracy. She has used the Border Security Force to suppress our movement. Therefore, whatever I have said to the police and the army was not to ask them to revolt but to urge them to protect the country in a delicate situation. If this is taken as a crime, I plead guilty to it. There are more than a dozen allegations against our movement by Indiraji and all of them are false and baseless. I can say this with all the authority at my command. I am happy to say that despite such efforts to misrepresent me, the people of Bihar and the rest of the country are convinced that the emergency is really meant to buttress Indiraji's personal dictatorship. All these are only to safeguard her own power and position.

In the booklet mentioned earlier, there were several false and fabricated charges against me and our movement. One of them is that our movement has Anand Margis as participants. I have refuted this charge more than once. Still the supporters of Indiraji have been persisting in their attempt to link the Anand Marg with our movement. The Anand Marg had never anything to do with our movement nor has it any links with us today. The policy and

conduct of Anand Marg were unacceptable to me and they are still unacceptable. As far as the R.S.S. is concerned, it is true that I had been in the past opposed to this organisation and I have also vehemently criticised it. But there is nothing static in the world. The form and principles of organisations change and I have to admit that the RSS also has undergone a change and it is still changing. Whatever the past of this organisation, today it is not exactly the same. It is alleged that the R.S.S. and Jan Sangh are communal. But today its workers include the name of Mahatma Gandhi among those worth being remembered at the time of their morning prayer. Therefore, by including these organisations in the movement for total revolution I have made an attempt to de-communalise them and now they are not communal. Youths of both organisations took part in the movement and had worked with Muslim youths and students. They have tried to remove the misunderstanding about their past role in the course of their working together and this has led to mutual confidence. This has been a big gain for secularism. In this way I have strengthened the foundations of secularism by including the RSS and the Jan Sangh in the movement for total revolution. This attempt of mine is different from other steps being taken to counter communalism. I think mine has been a more constructive attempt.

Indiraji and her supporters have often denounced our movement as Fascist because of the participation of the Jan Sangh and R.S.S. in it. Whoever opposes Indira Gandhi is termed a Fascist and reactionary.



Fascism originated in the countries of Hitler and Mussolini. People who know and understand the history of those countries say it is Indiraji who is stepping into the shoes of the Fascist dictators. If there is any danger to this country from Fascism, it is from Indiraji. She is laying the foundation of Fascism with her own hands, having crushed democracy.

Mrs Gandhi claims that by implementing her 20-point programme during the emergency the country has progressed in many directions. The economic gains are said to be curbs on money inflation, increase in production and discipline at work. The biggest gain of the emergency is said to be the 20-point programme itself. It has been called a revolutionary programme of the Prime Minister. In fact it is a mixture of old and new programmes and is not well planned. Some of its provisions are meant for villages and the others for the cities. The main item of rural development is implementation of the land ceiling laws and distribution of surplus rural land among the landless poor. A target was set to distribute nearly 4,00,000 to 5,00,000 acres of land which was declared surplus till June 30, 1976. According to Government statistics nearly 1,800,000 acres of land were surplus as on June 21, 1976. Only 1,000,000 acres of this land has come into the possession of the Government and out of that 4,62,000 has been distributed among 2,20,000 landless families. In this respect some States are still behind schedule. Bihar is certainly one of them. God knows how correct these statistics are as the

Government can distort facts during the emergency. If it is taken for granted that whatever the government says is correct, even then the achievement is marginal. According to a Government report itself there are about 47,000,000 landless labourers in the country. How is it going to solve the gigantic problem of landlessness if two or two and a quarter lakh\* persons get one or two acres of land per head ?

However, even if it is accepted that the country is gaining from the 20-point programme, it would be wrong to claim it as a gain of the emergency. Recently, a learned journalist, Shri B.G. Verghese has pointed out in an article in 'Commerce' (July 3, 1976) that whatever steps the Government has taken to control money inflation were already in force since September, 1974, and were proving effective. The action against smuggling also was initiated much before the proclamation of the emergency. So far as increase in production, especially foodgrains, is concerned, it is due to good monsoons in succession. This was the reason for money inflation being kept under control.

The Government further claims that there is an atmosphere of discipline in the country, which has facilitated economic growth. According to Shri Verghese, 'discipline is not equal to growth'. This never happens. It is said that emergency has produced a sense of discipline in the country, which too is incorrect. It is not discipline if it is due to a

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\*A lakh is 100,000.

sense of fear. The real meaning of discipline is self-discipline or self-imposed discipline which results from a sense of duty and responsibility. To what extent and at what rate corruption has increased during the emergency refutes the claim made by the Government. I do not say that the 20-point programme is wrong or that it should not be implemented. It may be pursued but not in the way it is being done through one-sided propaganda and by creating an atmosphere of fear. The 20-point programme will not be completed even in twenty years without the whole-hearted co-operation of the people. If Indiraji wants this programme to succeed, she has to change her methods and return to the ways of democracy. Also, the 20-point programme can provide only temporary relief to the sufferings of the masses. The economic policies of the Government have to be changed completely if the basic problem of poverty is to be tackled.

Among Indiraji's money slogans socialism is the most used. Indiraji claims to be a socialist and calls her opponents reactionaries. But under her socialism, the poverty of the poor and the wealth of the rich are increasing simultaneously. These are not signs of socialism but of capitalism. The capitalists of India are behind Indiraji. They are extremely happy with her. Following the judgment of the Allahabad High Court in Indiraji's election case when there was a demand for her resignation as Prime Minister, the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the organisation of the capitalists, passed a resolution saying that Indira should not resign.

What Indiraji calls socialism is in effect state capitalism, with all economic power concentrated in a few hands. Real socialism, on the other hand, stands on the formulation of economic equality and economic liberty. Today, Government Industries are being run on capitalist principles. Disparity in pay scales is wide. Exploitation of labour which is the main basis of capitalism is prevalent. Democratic socialism, on the other hand, presupposes individual liberty. The way individual liberty and civic rights are being crushed today, it is clear that Indiraji's socialism is opposed to democracy. The people of India will never accept such socialism.

In a book entitled "Why Emergency ?" I have discussed the 14-point programme which I have placed before the former Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. As Panditji did not approve of it, our negotiations for co-operation with the Government failed. Today when I look back I feel that if the programme had been implemented forcibly without seeking the co-operation of the people and without concern for the human values of socialism, the country would have been in a dangerous state and totalitarianism would have been established in the name of socialism. I have faith only in such socialism in which the economic power would be in the hands of the working people themselves and individual freedom and civil liberty would remain secure. In my opinion a socialist revolution will be successful when the economic power (and political authority also) is in the hands of the people and they will be able to build their future without any outside interference.

The total revolution of which I speak today is such a revolution and is based on socialism with real equality and human freedom.

It has become clear that in order to solve the problems of corruption, high prices, unemployment etc., we will have to change the politics of the country, its economy and education policies particularly, and the direction of the change will have to be the direction indicated by Mahatma Gandhi,—the direction of decentralisation of political and economic authority. Today all power is centred in the hands of a few people, rather in the hands of one person. It is not socialism, it is individualism, a reactionary dictatorship. Such excessive centralisation threatens the existence of society and the individual. It is also a danger to our freedom, democracy and the unity of the country. It is not possible to govern this large country from the Centre. History testifies that attempts to govern India in that fashion were not successful. Centralised States are not durable. This is why the framers of our Constitution gave a federal structure to the administration of free India. But today the attempt is to give it a monarchical form. The State Governments have become slaves of the Centre. The existence of legislative assemblies too depends on the discretion of the Central Government. The Centre can dismiss State Governments at will and dissolve State assemblies, except when it does not suit the political interests of the ruler. The latest example is Tamil Nadu, where the DMK Government was dismissed arbitrarily and its Legislative Assembly dissolved. Indiraji says that the

Government of Tamil Nadu was corrupt and that therefore it was removed. Why was the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly dissolved then? The Bihar movement had demanded the removal of the corrupt State Government and the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly. It was a demand supported by the people of Bihar. Therefore it was an offence. But in Tamil Nadu it became a right of Indiraji.

We have always raised our voice against corruption. Prevention of corruption was the main aim of our movement. During the emergency corruption has increased by leaps and bounds and is increasing, the reason being that nobody can raise his or her voice against corrupt officers, politicians or ministers. To maintain her dictatorship, Indiraji has vested the bureaucracy and the police officers with powers to do what they like with the people. There are some good police officers and civil servants who do not misuse their position because they understand that our movement is for them as well. But there are a large number of others who in the name of maintenance of law and order behave like dictators. These pigmy dictators are loyal to the supreme dictator in Delhi and carry out every wish of the latter. Her word is law for them. They do not observe discipline nor do they abide by any law. There is real lack of discipline today. The emergency is claimed to make the public, the youth, and the students disciplined. But in the so-called Anushasan Parva (Age of discipline) the greatest breach of discipline is by the rulers themselves. Let the public be disciplined, the youth and the students be

disciplined, but if the top authority is not disciplined and is not answerable to any, what is the result? The despotic power is nursing corruption from top to bottom. The corruption cannot be rooted out by merely taking administrative action against smugglers and a few corrupt officers.

There is much talk about prevention of corruption, but corruption is on the increase. Eleven years ago, the Santanam Committee was set up to suggest methods for curbing corruption. It had submitted a detailed report but its recommendations have remained unimplemented. In some States the Lok Ayukta law was enacted. But its rights are so limited and there are so many loopholes in the law that the Lok Ayukta cannot take any effective action against the corrupt. There is no provision for inquiry into charges against the Chief Minister. At the Centre a Lok Pal Bill was drafted, but it was not enacted. In that Bill, the Lok Pal was not empowered to inquire about corruption of the Prime Minister. In other words, the source of corruption was to remain untouched and kept beyond the jurisdiction of the Lok Ayukta or Lok Pal. Some years ago, during one of my meetings with Indiraji, I told her that if corruption was to be removed, the recommendations made by the Santanam Committee should be implemented honestly and that the Chief Ministers and the Prime Minister should not be put beyond the scope of proposed inquiries into corruption charges.

