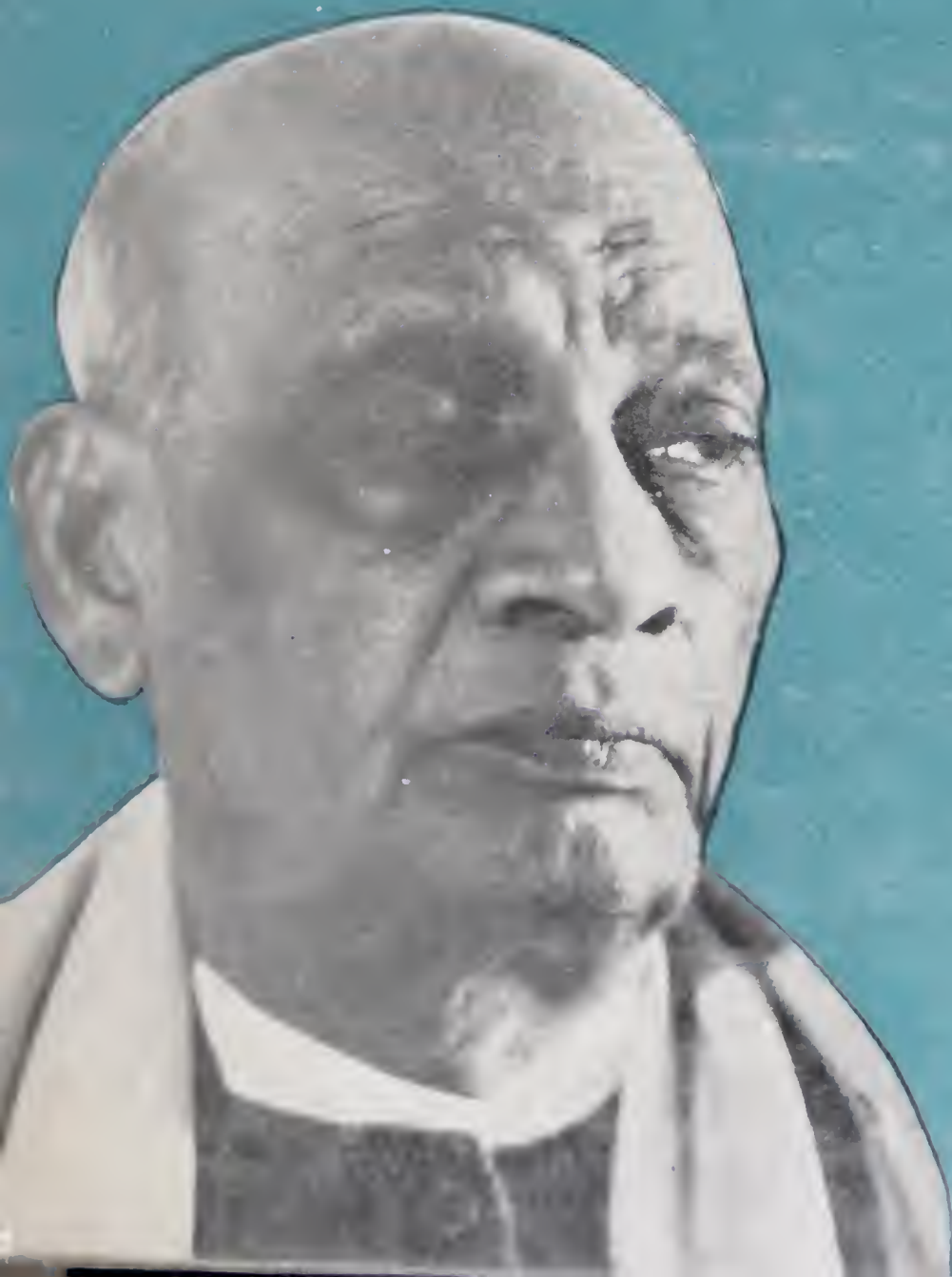


SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE

1945-50 Volume 3

**Guidance to Ministries - Constituent Assembly Problems -
Interim Government Deadlock - Reforms in Indian States**



Edited by
Durga Das

In 1946 India in a political ferment. Elections to the Central Legislative Assembly had been held. The Congress swept the general constituencies, while the Muslim League triumphed in those reserved for Muslims. The question posed before the nation was not whether Independence was coming, but when and how. And, most significant, would freedom come to a united India, as the Congress and other nationalist forces wanted, or to a divided India, as the Muslim League and a powerful section of British opinion wanted?

The dice were heavily loaded from the outset in favour of the League and separation. The League took the initiative in forcing a split. The "great killing" in Calcutta in August 1946 was followed by a bloodbath of Hindus in Noakhali. There was retaliation in Bihar, and it seemed as though there was no alternative to division, but the Congress leaders strove hard for a coalition government at the Centre in which the League would be represented in a desperate effort to preserve national unity. This bid failed when the League leaders decided to keep out.

The Sardar squarely blamed the British administrators in India for encouraging the League in its separatist tendencies. In a letter to Stafford Cripps in December 1946 he condemned Viceroy Wavell, saying that every action of his "has been in the direction of encouraging the Muslim League and putting pressure on us towards appeasement. . . . All of us have felt that there has been betrayal."

Patel's main task was to checkmate the break-up of India. At the same time, if partition was inevitable, Bengal and Punjab must be divided between India and Pakistan to safeguard the interests of minorities. What status the Princely States, and what rights the Princes, would enjoy in an independent India demanded his continuous attention. To all these tasks he brought the calm, patient skill in negotiation and deep insight of a consummate statesman.

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SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE

1945-50



MEMBERS OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT FORMED ON 2 SEPTEMBER 1946. LEFT TO RIGHT: SYED ALI ZAHEER, JAGJIVAN RAM, SARAT BOSE, ASAF ALI, DR RAJENDRA PRASAD, SARDAR PATEL,

SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE

1945-50

VOLUME III

GUIDANCE TO MINISTRIES—CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY
PROBLEMS—INTERIM GOVERNMENT DEADLOCK—
REFORMS IN INDIAN STATES

EDITED BY
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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|--------|
| FOREWORD | vii |
| CHRONOLOGY OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN SARDAR'S LIFE .. | x |
| FOCUS ON SARDAR | xxiii |
| OUTLINE OF I-X VOLUMES | xxxi |
| HIGHLIGHTS—VOLUMES I-II and IV-X | xxxiii |
| CONTENTS OF VOLUME III | xl |
| ABBREVIATIONS | xliii |
| GLOSSARY OF INDIAN TERMS | xliv |
| INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME III | xlix |
| SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE | 1-382 |
| APPENDICES | 383 |
| INDEX | 387 |

ILLUSTRATIONS:

Members of the Interim Government formed on 2 September 1946. Left to Right: Syed Ali Zaheer, Jagjivan Ram, Sarat Bose, Asaf Ali, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lord Wavell and Secretarial staff *Frontispiece*

Facing p.

Members of the British Cabinet Mission. Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Pethick-Lawrence and A. V. Alexander with Sir Francis Mudie, Governor of Sind, at Karachi airport 80

Mahatma Gandhi with Lord Pethick-Lawrence, leader of the British Cabinet delegation, after talks in April 1946 81

Nehru and Patel confer informally 96

Sardar Patel leans through a file in a relaxed mood 97

Maulana Azad and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, members of the Congress Working Committee, after meeting the Cabinet Mission in Simla 176

Mohammed Ali Jinnah shakes hands with Lord Wavell while members of the Cabinet delegation, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, A. V. Alexander and Sir Stafford Cripps, look on 177

- Congress Premiers from five provinces call on the Cabinet Mission. Left to right: Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, B. G. Kher, H. K. Mahtab, Pandit Ravishankar Shukla and Sri Krishna Sinha 192
- Hamidullah Khan, Nawab of Bhopal and Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, talks to newsmen after meeting the Cabinet Mission in New Delhi 193
- Members of the Interim Government at Dum Dum airport on a tour to study the communal riots situation in Calcutta and Noakhali in 1946. Left to right: Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, Liaquat Ali Khan, Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel 272

FOREWORD

The correspondence of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, published in ten volumes, covers a crucial period in India's history: 1 October 1945 to 12 December 1950, three days before his death in Bombay.

The letters and annexures consist of exchanges between Sardar Patel on the one hand and Lord Wavell, Lord Mountbatten, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, rulers of Princely States, Premiers of Congress Ministries and scores of Congressmen belonging to the party rank and file, on the other. These relate to various matters which arose in the domestic, international, constitutional, administrative and economic spheres in this period and thus constitute valuable source material of history. They were in the custody of Miss Maniben Patel, the Sardar's daughter, and were deposited by her with the Navajivan Trust in Ahmedabad after his death.

The Trust arranged, under her direction and supervision, to have them typed in Ahmedabad and send the copies to me for editing and compilation. The volumes are thus based on authentic copies of the correspondence deposited with the Trust.

Explaining the time-lag in releasing the correspondence, Maniben said in a long talk she had with me in New Delhi in late 1970 that she had held it back until she was certain that its publication would not be harmful to the nation for which her father had laboured and suffered so much. The letters contain matter relating to affairs of State and party organisation whose untimely disclosure might have embarrassed the Government or the political leaders of the day.

Since, however, some of the correspondence in the possession of other parties and relating to isolated events had been made public, she decided that the time had come to release the correspondence to give a balanced picture of the events to which they relate or of the Sardar's views. "I have been late," she said, "but not too late."

The Navajivan Trust, she added, had agreed to publish the correspondence and thus made it possible for the people of India and the world outside to have access to this valuable material which throws new light on the momentous developments

of the period covered by these papers and the calculations made by the leading personalities of the day in shaping the course of history.

The significance of the correspondence lies in the light it sheds on the main characters on the Indian stage as they acted and reacted to the challenges of the time and to the problems posed by their differing approach and outlook. There is indeed hardly a national or regional issue of consequence in contemporary history the origin of which cannot be traced to the five crucial years.

Vallabhbhai Patel emerges from the correspondence as a great organiser and consolidator of modern India. Over 70 when he assumed ministerial office for the first time, he carried on his ailing shoulders the crushing burden of building the political infrastructure of the new India. Death prevented him from completing his task, but what he achieved in five short years endures.

These volumes are the bones and sinews of Indian history of a crucial period. To the scholar and researcher, they offer a treasure of source material. To the politician, they should serve as a guide. To the citizen, they provide inspiration.

Arrangements are in chronological order and not by topic. But the letters have been grouped thematically to retain interrelation of events and negotiations. Correspondence of a routine nature has been omitted and a few excisions have been made out of regard for the susceptibilities of the persons concerned. Such excisions are indicated by dots.

Where an extract or extracts from a letter are published, this is indicated by the word 'Extracts' at the top of the letter. The omissions have been effected by the persons entrusted by Maniben Patel and the Navajivan Trust with selecting the material for publication.

In several instances, letters, enclosures and other documents referred to in the published correspondence are not to be found in these volumes. It is hoped that future researchers will be able to fill these gaps.

The yardstick which the Sardar applied to public life and to political and socio-economic issues was forgotten or ignored by his successors with consequences which became apparent in the confused state of politics in the 1960s. India has again entered the most crucial period in the evolution of its polity. The stand taken by the Sardar on various issues and his vision of the road which India should take have acquired a new relevance.

Each volume of the series contains an outline of the contents of the other nine volumes in the form of a summary of the main features. This should help researchers ascertain at a glance what the whole series contains. The details of arrangements for selection and presentation of the correspondence were explained in the Foreword to the first volume, and are not therefore recapitulated here. The feature "Focus on Sardar" giving the views of Maniben Patel and the "Chronology of Principal Events in Sardar's Life" given in Volume I are retained in this volume and will be reproduced in succeeding volumes.

2, Tolstoy Lane
New Delhi-1
15 February 1972

DURGA DAS

CHRONOLOGY OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN SARDAR'S LIFE

- 1875 Born on 31 October at Nadiad, Kaira district, Gujarat. Fourth son of Jhaverbhai Patel, a farmer of Karamsad in the same district, and Ladbai. Belonged to agricultural caste known as Leuva Patidar. Schooling up to English third standard at Karamsad.
- 1891 English 4th and 5th standards at Petlad, a small town seven miles from Karamsad. Lived in a rented room with four or five other boys, with seven days' ration. Walked from Karamsad to Petlad every week.
- 1893 At the age of 18 married Jhaverba of Gana, a small village three miles from Karamsad.
- 1897 Matriculated from a high school in Nadiad, Kaira district, at 22.
- 1900 Passed District Pleaders' Examination. Studied with books borrowed from friends. Set up independent practice at Godhra, headquarters of Panchmahals district, Gujarat. Contracted bubonic plague from a court nazir whom he nursed when an epidemic broke out in Godhra.
- 1902 Shifted practice to Borsad, where he quickly made a name as a criminal lawyer.
- 1905 Saved enough money to go to England to become a barrister, but postponed departure in deference to the wishes of his elder brother Vithalbhai, who came to know about his plan and wished to go first. Looked after his brother's wife while he was away.
- 1909 Wife Jhaverba died after an operation in Bombay. Received a telegram containing news of her death while arguing a murder case in Borsad, but continued case until hearing was completed. In spite of pressure from friends and relations, refused to marry again.
- 1910 Left for England. Admitted to Middle Temple.
- 1911 Passed preliminary examination with honours, standing first in Equity. Fell ill with a tropical disease unknown in England. Doctors wanted to amputate his leg, but a German

doctor intervened and cured him through an operation which he underwent without chloroform.

- 1912 Took final examination after sixth term instead of usual 12. Stood first in first class, winning a prize of £50 and exemption from two terms. Sailed for India the day after convocation.
- 1913 Reached Bombay on 13 February. Refused post in Judicial Department as a lecturer in Government Law School, Bombay, and left for Ahmedabad, where he established himself as foremost criminal lawyer.
- 1915 Member, Gujarat Sabha, which was converted into Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee in 1919.
- 1917 Elected member of Ahmedabad Municipal Board. Election challenged and set aside. Stood in a by-election and was returned unopposed. Mahatma Gandhi, president of the first Gujarat Provincial Conference, appointed an executive committee with Patel as secretary. Impressed by Gandhi's leadership of the agitation against the British indigo planters of Champaran, Bihar.
- Conducted agitation against begar (forced labour for Government purposes). Led agitation against the appointment of a British member of the Indian Civil Service as Municipal Commissioner and secured his removal.
- As Chairman of the Sanitary Committee of Ahmedabad, stayed on in city when most of the citizens went away during an epidemic of plague. Took a leading role in helping sufferers and enforcing precautionary measures.
- 1918 Organised famine relief works in Ahmedabad district.
- Represented textile mill labour with Gandhi and Shankarlal Banker before a tribunal appointed to hear a dispute between labour and millowners.
- Put up a temporary hospital in city with grant from Municipal Board to Gujarat Sabha to combat severe influenza epidemic. Organised no-tax campaign in Kaira district along with Gandhi. During campaign Gandhi said he was testing Patel, adding later that Patel had turned out to be "pure gold." Chairman, Sanitary Committee and Public Works Committee of Ahmedabad Municipality.
- Helped Gandhi in recruitment drive for British Indian Army. They used to walk together for miles and cooked their own food.

- 1919 Chairman, Managing Committee, Ahmedabad Municipal Board.
- Organised movement against Rowlatt Bills designed to strangle movement for self-rule. Led big demonstration march in Ahmedabad on 6 April and addressed public meeting against bills. Sold publicly Gandhi's proscribed books, Hind Swaraj and Sarvodaya, and published Satyagraha Patrika in Gujarati without official declaration or permission. Government took no action.
- Helped local authorities restore peace and order after large-scale disturbances leading to martial law in Ahmedabad after arrest of Gandhi.
- Served with a show-cause notice for cancellation of his sanad (permit to practise law) for participating in a public meeting advocating satyagraha. Case ended with a warning. Refused to pay fine imposed by Government as penalty for riots in city. Sofa attached and auctioned for Rs. 100.
- 1920 Organised campaign of Congress Party in elections to Ahmedabad Municipal Board. Congress captured almost all elected seats. Discarded Western dress and adopted khadi dhoti, kurta and chappals. Burnt all his foreign clothes. Way of life also changed to traditional pattern in Gujarat. Organised a conference of political workers of Gujarat in Ahmedabad and persuaded it to adopt a resolution supporting Gandhi's civil disobedience movement.
- In response to Gandhi's call at Nagpur session of Congress to collect money for Tilak Swaraj Fund, promised to raise Rs. 1 million and enrol 300,000 party members in Gujarat. Fulfilled these promises within three months.
- 1921 Elected chairman of Reception Committee of 36th session of Congress held at Ahmedabad. For first time, delegates sat on floor and the session set new pattern in simplicity, austerity and businesslike proceedings.
- Built a hospital and maternity home on 21 acres of land along Sabarmati river at site of session. The fountain built at that time is still there.
- 1922 Government of Bombay suspended Ahmedabad Municipality after a sharp tussle over supervision of municipal

schools. Organised schools under People's Primary Education Board with public contributions. Municipality suspended. Collected Rs. 1 million for Gujarat Vidyapith in a tour which took him up to Rangoon.

1923 All-India Congress Committee deputed him to conduct satyagraha at Nagpur in connection with British District Commissioner's ban on flying national flag in cantonment area.

Resisted Bombay Government's levy of punitive tax on people of Borsad who were charged with harbouring criminals. Tax withdrawn. Called Suba of Borsad.

1924 Ahmedabad Municipality reinstated. Fresh elections gave Congress Party a decisive majority in enlarged Municipal Council. Elected President of municipality.

1924-1927 Passed a resolution giving notice to Ahmedabad Cantonment to pay water tax from 1920 at rate of eight annas. If tax was not paid, threatened to cut off water connection. Tax paid under protest.

Introduced khadi uniform in municipality. Municipal work was conducted in Gujarati after he became President. His scheme for supplying pure water passed.

Completed drainage scheme during term as President. Collected all arrears of municipal tax not paid by high officials, some well-to-do people and municipal councillors by cutting water connections and attaching properties.

1927 Unprecedented rainfall caused great damage and hardship throughout Gujarat. Saved Ahmedabad from floods by getting culverts breached. Organised relief measures for flood sufferers with public contributions. Promoted grow-more food and fodder campaigns and opened shops to sell high-quality gram, cereal and cotton seed for sowing at low cost to farmers. Received more than Rs. 10 million from Government earmarked for famine relief. A new party emerged in Ahmedabad Municipality. Clashed with it over appointment of chief officer.

1928 Resigned presidency. Led peasant agitation in Bardoli taluka, Surat district, against increase in land revenue rates. Bombay Government punished farmers for non-payment by confiscating and auctioning land, crops and other property.

As agitation continued unabated, Government agreed to restore all unsold confiscated land, release satyagrahis, reinstate dismissed village officers and reduce land tax. Named Sardar of Bardoli and thereafter known as Sardar Patel. Presided over first local self-government conference in Surat.

- 1929 Presided over Maharashtra Political Conference in Poona. Toured Maharashtra, mobilising public opinion against enhanced land taxes and untouchability. Presided over Kathiawar Political Conference at Morvi. Toured Madras Presidency at request of C. Rajagopalachari. Presided over Tamil Nadu Political Conference at Vedaranyam. Reiterated support for Congress resolution of dominion status at conference against supporters of complete independence. Also visited Karnatak and Bihar. At Calcutta session of Congress advocated support to all-party committee headed by Motilal Nehru which recommended acceptance of dominion status as India's political goal, provided demand was granted within two years. Motilal Nehru, Congress President, moved a resolution from chair congratulating Patel and peasants of Bardoli on victory over British bureaucracy. Nominated in September as a candidate for presidency of Congress session at Lahore but withdrew in favour of Jawaharlal Nehru.
- 1930 Arrested on 7 March while addressing a public meeting at Ras village, near Borsad, a few days after Gandhi announced march to Dandi near Surat, to break salt law. Preceded marchers to arrange accommodation and food on way. Sentenced to three months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500 or three weeks' additional imprisonment. Refused to pay fine and lodged in Sabarmati jail, Ahmedabad. Went on hunger-strike in jail, requesting C class diet instead of A class. Request granted. Released on 26 June. Arrested when leading a procession in Bombay on 31 July and sentenced to three months' jail. Taken to Yeravda jail near Poona. On release, made a speech at Khadi Bhandar, for which he was arrested. Sentenced to nine months' imprisonment in the second week of December.
- 1931 Released from jail in March under Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Presided over 46th Congress session at Karachi in last

week of March. Helped Gandhi in his discussions with Viceroy (Lord Irwin) in Simla in last week of August on Congress participation in First Round Table Conference in London.

1932 Arrested at 4 a.m. on 4 January and taken by car to Yeravda and imprisoned with Gandhi there for 16 months. Mother died at Karamsad.

1933 Transferred to Nasik jail on 1 August. Elder brother Vithalbhai died in Switzerland on 22 October. Rejected terms on which Government offered to release him on parole for two days to perform funeral rites.

1934 Developed serious nasal trouble in jail and released on 14 July. Issued statement accepting Gandhi's decision to leave Congress on 24 September. Congress decided at its annual session in Bombay in October to contest elections to Central Legislative Assembly. Undertook tour of many parts of country campaigning for party candidates. British Government allowed Jinnah to go to North-West Frontier. Sardar also sought and obtained permission to do so. But after going there was not allowed to visit Bannu district.

1935 Organised relief work in Borsad taluka where plague had broken out in four successive summers. Organised relief for victims of Quetta earthquake from Bombay, where he was laid low with jaundice.

Sir Roger Lumley, Governor of Bombay, invited Sardar to a meeting and offered him premiership of Bombay Presidency, but added that land confiscated from farmers in Bardoli and sold would not be returned to owners. Sardar replied: "I am not going to be premier and the land will be returned to the peasants."

President of Third Local Self-Government Conference at Broach.

1936 Collected Rs. 49,000 for Harijan Fund in two days in February. Appointed Chairman of Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee to select party candidates for provincial elections under Government of India Act, 1935. Guided Congress Ministries after acceptance of office.

1937 Involved in a controversy with K. F. Nariman, President of Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, over selection of premier for Bombay Presidency.

- 1938 Involved in July in controversy on a constitutional issue with Dr. N. B. Khare, Prime Minister of Central Provinces. Khare accused Sardar of conspiring to oust him from office and resigned from Government and Congress. Efforts to impose central party discipline on provincial leaders earned him title Dictator of India. Presided over Kathiawar Rajkiya Parishad. Narrowly escaped attempt to kill him. Visit to Mysore city resulted in Government of Mysore State agreeing to flying of Congress flag in its territory. Flew to Rajkot on 24 December for talks with Thakore Saheb of Rajkot, who signed agreement on release of prisoners in Rajkot State and offered Sardar a portfolio in his Council of Ministers.
- 1939 Subhas Chandra Bose defied Gandhi, Patel and other members of Working Committee and got elected President of Congress at Haripura session uncontested because Maulana Azad withdrew at last moment.
- Thakore Saheb of Rajkot broke agreement and satyagraha was renewed in State early in the year.
- Bose's resolution for mass civil disobedience defeated at Tripura session in February. Bose described Sardar as "shining light of the ruling clique" and resigned presidency.
- Working Committee appointed a war sub-committee of three, including Vallabhbhai, in August. Warned provincial Congress organisations not to force a political crisis by hasty action.
- 1940 Replied in a public speech at Ahmedabad in October to Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for the Dominions, who had asked in House of Commons whether India was fit for independence. Sardar said: "If you lose the war, you will have lost everything, and even if you win, you will have suffered so heavily that your victory will be an empty one. At the end of the war, I declare no nation will remain subject to another. A great revolution is going to sweep the people everywhere. We shall see a new world emerge out of the fiery ordeal of this war." Arrested under Defence of India Act on 18 November for participating in satyagraha launched by Gandhi to press Britain for firm commitment on Indian independence. Imprisoned in Sabarmati jail and later transferred to Yeravda.

- 1941 Released on 20 August from detention on ground of health. Condemned communal killing in Ahmedabad at first public meeting after release. Treated for acute intestinal disorder.
- 1942 Participated in talks with Sir Stafford Cripps in New Delhi. Favoured acceptance of constitutional proposals put forward by Cripps provided they were modified to suit political conditions in India.
- 1942 Supported Quit India resolution at AICC meeting in Bombay
 August on 8 August. Arrested at 4 a.m. on 9 August under Defence of India Act. Detained without trial at Ahmednagar fort with other Working Committee members.
- 1945 Transferred to Yeravda. Recurrence of intestinal trouble. Released on 15 June.
- Went to Simla during political talks between Viceroy (Lord Wavell) and Indian leaders.
- Entrusted with organising Congress election campaign for Central and provincial legislatures.
- Secured G. V. Mavalankar's election as Speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly in December.
- 1946 Issued call to Ministers in Congress Governments to work for eradication of untouchability.
- Disapproved Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's proposal for mass conversion of members of Scheduled Castes to other religions. If they changed religion, they could not claim benefits as Harijans.
- Persuaded revolting men of Royal Indian Navy to call off agitation in February as "the dawn of freedom is breaking and the sun will rise in a few months."
- If political issues between Britain and India could not be solved satisfactorily, India would withdraw from Bretton Woods Conference, Sardar said in a statement in March. Condemned suggestion that sterling balances should be scaled down. "Sterling credit is the economic foundation of India and this country's future progress largely depends upon it."
- Opposed Jinnah's demand for Pakistan, saying: "It is a monstrous thing that a man can claim a different nationality because he changes his religion." Hindus and Muslims were all basically Indians and thought as such. Congress

could not accept the theory of Pakistan, happen what may. The two-nation theory would ruin all.

Declared in an exclusive interview with the political correspondent of Reuter that India would be prepared to refer major political issues to an international body for arbitration. Britain could not stay in India indefinitely. "Hand over power either to the Congress or to the Muslim League and go out of India," he said.

Advised withdrawal of trial of leaders of Indian National Army in Delhi.

Pleaded for fuller freedom to legislatures in Princely States and to Praja Mandals to select representatives to Constituent Assembly.

Appealed to Sikhs not to boycott Constituent Assembly even though Cabinet Mission had not done them justice.

Rejected possibility of a coalition between Muslim League and Congress.

Joined Viceroy's Executive Council as Home Member on 3 September. Announced in Central Legislative Assembly that foreigners would be appointed to senior administrative posts only in exceptional cases.

Accepted the principle of state control of industry, told Central Legislative Assembly that it was not desirable to go fast on nationalisation.

Spurned Jinnah's proposal for an exchange of population. Urged Muslim League to join Constituent Assembly and abandon its Pakistan policy.

1947 Talks with British Government representatives on transfer of control of services from Secretary of State to Interim Government and compensation for British officials completed. Statement on All India Radio's language policy announcing changes in existing practice.

Rejoinder to Jinnah: "Let an impartial tribunal decide the Pakistan issue, for Pakistan could be attained only on the basis of justice and understanding and not by force of arms."

Appealed to Muslim League to accept invitation to join talks and agree to arbitration by a "free power" in case of disagreement between League and Congress.

Told Princes to play their part in shaping India's destiny. Warned North-West Frontier Province Ministry headed by Khan Abdul Qayum Khan that Centre would not submit to rowdyism and threats.

Interim Government's proposals on compensation to British officials accepted by Attlee Government. Demanded dominion status for India "at once" so that a strong Centre could deal firmly with threats to law and order. Statement issued on outbreak of riots in Dera Ismail Khan and elsewhere in NWFP.

Rulers of Dholpur, Nabha and Nawanagar told Sardar in New Delhi of their decision to join Constituent Assembly. States Department created and entrusted to Sardar. Described Jinnah's demand for a land corridor linking West Pakistan with the eastern wing as "fantastic nonsense." Assured Princes that "internal autonomy" of their states would be respected.

Patel Committee's report on minorities submitted to Constituent Assembly. Report recommended joint electorates, representation in Ministries at Centre and in states and other safeguards.

Insisted on stationing a brigade of Indian Army in Kathiawar to protect states acceding to Indian Union from apprehended attack from Junagadh.

Persuaded Government to overrule Mountbatten and entrust Indian Army with operations against Nawab of Junagadh.

Pledged Government protection to Muslims staying in India. Said forced conversions and marriages would not be recognised.

Announced full agreement between India and Pakistan on all outstanding issues relating to partition, including division of armed forces. Said Kashmir had not been referred to Inter-Dominion Partition Committee. Announced in Constituent Assembly financial settlement between India and Pakistan under which India would transfer Rs. 750 million to Pakistan as a "great gesture of goodwill."

Addressed Orissa rulers in Cuttack. They agreed to merge their territories with Orissa province.

Announced at public meeting in Jammu that "everything possible" would be done to save Kashmir, "and this assurance I am conveying on behalf of the Government of India." Praised Sheikh Abdullah's role in ensuring Kashmir's accession to India.

1948 Appealed to labour leaders of West Bengal to support popular Government. Warned Pakistan that if it wanted further division of the country, "let us do it in the open field." Asked Indian Muslims: "In the recent all-India Muslim Conference, why did you not open your mouths on the Kashmir issue? Why did you not condemn the action of Pakistan? These things create doubts in the minds of the people."

Declared in a statement: "Unless the Kashmir issue is settled, the financial pact between India and Pakistan cannot be implemented. . . . Let there be no mistake that Kashmir belongs to India."

Declared at Patna that abolition of zamindari without compensation would be nothing short of robbery.

Appealed to Nizam of Hyderabad to respect his people's wishes and accede to India.

Inaugurating Rajasthan Union, said that only by coming together could smaller states save themselves from anarchy and confusion.

In message on formation of Vindhya Pradesh, said: "Unification and democratisation would be purposeless if they did not bring about improvement in the lot of the people." Warned British politicians and Press to halt propaganda against India. Blamed Churchill for India's partition and attendant disasters.

Rejected compromise on Hyderabad. Accession and responsible government were India's minimum demands. Said in an eve of independence speech: "In free India there is no room for divided loyalties."

Informed Parliament that "action would be taken against Hyderabad for breach of the standstill agreement."

Congratulated Defence Services on their remarkable success in the "police action" in Hyderabad.

Indicted UN for mishandling Kashmir issue. "We accepted the UN Commission's cease-fire proposals, but the other

party did not. We could perform the Kashmir operation without danger if only we could free ourselves from our commitments.”

Referring to Pakistan and its anti-Indian propoganda, said: “I wonder whether they are really afraid of us, or is this outburst merely an attempt to preserve their unity?”

Inaugurated Advisory Board of Central India States. Praised Nehru’s leadership on his 60th birthday, saying: “Pandit Nehru has led the country through the crisis and has by his great leadership enhanced the prestige of India. We want our leader to remain at the helm for many years.”

1949 Announced merger of five Princely States of Rajputana—Bikaner, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Udaipur—to form Rajasthan Union and hailed it as a momentous development.

Advised Maharaja of Baroda to merge his State with Bombay.

Challenged contention of Nawab of Bhopal that paramountcy had lapsed with British withdrawal from India. Warned Communists that if they continued to oppose Government and create danger they would be dealt with severely.

Opposed demand for linguistic states because consolidation of country must precede revision of boundaries.

Appealed to members of Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh to join Congress.

Advised South Indians to learn Hindi.

Appealed for public contributions to rebuild Somnath temple in Junagadh.

Announced in Hyderabad that responsible government would be introduced in former Nizam’s State only after normalcy was restored.

Warned Master Tara Singh in a speech at Amritsar that he was following suicidal policies.

Advised RSS to concentrate on regenerating Hindu society through constitutional and constructive methods.

Inaugurated Rajasthan State in Jaipur.

Announced take-over of administration of Bhopal State by Centre and congratulated Nawab on his understanding

and self-sacrifice. Declared that welfare of Muslims would be prime concern of State's new administration.

At a public meeting at Indore, warned Congress politicians in newly formed states unions that he would dissolve ministries and administer unions centrally if they did not stop their petty squabbles and tussles for power.

Told All-India Depressed Classes Leagues Confederation: "India's independence will not be completed until every Harijan claims, and actually gets, equality of status."

Moving consideration of report of Advisory Committee on Minorities in Constituent Assembly, said: "Minority concessions, though not good in themselves, have to be treated as purely temporary. Minorities should voluntarily agree to abolition of reservations for them in services and legislatures."

Supported grant of privy purses to princes in return for accession to Indian Union.

1950 Warned Pakistan against pushing Hindus out of eastern wing.

Defended in Parliament use of preventive detention to fight terrorism and violence.

Gave details of democratic set-up for Delhi Union Territory.

Appealed at public meeting in Calcutta for fair trial to Nehru-Liaquat Pact on minorities.

Told public meeting at Indore that Congress "is fully behind Nehru." Called for revolution in system of education in address to Gujarat Vidyapith.

Opened newly constructed building of Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad. Purse of Rs. 1.5 million presented on behalf of Gujarat on his 75th birthday, which he immediately handed over to President of the Provincial Congress Committee.

Declared that accepting aid from United States did not mean alignment with any power bloc. UNO should be strengthened.

Deplored Chinese intervention in Tibet and use of force against Tibetans.

Fell ill on 15 November. Taken to Bombay on Tuesday, 12 December. Died on Friday morning, 15 December.

FOCUS ON SARDAR

An illuminating picture of Sardar Patel's activities and style of work was provided by his daughter Maniben. What follows are extracts from the information and views given by her to Trevor Driberg and the Editor in New Delhi.

The Sardar was a man of few words. He wrote very little; he hardly kept any record of his public or party work. He destroyed letters addressed to him after reading them and replied by hand, not keeping copies. But after he was appointed Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Board in 1934, files relating to its transactions were kept.

When the Sardar fell ill towards the end of the Bardoli satyagraha in 1928, it was suggested that somebody should give him secretarial help. I said: "If someone is to be kept, why not I?" From 1929 until his death, I preserved his correspondence whenever possible. Once, when K. Gopaldaswami, political commentator of the Times of India, visited him in his flat on Marine Drive, Bombay, the Sardar called for a letter he had received from C. Rajagopalachari, forgetting that he had torn it up and thrown it in the wastepaper basket. Fortunately, I had collected the pieces. It took me some time to paste them together before passing it on to him. This happened before the Interim Government was formed.

The Sardar travelled second-class by railway before he became a Minister. I would spread his bedding at night and retire to a third-class compartment. But from 1934, when there was much correspondence to attend to even on train journeys and people came to see him at stations, I kept company with him in his second-class compartment. I used to make copies of important letters he wrote in hand, but he would question this, asking why I was taking such trouble and wasting time. I also kept newspaper clippings of important events with which he was associated.

The Sardar read several newspapers and listened to radio news bulletins regularly. This enabled him to keep abreast of developments throughout the country. He also talked to people to get information to supplement other sources.

After 1945, the secretarial functions of the Congress Parliamentary Board were undertaken mainly by Shantilal Shah. The Sardar was undergoing treatment for intestinal trouble at the

Nature Cure Clinic, Poona, when he sent for Shantilal Shah from Bombay. Shah, a Congress Socialist, hesitated at first because he did not know what was in store for him. But B. G. Kher (Premier of Bombay) advised him to take up the work. The Sardar told Shah he wanted him to act as his Secretary at the Parliamentary Board office located at the headquarters of the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee.

The Sardar was a very shrewd judge of character. When he met a person for the first time he looked him up and down, and the assessment he made in that process rarely went wrong.

Once when Mathuradas Trikamji, Mayor of Bombay, asked what kind of men he kept round him, the Sardar replied that his was a "juggler's basket." He kept all kinds of people for the single aim of winning India's freedom. He used different people for different purposes. He was fully aware of their weaknesses and drawbacks but exploited their useful qualities.

The Sardar learnt punctuality in his youth when he had to do everything for himself. This experience taught him to save time by doing things according to schedule. This gave him self-reliance and at the same time an appreciation of the difficulties other people encountered. He walked on business errands rather than use transport. This habit served him well in London when he was attending the Inns of Court. He used to walk from his lodgings to the law library, a distance of several miles daily. He could not afford to buy books for study, and was at the library when the librarian opened it and left at closing time every evening.

The visit to England fulfilled two of my father's ambitions. He wanted to see the country from which people had come to conquer India and to qualify as a barrister. He had seen how even mediocre lawyers had been able to build up a large practice because they had been to London to study for the Bar. On his return to Ahmedabad, he established himself as the city's leading criminal lawyer.

When he was a district pleader at Borsad in the early 1900s, there was a British magistrate who kept a mirror in his court to study the faces of witnesses. This made witnesses nervous and the magistrate drew conclusions from their behaviour about their truthfulness. The Sardar thought of a plan to make the officer behave. He demanded transfer to the district court of a case in which he was appearing before the magistrate. The Sardar presented him with a sealed letter. The magistrate opened the letter and saw his name

heading the list of witnesses for the defence. He called the Sardar to his chamber for a talk. The accused was acquitted and the magistrate stopped using the mirror, conceding that he had no right to do so. This incident illustrates a facet of my father's character. He had no fear of the British magistracy or administrators.

The Sardar was a man of regular habits and disliked armchair politicians. He read about Gandhiji's action in Champaran and was impressed by his methods of organising peasants to resist exploitation and oppression. Mahatma Gandhi was preoccupied with the agitation in Bihar and wanted somebody who would give up everything and devote all his time to the satyagraha campaign in Kaira district organised as a protest against excessive land revenue. My father volunteered his services, and they were accepted.

Until that time the Sardar wore European dress. He was so fastidious that finding no good laundry in Ahmedabad he got his stiff collars washed in Bombay.

From early youth, the Sardar developed the qualities of leadership and discipline. In later life, these qualities were to help him in organising large groups of people for action. Until the Bardoli movement, he was hardly known outside Gujarat. He did not go out of Gujarat until Gandhiji's sentence of imprisonment for six years in 1922, when he went on a fund-raising mission for the Gujarat Vidyapith as far east as Rangoon.

For years in Gujarat, whenever Gandhiji addressed a public meeting the Sardar did not speak at it and later, when the Sardar spoke, other Congress leaders did not speak. This is an illustration of the discipline observed by Congressmen at the time. The leader spoke for them and the others showed their loyalty by action.

When Gandhiji started the swadeshi movement and burning of foreign clothes, the Sardar burnt all his European clothes, socks and hats. He never wore any type of headgear, even a khadi cap, after he cast aside his black Banglora cap. From then, he always wore dhoti and kurta and a chaddar on his shoulder, adding only a warm jacket in winter.

The satyagraha in Borsad taluka, Kaira district, lasted a month. The provincial Government had levied a punitive tax of eight annas—a large sum at that time—per person on all the inhabitants for the maintenance of the preventive police. Even children were taxed. The campaign succeeded and in this satyagraha he gained the title Suba of Borsad.

Another sphere in which the Sardar helped to raise the morale of the people of the area was connected with the activities of dacoits. People dared not leave their houses after 6 p.m. for fear of dacoits who infested the area. They appealed to the Sardar for help. He agreed, provided they did not allow their houses to be used for keeping stolen property.

In the Bardoli satyagraha, there was one organiser for every big village. The Sardar set out at noon from his headquarters and returned at midnight after visiting many villages. There was only one car, so all the other organisers journeyed on foot or by train or cart. The peasants accepted the Sardar as their unquestioned leader. Every morning, he received written reports from each village through volunteer messengers. The title Sardar of Bardoli was conferred on him by a party worker at a public meeting. It gained nationwide currency when Gandhiji started referring to him in this manner.

As head of Ahmedabad Municipality, the Sardar looked far ahead of immediate civic needs and planned accordingly, unlike some of his successors who made changes looking to short-term gains.

His qualities of leadership were recognised when he organised relief measures during the floods that hit Gujarat in 1927. He went round Ahmedabad city with the chief engineer and ordered a culvert to be broken to let the flood waters flow into the Sabarmati river. This saved the city from total inundation. He also persuaded the Bombay Government to provide more than a crore of rupees for relief to the flood victims. He sent help to the Collector of Kaira when the district was cut off from the rest of Gujarat. Only the Collector's bungalow, which stood on a mound, was safe, and all the townfolk had gathered there for safety. The Sardar's men brought food and other necessities.

The Sardar went to Calcutta for the Congress session over which Motilal Nehru presided. Even though his name had become a household word as the hero of Bardoli his physical appearance was not known. The volunteers of the Congress failed to identify him and since he did not carry a ticket he was not admitted to the pandal. The next day he carried his membership card and the volunteers were surprised when they found people shouting for the darshan of the Sardar of Bardoli and that the hero was the person the volunteers had kept out the previous day.

The Sardar was favoured by the Provincial Congress Committees as the next party president, but Motilal Nehru wrote to

Gandhiji asking that Jawaharlal should succeed him. Motilal wanted to see his son Congress chief before he died. My father agreed with Bapu (Gandhiji) that Motilalji's wish be fulfilled.

It was usual for the Congress President to attend annual sessions with large retinues. The Sardar went to the Karachi session in 1931 with only me and an aide, thus cutting drastically the expenses of the reception committee.

The outlook of the Sardar and of Nehru was vastly different. They agreed to differ, but at the same time worked together for the common cause of India's freedom. The influence of Mridula Sarabhai and Rafi Ahmad Kidwai on Nehru was to a large extent responsible for the rift between my father and Jawaharlal.

The Sardar became the party boss from the time he became head of the Parliamentary Board. He was also the party's main fund-raiser. The Congress High Command, of which he was the mainspring, functioned as a moral prop for the Chief Ministers against the administrative machine directed by the British.

I used to sleep by the telephone to take calls that came at odd hours of the night so that the Sardar's sleep was not disturbed. I took down messages and passed them on to him the next morning. One such call came at midnight from Biswanath Das, then Premier of Orissa. He had decided to resign over the choice of a provincial official to act as Governor. The Sardar backed him and the Viceroy yielded.

I may recall a meeting the Sardar had with Bombay Governor Lumley in 1937 at Lumley's request. It lasted about an hour. Lumley told the Sardar that he would be Premier of Bombay, but the lands confiscated from the peasants of Bardoli would never be returned. The Sardar replied: "Note it down that I am not going to be Premier, and also that the lands will be returned to the peasants."

The Sardar took many unpopular decisions in party and Government matters, but his decisions were accepted because he had no axe to grind. He was not amenable to threats or blackmail. He had no property of his own and he was above extraneous considerations. He had nothing to lose, had no ambition and no desire to cling to office.

Once in Yeravda jail, Gandhiji asked in good humour what post he would like to hold after Independence. The Sardar replied he would become a sadhu. In 1945, when it had been decided to replace Azad as Congress President, the Sardar got the largest

share of votes in the Working Committee. But Kripalani, one of the candidates, withdrew in favour of Nehru and handed a paper to the Sardar to withdraw his nomination as well so that Nehru could be elected unopposed.

Gandhiji, to whom this matter was referred, told Nehru: "I don't want to make you a prop of mine if people don't want you." Nehru kept silent and was selected President. Gandhiji supported Nehru's choice as Prime Minister because he was well known outside India. He compared the Sardar and Nehru to two bullocks yoked to a cart. He felt that if Nehru was made Prime Minister he would be prevented from "making mischief" in the country.

When the Sardar became Home Member and later on Deputy Prime Minister, anybody could call on him during his morning walk from 4.30 to 6.30. He was a fast walker and few could keep pace with him. They told him what they wanted and then they would drop out when the dialogue was over. He gave brief answers and listened mostly. For party workers and others this was an opportunity for opening their hearts to him. At the end of an hour's listening, the Sardar would probably reply in a couple of words. He arranged assistance for even the humblest party worker who needed it. He provided hospitalisation if necessary. After his illness in March 1948 his medical advisers stopped morning walks completely and restricted his interviews.

In 1941, he was afflicted with severe intestinal trouble. He woke around 3.30 every morning because of pain in the bowels. He spent an hour in the toilet before setting out on his morning walk. He had a cup of tea and breakfast, which consisted of a piece of toast and apple juice. In these early morning hours, before going for a walk, I did my quota of spinning. When he assumed office his Private Secretary V. Shankar came in with office files after breakfast. The Sardar looked through the morning newspapers carefully and rarely missed any significant news. He gave oral instructions to Shankar. As before, he would write as little as possible. When in good health, he left home around 9.30 for the Home Ministry, returned for lunch and after a nap of 15 minutes went to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

I looked after the Sardar's Gujarati correspondence while Shankar attended to that in English. I passed on some of the correspondence in Hindi to Shankar. Morarji Desai had recommended Shankar as Private Secretary. The Sardar invited him to lunch to look him over before selecting him for the post.

The Partition Committee set up under the Mountbatten Plan and consisting of as many as 30 to 40 officers, would come to the Sardar's house and stay up to lunch receiving instructions from him. Its members had to report back to him in the evening. Every order he issued had to be executed within 24 hours. He rang up Premiers at night when he had a particular issue to discuss with them. He was against wasting money on telephone calls on matters that were not urgent. I kept a diary of all private trunk calls, for which Sardar paid out of his own pocket.

I recall another instance of his method of work. There was a crisis in the jute industry. The Sardar phoned C. C. Desai, Commerce Secretary, and M. P. Birla, Chairman of the Indian Jute Manufacturers' Association, Calcutta, and others every night to check on developments. Similarly, at the time of the Bombay riots and disturbances elsewhere, he made phone calls at night to find out what was happening. He made calls to Punjab and Bengal and UP at the time of the partition troubles.

The Sardar was not impolite or arrogant in his dealings with people. He replied promptly to correspondence. He read all the letters addressed to him personally and generally told the officer concerned how he should reply. He never signed letters or any other document blindly. When he was not fully satisfied with a draft, he would change it himself or ask the officer concerned to redraft it. He liked precision and conciseness in letters. He would say that this was "not a place for essays" or for exhibiting one's command of English.

Mountbatten recognised the Sardar's greatness. I was the only other person present when the Sardar had a talk with Bapu between 4 and 5 p.m. on the day of his assassination. Bapu had decided to release the Sardar from the Ministry at the latter's instance, but Mountbatten strongly opposed this because he felt that the Sardar "had his feet on the ground while Nehru had his in the clouds." He told Gandhiji that he could not release the Sardar. Gandhiji agreed and withdrew his decision.

It was agreed at the conversation on January 30 afternoon that Gandhiji, Nehru and the Sardar should sit together and iron out their differences. But this meeting was never held. The Sardar was greatly upset by the slander campaign against him at that time in certain Congress and Government circles. He was worried at heart that Gandhiji had to defend him continually against these slanders.

Previously, when Nehru lived at York Road and the Sardar just across on Aurangzeb Road, they used to meet every day, even though for a few minutes. Nehru would sometimes drop in after lunch, or in the evening or at night after dinner. They walked together and discussed matters. The Sardar would walk with Nehru up to the gate of the latter's house on York Road and see him off there or they would return together to Aurangzeb Road.

These daily meetings and talks cleared misunderstandings, but this dialogue became very difficult after Nehru moved to the house of the former Commander-in-Chief on Teen Murti Marg. If he had not moved there on Mountbatten's advice, much of their later differences might never have developed. Because of his illness, the Sardar was not able to go to Nehru's house frequently.

When there were party matters to be attended to, the Sardar requested the AICC General Secretary to call at his house for instructions. The Working Committee met at the Sardar's residence since there was no good AICC office building at that time in Delhi. The provincial Premiers constantly sought his guidance, and he was a great help to them in their encounters with members of the bureaucracy or party dissidents.

The administrations of the new states formed after integration lacked capable men to guide them. But in those areas where party members had carried out constructive work under the Sardar's direction before independence, such men were available. This was so in Kathiawar and Gujarat. Elsewhere in the country, party workers in the former states had only indulged in agitation and there was no solid foundation for their work.

The Sardar did not aspire to prime ministership or any other high office. He once said that if India had won Swaraj ten years earlier he would have solved the food problem as he had solved that of the states. He added: "But I have not the strength to do so now." He considered food the country's most important problem after consolidation. He was essentially a man of action, averse to writing. His philosophy of life may be summed up in the words: "Why not create history rather than waste time writing it?"

MANIBEN PATEL

OUTLINE OF I-X VOLUMES

MAIN TOPICS

KASHMIR PROBLEM

1945-46

ELECTIONS

Working of Constituent Assembly and its parliamentary aspects

Interim Government and its working

Negotiations with Indian States—their place in future set-up

Bretton Woods Conference and other international conferences

Indian National Army

Provincial politics—Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, Central Provinces, Madras, Orissa, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and United Provinces

1947

NATIONAL ISSUES

Working of Central Government

(i) Interim Union Government

(a) Before 15 August 1947

(b) After 15 August 1947

(ii) External

(a) Ambassadorial appointments

(b) Indo-Nepal relations

(c) United Nations Organisation

Transfer of power

Partition

Communal flare-up

Refugee problem

STATES POLITICS

Hyderabad

Junagadh

Indian States

(a) Accession

(b) Integration

(c) Democratisation

Indian Provinces

1948

Indian States and their problems

Hyderabad State

Indian Government—its working and problems

Gandhi assassination

Refugee problem—rehabilitation

Provincial politics

1949

Indian States and their problems

Hyderabad

Provincial politics

Central Government and its working and problems

Gandhi murder, Trial of accused

1950

INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND ITS WORKING

Internal—Inter-ministerial correspondence

External—Commonwealth and India

China's aggression in Tibet

Constitutional—Constitution-making

New Head of State under Constitution

Role of Governor

STATES POLITICS

Indian States and their problems

Hyderabad issue

Provincial politics

HIGHLIGHTS—VOLUMES I-II AND IV-X

VOL. I: NEW LIGHT ON KASHMIR

This absorbing inside story of the events leading up to Independence and continuing subsequently till Sardar Patel's death in 1950 has not been told before. It contains the basic raw material for the research scholar and the historian. The correspondence published in this series opens with the efforts of Maharaja Hari Singh and his counsellors in Srinagar to shore up the feudal structure in Jammu and Kashmir by denial of democratic rights.

The Maharaja unleashed a campaign of repression against the National Conference, the political mouthpiece of the state people, arrested Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, its chief, and charged him with sedition. Jawaharlal Nehru entered Kashmir in defiance of the state Government's ban and courted arrest.

The Maharaja, finding that his hands were forced by the invasion of the state from Pakistan by armed "raiders," opted for India and, after signing the instrument of accession, agreed to the formation of a popular government under Sheikh Abdullah. The Maharaja and the Sheikh were soon at loggerheads. The Maharaja, under relentless pressure from New Delhi, surrendered power and placed himself in the hands of the Sardar, who, as the correspondence reveals, played a crucial role in the negotiations which led ultimately to the withdrawal of the Maharaja from the state and the succession of his heir, Yuvraj Karan Singh, as regent and finally as constitutional head of the state.

Patel also pointed out how India's case on Kashmir before the United Nations Security Council should have been effectively presented. The exchange of letters between him and the Sheikh foreshadows the strong differences on approach to the Kashmir problem which ultimately led to the Sheikh's removal from the prime ministership of the state in 1953. Abdullah went his own way, heedless of Patel's restraining influence.

VOL. II: ELECTIONS TO CENTRAL & PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES—DIRECTION OF CONGRESS CAMPAIGN

Soon after the Congress leaders were released from detention in 1944, negotiations opened with the representatives of the British Raj in New Delhi and the leaders of other Indian
S.C.-III-III

political parties, notably the Muslim League, on new constitutional arrangements to suit the change in the political climate brought about by World War II and to satisfy the aspirations of the Indian people for freedom.

Patel's guiding hand was evident in these negotiations as well as in the direction and management of the Congress campaign for the elections to the Central and provincial legislatures under the Government of India Act of 1935. These elections, based on communal electorates with a restricted franchise, were an acid test of the Congress claim to represent the Indian people and to be the recipient of power on their behalf when the British relinquished their authority. The Muslim League, through Mohammed Ali Jinnah, contested this claim, asserting that it was the sole champion of the Muslim "nation" which aspired to a separate existence on the advent of independence.

Patel's role as chief of staff of the Congress High Command, indefatigably marshalling manpower and finances and selection of suitable candidates for the big electoral battle, comes out strikingly in the correspondence in this volume.

VOL. IV: TRANSFER OF POWER—COMMUNAL HOLOCAUST AND PARTITION—ADMINISTRATION AND STABILITY

The political deadlock dragged on from 1946 to 1947. All efforts of the Congress to avert partition failed as the League, instigated by sympathisers in the top echelons of the British bureaucracy in India and Britain, stuck out for Pakistan. Finally, the Congress capitulated under heavy pressure and the twin states of secular, democratic India and Islamic, autocratic Pakistan were born, with Governor-General Mountbatten playing the role of midwife.

Partition and transfer of power were accompanied by the tragedy and turmoil of wholesale uprooting of populations, mass murder and looting and other acts of barbarity. The entire socio-economic structure of the affected provinces seemed on the verge of collapse. How the problem of restoring peace and sanity and resettling the uprooted and dispossessed victims of the trauma of partition was handled, primarily by Patel, with courage and firmness, is revealed in the correspondence.

While the Attlee Government in London and Mountbatten in New Delhi appeared to play fair by the Congress and the Indian people, British administrators continued to play politics

at the lower levels and were instrumental in pushing Pakistan into a military adventure in Kashmir as part of their game to weaken India economically and politically. The Muslim League, which had grabbed power in Pakistan, eagerly collaborated in this game.

VOL. V: CONTROL OVER CONGRESS MINISTRIES—
INDIAN STATES' ACCESSION

Creating conditions for stable government and maintaining law and order in the old provinces of British India after the disruption of partition was a major problem which was Patel's prime responsibility as Minister of Home Affairs. Relations between governors and chief ministers had to be redefined in the changed political context, and the Sardar was often called upon to mediate in disputes resulting from conflicting interpretations of rules and practices by those in authority.

