

Dr. Jagan's letter written in 1942, after been diagnosed with tuberculosis, to his friend Dr. Orrin Dummett

Edward Sanatorium
Telephone Cottage
Naperville, Illinois

Sept 4th, 1942

My dear Orrin,

Very good news indeed to hear that you are getting along well in Nashville. I am sure that as you get more adjusted to the environment you will like it all the more. As usual, I am feeling fine, so much so that I am beginning to feel skeptical of the diagnosis.

Next week I am going to ask for a stomach-lavage smear test, because so far all my spectrum tests were negative. At the same time I am going to take a look at the three x-rays. At present, I am brushing up on a book on Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

I agree with you that the South and its prejudices will have to go. Now is the time for the Negro population to demand equality, and to see that the Atlantic Charter materialize and bear fruit at home. After the war I'm afraid, when there is no more international quarrel and common enemy, all nations will drift back to internal social and economic conflicts. Now is the time for all suppressed and minority groups to demand not only theoretical but also practical equality, so that the common foe will be revisited by all on an equal footing. It is only in this light can the civil disobedience campaign of Gandhi be viewed. How can a country or a people be asked to fight for something they do not possess? To ask the Indians, or for that matter anyone else, to fight for the four freedoms, when those principles of the Atlantic Charter are denied them is morally invalid. Britain is fighting to liberate Poles, Czechs, Greeks and what not but liberation of countries under its own clutches is out of the question. I suppose you have read of the labor troubles and riots that occurred in Jamaica. Yes my friend, war is murderous and bloody, but at the same time it initiates changes – changes which are necessary for us. Clifton Close said that no matter who wins in the Orient, for the Orient itself there has been a Renaissance. History is in the making, whether anyone likes or not. There has been an awakening – the status quo that was is gone. Yes, now is the time for us to organize, to lobby, to make propaganda and demands, for now changes can be most rapid and to our benefit.

I am very sorry that we drifted apart when in Chicago for the past four years.. Now that I look back and reflect, I feel rather guilty, and ashamed of myself. My economic status in my environment was perhaps to be blamed for my attitude and actions. They were all very emotional and superficial. To be poor is a crime, but to be poor and ambitious is a sin. You have to do things which you otherwise do not care to do. Finance - social and economic status – has influenced me so much, that were I to write an autobiography, I would perhaps call it “The Struggle of Complaisances.” It would really be a psychological expose. Unknowingly, - now that I look back – I must have hurt your feelings. If I did, I wish you place yourself in my position and then perhaps you will forgive me my superficial attitudes.

I am very grateful for your offer of help. At the present time, I am happy to say I am adequately supplied. Please convey my regards to Lois. Good luck & cherrrio.

Cheddi

I have really said a mouthful, haven't I?



EDWARD SANATORIUM

Telephone Cottage
NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS

Sept. 4th, 1942

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