But the way Indiraji has been conducting the affairs of the State, an unprincipled and corrupt

policy is being built in the country and democracy is being destroyed. There is only one way to prevent it, by raising your voice of protest and by spreading awakening among the people so that we can demand the restoration of the rights being taken away from us. It is said that rights are not given, they are taken. Therefore, you will have to take your rights. You acquire them by the power of your unity. Today there is much emphasis on the duties of the citizen by the Government. In the amended Constitution a set of fundamental duties are inserted. It is evident that this is all being done to tighten the string of dictatorship round the necks of our people. Those who preach sermons on the duties of the people must first discharge their own duties by restoring to the people the rights taken away from them. Duties for the people and rights for Indiraji and her handful of supporters. This will not work. The people will do their duty but not by losing their rights. To win their lost rights is today the greatest and most fundamental duty of the people.

For winning back our rights we will have to abandon fear first. By the same means by which we earned our freedom from the British, we can regain our democratic rights and freedom. Hundreds of thousands of people had gone to jail in the freedom struggle under the leadership of Gandhiji and the jails were packed. In connection with our movement also thousands have been arrested and detained. Reliable sources say that even during the freedom movement so many persons had not been



detained at one time. Still, this much is not enough in the present circumstances. The present Government is worse than the foreign British administration. The British Government was subject to the control of the British Parliament responsible to the people of Great Britain. The present Government is totally despotic. To win back our rights from such a Government, the people would have to prepare themselves for greater sacrifices. Freedom from fear of jail is the first necessity.

The supporters of Indiraji claim that the people are interested only in food and if the Government ensures it they are not concerned about their rights and liberties. They also claim that the demand for political rights is made only by those people who belong to the opposition parties or the educated few living in the cities and accustomed to criticise the Government. It is their conception of democracy. They treat the people as no better than dumb cattle, who can be satisfied with a little food. Whosoever criticises the Government and says that bread and freedom are not mutually incompatible is arrested and put behind the bars. Only those will have the right to speak who are the yes-men of Indiraji and who sing her praises day in and out. Do you want such democracy ! If not, you will have to speak in clear terms that we do not want only bread and that we want our freedom back, our civil liberties. We do not want to live like cattle but we want to be human beings. We also want the right to demand work and food as a result of it. We do not want to beg for food. We want those freedoms

which are essential for the citizens of an independent country.

People often ask me when the emergency will be lifted and how it will be lifted? Indiraji repeatedly says that the emergency will not remain for ever and will be removed as soon as it becomes unnecessary. But she does not say when it will be lifted. Till now she has detained in the name of internal security thousands of people of the opposition parties and other participants in our movement. Their detention period is being extended from time to time. When internal emergency was imposed on June 25, 1975, Indiraji said that with improvement in the situation the emergency would cease. But even today it continues. Why? People do not understand the reason for it. There is peace today in the entire country and no violent incidents are taking place anywhere. Even if it is claimed that before the emergency there were disturbances, there have been no such incidents for several months according to the Government itself. In my view there was never any violence of an organised kind even before the emergency nor is it there today. That apart, if the Government admits that there is complete peace prevailing in the country, why is the emergency not being lifted? Why is there continued censorship of news papers? Why are thousands of people kept in jails without trial or chargesheet? So far, only a few leaders have been released, whose health had deteriorated while in detention or who were about to die. I am an example of that kind. Besides me, Shri Nabha Krushna Chaudhuri, Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee,

Shri Asoka Mehta and a few others have been released after they suffered severely in health. Even today they have not fully recovered from the illness which they suffered while in jail. In the case of Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee after having been released from jail he is kept under house arrest and the detention order against him has not been revoked.

Many persons have also died while in jail. In Chandigarh, a prominent lawyer, Shri C.L. Lakhanpal died recently while in detention. Some days ago in Bihar, Prof. Ramachandra Sahi died in Darbhanga jail. There were some more such tragedies. Shri Vaidyanath Prashad Chaudhury, a Sarvodaya leader of Bihar, died in Banaras. He fell ill while in detention and his condition worsened day by day. He was then released only to die soon after. What were the offences of these people that they should be brought to the door of death in jail ?

When I visited Bombay, some friends advised me that to break the present political deadlock I should take the initiative. Indiraji also made a statement to a some what similar effect in the Lok Sabha sometime ago, saying that she is ready to talk with the leaders of the opposition parties. After that I wrote a letter to Indiraji on January 18, 1976, saying that I am always ready for talks to end the political deadlock but that such talks are possible only if I am given an opportunity of consultation with my senior colleagues who are all behind the bars. I sent the letter to Indiraji through Shri N.G. Goray, a Socialist leader. I have not got a reply to it so far. If Indiraji has decided that there should only be a

dictatorship in the country and not democracy then there is no purpose or meaning in having talks with the opposition. But she repeatedly talks of democracy even Parliamentary Democracy. If Indiraji wants that parliamentary democracy should be restored in this country then instead of suppressing and trying to destroy the opposition she should seek its co-operation to bring democracy back to life. She should have a dialogue with her critics with an open heart.

Whether the subject of lifting the emergency and the release of political prisoners is raised, Indiraji says that there has been no change in the ideology and policies of the leaders of the opposition parties. This suggests that she expects people to change their ideology and policies as a result of their being put in jail. Did the policies of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru change as a result of their being put in jail? If not, how can the leaders of the opposition parties be expected to abandon their principles just because they have been unlawfully detained. It is a matter of shame for the Prime Minister of a country like India to talk like that. If she wants to change the thinking and attitude of her opponents she should create an atmosphere of mutual understanding through a process of negotiations. She cannot expect them to change their policies under duress. But so far there has been no such gesture from the Prime Minister. According to some sources, Indiraji feels that as long as Jayaprakash Narain is unrepentent, there is no possibility of negotiation. My reply is that the need for negotiations arises only

when the parties to the dispute are unreconciled to each other. Now I am a wounded soldier. I cannot fight. But for the supreme need to restore democracy and to revive the liberties of the people, I am ready to sacrifice my life as a martyr. As long as thousands of our comrades are in jail the battle will go on and it is going on on both sides. Recently, Indiraji was reported to have said that the opposition has been vanquished but not subdued, that is that it has not accepted defeat. Being the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru she talks in that vein without realising that she is addressing, the people of the land of Mahatma Gandhi. The influence of Mahatma Gandhi is still there to some extent on our people and especially the youth of the country. So long as that influence lasts no follower of Mahatma Gandhi will kneel before even Hitler. We are fighters for truth and we remember the saying of Mahatma Gandhi that in the fight for truth there is no defeat. After the imposition of the emergency there was agitation in many parts of the country against the emergency and the arrest of the leaders. Thousands of people participated in demonstrations and were sent to jail. Especially in Bihar, October 2, 1975, a satyagraha has been going on, in which about 3,000 persons were arrested in five weeks. From November 14, 1975 to January 26, 1976, there was another phase of satyagraha in which some 6,000 to 7,000 persons participated and were arrested. In Punjab, comrades of the Shiromani Akali Dal kept up the glorious traditions of that State and carried on an unrelenting agitation against the emergency. The

satyagraha in Punjab has been going on since June 26, 1975, and every day people are courting jail. Examples of such perseverance and devotion to ideals were rare even during the freedom struggle. On the surface it might appear that the movement has receded under pressure from the authorities. But if one looks closer, it will be clear that we have advanced on the road of our struggle for civil rights.

On account of these agitations there is widespread awakening among the people, especially in Bihar and Punjab. Shri Dharendra Bhai Majumdar, who is a great leader and thinker of this country, shows by his experience that in the heart of the Indian people, the effect of the present movement is even more comprehensive and deeper than that of the 1942 struggle. Today the people of India are more awakened than ever before. Therefore, there is no question of our accepting defeat.

You might have heard about the Acharya Sammelan, which was organised at the instance of Vinoba Bhave at Paunar Ashram on January 16, 17 and 18, 1976. On the invitation of Vinoba Bhave, Acharyas\* from different parts of the country participated in that Sammelan. According to the definition given by Vinoba Bhave, an Acharya is he who is impartial, having no enemy and is courageous enough to speak out his mind. Such Acharyas considered the situation in the country for three days and they unanimously passed a resolution in which, besides other things, they said the emergency

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\*Learned persons

should be lifted, that the Press should be free of censorship and that the thousands of political prisoners should be released, so that there could be free and fair elections. Dr. Shriman Narayan, a close colleague of Vinoba Bhave, took this resolution to Delhi to convey it to Indiraji. He remained in Delhi for a week, but Indiraji would not meet him. After some days she herself met Vinoba Bhave and had a talk with him. It was said afterwards that as a result of the meeting with the Prime Minister, Vinoba Bhave had a feeling that the emergency would be lifted before June 25, 1976, and that political prisoners would be released. But that hope of Vinoba Bhave was not fulfilled.