Problems also arose from the emergence of factionalism in the provincial Congress organisations, and the Sardar had to exert his authority to prevent them from cracking up in the heat of local power struggles. The most notable instance was in Madras, where two rival factions were engaged in a bitter struggle which resulted in the ouster of Chief Minister T. Prakasam.

Rehabilitation of Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Pakistan was the key problem encountered in East Punjab, together with the intransigence of Master Tara Singh and the Akali Dal. In Assam, large-scale infiltration of Muslims created difficulties for the provincial administration in the wake of the loss of Sylhet district to Pakistan. The inclusion of the tribal hill tracts in the province also presented difficulties as the hillsmen, ethnically and culturally different from the dwellers in the Brahmaputra Valley, wanted a separate identity. In the interests of national security in a sensitive region, they were brought together under one administration.

Bringing the conglomeration of princely states within the ambit of the new integrated nation-state the Congress leaders envisaged after freedom also presented many problems, the solution of which rested on Patel's shoulders as Minister of States.

VOL. VI: PATEL-NEHRU DIFFERENCES—ASSASSINATION OF GANDHI—
SERVICES REORGANISED—REFUGEE REHABILITATION

Sardar Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru came to the brink of relinquishing office in each other's favour over differences, first, arising out of communal disturbances in Ajmer-Merwara and later

snowballing into serious conflict over the definition of the functions of the Prime Minister in relation to his colleagues and the preparation of memoranda by both for presentation to Gandhi for his adjudication. The assassination of Gandhi at this crucial period acted, however, as a cementing bond between them. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and similar organisations were banned.

C. Rajagopalachari was brought to the Centre as Governor-General in succession to Mountbatten. Restoring popular confidence after the Gandhi murder and curbing the extremist elements responsible for it without at the same time causing civil strife was the responsibility of Patel. The correspondence between Nehru and Patel on this subject reveals the different styles with which they functioned. Throughout the year, the influx of fresh waves of refugees and their rehabilitation continued to be a major pre-occupation of the government, and it was Patel's lot to co-ordinate these tasks.

The difficulties encountered in providing cohesive and effective administrations in the provinces called for firm directives from Patel. In the United Provinces, the major conflict was between the veteran Congress leader Purushottamdas Tandon and Premier Pant and their political adversary Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. This was represented in the press as a struggle between supporters of Patel and Nehru and a reflection of a power tussle at a higher level. Sharp differences arose in Assam between Governor Akbar Hydari and Chief Minister Gopinath Bardoloi, while Communist activities became a cause of worry in this province and in neighbouring West Bengal.

VOL. VII: INTEGRATING INDIAN STATES—POLICE ACTION IN HYDERABAD

The year 1948 was significant for the introduction of responsible government in many princely states, and also for the attempts of some princes to block this process. Integration talks were launched and new groupings of states came into existence with popular ministers to run them. Not long after their induction, Patel was called upon to deal with the squabbles within these governments as well as between them and the princely heads of the new unions.

The papers relating to the States of Hyderabad and Junagadh have been brought together, for their case stands apart from that of the other states which voluntarily merged in the Indian Union as a result of the patriotic impulse of their rulers, who read the

signs of the times. While the ruler of Junagadh fled to Pakistan, the Nizam dreamt of carving out an independent state in the belly of the Indian Union.

With this end in view, the Nizam's agents went on an arms buying spree in Europe and organised bands of thugs to terrorise the predominantly Hindu population of his State. Secret negotiations were also started with the British for the addition of Bastar State to his domain and the retrocession of Berar, which had been incorporated in the Central Provinces. Advances were made to the Portuguese Government about providing access to Hyderabad through Goa to the Arabian Sea.

Here, as in other instances of princely opposition to joining India, the undercover manoeuvrings of British officials and politicians, keen on seeing India weak and divided after independence, played an important part in stiffening the resistance of the Nizam and the feudal clique which supported him. After vain attempts to persuade the Nizam to agree peaceably to joining the Indian Union, as the vast majority of his subjects demanded, the Indian Government organised a "police action" to effect the merger. The story ends with the Nizam's surrender and expression of complete confidence in Sardar Patel's political sagacity.

VOL. VIII: FOREIGN POLICY IN EVOLUTION—CONSTITUTION- MAKING—POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS

The future of India's relations with the Commonwealth of Nations, ties with Nepal, recognition of Communist China and disputes with Pakistan over canal waters, ill-treatment of minorities in Pakistan and evacuee property were important matters of foreign policy in which the Sardar made a significant contribution. The main task the Sardar undertook was to merge the Unions of Princely States with the adjoining states of the Indian Union, thus creating a bigger territorial unit than existed under the British or any former Raj.

Internally, differences arose over whether the first President of the Indian Republic should be C. Rajagopalachari or Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Nehru and Patel took different attitudes to mass agitation by the Akalis in East Punjab. The Hindu Code Bill was another issue on which eminent Congress leaders differed from the government's view.

The sentence of death was passed on 12 February on Nathuram Godse, the principal accused in the Gandhi murder case, and

Patel overruled pleas for clemency. As Minister of Information and Broadcasting, he laid down a policy on the use of Hindi for the guidance of All India Radio.

VOL. IX: POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES—REFUGEES FROM EAST BENGAL—TERRITORIAL INTEGRATION OF PRINCELY STATES

Factionalism continued to cause administrative snarls in the states and provinces and to this were added charges of corruption and abuse of power against those in authority. The Sardar was deeply involved in trying to keep peace among the warring factions and weeding out the corrupt. A controversy erupted in West Bengal over the relative status of Bengali and Hindi for official purposes, and a movement for Greater Bengal, including East Pakistan, raised its head in the province.

Friction within the Madras Ministry was sharpened by popular demands for a separate Andhra Pradesh. Factions within the Punjab Congress came to be identified with Nehru and Patel. In Hyderabad, the Communists as well as communalists became active and caused anxiety to the State administration. The Communist-supported uprising of the peasants of Telangana, who employed force to dispossess the landlords and divide up their property, led to military operations against them.

Communal riots broke out in West Bengal as more refugees streamed in from East Pakistan with stories of atrocities perpetrated on the Hindu minority there. The Congress party split in Andhra Pradesh at the same time as the Communist swung into action in the region. Master Tara Singh strove hard to stir up communal feeling in the Punjab.

Nehru visited the United States. Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister, filled in for him. His confidential fortnightly letter of over 10,000 words to chief ministers of states elaborating his political, economic and administrative philosophy is in the nature of a will and testament.

VOL. X: ACTIVE POWER STRUGGLE—TRIUMPH OF MUTUAL ACCOMMODATION—WARNING AGAINST CHINA

The highlight of foreign affairs was the Chinese invasion of Tibet, an event which raised the problem of security along the Himalayan border. In letters to Nehru and CR, the Sardar underscored the potential threats to India's sovereignty from this source. Pakistan's persecution of minorities, incursions into Indian territory and general hostility were other matters of concern to

New Delhi. Efforts were even made to poison the good relations between India and Nepal. After the election of Rajendra Prasad as President, Nehru announced his intention of resigning the office of Prime Minister and devote himself to party activities. The Central Cabinet was reconstituted and CR entered it. There were several exchanges of correspondence between Nehru and Patel on matters of principle, including a definition of the powers of a governor. Finance Minister John Matthai resigned on an issue of principle, and this was followed by a bitter war of words.

In the Congress presidential elections, Nehru and Patel ranged on different sides. Nehru opposed Purushottamdas Tandon's nomination, and when Tandon was elected Nehru refused to join the Congress Working Committee. The Sardar's health began to fail.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME III

| | |
|---|-----|
| CHAPTER I ELECTIONS TO CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY | 1 |
| MADRAS—Sardar favours Rajaji as Congress party leader in Assembly; damage to Congress prestige; High Command advice flouted; Prakasam invited to form Ministry; Sardar's warning; defiance by Andhra; elections to local bodies; nominations to Upper House; Prohibition; Sardar on some major issues; Prakasam in the dock; Zamindars; joint electorates; welfare of Harijans; rival Trade Union Congress, if necessary; Bill to amend Estates Land Act | |
| CHAPTER II GUIDANCE TO PROVINCES | 58 |
| NWFP—briefing leaders for Cabinet Mission talks; election tribunal; accounts | |
| BOMBAY—The question of railway strike; caution about nationalisation of industries | |
| CHAPTER III THE PUNJAB MUDDLE | 73 |
| PUNJAB—Congress and the Akalis; appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries questioned; Sardar on an alleged League circular; treatment of reports on communal strife; Wavell-Sardar correspondence on curbing the Muslim League organ, Dawn | |
| CHAPTER IV BRITISH GOVERNOR'S PARTIALITY | 92 |
| SIND—Council of State elections; why Chief Judge resigned; Mudie Ministry in Sind; Cripps' glib assurance; rebuff to Jinnah; correspondence on grouping; League decides to boycott Constituent Assembly; political conditions deteriorate; European legislators' attitude; effect of Direct Action on Muslims in Calcutta; Syed raises constitutional point; Sardar forecasts general election; elections in Muslim constituencies; official interference in Sind elections; Sardar's letter to Wavell on the subject; Congress loses all along the line; Sardar sceptical about prospect of coalition ministry | |
| CHAPTER V D. P. MISHRA'S PROTEST | 142 |
| ORISSA—Constituent Assembly elections; Governor's investiture ceremony; demand for broadcasting station; Hirakud Dam; C. P.—Sardar's refusal to interfere in Provincial Ministries' working; criticism of philosophy of fast; assault on Sir | |

Shafaat Ahmed Khan; Satyagraha by Ambedkar's followers;
Sardar considers CID necessary

CHAPTER VI LEAGUE EXPLOITS SITUATION 164

BIHAR—Bapu threatens to go on fast; Nehru's report on Bihar riots; League discourages return of refugees; Sardar's directive on Scott's report; correspondence with Wavell on Scott's report;

BENGAL—An ordeal for Calcutta; neutral attitude of Europeans; Sardar's view; correspondence between Sardar and Cripps on Bengal; Nehru writes to Wavell on barbarism in East Bengal; a British officer for strong measures; Gill's scheme to assist Gandhiji in East Bengal

ASSAM—Joint Parliamentary Committee; Maulana Azad for all-party Government; representation of tribesmen

CHAPTER VII CRUCIAL NATIONAL ISSUES 200

Handling problems of personnel of Indian National Army; offshoot of RIN uprising; shipping, trade and commerce; Bretton Woods Agreement; international financial organisations; attitude on Finance Bill; food delegation to Copenhagen

CHAPTER VIII THE CABINET MISSION 242

Nehru's brief for discussion; release of papers about the Simla Conference; correspondence between Nehru and Viceroy about Interim Government; Jinnah frustrated

CHAPTER IX INTERIM GOVERNMENT—TWO PHASES 252

Names recommended by Nehru for Interim Government; Gandhi's talk with Viceroy; problems of official repression in 1942; Constituent Assembly; status and powers of the Interim Government; Sardar's criticism of Gill's proposal; Jinnah's points for reconstitution of Interim Government; partial agreement by Viceroy; Congress-League agreement; Nehru writes to Jinnah and Jinnah's reply; Interim Government reconstituted

CHAPTER X PROBLEMS CONFRONTING COALITION GOVERNMENT 292

Nehru's trip to NWFP; Chief Minister-Governor differences in UP; evictions of Bengali Muslims from Assam Valley; Cripps on Sudhir Ghosh's work; Ghazanfar Ali's communal outburst; responsibility for restoring peace in Bengal; Patronage lists; control of the Press; information channels on communal incidents; correspondence between Sardar and

Cripps; Gandhi on Constituent Assembly's jurisdiction; Secretary of State's services; proposal for Press Ordinance; Kashi Vidyapith's silver jubilee

| | | | |
|------------|---|---------|-----|
| CHAPTER XI | FERMENT IN INDIAN STATES | | 327 |
| | Nehru's talk with Ruler of Bhopal; Deccan States' Union; Sardar's correspondence with Sir B. L. Mitter and K. M. Panikkar; lead by Rulers of Bikaner, Baroda and Cochin; agitation for reforms in Travancore, Bhavnagar, Mysore, Alwar, Rewa and Datia. | | |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| AICC | All India Congress Committee |
| AIR | All India Radio |
| AITUC | All India Trade Union Congress |
| API | Associated Press of India |
| BB&CI | Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway |
| BPCC | Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee |
| CA | Constituent Assembly |
| CID | Criminal Investigation Department |
| CIO | Central Intelligence Officer |
| CP | Central Provinces |
| CR | Chakravarty Rajagopalachari |
| CSP | Congress Socialist Party |
| FPSC | Federal Public Service Commission |
| GT | Grand Trunk |
| HE | His Excellency |
| HM | Home Member or Hon'ble Member |
| HMG | His Majesty's Government |
| ICS | Indian Civil Service |
| IGP | Inspector-General of Police |
| INA | Indian National Army |
| KB | Khan Bahadur |
| KS | Khan Sahib |
| MLA | Member of Legislative Assembly |
| NWFP | North-West Frontier Province |
| PCC | Pradesh Congress Committee |
| PPCC | Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee |
| PSV | Private Secretary to Viceroy |
| PWD | Public Works Department |
| RIN | Royal Indian Navy |
| TNCC | Tamil Nad Congress Committee |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UNO | United Nations Organisation |
| UNRRA | United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency |
| UP | United Provinces |
| UPI | United Press of India |
| USA | United States of America |
| WC | Working Committee |

GLOSSARY OF INDIAN TERMS

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>Akali</i> | Strict devotee of Sikhism; member of principal Sikh political party |
| <i>Ambedkarite</i> | Follower of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, a leader of untouchables and one of the framers of Indian Constitution |
| <i>Anand Bhawan</i> | Abode of Happiness, name of the residence of Motilal Nehru in Allahabad |
| <i>Andhras</i> | Residents of Andhra, a region in South India where Telugu is mainly spoken |
| <i>Babu</i> | Term of respect used in Bengal and Bihar for members of the intelligentsia; commonly used for a clerk |
| <i>Badmash</i> | A bad character, a hoodlum |
| <i>Badshah</i> | King; also used as term of respect for individuals |
| <i>Bahadur</i> | Brave, dashing person, a hero, former title conferred by the British Viceroy on Indians, Diwan, Khan, Rai, Rao and Sardar Bahadur |
| <i>Bapu</i> | Father; affectionate term of respect for Gandhi used by followers |
| <i>Bazar</i> | Market place |
| <i>Bhavan</i> | House, mansion; Rashtrapati Bhavan is the residence of the President of India, Raj Bhavan the residence of a state Governor |
| <i>Charkha</i> | Spinning wheel |
| <i>Ch.</i> | Short for Chaudhury (Choudhury or Choudhary), headman in a community, a title of respect in the countryside |
| <i>Chi.</i> | Short for Chiranjivi meaning 'one who may live for ever' |
| <i>Crore</i> | 100 lakhs or 10 million |
| <i>Darbar (Durbar)</i> | Court of a prince; ceremonial assembly; government of a princely state |
| <i>Dhara Sabha</i> | Legislative Assembly |
| <i>Diwan (Dewan)</i> | Minister in princely states, Chief Minister; also council of state; titles Diwan Sahib and |

Diwan Bahadur were conferred by the Viceroy on distinguished South Indians

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <i>Goondaism</i> | Hooliganism |
| <i>Goondas</i> | Hooligans |
| <i>Gurdwara</i> | Sikh shrine where the sacred Granth Sahib is read to a congregation |
| <i>Gurkha</i> | Nepalese tribe known for military prowess |
| <i>Haji</i> | Person who has visited Mecca on pilgrimage |
| <i>Harijans</i> | Children of God, a term coined by Gandhi for untouchables; also title of Gandhi's weekly newspaper (Harijan) |
| <i>Hartal</i> | Strike; closure of shops and public institutions |
| <i>Hindustan</i> | Home of Hindus; used for India |
| <i>Idgah</i> | Premises or open space where Id-ul-Fitr is celebrated |
| <i>Jai Hind</i> | Victory to India |
| <i>Jamait</i> | Group, association |
| <i>Jee (Ji)</i> | Respectful address as in Gandhiji, Shastriji |
| <i>Kashi Vidyapeeth</i> | National university founded in Banaras in early 1920s |
| <i>Khadi</i> | Hand-spun and hand-woven cloth |
| <i>Khan</i> | Title of a Muslim member, commonly used with Afghan and Pathan proper names |
| <i>Khojas</i> | A Muslim sect in Western India engaged in trade and commerce |
| <i>Kirpan</i> | Miniature sword; claimed by Sikhs as a religious symbol |
| <i>Lala</i> | Title generally applied to Khattris in Punjab who were village bankers, and to leading members of the Bania tribe in North India |
| <i>Maharaja</i> | Great King, a title for a Hindu ruler |
| <i>Maharajadhiraja</i> | Great Ruler |
| <i>Maharani</i> | A Ruling queen, wife of a ruling maharaja |
| <i>Mahasabha</i> | Great assembly; political party associated with militant Hindu nationalism |
| <i>Mahatma</i> | Great Soul |
| <i>Mahatma Gandhi</i> | |
| <i>Ki jai</i> | Victory to Mahatma Gandhi |

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|---|---|
| <i>Maidan</i> | Field, open area or land |
| <i>Malik</i> | Originally a title for chieftain of one of the groups into which the Pathan tribes are divided |
| <i>Marwari</i> | Native of Marwar in Rajasthan; often settled elsewhere in India and usually a business man; loosely used for bania |
| <i>Maulana</i> | Title of respect accorded to Muslim judges, heads of religious orders and persons of great learning |
| <i>Mazdoor</i> | Labourer, menial worker |
| <i>Mir (Meer)</i> | Abbreviation of Amir, title of Muslim nobility |
| <i>Momin</i> | Muslim weaver |
| <i>Mussalman</i> (<i>Mohammedan,</i> <i>Muslim</i>) | a believer in Islam |
| <i>Nawab</i> | Originally a governor of a territory, later rank conferred on notable Muslims |
| <i>Nawabzada</i> | Son of a Nawab |
| <i>Nizam</i> | Ruler of former princely State of Hyderabad; a person entrusted with management |
| <i>Pandit</i> | Title applied to those versed in scriptures but used commonly to denote a Brahmin |
| <i>Panthic Board</i> | Body regulating affairs of Sikh institutions |
| <i>Parsee</i> | Descendant of Zoroastrian refugees who fled Iran on its conquest by Muslims |
| <i>Pathan</i> | Name given to Pushto-speaking people inhabiting North-West Frontier Province of Indian subcontinent and Afghanistan |
| <i>Pir</i> | Head of a religious sect; commonly used for a clever person |
| <i>Pir Pagaro</i> | Hereditary head of Hur tribe in Sind |
| <i>Praja Parishad</i> | People's party; name of a political organisation allied to Hindu Mahasabha |
| <i>Pratinidhi</i> | Representative |
| <i>Pucca</i> | An Indian word meaning good, correct, substantial, of standard quality of measurement contrasted with kachcha |
| <i>Pujya</i> | Respected |

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| <i>Purdanashin</i> | Woman who covers her face and lives in seclusion; generally used for Muslim women who observe purdah |
| <i>Purohit</i> | Family priest |
| <i>Qaid-e-Azam</i> | Supreme leader; title for Jinnah popularised by Gandhi in 1944 |
| <i>Qua'id-i-Azam</i> | |
| <i>Rai</i> | Title derived from Raja, one of the elite; the titles Rai Sahib and Rai Bahadur were conferred on Hindus in north India by the British Viceroy |
| <i>Raj Kumari</i> | Princess, daughter of a Raja or of a princely family |
| <i>Rajakiya</i> | Belonging or pertaining to state |
| <i>Rajputs</i> | Kshatriya, fighting caste of Hindus |
| <i>Ramzan</i> | Mohammedan month of fasting |
| <i>Rao</i> | Title drawn from Raja, titles Rao Sahib and Rao Bahadur were conferred by the Viceroy on South Indians |
| <i>Rashtrapati</i> | Father of the nation, term used for Congress presidents before independence and now used for head of Indian Republic |
| <i>Rashtriya</i> | National |
| <i>Rupee (Re.)</i> (Plural Rupees or Rs.) | Unit of money in India |
| <i>Sabhaites</i> | Members of Hindu Mahasabha |
| <i>Sahib (Saheb)</i> | Master; respectful form of address |
| <i>Salar</i> | Head of a military or a semi-military formation |
| <i>Sangh</i> | Union, party, organisation; generally used for the all-India political party known as Jan Sangh |
| <i>Sardar (Sirdar)</i> | Chief, leader, generally applied to Sikhs and equivalent of Mr.; affectionate term of respect for Vallabhbhai Patel |
| <i>Satyagraha</i> | Holding on to truth; form of protest initiated by Gandhi and developed into a political weapon; concept of truth achieved through non-violent resistance |
| <i>Satyagrahi</i> | Participant in non-violent movement of civil disobedience |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Seth</i> | Business man, wealthy individual belonging to the banking community |
| <i>Sevak</i> | Dedicated to service, a volunteer |
| <i>Sheikh</i> | A caste among Indian Muslims |
| <i>Shia (Shiah)</i> | Name given to Muslims who believe that Ali, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, was his rightful successor |
| <i>Shiromani Akali Dal</i> | Party of Sikhs which originally agitated for reform of Sikh shrines and later became a political party in Punjab |
| <i>Shri</i> | Short for Shrijukta, equivalent of Mr. |
| <i>Sikh</i> | Disciple; follower of Guru Nanak (1469-1538), the first of the line of 10 Gurus (leaders) who formulated a new faith to rid Hinduism of superstition and caste divisions |
| <i>Sjt.</i> | Short for Shrijukta |
| <i>Smt.</i> | Short for Shrimati, meaning Mrs. or Madam |
| <i>Suba</i> | Province |
| <i>Sunni</i> | Term generally applied to Muslims who acknowledge the first four Caliphs equally as the Prophet's rightful successor |
| <i>Swaraj</i> | Complete control over one's affairs; independent statehood |
| <i>Syed (Sayyid, Saiyed)</i> | Title assumed by the descendants of the Prophet Mohamed |
| <i>Thakur</i> | Title for a high caste landlord |
| <i>Vasant Panchami</i> | Festival in which yellow robes are worn to mark ripening of crop in spring |
| <i>Zabardasti</i> | Resort to force or intimidation |
| <i>Zamindar (Zemindar)</i> | Proprietary landholder who paid a fixed annual sum to the government |
| <i>Zamindari</i> | Landlordism; also used to indicate cultivation of land |
| <i>Zoolum</i> | Repression, injustice, tyranny |

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME III

The period preceding the transfer of power in August 1947 witnessed an intensified struggle for succession born of the sweeping victory in the elections to the Central Legislative Assembly of the Congress in the general constituencies and of the Muslim League in the constituencies reserved for Muslims. Inevitably, Princely India also felt its repercussions.

The burden of meeting the challenge fell on Sardar Patel, first as the head of the Congress Parliamentary Board and later as the Minister in the Interim Government in charge of Home Affairs and Indian States. The present volume reveals how the Sardar handled this complex situation and operated on four fronts—disciplining the Congress ministries in the States, countering the disruptionist moves of the League, exposing the intrigues of British bureaucrats and guiding the movement for reforms in the Princely States.

Congress affairs in Madras Presidency continued to cause concern to the High Command. The party elected T. Prakasam, instead of C. Rajagopalachari, its leader in the provincial assembly in the face of Gandhi's opposition to Prakasam. Patel, writing to V. V. Giri, who apparently enjoyed his confidence, said: "You have decided to go your own way. It would be a fraud on the public to lead them to believe that what is being done by the party is being endorsed or acquiesced in by us. It would be wrong to assume that we (the High Command) have abdicated our functions and that we will allow things to go wrong or to let the party have its own way in everything. At present we have decided to wait and watch and to allow the (legislature) party to go its own way, but when the limit is reached and our responsibilities are affected by any action that is being done there, we will not hesitate to take action."

The Attlee Government sent out a high-powered Cabinet delegation to India in 1946 to consult the political leaders and evolve a scheme which would accommodate the Congress stand for a united India with the League demand for a sovereign state of Pakistan.

The Cabinet Mission's plan for grouping the country into Hindu-majority and Muslim-majority areas and for summoning a constituent assembly to frame a constitution for a united India appeared at first to win tacit approval from both the Congress and

the League. The plan also envisaged the establishment of an interim government virtually independent of Whitehall.

The Congress leadership was in high spirits on the eve of forming a government. On 9 August 1946 the Congress Working Committee adopted a resolution setting up a parliamentary sub-committee "to keep in close, constant touch with Congress parties in all legislatures, to advise them in all activities and to take necessary action in case of emergency."

Writing to C. R. Reddy on 16 August 1946, Patel said: "The Congress President (Nehru) has been asked to form the Interim Government and for the first time, the British Government have shown the Muslim League its proper place. They have thus given proof of their bona fides and it is now for us to make or mar the future of India. . . . If the British Government and the Congress play the game well, I have no doubt that we shall see India free sooner than many people imagine and neither the League nor any other group of people or interests, however strong or powerful, will be able to stop it." The Congress leaders soon discovered, however, that the British bureaucrats were at their old game.

Direct Action Day, observed by the League all over India on 16 August 1946, led to "great killings" in Calcutta followed by massacres in Noakhali and terrible riots in Bihar. In a note dated 6 November 1946 prepared for Gandhi and forwarded to Patel, Nehru wrote: "Bihar riots were a reaction to killing of Biharis in Calcutta on 16 August and rape and killing and looting of Hindus in Noakhali. A feeling grew that nobody was helping the helpless Hindus of East Bengal while the provincial government of Bengal was deliberately pursuing a policy of exterminating Hindus from East Bengal either by killing or by forcible conversion."

The varying Congress and League interpretations of the Cabinet Mission plan led to a crisis when the League went back on its earlier stand and rejected the plan. The Viceroy, Lord Wavell, went ahead with forming an interim government and manned it solely with nominees of the Congress party. The League, sensing the setback it had suffered politically, changed its stance and agreed to join the government while maintaining its opposition to participating in the Constituent Assembly.

Since the British Cabinet agreed with the League's interpretation of the plan for regional grouping, it encouraged the induction of the League into the government. This decision precipitated matters as the Government was divided into two warring groups and it became incumbent on Whitehall to reshape the plan to suit the prevailing conditions. With his unerring instinct, Patel foresaw

the danger of Sind and Bengal playing into the hands of British bureaucrats and business men who wished to frustrate the Congress plan by supporting the League's intransigence.

Sir Francis Mudie, the Governor of Sind, for instance, invited the League to form a ministry even though it did not have a majority. Writing to Nihchaldas Vazirani on 21 August 1946, Patel said: "We are fully aware of the attitude of your Governor. He and his tribe will do their worst before they quit India. They cannot forgive the Congress which has compelled them to be prepared to leave."

The situation in Sind did not improve after the Interim Government was formed at the Centre. In another letter to Vazirani dated 16 December 1946, the Sardar, commenting on Vazirani's account of how the elections were rigged, wrote: "The goondaism was not unexpected. It is a foretaste of what Pakistan would be. . . . We can do nothing against the Civil Service for such misconduct (which probably is not misconduct but 'good conduct' according to the opinion of the local government whom they are serving) and so we must put up with these things."

The plan of toppling the League Ministry in Sind provoked a sharp rebuke from Patel in a letter to Vazirani dated 28 December 1946: "It is futile to depend upon internal quarrels of the League for building up the strength of the Opposition. They must lay out a programme for steady work among the masses who will be convinced only by honest hard work in their cause. The Hindus in Sind will have to adopt the only honourable course of a dignified opposition which must be of a constructive nature. No attempt should be made to break the Ministry as such efforts are bound to end in failure and the only net gain would be increased bitterness which would cause more harm to the Hindus. The Ministry, if it breaks, must break through its inherent weakness and not through our efforts."

Patel opened his heart to Sir Stafford Cripps in a letter dated 16 December 1946. Stating that Nehru had come back from London sadly disappointed, he wrote: "You called the League delegation there to London at a time when there was some realisation that violence is a game at which both parties can play and the mild Hindu also, when driven to desperation, can retaliate as brutally as a fanatic Muslim. Just when the time for settlement was reached Jinnah got the invitation, and he was able to convince the Muslims once again that he has been able to get more concessions by creating trouble and violence. . . . You must have seen what Jinnah has said in London immediately after

the debate. He swears by Pakistan and everything conceded to him is to be used as a lever to work to that end. You wish that we should agree to help him in his mad dream. . . . Every action of the Viceroy (Lord Wavell) since the great Calcutta killing has been in the direction of encouraging the Muslim League and putting pressure on us towards appeasement. . . . You know when Gandhiji was strongly against our settlement I threw my weight in favour of it. You have created a very unfortunate situation for me. All of us here feel that there has been a betrayal."

An interesting light is thrown on the birth of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC). Giri wrote to Patel on 15 December 1946: "I am feeling convinced day after day that it may not serve much useful purpose in joining the (trade) union whose deliberate purpose is to vilify the Congress as a national movement and incessantly seek inspiration and direction from another country."

Patel's reply clinched the issue thus: "If we cannot capture the (All-India) Trade Union Congress by peaceful and decent means it would be better to start a rival trade union Congress organisation which would straightway be recognised by the Government and all pretensions of the representative character of the rival organisation would be destroyed."

An interesting exchange of letters occurred between the Sardar and D. P. Mishra, then Home Minister in the Shukla Cabinet in the Central Provinces (and now one of the confidants of Mrs. Indira Gandhi). Commenting on Nehru's decision to induct new blood into the Congress Working Committee he formed in 1946, Mishra wrote on 11 July 1946: "Pandit Nehru wants new blood. In this ancient land for thousands of years public affairs have been in the hands of elderly men free from passions. It seems to me that public life is becoming Mrs. Warren's profession, wherein the elder one must give place to the younger one merely because she has become older."

Patel's reply on 29 July 1946 ran: "Though the President (Nehru) has been elected for the fourth time he often acts with childlike innocence which puts us all in great difficulty quite unexpectedly. . . . His action in Kashmir (courting imprisonment), his interference in the Sikh elections to the Constituent Assembly, his Press conference immediately after the AICC (repudiating the Cabinet Mission version) are all acts of emotional intensity and it puts tremendous strain on us to put matters right. But in spite of all his innocent indiscretion he has unparalleled enthusiasm and a burning passion for freedom which make him restless and drive

him to a pitch of impatience when he forgets himself. All his actions are governed by a supreme consideration of reaching the cherished goal with electric speed.”

The story of the future of the Indian States begins with a note recorded by Nehru of a private talk with the Nawab of Bhopal, then Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, on 20 and 21 April 1946. During the talks, which lasted over six hours, Nehru, a former President of the All-India States Peoples' Conference, gave an idea of the kind of federation that might be built up and of the changes required within the states to fit them into the national structure on an equal basis. He assured the Nawab that suitable provisions would be made even in regard to the smaller states, which might be merged in states unions or in neighbouring provinces, safeguarding their rulers' "personal dignity and position.”

It was left to Sardar Patel as Minister of States to handle this delicate operation. Certain developments helped in achieving the objective of evolving a federation. The Deccan States were the first to form a union, and the Bikaner ruler was the first to announce democratisation of his regime. The intrigues of the Political Department in Kathiawar were defeated, the stand of Travancore for independence and the unresponsiveness of Mysore were overcome.

Writing to H. S. Dasappa, a leader of the Mysore Congress, Patel said "no State can exist without the support of its people when there is no paramountcy to back them up or to protect them.” Encouraged by this, the Mysore legislature threw out all bills before it because, in the words of S. Nijalingappa, "the present Ministry has not the confidence of the legislature.” Developments in Alwar, Cochin, Rewa and Datia received the Sardar's attention.

The situation at the time was aptly summed up by Patel in a letter of 11 September 1946 to Sir B. L. Mitter, Dewan of Baroda: "At present we are engaged in checkmating the moves of the Muslim League, which is engaged in upsetting all that has happened since the Cabinet delegation left. It is believed that some of the States are in sympathy with the Muslim League and would like to take advantage of the situation created by the withdrawal of the League from the Constituent Assembly to sabotage the whole scheme.”

The volume prepares the reader for the drama to be unfolded by the Mountbatten plan for the partition of the country.

On page 149, Volume I of Sardar Patel's Correspondence—1945-50, the Parthasarathi referred to is not G. Parthasarathi, son of Shri Gopaldaswami Ayyangar, now Vice-Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University as stated, but is the late Shri C. Parthasarathi, a close relative who was then Shri Gopaldaswami Ayyangar's Private Secretary. The error is regretted. Consequently the reference to G. Parthasarathi in the Index (Page 391) should be deleted.

2, Tolstoy Lane
New Delhi-I
9 August 1972

DURGA DAS

SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE

CHAPTER I

ELECTIONS TO CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

1

19 March 1946

My dear Giri,¹

The elections will soon be over and the question of leadership will again occupy a prominent place in South India. Rajaji² [C. Rajagopalachari] has withdrawn and evidently there has been a vacuum. The Governor will want to call whoever happens to be the Leader and we must decide quickly. The Parliamentary Delegation is coming and Rajaji's keen intellect and experienced guidance would have been of immense help on this occasion. The Congress will miss this, no doubt partly due to his faults, but nonetheless also due to political intrigues for leadership and also to some extent to short-sightedness and blind prejudice. It is a pity that at a critical juncture South India could not rise above petty-mindedness and blind prejudice. However, as there is no atmosphere for fair hearing of the other side, it is futile to discuss this matter. The question now for you all is to consider who is going to be the Leader and, whoever becomes the Leader, whether such a Leader will be able to command general confidence of all the three [Congress] provinces in Madras Presidency and whether he will be able

¹ President of India since August 1969; gained prominence as President, All-India Railwaymen's Federation and All-India Trade Union Congress; member, Central Assembly, 1934-36; Minister of Labour, Industries, Cooperation and Commerce, Madras, 1937; first High Commissioner to Ceylon, 1947-51; Union Minister of Labour, 1952-54; resigned because of policy differences with Nehru; became successively Governor of UP, Kerala and Mysore, 1957-67; elected Vice-President in 1969 and succeeded Dr. Zakir Husain as President in May 1969

² Joined Gandhi's satyagraha campaign and non-cooperation movement in 1920; General Secretary, Indian National Congress, 1921-22; member, Congress Working Committee, uninterruptedly until 1942; first Premier of Madras after 1937 elections; resigned from Congress in view of differences over Muslim League's claim to Pakistan; assisted Gandhi in talks with Jinnah, 1944; member, Interim Government, 1946-47; Governor of West Bengal, 1947-48; acting Governor-General, June 1948-January 1950; Union Minister without Portfolio, July-December 1950; Minister of Home Affairs, 1950-51; Chief Minister of Madras, 1952-54; founded Swatantra Party in 1959 to challenge "Leftist" policies of Congress

to run the show with ability and integrity, so as not to bring any discredit to the great national organisation to which we all belong. Some of you must meet immediately and inform me as to who is going to be the choice.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. V. V. Giri, MLA
"Malathi"
4 Giri Road
Madras

2

19 March 1946

Dear Mr. Kamaraj,¹

The elections will soon be over and the Governor will want to call the Leader of the Congress Assembly Party for the formation of a ministry. No time should be lost, therefore, in the selection of the Leader. I should like to know whether you have thought of this question and if so who is your choice. If you have not decided yet, some of you who count must meet immediately and let me know on whom the choice is going to fall. I understand that the Governor had invited you and I presume that he must have called you to ascertain from you about the prospects of leadership. Please let me have your views as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Kamaraj Nadar
President, TNCC
8 Narasingapuram St.
Mount Road
Madras

¹Joined freedom struggle at a young age; President of Tamilnad PCC, 1940-54; member, CA; Chief Minister of Madras, 1954-63; Congress President, 1964-67; member, Lok Sabha, since 1969

3

TELEGRAM

Madras
25 March 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

YOUR PRESENCE HIGHLY NECESSARY FIRST MEETING LEGISLATURE
PARTY WHEN LEADER IS ELECTED. PLEASE ADJUST TOUR PROGRAMME.
COUNTING CONCLUDES MARCHEND.

GOPALAREDDI¹
EXMINISTER NELLORE

4

25 March 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your telegram. I do not know why my presence is required at the party meeting for appointing a Leader. The proper course would be for the leaders of the three provinces of Andhra, Tamil Nad and Kerala to put their heads together and come to some uniform decision. It is unfortunate that in the scramble for power, there has been no unity and there is no leader who can command the confidence of all the groups. Rajaji's absence has left a vacuum and there seems to be no one who can take his place. I would advise you to arrange a meeting of the leaders and discuss the question amongst yourselves and come to a unanimous decision. We are all very busy and we can hardly spare time at present to attend meetings of Assembly parties for such a purpose. It is the party's business to elect its own Leader. We can only hope that Madras will not make a sorry exhibition

¹ Member, Andhra Pradesh Parliamentary Board; minister in Rajaji Cabinet in Madras, 1937-39; later Union Minister; presently Governor of Uttar Pradesh

when the Cabinet Mission has come to India to discuss the question of transferring full responsibility.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. B. Gopala Reddi
Ex-Minister
Nellore

5

TELEGRAM

4 April 1946

Gopala Reddi
Nellore

COME HERE FOR SETTling PARTY LEADER'S ELECTION SOONEST
POSSIBLE.

ABULKALAMAZAD¹ VALLABHBHAI

6

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
4 April 1946

- (1) Kamaraj Congress, Madras
- (2) Rajagopalachari Thyagarayanagar Madras
- (3) Prakasam Thyagarayanagar Madras

COME HERE FOR SETTling PARTY LEADER'S ELECTION SOONEST
POSSIBLE.

ABULKALAMAZAD VALLABHBHAI

¹Leading Muslim divine; staunch nationalist from Khilafat days; Congress President, 1939-46; member, CA; Education Minister in Nehru Cabinet

7

TELEGRAM

Madras
5 April 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Congress
New Delhi

RECEIVED YOUR WIRE. STARTING ON SEVENTH.

[T] PRAKASAM¹

8

TELEGRAM

Tenkasi
5 April 1946

Sardar Patel
New Delhi

KINDLY WIRE ME HERE IF YOU ARE PROCEEDING MADRAS THIS WEEK.
RAJAGOPALACHARI

9

TELEGRAM

5 April 1946

Rajagopalachari
Courtallam
Tenkasi (South India)

NOT GOING MADRAS BUT LEADING CONGRESS MEMBERS INCLUDING
YOU INVITED HERE FOR SETTLING PARTY LEADERSHIP.

VALLABHBHAI

¹ Congress leader known as "Lion of Andhra"; member, CA; Premier of Madras after elections in 1946; first Chief Minister of Andhra State

10

TELEGRAM

7 April 1946

Sardar Patel
New Delhi

ARRIVING MONDAY TATA'S PLANE FROM BOMBAY.

RAJAGOPALACHARI

11

TELEGRAM

Madras
9 April 1946

Sardar Patel
New Delhi

KAMARAJ PRAKASAM MADHAVA MENON¹ STARTED TODAY FOR DELHI.
TAMILNAD CONGRESS

12

New Delhi
6 April 1946

My dear Giri,

I have received your letter of the 2nd inst. and also another one without a date addressed from New Delhi. I understand you perfectly well. I have not misunderstood your position regarding the election of Leader. Everybody is anxious to see that a proper selection is made but there seem to be enormous difficulties and the one man who could run the show with efficiency and integrity is not likely to be selected for various reasons. The Andhras have made a dead set against him. The Malabar people also seem to be

¹ Former Chairman, Calicut Municipality, President, Kerala PCC; Minister, 1946-48

opposed and Tamil Nad is divided. The Andhras are united in opposition only but are divided amongst themselves in finding a substitute. We have called some of the leading Congressmen from the three provinces and if they come, we propose to enquire and give them our advice. More than that we cannot do. There is no doubt that we are very apprehensive of the shape of things to come in the absence of a good leader. However, that cannot be helped. I am not coming to Madras at present.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. V. V. Giri, MLA
Madras

13

TELEGRAM

Madras
18 April 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

TELEGRAPHED CONGRESS PRESIDENT MUSSOORIE QUOTE MADRAS CONGRESS LEGISLATURE PARTY MET TODAY. 188 OUT OF 196 ATTENDED. YOUR MESSAGE ADVISING ELECT RAJAGOPALACHARI LEADER AND SUBSEQUENT TELEGRAMS PLACED BEFORE PARTY. AFTER FULL DISCUSSION PARTY RECORDED INABILITY TO ACCEPT YOUR ADVICE BY 148 VOTES AGAINST 38 NEUTRALS 2. MEETING ADJOURNED 4 PM 19TH FOR ELECTING LEADER UNQUOTE.

PRAKASAM MADIHAVAMENON KAMARAJ GIRI CHAIRMAN MEETING

14

TELEGRAM

Madras
19 April 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

REFERRING OUR PARTY MEETING ADJOURNED FURTHER TWO PM 20TH FOR ELECTION LEADER.

PRAKASAM KAMARAJ MADHAVAMENON GIRI

New Delhi
20 April 1946

My dear Giri,

I received your joint telegrams of the 18th and 19th inst. yesterday and this morning respectively. I had no more advice to give, as responsible people there were not in a mood to listen to our advice. Maulana Sahib has gone to Mussoorie and he may deal with your telegrams from there. All through this unfortunate controversy, I have advised consistently that the election of the leader rests with the party. We can only give advice and it is for the party to accept or reject it. If democracy chooses to go wrong, it has a right to do so. In this case, it has grievously erred in not coming to a decision long ago. I had written to all the leaders of the province to meet together and come to some unanimous decision. They failed to do so, because of cliques and parties, as also due to personal prejudices amongst themselves and there was no evidence of any wider vision for the common good of the province, much less of the country. I can understand their objection to Rajaji's leadership, but I cannot understand their failure to come to a decision in due time and thus expose the Congress organisation to the kind of attacks and criticism to which it has been subjected in [British] Parliament, the proceedings of which must have been seen by you all. This is the first instance in Congress history where responsible Congressmen have failed to respond to a reasonable appeal from the leaders. It is not Rajaji's leadership that was objected to, but what we disliked was the motives which influenced all to combine in that opposition.

Apart from the question of Rajaji's leadership, another important advice was given to those who had come here, but that has been contemptuously disregarded, for which there is no justification at all. Privately almost all of them had agreed that we were right but openly they all combined, after going there, in coming to a unanimous decision of rejecting that advice. This is indeed a very strange disclosure of mentality for which we were quite unprepared. It has given us a shock and we have great apprehensions for the future of your province, which may result

in discrediting the Congress organisation as a whole. Let us hope that our apprehensions may prove to be unjustified. Your telegrams to me were unnecessary as all of them knew all throughout that my own attitude has been to throw the responsibility on the party in the event of refusal to listen to our advice.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. V. V. Giri
Madras

16

New Delhi
20 April 1946

My dear Madhava Menon,

Your joint telegrams of the 18th and 19th were received yesterday and this morning respectively. I had no more advice to give, as you know my attitude all along has been that we do not want to impose leadership from above. The moment you decided to refuse to accept our advice, our function ended. I had all along expected that none of you were in a mood to listen to reason. Your refusal to elect Rajaji as Leader was understandable but the other advice which was given by Gandhiji and myself was in consonance with the attitude of almost all of you except one, and therefore your deliberate and unanimous decision to disregard that advice has revealed a mentality for which we were not prepared. However, we live to learn and we have known much in this unfortunate episode.

I had been pressing you all since a long time to come to a decision about the leader's election but you failed to do so and we have been discredited all over the world, as you must have noticed from the recent proceedings of the [British] Parliament on this subject. Maulana Sahib is not here and he may deal with your telegrams direct.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Madhava Menon
C/o TNCC
Madras

New Delhi
21 April 1946

My dear Madhava Menon,

I have already written to you yesterday and hence I have nothing more to add to what I have said in reply to your telegram of yesterday received this morning, except that I am thoroughly disgusted with the whole affair. It is extremely painful to see the prestige and reputation of the Congress being assailed all round by those who had made sacrifices and secured overwhelming confidence of the people. Maulana Sahib is not here and I am not in touch with him; otherwise I would have stopped this disgraceful show without a moment's delay. I have seen Shri Giri's telegram also, which is not in accord with yours. The Madras Mail and the Free Press have started a story which brings Gandhiji in this controversy in an undesirable manner regarding Shri Prakasam's affair and he has been compelled to publicly refer to his letter to him.¹ There is no wonder that there is a good deal of apprehension all round about the future of your province.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Madhava Menon
Madras

¹ With regard to a press report in which Mahatma Gandhi was reported to have stated that the Madras Congress Legislature Party was free to elect any leader it liked and he had no objection to Mr. Prakasam or anybody being elected leader. Gandhiji stated today that he had said nothing of the kind to anybody but he had written a private letter to Mr. Prakasam, which Mr. Prakasam was at liberty to publish and which should be read out to the persons concerned in case of doubt. (The Hindu, Madras, carried this report with dateline Delhi 20 April 1946.)

Mr. T. Prakasam, President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, told the API today that he had not yet received the letter from Mahatma Gandhi referred to in the news agency despatch from Delhi. (The Hindu, Madras, 22 April 1946.)

New Delhi
20 April 1946

My dear Kaleswara Rao¹,

I have received your letter of the 16th inst. Shri Prakasam's popularity in the province is well known. His sacrifices and suffering all his life and his steadfast loyalty to the Congress have earned for him his popularity, but both Gandhiji and myself feel that in his own interest he should keep out of office at this juncture. We had given our advice to those who came here also but whether this advice will be listened to or not, we expected that at least Shri Prakasam would not go against our advice. So far as the opposition to Rajaji is concerned, we knew about it and it is understandable. The election of the Leader must have now been over and let us hope that this controversy will end. People learn by experience. This is the first time in which advice from the top has been rejected lightheartedly. Future will show how wrong were those who did so. Of course if Shri Giri is elected, there can be no objection to it and we will all be happy to hear about it, but I doubt whether they will do so.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri A. Kaleswara Rao, MLA
10 Natesa Iyer St.
Madras

19

TELEGRAM

Madras
20 April 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM CONGRESS PRESIDENT QUOTE
YOUR TELEGRAM. PARTY MAY SELECT MORE THAN ONE PERSON FOR

¹ Congress leader of Andhra Pradesh

LEADERSHIP AND SEND ME FOR SELECTION OUT OF THEM. ABUL KALAM AZAD UNQUOTE. THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM IS BEING SENT BY ME TO PRESIDENT QUOTE YOUR TELEGRAM REGARDING ELECTION OF PANEL FOR LEADERSHIP WAS PLACED BEFORE TODAY'S ADJOURNED MEETING OF CONGRESS [legislature] PARTY WHEN CERTAIN POINTS WERE RAISED FOR CLARIFICATION. THE DIFFICULTIES POINTED OUT ARE FIRSTLY THAT THE PARTY CONSTITUTION REQUIRES ELECTION BY PARTY MEMBERS THEMSELVES OF ONE LEADER, SECONDLY AND MORE IMPORTANT FROM CONSTITUTIONAL POINT OF VIEW IS THAT UNDER THE INSTRUMENT OF INSTRUCTIONS TO GOVERNORS THE LEADER WHOM THE GOVERNOR INVITES TO CONSTITUTE THE MINISTRY IS ONE WHO IS ELECTED AS SUCH BY THE MAJORITY PARTY WHEREAS THE LEADER THAT YOU CONGRESS PRESIDENT WOULD FINALLY SELECT FROM OUT OF A PANEL CANNOT BE SAID TO BE THE LEADER ELECTED BY THE PARTY AS CONTEMPLATED ABOVE. HENCE THE GOVERNOR MAY NOT RECOGNISE THE PERSON TO BE SELECTED BY YOU THUS INVOLVING A GRAVE CONSTITUTIONAL TROUBLE AND FURTHER PROLONGATION OF SECTION 93 RULE AND THIRDLY SOME MEMBERS EXPRESSED THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT THAT MEMBERS ARE NOT BEING ALLOWED TO ELECT THEIR OWN LEADER THEMSELVES ESPECIALLY AFTER YOUR PRIOR DIRECTION THAT IN CASE YOUR RECOMMENDATION OF RAJAJI IS NOT ACCEPTED BY THE PARTY IT IS FREE TO ELECT A LEADER ON ITS OWN RESPONSIBILITY. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE I REQUEST YOU TO BE PLEASED TO CLARIFY WHETHER SUBMISSION OF MORE THAN ONE NAME FOR LEADERSHIP TO YOU IS STILL OBLIGATORY. PLEASE REPLY. URGENT MEETING ADJOURNED TO FOUR PM TOMORROW TWENTYFIRST UNQUOTE.

V. V. GIRI CHAIRMAN PARTY MEETING THIYAGARAYANAGAR
MADRAS

20

New Delhi
21 April 1946

My dear Giri,

I received your telegram of yesterday this morning. I have nothing to add to what I have written in my letter of yesterday, which must have reached you, except that I thoroughly disapprove of what is being done about this whole affair by both ends. Maulana Sahib is not here and I cannot come in contact with him nor can I give any instructions in this affair, as it may create further complications if I were to do so from

this place. I have received a telegram from Madhava Menon and Kamaraj today simultaneously with yours, which takes a different stand from yours. It is all a painful affair. We have been behaving like petty-minded, irresponsible people, and are influenced by party cliques and personal prejudices at a critical juncture when we should have set better examples.

I do not propose to answer any of the constitutional questions and objections raised in your telegram. The Congress has already lost its prestige in the South and it now brings the central organisation into contempt and ridicule, but as I have already stated, I do not wish to say anything more.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. V. V. Giri
Madras

21

TELEGRAM

Madras
21 April 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM SENT TO THE CONGRESS PRESIDENT QUOTE
LEGISLATURE PARTY MET AGAIN THIS AFTERNOON GIRI PRESIDING.
YOUR TELEGRAM ASKING ELECTION MORE THAN ONE FOR SELECTION
BY YOU AS LEADER READ. MAJORITY PREPARED TO ELECT PANEL AS
SUGGESTED. BUT DILATORY TACTICS RESORTED AND POINTS OF ORDER
RAISED BY ONE SMALL SECTION. PRESIDING CHAIRMAN NOT GIVING
RULING ADJOURNED THE MEETING TILL TOMORROW FOUR PM. WE
WANTED TO MOVE THIS RESOLUTION SUBQUOTE READ TELEGRAM DATED
NINETEENTH FROM THE CONGRESS PRESIDENT THAT THE PARTY MAY
SELECT MORE THAN ONE PERSON FOR LEADERSHIP AND SEND IT TO
HIM FOR SELECTION OUT OF THEM. RESOLVED TO ELECT A PANEL
OF TWO FOR LEADERSHIP AND FORWARD THE SAME BY TELEGRAM
TO THE CONGRESS PRESIDENT UNSUBQUOTE. BUT WAS NOT ALLOWED.
RESOLUTION ALSO COMMANDED MAJORITY SUPPORT. CHAIRMAN
ANNOUNCED REFERENCE TO YOU POINT OF ORDER RAISED. PLEASE
DIRECT CHAIRMAN V V GIRI THIYAGARAYANAGAR OURSELVES AND
PARTY UNQUOTE.

KAMARAJ MADHAVA MENON

22

TELEGRAM

Madras
21 April 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

TODAY'S EVENING EDITIONS OF MADRAS MAIL AND FREE PRESS HAVE PUBLISHED NEW DELHI MESSAGE THAT MAHATMA GANDHI HAS NO OBJECTION TO PRAKASAM OR ANYBODY ELSE BEING ELECTED LEADER AND THAT MADRAS LEGISLATURE CONGRESS PARTY IS FREE TO ELECT ANY LEADER IT LIKES. THIS NEWS IS GREATLY APPRECIATED AS IT PUTS AN END TO THE UNFORTUNATE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND AND LOCAL LEGISLATORS AND I HOPE YOU WILL IMPLEMENT IT IN YOUR REPLY TO TELEGRAM SENT TODAY BY GIRI. PLEASE ALLOW FREE CHOICE OF LEADERSHIP TO MADRAS LEGISLATORS AND AVOID CONSTITUTIONAL COMPLICATIONS AND FURTHER UNNECESSARY DISPUTE WITH LOCAL LEGISLATORS.

ADITYAN CENTRAL MLA

23

TELEGRAM

Madras
22 April 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai
Delhi

MANY THANKS. MEETING YOU EARLY.

PRAKASAM

24

TELEGRAM

Madras
23 April 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Delhi

GOVERNOR INVITED ME TO MEET AT 3 PM TODAY. MET HIM. HE ASKED ME TO FORM MINISTRY AND PROPOSE THE NAMES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CABINET. I REPLIED THAT I SHOULD CONSULT LEADERS OF OTHER IMPORTANT GROUPS IN THE LEGISLATURE AND CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND BEFORE I COULD GIVE THE NAMES. HE WANTED THE LIST BY SATURDAY. I ASKED HIM TO FIX MONDAY 29TH FOR PRESENTING THE LIST. HE FIXED 30TH FOR SWEARING IN OF THE MEMBERS SO THAT EXTENSION OF SEC. 93 IS AVOIDED. CONSULTING NADAR MENON VAIDYANATHAIYER AND OTHER FRIENDS TONIGHT. PLEASE WIRE ADVICE.

PRAKASAM

25

TELEGRAM

25 April 1946

Prakasam
Congress
Madras

YOUR CONFLICTING TELEGRAMS OF TWENTYSECOND AND TWENTYTHIRD RECEIVED. SINCE OUR ADVICE DELIBERATELY DISREGARDED I HAVE NO FURTHER ADVICE TO GIVE AND NO MORE REFERENCE SHOULD BE MADE HERE.

