

Document A2

Source: Mohandis Gandhi, "Letter to Lord Irwin," 1930.

Note: Lord Irwin was the English governor in India. Gandhi wrote this letter before marching to the sea and breaking the English Salt Tax Law. Gandhi's march to sea is generally called "The Salt March." Most historians consider it the turning point of the movement to free India from British control. The Salt Tax Law made it illegal for Indians to manufacture or collect their own salt.

Sabamarti, India (March 1930)

Dear Friend,

Before I go ahead with Civil Disobedience and taking the risk I have feared to take all these years, I would like to ask you for a way out.

I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less human beings, even though they may hurt me more. Although, I think the British rule is a curse, I do not intend harm to a single Englishman or to any real interest he may have in India.

And why do I think the British rule is a curse?

Even the salt the peasant must use to live is so taxed as to make it harder on him...The tax shows itself still more difficult on the poor man because salt is something he must eat more than the rich man....

I want to convert the British people through nonviolence, and make them see the wrong they have done to India....But if you cannot see your way to fix these problems, I shall proceed with the plan to peacefully break the Salt Laws.