I am telling you all these because some of these matters are directly relevant to your life. You might be knowing that from the very beginning Vinoba Bhave had different attitude towards our movement than that of mine. Some people had even interpreted Vinobaji's neutrality as support for Indiraji. When the emergency was imposed he called it Anushasan Parva or the period of discipline. Some people misunderstood these actions and even criticised him as a Sarkari Sant. The Government also made much of Vinobaji's expression 'Anushasan Parva'. Afterwards, on the completion of his vow of silence, Vinobaji interpreted Anushasan Parva in an entirely different manner. He said, the Government must accept the Anushasan (discipline) of the Acharyas. If it does not do, the people have a right to agitate against the Government. From this explanation of Vinoba

Bhave the misunderstanding of Anushasan Parva and of his role during the period is completely removed. Perhaps there will be another Acharya Sammelan on October 2, 1976, under Vinoba Bhave's auspices. If the Government does not accept the advice of that Sammelan, it is said, Vinoba Bhave himself will lead the campaign against the Government. It is my hope that our people will have a direction to go ahead from any such action Vinoba Bhave may undertake.

There was widespread belief that since the imposition of the emergency, there is a serious difference of opinion between Vinoba Bhave and me on the circumstances which lead to the present situation and the method of resolving the crisis. I am now happy to say that all misunderstandings have now been removed. Actually there is no big difference of opinion or conception on the basic questions facing our people. The differences are only about the approach, the mode of thinking. You know, Vinoba Bhave is a saint. He is a spiritual man. He approaches every question from a spiritual point of view. I look at them from the social point of view. So differences are natural in our methods of working. Such differences lead to differences of opinion between friends and they have occurred. But today our country is in a dangerous situation and to get over it there is need for the spiritual leadership of Vinoba Bhave. Therefore, I request you all to consider seriously and dispassionately whatever Vinoba Bhave says and does.

For example, recently Vinoba Bhave has raised



the question of prohibition of cow slaughter and has decided that if no legal ban is imposed by September 11, 1976, which is his birthday, he will undertake a fast. The Government did not respond with a formal declaration of prohibition of cow slaughter. The Government did not also allow the newspapers to publish the news that Vinoba Bhave has decided to fast unto death on the question of a ban on cow slaughter. When "Maitri", the Journal of Paunar Ashram, published the news the police seized about 4,000 copies of that publication. However, good sense prevailed later and the seized copies of the Journal were returned to the Ashram. Shri R.K Patil, acting President of Sarva Seva Sangh, has told me that the Government is also considering the question of a legal ban on cow slaughter. If Indiraji accepts Vinoba Bhave's demand it is well and good. Otherwise he will go on fast from September 11, 1976. I have supported Vinoba Bhave on this question and I trust all the people of this country, irrespective of religion, will support him because prohibition of cow slaughter is not a communal issue. It is important that it should not be allowed to assume a communal colour and affect the unity of our people. We have to be vigilant and go to the villages and establish contact with the people and make them understand the significance of Vinoba Bhave's demand. In a majority of the States of India there is already a ban on the slaughter of cows. But in a few States, namely, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu there is no such prohibition. If the Governments of these States also fall in line there

will be no reason for Vinoba Bhave to undertake the fast which he is in support of the principle that the Government must honour the provision of the constitution and the judgment of the Supreme Court on the subject of cow protection.\*

Friends and colleagues have been repeatedly asking me for a new programme. "Give us some new programme", they insist. It is easy to give a new programme but implementing it on an extensive scale is not possible at present. There is fear all round. The majority of our people are cowed down and do not appreciate the importance of individual liberty. No meetings are allowed today and there is censorship of the Press. Therefore, we can reach the people only by means of personal contact. We have to make them understand the importance of individual liberty.

The question of elections has also to be raised in this connection in a general way. According to our Constitution, every citizen has a right to elect his representative to the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabhas every five years. Every five years the citizen exercises this right. Within the framework of the present system of democracy the citizen has no other active role. Today this right also has been taken away and the life of the Lok Sabha has been extended for one year by postponing the elections due in March 1976. If there is no strong protest from the people the term of the Lok Sabha will be extended further and the people will be deprived of their only

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\*There has been a compromise on the subject and Vinobaji did not go on fast.

right. It is, therefore, the fundamental duty of every citizen to demand that the elections be held as soon as possible. Such a demand will be constitutional and all people can participate fearlessly in agitations connected with it.

From the very beginning I have been saying that our movement is for total revolution, that is, there shall be a revolution in all aspects of the life of the society and the individual. The movement is not only for a change of Government, but it is for the change of society—individual as well as collective. That is why I have called it total revolution. There is a difference in the meaning of the words 'total' and 'whole'. But to me both are almost the same. Total revolution can be whole as well. This revolution cannot be completed in a day or in a year or two. To achieve this we have to struggle hard for a long period. We have to die for it. Besides, we will have to devote ourselves to constructive and creative work also. This double process of struggle and construction is essential if there is to be a complete revolution. At present the atmosphere is laden with fear. Thousands of leaders and workers are in prison. It is possible that in the absence of guidance from these people the movement may not proceed along the lines on which it was going before the emergency. As this revolution has to envelope the entire country it is my appeal to all of you that if you care for your country and the society then it is imperative that all and each of you should make your contribution to the revolution.

Take the sphere of education for example. From

the primary to the university level there should be a thorough overhaul of the system. This is the opinion of experts also. The Kothari Commission too was of the same opinion. But very little has been done in that direction. The students are dissatisfied because the present system of education is defective and the future of the student is threatened. When the dissatisfaction comes to the surface it is suppressed. Even then it remains in the hearts of the people, especially the young ones, and when the occasion arises it will surface again and assume explosive proportions. It cannot be said that an explosion will solve the problem but it is a warning to the society and its leaders to rise to the occasion. There are other problems too of an equally important nature, economic, social and other problems. There is for instance the plight of Harijans and the tribal people. Economically they are poor and socially they are backward. There is violence against Harijans who demanded equal treatment with the higher castes. Instances have been there in which Harijans were burnt alive. Participants in the total revolution will have to find a constructive solution to this explosive problem. They have to live with Harijans and the tribal people and win their confidence by serving them. They have to bring these sections into the mainstream of Indian community. Without such constructive work total revolution will remain incomplete. At the political level those who can contribute for the resolution of the crisis are behind the bars and those who run the Government think that the people are to be controlled and ruled ruthlessly. They are the rulers. Therefore,

it is the people's duty to obey all their orders. There is talk of seeking the co-operation of the people. But it is impossible to do so when the people are reduced to slaves. As for the future, I have full faith in our people. I firmly believe that this situation is unbearable to the public and that a day will come whether it is today, tomorrow or the day after when a mass upsurge against the present injustice will take place. Whether it will be explosive or peaceful, a mass movement is unavoidable. Change has to take place. I have no doubt about it.

As for the Government, it will do whatever it thinks proper. It is our duty to express our opinions on its actions and awaken the people to its wrong deeds. The youth should play an important part in this task. They must know where the country is going and what their responsibilities are. These are serious matters which should receive their serious attention. If the youth of the country and the people in the villages and the cities are awakened and stand united there will be a total change in the atmosphere in the country. It will change. This is my humble but firm belief.

Now the question arises what is to be done for total revolution in the present circumstances. Total revolution has many aspects. They are, struggle, construction, propaganda and organisation. In the present situation we should concentrate our efforts on the constructive aspect. It should be the main plank of our programme to make a united effort to enthuse the people and the youth and make them fight social evils like the system of dowry, caste

distinctions, practice of untouchability, religious and other differences between the communities etc. This is what I call social and cultural integration of our nation. Total revolution is a continuous process. It will go on for ever and will be geared to changing both the individual and social lives of the people. There is no stop, no rest and no respite in this revolution. Only the form of the revolution will have to be adapted to the prevailing circumstances. Thus the programmes of the revolution will vary and the methods will be different, but the purpose remains constant. The soldiers of total revolution will have to go on working in the different spheres for the different objectives I have mentioned, so that cumulatively they will usher in a situation congenial for total revolution. They must busy themselves in hardwork, in continuous action, tirelessly and in an endless way.

I have described above the social aspect of our programme. Let us now look at the economic aspect. It concerns the day-to-day problems of the farmers and the landless labour in the villages, the workers and the middle classes in the towns and the public in general. It has become more complex during the emergency. As a result of the demand of our movement for the curbing of price rise and due to good rainfall last year there is some check on inflation. But barring the prices on foodgrains the cost of other commodities and articles of daily use is still high. With the result, the biggest sector in our economy, that is, the agricultural sector, is suffering. Peasants are being forced to repay the loans given to them

during times of scarcity and revenue arrears are being collected forcibly. The cattle of those who are unable to pay are being attached and taken away.

The agricultural labourers in the villages are the worst affected. There has been no improvement at all in their working and living conditions, practically since independence. Though a lot of propaganda is made about the welfare of Harijans and the tribal people there is very little tangible improvement in their conditions. Newspapers daily publish accounts of distribution of land among the landless. But according to sources who ought to know it is all on paper.

In the urban centres the industrial labour is also suffering. Its right to bonus has been abrogated. Because of the emergency the workers are unable to raise their voice. The Government says industrial production has increased. If so, why are the workers being denied their due share of the extra wealth produced by them. Instead of an increase in their emoluments they are facing cuts in wages, dearness allowance and bonus. Many factories have closed down and the number of unemployed is rising. An eminent economist, Shri Ashok Mitra, who was formerly Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, has said that the claims of the Government about economic development are misleading. He has shown that the consumption levels and the demand for goods have fallen more than at any time since independence. According to him, the purchasing power of the wage earners has diminished compared to what it was at the time of the acute drought conditions of 1967. The main reason for

this state of affairs is that the present economic set-up is meant to safeguard and promote the interests of capitalists. There is no redistribution of income in the set-up.