VALLABHBHAI

26

TELEGRAM

Madras
26 April 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

RECEIVED YOUR TELEGRAM DATED 25TH. I GAVE YOU NO TELEGRAM ON THE 22ND. MY TELEGRAM ON THE TWENTYTHIRD RELATED TO MY INTERVIEW WITH GOVERNOR. HOPE THIS CLEARS DOUBT.

PRAKASAM

27

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
27 April 1946

Prakasam
Congress
Madras

YOUR TELEGRAM TWENTYSIXTH STATING YOU GAVE NO TELEGRAM ON TWENTYSECOND AMAZING. QUOTING BELOW YOURS TWENTYSECOND QUOTE MANY THANKS MEETING YOU EARLY UNQUOTE.

VALLABHBHAI

28

EXTRACTS

8 Narasingapuram Street
Madras
25 April 1946

Dear Sardarji,

May I recount what happened? On the 9th night at Gandhiji's hut he talked to us generally and to Shri Prakasam in particular. On the 10th night Gandhiji particularly sent for me and Shri Kamaraj and talked to us at length. He advised us to

have Rajaji as our Leader and when we expressed our difficulty, he definitely advised us not to have Shri Prakasam, giving us his reasons and further advised us to have Dr. Pattabhi.¹ We told him, and subsequently recounted to you the next day, that Dr. Pattabhi could be got through the Party only with the co-operation of Rajaji's group there.

On the 11th evening we came to you and after waiting there for about two hours you advised us to go to Maulana Sahib to take instruction from him. At his residence on the 11th night Maulana Sahib told us that his advice is that the Madras party should take Rajaji and his team including Shri Prakasam, and he asked us to take that as his message to the party saying that that is also the advice of Bapuji and yourself. This was at variance with Gandhiji's advice the previous day to have Dr. Pattabhi as our Leader. And when Maulana Sahib told us definitely that his message that Rajaji and his old team including Shri Prakasam should be the Cabinet, had your approval and that of Gandhiji, we naturally took that as your last advice. As Maulana's telegram conveying the message to the party meeting was slightly at variance with his oral message, he definitely wired to us that his advice is to elect Rajaji as Leader and that Bapuji and yourself agree in that view. You will kindly therefore realise that contradictory advice was given to us.

As Bapu had definitely advised us against having Shri Prakasam as our Leader we tried our best with Shri Prakasam to agree to stand back. As he obstinately refused, in view of the definite advice of Bapu not to have him as our Leader, we persuaded Shri Muthuranga Mudaliar² to stand so that we may at least avoid Shri Prakasam though we could not have Dr. Pattabhi, and thus act at least up to that extent according to Bapu's advice. But the result was unexpected as Rajaji's group numbering 29 remained neutral. The Andhras, solidly 72 in number, voted for Shri Prakasam and with some stray votes he got 82, and Shri Muthuranga Mudaliar only 69, the Tamil group minus Rajaji's group and the Kerala group voting for Mudaliar. The circumstances being as stated above, I feel that we do not deserve all that you have said in your letters.

Yours sincerely,
K. Madhava Menon

¹ Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: Congress leader of Andhra; joined party in 1916; member, AICC and Congress Working Committee; Congress President, Jaipur session, 1948-50; President, All-India States Peoples' Conference 1936 and again 1946-48; member, CA, 1946-50; last assignment Governor of Madhya Pradesh

² A veteran Congress leader of Madras

New Delhi
30 April 1946

My dear Madhava Menon,

I have received your letter of 25 April. I have seen the account given by you of your party meeting in your letter.

I did not know that Rajaji's group remained neutral. But I am not surprised, because the two groups of Tamil Nad are evidently working at cross purposes and therefore neither of them was prepared to support each other's nominee. The alternative, however bad, did not, in their opinion, matter much.

As the Leader elected by the party has already formed his Cabinet, it is useless to carry on this controversy further. The expected has happened. Ever since Shri Kamaraj Nadar and you came in contact with me I have placed before you in no uncertain terms the alternative and although you had expected that there were other alternatives, my prediction has been proved to be true and you have now to face the consequence.

For the time being, we shall wait and watch. Nobody will be more glad than ourselves if the ministry brings credit to the Congress and does good service to the province. But we shall never conceal our apprehensions and we do not propose to abdicate our functions in case things go wrong. The pledge on which the candidates were selected and on the strength of which [they] were eventually returned by the electorate gives us ample authority of control but we have thought fit not to exercise it at present for various reasons, which need not be stated here.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri K. Madhava Menon
Madras

New Delhi
30 April 1946

My dear Giri,

I have your letters of the 23rd, 24th and 26th inst. I have seen Shri Prakasam's amazing interpretation of our attitude. If

that is your view also, it is unnecessary to say anything to you or to all of you, who have adopted that attitude.

We have seen the formation of the ministry in the Press and you have all decided to go your own way. It would be a fraud on the public to lead them to believe that what is being done by the party is being endorsed or acquiesced in by us. It would be also wrong to assume that we have abdicated our functions and that we will allow things to go wrong or to let the party have its own way in everything. At present we have decided to wait and watch and to allow the party to go its own way but when the limit is reached and our responsibilities are affected by any action that is being done there, we will not hesitate to take adequate action. It must not be forgotten that the Assembly members of the party have given a definite pledge individually on the strength of which they have been selected by the Board and returned by the electorate. It has already been violated to a certain extent. Perhaps its implications are not properly realised over there and we do not wish to enforce our will in the present conditions, as it is likely to be misunderstood.

You said in your letter that if I had come there, things would have taken a different turn. I have my own views on the question and I know more than you do about the inner working of the party, groups, cliques and individual ambitions very well. We hope that future working may prove us to be in the wrong and if your party and the ministry bring credit to the Congress, we shall indeed be very glad. We cannot conceal our apprehensions and therefore I have written this letter to you.

I have received your letter of the 25th inst. also. I do not attach any importance to the discrepancy or the difference between your telegram and that of Shri Madhava Menon and Kamaraj Nadar.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri V. V. Giri
Madras

Camp Chadwick,
 Summer Hill,
 Simla W
 13 May 1946

My dear Rajaji,

I have received your letter of the 6th inst. today. I have received numerous complaints about the election of delegates in Andhra and Tamil Nad. But I do not know whether anything effective can be done to check the evils referred to in your letter.

You suggest that the Working Committee should pass a resolution preventing Congress organisations from setting up candidates for election to local bodies. That can be done if a proper representation is made by some responsible Congressman. I do not want to use your letter for that purpose. We are meeting in the Working Committee on the 17th inst. If you can ask some responsible Congressman to send a representation, we can certainly adopt the course you have suggested.

It is said that Congress name is being dragged in the mud and its reputation is being jeopardised. But you know that there has been a revolt in the South and we have not thought of any plan to meet with the situation as yet. It is not an easy matter. Democratic organisations can work only with the willing co-operation of the people. It is unfortunate that there is no other personality there to assert his will and put the Congress organisation on the right path.

We are going down to Delhi tomorrow. You know the result. The conference has ended, as was expected, in failure. But the next stage will begin now and if that results in the successful formation of a good Interim Government, things may go on right path.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
 Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari
 60, Bazullullah Road
 T. Nagar
 Madras

New Delhi
17 May 1946

My dear Rajaji,

I have received a copy of your letter dated 10 May addressed to Maulana Sahib. I have already written to you suggesting that a representation to that effect may be sent by a responsible Congressman from your province to the Working Committee. I do not think that you should take the initiative in the matter as it is likely to create more ill-will against you. However, if no such representation is received, the committee may consider your letter as a representation in this matter. You have attached copies of complaints from various people about the elections but in those complaints there is no mention of any suggestion to stop putting up candidates in local bodies on the Congress ticket.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

29 May 1946

My dear Rajaji,

I have not heard from you for a long time. I hear that your son was very ill and you ran up to Salem to bring him to Madras with you for treatment. I hope he is all right now.

I am sorry I have not been able to persuade my colleagues in the Working Committee to accept your advice about elections to the local bodies on the Congress ticket in Madras. We have come back in the interval, as Mr. [M.A.] Jinnah¹ was unable to come to a decision without consulting his Council. He has called his Council's meeting on the 5th at Delhi, and probably we will have to return to Delhi about that time, when perhaps I may be able to get through your proposal in the Working Committee.

¹ President, All-India Muslim League and first Governor-General of Pakistan

I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter from Shri Kamaraj and my reply to him concerning the accounts regarding the contribution from the Centre.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

34

In Train to Courtallam
Tenkasi
Tinnevelly
5 June 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

The enclosed cutting is a report of the proceedings of a conference at which Kamaraj Nadar took a leading part.

They have adopted a resolution that the Congress should not take part in the local board elections. So he also agrees.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

PS.

I hope you will not let the British Delegation go back broken, but will somehow manage to get something concrete.

C.R.

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT

The conference passed resolutions urging temple entry for Harijans and the enforcement of the Shop Assistants' Act in the province. The conference requested the Tamil Nad Congress Committee not to set up candidates on the Congress ticket for local board elections. Government was requested to enquire into the dispute between the rival groups of workers of Papanasam Mills and take steps to end the frequent clashes between workers.

Indian Express, 3 June 1945

New Delhi
16 May 1946

My dear Giri,

I have received your letter of 13 May acknowledging receipt of my letter of 30 April. That letter was received by you on the 6th and you attribute the delay to the censor's scrutiny. I do not know whether Ministers' letters are to be censored and whether you are still living under the Advisers' regime. It is a strange thing to hear.

I am enclosing herewith a Press cutting from which I find that the Madras nominations to the Upper House contain names which are not such as could have been recommended by a Congress Ministry. I should like to know whether the nominations have been made on the recommendation of the Ministry or whether these are nominations made by the Governor disregarding the advice of the Ministry. Please send me full details about this affair.

There is much to say about what has been done by the Madras Assembly Party and the tremendous damage done to the general cause of the Congress at a critical juncture in the country's history. But I will not say anything at present.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. V. V. Giri
Madras

New Delhi
26 May 1946

My dear Giri,

I spoke to you about the letter I had written to you re: the nominations to the Legislative Council in Madras. I am awaiting your reply. You may inform your colleagues that it is a serious matter and cannot be treated lightly. The reasons for nominations made in contravention of Congress principles must be explained.

I am going to Bombay tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. V. V. Giri
Madras

37

Sudarsen Mahal
Nellore
2 May 1946

My dear Shri Sardarji,

I am aware of the circumstances under which the Congress High Command was unwilling to give any advice to the Leader of the Madras Congress Legislature Party with regard to the formation of the Madras Ministry. Yet I feel it my duty to bring the following to your notice and consideration.

I was Minister in the late Congress Ministry which resigned in October 1939 in obedience to the Congress resolution. Shri Rajagopalachari appreciated my work and testified to my honesty and efficiency both in private and in public. I had participated both in the 1940 and 1942 struggles and underwent long terms of imprisonment. I served as a member of the Andhra Provincial Parliamentary Board which functioned recently for selecting candidates to the Assembly and Council. I am not a member of the Working Committee of the Andhra PCC.

Mr. T. Prakasam excluded me from his Cabinet contrary to the usual Congress policy in other provinces where old Ministers were restored to their places.

As you are the ultimate custodian of the rights and privileges of Congress members I bring this to your notice and you may decide the matter as you deem fit.

I am sorry to trouble you on a personal matter like this when you [are] in the midst of momentous discussions. But a matter of policy is involved in the issue raised.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
B. Gopala Reddi

Camp Chadwick
Simla W
8 May 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 2nd inst. You know that the Congress Assembly Party in the Madras Presidency has deliberately disregarded our advice and those who have done so have, in fact, violated the spirit of the pledge given by them at the time of selection as Congress candidates. The other provinces have all accepted our advice and observed Congress discipline. Andhra province has combined and thought fit to challenge the authority of the Centre. Under the circumstances we have decided to wait for some time and see how they intend to maintain their relation with the Central organisation.

We do not propose to advise them any more or interfere in their affairs for some time. If the Ministry brings credit to the Congress organisation, nobody will be more glad than ourselves. But if things go wrong and their working brings discredit to the Congress, we shall not fail to take strong action. For the present, I can only say that I can do nothing to help you for the wrong done to you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri B. Gopala Reddi
Nellore

Camp Chadwick
Simla W
9 May 1946

My dear Kaleswara Rao,

I have received your letter of the 5th inst. The Andhra members of the Assembly have thought fit to violate the spirit of the pledge they had given at the time of selection as Congress

candidates by completely ignoring our advice and decided to go their own way in order to see that their own man may become the Premier. It is unfortunate that responsible people in Andhra have winked at a highly undesirable incident and forced the Congress Working Committee to pass a resolution on the subject. It is surprising that Gandhiji's advice in this matter was also disregarded. We have therefore decided to allow them to do whatever they like at present. They have no doubt done great injury to the Congress organisation as a whole and set up a precedent for which they will in future repent.

It is taken for granted that the group which has decided to ignore our advice will try to consolidate its position by giving offices to those who would support them. To be out of office is better than to accept office under such circumstances.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri A. Kaleswara Rao, MLA
Bezwada

40

30 May 1946

My dear Kaleswara Rao,

I have received your letter of the 28th inst. If the 109 members who voted for the Speaker's election in defeating the Ministry's nominee are united on a common policy, it appears clear that they would be able to replace the present Ministry but if it was only an alliance for a single purpose in favour of a particular candidate for Speakership, it is of no value. The Ministry would not be affected by such shocks unless there is a plan behind it.

I have seen that Shri Varadachari's resolution was ruled out. But if there is a majority behind Shri Varadachari, the ruling itself will have to be ruled out and the question will have to be seriously considered by the authority responsible for the ruling.

I am surprised to see that nominations to the Upper House have been made contrary to the policy and principles of the Congress. I have asked Shri Giri to give me full details about it, but I have not yet received a reply. It is, in my opinion, a serious matter and the party should have considered this matter carefully. I do not understand why title-holders have been nominated nor do

I understand why, if my information is correct, a gentleman who was removed from the Servants of India Society for defalcation is accepted as Congress nominee. There is a lady who has been nominated, about whom I have heard complaints which require consideration. But I am surprised that no protest has been raised in the party. As I have no detailed information about these nominations, I am awaiting a report. If you have got any, you may also send it to me.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri A. Kaleswara Rao, MLA
Madras

41

6 June 1946

My dear Giri,

It is very strange that in the matter of the nominations that have been made by the Madras Government to the Legislative Council, I have not been able to obtain information asked for by me in my letter of 16 May. It should not be difficult to give me this information forthwith. The simple question is whether these nominations have been made by the Prime Minister or by him in consultation with the Ministry or whether they have been made by the Governor ignoring the Ministry altogether or whether he has done so rejecting the recommendations of the Ministry. This is not a matter which can be lightly treated. It involves serious principles and these nominations are entirely at variance with the policy of the Congress. It is therefore necessary that you should give me this information before we consider this question in the Working Committee at Delhi. You must have asked the Prime Minister about it and I do not see why there should be so much delay in sending me the information. I am going to Delhi tomorrow and I shall await your reply by return of post.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. V. V. Giri
Madras

PS.

I have been informed that in the party meeting Shri Prakasam was asked about this [and he said] that they were the Governor's

choice and he had no power in this matter. I wish to know whether this is true. I hesitate to believe this story, as you told me at Delhi when we met on the last occasion that the Governor had nothing to do with these nominations and he was not interested at all.

42

Camp Fort St. George
5 June 1946

My dear Chief,

On the matter of nominations, the Prime Minister made a statement in this behalf before an unofficial meeting of the Ministers today.

He stated that except in the case of one of the nominated members, viz., Mr. P. R. K. Sarma, the rest were all appointed by the Governor himself and that he was not consulted with regard to them and that what actually took place was as follows. The previous Governor had discussed some of the names with the Prime Minister before he left and said that the matter was not closed; but soon after that Governor left and the new Governor came in, the latter announced the nominations, obviously as having been made by his predecessor. This was done without further consultation with the Prime Minister and the announcement was made when he was on tour at Bezwada.

Yours sincerely,
V. V. Giri

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

43

New Delhi
12 June 1946

My dear Giri,

I have received your letter of the 5th inst. It is surprising that all nominations were made by the Governor and the Prime Minister was not consulted at all. There is a lacuna in your letter explaining this matter. The new Governor, according to your letter, announced the nominations obviously as having been

made by his predecessor without any further consultation with the Prime Minister. But this does not explain whether any consultation was necessary. As the new Governor was led to believe that all necessary consultation was completed by his predecessor and as the formal announcement was to be made by him, he completed the formality by making the announcement. To me, all this seems to be thoroughly unsatisfactory and I am surprised that such important questions have been handled in this manner. I do not know whether the party was satisfied with this explanation but this has certainly discredited the Congress organisation. It seems nothing would have been known about this matter if I had not asked for the information.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. V. V. Giri
Madras

44

New Delhi
12 June 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of Shri Giri's letter dated 5th inst. [See No. 42], from which it seems that the nominations in Madras to the Upper House were made by the new Governor without consulting you. The letter does not explain whether any consultation was necessary or whether the necessary consultations were finished in the previous Governor's time. In any case, I cannot understand how all these nominations could be made without your direct or indirect consent and if they were made by the Governor ignoring you, why should you have allowed such a thing to happen. This is the first assault on the constitutional rights and privileges of the Ministry and you should have resisted this encroachment upon your rights or the breach of understanding by which this privilege was secured when we agreed to form the ministries on the previous occasion. Please let me know whether consultation with you by the previous Governor on this matter was completed and whether you had given anything in writing stating your views for or against these nominations and whether you have recorded any protest against the

announcement. I wish to place this matter before the Working Committee and therefore please submit your report fully.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. T. Prakasam
Prime Minister
Madras

45

Camp Sardar Griha
Bombay 2
7 July 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of yesterday together with the two enclosures was delivered to me yesterday in the meeting hall. What happened with regard to the nominations to the Legislative Council in Madras was this.

I met the Governor at the appointed time and had a talk with him on some other matters. After that was over, he referred to the question of nominations to the Council and he took out a paper from his pocket on which the names of seven persons had been already written. Taking the paper out he said that he would be proposing seven names and I might propose two. He said at the very outset that the Congress party had got such a big majority and he would in his discretion like to propose seven out of the nine names with a view to give representation to some non-Congress persons or interests. He read out the seven names one after another and asked me to propose the remaining two names. Then I suggested the name of P. R. K. Sarma. When I was about to suggest the other name, he said he was not closing the subject then and that we might consider the matter later on another occasion. All these were done in a few minutes.

I did not give anything in writing stating my views on the names read out by him at the time. My belief was, according to the statement made by the Governor, that we would meet again to continue our discussion on the matter. There was no occasion for recording any protest against his announcement. He did not repudiate the convention. On the other hand he said, as the matter was one entirely in his discretion, he would propose seven names and that I might propose two. Because he said the matter

was not closed then and that we would meet again to continue our discussion, there was no need or occasion to protest. The matter did not come up again before the old Governor before he left or before the new Governor within a few days after he assumed office. A few days later I left for Bezwada just for a day to hand over charge of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee presidency. While I was in Bezwada some one brought a newspaper and showed to me the news announcing the eight names for the Upper House. After I returned to Madras on the third day I told the new Governor what had happened. As the names had already been announced and he was not a party to what had happened before he came, nothing could be done by him or even by me.

Some one in the Assembly raised a question asking who made the nominations. The Secretariat office suggested a reply to disallow the question on the ground that it was a matter entirely in the discretion of the Governor. On that file I wrote that the question should not be disallowed because of the convention entered into in 1937 before we accepted office. Then I wrote on the file as a reply to the question what I had stated above.

This is the history of the nominations about which you wanted information.

Yours sincerely,
T. Prakasam

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

46

10 July 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I have received your letter of the 7th inst.

The whole matter seems to me to be very badly handled. When the Governor said that he would, in his discretion, like to propose seven out of the nine names, with a view to give representation to non-Congress persons, you should have protested immediately and asserted your claim to give advice regarding nominations, which he was bound to accept, according to the convention. The Governor has no right to provide for representation to non-Congress persons. He has nothing to do with political parties. He is entitled to see that minority interests are represented, but to meddle with political interests and

parties is beyond his scope. Apart from that, when India is soon going to be free, the Governor has to exercise his own discretion consistent with the coming freedom. When he read out seven names, then you should have said that you were going to propose all the names and that you were not going to accept his nominations. When you suggested the name of Shri P. R. K. Sarma, he naturally concluded that you have accepted his nominations, because he asked you to suggest only two names, after reading the names of his 7 nominees. When the names were read out to you, you must have seen that there were names of persons, who can never be accepted by the Congress and it was for you to raise your objection at that time. It was all a sad business and we can do nothing in the matter now, as you say.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. T. Prakasam
Prime Minister
Madras

47

Madras
3 July 1946

My dear Chief,

Mr. N. M. Joshi¹ has written to me expressing his desire to stand for the Constituent Assembly. I am sure you have known him for a sufficiently long time. His capacity and sincerity of purpose are beyond question, and his honesty in the cause of workers is appreciated throughout the country. I shall feel very happy if something can be done in this matter.

With kindest regards,

Yours very sincerely,
V. V. Giri

Sjt. Vallabhbhai Patel
C/o Congress House
Bombay

¹Secretary, Bombay Social Service League; member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1920-45; attended RTC, 1931-32; twice elected member of governing body of ILO, Geneva; awarded CIE in 1921 but declined

7 July 1946

My dear Giri,

I have received your letter of the 3rd inst. I know Shri N. M. Joshi since many years. He has done very good service to the cause of labour and the country in his own way. But I do not think the Congress can take the risk of taking him in the Constituent Assembly. You know he is an open advocate of Pakistan, which is a matter of vital principle with the Congress. He has always advocated acceptance of all the claims of the Muslim League without any question. He is able to accommodate himself with the Communists or perhaps he is a Communist, and therefore he had to leave the Servants of India Society. Amongst the Communists also there are many able men but a golden knife cannot be used for committing suicide.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. V. V. Giri
Madras

EXTRACTS

Bezwada
[Undated]

My dear Sardarji,

As you know, I was elected as the President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee while I was in England. I find that there was a keen contest between the partisans of Dr. Pattabhi who had been in office and the others, and the former were defeated by a heavy majority.

They all feel that Dr. Pattabhi has developed settled prejudices against them and their co-workers. They are afraid that his advice to you and the Congress Parliamentary Board and the WC [Working Committee] regarding the PCC's work and our WC's

recommendations, is likely to be very much coloured by his unhappy feelings towards them.

As you know, I have already informed you how Dr. Pattabhi and his friends had treated our friends during the selection time for the last Assembly general elections.

I have persuaded not to insist upon placing it on record immediately but to give me the opportunity to consult you in private and in advance and obtain your wise counsel.

As you must be knowing by now, I am anxious to work in close co-operation with you and under your guidance and thus strengthen the work which is close to Mahatmaji's heart.

Yours affectionately,
N. G. Ranga¹

ENCLOSURE
DRAFT RESOLUTION

"This committee regrets to have to state to the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress and the Central Parliamentary Board that Dr. Pattabhi is felt to be not in a proper position to discuss and advise upon our provincial recommendations to the Central Parliamentary Board in view of his strong prejudices against the overwhelming majority of the members of the PCC by whom the present WC was elected after defeating those who claimed to be his nominees."

50

6 July 1946

My dear Ranga,

I have your registered letter without date together with its accompaniments. This kind of resolution does not reflect any credit to you or to your provincial organisation. As you have asked for my advice, I would advise you to withdraw the letter. Today is perhaps the last day of the Working Committee. There will be fresh nominations and at the fag end of its existence to pass such a resolution against a member of your own province would do more harm than good. You have now been in the Congress

¹ Started career as Professor of Economics in Madras; President, All India Kisan Sabha; President; Andhra PCC; member, Congress Parliamentary Party; founder-President Swatantra Party

organisation for several years enjoying a high position and status and you must learn to act with greater responsibility. As president of the provincial organisation you may be considered even fit to be a member of the Working Committee. In that case how would you like to have such a resolution passed against you? We must learn to be more charitable and to tolerate the difference of opinions of our colleagues.

Your recommendation about the by-election was too late. There was hardly any time left for appeals and therefore we had received advance appeals in anticipation of your recommendation. As there was very little time left, we sanctioned the nomination of Shri Nathumi Reddy early in the morning today and when I was in the Working Committee your note was received stating that you wanted to see me. I came home at about 12 o'clock. The matter was disposed of before you could see me, but it was your own fault, as your recommendation ought to have been sent much earlier.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Prof. N. G. Ranga, MLA (Central)
President, Andhra PCC
Camp Bombay

51

TELEGRAM

Madras
3 July 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

YOUR LETTER DATED 21 JUNE WAS DELIVERED ONLY YESTERDAY. JUNE TWELFTH LETTER NOT RECEIVED. MAKING ENQUIRIES. REACTION ON TIMES COMMENT IS THAT COMMENTATOR WAS ILL INFORMED. REST IN PERSON. STARTING TOMORROW.

T. PRAKASAM

Bombay
6 July 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I have received your telegram of the 3rd inst. and a copy of your personal assistant's letter to the Postmaster General of the same date. It is a surprise to me that the letter was mis-carried and has not yet been traced. This is the first time that my letter is missing. On the same day, I wrote a letter to Shri Giri on the same subject, which appears to have been duly received by him. I am enclosing herewith a copy of the original letter [See No. 43].

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. T. Prakasam
Prime Minister of Madras
Bombay

EXTRACT

22 Bandla Venugopal
Naidu Street
Madras
4 July 1946

Dear Sardarji,

There is the issue of total prohibition. You remember that Madras was the first province which, on the eve of the resignation of the last Congress Ministry, completed new taxation proposals and actually made them into law for the very purpose of meeting the deficit that prohibition would leave. The sales tax, the tobacco and entertainment taxes which now yield Rs. 9 crores in all were intended for this very purpose. The present Government would be guilty of a breach of faith if it diverted the proceeds of these taxes from their main purpose.

Yours sincerely,
N. S. Varadachari

10 July 1946

My dear Varadachari,

I have received your letter of the 4th inst. I am aware that the affairs in Madras are in a hopeless mess but I am not clear as to what could be done to improve matters. If any action is taken against the Madras Ministry, there is a danger of causing injury to the general cause of the Congress and if no action is taken, there is also a serious risk of the Congress being discredited. I am seriously thinking about it.

You must have known that Rajaji has been reinstalled in the Working Committee. Unfortunately his contribution to the present position in Madras is not small and he alone can restore the old moral position of the province. I see no other person there who can boldly come forward with confidence to take up the case. It cannot be done by comparatively smaller men. Rajaji can suggest what action would improve matters. You may therefore meet him and discuss with him the whole thing. I expect he will put his heart into it and suggest remedies.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri N. S. Varadachari, MLA
Madras

Madras
14 August 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am glad to say that my son Ramu is better although his condition is such that at any time the crisis may develop again.

I had a talk with Sidhwa¹ on the way in the plane. He is also of opinion that Jamshed Mehta² is not good. He would

¹R. K. Sidhwa: Congressman of Sind; member of Provincial Legislative Assembly and later of Union Parliament

²President, Municipal Committee of Karachi

certainly prefer [C. H.] Bhabha.¹ All reports tend to this opinion.

I have received a letter from Sir Stafford Cripps² from which I quote below a relevant passage:

“I have just had the news of Jinnah's speech and action and I hope that his 'bark will prove worse than his bite.' Whether we shall now get the Constituent Assembly going or not I don't know, but I very much hope so and I trust his withdrawal, if it takes place, will not lead to any stopping of the work by others. I still hope of course that the Muslims may join in when it comes to the tune.”

You will see from the above that he at least envisages our going on with the Constituent Assembly in spite of any non-cooperation of certain sections leaving it open to these sections to join it at any time and move for reconsideration.

Sir Stafford promises to be back at his desk after a month's rest.

If possible you will arrange to let me know immediately when final decisions as to personnel are reached.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

56

Madras
15 August 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

If Maulana does not agree, then I feel on further thought [that] Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan³ as a sturdy and straight representative of the NWFP would be the best choice for that place. From the point of view of world effect, this would be splendid and his

¹ Minister in Nehru Cabinet 1946-48

² MP (Lab) for Bristol East; Lord Privy Seal and Leader of House of Commons, February 1942, known for Cripps proposals in 1942 and as member, Cabinet Mission, 1946

³ Better known as 'Frontier Gandhi'; noted Congress leader and organiser of Khudai Khidmatgars; Member Congress Working Committee; represented Congress in negotiations with Cabinet Mission in 1946; member Constituent Assembly; agitated for establishment of Paktoonistan for which he was jailed in Pakistan; has been in self-imposed exile in Kabul for many years; visited India in 1969 and received Nehru Award

English does not matter. A good private secretary can function, and such business as we entrust to him can be done that way.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

57

Madras
15 August 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Perhaps you may be able to solve the mystery in the enclosed cutting [not available]. Prakasam's men are writing in the Press here vaguely that some appreciation or congratulations have come from the Congress President to the Prime Minister of Madras. But I cannot get any definite information.

What is this stunt about the age qualification for presiding over the first business of the Constituent Assembly? Maybe Prakasam [is] the oldest man available!

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

58

New Delhi
21 August 1946

My dear Rajaji,

I have received your three letters of the 15th and one of the previous date. I am glad Ramu is out of danger and is improving. Of course, he is of delicate health and will require careful nursing.

As usual, we are proceeding in a slow and unbusinesslike manner. We should have finished our work much earlier, but you know some of our colleagues. We hope to finish our business today. Rajen Babu¹ is leaving for Pilani this afternoon.

¹ Dr. Rajendra Prasad; Congress leader from Bihar; close associate of Gandhi; lawyer of Patna High Court when he joined Gandhi's satyagraha against British indigo planters in Champaran district, Bihar, 1917; twice President of Indian National Congress; Minister for Food and Agriculture, Interim Government and in first Nehru Government after Independence; Chairman, Indian Constituent Assembly; first President of Indian Republic, 1950-62

The Muslim League in Calcutta has begun direct action with a vengeance. They have discredited themselves and they must be made to pay for this senseless butchery. A government cannot be allowed to behave like this.

Sir Stafford told me when he was here that if law and order is not maintained properly in Bengal at the very first sight of trouble, there will be Section 93. There has been much more than trouble. There is a complete breakdown of safety and order but there is nobody responsible to check the thing. However, this will be a good lesson for the League, because I hear that the proportion of Muslims who have suffered death is much larger.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

59

16 August 1946

My dear Sir C. R. Reddy¹,

I have to thank you for your letter of the 3rd inst. which was received by me on the 10th. Also the enclosed article of the same date has been received.

Since the date on which you sent your letter and article, there have been considerable changes. The Congress President has been invited to form the Interim Government and for the first time, the British Government have [shown] the Muslim League its proper place. They have thus given proof of their bona fides and it is now for us to make or mar the future of India.

You do not agree with my defence of Pandit Nehru. But you will please appreciate the fact that in defending him, I am defending the organisation of which I am a loyal and humble soldier. You must have seen the resolution which the Working Committee has passed at Wardha and I think you will agree that our President has shown great statesmanship and risen to the occasion in drafting this resolution. If he had erred on a previous occasion on this subject, he had made ample amends. To err is human, but to accept one's error is something much greater.

¹ Director of Education, Mysore; Vice-Chancellor, Andhra University, 1926-30; MLC (Madras), 1921-26; again elected 1936; organiser of United Nationalist Party

I am glad you appreciate my attitude towards the Goa movement but your comparison about Kashmir is out of place. Goa today is a foreign sovereign State. Kashmir is a part of the British Indian Empire and the Maharaja is an Indian. Pandit Nehru has not started the movement in Kashmir and he wanted to go there to defend his comrade who was being tried in his capacity as President of the All-India States Peoples' Conference. The Congress as an organisation has kept out of this movement in Kashmir. We have managed to ease the situation by calling him back from Kashmir and arranging to send him there again to fulfil his mission with the permission of the State. We hope to settle this question constitutionally and peacefully by negotiations. It is difficult to avoid sympathising with our people in the States, whether they be in Kashmir or Hyderabad or at any other place, when a struggle is started by them on their own to improve their lot, which is indeed extremely miserable.

The non-co-operation of the Muslim League has commenced and they are observing this day as their 'Direct Action Day'. The Congress, claiming to represent the vast majority of the people of India, cannot afford to be weak or to fail to shoulder the responsibility of taking charge of the Government of the country, in spite of all difficulties that may have to be faced. If the British Government and the Congress play the game well, I have no doubt that we shall see India free sooner than many people imagine and neither the League nor any other group of people or interests, however strong or powerful, will be able to stop it.

I thank you for your good wishes.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sir C. R. Reddy Kt.
Padma Prabhasa
Chittoor

2 October 1946

My dear Jawaharlal Nehru,

Mr. Prakasam's letter of 27 August addressed to you [See enclosure I] has been received by me this morning, as it must have been forwarded under your instructions. I have sent him a

reply today of which I am enclosing a copy for your information [See enclosure II].

Yours sincerely,
V. J. Patel

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru
Vice-President
Interim Government

ENCLOSURE I

Fort St. George
Madras
27 August 1946

My dear Friend,

Allow me to congratulate you on the formation of the Interim Government with you at its head. Thanks for your letter dated 19-8-'46 marked 'personal'. I did not give your previous circular letter to anyone for publication. I have never been in the habit of using any letter addressed to me personal or otherwise, for advertising myself or recovering supposed lost reputation with the High Command, or anybody. It is not known from which paper the cutting you sent had been taken. It does not look like a paper from Madras province. Until you sent it, I never knew anything of it. In support of my statement, I enclose herewith a cutting from the local paper, The Hindu, regarding what happened on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. . . . I trust you would see through the truth of the contents of the paper cutting you sent. It was only when a false statement was made on the floor of the Assembly that I came to know of it and I contradicted it straightaway. I request you to read the paper cutting herein enclosed. You have said that several complaints have been received and that they have been referred to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. It is but proper that you should do so. During the last several months of internal political struggle in Madras province, there had been several complaints and counter-complaints and also several journeys on the aeroplanes on the part of some friends. I need not deal with them so long as they have not been referred to me. I feel it my duty to warn you not to rely upon anonymous and pseudonymous writers.

I don't remember what letters of Sardar Vallabhbhai to me remain unanswered. The last letter related to the nominations to the Upper House. You say in your letter that the matter relating to nominations to the Upper House in Madras seemed to you extraordinary. It is no wonder when what happened was extraordinary and it struck me so as well. But that is the truth. The only point sought to be made out in that connection against what I stated was

that I did not jump up immediately and record my protest. According to me the occasion for protest or arguing on the convention did not arise. The then Governor did not deny the convention altogether, as was done by some of the Governors recently in other provinces. The Bihar Governor, according to the Press report of the proceedings and questions and answers by the Premier in the Bihar Legislative Assembly, made all the nominations to the Upper House, without even informing the Prime Minister. A similar thing with the Bombay Governor as well. But here in Madras, the Governor, without repudiating the convention, said that he would nominate some and that I might nominate the others. At this stage, I would like to know whether any action has been taken against the Governors of Bombay and Bihar or other Governors who had repudiated the convention altogether. I trust you would agree with me that I should have this information for my future guidance.

Referring to our Khadi scheme you have written that it is "odd." It is surprising that even you should write like that without verifying facts. When comments are made on facts that do not exist, even in law, it does not come under "fair comment." You have been misled. May I request you to let me know the name of your informant? This is with reference to what you have said about a wholesale contract for the manufacture of charkhas being given to a single individual. Our Khadi scheme has not become final yet. No order for charkhas has been placed with one or more persons. All that our Provincial Textile Commissioner did was to make enquiries in different districts in Andhra, Tamil Nad, and in Malabar as to whether people would supply charkhas if orders are placed with them. It did not go beyond this and no order, whether big or small, has yet been placed with anyone. We have sent our Provincial Textile Commissioner, Mr. Venkateswaran, I.C.S., and Shri T. V. Raghava Rao, Asst. Textile Commissioner (Khadi) to Sevagram on the invitation of Shri Shrikrishnadas Jajujee, to whom as also Mahatmaji our scheme has been submitted. A sample charkha has been taken by them for inspection and approval at Sevagram. You can see from these facts that the man who gave you the information mentioned by you in your letter is not speaking the truth at all. In this connection I may point out that the gentleman who told Sardar Vallabhbhai that all the nominations for the Upper House in Madras were made by me alone, also spoke anything but the truth. Sardarji was good enough to give the name of the gentleman concerned to my friend V. V. Giri. Interesting correspondence passed between Sardarji and Giri at a time when Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was saying, even to outsiders, that he and the Congress High Command were non-co-operating with the Madras Government and the same thing was being published in the Press also.

I have been always very anxious to keep in touch with the Parliamentary Committee and the AICC office to get as much help from them as possible and I shall be doing it always.

Lastly, with regard to the labour legislation and labour policy, Shri V. V. Giri is addressing you separately. I am also addressing Sardar Vallabh-bhai today and a copy of my letter to him is herein enclosed.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
T. Prakasam

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

PS.

On the question of 'convention' I have recently received a letter from our present Governor, in which he wanted me to explain the 'convention' with reference to any nomination to the Upper House. I shall be writing to you about this in detail later.

T. Prakasam

[CUTTING FROM THE HINDU DATED 21 AUGUST 1949]

MINISTRY AND THE CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND

Resuming his speech after luncheon interval, Mr. Abdul Salaam said the Ministry was working under the direction of the Congress High Command and very recently Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru appeared to have written to the Prime Minister saying that the Ministry of Information should be so organised as to effectively propagate the Congress ideology. He did not know whether the provincial funds could be used for spreading the Congress ideology.

The Prime Minister: The Hon. Member must take care and make sure of the facts before he speaks. What he has stated is not a fact.

Mr. Abdul Salaam: I depend on Press reports.

The Prime Minister: Newspaper reports should not be taken as true.

Referring to the work of the Minister for Information, the Prime Minister said that when that office was properly equipped and the work started, the House would begin to realise that it was a department most serviceable to all members of the House and people outside. One Hon. Member was referring to a letter received from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The Prime Minister did not know who gave information about that letter to the member. When a representative of the Government gave information, there would be certain limitations. But Pressmen tried to gather information from here, there and everywhere. Members should not rush to conclusions from what appeared in the Press. Even Cabinet proceedings appeared in the Press and appeared in such a hopeless manner that some of them (Ministers) got into trouble. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was not the man to write in the manner suggested by the Hon. Member. That was why he (Prime Minister) had to contradict the Hon.

Member then and there. In conclusion the Prime Minister hoped that the cut motion would be withdrawn.

ENCLOSURE II

2 October 1946

My dear Prakasam,

Your letter of 27 August addressed to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has just been forwarded to me. I wish it had been received earlier, at any rate before you left Delhi, in which case I would have talked to you about certain matters contained in that letter.

With reference to para 2 of your letter, you know that my letter of enquiry from you about the manner in which the nominations in the Upper House in Madras were made remained unanswered for a long time.

There is apparent contradiction in your position with regard to these nominations. You seem to justify your position on the ground that similar things were done in Bihar and Bombay, and at the same time you admit that what happened was extraordinary and it also struck you so as well. Let me remove your ignorance so far as Bombay is concerned. There was difference of opinion between the Governor and the Bombay Ministry on this question, but eventually the Governor accepted the nominations of the Bombay Ministry. In Bihar evidently your precedent was followed, but apart from the question of nominations made by the Governor without reference to the Ministry or against the expressed will of the Ministry, the nominations in Madras were highly objectionable on other grounds, and it cannot be disputed that the Madras Ministry has shown unpardonable weakness in this matter.

You know very well that we have taken no interest in the affairs of the Madras Ministry as our non-co-operation has been entirely due to your deliberate refusal to be guided by us and also your assertions in private and public in so far as the Parliamentary Board was concerned were not in accordance with facts. My correspondence with Mr. Giri was purely in the nature of an enquiry about the nominations which cannot in any way be interpreted as co-operation, and I am surprised that you find that correspondence interesting and perhaps inconsistent with our attitude of non-co-operation.

I regret I cannot accept your statement that you have always been very anxious to keep in touch with the Parliamentary Committee. As you have not done so from the time you assumed office as Prime Minister, we have neither received any report of the working of your Ministry, nor have we been informed of anything that is happening there.

There have been comments in the past in the Times of India and other responsible Press about your keeping almost all the important portfolios with

you. These cuttings were sent to you, but no reply was forthcoming. As we have seen your attitude from the beginning, we have not pressed further in this matter, but if things continue to be the same and complaints continue to pour in regarding the working of the Ministry from responsible quarters, we cannot afford to remain indifferent altogether.

Yours sincerely,
V. J. Patel

The Hon'ble T. Prakasam
Premier
Madras

61

Fort St. George
Madras
29 October 1946

My dear Vallabhbai,

I very much wished to meet you again before leaving Delhi, but it was not possible. I congratulate you once again for the way in which you have conducted the proceedings of the conference.

I thought the League friends who entered the Interim Government will act bona fide and accept joint responsibility. But they have proved their bankruptcy. Still heavy responsibility has fallen upon you, Panditji and all others to take the League friends slowly towards joint responsibility. The little that happened in the Central Assembly the other day has convinced me that you will manage it with all the skill and patience that one in your position can command. The present situation is the most critical one in our struggle; but I have no doubt that you will be able to solve it ere long.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
T. Prakasam

The Hon'ble Shri Sardar Vallabhbai Patel
Member for Home Department
New Delhi

New Delhi
5 November 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I thank you for your letter of 29 October 1946.

We are now working out the details of the Central Services scheme and we hope to finish it soon.

The communal conditions in the country have taken a serious turn. The people in Bihar have retaliated and the Muslims there are meeting with almost the same fate as the Hindus of Eastern Bengal. Congressmen have lost their self-control for the time being.

Regarding the internal working of the Cabinet, we hope to evolve joint responsibility, and perhaps we may succeed without much difficulty. But the outside troubles give us no peace. Let us hope that things will straighten out in the end.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. T. Prakasam
Prime Minister
Madras

New Delhi
11 November 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I am enclosing a copy of a confidential letter received by me and my reply thereto for your information.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. T. Prakasam
Madras

ENCLOSURE I

Gulaby
P. O. Teynampet
(Adyar)
Madras
3 November 1946

Dear Sardar,

I am thankful to you for having extended to me Congress support at the time of the elections to the Madras Legislature held in April last. From the experience that I have had since my entry into the Council I find that there are various difficulties in the way of my doing any useful work within the limitations that prevail there. Apart from this, I have been ill for some time past and have been advised complete rest for some time by my doctor. But while I continue as a member, I feel that I cannot avoid the strain and worry which are incidental to my work as such. I regret to have to say that whatever may be the ultimate fate of the zamindars, they like any other class of citizens are entitled to represent their case to the ministers concerned; but when not only opportunity but even the common courtesies of life are denied to them and language is employed which is harsh and insulting, you will agree that there is no alternative for me, as a man of self-respect, but to resign from the seat which you were so good as to help me to obtain.

With respects,

Yours sincerely,
R. K. M. Surya Rao
(Maharaja of Pithapuram)

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE II

New Delhi
11 November 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 3rd instant.

The policy of the Congress about the zamindari system has been clearly laid down in the Congress manifesto, and therefore you are supposed to be

aware of what the Congress Assembly Party's position would be in the provinces. I do not see why you should be disturbed if this policy is being executed. If there is any change from the policy laid down in the manifesto, you are entitled to appeal to the higher authorities in the Congress, but there would be no occasion for your resignation on this account.

You are entitled to make any representation you like if there is any variation from that policy. In any case you are entitled to all the courtesy that may be due to a colleague, and I would be sorry to find that improper or harsh language which would hurt your self-respect would be used by any responsible Minister in your province in your attempt to represent your case before them.

If, in spite of this, you find it inconvenient to stay in the Assembly and if you propose to resign, you should have full liberty to do so.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sri Raja Rao Venkata Kumara
Mahipati Suryarao Bahadur
Maharajah of Pithapuram
Madras

64

Fort St. George
16 November 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Many thanks for your letter dated 11th instant together with the enclosures relating to proposed resignation of the Maharaja of Pithapuram from the Assembly. No Minister ever used any harsh language to any of the Zamindars nor any discourtesy was shown to any of them at any time. Every time they wanted to see and make representations, that was readily complied with by me and the other Ministers. I am much obliged to you for the decision communicated by you to the Raja Sahib.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
T. Prakasam

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

Andhra Insurance Building
Thambu Chetty Street
Madras
7 December 1946

My dear Sardar,

On the eve of the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, I think it is my duty to say that it is my view that the Indian Christian community should not ask for separate electorates or even joint electorates with reservation but ought to sink its identity with the general electorate. My opinion, so far as I know the mind of Indian Christians, is shared by a very large section of the community, particularly by the younger members of the community. I mentioned this at a public meeting to felicitate one of your representatives to the Constituent Assembly and enclosed is a cutting from the Hindu of Madras dated the 5th instant under the heading "Separate electorates not wanted." The heading is taken from my speech.

Yours sincerely,
V. K. John

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Home Member
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACTS

[Cutting from 'The Hindu, Madras]

5 December 1946

At a meeting of the Indian Christian Association and the Catholic Indian Association held at the Memorial Hall, P.T., to congratulate Rev. Fr. Jerome D'Souza on his election to the Constituent Assembly, speeches were made stressing that the Indian Christians should strive to bring about communal harmony in the country.

Mr. V. K. John said that the Indian Christian community should never cast even a shadow between the country and its freedom. There were no

large conflicts between the interests of the community and the interests of the nation, but if there was any he was sure that all would like that the communal interest would be subordinated to the national interest.

He believed that they must take a long-range view of the problem and even if power was transferred to a major community, the minority rights would be guaranteed in the interests of the majority community itself. The speaker was confident that when such questions were being discussed at the Constituent Assembly Father D'Souza would represent the correct view. The Christians did not want either separate electorates or reservation of seats with joint electorate.

66

New Delhi
16 December 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 7th instant along with its enclosures.

It is clear that the Christian community on the whole is in favour of joint electorate, and the younger members of the community are more in tune with the changing conditions in the country and the world. After all the change of faith is a matter of one's conscience, and it has nothing to do with the political or economic condition of the country. Separate electorate given to the Muslims has done irreparable damage to the cause of India: this was done deliberately as a policy of divide-and-rule, and we are paying dearly the price for this act of mischief. Let us hope that all communities will realise in course of time that it is more in the interest of the country and of the community as a whole to fall in line with the general national regeneration of the country as a whole.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. V. K. John, MLC
Barrister-at-Law
Madras

New Delhi
16 December 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a letter which I have received from the secretary of the Young Men's Muslim Association, Baliapatam. If separate electorates are to be introduced in place of joint electorates, it would be a misfortune, particularly if such a change is introduced by the Congress Ministry.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. T. Prakasam
Prime Minister
Madras

ENCLOSURE

The Young Men's Muslim Association
Baliapatam
4 December 1946

Sir,

I beg to communicate to you the following resolution unanimously adopted at the general body meeting of the above-said Young Men's Muslim Association held on 29 November 1946 under the presidentship of Jenab T. B. Kunja Sahib at Baliapatam, for favour of your kind consideration and favourable disposal. I have been authorised by the meeting to communicate the resolution to you.

Resolution: "There is a report in some papers that the Madras Ministry proposes to conduct the ensuing elections to local boards and municipal councils on the lines of separate electorates in place of joint electorates with reservation of seats. If this is a fact, and likely to mature, then it will be a very painful affair to the nationalist Muslims and this meeting of the Muslim youths is of opinion that such a proposal would be detrimental to the best interests of the country as a whole and of Hindu-Muslim unity, as may be known to the present Ministers themselves, and we request that the Government be pleased to direct the conduct of the ensuing elections to local boards and municipal councils on the existing healthy basis of joint electorates as heretofore."

Requesting for early and favourable consideration of this resolution,

Yours faithfully,
Illegible
Secretary

68

EXTRACT

Kodaikanal
22 December 1946

My dear Sardarji,

I am personally against proselytisation. I said this openly in one of my speeches in the Legislative Council. But I do not think the Madras Government is in order to exclude Indian Christians who are converts from Harijans from the benefit of public funds set apart for the advancement of Harijans. The grant is made for their advancement on account of their economic condition, and not on account of their creed. Why should there be discrimination against a person on account of change of faith, which you have rightly pointed out is a matter of one's conscience? I hope the Congress Ministries will not give the slightest room for complaint that there is discrimination against a person on account of his creed.

Yours sincerely,
V. K. John

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

69

New Delhi
28 December 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 22nd instant.

I am afraid there is some misunderstanding about this matter. I do not think that the Madras Government has the slightest idea of discrimination. The object, I believe, is to help in the removal of untouchability by taking measures with Government aid to uplift the downtrodden classes of people known as

Harijans. Perhaps through the efforts of Christian missionaries, the Indian Christians are a little more advanced or better off than the Harijans. Besides, the Indian Christians are not suffering from the curse of untouchability, and therefore those who are in the lowest layer of society attract the sympathy of Government first. It is in this sense that the problem has to be viewed and therefore I understand that no discrimination is meant.

It would be a blessing if there would be no communalism in public life in India, but unfortunately our public life bristles with it and it has poisoned the whole atmosphere, and we must all work for the eradication of it to the best of our ability.

If the Indian Christians require any special assistance from the Government of Madras, it may be claimed independently without questioning the right of the suppressed Harijans, and in a proper cause you can always count upon our co-operation and help.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbai Patel

Dr. V. K. John, MLC
Kodaikanal (S. India)

70

Camp 6 York Road
New Delhi-4
15 December 1946

My dear Chief,

I came to Delhi four days ago on business of the Madras Government. I did not call on you to pay my regards because I knew you were very busy with the work of the Constituent Assembly.

Shri Khandubhai Desai¹ met me after his talks with you on the matter of our trade unions joining the AITUC. I am feeling convinced day after day that it may not serve much useful purpose in joining unions whose deliberate purpose is to vilify the Congress as a national movement and who incessantly seek inspiration and direction from another country. If you consider that the starting of a rival all India organisation of our unions will

¹ Labour leader of Gujarat and one of the organisers of INTUC; trusted lieutenant of Sardar Patel; Union Minister of Labour 1954-57; Governor of Andhra Pradesh since 1968

serve the industrial workers, on our line of thinking, an effort can be made in that direction.

I am going via Bombay today and have sent word to Shri Gulzarilal Nanda¹ to meet me at Ahmedabad to discuss this matter further. I am likely to be here on or about 5 January when I can seek an interview with you to talk over these matters if you find it convenient.

Our friend, Mr. [V. R.] Kalappa,² who came to attend the Constituent Assembly, was suddenly struck down on the day of his arrival by facial paralysis. Luckily being here, I could render some assistance and made arrangements to send him on to Nagpur yesterday by the G.T. Express.

Hope you are keeping fit and with kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
V. V. Giri

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

71

New Delhi
17 December 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 15th instant.

Being in charge of Government in eight or nine provinces and also having power in the Central Government, it would be folly to allow the Trade Union Congress and unions to be exploited by the Communists or other groups which are hostile to the Congress. The Trade Union Congress is thus allowed to be represented as the official organisation of labour in India outside the country. They get official recognition all over the world, and their position in this capacity is naturally being abused.

If we cannot capture the Trade Union Congress by peaceful and decent means, it would be better to start with a rival Trade Union Congress organisation which would straightaway be recognised by the Government and all pretensions of the representative character of the rival organisation would be destroyed. You

¹ Labour leader; Secretary, Ahmedabad Textile Labour Union, 1922-46; Labour Minister, Bombay 1946-50; later Minister in Central Government 1950-67; twice interim Prime Minister after death of Nehru and Shastri

² Andhra leader elected to Constituent Assembly from CP

must, therefore, think of either joining the existing organisation and capturing the Centre or start a rival organisation at once. This is a question which should be considered immediately.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. V. V. Giri
Minister for Industries & Labour
Madras

72

New Delhi
22 December 1946

My dear Prakasam,

A report appeared in the Hindu of 17 December, from which it is learnt that the Cabinet Committee appointed to consider the Draft Bill to amend the Estates Land Act to regulate the rents in the zamindari area have finalised their proposals in their meeting of 16 December. It also appears that the Government intends to publish the Bill in the final form shortly and to introduce it at the next meeting of the Assembly.

I would advise you to place the committee's final proposals before your party before publication. It would unnecessarily create apprehensions in the mind of the owners of proprietary estates and perhaps exaggerated hopes in the mind of the peasants, which may result in their refusal to pay the rents before the legislation is passed. We are facing troubles all round at present, and no further complications should be added to our troubles, if such troubles can be legitimately avoided. Any sudden fundamental change in the current system of rent collection may be misunderstood and used as an excuse in the hands of the ignorant tenantry who may be willing to withhold payment of rents under influence of anti-social elements or irresponsible workers.

This may be treated as urgent, as representations have been received in our office from several zamindars apprehending trouble.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. T. Prakasam
Prime Minister
Madras

21 Ferozeshah Road
New Delhi
23 December 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thanks for your letter dated 22 December.

The Bill referred to in your letter is for reduction of rents and not for abolition. It was originally prepared during the last Congress Ministry and was placed before the party then and was approved by it. It has only been finalised now and will certainly be placed before the party before publication.

A resolution for the abolition of zamindaris is also coming up and a report about the same would be sent to you duly. I hope you are better now.

Yours sincerely,
T. Prakasam

PS.

The main principles of the proposed Bill have been placed before the present Congress Legislature Party also at a meeting specially convened for the purpose over the signatures of 40 members some time back.

TELEGRAM

Madras
31 December 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai
Marine Drive
Bombay

RECEIVED LETTER ZAMINDARS OTHER URGENT MATTERS TO DISCUSS.
WIRE IF I CAN MEET YOU THURSDAY NOON LEAVING HERE WEDNESDAY
EXPRESS.