The present Government claims to be a well wisher of the weaker sections of the society but the weaker sections have been weakened further. In 1961, when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was Prime Minister, the Government had appointed a study group to examine the conditions of the weaker sections in society and to make recommendations for improving them. I was made the chairman of the study group. The study group, after working hard, prepared a comprehensive report suggesting a number of recommendations for the amelioration of the weaker sections of our nation, but the recommendations were never implemented. After that experience I decided not to participate in any future official committee. Now being a soldier of total revolution I realise that the task of the revolution is first to raise these people who constitute the weaker section of the society and who have remained for a generation at the lowest rung of our nation. In these circumstances it is clear what should be our programme. We must go to the villages, mix with Harijans, tribals and the other weaker sections of the society, share their agony and organise them into participants in the revolution.

Before I conclude this letter I want to mention one more subject. It is the effort to form a new political party. The new party has not been formed so far, but I hope it will be done soon. As you know, we received the active co-operation of many



parties in the Bihar Movement. These include the Socialist Party, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Organisation Congress, Bharatiya Lok Dal, Revolutionary Socialist Party, Socialist Unity Centre, Communist Party (Marxist), Marxist Co-ordination Committee, Shiromani Akali Dal and others. Of these, the representatives of the Socialist Party, the Jana Sangh, the BLD and the Congress (O), besides a few independent politicians, held a joint meeting in Bombay on March 20, 21, in my presence. They decided to form a single new party comprising these parties. A steering committee was set up for the purpose. Amongst its members were N.G. Goray (Socialist), Om Prakash Tyagi (Jana Sangh), H.M. Patel (BLD) and Shanti Bhushan (Congress—O). Shri Goray was the convenor of this committee. The committee prepared an outline of the policies and programme of the proposed new party. It was circulated among the members of the different parties. Then, on May 22 and 23, the second meeting of the representatives of the above four parties and some independents was held in Bombay. The outline prepared by the standing committee was unanimously adopted at that meeting and it was decided to announce the formation of the new party. Accordingly, on May 25, I held a press conference at my residence and announced that a new party was being formed though it had not given a name at that time. It was decided that at first the members of the different parties coming together will join the new party individually and that the parties will then be dissolved. It was also decided that the doors of the new party will

remain open to those groups which have supported our movement as also to individuals who left the Congress. Individuals who never joined any party but participated in the movement are also to be welcomed into the new party. Meanwhile, there was a setback and the process of formation of the new party was halted. But I am sure the new party will be formed because the present situation demands it. It is very essential that there should be a single strong opposition party in the country.

Since I announced the formation of the new party there was some misunderstanding that I have given up my policy of not taking part in party politics and would be joining the new party. I have been working on non-party forums for several years and have kept myself aloof from all party and power politics. At the same time I had always held the opinion that if parliamentary democracy is to succeed in our country, there is need for a strong opposition party. Attempts to form such a party were not successful in the past. But whenever there was movement in that direction I welcomed it. In the Bihar Movement when members of different parties came together and shared the common ordeal of repression they realised that the time had come when they should stand united. As a first step in that direction the Janata Morcha was formed in Gujarat. Movement towards integration of the different parties supporting the Movement was encouraged by that experience. Perhaps some of you might be remembering that in connection with the Bihar Movement while I always stressed the need for a non-

political mass movement, I was also pleading for the formation of a new political party, on the basis of the experience of the Movement. But I must say in this connection that my determination not to participate in party politics remains undiluted. I will not fight any election nor will I hold any office. I never craved for power because I always relied on people's power instead of State Power and I always dreamt of a revolution through mass action. I have endeavoured to accomplish it in the Bihar Movement. But in the next context of democracy, especially parliamentary democracy, I have always accepted the necessity of political parties. Now I have come to realise the need more keenly. In the present movement when the party in power is trying to reduce democracy into dictatorship it is imperative to have a single strong opposition party, which has faith in democracy and which will resist the dictatorship of the rulers. That will be a symbol of the political aspirations of our people.

While trying for the integration of the different political parties I also realised very keenly that all those youth organisations which are affiliated to or are influenced by these parties should come together. In the context of the Bihar Movement and more recently in opposing the emergency, these youth organisations have played an effective and notable part. They include, in addition to the Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti, the Samajvadi Yuvajan Sabha (both groups), Vidyarthi Parishad, Yuva Congress (Organisation), Tarun Shanti Sena, Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh, Nava Nirman Samiti, Lohia Vichar

Manch, Democratic Students Organisation, the Students Federation of India and others. The non party Chatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini was born of the Movement in Bihar. The members of Tarun Shanti Sena have merged into the Sangharsh Vahini. The Lohia Vichar Manch has also decided to join the Sangharsh Vahini. The remaining youth organisations, either affiliated to or influenced by one of these parties, should also come together and form a single organisation. If this happens youth power will then be felt in the affairs of our country and will grow into a invincible force.

When I talk of integration of the different parties I do not mean to suggest that I have given up the idea of formation of a non-party people's forum and a youth movement based on that principle. I know that such a forum is necessary in all conditions. Even if the proposed new party becomes the party in power there will be need of a non-party forum to keep a check on its conduct. This forum will be a king of watchman of democracy and will strive to keep the representatives of the people on the right path. At the same time it will be a carrier of the concept of total revolution and will assist in organising the powers of change. From this point of view the importance of the two facets of the movement, political parties and a non-party forum, will be cleared.

Before concluding this letter I would like to say one more thing to you, especially to my young friends and students. It is you who started this struggle against established power. On your invita-

tion I joined the movement afterwards. At that time also I said you are to give the lead to this struggle, this revolution, yourself. On your persistent demand I agreed to guide you. Now I am a wounded soldier. In the present state of my health how much more can I do inspite of my burning desire to do it. For the long and endless battle of total revolution there is need of new leadership. In every village, every town and city, every school and college and in every factory and workshop, young persons sharing these ideals, who accept the values of total revolution, who have allegiance to democracy and civil liberties and are ready to devote all thcir strength and power towards the making of a new Bihar and a new India, should come forward. They should above all eschew narrow selfish interests. So long as I am alive I am with you for discussion and consultation but it must be understood that you have to bear the responsibilities and drive the chariot of revolution yourselves. This battle, as I said before, is a very long one. Its aim is not mere assumption of power but changing society in all its aspects. Therefore, you should prepare yourselves for a long struggle. The forces of history are with you. So go ahead with full confidence. Victory is certainly yours.

With these words I convey my good wishes to all my sisters and brothers. I know you will continue to bestow your love on me. I have spent all my life in your service, in the service of this country. Even now it is my earnest desire that I should be able to serve

you. May God grant me the strength to spare my life for your service.

Mahila Charka Samiti,

Patna.

August 28, 1976

Yours affectionately,  
Jayaprakash Narayan

*P. S.*

After concluding this letter some more things struck me and I thought I should tell you about them. One of them is the question of amendment of our Constitution. You might have heard that Indiraji wants to get the Constitution altered basically by the present Lok Sabha. The tenure of the Lok Sabha is already over in the month of last March, but the emergency has been extended improperly and the life of the Lok Sabha also has been prolonged. The present Lok Sabha is not competent to pass any amendment of the Constitution because it has no order from the people to do so, no mandate for that purpose. Whatever mandate it had, it was over.

As the people are sovereign, any amendment or change in the Constitution must be in consultation with the people. One way of consulting the people will be to place the proposed amendments before the public and ask them to give their opinion on the amendments. This method is called referendum. A second method is to convene a new Constituent Assembly to consider the desired amendments and approve them. For this purpose also it will be necessary to circulate among the people of the country

all the proposed amendments and educate them about their implications. The newspapers may be asked to discuss the amendments thoroughly in their columns. The opposition parties and other groups may be given opportunities to express their opinions on the amendments. Only a Constituent Assembly elected in this way is competent to amend or alter the Constitution basically. If the amendments are not of a basic nature the Lok Sabha can make them, provided at the time of electing the Lok Sabha the proposed amendments placed before the electorate and their verdict sought. When the present Lok Sabha was elected the amendments, which the party in power now wants to enact, were not placed before the people. Therefore, this Lok Sabha cannot pass the amendments.

But Indiraji is bent on getting the Constitution thoroughly amended by the present Lok Sabha because she is not sure whether in a future Lok Sabha she will have a two-thirds' majority, which is essential for amending the Constitution. The country has been under a state of emergency for several months now. The newspapers are subject to strict censorship. Several leaders of opposition parties are behind the bars and those not arrested are not allowed to hold meetings or issue statements to the Press. In the Lok Sabha also the opinions expressed by the opposition members are not allowed to be published. In view of these restrictions the main opposition party refused to participate in the parliamentary debates on the proposed constitutional amendments. It was a correct decision on their part. But it does not seem to have

had any effect on Indiraji and her decision to go ahead with the amendment of the Constitution. She is determined to push this amendment through the current session of the illegal Lok Sabha.

I have always supported adequate and desirable changes in the Constitution. But in my view the aim of any such amendments must be to strengthen democracy, not to throttle it. For instance, there is a great necessity to lay down clearly the circumstances in which a state of emergency can be proclaimed and how long it should last. Similarly, in order to prevent the misuse of the emergency powers by the Government, there should be specific limitations provided in the Constitution itself. In the absence of such limitations the powers assumed under the emergency are being misused today for party and personal interests. It should also be clearly stated in the Constitution that the fundamental rights and civil liberties of the people are inviolable. Today the provisions of the Constitution are being used to destroy the basic structure of the Constitution itself, and the rights of the people are being abridged. The rights are being diluted as a result of loopholes in the Constitution itself. It is necessary to plug such loopholes. If the Constitution is going to be amended for such a purpose, I will surely welcome it.

Indiraji talks a lot about socialism. She has decided to insert the word socialist in the preamble to the Constitution. I am also a supporter of socialism. But the socialism of Indiraji, as earlier mentioned, is synonymous with Statism or "Governmentism". By imposing such socialism on the Constitution she



wants to have a firm and permanent grip on authority. So far as the right to property is concerned I have always been of the view that the right should be excluded from the list of fundamental rights. But the remaining fundamental rights and freedoms such as freedom of speech and expression, freedom of communication, freedom of forming unions and holding meetings, etc. should remain untouched.

However, whatever amendments one wants to make in the Constitution, it is necessary to obtain the sanction of the people for them. Without such specific sanction it will be unconstitutional and undemocratic to change even a single word in the Constitution. Indiraji, however, is very impatient to amend the Constitution, the reason being her desire to protect her authority and perpetuate her power. Obviously, she intends to limit the rights of the people and curb their freedoms and liberties to make Indian democracy so disabled that nobody can challenge her authority. She wants to retain the rulership of this country in her hands as long as she wishes and afterwards pass it on to her heirs. After the imposition of the emergency, the manner in which Shri Sanjay Gandhi has been elevated to a position of unchallenged power makes it clear that Indiraji wants her son to succeed her as Prime Minister.

In this way individualism or dynastism is being established in the country in place of democracy. Foundations are being laid for a new kind of monarchy. Now the people will have to decide, the youth will have to decide, whether they will let this happen, whether they want democracy or monarchy. If we

want democracy we have to raise our voice against whatever is being done in Parliament and have to resist the onslaught of dictatorship. This we can do with our united power. The rulers are yet not in a position to assume the crown of dictatorship openly, abandoning the veil of democracy. Indiraji wants monarchy in the name of democracy. Therefore it is possible that after amending the Constitution and adopting it to suit her dictatorial interests she may decide to hold a General Election.

It is being repeatedly said by the rulers that election can be held under the emergency. But there can be no genuine elections in the present state of affairs. Only a drama of elections can be performed. With ban on public meetings and assembly of people, with the opposition parties not being allowed to campaign and the people not being free to participate in the electioneering, there can be no free elections. In the name of maintenance of law and order the Government can do anything it likes. It can even stop the traffic on the roads. In such a state of affairs free and fair elections are not possible.

It is also likely that the Government may lift the emergency in theory but maintain it in practice, so that the opposition parties are rendered powerless. Recently, on August 18, Indiraji said in Colombo while addressing the Indian community that the emergency has been much relaxed and there is no censorship of newspapers. Both these statements are false. There is such strict censorship of the Press that the newspapers cannot publish statements or speeches of any person except Indiraji and her supporters.

Leave aside statements and speeches, even, the names of opposition leaders are not allowed to be mentioned. Take my own case. I returned to Patna on July 20, after a year's absence and as a sick man, but the newspapers in Patna were not allowed to say that I was sick or that I had returned to Patna. Many persons in Bihar did not know that I had returned to Patna and had been living here for the past one-and-a-half months. No photographer was allowed to take my photograph. Still Indiraji tells the world that there is no censorship in India. What cannot happen in a country where its Prime Minister tells such lies ! I am afraid that in the same way she may announce that the emergency has been lifted and that there is no censorship, without doing either in effect. Now the question arises what should we do if, while retaining the emergency, elections are held. The opposition parties have not so far taken a decision on this matter.

In my opinion, in any situation it is for the people to take a determined stand and shedding their fear, make it clear that they will ensure free and fair elections. The youth and the students should come forward and be prepared to prevent irregularities and misuse of power during elections. In order to restore democracy it is essential that we should all be fearless. Let every youth and student be fearless. Let every child of India and Bihar be fearless. It is my firm conviction that the youth of this country will not allow the flag of India to be lowered and that they will keep the torch of liberty aflame even sacrificing themselves, if necessary.

September 2, 1976.

Jayaprakash

# *Letters from Jail*

TO INDIRA GANDHI

July 21, 1975

Chandigarh

Dear Prime Minister,

I am appalled at press reports of your speeches and interviews. (The very fact that you have to say something every day to justify your action implies a guilty conscience.) Having muzzled the press and every kind of public dissent, you continue with your distortions and untruths without fear of criticism or contradiction. If you think that in this way you will be able to justify yourself in the public eye and damn the Opposition to political perdition, you are sorely mistaken. If you doubt this, you may test it by revoking the emergency, restoring to the people their fundamental rights, restoring the freedom of the press, releasing all those whom you have imprisoned or detained for no other crime than performing their patriotic duty. Nine years, madam, is not a short

period of time for the people, who are gifted with a sixth sense, to have found you out.

The burden of your song, as I have been able to discover, is that (a) there was a plan to paralyse the government, and (b) that one person had been trying to spread disaffection among the ranks of the civil and military forces. These seem to be your major notes. But there have been also minor notes. Every now and then you have been doling out your *obiter dictae* such as the nation being more important than democracy and about the suitability of social democracy to India, and more in the same vein.

As I am the villain of the piece, let me put the record straight. This may be of no interest to you—for all your distortions and untruths are wilful and deliberate—but at least the truth would have been recorded.

About the plan to paralyse the government, there was no such plan and you know it. Let me state the facts.

Of all the States of India it was in Bihar alone where there was a people's movement. But there too, according to the Chief Minister's many statements, it had fizzled out long ago, if it had ever existed. But the truth is—and you should know if your ubiquitous Intelligence has served you right—that it was spreading and percolating deep down in the countryside. Until the time of my arrest janata sarkars were being formed from the village upwards to the block level. Later on, the process was to be taken up, hopefully, to the district and State level.

If you have cared to look into the programme of the janata sarkars, you would have found that for the most part it was constructive, such as regulating the public distribution system, checking corruption at the lower levels of administration, implementing the land reform laws, settling disputes through the age-old custom of conciliation and arbitration, assuring a fair deal to Harijans, curbing such social evils as *tilak* and *dahez*, etc. There was nothing in all this that by any stretch of the imagination could be called subversive. Only where the janata sarkars were solidly organised were such programmes as non-payment of taxes taken up. At the peak of the movement in the urban areas an attempt was made for some days, through *dharna* and picketing, to stop the working of government offices. At Patna whenever the Assembly opened attempts were made to persuade the members to resign and to prevent them peacefully from going in. All these were calculated programmes of civil disobedience and thousands of men and women were arrested all over the State.

If all this adds up to an attempt to paralyse the Bihar Government, well, it was the same kind of attempt as was made during the freedom struggle through non-cooperation and satyagraha to paralyse the British Government. But that was a government established by force, whereas the Bihar Government and the legislature are both constitutionally established bodies. What right has anyone to ask an elected government and elected legislature to go? This is one of your favourite questions. But it has been answered umpteen times by competent persons.

including well-known constitutional lawyers. The answer is that in a democracy the people do have the right to ask for the resignation of an elected government if it has gone corrupt and has been misruling. And if there is a legislature that persists in supporting such a government it too must go, so that the people might choose better representatives.

But in that case how can it be determined what the people want? In the usual democratic manner. In the case of Bihar, the mammoth rallies and processions held in Patna, the thousands of constituency meetings held all over the state, the three-day Bihar *bandh*, the memorable happenings of November 4, 1974, and the 'largest ever' meeting held at the Gandhi maidan on November 18 were a convincing measure of the people's will. And what had the Bihar Government and Congress to show on their side? The miserable counter-offensive of November 16 which had been master-minded by Mr. Barooah and on which according to reliable reports, a fantastic sum of 60 lakhs of rupees was spent. But if that was not conclusive enough proof, I had asked repeatedly for a plebiscite. But you were afraid to face the people.

While I am on the Bihar movement let me mention another important point that would illumine the politics of such a type of movement. The students of Bihar did not start their movement just off beat as it were. After formulating their demands at a conference they had met the Chief Minister and the Education Minister. They had had several meetings. But unfortunately the inept and corrupt Bihar Government did not take the students seriously.

Then the latter *gheraoed* the Assembly. The sad events of that day precipitated the Bihar movement. Even then the students did not demand the resignation of the Ministry nor the dissolution of the Assembly. It was after several weeks during which firing, lathi charges and indiscriminate arrests took place, that the Students' Action Committee felt compelled to put up that demand. It was at that point that the Rubicon was crossed.

Thus, in Bihar, the government was given a chance to settle the issues across the table. None of the demands of the students was unreasonable or non-negotiable. But the Bihar Government preferred the method of struggle, i.e. unparalleled repression. It was the same in U.P. In either case the government rejected the path of negotiation, of trying to settle the issue across the table, and chose the path of strife. Had it been otherwise, there would have been no movement at all.

I have pondered over this riddle : why did not those governments act wisely ? The conclusion I have arrived at is that the main hurdle has been corruption. Somehow the governments have been unable to deal with corruption in their ranks, particularly at the top level : the ministerial level itself. And corruption has been the central point of the movement, particularly corruption in the government and the administration.

Be that as it may, except for Bihar, there was no movement of its kind in any other State of India. In U.P. though satyagraha had started in April, it was far from becoming a people's movement. In some



other States though struggle committees had been formed, there seemed to be no possibility of a mass movement anywhere. And as the general election to the Lok Sabha was drawing near, the attention of the Opposition parties was turned more towards the coming electoral struggle than to any struggle involving civil disobedience.

Thus, the plan of which you speak, the plan to paralyse the government, is a figment of your imagination thought up to justify your totalitarian measures.

But suppose I grant you for a minute, for argument's sake, that there was such a plan, do you honestly believe that your erstwhile colleague, the former Deputy Prime Minister of India,\* and Chandra Shekar, a member of the Congress Working Committee, were, also a party to it? Then why have they also been arrested and many others like them?