PRAKASAM

CHAPTER II
GUIDANCE TO PROVINCES

75

19 March 1946

My dear Mehrchand¹,

I am glad that you have joined the Ministry, as your shouldering the responsibility will ensure efficient and smooth working. I expect you to keep me informed from time to time about the situation in the province and the working of the Ministry.

Mr. and Mrs. Yunus² have come here and they met me yesterday and gave me reports about the election campaign. Saadullah Khan³ had also given me some information.

You know that the British Cabinet Mission is coming here on the 24th. From the Press Note issued by the Government of India yesterday, it appears that the Prime Ministers of Assam, Punjab, Sind and the NWFP have been invited to meet them on 1 April. As they are the first to meet, both Dr. Khan Sahib⁴ and Sjt. [Gopinath] Bardoloi⁵ will want some guidance about what attitude they should take. It is better for them to take instructions from Maulana [Abul Kalam Azad] Sahib about it. There is enough time to put yourself in touch with Maulana and obtain instructions. Please do the needful in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Lala Mehrchand Khanna
28 Saddar Road
Peshawar

¹ Member, North-West Frontier Legislative Council, 1932-37; Finance Minister, 1937; Secretary, Frontier Congress Parliamentary Party, 1943-45; migrated to India after partition and was a Minister in Nehru Government

² Private Secretary to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan; joined Indian diplomatic service after partition

³ Eldest son of Dr. Khan Sahib, Premier of NWFP

⁴ Elder brother of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan; Premier of NWFP before and after Independence; dismissed by Jinnah after partition; later Chief Minister of West Pakistan

⁵ Assam Congress leader; headed Congress Ministry in 1937-39 and in 1945-48

Peshawar
30 March 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Many thanks for your kind letters of 6 and 9 March. I am grateful to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Badshah Khan [Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan is also known as Badshah Khan] for the confidence that they have reposed in me and I pray to God that I may prove worthy of it.

We propose to file at least two election petitions, one against Arbab Mohammed Sharif Khan, who has been returned from the Bara Mohmand constituency, and the other against Nawab Sir Mohammed Akbar Khan, who has been returned from the Kamalzai constituency. A sub-committee consisting of Lala Bhanju Ram Gandhi,¹ Sardar Ishar Singh, Mian Qain Shah, Mehta Madan Lal and L. Girdhari Lal Puri has been formed to go into the question. The Muslim League is bound to file some election petitions against some of our successful candidates. It is all in the melting pot, and when the situation crystallises I will let you know. Fourteen days are allowed to file an election petition after the "return of expenses" has been gazetted.

Dr. Khan Sahib left for Delhi this morning. Before he did so Badshah Khan, Dr. Khan Sahib, Qazi Attaullah and I had a full discussion. Dr. Khan Sahib will put forward the Congress point of view.

The accounts are not ready as yet. I have been very busy with the Assembly session.

Thanking you once again for the great kindness that you have shown me and the great trust that you have reposed in me.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Mehrchand Khanna

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

¹MLA (NWFP) in 1936 as Congress candidate; joined Frontier Cabinet as Finance Minister in September 1937; resigned in 1939; was re-elected to Assembly in 1946

New Delhi
8 April 1946

My dear Mehrchand,

Many thanks for your letter of 30 March. As the period for filing election petitions is over, you must now be in a position to let me know how many petitions have been filed on behalf of the League against our candidates and whether there is any chance of any of our candidates being unseated. In the two petitions that have been filed on our behalf, you have not stated the grounds on which the petitions are filed, nor have you stated whether there is any chance of these elections being set aside.

Dr. Khan Sahib met me and he has put his case with his usual frankness.

I expect Badshah Khan will come here on the 12th for the Working Committee meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Mehrchand Khanna
Minister
Peshawar

Peshawar
23 April 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Many thanks for your letter of 8 April 1946.

I am sorry I could not write you before as I have been away on tour.

The period for Government notifications is not over as yet. The returns are gazetted weekly. So far only four election petitions have been filed. One is against K. B. [Khan Bahadur] Mohammed Zaman Khan of Hazara. This does not affect us as we never contested this seat. The other two have been filed by us, one against Nawab Sir Mohammed Akbar Khan of Mardan

and the second against Arbab Mohammed Sharif Khan, representing the Bara-Mohmand constituency. The fourth application has been filed by K. S. [Khan Sahib] Malik-ur-Rahman Kayani against S. Ali Badshah of Hangu, Congress MLA. I am trying to obtain copies of the grounds, for and against, and will send them to you in due course.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Mehrchand Khanna

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

79

Peshawar
25 April 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

In continuation of my letter dated 23 April 1946, four more election petitions have been filed. The list is given below:

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|---------|---|
| 1. | Khan Abdul Hamid Khan | against | Nawab Qutabud Din of Tank (Muslim League) |
| 2. | L. Paira Khan (Independent) | „ | Diwan Bhanju Ram Gandhi (Congress) |
| 3. | Daud Khan (Independent) | „ | Khan Ali Gohar Khan (Muslim League) |
| 4. | Sahib Khan (Independent) | „ | Mohammed Abbas Khan (Muslim League) |

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Mehrchand Khanna

Sardar V. J. Patel
New Delhi

Peshawar
28 July 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Kindly refer to your letter dated 15 June 1946 from New Delhi. Now that you have been in Bombay for some time, I shall be grateful if you would do all that you can for us. The Election Tribunal has started functioning and the legal advisers have to be paid. As you will have seen from the accounts sent through Ram Dass, the sum of Rs. 9,317/2/- is still due. I was hoping that we will save something and this very impression I had given to Sadullah Khan but a large number of unexpected bills started pouring in towards the end. In spite of all that I feel that we have not been extravagant. Over and above the amount given to us by you, we spent a large sum which was subscribed partly by the candidates and partly from other sources.

I had delayed writing to you as I was hoping to come to Bombay in connection with the Industries Ministers' conference to be held at Poona on 31 July but so far I have received no official invitation. Even if I do so now, my going to Poona is out of the question as I cannot get there in time.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Mehrchand Khanna

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

New Delhi
21 April 1946

My dear Shantilal¹,

You have been writing to me some formal official letters occasionally, but you have not written anything about what is going on in Bombay or about any interesting news from there.

¹Shantilal H. Shah: Solicitor; one of early members of Congress Socialist Party; founder-member, INTUC; member of Bombay Legislative Council and its Deputy Chairman; in charge of Congress Central Election Office, 1945-47; member, CA; Minister in Bombay for over a decade; member, Lok Sabha, 1967-70

The BPCC elections did create some interesting developments which were more or less expected. I expected to hear your views about the affair as you must have known much of it. Both parties have sent telegrams and letters of protest.

I have received your letter of the 17th instant about filing of Shri Khedgikar's petition. You must ask Sjt. [S. K.] Patil¹ about the amount to be deposited as security for costs and I am sure he will do the needful. We must not do anything in such matters from the Centre.

I am sending herewith an extract of a letter from Shri [R. R.] Diwakar,² wherein he says that Shri Mane should be helped to the extent of Rs. 5,000. If you think that it is reasonable, you can get a cheque for that amount from Dahyabhai³ [Patel] and give it to him.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbai Patel

Shri Shantilal H. Shah
Bombay-1

82

Bombay
7 May 1946

Respected Sardar Sahib,

I enclose herewith a copy of the resolution passed by our Association at its annual general meeting at Ahmedabad on 28 April last. When this resolution was passed the line adopted in the resolution was approved by Shri [Gulzarilal] Nandaji and Shri Khandubhai [Desai] though the actual draft is mine. On the whole the resolution was opposed to strikes on the railways. It decided that as to the points which were referred to the adjudicator the Association should take steps to represent its case before the adjudicator. As regards the question of scales of

¹ General Secretary of Bombay PCC for 17 years till 1946, when he became its President; member, Bombay Assembly, 1937-46; member, CA, 1947-48, MP, 1952-67; Central Minister, 1957-63 and again 1961-67; member, AICC, 1933, Treasurer, 1960-64

² Joined non-cooperation movement in 1921; Secretary and later President of Karnatak PCC; pioneered movement for separate Karnatak State; AICC member for several years; member, CA, Central Minister, 1948-52; Governor of Bihar, 1952-57; President, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Gandhi Peace Foundation

³ Son of Sardar Patel; member of Congress 1924-56; member, Bombay PCC, 1946-56; first elected to Rajya Sabha 1958; re-elected 1964; now Swatantra Party leader in Rajya Sabha; business man by profession

pay and allowances which was proposed to be referred to the Commissioner, our demand was that labour representatives should have adequate representation on the commission and the findings of the commission should be implemented without delay. It was also resolved to take steps for placing the case of the railway employees before the commission. The resolution therefore states that it would be premature to resort to strike and that the question should therefore be postponed. The main ground was that essential services like the railways should not resort to strike, particularly at the present moment of food and cloth crises. We also stressed that it was the duty of the railway administration to see that the just demands of its workers should be immediately remedied and that the feeling of discontent should not be allowed to continue. There is one omission in the resolution that there were other demands of the Railwaymen's Federation which were neither referred to adjudication nor to the commission. About some of these the Government declared its decision by granting dearness allowance retrospectively for certain periods, but as to others the Government was silent. Our resolution is also silent about these demands.

After coming to Bombay and before the Railwaymen's Federation, I spoke to Mr. Khedgikar and Shri Shibnath Banerji and formed an impression that the Federation was not likely to pass a resolution for strike but would pass a dilatory or postponing resolution. The Federation met on the evening of Saturday the 4th instant. I saw Mr. Giri in the Servants of India Society on the morning of Sunday the 5th and he gave me the same impression. Mr. Giri has given the same impression to Shri Nandaji. The Federation, however, passed a resolution a copy of which I enclose. This resolution directs that the unions which have not taken a strike ballot should do so before the end of this month and should give notice of strike on 1 June and that the strike should commence on 27 June.

This resolution was passed by the Federation after they had before them the statement of Maulana Azad, but I think that the Communists and Royists¹ who were in the Council of the Federation proved too strong for Mr. Giri, for Mr. Khedgikar and Mr. Shibnath Banerji.

Our Association is not a member of the Federation and though we have applied for membership we have not yet been admitted.

¹ Followers of late M. N. Roy

The resolution has appointed a committee which has been given the power to negotiate with the Government with a view to a settlement. The committee, however, is overloaded with Communists and Royists and I have a feeling that they will not allow any settlement to go through unless the Government were to agree to refer all the demands to an adjudicator. As regards the scales of pay, the Government is not likely to refer them to the adjudicator and will insist on a commission because they might affect the whole budgetary position of the railway budget as well as the general budget and the wage standard of railwaymen will also have its repercussion on the wage standard of other Government employees even outside the railways.

I could not attend the meeting of the Federation as we are not members. As soon as I read the resolution on Monday morning I saw Shri Nandaji and sought his advice. He told me that as we had applied for membership of the Federation we ought to act along with the rest of the bodies and must abide by the majority decision as we should act democratically. He further said that by passing our resolution at the annual meeting against the strike we had made our position clear, but that as to future action we should fall in line with the Federation.

He, therefore, advised that we should take a strike ballot of the members of our Association. I feel that if a ballot is taken it will be in favour of the strike. Our constitution requires that it will not resort to strike unless a ballot for that purpose is taken.

I have, therefore, to seek your advice as to what should be our further attitude and action. If we take a ballot, it would result in favour of the strike and we shall then have to give notice of strike and go along with the rest of the unions who are in the Railwaymen's Federation. If we do not, ours might be perhaps the only union which will be keeping out and the position of our members who may choose to remain loyal to the resolution will be very awkward—almost impossible.

What, then, shall we do?

The resolution of the Federation has also appealed to the unions to increase their membership and collect funds for the strike. This is intended only to collect money for the other unions, who seek to make this an opportunity to swell their coffers.

The resolution also says that where there are more unions than one on the same railway joint committees of action should be set up. Should our union join in these committees? The resolution further said that there should be strike committees at the

different station depots, workshops and centres. Should our members join these strike committees?

I am very anxious to have your advice on these matters as our Association is yet not strong enough to take an independent stand, nor is our membership large. The feeling of unrest among railwaymen is also strong. I do not think any action need be taken till the 15th instant by which time I hope to get your advice. But if anything has to be done in the meantime I will consult Shri Nandaji and act as he directs.

As regards the affairs of the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh and the Rashtriya Girni Kamgar Sangh in Bombay, Shri Shankarrao Deo, Nandaji, Khandubhai and myself had discussion on Sunday the 5th instant. Thereafter Khandubhai discussed the matter with Shri Patil and he and Nandaji will be writing to you.

Re: Central Election Board: Shri Mane, who had contested on independent ticket from Belgaum and is successful, came to me this morning for his election expenses. It seems that Shri Diwakar has written to him that he has spoken to you and said what was necessary and you will give such help as was proper. I told him that I had not discussed the matter with you and would write. He wants Rs. 6,000 to be paid for his election expenses. I believe Rs. 2,000 would be enough.

He is now a Parliamentary Secretary but seems to be dissatisfied. He told me that you had promised him something higher when he saw you in Bombay at the time of candidature. I told him that you had not made promises to any candidate and that he was wrong in assuming that a Minister's seat was promised to him. He feels that the salary which he would get as a Parliamentary Secretary would not be enough as he has to pay his election expenses. He was telling me that he used to earn Rs. 300 to 400 per month in his practice at Belgaum and would like to go back to practice after about six months' work here. I do not believe either of this is true.

I am unable to get your address from Mr. Dahyabhai. I wanted to speak to you on the phone about the railway strike but nobody could give me your telephone number at Simla. I am therefore sending this letter care of Gandhiji.

Yours obediently,
Shantilal

Shri Vallabhbhai Patel

Camp Chadwick
 Summer Hill
 Simla W
 11 May 1946

My dear Shantilal,

I have received your letter of the 7th instant. It is difficult for me to handle the strike question of the Railway Association from here. All I feel is that irresponsible and mischievous forces are at work and they want to create a situation which would baffle the coming National Government in its beginning. There are obvious reasons for such conduct on their part. However, in this matter you have to be guided by Nandaji. Shri Giri has taken Ministership and his successor is not half as competent as he was.

Re: Shri Mane, if you think that Rs. 2,000 should be paid to him, you can get that amount from Dahyabhai and give it to him. I have given him no promise and he had no talk with me about his being made a [Parliamentary] Secretary or a Minister. He was not on the Congress ticket at all and there can be no promise from me to a non-Congressman when I have refused to give such a promise to Congress candidates. I cannot understand his making such a statement to you. If he is dissatisfied with his present position, he is free to resign and go back to his practice. When he contested independently of the Congress, he expected no help from us. But as he is a Scheduled Caste man, I referred the matter of his demand to Shri Diwakar. Be careful that he may take the money from us and then go against us.

Yours sincerely,
 Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Shantilal H. Shah
 Secretary, Central Election Board
 Congress House
 Bombay

Chadwick
 Simla W
 13 May 1946

My dear Gulzarilal,

I have received your letter of the 8th inst.

I see your difficulties and the mental conflicts arising out of the responsibility of holding two offices of a different character. It is impossible now to leave the ministry. It would be wrong to get out of it. But we have to think about the secretaryship of the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh.

I see also that there is no enthusiasm today for training young men for labour work in any province, and therefore the plan for the opening of training classes has got to be abandoned.

I do not think it would be possible to work with Achyut [Patwardhan]¹ and his friends, so far as the labour work is concerned. We cannot take people who are not willing to accept our programme and discipline in the labour field. It would be dangerous.

I have seen the Railwaymen's Federation's resolution as also that of the B.B. & C.I. Rly. Workers Union. Shri Shantilal had written to me asking for advice. I have asked him to accept your guidance in the matter, as it is difficult for me to advise him from such a long distance.

I do not think that the railwaymen have got proper guidance. Our union is in its infant stage and it has no inherent strength to join in any strike. But as it has applied for joining the Federation, it will have to follow the general policy of the Federation in this matter. I deplore the attitude of the leaders of the railway associations. I am enclosing herewith a cutting of a Press report, which publishes the views of Shri Khedgikar with reference to the Congress President's statement advising railwaymen not to go on general strike now. It is surprising that Shri Khedgikar, who happens to be a Congressman and stood as a candidate on the Congress ticket for the Assembly from the labour constituency of the Railwaymen's Union, should have the

¹ Veteran freedom fighter

impudence to issue such a statement against the President's advice. This is an ugly exhibition of indiscipline. If Congressmen were to behave in this manner, they would not be able to serve either organisation.

We are going down to Delhi tomorrow. Our work here is finished, as you must have seen from the Press; so far as the first phase of the conference was concerned, it has ended in complete failure, as was expected. But the second phase will begin now. That will be arranged at Delhi and I expect I will have to stay there for about a fortnight. After that I may return to Bombay for a few days at least. When I come to Bombay, we shall think of all the labour questions referred to in your letter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Gulzarilal Nanda

85

New Delhi
24 June 1946

My dear Balasaheb,¹

Unfortunately our work here has been unduly prolonged. I do not know what has happened there about the Constituent Assembly nor am I in a position to give you final instructions yet, but I expect to be able to do so in a day or two. In the meanwhile, I should like to know whether any declaration has to be signed by intending candidates for the Constituent Assembly and if so, does that declaration bind or commit the candidate signing that declaration to accept compulsory grouping of provinces or is he free to put his own interpretation on the grouping question and join the Constituent Assembly. This question has arisen because some of our Assam friends have complained against this clause being introduced in the declaration made by the Bengal Government and they suspect that this has been done with the ulterior object of committing the candidates to the acceptance of compulsory grouping. I have not seen the form of declaration, nor have I

¹B. G. Kher: popularly known as Balasaheb Kher; solicitor; entered politics in 1922; Secretary of Swaraj Party and of Bardoli Satyagraha Inquiry Committee; emerged on national scene in 1937 when Sardar Patel selected him in preference to K. F. Nariman as leader, Bombay Legislature Congress Party; became first Premier of Bombay; High Commissioner in London

seen the rules yet, but I suggest that you should scrutinise the rules carefully and see that no such commitment is secured indirectly by this method.

I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter which I have received from Shri K. G. Gokhale, Belgaum.

I invite your attention to the Press report appearing in The Times of India of 19th instant [see enclosure] in which Shri L. M. Patil, one of your Ministers, has enunciated a policy at a Press conference regarding the basic idea of industrial planning and nationalisation of industries. It would be unwise for Ministers to make such extravagant and uncalled for declaration, creating a feeling of insecurity and discouraging individual initiative for industrial development in the province. To talk of sugar and textile industries as being included in public utility concerns in a vague statement of policy is undesirable. It unnecessarily creates suspicion in the minds of those who are running these industries. Surely we are not going to take over management, control and ownership of cotton mills and sugar factories in Bombay Presidency at least during the period of the present ministry. It is beyond the scope of the Congress Manifesto and such loose and wild talk does not add to the prestige of the Congress Ministry. It is being criticised outside and the ministry loses respect in the eyes of responsible people for tall talk which is not intended for fulfilment at all. Please see that we do not go in for propaganda which would eventually hit us instead of helping us.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. B. G. Kher
Prime Minister
Govt. of Bombay
Poona

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACTS FROM A NEWSPAPER REPORT OF THE PRESS
CONFERENCE AT POONA ON 18 JUNE 1946
ADDRESSED BY MR. L. M. PATIL

Elucidating the recently outlined policy of nationalising the key industries of the province, the Minister for Reconstruction, Mr. L. M. Patil, told a Press conference today that the Government of Bombay would not hesitate to take over control of essential industries when the time was favourable for it.

Mr. Patil illustrated his point by citing the sugar industry, which owed its prosperity to the irrigation scheme. . . .

Generally speaking, all public utility concerns, hydro-electric schemes, motor transport and large-scale industries, such as sugar, steel and textile industries, came within the scope of being considered for nationalisation or State control in one form or another.

86

Council Hall
Poona
27 June 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 24th instant sent by express delivery. It reached me only today, on the 27th, at 4 p.m. I am looking into the matters referred to by you, and will do the needful.

Yours sincerely,
B. G. Kher

Shri Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

87

Council Hall
Poona
28 June 1946

My dear Sardarji,

I have read the letter addressed by you to Shri Balasaheb Kher. In the Press conference which I had in Poona on the 18th instant, I made it clear that nationalisation of key industries and public utility concerns can only come when circumstances are favourable. I also made it clear that the present Ministry has not as yet given consideration to any of such industries with a view to control it. Some of the newspapers have published these statements of mine. In view of this, I am at a loss to understand why there should be a scare or cause for apprehension in any quarter. 2. However I am very thankful to you for giving me a hint to be cautious in these delicate and important affairs. In future, I

will mould my utterances in such a way as they will not discredit the name of the Congress Ministry in Bombay province, in the least, even indirectly.

Yours sincerely,
L. M. Patil

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

88

Bombay
15 August 1946

Dear Sir Hari Singh,¹

I have received your letter of 14 July, this morning on my return from Wardha. I am glad that you have been elected to the Constituent Assembly as a representative from the CP and Berar Legislative Assembly. Your wide experience and great ability will indeed be of great assistance to the Assembly. There is hardly any conflict now left with the British Government and it is for us now to frame a Constitution of Free India. Unfortunately the Muslim League has not yet reconciled to the new situation but we hope that they will soon realise that the British will no more be interested in supporting one party against the other. The sooner we frame our Constitution, the better for us all.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sir Hari Singh Gour
Nagpur

¹Sir Hari Singh Gour: Author of several commentaries on law; social reformer and member of Central Assembly for two decades

CHAPTER III
THE PUNJAB MUDDLE

89
TELEGRAM

Amritsar
6 May 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Simla

SIKHS ARRESTED AT AHMEDABAD FOR WEARING KIRPANS DURING PROHIBITORY ORDERS. IS HIGHLY REGRETTABLE. IN PUNJAB KIRPAN THE RELIGIOUS SYMBOL OF SIKHS ALWAYS EXCLUDED DURING PROHIBITORY ORDERS. PLEASE INTERVENE AND INSTRUCT CONGRESS MINISTRY TO WITHDRAW CASES.

SHIROMANI AKALIDAL¹

90

Camp Chadwick
Summer Hill
Simla W
8 May 1946

The Secretary
Shiromani Akali Dal
Amritsar

Dear Friend,

I have received your telegram re: the arrest of some Sikhs at Ahmedabad for wearing kirpans during the period of prohibitory orders and I have written to the proper quarters about it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

¹ Party of Sikhs which originally agitated for reform of Sikh shrines and later became a political party in Punjab

Camp Chadwick
Simla W
8 May 1946

My dear Morarji,

I am sorry to say that I am detained here longer than I expected and I do not expect to be free for some time to come and hence you will have to make arrangements for the conduct of the business of the Provincial Congress Committee meeting on the 16th inst. in my absence.

I am quoting below a telegram received from the Shiromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, dated 6 May.

“SIKHS ARRESTED AT AHMEDABAD FOR WEARING KIRPANS DURING PROHIBITORY ORDERS. IS HIGHLY REGRETTABLE. IN PUNJAB KIRPAN THE RELIGIOUS SYMBOL OF SIKHS ALWAYS EXCLUDED DURING PROHIBITORY ORDERS. PLEASE INTERVENE AND INSTRUCT CONGRESS MINISTRY TO WITHDRAW CASES.”

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Morarji Desai¹
Minister,
Secretariat
Bombay

19 July 1946

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter received from Kak², Prime Minister of Kashmir. The letter was posted on the

¹ PCS, Bombay, 1918; resigned in 1930 to join civil disobedience movement; Minister, Bombay Government, 1937-39; Home Minister 1946-52; Chief Minister, 1952-56; thereafter Central Minister of Commerce and Industry and later Finance, resigned under Kamaraj Plan, 1963; Deputy Prime Minister in Mrs Indira Gandhi's Cabinet, 1967-69; presently member, Lok Sabha

² Pandit Ram Chandra Kak: archaeologist who entered service of Kashmir Government as librarian of a college; later appointed Minister in Waiting to Maharaja Hari Singh; became Prime Minister of State in 1945; succeeded by Gen. Janak Singh in 1947

12th from Srinagar, but it was received here only today owing to the postal strike. I was anxiously awaiting his reply. I do not know whether you have received the original letter which the Maharaja [Hari Singh] has sent to you because there is a postal strike over there also. This letter of the Maharaja is, I believe, the joint work of the Political Adviser, the Viceroy, the Maharaja and the Nawab of Bhopal. I do not know what is your programme, but as the letter imposes no condition and makes suggestions only, I think if you would like to go there there should be no difficulty at all. It is better that you should go there once and see Sheikh Abdullah¹ personally. We can deal with the general situation later.

There is a report in the Press that Maulana [Azad] and you are both going to Srinagar, but I do not know whether the report is true.

The Punjab situation is in a hopeless muddle. I had a telephone [call] just now from [[Bhim Sen] Sachar.² He wants to resign his leadership. Maulana placed him there and I have asked him to obtain his permission by telephone. It seems the coalition is scrapping. The Sikhs are not in our discipline. Col. Gill,³ in his anxiety to unite the Sikhs in order to obtain a hold over them, is playing a game which is sure to create greater difficulties. He does not show his plans to us and does not act up to his agreements with us. Maulana Daud⁴ has played false to us in a crisis. It seems he was waiting for an opportunity for an excuse to go over to the other side. He was made Congress president in the

¹Became first President of Muslim Conference in 1932 and took leading part in converting it into National Conference. Launched Quit Kashmir movement. Tried for sedition in 1946 and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Elected President, All India State Peoples' Conference. Released unconditionally in September 1947; Presented Indian case on Kashmir against Pakistan at the United Nations in 1948; Prime Minister of State from 1948-1953; arrested in August 1953 for anti-State activities and released in January 1958; rearrested in April 1958 and tried for conspiracy; Nehru ordered withdrawal of the case as political gesture. Visited Pakistan on goodwill mission in May 1964 and had talks with President Ayub Khan but mission ended abruptly with Nehru's death; arrested in Delhi on return from foreign tour in 1965 and detained; residing in Delhi because his entry into Kashmir was banned; ban lifted on 5 June 1972

²Joined non-cooperation movement in 1921; Secretary, Punjab PCC, 1912; MLA (Punjab), 1939-45; Finance Minister (Punjab), 1946-49; Chief Minister, 1952-56; Governor of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh; High Commissioner in Ceylon

³Served in Indian National Army under Subhas Bose; joined diplomatic service and retired as Ambassador to Mexico

⁴President of Punjab PCC for several years

Punjab by Maulana. We had to spend a lakh of rupees for his election alone and he was given a safe joint constituency, from where he got in by a majority of Hindu votes. It is unfortunate that this precedent will make it difficult for us to trust the best of them. I had my doubts but Sachar and [Seth] Sudarshan¹ got round him for power and deposed Gopichand with the help of Maulana. Daud wanted to be a Minister in the coalition and he created a split in the Congress ranks and succeeded in getting Sachar appointed as Leader. I am not in touch with Maulana at present because of the postal strike and the telephones these days are very difficult to get, the service being very irregular. Prof. K. T. Shah,² who was nominated as one of the candidates from the Punjab, has not been selected by the party, as the Unionist Hindus insisted on another seat. I wish Maulana would go for a couple of days to Lahore. He has handled the situation there from the beginning and it would be better if he were to finish it.

I am awaiting information about your programme.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Allahabad

93

The Monastery
Simla
15 May 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Something quite nasty has happened here since you left and you must know about it.

A meeting was arranged with Maulana Sahib where Malik Khizr Hayat,³ Sardar Baldev Singh⁴ and Mr. Sachar were present.

¹ Chief Whip, Congress Legislative Party, Punjab, 1946-56

² Leading economist of Bombay; member of Zakir Husain Committee to prepare school syllabus on Wardha scheme lines; became Congress member of Constituent Assembly, 1946

³ Leading figure of Unionist Party of Punjab; Prime Minister of Punjab before partition

⁴ Started political career as Akali leader; Development Minister, Punjab, 1942-46; joined Congress and served as Defence Minister in Nehru Cabinet, 1946-52

Many things were discussed—without, I believe, any finality! But at this meeting Mr. Sachar made a strange proposal.

As you know, the Premier has to go to Oxford next month for his new degree. In his absence something has to be done about acting premiership. No one has discussed it yet. Mr. Sachar came out with his view that the office should go to a Muslim!

It so happens that S. Baldev Singh is the next senior Minister after the Premier and the acting office will go to him naturally, if he is still in the province. Knowing this Mr. Sachar should not have said what he did. Baldev Singh said nothing in the meeting; but he has since told Sachar that he took his proposal to mean that he and the Congress have no confidence in the Sikh Minister.

I may say that even the Premier did not like the proposal coming as it did. For whose benefit Mr. Sachar made this suggestion no one knows. Baldev Singh is now trying to bring about some kind of settlement with the Akalis. News like this will upset everything, and in fact it might well give a big jolt to the Ministry, because, as I told you, both Malik and Baldev Singh are getting fed up with things.

Maulana Sahib has met the Premier again this afternoon. The latter will certainly want the colleagues with whom he can get on. I have already spoken to you about these matters. Kindly do intervene somehow, as things might take an ugly shape if allowed to drift further.

With respects,

Yours sincerely,
B. S. Gilani¹

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

New Delhi
20 May 1946

My dear Gilani,

I have received your letter of the 15th instant. I do not know whether Malik Khizr Hayat should leave India at a time when the Constituent Assembly is to be elected, an Interim Government is to be formed, and other important events are to take

¹Private Secretary to Sardar Baldev Singh; a spokesman of Christians

place. It would be extremely unwise to go out of India at such a juncture.

I have no knowledge of the conversation which Shri Bhim Sen Sachar had with Maulana Sahib but I am sure that if Malik Khizr Hayat desires that Sardar Baldev Singh should hold office in his absence in his place there is nothing to prevent him from doing so. The Congress President cannot and will not come in his way if he chooses to make that arrangement. I do not read any sinister motive in Shri Sachar's suggestion, if he has made any, to Maulana Sahib.

Sardar Baldev Singh met me this morning, when I had not received your letter. But he did not say anything to me about this matter, as perhaps he may not be aware of it. This I think is a very unimportant and trivial matter and you may ignore it altogether.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri B. S. Gilani
The Monastery
Simla

95

27 July 1946

My dear Bhim Sen,

Last week I had a telephone call from you suggesting that you proposed to resign from the leadership. I could not understand what you meant and why you wanted to take my permission. You were appointed by Maulana Sahib as Leader and you should have asked him to permit you to resign, if you wanted to do so. I have heard nothing from you except this telephone call. Perhaps your letter may be in the post and not delivered to me because of the strike.

I am sorry about the Punjab muddle, particularly the bungling in the Constituent Assembly elections by the Sikhs. We expected three seats from the Unionist group,—at least two—but we got only one. The Sikhs did not contest at all, in spite of all my efforts and I was surprised to hear that in spite of my instructions, you had contacted Pandit Nehru and conveyed a message to the Sikhs which resulted in this unfortunate situation. Its repercussions have been very serious. It has given a plausible

excuse to our friend Daud Ghaznavi to get out of the Congress at a critical moment. You know how you pressed me to help him in his own election, as a special case, in addition to the usual share which was included in the budget. I had my doubts about your judgment and that of Seth Sudarshan. I was insistent on Dr. Gopichand's¹ endorsement. Unfortunately, I yielded and disregarded Dr. Gopichand's wise counsel. You are on the spot and you could have warned us even subsequently about his unreliability. If you did not know or suspect about his unreliability, you are certainly much too simple for Punjab politics.

Our instructions about Prof. K. T. Shah have not been followed, but there no blame may be placed on your shoulders as there may be other factors beyond your control.

There may be re-elections now for the Sikhs. I do not know whether you will be able to influence them at all. The younger elements in the Punjab are getting out of control. The Sikhs are being led by a group of people whose politics are not easy to understand. I would advise you to take Dr. Gopichand into your confidence and see that the Congress Sikhs at least, if not the Akalis, go into the election.

I am sending this letter by a messenger, as there is complete dislocation of correspondence owing to the post and telegraph strike.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Bhim Sen Sachar
Minister, Government of Punjab
Lahore

Camp New Delhi
26 May 1946

My dear Bhim Sen,

When you met me at Simla, I had spoken to you about the resignation of Smt. Rameshwari Nehru.² She wants to be relieved and therefore you must either persuade her to continue or see

¹ Congress worker of Punjab from 1919; elected to Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1957 and again in 1946; Prime Minister of Punjab, 1947-51

² Wife of Brijlal Nehru, Accountant General of Punjab, and mother of B. K. Nehru, present Governor of Assam; she was a freedom fighter and rendered great service in rehabilitation of refugees after partition

that her resignation is accepted and a by-election is held in her place.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Bhim Sen Sachar
Lahore

97

EXTRACTS

Lajpatrai Bhawan
Lahore
22 June 1946

My dear Sardarji,

The by-election for the vacancy caused by the resignation of Dewan Chamanlal¹ is to take place now. The date of nomination of papers is the 25th instant. Maulana Sahib wired him "to come with applications old and new received for Assembly by-election Rawalpindi with provincial committee's recommendations for approval Central Parliamentary Board."

Maulana Sahib, when he was here last, made several statements. He told L. Avtar Narain, one of the candidates, that he had already promised the seat to some gentleman and his name was not before him, and that when once he had made up his mind nothing could change it.

Dewan Chamanlal told Seth Sudarshan, when he was on his way to Srinagar, that he was also going to file his nomination papers and asked him to keep everything ready. He further told him that Maulana Sahib has asked me to do so.

It will be very ridiculous to nominate Dewan. He was asked to resign the seat and now he contests again.

Seth Kishori Lal Sethi,² though he belongs to Hoshiarpur district, is a big contractor in Srinagar. He was nominated for the Hoshiarpur constituency at the time of the general elections, but he did not contest because he found that he had no chance. He

¹ One of the founders of All-India Trade Union Congress, 1920; MLA (Central) 1924-31 and 1945-48; member, C.A. 1946-48; MLA (Punjab) 1937-45; later Ambassador to Turkey

² Forest contractor of Kashmir; host of Gandhi and Nehru on their visits to Srinagar; member, Punjab Legislative Council after independence



MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH CABINET MISSION: SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS, LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE AND
A. V. ALEXANDER WITH SIR FRANCIS MUDIE, GOVERNOR OF SIND, AT KARACHI AIRPORT



MAHATMA GANDHI WITH LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE, LEADER OF THE
BRITISH CABINET DELEGATION, AFTER TALKS IN APRIL 1946

requested the PPCC president to allow him to withdraw his name and nominate some other person. This was done and the other person won the seat. He was Maulana's host during his visit to Kashmir last year.

Dr. Lehna Singh [Sethi] has been recommended unanimously by the WC of the PPCC. The name of the other gentleman was not even seconded. Dr. Sethi does not belong to any party. He is a non-party man.

Therefore I would request you to confirm his nomination and oblige.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

98

New Delhi
25 June 1946

My dear Dr. Gopichand,

I have received your letter of 22nd instant. As Dr. Lehna Singh Sethi, General Secretary of the PPCC has been unanimously recommended by the Working Committee of the PCC, his nomination has been approved.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Lahore

99

TELEGRAM

Lahore
4 July 1946

Sardar Patel
Care Power Farm
Bombay

JINNAH SEEKING ELECTION PUNJAB. REQUEST YOU ALSO REPRESENT PUNJAB. STRONGLY RECOMMEND CHAUDHRY KRISHNAGOPAL DUTT'S SELECTION PUNJAB QUOTA. HE FITTEST MEMBER. LETTER FOLLOWS.

S.C..III-6

GOPICHAND

Bombay
6 July 1946

My dear Gopichand,

I have received your telegram of the 4th instant. I do not think it wise to get myself elected from the Punjab. Mr. Jinnah's case is different. In Bombay there are only two seats for the Muslims and he wants his two League friends to go from here. Besides, he has already acquired a status for being elected from the Punjab by his work for Pakistan in Northern India. I think Maulana Sahib is enough for him in the group, if at all it is formed.

I have also received your letter of the 28th ultimo. The declaration to be signed by the candidate contained in your letter is quite proper and it makes no reference to para 19. The candidate is only to sign that declaration which commits him to nothing except to take part in the Constituent Assembly. Why the copy of instructions was enclosed with the notice of the Assembly Party I do not know. Perhaps it is an intimation of business but clause B of the instructions is redundant in view of the declaration which has been sent to you. It can therefore be disregarded entirely.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, MLA
Lahore

New Delhi
24 August 1946

My dear Dr. Kitchlew,

The past Assembly elections have left certain bad legacies in your province, one of which is the election disputes amongst the Sikhs. It would be advisable now to withdraw all such petitions both for and against the Akalis and the Congress candidates. It is creating difficulties in the way of unity. I would therefore

advise you to arrange about the immediate withdrawal of those petitions.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. S. P. Kitchlew
President, Punjab PCC
Lahore

102

New Delhi
25 August 1946

My dear Dr. Alam,

Thanks for your letter of the 16th inst. which was received here only today.

The Interim Government has been announced and we propose to take charge on 2 September. This is an event of unusual importance in the history of our country and we can all feel proud to have seen the day when an Indian National Government has been formed for the first time. Unfortunately the Muslim leadership of today has chosen to take a different course. We all feel ashamed of what has happened in Calcutta. No Indian can help feeling sorry about it. It has brought discredit to the country and has disgraced the League all over.

You must have heard about the dastardly attack on Sir Shafaat Ahmed¹, who chose to differ from the League, and his place with us. Where the League leadership will lead the Muslims by this method one cannot say. The Muslims may well say that they may be saved from their so-called saviours.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Sh. Mohammad Alam, MLA
14 Lytton Rd.
Lahore

¹ Started career as Professor of History; India's Agent in South Africa, 1941-45; Minister, Interim Government; later accepted diplomatic assignment

New Delhi
25 August 1946

My dear Bhim Sen,

I have been hearing a lot of complaints about the appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries by your Ministry, particularly against you. One of the complaints is from your friend, Seth Sudarshan. The other complaint is that you are trying to strengthen your party by making extravagant use of the power of appointing secretaries, i.e., by distributing patronage bordering on nepotism. I do not know what is the truth in this matter. Please let me know what are the actual facts, what appointments you have made and what further appointments you propose to make.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Bhim Sen Sachar
Minister, Punjab Government
Simla

Simla
16 September 1946

My dear Sardarji,

I am sorry to know from your letter of 25 August that you have been hearing a lot of complaints about the appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries by the Ministry, particularly against me. Perhaps a personal discussion on the subject would be desirable. I hope to be in Delhi on 9, 10 and 11 October in connection with the conference of Labour Ministers and shall be grateful if you would find it convenient to allow me some time to meet you on any one of these dates.

So far I have appointed only two Parliamentary Secretaries from the Congress Party, Ch. Sunder Singh (representative of the Scheduled Castes) and S. Sajjan Singh (representing Congress Sikhs) and am not likely to ask for any more.

Yours sincerely,
Bhim Sen Sachar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai J. Patel
New Delhi

105

Simla
27 August 1946

My dear Sardarji,

I am in receipt of your letter of 24 August regarding election petitions. I have also received a telephonic message from Maulana Azad saying that a gist of the election petitions may be forwarded to him. The information will be supplied to Maulana Sahib either today or by tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,
Bhim Sen Sachar

Sardar Vallabhbhai J. Patel
New Delhi

106

New Delhi
29 August 1946

My dear Bhim Sen,

I have received your letter of the 27th inst. I do not understand why the election petitions should not be withdrawn by agreement between both parties. No useful purpose would be served by prolonging this affair but I wish to know your own views and to see if there are any difficulties in doing so. From your letter I am not in a position to find anything by way of guidance. Surely it is high time now to end this matter one way or the other.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Bhim Sen Sachar
Simla

107

Simla
31 August 1946

My dear Sardarji,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 29th instant. My personal view is that election petitions between the Congress Sikhs and the

Panthic Sikhs should be withdrawn. The position with respect to the remaining election petitions is not free from difficulty. Mr. Dev Raj Sethi, MLA, who is leaving for Delhi today will, I hope, get an opportunity of meeting you and will explain those cases personally.

As mentioned in my last letter, the list containing the description of the election petitions has already been supplied to Maulana Sahib.

Yours sincerely,
Bhim Sen Sachar

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

108

Lahore
11 November 1946

My dear Sardar,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a circular alleged to have been distributed in large numbers. Some of the Hindus are also circulating it amongst the Hindus just to excite them to organise themselves for counteraction. The Rashtriya Sangh is specially creating panic and disaffection and they excite others to take the offensive. It is thought that if this circular were discussed in your Cabinet and then denounced on the floor of the House asking both the communities to remain calm and peaceful and not be led away by such circulars it may counteract the effects of this circular and have a salubrious effect on the people. I am sending a copy of this to Shri Deshbandhu Gupta¹ to enable him to put a short notice question.

The Dawn is publishing objectionable articles. It is either you or the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, who can take action. Please have this question reviewed and discussed.

You will be sorry to know that there have been six cases of stabbing in Rohtak. There may be reaction in some of the north-western districts. The Government is trying to take precautionary measures and is preparing for suppressing violent actions, if any.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

¹ Disciple of Swami Shraddhanand; Director of Urdu daily Tej; leading Congressman of Delhi; member of AICC and Lok Sabha

ENCLOSURE

From an ex-Muslim Leaguer

Here is the verbal circular passed by Mr. Jinnah and Working Committee of the Muslim League.

1. All Muslims of India shall die for Pakistan.
2. With Pakistan established, the whole of India should be conquered.
3. The people of India should be converted to Islam.
4. The Muslim kingdom should join hand with Anglo-American exploitation of the whole world.
5. One Muslim must get rights of 5 Hindus, i.e. each Muslim is equal to five Hindus.
6. Until Pakistan and Indian Empire is established, the following action will be taken:
 - (a) All factories and shops owned by Hindus should be burnt, destroyed and looted and the loot should be given to the League office.
 - (b) All Muslim Leaguers should carry weapons in defiance of orders
 - (c) All temples should be destroyed.
 - (d) Hindus should be murdered gradually and their population will be reduced.
 - (e) All Nationalist Muslims if they do not join the League, must be murdered by secret League Gestapo.
 - (f) Muslim League spies should be kept in every village and district of India.
 - (g) Congress leaders should be murdered one in one month by some method.
 - (h) Congress paper offices will be destroyed by secret Muslim Gestapo (single person doing the job).
 - (i) Karachi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Vizagapattam, Goa should be paralysed by December 1946 by Muslim League volunteers.
 - (j) Muslims should never be allowed to work under Hindu in the Army, Navy, Government services or private firms.
 - (k) Muslims should sabotage the whole of India and Congress Government for the invasion of India by Muslims.
 - (l) Financial resources are given for the Muslim League invasion of India by Nizam, Communists, few Europeans, Khojas, [See glossary]

by Bhopal, a few Anglo-Indians, a few Parsis and a few Christians. The Punjab, Sind and Bengal will be places of manufacture of all war weapons for Muslim Leaguers invasion and establishing of Muslim Empire of India.

- (m) All arms and weapons should be distributed to Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras, Bangalore, Lahore, Karachi branches of the Muslim League.
- (n) All sections of Muslims should carry minimum equipments of weapon at least pocket knife all the time to destroy Hindus and drive all Hindus from India.
- (o) All transport should be used and organised for battle against Hindus.
- (p) Hindu women and girls should be raped, kidnapped and converted to Muslims from 19 October 1946.
- (q) Hindu culture should be destroyed.
- (r) All Leaguers must try to be cruel at all times to Hindus and boycott them socially, economically and in many other ways.
- (s) No Muslim should buy from Hindu dealers. All Hindu produced films should be boycotted.

All Muslim Leaguers should obey these instructions and bring into action by 15 September 1946.

Yours faithfully,
Habibur Rahman

109

14 November 1946

Dear Dr. Gopichand,

I have received your letter of the 11th instant.

The circular which you have mentioned appears to have had countrywide circulation, but there is no proof that it is authentic. There are many other similar documents which are circulating and if we started taking notice of some and not of others, the feeling would naturally be widespread that those, of which we did not take any notice, are authentic. The best course, therefore, would be to take notice of none.

You must have noticed from Press reports today that the Press in Delhi have come to an agreement on the question of treatment of communal news, and the Press Note makes it clear that we are not satisfied with it, but at the same time are prepared to give it a fair trial. My policy is to watch for the time

being, but to act swiftly if the arrangement appears inadequate or defective.

I received news about the trouble in Rohtak yesterday. I hope it has been localised and not spreading to villages as was the burden of that information.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Lahore

110

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
28 November 1946

Dear Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,

I have had a telegram from the Governor of the Punjab in which he says that his Government are gravely concerned at the tone of the last few issues of Dawn which has published an inaccurate and inflammatory account of the Rohtak disturbances and other articles likely to stimulate communal hatred in the Punjab.

2. The Governor says that orders have been issued for the immediate arrest of Dawn's Rohtak correspondent if he can be found. The Government have in draft an amendment to the ordinance empowering the Punjab Government to ban the entry of objectionable newspapers etc. into the province, and this is likely to be submitted to me shortly for concurrence. But the Premier and the Governor consider that the Central Government should take immediate action to stop the publication of communal articles such as those complained of. A provincial ban on newspapers published elsewhere may not be effective.

3. I suggest this matter should be urgently examined and I have informed Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan¹ that I have written to you to this effect.

¹ Landlord of UP; member of provincial legislature, 1926-39; MLA (Central), 1941 and Deputy leader of Muslim League; Finance Minister in Nehru's Interim Government, 1946; Prime Minister of Pakistan after partition

4. You will of course agree that any restriction found necessary must [apply] impartially to all newspapers.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell¹

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

111

New Delhi
29 November 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Please refer to your letter dated 28 November 1946 regarding the Dawn.

2. The Punjab Government have represented the need for action against the Dawn once or twice before and we have had similar suggestions from the Government of Bombay. Apart from its delinquencies in the past, we have been observing that its implementation of the convention, to which the editor of the Dawn himself was a party, has not been satisfactory. The approach of the Constituent Assembly makes the need for action most urgent. Recently, we referred to our Legal Advisers some material for opinion as regards the desirability of action under the present Press laws. The opinion of the Solicitor to Government and of the Advocate-General was not helpful. In these circumstances, I consider that special powers would be necessary which we would have to take under a Governor-General's ordinance. [A.E.] Porter,² who agrees with this suggestion, has been asked by me to take up at once the preparation of a suitable draft for the purpose, and in view of the extreme urgency of this matter it is possible that this ordinance may have to be issued in your absence in London.

3. With reference to paragraph 3 of Your Excellency's letter, you have already mentioned this question once to Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, but the Dawn has not improved its ways. I am extremely doubtful if any intercession on his part would have any different effect now.

¹ Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1945-47; GOC-in-C, Southern Command, 1938-39; Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, 1939-41; ADC General to the King, 1941

² ICS; Secretary, Home Department, during Interim Government in India, 1946-47

4. I am afraid I am unable to appreciate paragraph 4 of your letter. Powers under the existing law or under the proposed ordinance would obviously apply to all newspapers and it is quite clear that in the actual implementation of those restrictions, it is only those papers which offend that would be involved. If Your Excellency's intention was that the Home Department should be impartial in the administration of those powers, it hardly needed any reminder.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Field Marshal
The Right Honourable Viscount Wavell
GCB, GMSI, GMIE, CMG, MC

CHAPTER IV
BRITISH GOVERNOR'S PARTIALITY

112

Karachi
25 February 1946

Pujya Bhai, [Sardar Patel]

I have today been able to secure a copy of the agreement with Mr. G. M. Syed¹ and I am forwarding the same to you. I am sorry this could not be done earlier.

On arrival here I found that conditions in the city were pretty serious. I had, therefore, to abandon my visit to Sann. Now the disturbances are over and the city has returned to normal.

Today friends have returned from Sann and I hope to communicate to you tonight on the phone all that has transpired there.

Near Ahmedabad, my plane just escaped meeting with a mishap. Within a few minutes of our taking off from Ahmedabad, one of the engines developed some trouble and the bearings got completely burnt. The pilot had the wisdom to notice it immediately and to bring back the machine to Ahmedabad slowly working on a single engine.

With respects,

I am,

Yours sincerely,
Lalji Mehrotra²

¹ Prominent Muslim leader in Sind opposed to Muslim League and friendly to Congress

² Leading Congress worker of Sind; treasurer, Sind PCC; Motilal Nehru's secretary, 1919-20, when Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee was appointed to report on Punjab disturbances; later President of Federation of India Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Ambassador to Japan

ENCLOSURE

1. A coalition between the three groups, viz., the Congress, the Syed group and the Nationalist Muslim group of K. B. Maula Bux, for forming the Government.
2. Mr. Syed and his group will be free to continue to style themselves as the advance wing of the League and have Pakistan as their ideal subject to the following conditions:
 - (a) The acceptance of the right of self-determination of the Mussalmans in the majority provinces shall not be a condition precedent to their group joining the struggle for the independence of the country.
 - (b) The group shall base their efforts for the attainment of their objective on communal amity and harmony and not on hatred as is done by the official Muslim League.
 - (c) The group does and shall recognise the separate existence of the Nationalist Mussalmans.
3. There shall be joint responsibility of the Cabinet as also in the Coalition Party, the majority decision shall prevail.
4. The Coalition Government shall carry out the constructive programme of the Congress as enunciated in their election manifesto. They shall also be free to introduce joint electorates in the local bodies.
5. The present proportion of the Hindus and Mussalmans in the Cabinet shall not be altered except by mutual consent. The Premier shall be a Mussalman.

113

1 March 1946

My dear Lalji,

I got your letter of 25 February only yesterday. So it has come by rail instead of by air.

The disturbances in Karachi were of a very minor nature compared to those that happened in Bombay at the same time. I had also to abandon my visit to Lahore. Fortunately conditions have returned to normal and I hope there will be no more trouble.

I read about the proceedings of the District Board's meeting in which the Commissioner himself presided and Maula Bux was asked to go. This is curious but we should have expected all this in Sind. This means that the League is more active and gets every information of our move. We have lost one vote in this game, which we expected to gain. However, we have to fight against heavy odds and I hope that with the combined efforts of Syed and Maula Bux it will be possible to make a breach in the League ranks, which are none too solid. You know we have also abandoned the Bardoli programme. Please keep me informed of the situation.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Lalji Mehrotra
Karachi

114

2 March 1946

My dear Dr. Choithram,

I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter from Sjt. Lalchand Navalrai as well as of my reply to it, for your information. I should like to know when you propose to send your proposals about the Council of State election.

I have not heard anything from you since I left Karachi. I should like to know what happened afterwards and what are the activities of the Coalition Party at present. The date for the Assembly session is coming near. Have you been able to make any progress or are the conditions the same as they were when we left? You had been to Delhi in the interval but I have not heard from you as to what has happened there.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Choithram Gidwani
President, Sind PCC
Swaraj Bhuvan
Karachi

ENCLOSURE I

EXTRACT

Larkana,
21 February 1946

My dear Sardar Patel,

When I met you at Karachi last I informed you that I had put in an application and given it to the Provincial Congress Committee here. Rumours go afloat every day that the local committee would try to please the local Congressmen who are Dr. Choithram, Mr. Lalji Mehrotra and Bhai Partap of Hyderabad. No one should forget that I have also remained a Congress Nationalist member.

Hoping you do well, with kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Lalchand Navalrai

Sardar Vallabhbai Patel
President
Central Congress Parliamentary Board
Bombay

ENCLOSURE II

2 March 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 21st inst. So far no report from the Provincial Congress Committee has been received for the Council of State election. If the local Congress organisation recommends somebody, it will not be possible for the Central Board to overrule it. When I spoke to some of them at Karachi, I was informed that they had not considered the question at all. They thought that it was too premature at that time. My advice would be that you should try to win the goodwill of the local people. It is not for the Centre to impose its decision on them. It would not work.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbai Patel

Sjt. Lalchand Navalrai
Ex-MLA (Central)
Larkana
Sind

Chelsfield
 Ekatauna
 New Zealand
 18 March 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Very many thanks for your letter. It was a great wrench leaving India but I had decided to go before the June 1948 announcement and I was surprised when some of the Sind Ministers came and asked me not to go and I had to say that if there was serious trouble and the Sind Government wanted me to come back for a time, I would do so. I had never thought of running away and I owe so much to India to leave if I could help but I do not think I could help in Sind. My views and outlook differ entirely from that of the new Governor, Sir Francis Mudie.¹ He is different from any man in our Service I have ever met, and I could only conclude that the training and traditions of the ICS in North India differ greatly from that in Bombay and as he is Governor and I am not, it is as well I left. He was anxious that I should resign my office of Chief Justice before I left. So, I believe that Sir Ghulam's² nephew could be made a permanent judge of our Chief Court at once. But both the RA [Revenue Account] and the Comptroller thought I should not resign my office of Chief Justice until my leave expires. So it was not necessary for me to do so and I had to promise some of the Ministers I would not resign in case circumstances required I should return. This is for yourself alone but I thought you ought to know, should the case come before you.

I am staying here with relations. The country is very like England. There are some good newspapers. . . . Do not trouble to answer.

Yours sincerely,
 Godfrey Davis
 [Chief Justice of Sind]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

¹ Home Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1945; Governor of Sind, 1946-47; Governor of West Punjab in Dominion of Pakistan, 1947-49

² Ghulam Husain Hidayatullah; First Premier of Sind when it separated from Bombay Presidency



NEHRU AND PATEL CONFER INFORMALLY



SARDAR PATEL LEAFS THROUGH A FILE IN A RELAXED MOOD

Caxton House
Annic Besant Road
Karachi
20 March 1946

Dear Sardarji,

Here is a bit of interesting information for what it is worth. Of his own accord, Khuhro¹ told me yesterday that the Ministry might break. He even hinted that the actual breaking would be not over the no-confidence motion but over the budget demands. I did not know what importance to attach to this voluntary information but I utilised it to persuade Gazder to read out the speech I had prepared for him completely vindicating the Congress position in respect of your and Maulana Sahib's mission. You would find a full summary of the speech in today's issue of *The Daily Gazette*. Both sides appear to be waiting and watching.