No, dear Prime Minister, there was no plan to paralyse the government. If there was any plan, it was a simple, innocent and short-time plan to continue until the Supreme Court decided your appeal. It was this plan that was announced at the Ramlia Grounds by Nanaji Deshmukh on June 25 (1975) and which was the subject matter of my speech that evening. The programme was for a selected number of persons to offer satyagraha before or near your residence in support of the demand that you should step down until the Supreme Court's judgment on your appeal. The programme was to continue for

\*Morarji Desai.

seven days in Delhi, after which it was to be taken up in the States. And, as I have said above, it was to last only until the judgment of the Supreme Court. I do not see what is subversive or dangerous about it. In a democracy the citizen has an inalienable right to civil disobedience when he finds that other channels of redress or reform have dried up. It goes without saying that the satyagrahi willingly invites and accepts his lawful punishment. This is the new dimension added to democracy by Gandhi. What an irony that it should be obliterated in Gandhi's own India !

It should be noted—and it is a very important point—that even this programme of satyagraha would not have occurred to the Opposition had you remained content with quietly clinging to your office. But you did not do it. Through your henchmen you had rallies and demonstrations organised in front of your residence begging you not to resign. You addressed these rallies and justifying your stand advanced spurious arguments and heaped calumny on the head of the Opposition. An effigy of the High Court Judge\* was burnt before your residence and posters appeared in the city suggesting some kind of link between the judge and the CIA. When such despicable happenings were taking place every day, the Opposition had no alternative but to counteract

\*Justice J.M.L. Sinha of the Allahabad High Court who delivered the judgment of June 12 disqualifying Mrs Gandhi from membership of Parliament on the ground of corrupt election practices.

the mischief. And how did it decide to do it? Not by rowdyism but by orderly *satyagraha*, self-sacrifice.

It was this 'plan' and not any imaginary plan to paralyse the government that has aroused your ire and cost the people their liberties and dealt a death-blow to their democracy.

And why has the freedom of the press been suppressed? Not because the Indian press was irresponsible, dishonest or anti-government. In fact, nowhere, under conditions of freedom, is the press more responsible, reasonable and fair than it has been in India. The truth is that your anger against it was aroused because on the question of your resignation, after the High Court's judgment, some of the papers took a line that was highly unpalatable to you. And when on the morrow of the Supreme Court judgment all the metropolitan papers, including the wavering *Times of India*, came out with well-reasoned and forceful editorials advising you to quit freedom of the press became too much for you to stomach. That cooked the goose of the Indian press, and you struck your deadly blow. It staggers one's imagination to think that so valuable a freedom as freedom of the press, the very life-breath of democracy, can be snuffed out because of the personal pique of a Prime Minister.

You have accused the Opposition of trying to lower the prestige and position of the country's Prime Minister. But in reality the boot is on the other leg. No one has done more to lower the position and prestige of that great office than yourself. Can one ever think of the Prime Minister of a

democratic country who cannot even vote in his parliament because he has been found guilty of corrupt electoral practices? (The Supreme Court may reverse the High Court's judgment—most probably it will, in this atmosphere of terror—but as long as that is not done your guilt and your deprivation of right to vote remain.)

As for the 'one person' who is supposed to have tried to sow disaffection in the army and the police force, he denies the charge. All that he has done is to make the men and officers of the Forces conscious of their duties and responsibilities. Whatever he has said in that connection is within the law: the Constitution, the Army Act and the Police Act.

So much for your major points: the plan to paralyse the government and the attempt to sow disaffection in the armed and police forces. Now a few of your minor points and *obiter dictae*.

You are reported to have said that democracy is not more important than the nation. Are you not presuming too much, Madam Prime Minister? You are not the only one who cares for the nation. Among those whom you have detained or imprisoned there are many who have done much more for the nation than you. And everyone of them is as good a patriot as yourself. So, please do not apply salt to our wounds by lecturing to us about the nation.

Moreover, it is a false choice that you have formulated. There is no choice between democracy and the nation. It was for the good of the nation that the people of India declared in their Constituent Assembly on 26th November 1949 that 'We, the

people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic. . . give to ourselves this Constitution'. That democratic Constitution cannot be changed into a totalitarian one by a mere ordinance or a law of Parliament. That can be done only by the people of India themselves in a new Constituent Assembly, especially elected for that specific purpose. If Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity have not been rendered to 'all its citizens' even after a quarter of a century of signing of that Constitution, the fault is not that of the Constitution or of democracy but of the Congress party that has been in power in Delhi all these years. It is precisely because of that failure that there is so much unrest among the people and the youth. Repression is no remedy for that. On the other hand, it only compounds the failure.

I, no doubt, see that the papers are full these days of reports of new policies, new drives, show of new enthusiasm. Apparently you are trying to make up for lost time, that is to say, you are making a show of doing here and now what you failed to do in nine years. But your twenty points will go the same way as your ten points did and the 'Stray Thoughts'\*. But I assure you this time the people will not be fooled. And I assure you of another thing too : a party of self-seekers and spineless opportunists and *jee-huzurs* ('yesmen') such as the Congress, alas, has become, can never do anything worthwhile. (Not all Congressmen are such. There

\*The note on economic policy that Mrs Gandhi sent to the AICC meeting held at Bangalore in July 1969.

are quite a few exceptions, such as those who have been deprived of their party membership and some of them their freedom. So that according to the *dharma* of totalitarianism, there could be no criticism even within the party.) There will be a lot of propaganda and make-believe on paper but on the ground level the situation will not change the least. The condition of the poor—and they are the great majority over the greater part of the country—has been worsening over the past years. It would be enough if the downward trend were arrested. But, for that your whole approach to politics and economics will have to change.

I have written the above in utter frankness without mincing words. I have done so not out of anger or so as to get even with you in words. No, that would be a show of impotence. Nor does it show any lack of appreciation for the care that is being taken of my health. I have done it only to place the naked truth before you, which you have been trying to cover up and distort.

Having performed this unpleasant duty, may I conclude with a few parting words of advice? You know I am an old man. My life's work is done. And after Prabha's\* going I have nothing and no one to live for. My brother and nephew have their family and my younger sister—the elder one died years ago—has her sons and daughters. I have given all my life, after finishing education, to the country and asked for nothing in return. So I shall be content to die a prisoner under your regime.

\*Jayaprakashji's wife, Prabhavati Devi.

Would you listen to the advice of such a man ? Please do not destroy the foundations that the Fathers of the Nation, including your noble father, had laid down. There is nothing but strife and suffering along the path that you have taken. You inherited a great tradition, noble values and a working democracy. Do not leave behind a miserable wreck of all that. It would take a long time to put all that together again. For it would be put together again, I have no doubt. A people who fought British imperialism and humbled it cannot accept indefinitely the indignity and shame of totalitarianism. The spirit of man can ever be vanquished, no matter how deeply suppressed. In establishing your personal dictatorship you have buried it deep. But it will rise from the grave. Even in Russia it is slowly coming up.

You have talked of social democracy. What a beautiful image those words call to the mind. But you have seen in eastern and central Europe how ugly the reality is. Naked dictatorship and, in the ultimate analysis, Russian overlordship. Please, please do not push India toward that terrible fate.

And may I ask to what purpose all these draconian measures ? In order to be able to carry out your twenty points ? But who was preventing you from carrying out the ten points ? All the discontent, the protest, the satyagraha were due precisely to the fact that you were not doing anything to implement your programme, inadequate as it was, to lighten the misery and burden under which the people and the youth were groaning. This is what Chandra

Shekhar, Mohan Dharia, Krishna Kant and their friends have been saying for which they have been punished.

You have talked of 'drift' in the country. But was that due to Opposition or to me? The drift was because of your lack of decision, direction and drive. You seem to act swiftly and dramatically only when your personal position is threatend. Once that is assured, the drift begins. Dear Indiraji, please do not identify yourself with the nation. You are not immortal, India is.

You have accused the Opposition and me of every kind of villainy. But let me assure you that if you do the right things, for instance, your 20 points, tackling corruption at Ministerial levels, electoral reform, etc., take the Opposition into confidence, heed its advice, you will receive the willing cooperation, of every one of us. For that you need not destroy democracy. The ball is in your court. It is for you to decide.

With these parting words, let me bid you farewell. May God be with you.

Jayaprakash



September 2, 1975

(Draft of a letter to Mrs. Gandhi. It was not ultimately sent letter)

Dear Prime Minister,

It is after great deal of hesitation that I am writing to you again. I am doing so because I feel much worried about our country. The Fathers of Indian freedom had the great wisdom to establish a democratic sovereign republic. Of the three words, democratic is the most important. A country that had just fought for and won its independence could not but be sovereign. There also could not be any question of any kind of monarchy being established. The country had naturally to be sovereign and it had naturally to be a republic. But there was no natural reason why it must be also democratic. There are several sovereign republics in the world that are *not democratic*. Sovereignty and republicanism were not matters of choice. The country in the circumstances could not but be sovereign and republican.

But a sovereign republic could be a dictatorship—either of a person or a party caucus or a military junta; it could be an oligarchy, or again it could be based on a restricted franchise, say, restricted to the educated (the word 'educated' being defined variously). But our Fathers chose a parliamentary democracy based on adult franchise. That was a great leap forward. And it drew the admiration and acclaim of the world.