I resumed duty on 6 March but did not write to you as things were well settled here. My agreement with the proprietors of this paper is to expire on 31 March. Although they are now offering to renew the agreement, I am biding my time to decide whether it is worth my while to stay on if a League Government is going to function. Ghulam Hussain has vowed vengeance. But I am not afraid of the old fool.

Yours sincerely,
M. S. M. Sharma²

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

¹ M. A. Khuhro: Active Muslim Leaguer who was charged with murder of Allah Bux, Premier of Sind, but acquitted on final appeal: opposed intrusion of Punjabis into Sind politics and championed Sind for Sindhis

² Editor, *Daily Gazette*, Karachi

21 March 1946

My dear Lalji,

I have seen the proceedings of the no-confidence motion in the Sind Assembly. It is good that we have succeeded in establishing the fact that the League Ministry is in fact not a League Ministry but Mudie Ministry supported now openly by the European bloc. The Leader of the European bloc made a speech in defence of the action of the League Ministry about the commutation of death sentence and compared this case with that of Chimur-Asthi commutation, which is surprising. It is clear that but for the Governor's action of suppressing facts and adopting the unconstitutional and arbitrary procedure of calling the leader of a party which was not in majority and refusing to call the leader of a majority party, the League would not have been able to form a ministry.

I am enclosing herewith a cutting about a conference to be called by Mr. G. M. Syed at Delhi in the first week of April. I should like to know more about it and if you have any idea please let me know what are his plans.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Lalji Mehrotra
Karachi

25 March 1946

My dear Sharma,

I have received your letter of the 20th instant, from which I learn that you resumed your duty [as editor of Daily Gazette, Karachi] on 6 March.

It is surprising that the Mudie Ministry has lasted so long. I was almost certain that it would collapse at the very first sitting of the Assembly but Sind is a peculiar province and often unexpected things happen. In fact, the ministry could never have been

formed but for the Governor. Since its formation its fall was expected every minute. This expectation is still not abandoned and you need not hesitate to accept the offer for the renewal of your agreement because of the existence of the League Ministry, as its existence is so precarious that you need not have the slightest fear of its effective life.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. M. S. M. Sharma
The Daily Gazette
Karachi

119

Karachi
25 March 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

You might be interested to know an aside with Sir Stafford Cripps whom I asked whether, in the event of a breakdown of their negotiations consequent upon Mr. Jinnah's continued intransigence and taciturnity, he thought that the British had a technique ready with which to cope with another resistance movement in India. Sir Stafford was not taken aback and he even authorised me to use his reply. "My friend," he stated, "do not look back; rather look forward. We are determined to succeed and nothing will stop us."

I also took occasion to inform him of the ridiculous constitutional convention of Mudie's making that any party which had set up the largest number of candidates was entitled to be called to form the ministry. He thought I was joking. But when I insisted that what I was stating was a fact, he expressed surprise. I should not be surprised if he had talked to Mudie about this. But I have no information. It might, however, interest you to know that I had caused it to be conveyed to Mudie through a common friend that, if he continued to be unpleasant, the Congress High Command would not hesitate to make it a preliminary condition of negotiations with the Cabinet Mission that ICS Governors bent upon thwarting our progress should either be recalled or removed from office. This message was conveyed to Mudie at Khuhro's dinner party the other night.

I also informed Sir Stafford Cripps that the local Europeans were making themselves the laughing stock of India by their open

association with a party which was resolved upon thwarting the good work for which the Mission had come out to this country. Replying to his question, I stated that Mr. Jinnah was determined to obstruct and that, if in response to Jinnah's instruction, the only League Ministry refused to co-operate with the Centre in the task of setting up a national government, the European group was simply abetting this backdoor arrangement in collaboration with the Governor. Naturally, it was not possible for me to gain an insight into his reactions for lack of time.

But I have no such illusions really; Sir Ghulam Hussain solemnly assured me last night that he would tell Jinnah that such a position as I had visualised would both be improper and dishonest because the Ministry and the opposition were so equally divided in strength as to give an equal opportunity to the opposition in Sind. For some unknown reason the Premier was beginning to get sweet to me. I was surprised. I soon knew the reason. He himself told me. The story was this. I am repeating it to you in confidence and in the hope that, in case you take it up with the party concerned, my name would be kept out for obvious reasons. The Premier was asked by me what he proposed to do to implement his offer of a coalition between the Congress and the League in terms of the suggestion by Colonel Mahon. Sir Ghulam Hussain replied more or less as follows: "I shall break the present coalition. Nihchaldas¹ has already promised to sow discord in his party. You also tell Nihchaldas that it is a shame that he is not being invited to confer with the Cabinet Delegation." Quietly, however, I dropped the conversation in so far as it related to this aspect of politics. But yesterday I was staggered to know that Nihchaldas did indeed make an attempt in the Congress party to create dissensions although, I am glad to say, unsuccessfully. Some days ago, he also mortally wounded the susceptibilities of Sheikh Abdul Majid by insulting him in a manner the details whereof would not make pleasant reading. But the whole thing appears to have been inspired by Sir Ghulam Hussain who wants to obstruct the chances of a good understanding between you and Sheikh because Ghulam Hussain fears that you might succeed in getting a place for Sheikh in the Executive Council of the Central Government.

I am sorry to say that the Hindus in the Congress party—at least some of them—are more Hindu Sabhaites than Congressmen but that could not be helped. But I do hope that the ban

¹ Nihchaldas C. Vazirani, Advocate of Karachi; minister in Allah Bux Cabinet in Sind; independent in politics

you had imposed on me during the elections in respect of Nihchaldas has now ceased to be operative.

Yours sincerely,
M. S. M. Sharma

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

PS.

Before you get this letter the ministry may have collapsed.
M. S. M.

120

28 March 1946

My dear Sharma,

Your letter of the 25th instant was received today. I do not know what Sjt. Nihchaldas is doing but I have not heard any complaint against him as yet from the party. I do not think he will go against party discipline as he is likely to finish up his career if he were to do any such thing.

You expected the ministry to fall but your expectations were premature. The attempt made has done harm to the Coalition and perhaps strengthened the ministry. It has affected the reputation of the Coalition, which stood on clean grounds up to now. Sind is a peculiar province, where principles hold no field, nor can anybody be trusted to keep his word or promise. It is a strange place. I wish to know why you want freedom to criticise Sjt. Nihchaldas in the Press. You must give me some idea about your complaint. It is unwise to attack the Coalition in the Press as it is likely to create dissensions and Sjt. Nihchaldas may think that some of his colleagues in the Coalition may be at the back of the affair. I am at a distance and it is difficult for me to ascertain and to assess facts.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. M. S. M. Sharma
Karachi

27 March 1946

My dear Lalji,

Up to now the Coalition Party was able to hold its head high as it stood on clean record and on principles. By making a settlement with Mir Bundeh Ali,¹ the Coalition Party compromised its position and damaged its reputation, as it had to offer a very high price for inducing him to come out of his party and join the Coalition. On top of this, the failure of Mir Bundeh Ali to stand by his promise made the position of the Coalition more vulnerable and ridiculous. Sometimes even improper actions are covered and forgotten if they result in achieving the objective. Here the failure exposed the impropriety of the action more aggressively. Undoubtedly there was pressure to which he succumbed, but that should have been expected. Besides there was a price paid to him which he might have considered sufficient as it kept him on square with his electorate as he had not to leave the party to which he belonged. We have a very weak case to look to the higher authorities for help as our initial action is not exceptional. If Mir Bundeh Ali had left the League without any offer of inducement or price, it would have been possible to effectively attack the source that put pressure on him. Our hands not being clean, it is difficult to expect help on the principle that he who seeks equity must also do equity.

The budget session will be over by the end of this month and perhaps they will not call the Assembly again for a long time to come and so the present ministry is fairly fixed unless something unexpected happens in the interval.

I am enclosing herewith a cutting which I have received from Delhi drawing my attention to Dr. Hemandas'² note of warning on an extract from Mr. Syed's speech reported in the *Sind Observer* of the 22nd.

¹ Member, Sind Legislature

² Popular doctor in Jacobabad and member, Sind Legislature

Please keep me informed of the situation there from time to time.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Lalji Mehrotra
Messrs. Bacchraj Factories Ltd.
Karachi

122

EXTRACT

Karachi
23 May 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I have not written to you nor got into any telephonic talks with you after you left Karachi. That duty, by common consent, had been assigned to my friend, Lalji Mehrotra. He is however out of station, having gone to Kashmir for a change. I am therefore taking the privilege of writing to you this letter.

I have no doubt in my mind that your strong stand has achieved success for India. I have always believed that weakness never pays. I have read Mr. Jinnah's statement. He has pleased himself by calling the two alleged groups as two Pakistans. This indicates that he or his Working Committee is going to accept the proposals. A bully is always a coward and he and his Muslim League Nawabs answer that description fully.

Mr. G. M. Syed's group have passed a resolution saying that all have failed because they have not made each province a separate independent unit. The resolution is to the effect that all these [provincial] units should have a common centre and that each unit should receive equal representation at the centre. He is against grouping or sub-federations. So far his proposals are not bad. His proposal, even if accepted, will give preponderance to the Congress. Of course he has added that in the representation given to each unit, Hindus and Muslims should have equal numbers. That of course is absurd as I told him that 8% or 10% population cannot have parity with 90% population in some provinces. Poor man is neither here nor there. He thinks he has now got an opportunity to strike at Jinnah and his League.

In Sind the Cabinet is divided into two definite parties. One wing is led by Sir Ghulam Hussain and has its members Mir

Ghulam Ali¹ and Pir Illahi Bux²; the other is led by Khuhro with Mir Bunde Ali Khan and Pir Abdul Sattar³ as members.

* * *

I would seek your advice as to the member who should represent the Hindus of Sind in the Constitution-making body. There is Mr. Jairamdas Doulatram⁴ outside the Assembly. He, however, now leads a retired life and I don't know whether he would undertake the trouble and responsibility of going to the Constitution-making body.

* * *

From inside the Legislature the aspirants might be Prof. Malkani,⁵ Prof. Ghanshyam⁶ and Mr. Sidhwa. You know each one of them. As for myself, if you or the Congress members of the Legislature are of the view that I should undertake this duty, I shall do so. But otherwise I won't like to have a division over this question for my sake.

Wishing you health and complete success,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
Nihchaldas C. Vazirani

123

2 June 1946

My dear Nihchaldas,

I have your letter of 23 May, perhaps for the first time after I left Karachi. I had not heard anything from Sind since a long time.

We had a busy time for about two months in Delhi and Simla. So far we have done a very good job of the thing and I hope we will hear no more of that mischievous cry of Pakistan. In any event, the Muslim League will expect no such thing from the British Government or to secure any assistance from that quarter for that purpose.

¹ Minister in Allah Bux Cabinet in Sind

² Muslim League leader of Sind; minister in League Cabinet

³ Minister in Allah Bux Cabinet

⁴ Member, AICC, 1917; MLC (Bombay), 1927-29; General Secretary, AICC, 1931-34; member, Congress Working Committee; Member CA 1941; Bihar Governor, 1947; later Union Minister and Governor Assam

⁵ Constructive Gandhian worker devoted to Harijan uplift and propagation of khadi

⁶ Ghanshyam Jethanand: Leader of Congress party in Sind Legislature

Regarding the clause of grouping, I feel certain that the Muslims of Sind as a whole will not like to be ruled by Punjab and have a capital in Delhi for the Union and one at Lahore for the Group. In my opinion, no province will be willing to sacrifice provincial autonomy. It is against human nature and this grouping is not going to help the Muslim League at all. But our objection to it is on principle. The Cabinet Delegation cannot and should not coerce any province to go into a group against its own will, although it has freedom to opt out later.

I have seen the Syed group's resolution. I dislike entirely their demand for equal representation in the Centre. The Muslim League asked for parity but I opposed it stoutly. Parity in any shape or form is against the very principles of democracy and no amount of quibbling can justify it. Indeed Syed has got a very good opportunity to strike at Jinnah because Jinnah and the League have secured nothing for the Muslims after a struggle of five years against the Congress and after the spreading of so much communal bitterness. His main demand of Pakistan is buried forever. His demand for parity is not accepted. The Muslims in the Hindu majority provinces have lost weightage in the Constituent Assembly. They will be in a hopeless minority. The principle of representation on a population basis is accepted. The only thing that he got, as a face-saving device, is grouping which will be seriously opposed by his own people.

The Muslim Leaguers in their convention at Delhi took oath under which they are bound not to enter the Interim Government till the principle of Pakistan is accepted. All of them are now anxious to go in in spite of the pledge.

You will soon find cracks and quarrels in the Muslim League everywhere. You are suggesting Sheikh Abdul Majid as a representative for the Constituent Assembly as a good nationalist. Perhaps you may be right but I can trust nobody who wants more representation for his community at the cost of the other community. All nationalists must accept the principle of representation on a population basis. No device to turn a majority into a minority can be accepted under any circumstances. In our anxiety to placate the Muslim League, we have diluted nationalism to such an extent that it has almost lost its original genuine appearance.

I am not in touch with Jairamdas [Doulatram] at all. He is so much involved in his domestic affairs, owing to his daughter's illness, to whom he is so much devoted that he will hardly find time for the Constituent Assembly. Besides, his health is also not quite all right.

In the Constituent Assembly we want men who can make a good contribution in the complicated task of Constitution-making or drafting and we certainly want men of ability and experience. We have not yet decided about the question of selection but we hope to do so and issue instructions, as soon as we are able to settle with the British Government finally about the points that we have raised in our resolution.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Nihchaldas C. Vazirani
Karachi

124

EXTRACT

Karachi
8 June 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I acknowledge with thanks receipt of your letter of 2nd instant.

I hasten to bring to your notice one point which has not yet been mentioned in the Press. It is about grouping. The point is whether any province has the right by a majority vote of the Assembly to opt out from the group in which it is compulsorily put in, after the Constitution is made and election is held in pursuance of that Constitution. According to me this point has been purposely left vague. You would notice that it has been expressly mentioned in the para giving right after 10 years to the provinces to ask for the revision of the Constitution that that object could be achieved by a majority vote. No such provision of majority vote has been made in para 19 (VIII) which deals with the question of opting out. It appears to me that the group body, say, of Punjab, NWFP, Bahuchistan and Sind, can by a majority provide in the Constitution that they would be framing, that no unit can opt out except by a two-thirds majority. If that is permissible then neither the NWFP nor Sind can ever opt out. That would result in perpetual injustice to these provinces and Pakistan would be established in practice forever.

Yours sincerely,
Nihchaldas Chaturmal Vazirani

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

EXTRACT

Karachi

19 June 1946

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

As regards grouping, the (Cabinet) Minister's statement decides that at the initial stage the provinces shall belong to the various sections. The respective sections shall then decide whether they will form themselves into groups or not; and if they decide to form a group, then they should further decide what subjects should be assigned to the group.

Now take *B-G* group. The provinces put in that section are Sind, British Baluchistan, NWFP Province and the Punjab. Suppressing three provinces—Baluchistan, the NWFP and Sind—by a majority of 3 provinces out of 4, say they shall not form a group, will their vote prevail, or is that decision also to be taken by a majority of the members of the Constituent Assembly belonging to that section? I think if three out of four provinces say so, their vote should prevail. On the other hand, according to the representation on the Constituent Assembly, the Punjab gets 26 members, Sind only 4, NWFP Province 3, British Baluchistan 7—total 36. Out of this total of 36, only 8 members belong to the three provinces and 28 to one province. Is it the intention that one Punjab can compel the three other provinces to form a group against their will and also to decide what subjects should belong to the group? That would be unjust.

I suggest that if on the question of representation of the Congress in the Interim Government there is going to be a good solution, then at least this point should be got clarified or suitably amended so as to give a right to the rest of the section to decide by a majority vote that there shall be no grouping.

The Minister has made a distinction between sections and groups. They are not likely to amend the clause in such a way as to make it optional for the provinces to get into a particular section or not, because they stand committed on that point. But as it is already provided in the White Paper that the respective sections shall decide whether they shall form groups or not, they

can say that for the purpose of coming to that decision each unit shall have an equal voice. It would be sheer injustice to give the power to the representatives of a single province to decide that three other autonomous provinces should compulsorily group with that one province against their will.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
Nihalaldas G. Vazirani

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

126

New Delhi
12 June 1946

My dear Nihalaldas,

I have received your letters of the 8th and 10th inst.

There are certain points in the Cabinet Mission's proposals which bear different interpretations and there are some which require explanation. But it is unnecessary to go into the details of these contradictions and omissions or ask for their explanations, as the document is final and the proper time for interpretation will come when the Constituent Assembly meets. I have no doubt in my mind that according to the legal interpretation of the document, the provinces are free to join or not to join, even in the first instance and after the group constitution is framed, they have a further right to opt out of the group. I have seen the point raised by you also. I do not think it is wise to open up these matters at this stage. If we find the proposals otherwise satisfactory and the interim arrangement is made to our satisfaction, it would be wise to accept the proposals. But it is just likely that the whole thing may break on the question of composition of the Interim Government. This, in our opinion, is a vital matter and the result of our discussions will end one way or the other in a day or two.

I have seen the statements of Syed and his party but they are in a small minority and would not be able to affect the decision. If the majority of the Muslims in Sind realise that they will lose their provincial autonomy, they are bound to oppose it and when the time for consideration of grouping will come, the people of Sind will realise its full implications. Nobody wants to sacrifice

one's own provincial patriotism and I have little doubt that this formation of groups will create dissensions in the Muslim League itself. But we must wait till the proposals are accepted and the time for the meeting of the Constituent Assembly comes.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Nihchaldas Vazirani
Karachi

127

TELEGRAM

Amil Colony
Karachi
21 June 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Birla House
New Delhi

MEETING ASSEMBLY PARTY TOMORROW. QUESTION NOMINATION REPRESENTATIVES CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WILL BE DISCUSSED. LAST DATE NOMINATIONS SECOND JULY. SIND ASSEMBLY MEETING FIFTH JULY FOR ELECTIONS. KINDLY WIRE INSTRUCTIONS PROCEDURE.

GHANSHYAM JETHANAND

128

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
25 June 1946

Ghanshyam Jethanand
Amil Colony
Karachi

YOUR WIRE. CONGRESS ACCEPTS CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY PROPOSALS. IF JAIRAMDAS AGREE ADVISE ELECT HIM.

VALLABHBHAI

Karachi
15 July 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Sind politics again occupy front page. We have definitely added two more members to the Coalition Party. Neither K. B.¹ Fazal Mohd. Khan nor K. S.² Sardar Khan are seekers of any jobs. K. B. Fazal Mohd. Khan enjoys a very good reputation for the sanctity of his promises, and is considered fairly reliable. K. B. Fazal Mohd. Khan has acted in accordance with the declared wishes of his voters. His supporters are with him. The tract to which he belongs is really backward and the only promise they have got from us is with regard to the prosecution of irrigation schemes and other works connected with his tract. K. B. Sardar Khan gave full trial to the other side and has then come over. He is not a Muslim Leaguer by conviction. Neither did he stand on the Muslim League ticket.

The present Governor is a nuisance. We think we have got a very clear case now. We have demanded that the Governor should call an early session. We have also requested the Governor-General to exercise his controlling powers under Sec. 54 of the Government of India Act and direct the Governor to call the session at an early date. Mr. Malkani has been deputed to go and see Pandit Jawaharlal and post him up with all facts, as Panditji had issued a strong statement on the subject. I have no doubt in my mind that the Governor was wrong in proroguing the Assembly and thus shutting out the no-confidence motions.

This is a very important question. A principle is involved. Election petitions are pending against four members of our party, including Sardar Khan. The Ministers and the Governor would do everything in their power to harass them. How can a ministry be allowed to carry on government after it was proved on the floor of the House that it had no majority? On the 12th we were 31 in the opposition and there were only 24 on the government benches. The Speaker himself said that it was obvious that the Government had no majority.

¹ Khan Bahadur

² Khan Sahib

Do kindly treat this as an all-India question. From the conduct of the Governor it is arguable that the British are not serious in their professions. I have no doubt that the Governor did consult the Viceroy before passing his order.

How long can it be permissible for a minority party to carry on government? The Government of India Act does not contain a provision of meeting being called on the requisition of members. We however have sent a requisition signed by 31 members to the Governor. Section 52 of the Government of India Act vests the power of calling a meeting in the Governor and this power he is to exercise in his discretion and therefore can ignore the ministers' advice. The ministers will avoid as much as they can.

Something has to be done to maintain the prestige of the Congress. Sessions should be called before 15 August.

With respects,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
Nihchaldas C. Vazirani

Shri Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

130

30 July 1946

My dear Nihchaldas,

I received your letter of the 15th inst. only a couple of days back owing to the postal strike, which is still on. I am therefore sending this letter through a friend who is coming there.

Your Governor has at last called the Assembly meeting on 5 September. The Ramzan came as a handy excuse. Otherwise it would have been called earlier because he had to call the meeting in spite of his disinclination to do so.

In view, however, of the resolution passed by the Muslim League Council yesterday in Bombay regarding the boycott of the Constituent Assembly, it is doubtful whether any good result will come out of your efforts. The repercussions of the League resolution on direct action may be such as would drive all the Assembly members who have left the League recently to its fold again because the fanaticism of the Muslim masses may be roused to such a pitch that they may not be able to hold on to their position.

The leaders of the League have at last realised that in the negotiations they have lost all along the line and got nothing and

therefore they are anxious now to wriggle out of their acceptance of the scheme. They are, therefore, out for trouble and I am afraid your province may have a bad time. But there is no help. The nation has to go through the ordeal. I hope you will all stand together in the coming crisis.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Nihchaldas C. Vazirani
Karachi

131

TELEGRAM

Karachi
19 July 1946

Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

SIND GOVERNMENT APPOINTED COLLECTOR RAZA AS SECRETARY SIND DELEGATION TO CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY FOR COLLECTING DATA AND FOR FRAMING PROPOSALS CONCERNING FUTURE SIND CONSTITUTION. I INTEND OBJECT APPOINTMENT FIXING FUNCTIONS WITHOUT CONSULTING DELEGATION. KINDLY WIRE IF CONGRESS GOVERNMENT ALSO APPOINTING SECRETARIES TO DELEGATIONS SIMILARLY.

JAIRAMDAS

132

TELEGRAM

Karachi
23 July 1946

Vallabhbhai Patel
Marine Drive
Bombay

FEEL APPOINTMENT SMALL EXPERT COMMITTEE LEGAL OTHER MATTERS 'B' SECTION ESSENTIAL. KINDLY MOVE JAWAHARLAL IF NECESSARY. HOPE YOUR CONTINUED EFFORTS SECURE PRESENCE. SIKHS IN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WILL SUCCEED.

JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM
CARE HINDU

Bombay
30 July 1946

My dear Jairamdas,

I had received two telegrams from you, one about the appointment of Collector Raza as Secretary of the Sind Delegation to the Constituent Assembly and another suggesting the appointment of a small expert committee. Both these telegrams were received but I could not send a reply owing to the post and telegraph strike. The strike is still on and I am, therefore, sending this letter through a friend who is coming there.

I do not know of any such appointment being made in the Congress provinces. But the question becomes less important now owing to the Muslim League Council having passed a resolution withdrawing its assent and of boycotting the Constituent Assembly.

I see that the Governor has after all fixed 5 September as the day for the Sind Assembly meeting. But I am not sure what repercussions the boycott resolution will have in your province. It is quite possible that the fanaticism of the Muslim masses will once again be roused to such a pitch that those who were against the present ministry may not be able to hold on to their position till the last. I expect we will have trouble in India, because the League seems determined to wreck the scheme, as they have found that they have gained nothing and lost all along the line in the negotiations. I am afraid there will be more trouble in your province than anywhere else. But there is no help. We have to go through this ordeal.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Jairamdas Doulatram

30 July 1946

My dear Sharma,

I have your letter of the 24th inst. sent through a messenger. The postal strike is still on and therefore I am sending this through a friend.

I expected you to meet me in Bombay, as you had sent me a telegram. Shri Nihchaldas was in correspondence with me on the question of grouping but the postal strike intervened and his letters were delayed and I could not reply. This question has now become unimportant because of the resolution of boycott passed by the Muslim League Council yesterday in Bombay.

Your Governor's action this time created a stir and its repercussions would have been serious had it not been for the intervention of Ramzan, which came as a handy excuse for delaying the calling of the Assembly meeting. He has fixed it now on 5 September, soon after the Ramzan month is over. This question, however, will not perhaps be of much importance as the resolution of the Muslim League Council and its aftermath may again stir up fanaticism to such a pitch that those who had left the League may again be driven back to its fold, and the no-confidence motion may once more fail. It is difficult to say what would happen after a month. The League is out for trouble. Its leaders have realised at last that they have lost all along the line and gained nothing in the negotiations. Therefore they want to wriggle out of their acceptance. Your province may find itself in trouble and turmoil. But there is no help. The nation has to go through this ordeal. Freedom's price has got to be paid.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbai Patel

Shri M. S. M. Sharma
Karachi

135

Karachi
3 August 1946

My dear Sardarji,

I am enclosing herewith translations of statements published in the Sind Observer dated 3-8-46 issued by Mir Ghulam Ali, Home Minister, and Pir Illahi Bux, Revenue Minister, Sind Government, and an editorial of Alwahid, a Muslim League daily of Karachi, originally [published] in Sindhi, and an extract from the Daily Gazette dated 3-8-46.

Subsequent to the passing of the resolutions in the recent meeting of the Council of the All India Muslim League held at Bombay, communal tension in Sind has worsened, as evidenced by

the enclosed matter. Such statements made by responsible ministers are all the more deplorable and are very likely to further increase lawlessness in this unfortunate province unless immediate steps are taken to remedy the situation.

Yours sincerely,
Choithram P. Gidwani¹

136

5 August 1946

My dear Dr. Choithram,

I received your letter of the 3rd inst. along with its enclosures yesterday. I am not surprised that the communal situation has since worsened in your province and it is due to the inexcusable behaviour of responsible Ministers. Greater responsibility is that of the Governor who is encouraging this by his unconstitutional conduct. The nation, however, has to pass through this trial and I hope that in the test it will not be found wanting.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Choithram P. Gidwani
Karachi

137

5 August 1946

My dear Sidhwa,

Your letters were delivered to me only yesterday owing to the postal strike. I am glad that you have been elected from CP without any difficulty, and the Parsi friends there have been very accommodative.

Your Governor has at last called the meeting of your Assembly on 5 September, much against his will. But I am afraid he will do his best to frustrate your efforts to get the resolution of no-confidence passed.

I am surprised to hear about the reaction caused there by the recent resolution of the League Council. Why should such empty threats and vulgar abuses affect your party's course of action? Please keep me informed of the events that may take place in your

¹ Congress leader of Sind; President, Sind PCC, before independence; Chief spokesman of Sind in Congress organisation

province on account of the League resolution and the calling of the meeting of the Assembly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri R. K. Sidhwa, MLA
Victoria Road
Karachi

138

EXTRACT FROM MR. R. K. SIDHWA'S LETTER OF 16 AUGUST 1946
TO SARDAR PATEL

While I was in Delhi Sardar Baldev Singh, Punjab Minister, was in the same hotel where I was and he told me that the calling of our session of 5 September is at the instance of the Viceroy. It is just possible as the past conduct of Mudie I would not accept that he of his own accord has summoned it. As you rightly state, he would do his best to frustrate our efforts. Yusuf Chandio who is at present the Parliamentary Secretary has resigned on the bait of being offered [a seat in the] Ministry by our friends. This is an old story. I enclose a cutting from which you will see he has not yet joined our party. In any case I will not be sure unless he votes with us. He has given us a slip many a time before. Today we are in a majority of two votes; I do not know what may happen on the 5th. On the day I left for Delhi viz., 9th, Europeans were to meet and take a decision in view of the changed situation. I have not yet met them, but my information is that they are yet undecided. If Europeans still decide to support the League, it will be taken for certain that the Governor has a hand in it. I am however glad that the Congress having accepted to form the Government at the centre, you will take note of his actions when you come into office. I entirely agree with you and at the very first meeting I told Syed and Majid as to why our party should at all be disturbed by the action of the League.

139

New Delhi
25 August 1946

My dear Sidhwa,

I have received your letter of the 16th instant. After all your Assembly meets in the beginning of September and let us hope

this time there will be no repetition of the same old story and the Ministry will be dethroned. Dr. Choithram was here and he has informed me of the present situation there.

Unfortunately the Europeans in India still sympathise with the Muslim League and the Governor there will not allow them to vote against the Ministry even if they want to do so.

The Provisional Government has been announced and we propose to take charge on 2 September. Perhaps this will make a change in the atmosphere.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri R. K. Sidhwa
Karachi

140

EXTRACTS

Karachi
17 August 1946

Dear Sardar Sahib,

I hope the Congress is taking over the reins of Government in a few days.

You know the Governor of Sind. There is no change in his attitude. He would do all possible mischief.

If a Sind Muslim, a non-League one, is taken in the Interim Government, it would encourage all non-League Muslims in Sind and the whole outlook would change.

I would very earnestly request that you should [give] this matter your serious consideration.

With regards,

I am,
Yours very sincerely,
Nihchaldas C. Vazirani

Shriman Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

New Delhi
21 August 1946

My dear Nihchaldas,

I have your letter of yesterday, in which you strongly advocate the case of Sheikh Abdul Majid. It is difficult for us to accommodate all interests, provincial and others, when we have got a very restricted space. In these matters, we have to be guided mainly by Maulana [Azad] Sahib's advice.

I have also received your letter of the 17th instant. We are fully aware of the attitude of your Governor. He and his tribe will do their worst before they quit India. They cannot forgive the Congress which has compelled them to be prepared to leave.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Nihchaldas C. Vazirani
Karachi

Karachi
26 August 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Thanks for your letter of the 21st instant. I fully appreciate the situation. There are still two vacancies.

Maula Bux must have informed you that we have hope of overthrowing the Ministry.

Ministers have called volunteers from [all over] the province to be present at Karachi on 5 September, the day on which the no-confidence motion is to be taken up for admission. They are enlisting 'Jan Bazes,' a sort of suicide battalion, who are on oath of sacrificing their lives. They have fixed 8 and 9 September, as days for holding a big Muslim League session at Karachi. These are the days on which the no-confidence motion would be discussed. The excuse is the election of provincial League office-bearers.

They are adopting all illegitimate means to coerce the members of our party.

We have a very unscrupulous Collector in the person of Mr. Masud, ICS, Collector of Nawabshah. He came personally to Karachi and had the temerity to beg Haji Maula Bux to go to the League. He failed. He then tried to put into jail Mr. Newandram, MLA, on the excuse of his having committed contempt of court. But he failed there. He created a lot of mischief in Bombay. He has been thrust on us. We wish to be rid of him.

Ministers have ordered the issue of a warrant of arrest of Dadankhan, one of our members, under the Land Revenue Code. That is a funny matter. Dadankhan's nephew has gone under the protection of the Court of Wards. He was separate from Dadankhan. Ministers have held, without any inquiry or material and against facts, that Dadankhan must have been in possession for previous four years and must have made a profit of Rs. 34,000 and they have asked that the amount be recovered as arrears of land revenue by putting Dadankhan into jail.

We shall however get through, I hope, and then deal with the matters.

Probably the question of dealing with Hurs, and the successor of the Pir of Pagaro¹ might have to be dealt with by you. These are questions that would affect the peace of our province. I would like to be heard before you take any decisions. There is however no particular hurry. Such questions can wait.

Possibly some change might have to be made in the nominated members of the Central Legislative Assembly in order to get more reliable and competent men. In that event, you should kindly bear in mind the name of Pir Ali Mahomed Rashdi.

With kind regards,

I am,
Yours very sincerely,
Nihchaldas C. Vazirani

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

¹ Hereditary head of Hur tribe in Sind

New Delhi
29 August 1946

My dear Nihchaldas,

I have received your letter of the 26th instant. Both Haji Moula Bux and Dr. Choithram have appraised us of the situation there. We are passing through difficult times and we must face them manfully. In Sind the official alliance with the League makes the position more difficult.

I do not know when Mr. Masud was transferred but I believe that he got himself transferred before the Congress Ministry [assumed] office in Bombay. There was some enquiry pending against him and he was naturally frightened. I was under the impression that he got himself transferred to the Government of India but from your letter it seems that he has been placed as Collector of Nawabshah.

They will strain every nerve to keep the present Ministry in office and I would not be surprised if their efforts succeed once again.

Complicated questions like the successor of Pir Pagaro, the general question of dealing with the Hurs etc., may be allowed to wait for some time. We are taking office on 2 September and we must allow some time till we have a grasp of the situation. We have not decided what to do about the nominated bloc.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Nihchaldas C. Vazirani
Karachi

Karachi
24 August 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I hope you have received my letter dated 22nd instant with enclosures. I am enclosing herewith a copy of the circular issued

by the Sind Provincial Muslim League. It fully justifies our fears about disturbances at the time of the next Sind Assembly sessions. The circular purports to be a notice of an election meeting, but it discloses the preparations that are being made to collect Muslim League volunteers for the purpose of carrying into effect the threats of the agents of the Ministers to create disturbances in order to retain the League Ministry in power. I am writing this just to keep you informed.

Yours sincerely,
R. K. Sidhwa

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACTS FROM A CIRCULAR OF THE SIND PROVINCIAL MUSLIM LEAGUE

To elect the office-bearers for the New Year and to discuss other important matters, the annual general body meeting of the Sind Provincial Muslim League Council will be held on 8 and 9 September 1946, at the Idgah Maidan, Bunder Road, in a large grand tent to be put up, so as to accommodate over 3,000 visitors.

Around the large tent in which the Council will hold its sittings will be put up three small tents on each of the four sides and in these will be lodged batches of Muslim National Guards, who will come from different districts . . . and Salare Suba. In one of them in the south will be accommodated the Council of the Provincial Muslim League office. The Council of the Provincial Muslim League will issue directions to all district presidents and Salars to depute 10 Muslim Guards under the salarship of the Salare Suba, so as to reach Karachi on 7 September. The District salars will reach Karachi on the evening of 5 September as on the next day there will be a meeting of all district salars in the provincial League office. Salare Suba is already engaged in making the necessary arrangement and further programme and plans will be released as soon as they are ready. It is hoped that the Muslim Leaguers from all corners of Sind will attend the session in thousands.

New Delhi
27 August 1946

My dear Sidhwa,

I have received your letters of the 22nd and 24th instant along with their enclosures.

The Muslim League tried its programme of direct action in Calcutta and to their great bewilderment they have found out that two can play at the game although it may be started by one. The poor Muslims in Calcutta have suffered terribly and the League has discredited itself by their doings in Calcutta. If they follow the same method of arson, loot, murder and anarchy, they may be able to inflict hardship on the non-Muslims but eventually that way will without doubt lead the League organisation to ruin and destruction.

I am not sure that your Governor will allow any violence or disturbance to take place, because he is much too clever not to understand his own responsibility and his own reputation would be at stake. He will no doubt try his best to keep the Ministry in office but he will not allow his own reputation to suffer. I hope things will ultimately straighten themselves.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri R. K. Sidhwa
Karachi

Hyder Manzil
Muslim Colony
Karachi
12 September 1946

Dear Sardar Sahib,

I enclose herewith a copy of the letter addressed by me today to His Excellency the Governor of Sind for your information.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
G. M. Syed,
Leader,
Sind Assembly Coalition Party

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Karachi
12 September 1946

His Excellency the Governor of Sind
Karachi

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to Your Excellency's letter of the 10th instant and to quote below some of the parliamentary precedents in the United Kingdom and Dominions that have been brought to my notice.

I first refer Your Excellency to the authoritative books on Constitutional Law by Mr. A. B. Keith. The first example I cite is quoted at page 168 of Responsible Government in the Dominions by Keith Volume I and at page 95 of Imperial Unity and Dominions by Keith. The facts of that precedent are as under:

2. After the general elections in New Foundland in 1908, the equality of parties made it clear that it was not possible either to have the Speaker elected or to carry on the government satisfactorily and the Prime Minister asked for further dissolution. The Governor declined this request and in his place appointed the Leader of the Opposition to the post of Prime Minister on the

understanding that he would spare no effort in order to secure that the work of government be carried on smoothly.

In our case we are prepared to give that undertaking, not only that but we are reasonably confident of securing more support.

The next precedent is quoted at page 175 Volume I of Responsible Government in the Dominions by Keith and page 96 [of] Imperial Unity and the Dominions by Keith. In 1911, the Government and Opposition parties got equally balanced in New South Wales, on account of two of the members of the Government Party having resigned. Owing to the equality of strength, the Government could not get any motion carried, (because the Speaker declined to be a partisan). The Ministry asked for prorogation of the House on the ground that they expected to have two members elected in a short time but the Governor declined to oblige the Ministry and he actually invited the Leader of the Opposition to form the Government.

3. I would also invite a reference to page 171 of Imperial Unity and the Dominions by Keith where an example is cited of the Ministry in New Zealand which honourably resigned even though a motion of no-confidence brought by the Opposition against it was defeated by the casting vote of the Speaker. The Prime Minister said, 'He did not want to carry on without a majority' and then the Opposition was called upon to form the Ministry, which they did.

4. I would also invite attention to the authoritative book bearing the title of Cabinet Government by W. Ivor Jennings.

It is stated at page 302 that the Ministry is entitled to support from the Crown only as long as it can command the majority in the House of Parliament. It is further stated at page 17 that Government without constant parliamentary support is legally impossible and it must resign as constitutional conventions also demand that course. At page 368 it is stated that it is not untrue to say that the most important part of Parliament is the Opposition in the House of Commons. At page 46 it is stated that where Government cannot get passed supplies or legislation, it cannot be suffered to continue, even if the Opposition agree to its continuance. Under such circumstances no step should be taken except in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition. At page 365 it is stated when Government has no majority, the major party in Opposition can always point to the weakness of the Government and can always assert that since the Government cannot obtain a majority, it is better to give the Opposition a chance.

5. I would also invite attention to page 154 Volume I of Responsible Government in the Dominions by Keith. It is stated that whereas in the United Kingdom the advice of the outgoing Ministry for dissolution is invariably accepted, the Governors in the Dominions have not merely a right to exercise their discretion, but they would be worthy of censure, if they did not do so.

It is further stated therein that if the dissolution is advised soon after the general elections, it would be wiser to allow the formation of a new Ministry in the hope that things will gradually be cleared up. Advice of the outgoing Ministry which has no majority, means that there may be an alternate Government which could carry on for the rest of the period, either because it has already secured a superiority in numbers or because, if given an opportunity to form a Ministry, it will succeed in detaching enough supporters of the Government to have a working majority.

I might mention that I have every reason to believe that some of the members continue to be in the Ministerial Party because of fear of harassment in case they left.

6. Your Excellency has conceded that the Government, even with the inclusion of three European votes, has no majority and has only an equality of votes. A very important Government business, viz. of supplementary demand for carrying on the work of the Lower Barrage costing Rs. 30 crores was fixed for the 10th instant. The Government could not get that grant passed and it could not spare a member to act as a chairman. Government had placed on the agenda more than a dozen Bills, none of them can be passed by them. I invite a reference to page 356 of May's Parliamentary Practice where it is stated that where Government can get only an equality of votes, it should be considered that its measures are defeated. Although that principle was laid down in the case of a division in the House of Lords, that principle is of general application and is based on a Latin maxim from Roman Law. It is obvious that no measure can be got passed without having a majority, which this Ministry admittedly does not possess. I have quoted a number of precedents which show that when the strength of a Ministry is reduced to an equality, it is tantamount to its defeat and that Ministry cannot be retained in office. I hope there would be no difficulty now for Your Excellency to come to a correct decision.

Owing to urgency of the situation and owing to the fact that the whole of India is anxious to follow all the developments in this province, I am, in anticipation of your permission, releasing this letter to the Press.

I have the honour to be,
 Sir,
 Your most obedient servant,
 [G. M. Syed]
 Leader,
 Sind Assembly Coalition Party

New Delhi
13 September 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 11th instant along with its enclosures. I had also a telephone talk with you last night.

Success will depend upon our ability to win the elections, which are bound to be held. The general elections will soon be held in Sind and in spite of all our efforts, we will have to face opposition and interference from the temporary Ministry backed by the Governor. The law eventually gives power for continuance of one or two Ministers till elections are over. We must be able to fight the elections against all odds and win.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

G. M. Syed Esq.
Karachi

EXTRACT

MAIN SUGGESTIONS IN MR. VATANMAL GIDWANIS' LETTER OF
20 SEPTEMBER 1946 ADDRESSED TO SARDAR PATEL

Dear Friend,

The Congress should not interfere in the elections in the Muslim constituencies except when:

the candidate whom the Congress is supporting accepts the Congress ticket and becomes a full-fledged member of the Congress, or

the candidate definitely and unequivocally subscribes to the Congress programme but does not like to be subject to Congress discipline. He adopts the Congress ideology of one strong Central Government with the largest possible decentralisation of functions which the provinces control.

New Delhi
26 September 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 20th instant.

I do not think the Congress can keep away altogether from the elections in the Muslim constituencies. It would be turning the Congress in Sind into a Hindu organisation. Although we failed to secure a sufficient number of Muslim seats in the last election, the percentage of votes cast against the Muslim League was fairly substantial. The immediate unpleasant and disturbing situation cannot be the criterion for a long-term programme; nor can the Congress think of giving up its right of educating the electorate of either community.

What should be done after the elections cannot be determined now. There may be differences of opinion about the policy to be pursued, but so long as it is honestly pursued, we must have no fear about the consequences.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Vatanmal G. Gidwani
Gulabsing Dispensary
Mirpurkhas (Sind)

Karachi
4 October 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I am enclosing herewith copies of letters addressed by me to the Governor of Sind and the Governor-General of India and also a copy of the notes of conversation that took place between Mr. Masud, the District Magistrate of Nawabshah, and Mr. Mahomed Ali Shah, ex-Minister, PWD.

The much apprehended official interference in the ensuing Sind Assembly elections is bound to assume larger dimensions and

the conduct of Mr. Masud will certainly lead to the province-wide mischief from other Government officials if some immediate action is not taken against the present Collector of Nawabshah.

Yours sincerely,
G. M. Syed

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Birla House
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE I

EXTRACT

Hyder Manzil
Muslim Colony
Karachi
3 October 1946

Dear Sir Francis Mudie,

I am not exaggerating in the least when I say that a widespread impression has been created by him (District Magistrate) in the minds of the people of his district that anybody venturing to oppose the League or its nominees in the elections shall look forward to nothing but hard times at his hands. This is hardly consistent with the meanest notions of freedom or of purity of elections; much less does it conform to any conceptions of non-interference on the part of Government officials in political matters like elections. Your Excellency will readily agree with me that when this is how a Collector deals with an ex-Minister of the province it should not be difficult to imagine what must be the nature of his approach to other persons in comparatively smaller situations.

Yours sincerely,
G. M. Syed

Sir Francis Mudie, KCSI, ICS
Governor of Sind
Karachi

ENCLOSURE II
EXTRACTS

Hyder Manzil
Muslim Colony
Karachi
3 October 1946

His Excellency
the Governor General of India
New Delhi

Your Excellency,

I beg to enclose herewith a copy of my letter (with accompaniments) to His Excellency the Governor of Sind regarding the blatant and reckless interference in the Sind Assembly elections by a District Collector which seems to be but a foretaste of a greater interference on a provincewide scale by the executive in Sind.

This officer has had the impertinence to coerce an ex-Minister of the province to join the ministerial party and seek its ticket in the elections. When this is how he deals with a man of that position it should not be difficult to imagine what must be, and would be, his conduct in respect of men in comparatively smaller situations. This, I venture to submit, is hardly consistent with any notions of purity and freedom of elections or of non-interference of Government officials in political matters. In the district in which this particular Collector holds office, and where as many as seven Assembly seats are to be contested, there exists a considerable state of demoralisation and excitement. Unless something is done to check this rising tide of official terrorism it is bound to spread all over the province and free elections would be an impossibility.

G. M. Syed,
Parliamentary Leader,
Sind Muslim Jamiat,
Karachi

13_October 1946

G. M. Syed, Esquire
 Hyder Manzil
 Muslim Colony
 Karachi

My dear Syed,

Many thanks for your letter of 4 October 1946, with which you enclosed correspondence relating to Mr. Masud, the District Magistrate of Nawabshah. I have brought this correspondence to the notice of His Excellency, who has written to the Governor of Sind on the subject. His Excellency shares my view that there should be complete non-interference by officials in elections.

Yours sincerely,
 Vallabhbai Patel

Karachi
 24 October 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Thanks for your letter of the 13th instant.

2. Mr. Masud is getting openly and recklessly aggressive. He was to proceed on leave for his own marriage. His leave had been sanctioned with effect from the 21st instant and Mr. Tompskin, Collector of Nasik, was appointed to relieve him. That gentleman actually arrived on the due date, but Mr. Masud got his leave cancelled. He has been retained and Mr. Tompskin had to go to other charge.

3. Mr. Masud met Liaquat Ali Khan and the tickets in his district have been given to his nominees. He had threatened Abid Shah, a district local board member, that if he helped Mahomed Ali Shah, he would be run in as a badmash.¹ Abid Shah defied him and issued a statement to the Press within a few days thereof.

¹ A bad character, hoodlum

Mr. Masud actually went and took statements of a few irresponsible men and got Abid Shah arrested, handcuffed and taken through the bazar of Nawabshah with a rope round his waist. The Sessions Judge has however released him on bail.

Terror is so great that our man, Syed Khair Shah, who lost last time by only 300 votes and who is sure to win now, is afraid to offer himself as a candidate. Mr. Masud's friends are giving out that Mr. Masud would have even arrested Mahomed Ali Shah, ex-Minister, as a badmash.

I had written to the Governor to see that orders are issued that badmashi proceedings should not be taken against respectable persons with clean records during these election times but I have received a reply that proceedings will be taken.

Things are being made a good bit hard for my group, but all the same we shall face the music.

Kindly help us as much as you can in seeing that there is no official interference in the elections.

Thanking you in anticipation,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
G. M. Syed

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

153

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
27 October 1946

Dear Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,

Thank you for showing me Mr. Syed's letter of 24 October which I return. I have sent a copy to the Governor and asked for his comments. As you know, the Governor is doing all he can to ensure that the elections are properly conducted and that Government servants are impartial.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

28 October 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Many thanks for your letter dated 27 October 1946 regarding Mr. Syed's letter of 24 October.

I wish I could share Your Excellency's confidence in the Governor's ability or willingness to ensure free elections in Sind. If what Mr. Syed has stated is correct and Mr. Masud is still being continued as District Magistrate of Nawabshah by resort to cancellation of leave, there can be only one conclusion, and that is that he is being retained for a special purpose.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Field Marshal Viscount Wavell

Karachi
27 November 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Very many thanks for your help.

The elections relating to the labour and landholders' constituencies took place yesterday. Naraindas did not act wisely. He avoided the Congress and kept only a few youths as polling agents. The electoral rolls were in Arabic Sindhi and none of his polling agents knew that language. The other side used all possible illegal methods and got thousands of false votes recorded. The result is very doubtful. There is official zabardasti.¹ But I am sure if Naraindas had acted wisely and boldly and made pucca² arrangements, he would have surely won. We have to wait in suspense.

As against this, the reports about the landholders constituency are hopeful. Mukhi would of course be returned. I believe that

¹ Resort to force or intimidation

² Indian word meaning good, correct, substantial, of standard quality of measurement, as contrasted with kachcha

Maula Baksh would also be successful. The result would be out on 6 December. If we succeed here, then it would mean a grand success as Ghulam Hussain is the leader of the Parliamentary party.

I am still very hopeful. There is hope in the following Muslim constituencies.

Three seats from Karachi district, two from Hyderabad district, two from Thar Parkar district, one Dadu, one Sukkur, one Jacobabad and one Landholders and one Nawabshah. In fact one more may come from Hyderabad and one Sardar Nabibaksh of Larkana might come to us.

But I have always counted 10 and I have not yet changed my opinion.

Mr. Jinnah proposes to tour throughout the province. We have to wait and see the effect his visit produces, but I do not apprehend any serious results.

Only official zabardasti is there; but we can do nothing effective. If only the Bombay Government were to act quickly and suspend or at least order prosecution of Mr. Masud, then there might not be so much highhandedness.

Can you not oblige by talking on the phone to Mr. Kher or Morarji? They have a very strong case and on merits they are of the opinion that action should be taken.

God bless you. You are saving India and Hindus by your strong attitude.

With respects,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
Nihchaldas C. Vazirani

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

156

29 November 1946

My dear Nihchaldas,

I have your letter of the 27th instant.

I am glad you still hold an optimistic view about the prospects of election in Sind.

I have found Naraindas is sitting on the fence and it was a mistake not to have put in a candidate at the time of nomination

in that constituency on behalf of the Congress. If that seat is lost, it will be due to our stupidity and Naraindas' vacillation.

If in the landholders' constituency you win both the seats and if it belongs to us it would indeed be a great defeat of the League forces. But you cannot be sure till the results are out.

Mr. Jinnah is to leave Karachi tomorrow. So you have a free field for a week before the elections. I do not think Sind voters would be affected much by Jinnah's tour. It is the official pressure that works on these voters in Sind. Nothing else matters.

I am going to Bombay for four or five days, having a halt at Nagpur for a day in the interval, tomorrow. I propose to return here on the 6th as we have the Constituent Assembly meeting on the 9th. I expect to hear from you about the reaction of Jinnah's activities in Sind.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Nihchaldas C. Vazirani Esq.
Karachi

157

Hyderabad (Sind)
7 December 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I am sorry to inform you that I have been defeated in the Landholders constituency.

Haji Maula Bux had also been supported by the Congress. While the arrangement was being made I as well as Mr. Vazirani pressed that Maula Bux may be given Hindu votes of only Jacobabad and Sukkur districts and half the number of votes of Larkana district. There were more than 300 voters in Larkana district, but Messrs Choithram and Lalji [Mehrotra] allotted full votes of the three districts to Maula Bux. Not only that but even in the remaining five districts several Hindus were asked by certain Congress workers (some of them very important people) to cast one vote for me and another for Maula Bux. Maula Bux got in all 1,647 votes, out of which as many as 1,100 votes were votes of Hindus. I got 1,502 votes. He thus got very few Muslim votes.

I have done my best. I had to abide by the arrangement, though my friends and workers all thought that I am losing the seat. One definitely safe Hindu seat has been lost to the Congress.

The Congress organisation is being blamed by every Hindu for having lost this Hindu seat.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Gobindram Putamdas Mukhi

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

158

New Delhi
16 December 1946

My dear Mukhi Gobindram,

I have received your letter of the 7th instant and I am sorry to hear that you have lost the re-election. It was no surprise to me, as I had warned our friends when they proposed to put Maula Bux in that constituency. My apprehensions have turned out to be true. We have gained nothing by the change. We lost one Hindu seat and got in Maula Bux by Hindu votes.

The worst is that we have lost all along the line and got bitterness instead. It was a false move, and our friends did not listen to my advice. The money spent on these elections has been a sheer waste and we have purchased enmity in the bargain. But it will leave much to learn by experience, and I hope our people there have learned a good lesson. I am sincerely sorry for your losing the seat. Let us hope that the tide will turn and you will have another opportunity to serve your province.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Gobindram Putamdas Mukhi
Hyderabad (Sind)

159

EXTRACTS

Karachi
13 December 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

The defeat is complete. It is very little consolation for us or you that highhandedness and impersonations on a very large

scale were practised and the results in some cases were due to these factors. However, I feel I should give you some idea about only one constituency. Things completely changed for the worse on 6 December. Before that the prospects were bright.

Tatta constituency—Premier's son was opponent of Osman Soomro. Osman Soomro is a casteman and a friend of Maula Bux who is an MLA now. He was present on 6 December at the time of the counting of votes in the Landholders constituency. Both Maula Bux and Osman Soomro were spat upon, wrongfully restrained for about two hours and severely beaten with fists and kicks in the compound of the Revenue Commissioner and in the presence of about 16 policemen and the Muslim Assistant Revenue Commissioner, who was the Returning Officer. None even attempted to save him. No action has been taken against the miscreants. This was the beginning of the end.

Even before this occurrence, Mr. Farukhi, a Muslim Collector of Karachi, had shown his high hand. He had purposely changed the polling stations in such a way that impersonations and highhandedness could be effectively played.

He had picked up officers from Karachi city, who were reckless and highhanded staunch Muslim Leaguers.

On the 9th there was hardly any real voting. Hardly 10% of the real voters voted. The remaining 80% [of the 90% of the total votes polled] were false votes. At every polling station several impersonators had been kept, each of whom affixed from 20 to 100 thumb impressions on as many voting papers and 80% of the votes on the voting lists were put into the ballot boxes in a few hours and the election completed. You would grant that it is impossible to get 90% voting strength specially on the electoral rolls prepared as back as 1942. It was a huge farce and hundreds of Osman's voters came and they were turned away and even their tendered votes were not recorded.

I sent my partner to be present at the time of counting. He informs me that at one polling station, viz. Tatta, he found that more than 100 voting papers had one cross each, apparently in the handwriting of an illiterate person who was unaccustomed to put crosses (real voter), in favour of Osman and then another cross on all the 100 or more in the handwriting of one person, who looked habituated to draw crosses and must therefore be a clerk, in favour of the Premier's son and thereby almost all the votes of Osman Soomro were made bad. An application in writing has been

put in before the Returning Officer. This fact clearly proves that ballot boxes were opened after the voting and extra crosses put on Osman's votes.

Most of the methods mentioned above have been followed at almost every polling station. Under the circumstances it was impossible for anyone to win.

Only one Sardarkhan Khoso has won. That also because it is a frontier district and the District Magistrate there is a European and therefore false voting could not go on a very elaborate scale.

2. I always boldly face the situation. Some say I should have anticipated this hooliganism. I confess I did not. There was heretofore no such widespread open impersonation at any elections in Sind.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
Nihchaldas C. Vazirani

PS.

Have the Government of India any such jurisdiction over acts of misconduct of ICS people? I don't think—in fact I do not know what to do.

160

New Delhi
16 December 1946

My dear Nihchaldas,

I am extremely sorry to see that in Sind the Congress has lost all along the line. All the efforts and money spent have been sheer waste and we have purchased bitterness and enmity in the bargain. I hope this experience will put you on guard for the future and you would work on different lines hereafter. I should like to know what the future plans of the party in Sind are.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbai Patel

PS.

I have just received your letter of the 13th instant after I dictated the above.

I do not think that anything can be done from the Centre to report on the facts. The position is well known. Goondaism

was not unexpected. It is a foretaste of what Pakistan would be, and therefore we have to be more careful in our future plans. We can do nothing against the Civil Service for such misconduct (which probably is not misconduct but 'good conduct' according to the opinion of the local Government whom they are serving), and so we must put up with these things.

It would certainly be a good result if Maula Bux, Syed, and others joined the Congress instead of keeping apart.

Vallabhbhai Patel

161

Karachi

26 December 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I reached here on the 24th afternoon. I am writing this briefly as a large number of various meetings have been fixed up here which today and tomorrow won't leave the leisure and time for a full letter. I will write again after a few days.

The provincial Congress executive and the provincial committee are both meeting. They have been sitting since the 24th. It is quite clear by now that no offer will be made to the Congress Party as such to join the Ministry. Some persons are still expecting that the Governor, in view of the reference to minority representation in the Provincial Ministry which occurs in the instrument of instruction to the Governors, may approach the representatives of the Hindu electorates, i.e. the Congress Party, for two names for the Ministry. Probably this also will not eventuate.

Certain members of the party are thinking in terms of approaching the Governor publicly through the Press or personally through an interview asking that two Hindu Ministers be taken up as representing the minority. I understand that Vazirani has approached you for your support in this step. The party has not yet considered this step but I feel that the majority would not favour such an approach being initiated by the party. I have also doubts if the League would agree to it as I understand the Bombay Ministry also contain no representative of the Muslim minority. Such an approach on our own behalf does not appear dignified for the Congress to take now in Sind. I would however wish to have your view on this point and the opinion you have sent to Vazirani.

Maula Bux has not come to any decision till the hour of my writing this letter as to whether he should join the Congress. He wanted the Congress party not to proceed with its election of office-bearers, as he wanted to be its leader, in case he decided to join the party. It seems he feels that if the party is offered two minister-ships, he as leader would be selected for one of the ministerships. Congress circles feel that the ratio then of five Muslim [ministers] and one Hindu minister will not be fair to the minority.

The Muslim Jamiat is the old Syed party and his friends met here for four days and are thinking of a 'conference' again to organise themselves. I have doubts if they will grow stronger by mere speeches. I learn they have expressed the view that the Congress party should not accept the offer of joining the Ministry if it is made. They are thinking in terms of trying to induce some of the Leaguers to cross the floor and join them to defeat the Ministry at the February session of the Assembly. They are relying on the feud between Ghulam Hussain and Khuhro. They think that if the former is made premier the latter may try to have the Ministry defeated and reshuffled with himself as premier. I think this is a fruitless and dangerous game and the Congress should not make itself a tool in that game.

In the provincial committee meeting last evening, I told the members quite plainly that the party position in the new Assembly was such that an attempt at seducing some League supporters to defeat the Ministry will not succeed and it will not be wise to be trying every day to win over League supporters even by all kinds of inducements as all such attempts will fail and that for some indeterminate time if no offer is eventually made the Congress party should content itself to be in opposition dealing with the question on merits and, by taking up popular issues, rebuild its position among the Muslim masses who will soon be dissatisfied with the League Ministry and the League, owing to the corrupt and oppressive administration. This I feel is the general view of the members. Discussion will be continued today.

I enclose a cutting containing Abdul Majid's statement.

The Syed-Majid group are to decide about joining the Congress at some further meeting . . . a month or two hence. Opinion is divided among them.

I hope you have fully recovered your strength,

Affections for Maniben.

The Press here carries the news that Rajendra Babu is resigning from the Interim Government. Has it any basis?

Yours affectionately,
Jairam
[Jairamdas Doulatram]

162

New Delhi
28 December 1946

My dear Jairamdas,

I have just received your letter of the 26th instant.

I am enclosing a copy of my reply to Mr. Nihchaldas which I have sent today. I have nothing more to add to it. I am in entire agreement with your views on the question.

I am going to Ahmedabad tomorrow for four days. I am not quite fit, but I feel better and I think the change will do [me] good.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Jairamdas Doulatram
Karachi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
28 December 1946

My dear Nihchaldas,

I have received your letters of the 21st and 23rd instant.

Regarding the decision of Mr. G. M. Syed, K. B. Maula Bux, Sheikh Abdul Majid and others to join the Congress, I can express no opinion from here. If they honestly believe that the Congress policy and programme are the only real policy and programme in the interest of the country, and if they decide to join the Congress without any promptings from outside or without any regard to the disappointment or frustration caused by their defeat in the elections, they are welcome to do so. I do not think their decision to join the Congress will cause the slightest ripple in the political atmosphere of the country; the League will not be affected by it at all, and therefore I do not see any reason to enthuse over this decision, as you seem to do.

It must be recognised that for the present the Syed group, or the anti-League Muslim Groups in Sind have got a serious setback; and in spite of all

that may be legitimately said about the official interference in the elections, the fact that the League has got a sweeping victory cannot be concealed and its effects cannot be minimised. Those who are opposed to the League will have to work patiently and steadily to build up their strength again. The League members being in office will naturally quarrel amongst themselves for position and power. But for a time, the group in power will dominate those others who may not have a share in power or office. It is futile to depend upon internal quarrels of the League for building up the strength of the Opposition. They must lay out a programme for steady work amongst the masses, who will be convinced only by honest hard work in their cause.

I do not expect that there will be any offer for coalition on behalf of the League; nor do I expect any offer from the Governor. It would be suicidal to ask or work for any such offer. Perhaps it would be courting insult. You are aware that there is no Muslim minister either in Bombay or in Madras, and no offer has ever been made. In CP, Bihar, UP and Assam, there are non-League Muslim ministers, and in Orissa there is no Muslim. Under the circumstances, to expect any offer from the League would be absolutely foolish. The League has been kept out of the coalition in the Punjab. In the Frontier, it has no place. And, therefore, they are perfectly entitled to keep you out. The Hindus in Sind will have to adopt the only honourable course of a dignified opposition, which must be of a constructive nature. No attempts should be made to break the Ministry, as such efforts are bound to end in failure and the only net gain would be increased bitterness, which would cause more harm to the Hindus.

The Ministry, if it breaks, must break through its inherent weakness and not through our efforts. This is my considered advice which you should adopt for the present. We shall see what further we can do in future after some time.

Regarding the proposal to file criminal complaints about [impersonation], I entertain no hopes of any good result. Where all the forces of Government are arraigned against him, how can he expect to get any justice or relief from them? And therefore it will be a futile effort. Every failure in such efforts results in frustration and embitterment, and I would advise taking no steps which would as a matter of course end in failure.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Nihelaldas C. Vazirani Esq.
Karachi

CHAPTER V
D. P. MISHRA'S PROTEST

163

TELEGRAM

Cuttack
18 June 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Birla House
New Delhi

CONFUSING PRESS REPORTS. RECEIVED VICEROY'S INVITATION THIS
AFTERNOON. HAVE REPLIED INABILITY GIVE FINAL DECISION UNTIL
HEAR FROM WORKING COMMITTEE. NOT RECEIVING ANY INSTRUCTION
REGARDING ELECTION MEMBERS CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. PLEASE
ADVISE.

HAREKRUSHNA MAITAB¹

164

TELEGRAM

Cuttack
22 June 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

WIRED VICEROY YESTERDAY DECLINING ACCEPT INVITATION JOINING
INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND REQUESTING NOMINATE CONGRESS
PRESIDENT'S NOMINEE.

MAITAB

¹ MLA (Bihar and Orissa) 1924; President, Utkal PCC, 1930 and 1937; member, CWC, 1938-46; Chief Minister, Orissa, 1946-50; member of CA from Orissa, 1946-50; Central Government Minister, 1950-52; Governor of Bombay, 1955-56; Chief Minister of Orissa, 1957-60

New Delhi
25 June 1946

My dear Mahtab,

I have received your telegram of the 22nd inst. Your reply is quite all right. But some people are carrying on propaganda in Orissa without understanding the matter in its proper perspective. We have already rejected the Interim Government proposals and the question of your being appointed there therefore does not arise.

I have also received your express telegram of the 18th inst., which is quoted below:

“CONFUSING PRESS REPORTS. RECEIVED VICEROY’S INVITATION THIS AFTER-NOON. HAVE REPLIED INABILITY GIVE FINAL DECISION UNTIL HEAR FROM WORKING COMMITTEE. NOT RECEIVING ANY INSTRUCTION REGARDING ELECTION MEMBERS CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. PLEASE ADVISE.”

You have to proceed with the Constituent Assembly election as we have already accepted the long-term scheme concerning it this morning.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Hon. Mr. Harekrushna Mahtab
Prime Minister of Orissa
Cuttack

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
25 June 1946

Hon. Harekrushna Mahtab
Premier
Cuttack

PROCEED WITH ARRANGEMENTS ELECTION CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AS CONGRESS ACCEPTS THESE PROPOSALS.

VALLABHBHAI

167

TELEGRAM

3 July 1946

Hon. Harekrushna Mahtab
Premier
Cuttack

SUGGEST INCLUSION CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY CANDIDATES B DAS¹ IF PHYSICALLY FIT AND RAIBAHADUR ACHYUTANANDA PUROHIT GOVERNMENT PLEADER SAMBALPUR.

VALLABHBHAI

168

3 July 1946

My dear Mahtab,

I do not know whether you will be able to come to Bombay for the AICC. But in case you [do] not come, I write this to you to make some important suggestions for the Constituent Assembly elections in your province.

Shri B. [Bhubananand] Das was excluded last time from the Central Assembly on the ground of his ill-health. He is terribly disappointed, and subsequently I was told that he was quite fit to be able to attend and work for the province. If he is elected to the Constituent Assembly, his grievance may be minimised and he may have no sense of injustice left in him. I would therefore suggest that his name may be included in case he is found to be physically fit to work. There will be about 400 members in the Constituent Assembly from all over India. Except in committees, there will not be much work to do.

Another name I have to suggest is of one man named Rai Bahadur Achyutananda Purohit of Sambalpur. He seems to have a very good record as a lawyer and he is likely to make his contribution in the constitution-making body, particularly in committees

¹ Member, Central Assembly and Lok Sabha for over two decades; Chairman, Public Accounts Committee of Parliament

also. Although he is a title-holder, we have made an exception in the case of selection of experts and lawyers of eminence and ability such as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru,¹ Rt. Hon. M. R. Jayakar,² etc. From the report I have received, I find that Achyutananda is an able and experienced lawyer. Sambalpur may well be satisfied with his selection and their grievance may disappear. This may also be a representation from the Excluded Areas.

I have also sent you a telegram today suggesting these two names in order to avoid delay.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Harekrushna Mahtab
Prime Minister
Cuttack

169

TELEGRAM

Cuttack
10 November 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

PLEASE ADVISE IF WE SHOULD ATTEND GOVERNOR'S INVESTITURE CEREMONY HELD TO CONFER TITLES ON OFFICERS. METHINKS OUR ATTENDANCE PERHAPS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE AMONGST OFFICERS. OLD INSTRUCTIONS [WERE] HOWEVER NONATTENDANCE. PLEASE WIRE IF OLD INSTRUCTIONS SHOULD BE FOLLOWED EVEN DESPITE CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES.

MAHTAB
PRIME MINISTER

¹ Leading lawyer who specialised in Constitutional law; member, All-India Congress Committee, 1906-17; member, Imperial Legislative Council, 1916-20; Law Member of Governor-General's Executive Council, 1921-23; President, All-India Liberal Conference, 1923; member, Reforms Enquiry Committee, 1924; member of Round Table Conferences, 1930-32 and Joint Parliamentary Committee, 1933; took leading part in organising non-party conference for ending Indian political deadlock in 1941; Founder-President, Indian Council of World Affairs

² Entered public life in 1916; leader of Swaraj Party in Bombay Council, 1923-25; entered Central Legislative Assembly as representative of Bombay City in 1926; Deputy leader of Nationalist Party in Assembly, 1927-30; delegate to Indian Round Table Conference in London; successively Judge of Federal Court, Privy Council in London and of International Court of Justice, the Hague

TELEGRAM

11 November 1946

Harekrushna Mahtab
Prime Minister
Cuttack

CONSISTENT WITH OUR POLICY REGARDING TITLES ATTENDANCE AT
INVESTITURE UNDESIRABLE.

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

31 July 1946

My dear Mahtab,

I have not heard from you since a long time. The post and telegraph strike has dislocated all contacts and communications, and therefore I have been isolated more or less from the outside world except what little information we are getting from newspapers. I am sending this letter with your colleague who is returning from Poona.

I read about some communal riot somewhere in Orissa. I wonder why should there be any such riots where the Muslim population is insignificant. I hope there is nothing serious behind it.

I am anxious to hear from you about your plan and programme for the current year. You have an opportunity to do constructive work, which must be fully utilised. You have many facilities which other provinces have not got, and they should be fully exploited in order to be able to demonstrate what an Indian administration can do if there are opportunities.

Shri B. Das met me while he was on his way to Rajkot. He seems quite pleased with Orissa affairs. I found him much improved in health also.

I hope your relations with your Governor are happy and cordial and there is perfect co-operation between you and him.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Harekrushna Mahtab
Cuttack

16 August 1946

My dear Mahtab,

Shri Sarangadhar Das writes to me that he wants to resign from the Orissa Assembly. I am enclosing herewith a copy of the reply that I have given to him. If you think that he is not co-operating with you or would not do any useful work in the party, you had better relieve him instead of keeping him as a disgruntled member.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Harekrushna Mahtab
Cuttack

ENCLOSURE

16 August 1946

Dear Friend,

I received your letter of 27 July on 9 August. It is regrettable that you propose to resign from the Legislative Assembly simply because you are not elected to the Constituent Assembly or because you were not taken as a Minister. If you entered the Assembly with the expectation of getting any office or being selected for any committee, you made a mistake. No member elected to the Assembly should expect or aspire for any office.

If, however, you think that you cannot do any useful work in the Assembly, you must approach the Leader of your party and get his permission or you can get the permission of your party. Discipline requires that for the reasons that you have stated no resignation could be given.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Sarangadhar Das, MLA
'Punascha'
Cuttack Dist.
Orissa

Cuttack
6 September 1946

Revered Sardarji,

I have been thinking of writing to you for the last several weeks, but in view of your present engagements I thought I should rather wait. Now I have to write to you not only as our leader but also as an important Member of the Government of India with whom we have to deal officially. Even in official matters it is my experience that demi-official letters speed up a lot of matters rather than official correspondence. Before you assumed office our Governor used to keep the Provincial Government in touch with the Government of India through personal correspondence, but now the work has devolved upon me.

We have been agitating for a broadcasting station for Orissa for a number of years. Last time when I saw Sir Akbar Hydari¹ in May 1946 I pressed our demand before him and he agreed to give high priority for a broadcasting station in Orissa. Now I understand the matter is still under consideration of the Government of India. I would request you to kindly take personal interest in the matter and see that our case is given the highest priority. Even before the Interim Government came in, I used to impress upon the Government of India that they should show special consideration to our province because of our backwardness and poverty, for which her people are not responsible. I have no doubt under your regime our province would be shown more preferential treatment than before.

As regards our work in the province, it is going on smoothly except for one thing, i.e., the construction of Hirakud Dam of the Mahanadi Valley project. Two of our members of the Assembly are carrying on an agitation against the dam because it entails displacement of 200 villages which are required for the reservoir area of the dam. You will know about this project from Mr. Gokhale, who is there in the Government of India as Secretary of the Department of Works, Mines and Power. It will be of immense help to me if you kindly write to me your opinion

¹ ICS; Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1945-46; Governor of Assam after independence

about the dam after knowing all details about it from Mr. Gokhale.

Hope you are keeping good health,

Yours sincerely,
H. Mahtab

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

174

New Delhi
11 September 1946

My dear Mahtab,

I have your letter of the 6th instant.

You have referred to two matters in your letter. First, about opening a broadcasting station for Orissa. This question will be examined along with the whole question of the extension of broadcasting in India.

The second one is in connection with the Hirakud Dam of the Mahanadi Valley project. About this I had seen your letter to Gandhiji and I had advised Shri Sarat Bose¹ to send Mr. Khosla, the engineer in charge of this scheme, to go and explain the whole project personally to him. I understand he is doing so. As soon as he has finished doing so, you will come to know of it and I shall attend to the matter.

In such big projects, a considerable amount of hardship is bound to entail on account of the displacement of villages involved in the scheme. The poor villagers do not easily understand the benefit of such schemes; they are concerned primarily with their own immediate inconveniences caused on account of their being dishoused and they are naturally unwilling to leave their own ancestral huts, however poor they may be. It is up to the Provincial Government concerned to make it easy for them to go elsewhere, where better accommodation can be provided for with good compensation and other facilities. Educative propaganda will have to be started on a wider scale.

Perhaps you are aware that in the Tata hydro-electric scheme of Bombay, when it was first undertaken, a similar situation

¹ Sarat Chandra Bose—leading Congressman of Bengal; elder brother of Subhas Chandra Bose; Member, Interim Government headed by Nehru

arose, where in Musipeta a satyagraha was started by the peasants whose lands and houses were affected. Several people were sent to jail and this agitation was led by local Congress leaders.

The Congress has advanced much more since those days and it would be easy for us, now being in power, to control and guide the agitation in proper channels. Two of your members are, according to your letter, carrying on agitation against the dam. It should be open to you to take disciplinary action against them. They have no business to agitate outside. They are members of your party and they can only discuss such matters in the party. They are free to discuss this also in the Congress organisation. But the decisions of the party and the [Provincial] Congress Committee must be binding on them; and if they do not accept such decisions, they must resign their Assembly seats and go out. You have not given the names of these people—otherwise, I would have written to them.

I trust you are making steady progress in the field of administration. Your province must lead in building up the reputation of the Congress ministries.

Hope you are doing well,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Mr. Harekrushna Mahtab
Cuttack

175

Camp New Delhi
27 June 1946

My dear Ravishankar,¹

You must have received instructions about the Constituent Assembly elections from the General Secretary of the AICC, who has been asked to do so by the Working Committee. You have to take a Parsi from your province and in this connection I would suggest the acceptance of that Parsi lawyer Rustomji who came to me in connection with Avari's fast. If there is any other more competent or influential man from that community, you may inform me about it.

¹ Entered Legislative Council of Central Provinces in 1923 as member of Swaraj Party; Minister of Education, July 1937; Premier, August 1938; Chief Minister of CP after independence and later of reformed State of Madhya Pradesh until 1956

Shri Kamath¹ has returned there, and it would be better to elect him from your province. For a woman whom you have got to provide, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur² may be taken, in which case you may not have to provide separately for a Christian seat. The Scheduled Castes representation should be in proportion to their number, and if you have any men who could be useful otherwise in the Constituent Assembly, it is not necessary that you should confine your choice within the Assembly or the Congress.

Shri [M. S.] Aney³ has written to me from Ceylon that he would like to serve in the Constituent Assembly and is prepared to resign his job and come back if he is elected.

I am returning to Bombay via Bhopal by the end of this month.

I am enclosing herewith a Hindi letter in which there is some complaint about non-release of certain political prisoners. You may look into the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Ravishankar Shukla
Prime Minister
Central Provinces
Nagpur

¹Joined ICS in London 1929; resigned 1938 to join freedom movement; later joined Forward Bloc; member, CA, 1940; elected to Lok Sabha on PSP ticket in 1955 and 1962; member, Administrative Reforms Commission

²Personal assistant to Mahatma Gandhi; Minister of Health, Government of India, 1947-57

³President, Berar PCC, 1921-30; Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1941-43; resigned over Gandhi's fast and Government refusal to release him; India's representative in Ceylon, 1943-47; member, CA, 1947-48; Governor of Bihar 1948-52; Lok Sabha member, 1959-66

Nagpur
11 July 1946

Revered Sardar Sahib,

I had gone to Bombay, this time resolved to discuss with you a number of difficulties which face us as Congressmen in this province. I have never believed in non-violence as a matter of religious faith, but as a matter of policy. I have religiously followed it. Today I see an atmosphere of violence all round. It is not even honest belief in violence. It is all power politics and playing to the gallery. Congressmen, quite a large number of them, have become thoroughly irresponsible. Not to speak of the Forward Blockists and Socialists, who frankly have ceased to believe in non-violence, even those who profess to believe in the Gandhian philosophy of life, have so far forgotten themselves as to swim with the current for fear of losing the support of the public which is being increasingly fed on tall talk. At the very hour of victory, all the basic principles of Gandhiji are being ridiculed. I had thought that the contemplated reorganisation of the Congress would put an end to all this confusion, but the announcement of his Working Committee by our new Rashtrapati [Jawaharlal Nehru] has dashed all my hopes to the ground. What names! They are our new statesmen! They are supposed to have a clear grasp of our political affairs! They are supposed to possess self-control in dealing with men and matters! It seems to me today that we have been foolish in obeying you and remaining mute. We have been made to surrender without a fight. All of us are not job-hunters. We too have some political ideals and wish to see them realised. Our silence should not be mistaken for absence of active brains and warm hearts. Pandit Nehru wants new blood! In this ancient land for thousands of years public affairs have been in the hands of elderly men free from passions. It seems to me now that public life is becoming Mrs. Warren's profession, wherein the elder one must give place to the younger one merely because she has become older! In all democratic countries a team carries on until it forfeits the nation's confidence. Has this happened in the case of those who have been discarded? These rejected ones were the real authors of the "Quit India" policy. These rejected ones covered themselves

and the nation with glory by their statesmanlike negotiations with the Cabinet Mission. The reward of these tried men is their replacement by a lot of tall-talkers at a time when utmost wisdom is the prime necessity.

The wickedness and follies of some men in our province was borne by us in silence in the hope that just and wise people were at the top to set matters right. All that is gone. In honest men loyalty takes root slowly and it cannot be uprooted suddenly. I feel as if all is lost but I must stop. In my letters to you I have always observed restraint. It has failed me today. Kindly excuse me.

Respectfully yours,
D. P. Mishra¹

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

177

29 July 1946

My dear Mishraji,

I received your letter of the 11th on the 17th, but I have not ventured to send you a reply by post owing to the postal strike. I am taking a holiday for all practical purposes owing to the post and telegraph strike, except confining myself to local activities in the city and sending urgent messages through special messengers.

I have received numerous complaints about the formation of the new Working Committee by our new President, and I fully appreciate the depth of feeling amongst comrades who have worked with us for so many years and who are upset by the revolutionary change in the personnel. I am therefore not surprised at the unrestrained manner in which you have expressed yourself in your letter.

Though the President [Nehru] has been elected for the fourth time, he often acts with childlike innocence, which puts us all in great difficulties quite unexpectedly. You have good reasons to be angry but we must not allow our anger to get the better of ourselves. We are passing through a critical period and our life's work may either yield successful results or our hopes may all be

¹Joined Congress movement in early twenties; MLA (Central); Opposition Whip under Motilal Nehru; Home Minister (CP), 1937-39; member, CWC, 1950; VC of Saugor University, 1956-62; Chief Minister, 1963-67; member, Central Parliamentary Board and Congress Working Committee and Treasurer, ruling Congress

dashed to pieces by sheer foolishness on our part and the cup which is full of nectar and which is very near our lips may drop down from our hands before we can taste even a drop of it. The situation is full of perplexities and difficulties, but on such occasion seasoned soldiers have to hold their feet firmly and tightly on the ground and brave the tumult and storm through which the country is passing.

You may perhaps be thinking that I must have been consulted. Many Congressmen also think so. But you will be surprised that when I was informed of the new personnel, I pressed for being relieved of the burden. I cannot write to you all in a letter, because it would be unwise, but I feel as much that our cause has been injured at a critical juncture. I cannot afford to get out of it because it would be injuring our cause.

He has done many things recently which have caused us great embarrassment. His action in Kashmir, his interference in the Sikh election to the Constituent Assembly, his Press conference immediately after the AICC are all acts of emotional insanity and it puts tremendous strain on us to set matters right. But in spite of all his innocent indiscretions, he has unparalleled enthusiasm and a burning passion for freedom which make him restless and drive him to a pitch of impatience where he forgets himself. All his actions are governed by a supreme consideration of reaching the cherished goal with electric speed. His mind has been exhausted by overwork and strain. He feels lonely and he acts emotionally and we have to bear with him in the circumstances. Opposition sometimes drives him mad, as he is impatient. His present action is also the result of a burning desire to take the younger elements with him and although in doing so he has committed a grave mistake he will not hesitate to rectify it when he realises the grave injustice he has done to others and to the organisation.

You may, however, rest assured that so long as one of us is inside the group that governs the policy of the Congress, the straight and steady march of the ship will not be interrupted.

You are right when you say that the atmosphere is full of violence. You must be reading Harijan, wherein you will find that there can be no greater condemnation of the present-day hypocrisy, tomfoolery and mad race for power politics. You have seen that the Madras Ministry is formed and functioning against Gandhiji's advice. Who could have thought of its possibility before 1942? And yet these people claim or profess to belong to the Gandhian school.

The mad race for going into the Constituent Assembly has caused him [Gandhi] considerable pain and he has come out with his heart's agony in an article in which he compares these people's jail-going with that of thieves and robbers. These people are also Congressmen of the Gandhian school. The underground variety of Congressmen, who call themselves 'Augusters', think that they created the August revolution. Like a dog walking under a fully loaded cart, they feel that the whole load is on their shoulders and they are dragging the whole cart. However, in a world full of violence and immorality resulting from the aftermath of the war, India cannot be isolated. But individuals who are conscious of their surroundings must stand firmly and resist all temptations so as to keep the torch burning.

I have written to you at length in order that you may derive some consolation by getting [an] inkling of my own mind and also with a hope that this passing phase of our political life will not upset you so much as to deviate from our chosen path.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. D. P. Mishra
Minister for Industries
Nagpur

178

Nagpur
16 July 1946

Revered Sardarji,

I am in receipt of your letter and very glad to let you know that Shri Dada Dharmadhikari and Shri H. V. Kamath have been selected [for] the Constituent Assembly. But before selecting them the trio of Mahakoshal Pandit Ministers tried to lower Shri Dharmadhikari's position. I don't wish to pen anything on this subject at this stage but I certainly would like to suggest you to be very strict in CP affairs. It is you and you alone who can check all the ill-plannings of the Pandit Ministers.

For instance, one Dr. Mehta, brother of Minister Mehta, has been promoted though serious allegations were made against him. It was alleged that Dr. Mehta as Superintendent of Betul Jail, gave maltreatment to political prisoners. Shri Anandrao Lokhande, president, August Atrocity Inquiry Committee for Betul,

has written an open letter to the Congress Govt., in which he [gave] a very shocking description of the Betul Belsen camp. The local Press and public demand immediate reversion of such an officer, else there is every possibility that there may be a satyagraha movement on this point.

I hope you will personally look into this matter before it is too late.

An early reply is awaited.

JAI HIND

B. N. Saojee

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

179

5 August 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of 16 July only today owing to the postal strike. I do not understand your statement in your letter that the Mahakoshal Ministers tried to lower Dada Dharmadhikari's position in the election, because Dada Dharmadhikari had been here last week and he did not say anything or had any complaint to make in this behalf.

Your complaint is a promotion given to Dr. Mehta, who happens to be the brother of Minister Mehta. The allegation against him, which according to you, prevents his promotion, is that as Superintendent of Betul Jail, he has given maltreatment to political prisoners.

I do not know anything about such allegations but I know that many jail officers in all provinces have in those days behaved rather strictly with political prisoners, some of whom expected that they being their countrymen should have behaved more leniently. Whether these old sores should be revived or forgotten is a very delicate matter, and much would depend upon the gravity of the alleged offence in individual cases. If he is fit to be retained in service, it would be difficult or perhaps unfair to prevent his promotion, which may be due to him in the normal course of service. I do not think that it would be wise for me to interfere in such individual cases or actions of Ministries in the provinces. We can lay down general policies from above but we cannot interfere in the day-to-day affairs of the Ministries. It would be

contrary to the democratic working of popular Ministries, which would be generally influenced by public opinion.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri B. N. Saojee
Managing Director
The Indian Central News
Mahal
Nagpur City

180

Nagpur
1 November 1946

Revered Sardarji,

Since I have written to the Congress High Command about the notorious case known as Mehta case my news service has been blacklisted and the said news service has been denied the privileges which are given to other services.

I have started this news service after my release with a view to remove the blackout of the news about our political prisoners. In spite of repeated warnings and obstructions from the Section 93 Government I did my best to serve the said cause and I can say proudly that to a great extent I proved successful in it. I have got ample proof in support [of] what I have stated above. More than 75 MLAs of my province have certified my services and have recommended that the said service be given such privileges as are been given to other news agencies. I sought an interview to place this fact before the Hon'ble Pandit D. P. Mishra, Minister of Information. But I was not even granted an interview. Then what of privileges?

This is nothing but a criminal injustice for which I have decided to fast unto death. I propose to start my fast before Mahatma Gandhi's hut at Sewagram as beloved Bapu has got fatherly feelings. But before starting the same I am prepared to put my case before any tribunal you suggest and if such a tribunal is appointed, there will be no ground [for] me to start fasting. In view of my above suggestion I hope you will please do the needful in the matter earliest and will oblige me.

I have penned this letter to your goodself as you are aware of the Mehta case and as your iron leadership has attracted me

very much since your release from jail. I hope you will please take the trouble to reply earliest and will oblige me.

Thanking you,
Jai Hind,

B. N. Saojee

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

181

New Delhi
14 November 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 1st instant.

2. I do not understand the philosophy of fast, and it is not for ordinary men to use this weapon against anybody. Many people have tried it and failed. People do not take this seriously. Many of those who threaten fasting are not themselves serious, but fasting should be left to great men like Gandhiji.

3. If you are going to fast for self-purification, there can be no objection. It will do good to you physically and mentally, but if it is intended against anybody else it will be considered as blackmail, pure and simple. You may do whatever you like.

Yours sincerely,
V. J. Patel

B. N. Saojee, Esq.
Nagpur

182

Nagpur
27 August 1946

Revered Sardar Sahib,

Before I could answer your kind letter about the selection of Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan, I had to leave for Chhindwara and there I learnt of the brutal and cowardly assault on him. We are all relieved to learn that he is out of danger and is making satisfactory progress.

In the meanwhile, I had received a letter from him dated 20 August from which I quote the following:

"I am expecting that my book on the Indian problem in South Africa will soon be published. Nobody knows more about Mahatma Gandhi's work in South Africa than I do. Without his inspiration and sacrifice, the Indian community would have disintegrated.

"On my return from South Africa I expected to be appointed to the next vacancy in the Executive Council of the Government of India, but in the higher circles they thought that I had been too zealous for the Indian cause in South Africa and was regarded as anti-Smuts. If my despatches from South Africa to Government are ever published—and they are voluminous and deal with my negotiations with Smuts for three years—then the Indian public will know what I tried to do for the Indian race. At present my lips are sealed, and though I have been under the cloud, wholly because of my excess of zeal, I do not mind as the National Government which is likely to be formed will, when it studies my despatches and the work achieved there, regard me, as the South African Indians regard me, as the saviour of the Indian race in South Africa. I have written to Mahatmaji about it, but I give you permission to show this part of the letter to Mahatmaji if you think it proper."

It will thus be seen that he is anxious to be understood. As his student in the University of Allahabad, I always found him treating his Hindu and Muslim students alike. In those days the late lamented Dr. Beni Prasad had written a book on Jehangir to which Sir Shafaat had contributed the introduction. A perusal of it will show that even in those days he was an ardent believer in common Hindu-Muslim culture. I learn from him that his latest book, just going to the press, deals with the development of Hindu and Muslim culture.

I am sure that with your usual tact and sympathy you will completely win him over to the nationalist cause.

Yours sincerely,
D. P. Mishra

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

New Delhi
30 August 1946

My dear Mishraji,

I have received your letter of the 27th inst. I have shown it to Gandhiji and he has also received a letter from Sir Shafaat Ahmed.

His was a providential escape from the murderous assault, which was cleverly organised, and, thank God, he has been making satisfactory progress. I understand that arrests have also been made in this connection.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pt. D. P. Mishra
Minister of Development
Nagpur

184

Nagpur
9 February 1947

Revered Sardar Sahib,

While leaving Delhi I met Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan. He expressed his gratefulness for the uniform courtesy and kindness received from you. He expressed his preference for being sent to Moscow. He thinks that some eminent Hindu should be sent to London. Regarding Canada, he thought it was inferior even to the high commissionership in South Africa—a job held by him long ago. But he said that as a devoted follower he would carry out the humblest task entrusted to him. I have written all this merely for your information.

The day after I reached Nagpur I got high fever and have not yet recovered completely. Shuklaji has gone out in connection with his son's marriage.

Yours sincerely,
D. P. Mishra

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

185

New Delhi
13 February 1947

My dear Mishraji,

I have your letter of the 9th instant.

I know Sir Shafaat Ahmed's views and desires in the matter. It is not easy in the present set-up of the Interim Government. There are many difficulties in the way of selection of foreign

ambassadors' appointments. But he is not out of our mind, and will never be. We must wait for a proper occasion.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit D. P. Mishra
Nagpur

186

Seminary Hills
Nagpur
9 September 1946

Revered Sardar Sahib,

I have been desirous of seeing you after your assumption of office, but could not do so owing to the Assembly session, which is to be resumed on the 12th instant after a brief recess. Hence this letter.

The Ambedkarites are conducting a so-called satyagraha, and so far we have dealt with it in our own way. Instead of sending them to prison, we have let them off with a fine, without imposition of any sentence in default. Now they have started publicly asking for imprisonment and perhaps the top ones will get it. A good deal of secret information in our possession goes to show that they had planned to murder Congressite Harijan members of the Assembly. Even the names of the would-be assassins are known to us and we are trying to round them up under the provisions of the Goonda Act recently passed by the Assembly. What is dangerous for the peace of this city and other Marathi-speaking towns is a junction between the Ambedkarite Mahars and Muslims, which the leaders of both the communities are trying to effect. So far we have succeeded in keeping the two apart. Elaborate police arrangements have been made throughout the province. A little trouble has already taken place in Amraoti [Amravati], but the situation is under control. All India Radio reported two cases of stabbing but the news was not quite correct. In my opinion if Press correspondents show their Press messages to their District Magistrates before sending them out it would be conducive to public peace. Government can impose such a restriction, but voluntary co-operation should be forthcoming. If you agree with me, kindly speak to the heads of API and UPI [United Press of India].

Another suggestion I would like to make is about the organisation of a national peace police, which I think can be done under the existing laws. It should be on an honorary basis and recruited from all sections of the population holding nationalist views. They should be made to take a pledge to sacrifice even their lives in the maintenance of law and order and to be impartial in their behaviour towards all communities. They can be trained in the use of arms, which will be kept in Government custody, but issued to them on emergent occasions. If you approve, you can instruct and inspire all Congress Governments to take action accordingly.

As you are aware, there are branches of the Central CID in all the provinces. So far we have looked upon them with suspicion and have been opposed to their existence. Some were of the opinion that as soon as a national government was formed at the Centre these branches should be closed down. I personally feel that as all the provinces are not under Congress control they should continue to exist to enable you to know what is happening in the non-Congress provinces.

Another question is regarding the abolition of commissionerships. In all provinces the Commissioners are merely post offices between the Deputy Commissioners and the provincial Governments. If the Central Government decides to help us, this reform can be effected at once and so much public money saved.

Now I wish to make a few suggestions to you regarding my own province. As you very well know, the Tata Iron and Steel Works are the only one of its kind in the country. Recently the Iron and Steel Panel, presided over by Mr. Ginwala,¹ has recommended opening of a similar works in the CP. They have given preference to the CP over Bihar, and I trust our interests will not be sacrificed.

Another matter relates to Nagpur having a broadcasting station of its own. Repeated requests have been made but to no purpose. As the department is under you, we hope our needs will now receive attention. Besides its educative value, in times of stress it can be of great help to us in maintaining peace in the province.

Hoping to be excused for inflicting this lengthy letter upon you.

Yours sincerely,
D. P. Mishra

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

¹ Secretary, Legislative Council, Burma, 1916-20; President, Rangoon Municipal Corporation, 1922-23; Member, Indian Legislative Assembly, 1921-23; President, Indian Tariff Board, 1926-30; Member, Round Table Conference, 1931; President, Indian Air Force Pilots Selection Board, 1940-41

PS.

Pandit Shukla has gone to Lucknow on some private work and will be back on the 11th instant.

187

New Delhi
11 September 1946

My dear Mishraji,

I have received your letter of the 9th inst.

We must not depend upon the military. If you think that a national peace police under the existing laws can be raised, you can do so, and if such police can be raised on an honorary basis it would be all the better. It should be recruited from all nationalist elements, without caste or creed.

I do not think that it would be advisable to close down the small nucleus of the Central CID which is functioning at present in the provinces. It is the only useful source of information in some of the truculent provinces.

The abolition of commissionership is important, but before taking up questions affecting the services it may be advisable to wait till the general Hindu-Muslim question is settled one way or the other. Abolition of such posts is likely to further alienate the already unsympathetic Civil Service, and we may not give any irritant at present. It would be inadvisable to throw them into the lap of the Muslim League. Let us not raise more than one front at present.

Your suggestion about looking after your province's interest in the matter of iron and steel works will be borne in mind. I should like to know at what particular stage the matter stands. Do you think your provincial Government would be able to take the responsibility of starting any such industry, or is it proposed to give a licence to any private enterprise? Perhaps a scheme for taking up this question may be considered by the Central Government. I have no idea as yet as to the actual state of things in this matter.

About the opening of broadcasting stations, perhaps I will be able to do something because it falls within my province. I will look into the matter.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit D. P. Mishra
Nagpur

CHAPTER VI
LEAGUE EXPLOITS SITUATION

Bihar Riots

188

Circuit House
Patna
5 November 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of the letter Bapu has sent me. After receiving this I telephoned to him and gave him our joint message. This was to the effect that he should not precipitate matters at this stage. He should wait for our report and see what developments there are during the next few days.

This letter will be taken by [Sardar Abdur Rab] Nishtar¹ tomorrow morning. Nishtar has been accompanying me throughout these two days. I must say that he has behaved very well and wherever he has spoken, either in a public meeting or in a small gathering, he has not said anything to which I could take exception. We have seen and heard many things which are horrible and which could easily unnerve many individuals, especially a Muslim. But he kept his end up throughout.

My programme is entirely uncertain, but I feel strongly that having taken this matter in hand I must not leave Bihar till we see light. I am here anyhow tomorrow and the day after. So at the earliest I might return on Friday or I might stay on for another day or two. It is better that I do one job well than two or three jobs badly. In any event, unless the unforeseen happens, I should be back by the end of the week.

Rajendra Babu is also rather vague about the length of his stay here. I suppose he will remain for two or three days. [J. B.]

¹MLA (NWFP), 1937; Finance Minister, 1934-45; member, Working Committee, All-India Muslim League; member, CA; Member for Communications, Interim Government, from 26 October, 1946 until partition

Kripalani¹ is of course also here. They are both going to Bihar-Shariff tomorrow and will spend the night there. I shall be going to Gaya tomorrow by air, coming back in the evening.

These two days here have been so full of horror for me that I find it difficult to believe in the reality of things I must believe in. What the Muslim League people told us was wrong and exaggerated here and there, but the real picture that I now find is quite as bad, and [sometimes] even worse than anything that they had suggested. In the affected areas, that is Patna district, in a part of Monghyr district and in Gaya, there has been a definite attempt on the part of Hindu mobs to exterminate the Muslims. They have killed indiscriminately men, women and children en masse. Some stories are incredibly brutal and inhuman. Indeed, one can only explain all this by saying that a madness had seized the people. I have addressed some large crowds in the rural areas and I have no doubt that many of them had participated in this bad business. They were the ordinary peasant folk of Bihar, very simple, unsophisticated, and rather likeable. They shouted "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai" and when I spoke sternly to them they seemed full of shame of what they had done. Almost everywhere after my speech I asked them to pledge themselves to behave in future and they seemed to do so with some conviction, raising their hands all together. Occasionally there were a few troublesome elements, usually some educated people of the Hindu Sabha variety. Some Marwaris in Monghyr were obviously trouble-makers.

It is obvious that this big uprising could not come out of nothing. I could not make out who were the leaders of this business. Probably they are mostly local village leaders but they have received their inspiration from others. It is stated that apart from some Hindu Sabha elements, some landlords backed these disturbances, partly to divert the attention of their tenantry from agrarian problems, partly to discredit the Ministry. It is also said that the black-market elements also gave encouragement.

A few Congressmen, of Hindu Sabha inclinations, are strongly criticised. On the other hand, some Congress workers have done excellent work in the face of grave difficulty.

¹ One of the oldest living Congress leaders; joined Gandhi in 1917; General Secretary of Congress, 1934-46; its President, 1946-47; Congress member of CA, 1946-50; resigned from Congress in 1951; MP intermittently since 1952; exponent of Gandhian philosophy

There is an impression, which I think is justified, that local officials in many places, and especially the ICS elements, moved very slowly. Probably they enjoyed the fun of a Congress Ministry getting discredited.

It is impossible to say what the total number of deaths is. But it must be a very large number. I doubt if it is under 2,000 and it may be double that number. Some small Muslim villages have been completely wiped out. One of the peculiarly sorrowful features is that a considerable number of Momins have been killed.

The number of Muslim refugees is very large. I do not know what it is, but it may well go up to 15,000 in various places and the problem of looking after them, feeding them, clothing them and finding accommodation for them as well as guarding them is a difficult one.

The military are coming into the scene with fairly adequate forces now, or they will begin to function in a big way in about two days' time. As I told you, there is news of their firing on a mob today, inflicting 400 deaths. We have not got correct figures yet. In a couple of days' time all the affected areas will be sufficiently held by the military, which will reach even the villages in the interior of these areas.

My own rough guess is that the next three days will see the end, more or less, of the active part of the disturbances. This is not only for military reasons but also partly because of other efforts. Of course the ill-will that has been generated and the terrible effects of this horror will last a long time.

I do not know what is happening to my particular work in the Assembly. I wish you would deal with it if it is urgent.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

Calcutta
Sodepur

5 November 1946

Chi. Jawaharlal,

I have been distressed with the news about Bihar. My duty seems clear to me. I cannot for a moment forget that I am closely associated with Bihar.

If only the half of what I hear comes true, I would only say that Bihar has lost all sense of humanity. It will be blasphemous to opine that these were only the acts of goondas [toughs]. Much as I would try, I cannot brush aside the thought of a fast. Today is the seventh day since I declined to myself both milk and cereals. I was already on a semi-diet to free myself from the cough and itching in the body. In that Bihar made me think deeply and the still voice came forth, "Should you be a witness to such carnage?"

The letter of Mohammed Unis on Shamshuddin is already with Sardar Baldeo [Baldev] Singh. Is it a true report? It is our duty to place facts as they are.

My partial fast will go on. It may be some time before I resort to full fast. You had just referred to the prospects of it amidst my stay in Delhi. I had then said that nothing of the kind was in my mind. But things since then have changed immensely. You are, however, free to vent to me your views about it. If that will impress upon me, I shall just leave the idea. But, as I hope, you will approve of my step, acquainted as you are with my present attitude of mind. Let what befalls me, all of you must stick to your posts of duty and carry on. No thought be wasted over my impending death! Leave me in the hands of the merciful God and be free of all cares on my count.

This letter may be shown to the Bihar Ministry. Oh! The Bihar of Brajkishore!¹

Yours
Bapu

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
[Original in Hindi]

189

Patna
7 November 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a report I am sending to Bapu. It was hurriedly written last night. The news today is fairly satisfactory, but there are still two or three pockets of trouble where it appears that professional dacoits are functioning.

I flew over most of the affected areas and found them peaceful with people working in their fields. We saw two fires in empty villages.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

¹ Highly respected leader of Bihar; a Gandhian; father-in-law of Jayaprakash Narayan

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACTS FROM A NOTE ON THE DISTURBANCES IN BIHAR

Since the Muslim League adopted Pakistan as its objective and started even before that an agitation based on hatred and bitter denunciation of the Congress as well as of the Hindus generally, reactions gradually began to set in which were taken advantage of by the Hindu Mahasabha and like organisations. This did not affect the widespread popularity of the Congress among the Hindu masses so far as the political issues were concerned. But it did produce communal feeling and a tendency among the middle class to criticise the Congress for not supporting the Hindu cause as against the Muslim League.

As the communal and political situation developed during the last seven years, a feeling of exasperation took hold of the Hindus at what they considered the unpatriotic and highly objectionable attitude of the Muslim League. They read from day to day violent attacks in the Press made by leaders of the League on Hindus as well as the Congress and all manner of threats to achieve Pakistan by force. One of the Muslim slogans was and is "Pakistan khun se lenge" (We shall take Pakistan through blood). There were also attacks and denunciations of the Hindu religion and practices. This feeling percolated, to some extent, even to the Hindu masses in Bihar. Never too docile, the peasantry reacted rather aggressively to it but was kept in check by Congress leaders. Among the Muslims also a fairly considerable movement arose among the Momins, or the weaver class, which refused to associate itself with the League and was on the whole friendly to the Congress and co-operated with it. They rejected the idea of Pakistan.

Events from 1942 onwards convinced the Hindu masses in Bihar, as elsewhere, that the Muslim League was a barrier not only to the freedom of their country but to the achievement of their own social demands. The Muslim League leadership was very largely socially reactionary and consisted of the landlord class. The appeals to hatred on behalf of the Muslim League brought about a like reaction among the Hindus.

This has been the background of recent events.

The events in Calcutta from 16 August onwards resulted in the killing of a large number of Biharis in Calcutta. Many of their shops were also looted in Calcutta. Many of the gwalas [milkmen], the cartmen, the rickshawallahs and the *dirwans* or doorkeepers, in Calcutta were Biharis. There is also in Bihar a large Bengali Hindu population. The news of this killing in Calcutta affected Biharis profoundly. The relatives of those killed returned to Bihar as

well as other refugees. They spread out in the rural areas carrying stories with them of what had happened in Calcutta. This created a feeling of great resentment throughout the province.

On top of this came news of Noakhali and East Bengal, more especially the accounts of forcible conversion of large numbers of people and abduction and rape of Hindu women. This kind of thing is likely to inflame any people anywhere. Hindus especially are affected by anything involving abduction and rape of women and forcible conversion. The Biharis became terribly excited and the Bengali element in Bihar was even more excited.

There was some propaganda on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha and other Hindu organisations after Noakhali. Many anonymous leaflets were issued asking for revenge for what happened in East Bengal and public criticism was directed to the passivity of the Central Government in allowing matters to proceed in East Bengal without intervention. The Interim Government was especially attacked for its seeming inactivity when horrible things were happening in Noakhali. A feeling grew that nobody was helping the hapless Hindus of East Bengal while the Provincial Government of Bengal was deliberately pursuing a policy of exterminating Hinduism from East Bengal either by killing or by forcible conversion. It is immaterial how far these facts were true. The point is that there was the strong feeling and the stock of the Interim Government fell very greatly.

On or about 25 October a Noakhali Day was observed in various parts of Bihar. A huge procession was taken out in Patna and a very big meeting was held. Though the official slogans and speeches were more or less restrained, many other slogans were heard asking for revenge for Noakhali. Some of the speeches were not restrained.

It is not clear yet whether there were any leaders of this widespread movement, apart from local leaders. There is some evidence, however, of people going about on bicycles and otherwise distributing leaflets which contained incitement to the people. The movement had an appearance of a spontaneous uprising in various parts chiefly involving the peasantry. No well-known persons so far appeared to be directly involved. At an early stage, however, certain known anti-social elements took the lead in certain areas. It is known that some notorious dacoits are participating and warrants are out for their arrest. These dacoits apparently possess some firearms which they have been using. The peasantry of course functioned chiefly with their lathis and sometimes with spears or other odd weapons.

During the first two or three days one had a sensation that governmental action was not as swift and effective as it might have been. Partly this was due to the absence of many of the Ministers as well as the Governor, partly to the suddenness of the outbreak, but partly, it appears, to the complacency of the permanent officers. Probably the criticism is not justified, but it is asserted by

a variety of people that some of these permanent officers were not too greatly displeased at this new embarrassment of the Provincial Government. Many odd people indeed liked to see anything happen which might bring some discredit on the Ministry. An instance which brings out the slowness of the governmental apparatus during these first two days is that at a place where a Hindu mob killed about 25 to 30 Muslims on a railway platform, for over two days after this murder the bodies lay on the platform and nobody took the trouble to remove them. It was only after a Minister went there and saw these bodies for himself that they were removed under his express orders.

From 31 October onwards trouble rapidly spread in Patna district and in part of Monghyr district. Muslim bustees [slums] were burnt and looted and many Muslims were killed. This was a ruthless and inhuman affair and women and children even were not spared. People seemed to have gone mad. Large numbers of refugees poured into Patna and other relief camps opened by Government or by private organisations. These refugees were often in a pitiable state and naturally terribly panic-stricken and excited. They brought stories of horrible conditions prevailing in their areas. These stories were inevitably greatly exaggerated. Any person whom they knew and whom they did not see with them was presumed to be dead. Nevertheless, allowing for all exaggeration, what had happened was terrible enough. There were gross cases of cruelty and insensate behaviour.

On the other hand, there were many cases also of Hindu villages affording protection to Muslims. In one case the Hindus of a village collected their Muslim neighbours for protection and violently resisted an attacking Hindu mob which wanted to get at those Muslims. They succeeded in protecting them. Many Hindus also helped in evacuating Muslims by carrying their baggage and otherwise assisting them in every way. Many Muslims testify to the help they received from the Hindus of their village.

During the last two or three days there has been repeated firing by the military and the police on Hindu hostile mobs. Casualties are not known yet. Generally they have been low except on one occasion when they are said to approach 100.

The position on the 6th night is that on the whole the situation is quietening down, though there are pockets of trouble still. With the help of Government large numbers of Muslims are being brought from the outlying villages to Patna or to such other relief camps. Food and blankets are being given to them as well as medical attention. General Bucher has promised to help with medical supplies as well as doctors.

6 November 1946

New Delhi
11 November 1946

My dear Rajen Babu,

I am enclosing herewith the copy of a telegram which I have received from Patna. The Hindus have been considerably agitated all over India about some of the strong references by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his speeches about his suggested method of military use against them. The League leaders are carrying on propaganda against the Ministry as well as against the people of Bihar in general. Two of those members who visited Patna last week have issued a statement today in the Bengal Press. It is full of exaggeration and a violent attack against all concerned. I hear about collective fines being imposed on the villagers. While we are justified in condemning the brutalities perpetrated by those who were concerned in these atrocities, we would be committing a grave mistake if we expose the people of Bihar and their Ministry to the violent and vulgar attacks of the League leaders. None of them open their mouth against what was happening, and is still happening, in Bengal. We must guard against being stampeded into indiscreet actions through sheer panic.

I hope you are getting better. Please let me know when you propose to return.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Minister for Food & Agriculture in
the Interim Govt. of India
Camp: Patna

ENCLOSURE

Patna
8 November 1946

Hon'ble Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

INNOCENT HINDUS MASS MURDERED EXMILITARY TROOPS VARIOUS PARTS PATNA
DISTRICT. PRAY VISIT AREAS CONCERNED ORDERING MINISTRY TO RESIGN
IMMEDIATELY.

JOTISHCHANDER CHOWDHURY MOWJIPUR
FATWA (PATNA)

191

New Delhi
25 November 1946

My dear Abell,

I should like to draw His Excellency's attention to the following extract from the daily report of the CIO, Bihar, dated 18 November 1946:

Although the conditions obtaining in the villages now admit of the refugees going back home, there is strong propaganda by some of the Muslim League workers that they should not go back to the villages where, according to them, Government will once again fail to give them the necessary protection. While such alarming advice may be given with all sincerity, there is also no doubt that some Leaguers think that they are furthering the cause of the League by dissuading the Muslims from going back to their own villages.

I notice from the report on communal disturbances in Bengal received from H.E. the Governor of Bengal that a similar situation has arisen in the affected areas of East Bengal, and it is proposed to give the District Magistrates powers which will allow them in certain circumstances to intern such persons.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

G. E. B. Abell, Esq., CIE, OBE, ICS
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy
The Viceroy's House
New Delhi

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
26 November 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Thank you for your letter of yesterday about Bihar and Bengal. His Excellency has drawn the attention of His Excellency the Governor of Bihar to the power proposed to be taken for District Magistrates in East Bengal under Bengal Act III of 1926.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

26 November 1946

My dear Sri Babu¹,

I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I had written to the Viceroy from Meerut and his reply thereto.