As I have written elsewhere, adult suffrage based on parliamentary democracy was made possible only because the genius of Mahatma Gandhi fashioned a form of struggle for independence which allowed the full participation of the masses including the humblest and even children. Crores of people openly took part in processions and meetings, hartals and morchas and lakhs were in prison. Given this mass base—the mass awakening, the mass participation—democracy on the basis of adult franchise became a possibility and then a reality. It is also because of the same mass involvement that Indian democracy had survived (until June 25, 1975) despite wars, famines, floods, growing and expanding poverty and, growing unemployment, and not the least. *Miseducation.*

It was not just a political proposition, a political ideal but it became a reality. If India had not won freedom this way, there was much less chance of parliamentary democracy being established. The most likely result would have been dictatorship.

Now for the first time since the promulgation of the Democratic Sovereign Republican Constitution more than 25 years ago the democratic structure of our country has been grievously—one hopes not fatally—damaged. This is a matter of deep and growing concern for me. And it is this concern that drives me to write this letter.

The Emergency proclamation and all that has followed since have been justified on the ground of 'danger of internal disturbance'. (Parenthetically, I may remark that the first emergency that was pro-

claimed in view of external danger still continues, though no external danger exists today in spite of Pakistan's anti-India propaganda. That is nothing new and certainly does not constitute an imminent military danger from Pakistan.) As for the danger of internal disturbance, Madam Prime Minister, it is my sober and objective view that at the end of June last there was no danger of internal disturbance—let me take State by State—in Jammu & Kashmir (if there was any, it was no more than a law and order problem with which Sheikh Sahib was quite competent to deal according to the laws in force and MISA); there was no such danger in Punjab, in Haryana, in Chandigarh UT,\* in Delhi UT, in U.P. (in spite of the limited Satyagraha that was going on), in M.P. in Gujarat, in West Bengal in Maharashtra, in Andhra Pradesh, in Orissa, in Assam, in Karnataka, in Tamil Nadu, in Kerala. In the extreme eastern States, Nagaland and the others, disturbances were not new and they were claimed to be under control. In any case, the Governor there had special powers and the Army was on the spot.

Only in Bihar you might claim there was not only a danger of, but actual disturbance. You and I would differ on this point and I would not want to argue about it here. But accepting your own premise, why should the whole country suffer on account of the faults of just one State? If you wished, the Emergency could have been proclaimed for Bihar

\*Union Territory.

alone. Even the British used to do it, restricting their special laws to the States where the Civil Disobedience Movement was strong and extending them to other States as and when needed.

Anyhow, all that is in the past. Rightly or wrongly, the Emergency was applied to the whole country. But what is the position now? You yourself have claimed several times, and so have your colleagues, that everything is quiet now, there is no trace of any agitation or movement to be seen anywhere. It certainly appears to be so from the press and other reports. If that is so then why are thousands of men and women detained without trial? What crime, what offence? Why is Morarji-bhai still held in detention and why the Congress Working Committee member Chandra Shekhar and Congress Parliamentary Party Secretary Ramdhan? Why so many others? Thousands of them. If they are guilty, please have them tried and let the law take its course. Why should the Emergency continue to suffocate the freedom of citizens, the freedom of the press and go on with the whole sordid affair? Are you afraid that once the Emergency is revoked, the lid will be off—the genie of disturbance will spring up again? If you are, I must say you are afraid of shadows. Why must you and your party take upon itself the burden of this terrible wrong? Do you think it will do you or your party any good? You may want to frighten the people, cow them down, teach them a lesson. But history has shown that this never works. Action and reaction are equal and opposite not only in physics but also in politics.

In your interviews with pressmen, particularly, foreign pressmen or other news media, you have reaffirmed your resolve to hold the General Election, but have refused to indicate the time. In one interview you are reported to have said that you are watching the Opposition leaders and you think that they have not yet changed 'their stand'. What is the stand that you want them to change? Do you want them to stop to function as Opposition parties? Obviously you cannot want anything that is so absurd, because that would be nonsense. Then what? You want them perhaps to be balanced? But, Madam, have you yourself set a good example? What vitriol have you not poured over their heads? The most unworthy and unsubstantiated charge you have been making against them, not sparing me either, is that those who are opposed to you have some kind of dubious link with foreign powers. You have been challenged many times to prove your words or stop your insinuations. But so far you have produced no proof, but the insinuations still continue to be repeated on suitable occasions. God knows whom you are trying to deceive. And the great joke is that you yourself and your party—much to the disgust of many leading members of your party—are hand in glove with the (Rightist) CPI, who are stooges of Soviet Russia. In your own party leadership there are dupes who are little better than stooges of the Soviets.

I know this would be jumped upon as an anti-Soviet gambit and divert the whole argument from the main point I am making here. You should know

better. I believe no less than anyone in India remaining on the friendliest possible terms with the Soviet Union. But friendship should never be servitude. India should never become a satellite nation. It is in our national interest that we should be friendly to Soviet Russia, but we should be careful that we do not pass over into Russia's 'sphere of influence'. Sometimes I fear that we are already within the zone, whether knowingly or unknowingly. The Russians certainly seem very keen to prod you forward on to the path of totalitarianism. The latest evidence of this is their wholehearted support to your recent anti-democratic steps.

Today, dear Prime Minister, let me repeat there is no internal disturbance anywhere in sight nor any—and this is important—danger of internal disturbance in any of the States in India. Not even in Bihar anymore, even if one were to concede for argument's sake that there was a danger of *disturbance*. (A civil disobedience movement is not a civil disturbance, but I shall not argue that point because I cannot hope to carry conviction with you.) All I wish to say is that in view of the unparalleled tragedy of Patna and some other parts of Bihar, no one connected with my movement (if I may call it 'my', only because it has come to be looked upon as such) can ever think of trying to revive the movement. At this moment of pain and suffering, disease and death, deprivation and hunger no one can think of a struggle or movement. Our only duty is to serve and succour the people and, most important of all, to help the people to help themselves. And if I were free this is

the lead I would have given. Lest you should think that I have cooked up this argument only to persuade you to alter your present course, it is not so. I gave the same lead at the time of the Bihar famine of 1966-67, when Sarvodaya work was suspended and at another time (in 1961) when parts of Monghyr and Nawadah districts which never had known floods before were suddenly inundated on account of unprecedented rain in the nearby hills, I gave the same advice and myself gave up all Sarvodaya work and plunged into the work of relief. That was the occasion when I saw dead bodies floating in the rice-paddies, and the stink filling the air.

There is also another important point to consider. When the Bihar movement had started in 1974 February-March, the Assembly elections were full three years away (1977 February-March) and not just around the corner as it is being made out now. The Lok Sabha elections were also full two years distant. Now the Lok Sabha elections are only six months away (and may be the Assembly elections also if you so decide). For the Opposition parties, if their leaders were to be freed and the parties were to be allowed to function, the most important task, besides the immediate task of rendering relief, would be to prepare for the elections. They can have no interest, even if I or anyone else were so foolish as to attract them, in reactivation of the movement; they would have no interest in it whatever. The attitude of the students would be the same.

So, to sum up, now that you claim to have the

situation under control and there is no anti-Government agitation or movement of any kind, and now that there is calm and order throughout the country, and further that you profess faith in parliamentary democracy and the scheduled parliamentary elections are due six months hence, you should in all fairness to yourself, to the country and to democracy, order the release of all those detained at present on political grounds (I am not concerned about the smugglers and the like), you should withdraw press censorship and restore full freedom to the press, restore full civil liberties to the people and as soon as possible announce the probable dates for the Lok Sabha election.

As the emergency is over in your own terms of definition, the proclamation should be revoked and the intolerable incubus lifted up from the heart of the nation.

Begging you earnestly to consider my plea,  
I remain, with best wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jayaprakash



## TO MRS GANDHI

September 17, 1975

Dear Prime Minister,

On 17th August I had made my request for a month's parole. On the 4th September Mr Vohra of the Union Ministry of Agriculture came here to post me with all that was being done to render relief to the people of Patna. (He did not tell me anything about the rural areas.) I expressed to him my satisfaction over the steps taken by you and your government. At the same time, I told him that after his account my desire to be allowed to serve the people had grown keener and more urgent. I requested him to communicate that to Professor P.N. Dhar, at whose instance he had come to see me.

It was natural of me to deduce from Mr Vohra's visit that my request for parole was being taken seriously and a decision would soon be reached, particularly in view of the extreme urgency of the situation. But I am sorry to say that three whole weeks have been allowed to pass, weeks during which waves after recurring waves of floods in different part of Bihar have caused me deep mental agony. My part of Uttar Pradesh has also been repeatedly flooded, and I have no news of my own village and home. Yesterday's *Tribune* in a three-column headline said, 'Bihar floods take grim turn'. This morning again (17-9-75) the paper reports, 'Bihar Flood Situation

Deteriorates'. The breaching of the right bank of the main Kosi Canal is no small matter. The sudden and widespread destruction must be indescribable. Hundreds of Monghyr villages are under water. This year's calamity seems to have surpassed even that of the Great Earthquake (1928).

In these circumstances, I cannot but renew my request to be given a chance to serve the people. Please do not let politics come in the way. Even the British had humanity enough in the event of a calamity to set at liberty those who were fighting to destroy their empire. What place can politics have in a situation of such staggering human suffering? For my part, I cannot do better than quote from my letter to the Deputy Commissioner, Chandigarh (31-8-75), the contents of which were to be passed on to the proper authorities in New Delhi. I wrote, *inter alia* : 'I would consider it immoral and impolitic to exploit the period of freedom allowed to me for any political purpose. Indeed to talk of politics at this moment would be to mock the miseries and sufferings of the people. No one with a grain of human sympathy would ever think of doing such a thing.' This continues to be my stand.

It cannot be Government's case that there was no need of voluntary relief services. You yourself and some of your colleagues have appealed for voluntary agencies to help. As for my own competence for relief work, you have some personal knowledge to go by.