On my return from Meerut, I read the report of Mr. Scott about the Bihar situation after his short visit for a day or two. I do not know whether you have seen the report. Some of the statements in his report have been attributed to you, which are prima facie not understandable. At one place he has mentioned that the Ministry has asked for the reduction of the Special Police Force from the point of view of economy after the disturbances took place. The importance of this matter is whether the proposal for reduction was made before or after the disturbances. It is possible that it was made before the disturbances, but as the riots took place the idea was abandoned and the proposal is postponed. Surely, you would not make any suggestion for reduction immediately after such vast-scale disturbances.

The other point attributed to you is that you agreed with the view that there was real danger for the refugees to go back

¹ Sri Krishna Sinha: Congress leader who was Premier of Bihar, 1937-39, and for decade after independence

to their villages. I do not know whether this is true. I understand that there have been no untoward incidents for the last two weeks or more. The people are not willing to go back, according to my information, because the League volunteers and workers are inducing them not to go back.

You must have seen Mr. Jinnah's statement in the Press today. He talks of transfer of population. Nobody with any stakes or having any land in the villages would like to leave that place for ever. But the League wants to keep on the propaganda and the war of nerves and therefore they may be interested in keeping the evacuees in the camps and not allow them to go back to their villages.

Mr. Scott also proposes the transfer of some of these people of Bengal.

My impression, reading the report of Mr. Scott, has been that even a confirmed League member would not have made such a report. It is an effort to put the League into power in these areas at the expense of Government and the use of Government machinery. The whole scheme smacks of pure partisanship and is a great reflection on, and distrust of, the Ministry.

I do not know whether you have read the report, but it will be referred to you for report. Nothing can be done without the consent of your Government. Therefore, you must scrutinise the proposals and agree to nothing, or protest strongly against anything that interferes with your provincial autonomy. You must appoint your own officers and your own staff which will work under the Ministry and not take orders from any outside authority or have powers which would override the Ministry in matters of policy or in essentials.

You will be asked to report about what help you want from the Centre. You can say that you would want financial assistance, for which you can make your own reasonable calculations. But you should agree to nothing which gives the League exclusive status or makes the influence of the League stronger in the areas at the expense of Government.

Of course, you can allow bona fide League volunteers who want to do purely relief work and would exclude all party politics, or party propaganda, or exploitation of any kind.

I hope you have got an eye on the volunteers of the Muslim League who are parading in those areas with uniforms. You must not allow them to go about in military uniforms, or having a demonstration of force, so as to demoralise the Government machinery of the people there.

You must keep full control and authority over the affairs of relief and rehabilitation.

The League organisation is out to create trouble for the Ministry, cast reflections on it and create an atmosphere of insecurity there.

I want to know how many people have been arrested and how many have been released on bail. There is a lot of propaganda going on from Muslim League quarters about this question also, and we must have full information.

What is the Government's plan for relief work? What is its organisation, and what amount have you spent from Government and from private agencies, if any?

I should also like to know whether you are supported in your actions in this matter by your Governor. Do not alienate his sympathy or support; try to secure his co-operation and goodwill. You must keep us informed of all important happenings there from time to time.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Sri Krishna Sinha
Prime Minister of Bihar
Patna

ENCLOSURE I

Congress Nagar
Meerut
22 November 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I received a telephone message last night from the Premier of Bihar to the effect that your Deputy Private Secretary, Scott, had reached Patna. We are somewhat mystified at this sudden activity and should like to be enlightened as to the purpose and scope of his mission. Should this have anything to do with the organisation of relief for refugees in Bihar, I would like to make it clear that any interference with, or bypassing of, the Ministry—particularly now that peace has been restored and the Ministry from all accounts has been doing all that is possible under most difficult circumstances—would create a major crisis. I have also got reports that attempts are being made to make political capital out of the misfortunes and miseries of the people. There is considerable interference and obstruction in the relief work of the Bihar

Government by Muslim League workers. The refugees are returning to their villages without any fear of molestation. If any work of relief is to be financed by the Centre, it must be done through the Ministry, and if any officers are to be appointed they should be appointed by them and not by any outside authority. They must also work under the Ministry.

I would also like to know what similar measures are contemplated in regard to relief in East Bengal. The last fortnightly report makes it clear that relief operations in that area are meeting with open defiance from the local Muslims and a senior ICS officer has been attacked thrice while giving succour to the unfortunate victims of communal bestiality. I would also like to point out that about a lakh of refugees from Eastern Bengal have been homeless and helpless for a much longer period and are unable to go to their villages because of the complete absence of any sense of security. From very reliable reports that I have received, a number of goondas are still at large; the Muslim population is very hostile; and there is considerable panic and fear in the minds of the refugees. Consequently, they are not able to go back even now to their villages. There is no safety for the honour of their womenfolk. Whilst I have all my sympathy for the victims and sufferers of Bihar, I wish to bring to your notice that there is a strong feeling that the unfortunate sufferers of East Bengal have not been able to enlist adequate sympathy and attention from official quarters.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Right Hon'ble Viscount Wavell
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE II

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
23 November 1946

Dear Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,

I have received your letter of 22 November.

2. Scott, my Deputy Private Secretary, is returning from Bihar today. I informed my colleagues on Wednesday that I proposed to send him and he went off the next morning. I wished to get first-hand information of the scope of the problem in Bihar.

3. There is no question of bypassing the Bihar Ministry. What is proposed is that an offer of assistance should be given both to them and to the Bengal Government. Both Bengal and Bihar will be treated alike, except that the scope of the problem is very much larger in Bihar. I have already informed



MAULANA AZAD AND KHAN ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN, MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE, AFTER MEETING THE CABINET MISSION IN SIMLA



MOHAMMED ALI JINNAH SHAKES HANDS WITH LORD WAVELL WHILE MEMBERS OF THE CABINET DELEGATION,
LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE, A. V. ALEXANDER AND SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS, LOOK ON

the Governor of Bengal that his Government are likely to receive an offer of help.

4. I strongly deprecate a political or communal outlook on this problem of relief and rehabilitation. What we have to do is to ensure that the miserable victims of these disgraceful outbreaks are helped as promptly and effectively as possible.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Direct Action Day

194

New Delhi
24 August 1946

My dear Sarat,

Last night I had a talk with you on the telephone, and Shri Surendra Mohan Ghosh¹ has also met me. I am sending this letter with him, as probably there is no postal delivery in Calcutta as yet.

If you think that conditions there would not permit your coming here at this juncture, you may remain there till the 31st, when you will have to come here for settling preliminaries of our taking charge on 2 September.

Important questions will be discussed this time in the Working Committee. But your presence there may be more important and I am not in a position to advise you to leave the place if you think that it would not be wise to do so.

Nathalal [Parikh] has not yet met me, but I understand that he tried to get the film from Shri Bhimani but he has not succeeded. It would be advisable to ask him to send it to me here, as I expect Nathalal to come here shortly.

Calcutta has gone through an unparalleled ordeal and our hearts are there with you. In its suffering, we have not been able to do anything. But we have all our sympathies for all those who have lost their lives and who have suffered during these riots. Those who were responsible for these black and inexcusable crimes and who have brought discredit to the city and the country will have to be punished. There will, I hope,

¹ Veteran Congress leader of Bengal

be a fair, impartial and independent enquiry. It will take long for Calcutta to recover from the shock. I do not know what will happen to that Government during whose regime such disgraceful events have happened. In no civilised country such a Government should have a day's existence. But we are living in strange circumstances and we have to go through the ordeal. Let us hope that from evil cometh good, and Providence in His wisdom may have inflicted these sufferings for some ulterior purposes.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose
Calcutta

195

7 Wellesley Place
Calcutta
4 September 1946

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

I am sending this letter with Mr. Manubhai Patel who is coming to Delli. You must have already heard first-hand accounts of all that transpired in Calcutta. I also wrote to Mr. G. D. Birla¹ last week about the reactions of the British commercial community here and requested him to convey the contents to you. I am troubling you because I desire to place before you one or two important matters for your consideration.

It now seems certain that the Europeans have decided to remain neutral on any motion of no confidence against the Ministry. This will prevent the defeat of the Ministry which is wholly undesirable if any confidence is to be revived or any sense of security to be ensured for innocent and law-abiding people. The Europeans seem to be anxious to throw the onus on Jinnah to have a Coalition Ministry and also on the Provincial Congress. But Jinnah, for reasons of prestige, will presumably back up [H. S.] Suhrawardy.² The local Britishers' partiality for the League is stronger than their sense of justice or even their

¹ Leading industrialist; MLA (Central), resigned in protest against legislation for imperial preference in 1930; President, Indian Chamber of Commerce, 1924; President, FICCI, 1929

² Leading Muslim politician of Bengal who was Chief Minister of province at time of partition; Prime Minister of Pakistan

abhorrence of the terrible happenings of a fortnight ago. Unless, therefore, there is some pressure from the Centre, i.e. the Viceroy, neither the Governor nor the local Britishers will move. It will be a disgraceful thing if the present Ministry is allowed to continue. As it is, it is a disgrace that it is still in office. The same thing happened during the days of the Bengal famine when, despite all their inefficiency and corruption and the criminal incompetence shown by them, they continued in office all the time. That was because the British Government wanted the support of the League as against the Congress. Now there could be no justification for such an attitude.

The other point which is causing us anxiety here is the position of Muslims with a nationalist bent of mind. I am told on good authority that [A.K.] Fazlul Huq¹ was physically coerced into signing the pledge of the Muslim League. I have known some Nationalist Muslims staying in Muslim localities who have been bullied and intimidated to hoist black flags on 2 September and were also compelled to put on black strips on their coats. You might have seen the statement made by Mr. Nausher Ali, ex-Speaker of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, and the manner in which he was treated and ultimately driven out from his own house. On the other hand, such Nationalist Muslims also stand in danger from ignorant and illiterate Hindus who treat all Muslims alike. I saw Dr. B. C. Roy yesterday and discussed this matter with him, but, frankly, I am not able to suggest any effective steps. The situation, however, is so serious in some quarters that many independent-minded Muslims would have to fall in line with the League on pain of being killed and their houses being looted. I have suggested to some of the leading papers here to take up this question in a cautious way because if more provocation is offered their position would tend to become worse. I am told that at the mass meeting on 16 August where Suhrawardy spoke, it was openly stated that the League should see that no Nationalist Muslims existed within eight days. You must have no doubt heard that none of the speeches made at the meeting has been allowed to be reported even in the League papers. But I am told that they were very wild and inflammatory. I would, therefore, beg of you to consider the steps that could be taken by the Government and by the Congress in order to ensure the safety and freedom of opinion of independent and Nationalist Muslims.

¹ Leader of Krishak Praja Party of Bengal; Chief Minister of Bengal before and after partition; moved resolution at Muslim League session at Lahore in 1940 demanding Pakistan

Lastly, I would like to mention that the ratio of casualties as between Hindus and Muslims is not at all certain. Those who go about saying that three Muslims have been killed for every Hindu are not accurate. From all that I have seen and heard, nobody knows the exact figures. In any case, to state these figures would be extremely misleading and, in fact, would be playing into the hands of the League which is trying to make out that more Muslims have been killed than Hindus because of the premeditated attack made on the Muslims.

Walchandbhai [Walchand Hirachand]¹ wanted me to come to Delhi last week to place before you certain facts regarding the shipping question and to take your advice and guidance. But in view of the situation as well as the impending Id² and the establishment of the Interim Government, I could not see my way to leave my people here. We are all safe and doing well.

Even in the midst of the anxious period through which we have been passing, it was a matter of sincere rejoicing to us to see a national Government at last installed in Delhi.

With respects,

Yours sincerely,
Gaganvihari L. Mehta³

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

196

New Delhi
16 September 1946

My dear Gaganbhai,

I have received your letter of the 4th instant. I had no doubt that the Europeans would not vote against the Ministry. They will not vote at all, because they know that even without their vote, the Ministry can survive. But if there was any possibility of defeating the Ministry owing to their neutrality, they would not hesitate to keep the Ministry alive. I am not surprised at the attitude of the British business men there. No one will be able

¹ Leading industrialist of Bombay who pioneered shipbuilding and manufacture of aircraft

² Muslim festival

³ Employee of Scindia Shipping Company who became member of Planning Commission after Independence; ambassador in Washington, 1952-58

to remove the Ministry by a motion of no-confidence. It can only be defeated if the complicity of the Ministry in the riots is established in the inquiry for which a commission has been appointed.

I do not know who are the Nationalist Muslims in Bengal. I hardly know any of them and the League is not worried about any such people of no consequence.

The proper course for Bengal and for India is not to depend upon either the police or the military but for everyone to learn to defend oneself. In free countries, people don't rely upon others for defence.

Friends from Bengal, Dr. Syama Prasad [Mookerjee], [N. R.] Sarkar¹ and others came here and met me since receipt of your letter. We had a long talk and I have explained to them what should be done for the future.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri G. L. Mehta
Calcutta

197

New Delhi
19 October 1946

Dear Stafford Cripps,

I thank you for your letter of 23 September which was sent through Sudhir [Ghosh].² I am glad to hear that he has been helpful in the formation of public opinion on Indian matters. Your suggestion of sending him back in a more official capacity is under consideration, but we are here at present working under great difficulties, of which perhaps you have hardly any idea.

You will, I am sure, remember that when you were here we had a long conversation on the likelihood of communal trouble in India in case there was no settlement with the Muslim League. I told you that there was no possibility of any trouble except in Bengal and Sind, and you told me, "You need not be afraid of

¹ Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1941-42; Minister of Finance, Commerce and Industries, West Bengal, after independence; Mayor of Calcutta, 1934-35; member, Central Banking Enquiry Committee; member, Indian Industrial Mission to Britain and USA, 1945

² Unofficial emissary of Congress in Britain before Independence; appointed Public Relations Officer at India House in 1946

Bengal as we have a Governor who would immediately put Section 93 into operation in case of any serious trouble." You have heard, I believe, of the "Great Calcutta Killing." Those who have seen the thing can alone realise what it was. But now what is happening in Eastern Bengal is much worse and the Calcutta incident pales into insignificance before Noakhali. In Calcutta, Hindus had the best of it. But that is no comfort. Was Noakhali by way of revenge? My point just now is that the Governor did nothing to prevent the mischief if he had wished to avoid it. At least that is the general impression. I will not bother you with the details, but I am just sending you a copy of a letter which Jawaharlal wrote to the Viceroy on the eve of his departure for the Frontier. I am also enclosing a copy of a letter from another friend who has been a member of the Working Committee for many years.

Would you believe that the Governor of Bengal has all throughout these terrible happenings been enjoying the bracing climate of a hill station known as Darjeeling?

I myself received many letters and telegrams from the terror-stricken people of the unfortunate area. Similar warnings were addressed to the Viceroy and the Governor, but provincial autonomy serves as a screen to prevent Government action. You would realise how difficult it is for an Indian Home Member to sit in his office quietly day by day when innumerable piteous appeals and complaints are received for some kind of help which would give these unfortunate and helpless victims some protection.

You must have seen that the League has decided to come into the Interim Government at last, but you will see the correspondence that has passed between Mr. Jinnah and Pandit Nehru which has been published and which will give you an idea of the object with which they have come in. There is something uncanny in the way things are done. Whilst we fully realise your difficulties, all three of you must at least give some thought to the terrible strain that has been put upon us.

I have ventured to write this letter to you because I was encouraged by your kind letter. You may share it with your two colleagues. My best wishes to you and them.

I hope you have benefited by the change and rest you had for a month.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Sir Stafford Cripps

ENCLOSURE

15 October 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Thank you for your letter of today's date about East Bengal.

I am going to the Frontier tomorrow morning, but my mind is full of what is happening in East Bengal. Both the reconstitution of the Interim Government, important as it is, and my Frontier visit, which I have looked forward to for so long, have suddenly become of secondary importance. Indeed, I have come seriously to think whether it serves any useful purpose for me to be in the Interim Government if an important part of India sinks to barbarism or something much worse. The accounts we have received and are receiving from hour to hour are incredible, and yet there can be little doubt that they are largely true. A vast area of Bengal has ceased to have any Government functioning, any security, and has just become the happy hunting ground of the worst elements in the community. Mass slaughter, arson, burning of human beings, rape, abduction on a large scale, forcible conversions and all manner of other horrible things are happening.

For at least two or three weeks past we have been receiving warnings that this was going to happen in East Bengal. Indeed, it began in Dacca some time back. Instead of being stopped in time it was allowed to grow, and it is now spreading to other districts. Bengal, which has long led India in many ways, [has] rapidly become a shambles and a ruin. It is a small matter to discuss legal responsibilities when such a horrible catastrophe overtakes a people. It is evident that the Bengal Government is completely incapable of controlling the situation. Indeed, many people think that they have no desire to control it. You have told us that this is the domain of provincial autonomy and that for the rest it is a special responsibility of the Governor and the Viceroys. It may be so, but I should like to know how that responsibility is discharged either by the provincial Government or the Governor when these conditions that are worse than war are allowed to prevail over wide areas and for indefinite periods. It would appear that not only Government but also general and special responsibilities have all ceased to function in these parts of Bengal. Only the gangster, the hooligan and other anti-social elements function there.

Surely it serves little purpose to say that all this is due to communal friction and to divide up the blame between various parties or groups. Conditions are difficult in various parts of India, but it has become the special province of Bengal to indulge in this horror and frightfulness. There was

the famine three years ago. There was the Calcutta killing two months ago, and there is now this mass slaughter, etc., in Noakhali and the surrounding districts which, if reports are correct, is far worse than the Calcutta killing. Law and special and other responsibilities have no meaning when they become completely incapable of controlling such a situation. It is a terrible responsibility for all those in charge. But it is also a terrible responsibility for us and we too have to answer before the people of India. What is the good of our forming the Interim Government of India if all that we can do is to watch helplessly and do nothing else when thousands of people are being butchered and subjected to infinitely worse treatment?

I am greatly perturbed. I feel that we must face this issue somehow or else we retire from the public scene.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

198

Board of Trade
Millbank
London SW 1
24 October 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 19th. I am so glad that you sent it to me and I shall actually see that my colleagues and the Prime Minister have copies of it.

I realise very fully what a difficult situation you are all in and how terrible are the happenings in Bengal. It is of course quite impossible for us to judge from here exactly what is happening and why it is happening. It seems to us that firm measures are being taken to quell the riots and I hope they will be successful.

I know how exasperating it must be for you especially, but that is always one of the difficulties with a Central Government where there is a large measure of provincial autonomy. The system has many advantages, but it also has its difficulties and drawbacks. We are all very impressed the way in which your team is tackling its most difficult job and I send you my very best wishes and may your patience not give out!

Yours very sincerely,
Stafford Cripps

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

New Delhi
25 October 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I am enclosing a copy of a letter¹ which I have received from a British member of the Indian Civil Service who prefers to remain anonymous. The feelings expressed in the letter about the situation in Bengal are similar to what have been expressed in shoals of letters and telegrams that I have been receiving every day on this subject, and the letter provides a revealing commentary on the situation. I am sure you will find it of some interest.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Field Marshal Viscount Wavell
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Mirzapur (UP)
20 October 1946

Dear Pandit Pant,

Although it is perhaps irregular for a district officer to write to you direct, I take the liberty of doing so on a somewhat personal matter. I have already written demi-officially about it to Mr. Banerjee, and trust that you will have no objection to my addressing you privately in this way, as the matter is not one which falls completely under any special conduct rule.

It seems to me quite obvious, from what is happening in Bengal, that if India is to have any chance of working out any scheme of unity, or even of communal agreement, the goondaism in Bengal must be firmly and completely stopped. Quite apart from this, the most elementary tenets of humanity and commonsense demand that such a state of affairs be not allowed to continue. It is quite obvious that the Bengal administration is not capable of dealing with these troubles; and so the logical thing would be to strengthen it from outside. It is possible that Bengal may have to borrow officers from other provinces, just as she did during the war; and I should like to be one of these volunteers. I fully appreciate that the present Muslim League Ministry

¹ The letter was addressed to Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Premier of UP, who forwarded it to Sardar Patel

in Bengal will be unwilling to have such officers from outside; there is no use trying to conceal the fact that Suhrawardy and his Ministers are the leaders of the goondas who are ravaging Bengal, and I do not propose to try to do so. At the same time, I do not see how the Government of India can do anything else but step in and take over Bengal after removing the Ministry; and I imagine that for the subsequent "mopping-up" operations extra civil officers will be required. I feel that I could be of some use in this capacity. I have had a certain amount of experience in the work which will be required in the guerilla formation in which I served during the war; and my administrative experience as a district officer might be useful if added to this. I have had a certain amount of contact with Chittagonians and Bengal Muslims during the war, in the L of C areas, and have learned a little about how to deal with them. Surely it is the duty of every person to oppose in the best way he can the sort of thing that is happening in Bengal; and I feel that I could be most useful working on the spot, helping to stop the trouble, and to hunt down and destroy those who have caused it, and to help to clear up things and set the administration on its feet afterwards. As I think you know, I have asked for permission to retire from the ICS in January, and I feel that I must do so under normal conditions—not because I disapprove of the idea of Indian nationalism, for I do not, but because I am convinced that I cannot give service as it should be given by remaining in the ICS. But I should be prepared to postpone my retirement if I could do anything to help to stop the appalling state of affairs which at present exists in Bengal, and I would gladly offer my services for this work until such time as conditions are satisfactory again. I have approached you in this matter in the hope that you will be able to appreciate my attitude as a private individual as well as from the official point of view and would be prepared to recommend my case to the Government of India. I may add that I feel very strongly the necessity of putting an immediate stop to the state of affairs which exists in Bengal, and of the part which individuals outside that province must play in doing so—not merely to relieve the sufferings of the people who are affected but to prevent the spread of a creed of violence and anarchy which is as bad as anything which has ever been known in the world and which strikes at the roots of world peace and the rights of man. Commissions and resolutions may be all very well in their way; but a lot of action on the spot is needed also, and I feel that my experience in the war could be turned to good use if I were allowed to go to a position in Bengal in which I could help in that action. I should be most grateful, therefore, if you would be good enough to give my case consideration.

Yours sincerely,
A. I. Bowman
[ICS]

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant

200

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
29 October 1946

Dear Sardar Sahib,

H.E. asks me to acknowledge with thanks your letter of 25 October, enclosing a copy of a letter from a British member of the Indian Civil Service.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

201

Delhi
17 December 1946

My dear Sardarji,

Seth G. D. Birla suggested approximately Rs. 50 per man per month is Rs. 50,000 monthly for 1,000 men, and he added that this amount with any reasonable modifications he will give for a period of a year or so. I accept this as the basic minimum expenditure, but there are some essential modifications and including these, I enclose a general estimate of the budget herewith. I had wanted to do this later, so that in consultation with a few others, I could, if possible, make it more accurate, but I hope there will be as little modification from it as possible.

It was my intention to send a hundred men immediately to Gandhiji and then follow it up with [larger] numbers. As you will see from the budget, this means an expense of Rs. 19,000.

Yours affectionately,
Niranjan Singh Gill¹

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

¹Joined Indian National Army under Subhas Bose

ENCLOSURE

Honorary Work Except for Maintenance and Journey and Material Expenses

- (A) Maintenance
Rs. 2 per man per day=Rs. 60 per month for 1,000 men per month=Rs. 60,000
- (B) Travelling and incidental expenses in the disturbed area
Re. 1 per man per day=Rs. 30 per month
For 1,000 men per month=Rs. 30,000
- (C) Initial expenditure
Rs. 100 per man once only
1,000 men=Rs. 100,000
- (D) Return journey on completion
Rs. 50 each man for journey only 1,000 men=Rs. 50,000

202

19 November 1946

My dear Gill,

Your letter of the 17th was delivered to me this morning with the budget which you have prepared.

I am enclosing herewith a draft of Rs. 25,000 (Rupees twenty-five thousand only), which you can cash in Lahore. I do not think it would be wise to embark on the whole scheme all at once. Start with one hundred good men, get in touch with Gandhiji, and if he thinks that our work there would be useful, then we can extend it in accordance with your scheme as a whole, and there will be no difficulty about settling the budget. For the present, hundred men should go immediately and you must get in touch with him and obtain his approval or consent. If our men become helpful to him, or he approves of our scheme, it would be easy to settle the rest. If, however, he does not approve of our scheme and he does not want us to work there on the lines you propose, it may be difficult for us to stay against his will.

In any case, it would not be wise to prepare for a scheme of one year unless we know how the work is received by the general

public in the first month. If it is well received, then we will be able to settle the rest, but our first effort should be for the first quarter of a year. In the meanwhile, the atmosphere in the country will be cleared and we will be able to feel our way.

I shall await your report from time to time regularly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Col. Niranjan Singh Gill

203

Majitha
Amritsar Dist.
23 November 1946

My dear Sardarji,

I have your letter together with the draft enclosure for Rs. 25,000.

I have already sent my messengers and started the move. I am keeping it quiet till I have met some leading persons of this province, after which I may give it due publicity and enlist public support. I, of course, realise the constitutional difficulties as well as the political aspect, so will proceed keeping them in [view].

I intend shortly to open offices at Delhi, Lahore and Peshawar. Regarding Peshawar, will you be good enough to mention to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan that you commend my effort for relief, because I would like to have a talk with him before doing anything in Peshawar?

I expect my first forward lot to reach Gandhiji within the first week of December. I myself will pay you a visit towards the end of this month and then go on to meet Gandhiji myself.

The detailed plan I will explain at the next meeting.

I know what heavy responsibilities you have and how busy you must be, but please do not worry about the part you have asked me to play. I realise its importance and urgency and am acting accordingly, and hope to lift a part of your burden shortly.

Yours affectionately,
Niranjan Singh Gill

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

New Delhi
28 November 1946

My dear Colonel Gill,

Your letter of the 23rd instant was delivered to me this morning.

Unless you expedite your work you will perhaps be too late. Things are moving rapidly. I have doubts whether you and your men will be allowed to enter, or remain in that area, by the Bengal Government. You must get into contact with Gandhiji immediately if you want to do anything.

There have been developments here so far as the Government at the Centre is concerned. You have seen that in the Press. The League and the Viceroy will go to England day after tomorrow. The Congress and the Sikh representatives will not go. The Constituent Assembly meets on 9 December.

I am leaving Delhi on the 30th morning and proceeding to Nagpur, from where I will go to Bombay on 1 December and return to Delhi on the 6th.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Col. Niranjan Singh Gill
Majitha
Amritsar

EXTRACTS

New Delhi
19 December 1946

My dear Sardarji,

I am extremely sorry to find you unwell and pray for your earliest recovery. I would not have bothered you but this matter can only be seen and dealt with by you.

2. I have been to Noakhali and met Mahatmaji. He has approved and blessed the work and wants me to carry on immediately and on as large a scale as possible. He considers it as an 'all India question' the success or failure of which work will have all-India repercussions. So our work in accordance with Mahatmaji's wishes and directions must succeed in spite of the Muslim League and the Bengal Ministry's efforts to the contrary.

3. I have established my headquarters at Qazer Khil (Ramganj) three miles from Mahatmaji. Satish Babu is also there. Two strong and staunch men have been posted at Mahatmaji's camp itself. Seventy men under Col. Jiwan Singh (INA) have started work there . . . in batches. Of the remaining 30, five are at Calcutta to act as reception and despatch centre, five in Patna, and 20 in Punjab districts organising for expansion.

4. The condition in East Bengal is bad. Hindus are completely terrified. Muslims are hostile. It is almost certain that the Bengal Ministry wants Mahatmaji's mission to fail, for that will be a step towards Pakistan. If the mission succeeds then Pakistan and the Muslim League objectives get a hard blow. Mahatmaji's presence is of course doing great good, but he has no workers with him and so effects are in a limited area. What is required is consistent and co-ordinated work under Mahatmaji's instructions and guidance, consistent in that some workers should stay for at least six months, or even a year or more, until normality is restored and the false League propaganda shaken and broken. Various relief agencies must co-ordinate to ensure minimum wastage, which is not the case now. Real consistent workers are few, the area covered is also little. In some places like Sandwip island (30,000 Hindus) hardly anybody has been to that isolated place, where conditions are even worse, to console them and give them strength.

8. Although Mahatmaji has approved "all out" work, I suggest we increase the number to 300 and after their settlement expand in accordance with the circumstances and the results. One hundred workers are not adequate.

9. I enclose a budget, now that I have seen the place.

Affectionately yours,
Niranjan Singh Gill

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

19 December 1946

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--|
| For 100 as now | | |
| First month now | Rs. 45,000 | (i.e. nil Rs. 20,000/- for transport and material) |
| Thereafter monthly | 25,000 | |
| For 300 as suggested and required | | |
| First month now | Rs. 90,000 | (i.e. nil Rs. 30,000 for transport and material) |
| Thereafter | Rs. 60,000 | |

Niranjan Singh Gill

206

New Delhi
22 December 1946

My dear Gill,

I have received your letter of the 19th instant, which I have seen only just now because of my illness. It was a matter of regret that we could not meet as I was suddenly taken ill and I am afraid I will still have to wait for some time before I can deal with such complicated matters.

I have received a letter also from Pyarelal¹ in which he says that you have been asked to see the Bengal Prime Minister and get permission in writing from the Bengal Government for you and your men being allowed to work in that area. I find no mention about it in your letter.

The budget that you have submitted is not in keeping with the kind of work that we have to do. In the relief of distress, we cannot spend so lavishly and without regard to the conditions of the surroundings.

After all, your work there will not remain secret, and secrecy is a thing which Gandhiji dislikes. We cannot conceal anything

¹ Secretary to Gandhi; author of several books on Gandhi's life and works



CONGRESS PREMIERS FROM FIVE PROVINCES CALL ON THE CABINET MISSION. LEFT TO RIGHT:
PANDIT GOVIND BALLABH PANT, B. G. KHER, H. K. MAHTAB, PANDIT RAVI SHANKAR
SHUKLA AND SRI KRISHNA SINHA



HAMIDULLAH KHAN, NAWAB OF BHOPAL AND CHANCELLOR OF THE CHAMBER OF PRINCES, TALKS TO NEWSMEN AFTER MEETING THE CABINET MISSION IN NEW DELHI

either from him or from the public for a long time. In any case, he must be informed of everything that is happening. Otherwise all our work would go to nothing and we may land ourselves in difficulties.

I hardly think that he will approve of our being there if he knows what we have to spend there.

In any case, I see dangers ahead in making a programme for a longer period than three months. Nor do I think that we should increase the number from 100 at present. As I have suggested, we must see how things shape during this period, and therefore you should restrict your activities for the present to the limited number of 100 and the restricted period of three months.

For the budget amount, you will have to discuss with me certain details, and we shall fix it up when you come here. You may take the amount with you when you return to Eastern Bengal and meet me here on your way there. It is not easy for me to apply my mind at present to these things.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Col. Niranjan Singh Gill
Majitha
Amritsar

PS.

Inform me of the date of your coming here so that I can keep some time for you.

207

Calcutta
15 February 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I caught fever on my arrival at Shillong, which is still persisting.

The differences between the Assam Valley and the Surma Valley have gone deep in Assam, and now every question is viewed from the same point of view. The rivalry of these groups went on in regard to Ministry also, and as you know, other groups had their demands too. However I have tried that these sentiments may not surge up any further, so that the demands of various groups as well as the efficiency of the Cabinet may not

suffer. A great deal of success has, therefore, been achieved, and so far as I could gauge, I have found that the whole province was satisfied and happy over it. Basanto Babu has been taken in the Ministry, Mr. Sarma has been nominated for Speakership from the Assam Valley, who will prove a suitable person for it.

Only one man, Abdul Mutalib, out of the three Nationalist Muslims returned to the legislature, deserved to be included in the Ministry. He has, therefore, been taken. The remaining two seats have been kept vacant. Saadullah has been told that if he co-operates with the Congress party work and its parliamentary programme then the Congress will gladly include two of his men in the Ministry. I have prepared Saadullah for this, but Jinnah will probably not agree to such a proposal. However we have clarified our position.

On my arrival here I got the message of the Viceroy that he desired to meet me. If I get fit I shall leave for Delhi on the 15th. After which I may have to go to Peshawar and Lahore. Under the circumstances it is difficult for me to get time to go to Bombay. You have called the Parliamentary Board on the 16th. It should finish the work of the remaining provinces. If any appeal will be filed in this connection, you would send it to me and I will decide it in consultation with you.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Central Parliamentary Board
Congress House
Bombay

208

Congress House
Gauhati
18 February 1946

Revered Sardarji,

The whole subject of having a joint parliamentary board for advising the Ministry was discussed by Maulana [Azad] Sahib with us, some members from the Surma Valley districts and the secretary of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. Maulana Sahib, in the beginning, was not in favour of it, and thought that the Assam Provincial Congress Committee might do the function

of advising the Ministry on matters of policy, leaving the Ministry free to carry on day-to-day administration. It was pointed out, however, on behalf of the Surma Valley districts (Sylhet and Cachar) that being under the Bengal PCC and having problems of their own, [they] would like to have some say in the enunciation of policies, etc. Ultimately I was told by the secretary, Bengal PCC, that he had spoken to Maulana Sahib about the establishment of a sort of joint parliamentary committee with functions as described above [and] consisting of the following members:

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| (a) | Two members from Sylhet DCC | 2 |
| (b) | One from Cachar DCC | 1 |
| (c) | Secretary of the BPCC | 1 |
| (d) | Leader of the Party | 1 |
| (e) | Secretary, Assam PCC | 1 |
| (f) | Four members to be elected from the Assam PCC | 4 |
| | | 10 |

To such an arrangement, the Bengal PCC secretary has already agreed and signed, but so far as the Assam PCC is concerned the matter is waiting consideration of the Working Committee. My own reaction to the proposal is that while I have no objection to the setting up of any machinery of advice or even control, I am not quite sure how smoothly it will work. The success of the Congress in the general seats has brought the Surma Valley feelings to the forefront and, I am sorry to say, to the extent of causing bitterness among some members. The Surma Valley friends have chosen to criticise the Government, and even the Congress Government of 13 months, on grounds which from the point of view of population, revenue given to the Government, etc., and all considerations are absolutely untenable. Maulana Sahib has learnt it first-hand and I am not quite sure whether the establishment of such a committee will really not keep this jealousy alive. I should keep you informed that every action of mine, beginning from the formation of the ministry, giving 3 [seats] to either valley, where the population between Assam Valley and Surma Valleys is 6 to 4 roughly, distribution of important portfolios, etc., are being adversely criticised by a considerable section of the Assamese people. Maulana Sahib seemed to come to the conclusion that the only alternative to this state of things is to separate the Bengali districts of Sylhet and a portion of Cachar from Assam and join these with Bengal—a consummation to which the

Assamese people are looking forward for the last 70 years, when this district was tagged to Assam for "administrative reasons." He said he would take up the matter as soon as it is possible; my prayer to you also is to have it as soon as the Congress assumes power in the Central Government and is in a position to do so.

Maulana Sahib's meeting with Sir Muhammad [Saadullah] and his offer to the League, became the subject [of] criticism among a large number of people. I am afraid my statement on a former occasion may have something to do with it, wherein I followed you in saying that after having given the last Government (primarily a League one) the chance to run it with our support, and the deplorable condition to which we were subjected, I strongly protested against any government but on party lines. The Maulana addressed a meeting of the party members and explained that if the League accepted the offer of the Congress to join on the basis of work according to the Congress manifesto, the whole morale of the League would break down. The League, however, has chosen to turn a deaf ear to it and the two vacancies in the Cabinet yet remain so. The non-inclusion of a tribal in the Cabinet left room for propaganda and the Governor himself showed interest in the subject, but the Maulana's statement to the effect that if a properly efficient man was available a tribal would also be taken in may help to remove the fear that was fanned by interested tribal leaders. I need inform you in this connection that in our province the following are the constituent population (1) Hindus, with scheduled castes, 45 lakhs (scheduled castes 7 lakhs) tribals, about 20 lakhs, and Muslims 34 lakhs (in the included area).

Thanks so much for your enquiry about my health, which continues just as before with blood pressure.

Yours sincerely,
Gopinath Bardoloi

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

1 March 1946

My dear Gopinath,

I have received your letter of 18 February today. I am sorry to hear that the elections have left bitterness behind and the Surma Valley friends have fought the election on parochial lines

instead of basing their propoganda on the Congress manifesto. However, I agree with you that the only alternative is to separate the Bengal district of Sylhet and a portion of Cachar from Assam and take them on to Bengal.

I am afraid that the arrangement of a joint committee to guide and control the Ministry will not work smoothly and will create friction, perhaps even trouble. But you have to handle it smoothly for the time being.

I myself did not like the idea of offering any share in the Ministry to the League. An all-party Government can never work and we should not have made any such offer, but Maulana's view is different and in such matters we are guided by him.

Now that the League has turned down the proposal, we must revise the whole thing and include some tribal members in the Cabinet. It is unfair to give no share to the tribals, whose population is so big. Absence of representation in the Cabinet of a class whose population is as big as 20 lakhs is bound to create disaffection and we must remedy this wrong at the earliest possible opportunity. You had better send your proposal after consulting your colleagues for consideration by us as early as possible.

Please keep me informed of the working of your Ministry and also of your difficulties, if any, in its working.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Gopinath Bardoloi
Assam Provincial Congress Committee
Congress House
Gauhati

210

TELEGRAM

Shillong
10 July 1946

Sardar Patel
Bombay

NONCONGRESS TRIBAL GROUP ASSAM LEGISLATURES PRESIDENT SECRETARY PLAINS TRIBAL LEAGUE JOIN THE CONGRESS PARTY ACCEPT CONGRESS PRINCIPLE OF JOINT ELECTORATE WITH RESERVATION OF

SEATS. PARTY INCLUDES QUALIFIED TRIBALS INCLUDING AN EX-MINISTER AND A MEMBER LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. THREE MINISTERS INCLUDING MYSELF LIKELY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. SATISFACTORY WORK NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT ADDITION OTHER MINISTERS. NOMINATING PLAIN TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBER. PRAY APPROVE. LETTER FOLLOWS.

GOPINATH BARDOLOI

211

TELEGRAM

14 July 1946

Hon'ble Gopinath Bardoloi
Shillong

YOUR TELEGRAM. PROPOSAL NOMINATING PLAIN TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBER PROVISIONALLY APPROVED. AWAITING LETTER.

VALLABHIBHAI

212

TELEGRAM

Birla House
8 September 1946

Hon'ble Gopinath Bardoloi
Premier
Shillong

INCREASE MINISTERIAL STRENGTH AS PROPOSED APPROVED.

VALLABHIBHAI

213

TELEGRAM

Shillong
8 September 1946

Sardar Patel
New Delhi

REFERENCE CONVERSATION INCREASE STRENGTH ASSAM MINISTRY
BARDOLOI ARRANGED SWEARING IN PLAINS TRIBAL MINISTER [in]

TELEGRAM SARDAR PATEL DATED FOURTEENTH JULY GIVING PROVISIONAL PERMISSION PLAIN TRIBAL ASSOCIATES FAVOURING JOINT ELECTORATE AND SUPPORTING CONGRESS. PROPOSED MUSLIM MINISTER GIVES UNDERTAKING AS DIRECTED. BARDOLOI WILL ISSUE STATEMENT AS DESIRED. WIRE APPROVAL IMMEDIATELY.

FAKHRUDDIN AHMED¹

214

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
8 September 1946

Fakhruddin Ahmed
Congress
Shillong

YOUR TELEGRAM. INCREASE MINISTERIAL STRENGTH AS PROPOSED APPROVED.

VALLABHBHAI

¹ Finance Minister in Bardoloi Ministry, 1930-39; defeated in general election in 1946 and appointed Advocate-General of Assam; minister in Assam, 1952-67; Union Minister since 1967

CHAPTER VII
CRUCIAL NATIONAL ISSUES

215

2 January 1946

My dear Jawaharlal,

Dr. Bidhan¹ [B. C. Roy] has been making all possible efforts to obtain the necessary facilities for sending [out] medical missions to Burma, Malaya, etc. All his efforts have so far ended in nothing.

I have received a letter today from Swami Atmaram, Chairman of the INA [Indian National Army] Defence & Relief Committee (Selangor), Kuala Lumpur, wherein he complains that his committee, which has been formed for the purpose of helping the defence of the members of the INA and the Indian Independence League, who are being prosecuted by the local administration for political activities during the time that country was under Japanese control and to relieve the distress amongst the INA or IIL personnel in Selangor or amongst the families of those members of the INA or IIL who are stranded elsewhere, is not allowed to collect funds or to hold any meeting. The chairman wants us to approach the Govt. of India to move the local administration through their accredited representative in Malaya to accede to their demands in this behalf.

Bidhan has received numerous letters and telegrams from all the affected places, but in the absence of any facility given to us it is almost impossible to render them any help from here.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
C/o Sind PCC
Karachi

¹ Congress stalwart in Bengal; VC, Calcutta University, 1942-44 and later President, Jadavpur University; Prime Minister and later Chief Minister, West Bengal

3 January 1946

My dear Jawaharlal,

I had called Mr. M. A. Raschid¹ according to your suggestion and he came and saw me today at my place. He has changed his address, which is as under:

M. A. Raschid Esq.
Raja Bahadur Mansion
1st Floor
32 Apollo St.
Fort, Bombay

This is for your information in case you want to write to him anything. He is now in the Government of India's service, in the Labour Dept., and is not in a position immediately to go to Burma. According to him, he seems to be anxious to go, but he can go only after March next and that too if he gets priority from the Burmese Government and the necessary facilities to return, of which he is not very sure. He had received your letter also, but he regrets that he is not in a position to go all at once. Probably he will write to you also.

I have received a telegram from Maulana [Azad] Sahib today proposing to fix the Assembly Party meeting on the 18th and the Election Board meeting on the 19th. I am therefore fixing the INA Inquiry & Relief Committee meeting also about that time.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Karachi

¹ Member of INA who supported Muslim League demand for a separate State

217

TELEGRAM

Bombay
9 January 1946

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Congress
Hyderabad (Sind)

YOUR WIRE INA MEETING FIXED EIGHTEENTH BUT CAN POSTPONE
NEXT DAY AFTER MEETING.

VALLABHBHAI

218

TELEGRAM

Bombay
11 January 1946

Jawaharlal Nehru
Anand Bhawan
Allahabad

TELEGRAPHIC INVITATIONS SENT THROUGH MAULANA DAUD TO CAPTAIN
SHAHNAWAZ AND HIS COMPANIONS FOR INA MEETING EIGHTEENTH.
REACHING DELHI SIXTEENTH.

VALLABHBHAI

219

TELEGRAM

Allahabad
11 January 1946

Sardar Patel
68 Marine Drive
Bombay

EIGHTEENTH SUITS ME FOR INA MEETING. AM REACHING DELHI
SIXTEENTH.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

202

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
15 February 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

In Gorakhpur I found 100 Gurkhas who had served in the INA and had been discharged. They are a special problem and have to be dealt with specially for various reasons. Partly because the Gurkhas stood apart in the past and they require some encouragement. Partly, on the other hand, because they are generally illiterate and the only work they can do is watch and ward or something of that type. I imagine that room could be found for them in Bombay for this kind of work. We could get some of them engaged here but the salaries are low. Could you kindly look into this matter or ask somebody to look into it? A direct communication on the subject might be sent to:

Thakur Singhasan Singh
C/o The District Congress Committee
Gorakhpur

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

New Delhi
16 November 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have received repeated complaints from the Punjab in regard to the Provincial Government's policy there about the employment of INA personnel. This is, of course, a provincial matter entirely for the Government there to decide. But I understand that the Prime Minister of the Punjab has repeatedly stated that he is really carrying out the Government of India's policy as contained in various circulars sent to him. I enclose copies of two of these

circulars. You will notice that they are old circulars issued previous to the formation of the Interim Government.

I understand that subsequently it was made clear to Provincial Governments that there should be no bar at all to the employment of INA personnel, except in so far as the army or the police services were concerned. Some of the Provincial Governments have actually employed them in various civil departments. May I request you to make this clear to the Punjab Government, as they seem to be in some doubt about the position?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

222

New Delhi
19 November 1946

My dear Jawaharlal,

Many thanks for your letter dated 16 November 1946 about the employment of INA personnel.

2. Neither of the two circulars enclosed with your letter refers to any circular issued by the Home Department on the subject. Reading the two circulars together it seems they have been issued under the instructions of the Defence Department. So far as the Home Department are concerned, they have issued orders in May 1946 stating that civilians who were formerly employed in the Army and had gone over to the INA should be readmitted into service if they were classified as "White" and discharged if they were classified as "Gray" and dismissed if they were classified as "Black." I have already initiated a proposal that these orders should be reconsidered. No ban on the reemployment of ex-INA personnel has been imposed under any orders of the Home Department.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Member for External Affairs Department
New Delhi

Swaraj Bhawan
Karachi
25 April 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

We have read in the papers about the proceedings before the Commission appointed to inquire into the recent disturbances in the RIN. It has also been given out that the Commission is to come and hold some inquiries at Karachi in connection, I presume, with the happenings in Karachi at that time. Some of the naval ratings employed here have been meeting me occasionally and keeping me informed about their treatment etc. They have expressed a desire that we should make some arrangement for a lawyer of our own to participate into the inquiry before the Commission and try to bring out the real causes of the Karachi disturbances. According to me, what happened at Karachi was more important as there was a regular naval battle.

It would not be difficult to ask some Congress lawyer here to do the work; or if Shri Purushottamdas Tricumdas¹ of Bombay who, I read in the papers, appears at Delhi before the Commission is to come here also, we may have him as well as a local lawyer. I am writing this to ask you whether the Commission will allow our lawyer to be present and put questions, and if so on whose behalf he will be supposed to be present; and also any other instructions that you would desire to give us in this behalf.

Some time back one of our Congressmen, who is a lawyer, had written to the naval authorities informing them that the Congress would make arrangements for the defence of the ratings which may be placed before a court martial and he had also asked for permission to interview those of the ratings who were reported to be in confinement. But the only reply he got from the naval authorities was that he would be informed in the matter after "instructions have been obtained from headquarters." So far no further reply has come and we do not know what has happened to

¹ Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi, 1914; member, Congress Socialist Party, 1940-45; member, Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1949-52; later active member of PSP; member, International Commission of Jurists, 1955

the ratings concerned. It would be difficult to present their side without reaching them.

I understand that the Commission is to come here by 8 May. So I hope you will reply to me soon so that suitable arrangements may be made.

With truest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Choithram P. Gidwani

224

New Delhi
18 June 1946

My dear Mehrchand,

I am informed that in the recent court martial trials in Bombay, several RIN ratings have been convicted and sentenced to short-term imprisonment and they are given 'C' class treatment. The following is the list of persons imprisoned in Peshawar Jail in your province:

| | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| H. L. Khosla | 60 days' imprisonment |
| R. Singh | 42 days' „ |

Please see that these prisoners are given better treatment. They deserve to be placed in the special class.

I have received your memo of the 13th enclosing a note on the proposal for nationalisation of transport in your province, which is returned herewith, as desired.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Mehrchand Khanna
Minister
Peshawar

225

Peshawar
24 June 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Many thanks for your letter dated 18 June 1946 regarding the placement in special class of RIN ratings, H. L. Khosla and

R. Singh. I have spoken to the Hon'ble Q. Attullah, Minister in charge Jails. He is going to take immediate action in the matter.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Mehrchand Khanna

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

226

TELEGRAM

Bombay
26 August 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

AS GAGANBHAI [G. L. Mehta] CANNOT LEAVE CALCUTTA ASKING
J P MEHTA SUBMIT YOU COPY MY LETTER TO GAGANBHAI
REGARDING SHIPPING OTHER MATTERS. REQUEST YOU DO NEEDFUL.
WALCHAND [Hirachand]

227

New Delhi
27 August 1946

My dear Walchand,

I have received your telegram this morning. Shri J. P. Mehta also met me and placed your case about shipping before me. We have not yet taken charge and we will have to feel our ground but it will take some time before we can announce our policy on any important matter. You must therefore wait for a little while and I think Sir [N. R.] Pillai¹ will return by that time.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Walchand Hirachand
Construction House
Ballard Estate
Bombay

¹ICS; Commissioner General for Economic and Commercial Affairs in Europe, 1946-48; Secretary to the Union Cabinet till 1952; retired as Secretary General, Ministry of External Affairs

TELEGRAM

Bombay
16 September 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Home Member
New Delhi

INTEND SPENDING WEEK DELHI. DESIRE DISCUSS SEVERAL MATTERS REGARDING SHIPPING SHIPBUILDING AIR BURMA CEYLON WITH YOU AND WITH YOUR ADVICE WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES. ARRIVING TWENTYFOURTH EVENING.

WALCHAND

Scindia House
Bombay
17 September 1946

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

I sent the following telegram to you yesterday:

INTEND SPENDING WEEK DELHI. DESIRE DISCUSS SEVERAL MATTERS REGARDING SHIPPING SHIPBUILDING AIR BURMA CEYLON WITH YOU AND WITH YOUR ADVICE WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES. ARRIVING TWENTYFOURTH EVENING.

I propose to leave this place on the 23rd and will be reaching Delhi on the 24th evening. You will be busy with the meeting of the AICC on the 25th. I would, therefore, like to see you when you are free on the 26th. I shall thank you if you will let me know when it will be convenient to you when I can see you on the 26th so that I can have some time with you in talking over several matters such as shipping questions, problems connected with the shipbuilding industry, questions connected with civil aviation, the position of Indians in Burma and Ceylon and the trade relations of this country with those two countries. I shall be obliged if you will, therefore, spare good time for me on the 26th.

Mr. Master is flying tomorrow to Delhi as he has to attend the meeting of the Trades Policy Committee on the 19th and the 20th. I have asked him to stay there till I come. He will accompany me when I come to see you.

I understand that the Interim Government has decided not to take any part in the conference of the Commonwealth countries in connection with the question of the expansion of international trade and employment. I, however, gather that the Interim Government will decide to attend the Preparatory Committee of several countries which has been called to meet in London on 14 October for the same purpose. Sir Raghavan Pillai had a talk with Mr. Master when he was in London and told him that he should see that he was invited to attend that meeting as shipping has to do a lot in the carriage of international trade. Apart from that, as Vice-President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry he will have to deal with other issues connected with that problem. I would, therefore, request you to include his name as a member to be sent to that committee if the Interim Government decide to attend the committee and invite non-officials to go with the officials to that committee.

I shall be staying at the Hotel Imperial. I have asked Mr. Master to see you and if you will kindly let him know when it will be convenient to you when we can talk at a little leisure, he will convey your message to me.

Yours sincerely,
Walchand Hirachand

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

230

New Delhi
21 September 1946

My dear Walchand,

I have received your telegram of the 16th instant.

Mr. Master also met me day before yesterday. Many years after, we will be meeting in Delhi again and I shall be glad to be of any help to you if it is possible for me to do so.

S. C. III-14

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Walchand Hirachand Esq.
Narayan Dabholkar Road
Malabar Hill
Bombay

231

New Delhi
26 September 1946

My dear Rajaji,

I am enclosing herewith two notes from Mr. Vadilal, Member of the Central Legislative Assembly, Ahmedabad. One is a draft scheme for increased cloth production in the textile industry, and the other is regarding the reduction of the present price of fuel oil, which is too high. You can go through them, and then we shall discuss about it later.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Minister for Industries and Supplies
New Delhi

232

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
15 February 1946

Sardarsahib Vallabhbhai Patel
Hemprabha
Marine Drive
Bombay

REGRET TO INFORM YOU CONGRESS PARTY MEMBERS WEAKENING ON
BRETTON WOODS.¹ ISSUE INEXTRICABLY MIXED UP WITH RECOVERY

¹ A conference was held at Bretton Woods in America regarding exchange rates during World War II

OF STERLING BALANCES. FEAR THIS IS BEING DONE UNDER INFLUENCE OF BIG BUSINESS CONTRARY TO REAL INTERESTS INDIAN MASSES ACCORDING TO MY JUDGMENT AFTER THIRTY YEARS' CLOSE STUDY OF CURRENCY AND EXCHANGE PROBLEMS. AM VERY MUCH PAINED AT THIS MISDIRECTION OF PUBLIC OPINION. REQUEST YOU WITHIN TWO DAYS TO GIVE LEAD BY TELEPHONE OR TELEGRAM. OFFICIALS TRYING RUSII TACTICS PREVENT VENTILATION INDIA'S GRIEVANCE AND RUSH UP THE ISSUE. IIMG HAVE REFUSED TO GIVE EVEN PRELIMINARY ASSURANCE THAT THEIR DEBT TO INDIA WILL BE FULLY MET. WRITING. MY TELEPHONE FOUR NOUGHT TWO FOUR EIGHT. NEW DELHI.

MANUSUBEDAR¹

233

27 Canning Lane
New Delhi
17 February 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

When I sent the wire and wrote to you on Friday, I had a serious provocation. The day before, we (Gadgil,² Anantayananam³ and myself) had met at my house and reached the conclusion that we should come out of the Bretton Woods Fund and [International] Bank because we do not want to risk more money, even if the risk was not immediate and also because His Majesty's Government had refused, in response to a request for the committee of the Assembly, to give an assurance which [would] wipe out the bad effects of the speeches of Sir John Anderson⁴ and Churchill⁵, and because a request to them to make clear their intentions about the sterling balances was definitely turned down. We should not miss this chance of exposing to the whole world the bad intentions of England towards us and our refusal to go under the aegis of the United Kingdom to international bodies.