I had given Mr Vohra another message for Professor Dhar, namely, that the Bihar flood situation

had created a good opportunity for Government to review and revise the entire political policy it has followed since and prior to the proclamation of the Emergency. This conviction of mine has grown stronger since. Not only has the Bihar flood situation worsened, but there have also been floods in most parts of the country. There can be no question of anyone starting a movement or struggle at such a time. The political emergency, granting that it existed at any time, has passed and its place has been taken by an emergency of human suffering, calling for a national effort. No less a person than the Union Home Minister has declared the other day at Madras that there was *normalcy prevailing throughout the country* (His actual words : '*With normalcy prevailing throughout the country 30 per cent of those arrested have been released*'. PTI, *Tribune*, 14-9-75). What justification can there be now for prolonging the emergency?

There is also another reason, a much more important one, why the emergency must end. It is the drawing near of the parliamentary elections. According to the Constitution, elections to the Lok Sabha must be held early next year. On the pretext of a non-existent emergency the term of the present Lok Sabha might be extended. But you know how flimsy that pretext would be. It would deceive no one, and you would have permanently given the go-by to parliamentary democracy, by which you swear so ardently in public, and in the end the loss would be yours more than anyone else's. On what ground can you deny the people their democratic

right to choose their new representatives to the Lok Sabha? Who except your sycophants will believe that you are taking this grave step because there is an emergency in the country?

It is the third week of September now. By the end of this month or the beginning of the next, you should announce in unambiguous terms that elections to the Lok Sabha would be held early in 1976 and that the Election Commission would fix the dates in due course. You will find, Madam, that that single announcement by you would work a miraculous change in the political climate of the country. In a democracy, a General Election (provided it is fair and free) acts like a powerful catharsis, cleansing the political atmosphere, easing tensions and bringing health and vigour to the body politic.

Praying for a dispassionate consideration of the suggestions made above, and with best wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jayaprakash

## TO SHEIKH MOHAMMED ABDULLAH

September 22, 1975.

My dear Sheikh Saheb,

In this morning's *Tribune* (September 22), a PTI report from Srinagar is headlined 'Sheikh Favours conciliation at all-India level'. I was naturally interested, and carefully read that report twice. The agency report says, *inter-alia*, the following (words within single quotes are the correspondent's and those within double quotes are reported to be yours) :-

'He declined direct comment on reports of his mediatory efforts appearing in the Western press, saying he wishes such differences to be resolved in a spirit of conciliation.'

'When correspondents persisted in their attempts to draw him out . . . the Sheikh said his services were always at the disposal of the Prime Minister. "It all depends on the situation. . . . One must wait for the appropriate time," he said.'

Further on, 'He said it was a "delicate task" and a "delicate subject" for one to dwell on and emphasised that "everyone would like normalcy to be restored". He added that as far as he claimed to know the wishes of the Prime Minister, "she is more than

keen to end the Emergency. It all depends on the overall situation.”

Coming from a friend like you, with so much of goodwill in both camps, and occupying such an important position as you do your words are of extraordinary significance and interest for me.

I whole-heartedly reciprocate your view that differences, such as we had with the government, should be resolved in a spirit of conciliation. But, Sheikh Saheb, there never was any discussion on the main issues raised by the movement : corruption in politics, government and administration ; electoral reform so as to make elections less expensive, fair, free and more representative of the people's will as expressed through the ballot box ; radical educational reform ; urgent economic measures to tackle unemployment (educated and uneducated) etc. We had put forward concrete proposals in regard to these issues. But the Prime Minister showed no inclination to have them discussed around the table in a spirit of conciliation. When the Tarkunde Committee on electoral reforms submitted its interim report, I invited organisational as well as parliamentary leaders of all the political parties represented in Parliament to discuss them and, if possible, work out agreed proposals. The Congress and the CPI declined to attend; in such a situation how could differences be resolved in a spirit of conciliation ?

Only on one occasion, on 1 November 1974, the Prime Minister invited me to discuss the Bihar movement. There was no agreement between us on the

question of dissolution of the Bihar Assembly. I was prepared to accept her formula of suspension of the Assembly, *provided* the Assembly did not re-convene before the next elections and President's rule was continued until them. This proviso was not acceptable to her. That same day she declared at a public meeting that the issue would be decided at the next elections. I accepted her challenge and there the matter rested. Meanwhile the repression continued. Three days later, on 4 November, I along with others was tear-gassed and lathi-charged. You know the rest of the story.

If you remember, Chandra Shekhar, Ram Dhan, Mohan Dharia, Krishna Kant and their friends were saying exactly what you have said in your interview : that the issues posed by the (JP) movement should be settled across the table and not by repression. For that, you know what has been done to them.

Since our arrest and the proclamation of Emergency, we have been victims of all manner of distortions, slanders, even outright lies. I shall give you only one example—the latest sample of these. Speaking at the First Conference of Educators (*sic*) in Secularism, Socialism and Democracy, the Prime Minister, irked by the vocal concern of the Western press over the eclipse of Indian democracy, asked hysterically : Would this country be considered more democratic had a large number of people been killed after June 29,\* if I myself, my family and the Chief

\*It was on June 29 that the proposed week-long satyagraha to urge Mrs. Gandhi's resignation was to begin.

Ministers and others who support me had been annihilated ?'

That the Prime Minister of a great country should descend so low and attempt in such a cynical manner to spread hatred and hostility against political opponents is incredible. But there it is in cold print.

However, in spite of all that has happened and is happening, I am prepared to seek the path of conciliation. I shall therefore, be much obliged if you kindly see me as soon as possible so that I could discuss this matter with you. I being the villain of the piece, the arch-conspirator, culprit number one, a return to true normalcy, not the false one established by repression and terror, can only be brought about with my cooperation. I am herewith offering you my full cooperation.

You have said that the PM is 'more than keen to end the Emergency'. Well, the first test of her keenness will be whether this letter is allowed to be delivered to you and whether you are permitted to see me.\*

Looking forward to seeing you soon, and with most affectionate regards,

Yours as ever,  
Jayaprakash

\*The letter was not delivered to Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, nor was he allowed to call on JP.





## APPENDIX I

June 11, 1976  
Bombay

Dear Indirajee,

I am writing this letter regarding a sum of Rs. 90,000 that you have kindly remitted to me in connection with my medical expenses for the purchase of a dialyser. A few weeks ago Shri Radhakrishna on the advice of Prof. P.N. Dhar wrote a letter to a friend of mine to enquire from me whether I would accept the amount given by you for my medical expenses. I gave my consent to it as I was not knowing that the amount will be from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. I was under the impression that you would give me something out of your own fund. Although, had I given a little thought to it I would have soon realised that it was not possible for you to give such a large amount out of your personal account. However, now the position is that Sarvashree Ravi Shankar Maharaj, Swami Anand (who has since passed away) Kedar Nathjee and Dada Dharmadhikari made an appeal to common people and had collected more than Rs. 3 lakhs from them. Out of that amount one

dialyser machine, its implements and other equipment were purchased, which were considered essential for a year's operation. A sufficient amount out of it is still there which is enough for my monthly expenses for a year or two.

I would like to mention two things which are quite relevant here. The Health Fund Samiti, first of all, decided to accept only small sums. Some friends wanted to contribute large amounts but only small sums were accepted from them also. Secondly, the Samiti has wound up the Health Fund by a declaration to the public to this effect before Shri Radhakrishna got the amount from you.

Under the circumstances it was not proper for me to accept such a large sum of money out of your relief fund. Many relief works are still there to be done ; a single paisa out of the relief fund ought not to be spent where it is not indispensable. Therefore, I am advising Shri Radhakrishna that he should return the draft (for Rs. 90,000) which he had received from you. I hope you will not misunderstand me and take me to be ungrateful or rude. I cannot think of being rude to you. I am grateful to you for your anxiety about my health.

With my best wishes,

Yours affectionately,  
JAIPRAKASH NARAYAN

*(Translated from Hindi)*

## APPENDIX II

New Delhi, June 17, 1976 (Samachar)—An official spokesman today expressed surprise and regret at Mr Jayaprakash Narayan's decision to return the amount given by the Prime Minister for a dialysis machine for his treatment.

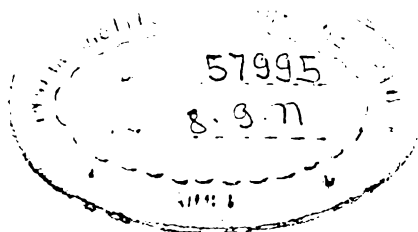
Asked to comment on Mr Narayan's change of heart regarding the Prime Minister's gift for the machine, which he earlier accepted, the spokesman said it was strange that while there was no hesitation about accepting donations from foreign sources for the purpose and earlier from businessmen, including those against whom cases are pending, there should be compunctions about a contribution from the national fund.

Evidently, it was an attempt to inject extraneous matters and give political colour to a normal human gesture, he said.

Meanwhile, Mr A.R. Antulay, AICC General Secretary, expressed astonishment over Mr Narayan's decision. He said it was well-known that an all-out effort was made to solicit funds from abroad. As admitted by Mr Narayan himself at a public meeting, funds even for personal expenditure had been accepted from persons such as Mr Ram Nath

Goenka, against whom serious cases of forgery, cheating and tax evasion are pending. How such persons accumulate wealth is common knowledge.

It is significant that the self-appointed J.P. Health Fund Committee did not withdraw its appeal and continued its collection even after large and adequate sums had been received. We are intrigued by the motives behind the spurning of a straightforward and sincere action.





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IIAS, Shimla