¹ Economist; member, Indian Central Banking Enquiry Committee; President, Indian Merchants Chamber, 1935; MLA (Central)

² N. V. Gadgil: Secretary and later President of Congress Committee, Poona; MLA (Central), 1934; party whip in Central Legislative Assembly till made minister in Nehru Cabinet in August 1947; Governor of Punjab

³ Anantayananam Ayyangar: member, Andhra PCC; AICC; member, CA; Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha, and then Speaker; Governor of Bihar, 1962-67

⁴ Governor of Bengal during World War II; Chancellor of Exchequer in Churchill's Government

⁵ Prime Minister of Britain, 1940-45

I was asked to draft the report on this basis and I worked hard on the report, which I had more or less ready. The next day, when there was a meeting of the Bretton Woods Committee, after some preliminary discussion Gadgil took the line that we [should] send our representative to Bretton Woods, notwithstanding the refusal of HMG to say anything at all on the topic of sterling balances running into 1,700 crores of rupces (17 years' total net income of the Government of India)!! From the position that we would have a separate report, this almost involved the acceptance by us of the official report.

After we came out, I asked Mr. Gadgil why he had thought it proper to spring this surprise on me, and his explanation was that "we must take some account of opinion outside the House," and he further said that he had a talk with Mr. Asaf Ali.¹

Mr. Asaf Ali called me up yesterday and, instead of sympathising with me for the position which had arisen, accused me of not having informed him of what was going on! The stage for informing him or the Leader, Mr. Sarat Bose, who is returning to New Delhi on Monday from Calcutta, had not yet [been] reached. Mr. Asaf Ali brought up the issue that if India is going to the world to ask for food how can India keep out of international institutions?

I would request you to see which India is going out for international food. The Congress has officially refused to associate itself with the delegation going out at the hands of Mr. Asaf Ali himself and would have always refused to be dragged into international affairs at the hands of this Government and with representatives of their choice.

Staying out of Bretton Woods for the next nine months, during which the sterling issue may be settled, is most important strategically from the point of view of finance. It will not do India any harm and it cannot possibly be misunderstood by America. I am in close touch with American banking circles.

If financial issues of this magnitude (which arise only once in a generation) are going to be settled in this slipshod way by laymen who think they are very diplomatic and who appear to be overwhelmed with the burden which they are carrying, I have

¹ Prominent Congressman of Delhi; Deputy Leader, Congress party in Central Legislature, 1945; Minister of Transport in Interim Government; Ambassador to US; Governor of Orissa

very little hope for the future of our country. If the usual machinery of official pressure, cajoling, buying out or otherwise driving non-officials into a certain position desired by Government is to succeed even on an issue like this, it is most unfortunate for India.

To me individually, it was an indication that I was doing no good in this place and that I would much rather retire into the quietude of private life and devote myself to topics which are of much greater interest to me than the activities of the Assembly.

The fact that I have brought these topics to your notice is itself being made a cause for complaint about me. In my opinion nothing more important in the financial field has occurred in the last 30 years, and even the ratio fight was for smaller stakes than what we are about to lose now if we do not look out.

When I found a Muslim member, Mr. Zia-ud-Din (Ahmed) behaving as if he had sold out the Government in the committee, I took an opportunity of approaching, through a mutual League member friend, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan¹. The latter assured me that on this issue there was nothing sectional and the League would go with us. He has asked me to prepare a note on the subject, which Jinnah and himself will consider. I offered to place myself at their disposal for cross-examination on the points raised. If they are satisfied, they will go with us.

I would request you to give to this question the importance which it deserves and which some of my colleagues do not appear to realise.

I have fought for financial justice to India for the last 30 years and I have guided the country's fight on this topic. I have never exaggerated the issues and I have not been swept off my feet by any situation. We shall all await with anxiety your instructions.

Yours respectfully,
Manu Subedar

Sardar Sahib Vallabhbhai J. Patel
Bombay

¹ Landlord of UP; member of provincial legislature, 1926-39; MLA (Central), 1941 and Deputy Leader of Muslim League; Finance Minister in Interim Government formed by Nehru in 1946; first Prime Minister of Pakistan after partition

ENCLOSURE

[This note was attached to Manu Subedar's letter of 17 February to Sardar Patel.]

Sterling debts represent the value of goods and services compulsorily taken from India, many of which Indians themselves required. They were taken on the basis of controlled price and often monopoly price. Otherwise the debts would have [been] three times as much. The total debt now amounts to between Rs 1,700 and 1,800 crores. This represents 17 to 18 years' total net revenue of India at the Centre.

Lord Keynes at Bretton Woods said that these were honourable debts which would be honourably met. Lord Wavell before the Associated Chambers in 1944 said that these debts would be honoured. But the last official word is that of Sir John Anderson, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, that these were not "commercial debts," implying that the obligation to meet them was not serious. Mr. Churchill, in a debate on 13 December 1945, said with reference both to India and Egypt that they had been protected against German and Japanese aggression and there should be some consideration for such protection. Ever since 1942 he had asked the Cabinet to make reservation on this point.

The omission by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer to get up in the House of Commons and to say that this was not His Majesty's Government's view is deplorable.

The whole of the British Press has more than once tried to say that these debts involved profiteering by India, that India got protection, that England cannot pay, and that these debts should not be paid.

Behind India's back, England negotiated an Anglo-American agreement on 6 December 1945, of which there are two clauses, 6(3) and 10(c), which are mandatory on Britain [to] scale down India's debts and which promise a waiver of interest to the UK from America only if they can show that they have defaulted both in capital and in interest to India.

The apprehension caused by all this to the Indian mind prevents India from judging issues involving a further financial liability to the extent of Rs 260 crores. When India is asked to sign on the dotted line for the Bretton Woods Fund and the Bank, this is the liability incurred. It is true that the risk to this money will not be immediate, but other ventures have been known to fail, and should this venture too fail (as I confidently expect it to fail in the next five years), India would lose this large [sum of] money, which she can save by withdrawing from the Fund.

If, however, His Majesty's Government was willing to give an immediate assurance that the sterling debts would be met in full, and that certain clauses of the Anglo-American agreement [would] not be applied to India, there is no difficulty in an interim position, by which India's representative would attend the first shareholders' meeting in March in New York.

The Finance Member sent a cable to HMG asking for such an assurance and the reply is in the negative: that HMG could make no kind of settlement, nor can [they] give any kind of assurance.

Equally, His Majesty's Government have said that they are not ready to negotiate now and they were unable to indicate any particular time when they could negotiate.

Under these circumstances, in order to let the whole world know that India has been badly treated with regard to a debt which is involuntary and that the debtor is not doing the right thing, it is desirable to come out of the Fund.

The Fund will not function for the next six months, during which preliminary arrangements for its functioning will be carried out. If the pace of negotiations about the sterling could be forced by the strength of public opinion in India, the matter may be settled before the Fund or the Bank begins to function.

After there is a fair and satisfactory settlement on the sterling issue, India can afford to take such risk as is involved in joining the Fund and the Bank, and it is in no spirit of isolationism that India should come out now.

When India's status at home is properly settled, her international status will also be proper, and when the load of anxiety in connection with the sterling [balances] is removed, she could enter the new venture with a lighter mind.

It may be noted that His Majesty's Government cannot plead delicate negotiations with America for not having taken certain obvious measures to reduce or to keep down the sterling debt. Dollars and dollar securities of Indians were requisitioned during the war. There is no reason why assets, at least those which belong to Britishers non-resident in India, should not be mobilised by the British Government with a view to reducing the outstanding sterling balance.

My efforts to get the Finance Member to modify section 41 of the Reserve Bank of India Act, by which the Reserve Bank is bound to give rupees for sterling, have failed. This means that even today commodities required for India are being purchased by the British Ministry of Food and other agents of the British Government in this country and payment is made in the form of sterling, whose return to India is problematic.

In other words, the problem is not old, but the sore is continuing. The debtor is showing no inclination. He is not even renewing the pronote. He is

not paying even where his ability to pay is obvious. He is not willing to send his representatives to the door of the creditor to discuss ways and means. He has not submitted any proposal nearly 12 months after the end of the war.

In order to get a proper perspective, please note that

- 1 the recent Anglo-American loan to England is *less than* £ 1,000 million, and
- 2 the sterling debt to India accumulated is *more than* £1,250 million.

If India does not take this opportunity of marking her protest with worldwide publicity by coming out of Bretton Woods, she will never get a chance. Old and stale debts are not paid and India's own experience in the last war was that only one-tenth was paid for claims of £ 35 million.

The attitude of Government, i.e. Sir Jeremy Raisman,¹ and of non-officials like Mr. [A. D.] Shroff² and Sir Purushotamdas Thakurdas³ up to July 1944, was that India would have no use either for the Fund or for the Bank unless and until the issue of sterling balances was satisfactorily settled. Since that date, when they returned and deplored their efforts to get this settled through the Fund and the Bank, Government's attitude has changed. But the attitude of the Indian people should be that we withdraw from the Fund and the Bank until we see a more clear light and until we get a fair solution of the sterling debt at the hands of the UK.

234

17 Ferozshah Road
New Delhi
15 February 1946

My dear Vallabhbai,

I am putting the following few lines for your consideration and awaiting your directions in connection with the same. On 29 January the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution condemning Government for signifying adherence to the International [Monetary] Fund and to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development by an ordinance. The resolution stated that a committee of nine persons should be appointed to go into the whole question and make recommendations to the House as to

¹ Finance Member, Government of India during World War II

² Director of Tatas, Bombay; President, Indian Merchants' Chamber; non-official Indian delegate to the world monetary conference at Bretton Woods, USA

³ Leading business man of Bombay; member of Indian Currency and Finance Commission, 1926; member, Acworth Committee on Indian Railways; President, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry; member, Central Assembly; delegate to RTC, 1930-33

what action would be in the highest interest of this country; further, the resolution provided that the Government of India should make no commitments till this ad hoc committee submitted its report to the House. This committee consisted of nine persons, four Congress, two Muslim League, one European group and two officials. The Congress is represented by Mr. Manu Subedar, Mr. N. V. Gadgil, Mr. Ayyangar and Mr. K. C. Neogy.¹ The Muslim League by Dr. Zia-ud-Din Ahmed and Mr. [Yusuf] Haroon², Mr. Tyson³ is for the European Group and the Finance Member and Dr. Madan⁴ represent Government. At the first meeting we, the Congress Party, represented that settlement of the sterling balances was the main issue for us and unless there was any satisfactory settlement it was useless to continue membership of the Fund and we would recommend withdrawal from the same. In the course of discussion we suggested that an assurance from His Majesty's Government should come forth in an unqualified manner that they would honour the debt and there would be no scaling down except with India's consent and further immediate negotiations should start. On that occasion the Finance Member, and in fact the entire committee, agreed that this was a reasonable proposal and at the suggestion of the Finance Member the committee was adjourned for 10 days. When the committee regathered the Finance Member informed us that His Majesty's Government was unwilling to give any such assurance because of the fact that the Anglo-American agreement was still not ratified by the American Congress. As regards the starting of negotiations, it was not possible to do it immediately. He then requested us to agree to the appointment of a governor who is to be nominated by India as her representative on the executive of the Fund. He has proposed Sir Chintaman Deshmukh⁵. This matter has got to be decided before next Monday and the discussion of the committee's report is fixed for the 23rd of this month. Now the question is what attitude should the Congress Party take. India is already in the Fund. We must move for her withdrawal

¹ Minister, Government of India, 1947-50; Chairman, Indian Railway Enquiry Committee, 1947; member, Standing Committee of Ministers of the Chamber of Princes, 1940-42; Chairman, Committee of Ministers of the Council of Rulers, Eastern States, 1940-42; Chairman, Planning Advisory Board, Government of India

² Succeeded father Abdullah Haroon as member of Central Assembly

³ Editor of Capital, weekly financial journal of Calcutta

⁴ Economist; Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India

⁵ Member of ICS; successively Governor of Reserve Bank of India, Union Finance Minister, head of University Grants Commission and Vice-Chancellor, Delhi University

if we so desire and we must make a recommendation to that effect in our report. In today's meeting all of us four again pressed the Finance Member to secure the assurance, which he failed to secure from His Majesty's Government, but he is not agreeable. After a good deal of discussion he has put forth the following proposals:

(1) Whatever may have been said in the Anglo-American Agreement about scaling down of debts (Article 10 C) India is not bound by it and India's claim to her sterling credit is not affected by the same.

(2) The committee takes notice of the strong feelings about the settling of the question of sterling balances and request His Majesty's Government to start negotiations as early as possible.

(3) That the Government of India may proceed to appoint a governor, but if there is any fresh commitment to be made with respect to the Fund, this committee should be immediately consulted. This committee should continue.

Under the provisions of the final act [that] a member can withdraw from the Fund by simply giving notice in writing. If at any time India thinks that the question of her sterling credits not being satisfactorily solved is good ground to withdraw from the Fund, she can do so at once.

Now, in our party over this question there is difference of opinion. Among the four of us who are on the committee, Mr. Manu Subedar is keen on withdrawal because His Majesty's Government has failed to give a satisfactory assurance and he wants to use this occasion as a lever for getting the question of sterling balances settled. Mr. Neogy and Mr. Ayyangar think that we can withdraw at any moment if we find that the Fund can be of no help to us in securing the settlement of the question of sterling balances. I am inclined to wait for some time and bring pressure for the settlement of the question of sterling balances and, if in reasonable time it is not done, then give notice of withdrawal and be out of it. The draft containing Government proposals will be received by us by tomorrow evening. I shall certainly send one copy to you, but in order to acquaint you with the position I have written this. Our committee will meet on Monday and we will have to give our final decision before Tuesday evening. You will be in possession of the draft embodying the Government proposals by Monday morning. If you can communicate your views to me by wire or by letter or by phone after 10 p. m. on Monday or otherwise, your views and also your directions will be put before

the party. If you so desire you may speak to Mr. Subedar or Mr. Asaf Ali on the phone. My phone [number] is 40272 and Mr. Asaf Ali's is 40238 and that of Mr. Manu Subedar is 40248.

Yours sincerely,
N. V. Gadgil
Secretary, Congress Party

235

17 Ferozshah Road
New Delhi
16 February 1946

Dear Vallabhbhai,

Please find herewith draft report submitted by Government. This will be considered by the committee on Monday (19-2-46). Kindly inform us as requested in yesterday's letter.

Yours sincerely,
N. V. Gadgil

ENCLOSURE

INTERIM REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE BRETTON WOODS AGREEMENTS

The motion adopted by the House at its meeting held on 29 January 1946, in substitution of the motion moved by the Honourable the Finance Member on the previous day asking for ratification of the action of Government in adhering to the Bretton Woods agreements as an original member, proposed inter alia "that in order to determine what steps should now be taken a committee of this House consisting of nine members be elected to go into this question and report at an early date to this House, and pending consideration by this Assembly of such report no further action be taken by this Government in respect of the said Fund or Bank." We, the undersigned members of the committee to which the above matter was referred, have considered the subject and have the honour to submit below our interim report containing our recommendations.

1 We strongly endorse the statement made in the course of the recent debate by the Honourable the Finance Member that India is not bound in any way by the terms of the Anglo-American Loan Agreement of December 1945.

2 In our view the final decision whether it would be to India's advantage to remain a member of the Bretton Woods institutions may be determined to a

very considerable extent by the outcome of the negotiations which His Majesty's Government are committed to undertake with the Government of India on the subject of liquidation of sterling credits. If these negotiations are unduly delayed, it may be necessary for India to withdraw before these negotiations take place, because it may happen that India will be called upon under the agreement to undertake commitments which she may feel unable to shoulder, in the absence of a satisfactory solution of the sterling credits. Similarly, it may be necessary for India to withdraw from the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank in case the proposals of His Majesty's Government for the settlement of the sterling balances are not satisfactory to India. Meanwhile, apprehensions in this regard were voiced in the course of discussions in the committee owing to certain speeches by eminent men in England advocating the scaling down of the sterling balances, and we are assured in this connection by the Honourable the Finance Member that nothing has happened since the authoritative pronouncement made by Lord Keynes, head of the UK delegation at the Bretton Woods Monetary Conference, in response to the demand of the Indian delegation for an assurance on the subject, to diminish in any manner the authority or force of that statement. Nevertheless, in order to allay the anxieties which have been caused by certain statements in Parliament and in the British Press we would welcome an early and authoritative reassurance by His Majesty's Government on this point and fixing of a date for negotiations with the least possible delay.

3 We are also informed by the Honourable the Finance Member that sections 40 and 41 of the Reserve Bank of India Act 1934, under which the Bank is legally compelled to give rupees for sterling and to accumulate sterling against the issue of rupees will be amended as part of the action that will be taken to implement adherence to the International Monetary Fund agreement.

4 We recommend to the Assembly that Government may be authorised to appoint a governor and an alternate and executive directors and alternates when this is necessary, but no further financial commitments should be undertaken by Government with regard to the Fund or the Bank before the matter has been further considered by the committee. The committee should be summoned again to have a report from the governor on his return from the first meetings of the boards of governors of the Fund and the Bank; we expect that he may be able to bring additional information bearing on the probable scope and manner of operations of these international institutions in relation to the requirements of this country which may assist the committee in arriving at a considered recommendation to the Assembly on the question of continuance or discontinuance of membership.

[SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE]

With reference to paragraph (3) of the report above, we should like to add the following:

Apart from India's membership of Bretton Woods institutions, the question of amending the Reserve Bank Act 1934 has assumed very great importance as there is continuous additions to our sterling balances. We think that Government should act promptly to put a stop [to] these accumulations by amending the relevant sections of the Reserve Bank Act 1934 or otherwise. The accumulated balances are already a great problem and we do not want it to become more difficult and disadvantageous to India.

N. V. Gadgil
M. A. Ayyangar
K. C. Neogy

25 February 1946

236

TELEGRAM

17 February 1946

N. V. Gadgil
New Delhi

YOUR LETTERS 15 AND 16 JUST RECEIVED. IN CASE SUGGESTED ASSURANCE NOT GIVEN STRONGLY ADVISE WITHDRAWAL.

VALLABHBHAI

237

TELEGRAM

Congress House
Bombay
18 February 1946

Sarat Bose
Care Legislative Assembly
New Delhi

IN CASE ASSURANCE NOT GIVEN BY HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT ADVISE STRONGLY INDIA'S WITHDRAWAL. I HAVE ALSO WIRED GADGIL ACCORDINGLY.

VALLABHBHAI

238

Bombay
18 February 1946

My dear Sarat,

I had wired to you yesterday about Shri Gadgil's reference to me and I had a long telephonic talk with Sjt. Asaf Ali at night also.

If the assurance that was asked for is not forthcoming, I have no doubt India should withdraw from the [Bretton Woods] Conference. There should be no hesitation in this matter.

Yours
Vallabhbhai

239

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
18 February 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai
C/o Congress House
Girgaum
Bombay

I SENT DRAFT PROPOSAL BY AIR MAIL SUNDAY REQUESTING YOUR VIEWS. SHANTILAL'S MESSAGE OVER PHONE TODAY NOT CLEAR. IN OUR PARTY MEETING DRAFT APPROVED. PLEASE WIRE YOUR VIEWS BY TOMORROW EVENING. TODAY'S SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING ADJOURNED TILL WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON.

GADGIL

222

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
27 February 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Hem Prabha
Marine Drive
Bombay

CONSIDER IT VERY DESIRABLE THAT A STATEMENT GENERALLY ON LINES INDICATED BELOW AND IF NECESSARY MODIFIED IN CONSULTATION WITH BOMBAY FRIENDS BE ISSUED BY YOURSELF TO COUNTERACT BRITISH PROPAGANDA IN USA AS WELL AS IN INDIA: COMMODITIES REPRESENTING STERLING BALANCES WERE TAKEN FROM INDIA AND THE DEBT TO INDIA BY ENGLAND IS SACRED OBLIGATION BECAUSE GOODS REPRESENTING AMOUNT NOW ACCUMULATED WERE TAKEN WITHOUT CONSENT AND AT CONTROLLED PRICES. CIVIL POPULATION OF INDIA WAS DEPRIVED OF SOME OF THESE COMMODITIES WHEN THEY WERE BADLY NEEDED AND PEOPLE UNDERWENT VERY GREAT PRIVATIONS. TO TREAT THESE DEBTS DUE TO INDIA LIGHTLY WOULD PERMANENTLY DESTROY BASIS OF FAIR DEALINGS BETWEEN ONE COUNTRY AND ANOTHER AND WOULD IMPERIL NEGOTIATIONS WHICH THE CABINET MISSION IS GOING TO INITIATE.

TO INSTITUTE COMPARISONS BETWEEN LOANS FROM USA AND THE STERLING DEBT IS CRUEL JOKE AS USA RICHEST COUNTRY IN WORLD AND INDIA POOREST. TO USA THE ANGLOAMERICAN LOAN REPRESENTS ONLY ABOUT NINE DAYS' COST OF THE WAR FOR INDIA THESE STERLING BALANCES REPRESENT SEVENTEEN YEARS' NET INCOME OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

MISCHIEVOUS PROPAGANDA ALREADY GOING ROUND THAT INDIA SHOULD FORGO THIS MONEY IN CONSIDERATION OF POLITICAL CONCESSIONS MUST NOT BE COUNTENANCED BY ANY SELFRESPECTING INDIAN SINCE POLITICAL POWER AND INDIA'S FUNDS HAVE BOTH BEEN TAKEN AND RETAINED WITHOUT CONSENT. INDIA IS ENTITLED TO BOTH AND ANY SUPPORTERS OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT WHO TALK OF WHITTILING DOWN INDIA'S JUST CLAIMS MUST BE REGARDED AS COUNTRY'S TRAITORS.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA BEHIND INDIA'S BACK ENTERED INTO ANGLOAMERICAN LOAN AGREEMENT CLAUSES OF WHICH ARE IN DIRECT

OPPOSITION TO INDIA'S JUST CLAIMS AND INTERESTS. BRITISH PRESS INDULGING IN PERIODICAL ASSAULTS ON INDIA'S POSITION WITH SUGGESTIONS OF SCALING DOWN BUT THEY ARE NOT SUPPORTING THE COUNTER-SUGGESTION FROM INDIA FOR THE MOBILISATION OF BRITISH ASSETS IN THIS COUNTRY AS AN HONEST ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF UK TO REPAY WHAT WAS TAKEN FORCIBLY. ACCORDING TO ASSOCIATED PRESS [of] AMERICA MESSAGE FROM LONDON DATED TWENTY-THIRD FEBRUARY BRITISH OFFICIALS PRESUMABLY WITH KNOWLEDGE AND APPROVAL OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ARE NOW EMBARKING ON SOME KIND OF PERNICIOUS PROPAGANDA. LET EVERYONE CONCERNED NOTE BOTH IN INDIA AND OUTSIDE THAT INDIA HAS STRENGTH AND UNITY TO ENFORCE FULLY HER JUST CLAIMS IN THE MATTER OF STERLING DEBTS. NO PARTY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INDIANS SHOULD INFLUENCE ATTITUDE OF ANY SECTION ON THIS GRAVE ISSUE OF COMMON INTERESTS VIS-A-VIS BRITAIN.

SARAT CHANDRA BOSE, MANU SUBEDAR

241

27 Canning Lane
New Delhi
27 February 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I confirm having sent the wire in company with Shri Sarat Bose [See 240]. Propaganda started in India and in America against India's claims is intense, as you will see from the London message of 23 January in which British officials are reported to be declaring that Indian money is frozen in London and cannot be given for 200 years if America does not give the loan, and even if America gave the loan India would have to make a settlement on the same basis as America did with lease-lend. America's claim on lease-lend was 12,775 million dollars and it was settled for 650 million dollars, i.e., roughly 2 per cent.

Government seem to be actively propagating the view that if there are political reforms a heavy scaling down should be attempted by India. This propaganda reached both Shri Sarat Bose and myself, and we feel that our own men (Indians) are being used for this purpose. We both therefore thought that it would be good if an authoritative statement of some kind came from you. It would guide Indian opinion generally in this country and all nationalist papers, and it would certainly be transmitted to the USA. Hence the suggestion.

The majority of the Congress Party's executive in the Assembly took a view against me, that we should withdraw unless there were assurances on the sterling balances. I have kept party discipline and signed the report as required by Shri Sarat Bose. It was the firmness with which I stood out for a definite position which has secured in the unanimous report several heads affecting sterling balances, though not in the language which I would have liked. I have been watching the financial depredations made by Britain on India during the last six years and I am convinced that their intentions are not clean, and unless opinion in India stiffened and was expressed very strongly at a high level they would be able to deprive India of 400 to 500 crores of rupees. The lever used is the impatient industrialists who want machinery and who want some dollars now for their machinery regardless of what happens to the country's general economy. It is these big industrialists who are therefore being used by the Government.

The fear which I have is that if there is any heavy scaling down Indian prices will never come down. Millions who could not eat fully when rice was at Rs. 3 a maund can hardly afford to live when rice is from Rs. 14 to 24 a maund. An ordinary workman, who is earning Rs. 30 now, would have to be paid something like Rs. 100, and he would be worse off on Rs. 100 afterwards than he is on Rs. 30 now. The whole of the middle class would be squeezed physically and morally.

I have endeavoured to bring to your notice the very great importance of this subject, and I have no doubt, as and when opportunities occur, you will express the voice of India in no unmistakable terms on this subject.

Yours sincerely,
Manu Subedar

Sardar Sahib Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

242

Bombay
4 March 1946

My dear Manubhai,

I received your letter of 27 February only yesterday. Why it was delayed so long in transmission I cannot say. As soon as I received your first telegram on this question I had wired
S.C.-III-15

Sarat Babu and also Sjt. Gadgil giving my opinion supporting your views. But we have to work in a party where we have to make compromises in order to take the weakest with us and thus we have to dilute our own strong opinions to suit certain conditions which are unavoidable.

I got your joint wire and I have prepared a statement in consultation with friends here which has been given to the Press today. I feel as strongly as you do on this question, but you know I hate making statements publicly on such important questions without first mobilising our strength behind it. However, I think the statement that I have given will be enough for the purpose you have in view [See enclosure].

We had a very difficult time in Bombay last week, but we have passed through the crisis and Bombay is normal again.

If ever you want my assistance in any matter, you can write to me without any hesitation. In the party there, on all economic subjects we have to rely on you; you are the only expert on whom we can count as the watchman of our interest.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Manu Subedar
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Sardar Patel's statement on sterling balances:

"Pending the forthcoming political discussions between India and Britain, a certain section of the British Press is carrying on misleading propaganda that Britain's sterling debt to India must be scaled down. Recently according to a Press message from London, British officials, presumably with the knowledge and approval of the British Government, have started propaganda on the same [line]. Any discussion of scaling down sterling debt at this stage when India has no independent bargaining power would embitter Indo-British relations still more and hinder rather than help the forthcoming Pethick-Lawrence Mission.

"The sterling debt is Britain's sacred obligation, as it is the result of services and goods taken by Britain during the war forced down by control. The people of India, in order to supply these services and goods, were deprived of their vital necessities and had to undergo untold privations. This sterling debt forms the most important asset for the future development of this country and

our hope of raising the standard of living in India depends upon it. Any comparison between the loans from the USA with the sterling debt to India is out of place, as the USA is the richest country in the world and India the poorest. To India this sterling balance represents 17 years' net income of the Central Government, whereas to the USA the Anglo-American loan represents only about nine days' cost of war.

"Any average Briton is 33 times richer than an average Indian and Britain has (Rs.) 600 crores of assets in India. Any release of such a rich debtor therefore, at the cost of a poor creditor is, on the face of it, unjust. The question of scaling down the sterling debt is therefore out of the question. No Indian can possibly support such an immoral attempt; but if there is any such person, he cannot but be regarded as a traitor to the country.

"The manner and stages of repayment of this debt can be satisfactorily settled only when India is in a position politically to discuss the question with Britain on terms of equality. The Finance Member is reported to have stated that India is not committed to scaling down the sterling debt. But there is no official denial from the British Government as far as the intentions of Britain are concerned. The fact remains that in the Anglo-American Financial Agreement published, a reference has been made that Britain intends to scale down her war debts. Further when the negotiations for the Anglo-American loan were completed Britain let down India completely, because Britain agreed to the stipulation that she would not use any part of the dollar credit for repayment of her debt.

"As regards India joining Bretton Woods, the (Central Legislative) Assembly has done the utmost that is possible for India. At this stage, it is not advisable to make any further commitments. If the political issues between Britain and India are not satisfactorily settled, India shall have reluctantly to withdraw from Bretton Woods. The other nations of the world who have joined Bretton Woods fully realise that if India with her population, resources and geographical position withdraws from Bretton Woods for want of an equitable settlement of the political issues and the sterling indebtedness of Britain to India, the hope of the United Nations to rehabilitate the structure of world trade and thereby establish permanent peace, will remain illusory. The world has come to understand that India will have the strength and the power to enforce her past claims when the time comes."

New Delhi
7 March 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I acknowledge your letter of 4 March and am grateful for the clear expression of your confidence in me on economic subjects.

The delay in my letter of 27 February reaching you on the 3rd, can be accounted for either by disturbed conditions in Bombay or delays of the CID.

Notwithstanding your clear instructions, I regret that Congress friends here, and principally Gadgil, urged a different course and succeeded in creating an impression on Mr. Sarat Bose that the majority wanted that course. What has happened is not fortunately so bad that the position cannot be retrieved. The statement made by you is very good. It has lifted the topic from the hands of economists and business men and small politicians, who may be either ignored or influenced. It has made this an important national issue, on which India would expect the Cabinet delegation to have something very definite to say.

While I am writing to you, I would like to bring to your notice an issue of some importance from here. In my opinion, the proper course would be to throw out the Finance Bill on the plea that we cannot vote supplies to this Government, which is not responsible to us and in the expenditure of which we have no hand or share. We have done this for the last 10 years. At a party meeting today Mr. Asaf Ali indicated that he himself would merely be content with a few small cuts and with securing those small changes which the Finance Member has promised if an undertaking was given to him that the Finance Bill would be passed. The suggestion of Mr. Reddiar (Southern India Chamber of Commerce) that on this matter directions from the High Command must be sought was not received well by several persons in the meeting. We have still to gain power. But some friends, particularly Shri Asaf Ali, seem to believe that we got all we had aspired for and now we must behave as co-partners with the Government and not oppose it. In my humble opinion this day is still to dawn on us.

The view that the Cabinet delegation is coming ought to elicit from us a courteous tone and the satisfaction that this would be the last budget which we would throw out, but it need not emasculate the Opposition as Opposition. If the League comes with us, it is very good. If the League stays out, it will show up the League.

While there are some good features in the budget, the fact that in a peace year Rs. 244 crores are proposed to be spent for the military (against Rs. 50 crores normal), and Rs. 111 crores are budgeted for Civil Administration (against Rs. 38 crores before the war) and there will be a deficit of Rs. 44 crores (real deficit Rs. 70 crores, reduced by crediting Rs. 24 crores collected from the War Risks Insurance Fund) cannot be ignored.

Important negotiations may be pending with this Government, but the Americans and others ought not to think that we are reconciled to the Government as it is today. The Executive Council is filled up with men chosen for their declared opposition to the Congress (as well as the League) and most of the expanded war departments are filled with men who got into favour by their anti-Congress attitude. Contraction both in the military field by demobilisation and in the civil administration field by sending away anti-popular men has been definitely deferred, obviously because Government may use these elements in case the negotiations break down.

Mr. Sarat Bose is expected to reach Delhi some time tomorrow. The decision whether the Finance Bill should be thrown out or not should be reached some time by Tuesday next.

Yours respectfully,
Manu Subedar

Sardar Sahib Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

244

Bombay
12 March 1946

My dear Manubhai,

I have received your letter of the 7th instant. I met Sjt. Asaf Ali last night and I learn from him that the party has almost unanimously agreed informally to discuss the budget on merits and not throw it out as has been done in the past on one uniform policy and principle. You want me to give instructions before

Tuesday, i.e., today. There is hardly any time for me to do so. We are meeting today in the Working Committee. It is difficult to postpone the very urgent matters which we are discussing today, and this question may have to wait till our discussions on important matters are over.

I had a talk with Sjt. Minoo [M. R.] Masani¹ when he saw me last week before returning to Delhi and he knows my views. He had also agreed with me that there should be no variation in our practice till we see a substantial change in the policy of Government. I see, however, difficulties in influencing the party from a distance, but I will try to discuss this matter in the Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt Manu Subedar
New Delhi

245

Bombay
20 July 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

The Bretton Woods Committee of the Assembly is scheduled to meet on the 26th at New Delhi and I am leaving on the 24th.

I have previously expressed to you very briefly my dissatisfaction with my position in the Congress Assembly Party. I did not give you details because you were engaged on larger negotiations and problems. In February, at the time of the Bretton Woods discussions, I found the hand of Government reaching right inside the Congress Party to secure results which they wanted. Their method of dealing with Indian opposition was to isolate me and to get the three other colleagues in their hands. They did this largely through Sir Chintaman Deshmukh, Sir Sri Ram², the Editors of the Eastern Economist and Indian Finance, Mr. Mulharkar, [Secretary of the Federation of Indian Chambers of

¹ Founder and joint secretary, Congress Socialist party, 1934-39; Mayor of Bombay, 1943-44; member, Central Assembly, 1945-47; member, CA, 1947-48; Ambassador to Brazil, 1948-49; Founder-member and later President of Swatantra Party

² Leading industrialist of Delhi

Commerce and Industry], Rao Bahadur V. P. Menon¹ and other agencies, and they got at both Satyanarayan Sinha² and Sarat Bose as well as the other three members. You know the subsequent history of how we compromised on this issue.

India's financial interests are being jeopardised in various subtle ways not quite clear to the layman. For example, the complete removal of EPT [Excess Profits Tax] has led to a stock exchange boom and an appreciation of British assets, which they are disposing of. It was also calculated to [lead] and has led to the result that enormous orders for machinery are going out of India. Caretakers will take care of it! But a national government would have continued this tax in order to check black marketing and rise in prices.

Similarly, India's financial interests in the matter of sterling balances are jeopardised. It is most extraordinary that the three Cabinet Ministers should have come here and not a word was said to them by any Indian in regard to the sterling balances. Why should the debtor offer to do anything about a debt if the creditor does not mind and if he does not constantly press for repayment?

Clauses 6 and 10 in the Anglo-American agreement are prejudicial to India and they have put up Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar³ to defend their position and to pretend that the American loan would be a very great advantage to India. I could have refuted this and various other propagandist statements, which are coming out, had I had the same zeal as I did in February 1946. But I carry a sense of frustration so far as my own party men are concerned, the latest phase of it being the omission of my name in the Constituent Assembly. It is extraordinary that no men with direct financial knowledge have been included from Bombay, a province, it was expected, would give such men.

¹ Secretary, Ministry of States, July 1947—October 1948 and December 1949—May 1951; Adviser, Ministry of States, October 1948—November, 1949; Governor of Orissa; played an important role along with Sardar Patel in integration of Princely States

² Joined Freedom movement in 1920; MLA (Bihar), 1926; member, AICC; MLA (Central) 1934; Congress whip 1937; Chief whip 1939; MLA (Central), 1945; Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, 1948-52; Present Governor of Madhya Pradesh

³ Member of the Legislative Council, Madras, 1920-26; Mayor, 1928-30; member, Council of State, 1930; member, Indian Legislative Assembly, 1931-34; Member, Round Table Conference and its committees, 1931-32; represented India at several international conferences; Member, Viceroy's Executive Council for Commerce, 1939-42; Member War Cabinet and Pacific War Council, 1942-43; twice President of Economic & Social Council of United Nations in 1946-47; Dewan of Mysore State on eve of independence; member, Rajya Sabha for one term

I confess I am a little undecided as to what definite course I should take in future. You very kindly advised in one of your letters written to me in Delhi not to act in a hurry or rashly, and I am following that advice.

I am going to this meeting with the conviction that India's adherence to the Bank (apart from the Fund) is a definite disadvantage. It means the ultimate risking of Rs. 130 crores for an international experiment whose principal object is to help war-torn countries like China, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Italy. India will not be eligible for loans from this institution, and if the money is lost (and I am absolutely convinced that these loans will never be repaid) India will have to bear it. The Bank will give loans to countries which cannot raise money through the ordinary machinery of banks, which means more risky loans. The loans will be to the governments of these countries, so that in the event of revolutions the new governments would repudiate their liability.

I fear that if the same kind of stampeding is done as in February my colleagues, i. e., Gadgil, Anantasayanam Ayyangar and Neogy, might or might not take this view. In that case I shall record a minute of dissent and do my duty.

I know you have many big things on your mind at the moment. I have therefore contented myself with just informing you of the position by means of this letter.

Yours respectfully,
Manu Subedar

Sardar Sahib Vallabhbhai J. Patel
Bombay

246

Bombay
3 August 1946

My dear Manubhai,

I had received your letter of 20 July, but as you had left for Delhi and I was bedridden I could not write to you. We shall discuss this question when we meet at our convenience. I know your difficulties and your feeling of frustration in the party. It is unfortunate that in the party there are few people who can understand such complicated and technical subjects. I do not think they do anything wrong consciously, but they are probably

unable to understand the matter in all its aspects and implications. Perhaps we will be able to meet on my return to Bombay from Wardha, where I am going for the Working Committee meeting on the 6th inst.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbai Patel

Shri Manu Subedar
Bombay

247

13 C Ferozshah Road
New Delhi
18 February 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I posted yesterday a copy of my report to Bapuji on the attitude that our party has taken up in the Assembly in regard to Government's invitation for our co-operation in their food delegation. I hope you approve of our action.

I learn that Mr. Asaf Ali has already talked to you twice on the trunk telephone about the Bretton Woods monetary proposals. We have had full discussions in our party and its executive, on this matter. Mr. Manu Subedar is strongly of the opinion that we should not join it. Mr. [K. C.] Neogy advocates our membership. A compromise was suggested whereby we will not be obstructing our immediate participation in the Fund and Bank but will be preventing the Government from undertaking any immediate financial responsibilities and will be keeping up the sub-committee appointed by the Assembly to watch further developments during the next few months; and we will also be demanding [that] Government consult the Assembly before it finally undertakes any financial responsibilities.

The idea behind this suggestion for a compromise is this: that to start negotiations immediately for the repayment of sterling securities by Great Britain with the present irresponsible Government in India may not be so beneficial to India. Secondly, since the USA is supposed to be keen on our trade and, therefore, is interested in getting India and other empire countries freed from the Empire Dollar Pool, it may not be to our advantage to alienate her feelings. Thirdly, we do not know as yet definitely whether our membership of the Fund and the Bank will be of any considerable advantage or disadvantage to us, and if we can get into

it without undertaking any financial responsibilities and see more about its activities we may be in a better position to make up our mind about it a little later on. Fourthly, we are hoping that the national government, to come within the next few months, may be in a better position to understand the full implications of the Fund and the Bank and to advise us to take the best possible action.

Yesterday we discussed this compromise formula but we could not come to any final decision because we wanted to await your advice on the matter. We advised our members of the committee to ask for more time before they signed on the compromise formula, so that we may be able to have the benefit of your advice also, if possible, on the trunk phone through Mr. Asaf Ali. We hope to receive it either today or by tomorrow noon.

Anyhow, the final discussion in the Assembly will come up on the 23rd instant. Therefore, I request you to consider this matter, if need be, with the help of any suitable friends who may be available to you, and then to give the benefit of your advice through Mr. Asaf Ali or Sarat Babu, who is back today.

Yours sincerely,
N. G. Ranga

ENCLOSURE

13 C Ferozshah Road
New Delhi
16 February 1946

My dear Bapuji,

Subject: Our party's attitude on food famine

I learn that certain interested Government circles are carrying on meticulous propaganda against our party for our refusal to associate ourselves with Government's delegation to the UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency] Combined Food Board.

Briefly the facts are as follows:

We showed our extreme anxiety to co-operate with everyone, including Government, in helping our people to wade through the food famine. It was in response to our four notices of adjournment motions that Government started the food debate. To their motion, only ours were all the amendments passed.

Through our amendments and speeches, we made it clear that if only the British Government really wanted to solve our food problem it could have built an adequate foodgrain reserve from imports; but it did not.

As things are, this Government of India is only a smokescreen for the British Government to hide its primary responsibility for India's food disaster and as such it has no real authority or prestige with UNO or UNRRA. So what is the good of our Congress associating itself with this subordinate Government and thus helping it further to succeed in misleading the outside world as to the real responsibility of the British Government for this food muddle?

We were quite prepared to take up the whole responsibility of approaching the Combined Food Board in case we [had] the full power in Government to do all that is necessary to mobilise our internal resources and also to speak with full authority in the name of India and her Government. Instead, when we were asked to go as a part of the delegation, while the Government continues to have its own last and principal say, we felt that as usual we would be reduced to record our views or protests as mere "dissents" whenever we would be unable to carry this Government with us.

On the other hand, we anticipated your latest statement and had in mind your 1942 advice to Orissa Congressmen. When we suggested ways and means for (i) increasing the total food production in the country through (a) assuring our peasants remunerative and equitable prices, (b) developing the Grow More Food campaign, (ii) minimising the corruption now prevailing in the food administration, (iii) fighting the prevalent zoolum [injustice] and arbitrariness of the food procurement administration, (iv) preventing the spread of the deficit zones for food and the conversion of self-sufficient zones into deficit zones through the present anti-rural and anti-peasant attitude of the Government authorities, (v) for insuring the people from the growing menace of food famine caused by the indiscriminate and arbitrary requisitions of foodgrains from peasants and rural areas without a second thought for their own needs and solutions.

On top of all these precautions were suggested by us to conserve and improve our existing food resources and to make them serve more of our people for a longer period than is the case under Government's dispensation. Your latest and timely statement has come to guide us in the Assembly and people in the country as to how to conserve and distribute existing foodgrains more equitably and economically so that we may be able to avoid any avoidable disastrous starvation.

But what do we find to be the truth about this Government?

- (i) Hoarders, profiteers and merchants are not being checked.
- (ii) Uneconomical prices are being imposed upon peasants, robbing them of all incentive to put in their best efforts to produce more and more.
- (iii) Manures, agricultural implements, are too scarce, cost too much, are available only in blackmarkets, and even many of the local agricultural officers are too corrupt.

(iv) Arbitrary procurement procedure is being resorted to; deficit areas are being extended and more and more rural people are forced into the artificially created famine zones.

(v) No serious effort is being made by Government to minimise the great difference between the prices paid for the producers and obtained from consumers of foodgrains.

(vi) Their Grow More Food campaigns are not effective.

(vii) Rationing is not introduced in most of the rural areas, with the result that grave under-feeding and much misery are being inflicted upon or experienced by the rural masses without being noticed by either Government or the Press.

(viii) No economy is being effected in the food consumption of the upper classes.

(ix) While in England, both production and consumption are being subsidized by the State, no such effort is being made in India. Communal feeding centres, offering meals at specially reduced prices for the poor, are not yet organised.

(x) On the false plea that people of rural areas can supplement their "rations" by other garden produce, only one-half or one-fourth the ration that is usually allowed for a townsman is being granted, with the consequent under-feeding and suffering of these few rural areas which are fortunate enough to be provided with so-called "informal rationing."

Under these circumstances, I am glad you have made the only possible and statesmanlike suggestion; that is, that a national government ought to be formed immediately, if for no other reason, at least to solve this terrible food crisis.

Yours sincerely,
N. G. Ranga

248

21 February 1946

My dear Ranga,

I have received your letter of the 18th instant and a copy of your letter dated the 16th instant addressed to Gandhiji regarding the party's attitude [to] the food situation.

Nobody expected that the Congress Party would join the delegation headed by a member of the present Executive Council. It is below the dignity of the Congress and it would compromise our position and would be inconsistent with our self-respect. Therefore the decision that has been taken by the party is perfectly

correct. Any other decision would have led the party into difficulties and would have been against the traditional policy of the Congress. It is not necessary therefore for us to make any defence against any criticism in this matter. Interested people may say anything they like but the Congress position is well known and is not likely to be misunderstood.

The Andhra nominations are over. I have tried my best but failed. There was no possibility of making any bridge in the delta set against your suggestion. Sjt. Asaf Ali has also telephoned to me about Mrs. Ranga and about your nominees and I tried my best to place this point also before the committee, but there was no change and I am sorry.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbai Patel

Prof. N. G. Ranga
13 C Ferozshah Road
New Delhi

PS.

On the matter of the Bretton Woods monetary proposals, I have already communicated my views to Sjt. Asaf Ali and also to Sjt. Gadgil.

249

25 Canning Lane
New Delhi
2 March 1946

My dear Sardar,

I am sending you herewith a copy of my speech in the Assembly yesterday on the interim report on the Bretton Woods agreements. That sums up our attitude towards the Bretton Woods institutions. I feel strongly that this question should be raised for discussion and settlement when the British Cabinet Mission is here by the end of this month.

I am going to Calcutta tomorrow morning on very urgent business in connection with the coming elections and shall be back in Delhi on the 7th instant.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sarat Chandra Bose

Sardar Vallabhbai Patel
Bombay

ENCLOSURE

[Sarat Chandra Bose's speech on Bretton Woods agreements]

Sir, I congratulate the members of the committee on the Bretton Woods agreements on the unanimity which they reached in submitting their interim report to this House. Those among them who represent the major parties in this House have demonstrated that party alignments cannot and will not be allowed to stand in the way of an agreement where the interests of India are at stake; and I hope, Sir, that when the time comes for us to take our final decision they and the parties they represent will demonstrate once more the inherent and essential unity and indivisibility of India in her opposition to the reactionary forces in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Sir, I do believe in unanimity but I do not make a fetish of it. And speaking for myself and for the party which I have the honour to represent in this House, I shall say that where the interests of India demand, we shall not hesitate to be and to find ourselves in the minority. For we know, and history teaches us, that all great movements in the world have begun and, if I mistake not, will always begin in the minority of one.

Sir, in considering the terms of the interim report before this House, we cannot afford to forget the circumstances under which the sterling balances which are due to India accumulated in the hands of the United Kingdom. Goods and commodities belonging to India, which are now represented by these sterling balances, were taken from India during the war, which was in no sense India's war, and were in fact taken without her consent. They were taken at a time when the civilian population of India was greatly in need of them and had, in consequence, to undergo very great privations. In those circumstances, to treat those debts lightly would, to my mind, permanently destroy the basis of fair dealings and good relationship between one country and another and would also, I think, imperil the negotiations which are going to be initiated by the British Cabinet Mission. As far as we know the British Cabinet Mission is coming out in a few weeks to this country. I would like to give a warning in this connection to propagandists in and outside India. I would tell them that to institute comparisons between loans from the USA to the United Kingdom and the sterling debts due to India would be nothing short of a cruel joke. We all know today that the United States of America is the richest country in the world and India the poorest. To the United States of America, the Anglo-American loan represents, if I mistake not, only about 9 days' cost of the war. To India, the sterling balances due to her represent 17 years' net income of the Central Government. So the importance of

repayment of the sterling balances due to India cannot possibly be exaggerated.

I should like to remind the House in this connection that mischievous and insidious propaganda has been going on for some time past in order to deprive India of this money, and the excuse put forward is that India has had, and will have, many political concessions and that India has benefited during the war. What benefit India has derived from the war we Indians know; and I should have thought that it was time that propagandists in India and outside realised that it was no use carrying on their nefarious propaganda any more. It will not do for the Honourable the Finance Member to say that the report cabled out by the Associated Press of America a few days ago was mere sensation-mongering. That report very clearly states the attitude of certain British officials, unnamed though they may be. I should have thought that if the report was mere sensation-mongering, His Majesty's Government would have been the first to protest against the report and declare in clear and unmistakable terms that every word of that report was untrue. That has not been done up till now.

Sir, on behalf of my party, I accord my support to the interim report for the time being because, for one reason, the Cabinet Mission is coming out to India within a few weeks. Some of us, at any rate, expect that the Cabinet Mission will be prepared to deal with this vexed question here in India and in our presence. I hope they will not tell us that they are not prepared to discuss it. If they do so, we shall know what to do.

I would like to say in this connection just a few words on the supplementary note which has been signed by members representing my party. I do accord my wholehearted support and the support of my party to every word they have said in their supplementary note. I wish to stress the words they have used in their note, the words being:

Apart from India's membership of Bretton Woods institutions, the question of amending the Reserve Bank Act 1934 has assumed very great importance as there is a continuous addition to our sterling balances.

I know that the Honourable the Finance Member has expressed a desire to amend at some future date certain sections of the Reserve Bank of India Act, but I do wish to impress upon him the importance of making those amendments with the least possible delay.

Sir, I am at the present moment racing against time and I do not want the Honourable the Finance Member to nourish the grievance that I have not left him time to give an adequate reply to the numerous points which have been raised in the course of the speech made this morning by my honourable and learned friend Mr. Manu Subedar. I shall conclude with just a few observations.

It is time for us to remind His Majesty's Government—it is also time for His Majesty's Government to remind themselves—that India's economy cannot any longer be tied to the chariot wheels of Britain's economy. I hope that, whether in the matter of repayment of the sterling balances or in the matter of the other issues that arise out of the interim report, they will always bear in mind this, that India is determined to come into her own, politically and economically. I look upon this interim report as one more opportunity given to His Majesty's Government to do justice to India. The interim report gives His Majesty's Government a locus poenitentiae. It is for His Majesty's Government to avail themselves of that opportunity. If they avail themselves of that opportunity, well and good. If they do not, we shall go our own way.

250

TELEGRAM

Lucknow
10 August 1946

Sardar Patel
Wardha

PAPERS REPORT FOOD DELEGATION TO COPENHAGEN INCLUDES RANGA ABDULGHANI¹. CONGRESS PARTY REFUSED JOINING FIRST DELEGATION UNDER SRIVASTAVA'S² LEADERSHIP. PLEASE ISSUE NECESSARY INSTRUCTIONS.

MOHANLAL SAKSENA³
SECRETARY

251

TELEGRAM

15 August 1946

Mohanlal Saksena
Care Congress
Lucknow

YOUR WIRE. ADVISE ALLOW RANGA ABDULGHANI TO GO UNDER CHANGED CONDITIONS. ISSUE NECESSARY INSTRUCTIONS.

VALLABHIBHAI

¹ Congress leader of Ludhiana and veteran freedom fighter; refused to migrate to Pakistan; member of Parliament after independence

² Food Member, Central Government during World War II

³ Member, Legislative Assembly, 1935-45; President, UPCC, 1938-39; Secretary of Congress party in Dominion Parliament, 1947-49; Union Minister for Rehabilitation, 1948-50

252

TELEGRAM

16 August 1946

Professor Ranga
Naidubrolu
Guntur Dist

PRESIDENT REFERRED ME YOUR WIRE. YOU ARE FREE GO COPENHAGEN.

VALLABHBHAI

CHAPTER VIII
THE CABINET MISSION

253

19 March 1946

My dear Maulana Sahib,

Government issued a Press Note yesterday which gives the programme of the British Cabinet Delegation. Dr. Khan Saheb and Sjt. Bardoloi and the Punjab Premier are invited to meet them on 1 April. They will require instructions as to what attitude they should take and I have written to Dr. Khan Saheb and Sjt. Bardoloi to put themselves in touch with you, but I do not know what advice you will give them. The procedure adopted by them as announced is different from what we anticipated. They have invited about 50 people in the course of a fortnight, beginning from 1 April. This is a strange procedure but we must instruct our people to take some uniform attitude in this matter. Please let me know what you think about it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
19A Ballygunge Circular Road
Calcutta

NOTES BY JAWAHARLAL NEHRU ON THE IMPENDING CONVERSATIONS
WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH CABINET MISSION
TO INDIA

1. It is essential that the basis of these conversations should be the independence of India. The proper course would be for the British Government to recognise this independence and then to proceed to discuss further steps to implement it. This recognition does not necessarily determine the form of relationship or alliance between free India and Britain. This question will have to be settled later between representatives of the two parties. If such a declaration or public recognition is not made to begin with by the British Government, even so it must be clearly understood that we can only talk on this basis and on no other.

2. Our talks are not a continuation of April 1942 nor are we going back in any way to the Cripps offer.
3. We do not accept the proposition that for the present we have Dominion Status with power to secede later. What our exact relationship may be later need not be settled now, but it must be clear that it is on the present basis of independence that we consider future problems.
4. While we are prepared to enter into friendly talks about future relations, we are not agreeable to any treaty or alliance which binds us to join a bloc or a nation for war or like purposes. Nor are we agreeable to India being made the base of war operations against any country. This matter must be left to be determined by the future government of free India. We do not want to inherit old feuds or to entangle ourselves in the power politics or imperialist adventures of the Great Powers. We are prepared, however, to play our full part as a free and co-operating nation in the United Nations Organization.
5. It has also to be made perfectly clear that the Constituent Assembly should be the final authority to determine the constitution. It must not be a consultative or advisory body. What it finally decides may or may not be passed by the British Parliament (that is Britain's affair) but for us it should be the final decision. In effect the British Government should pass some kind of an Act of Abdication.
6. In present circumstances we cannot afford to delay matters by asking for a new electoral roll for the Constituent Assembly. We have to accept the newly-elected Provincial Assemblies as electoral colleges for the purpose. They can elect delegates by proportional representation. The number can be settled later but it is preferable to have a fairly large number.
7. The procedure etc. in regard to the C. A. should be determined by representatives of the Provincial Governments. If any Provincial Government refuses to participate, it can be bypassed and left out for the present. So also if any Provincial Assembly refuses to elect delegates, there should be no compulsion.
8. It should be made clear that the question of Pakistan (whatever precisely it might signify) will not be decided by a mere majority of votes in the C. A. Questions of this kind will have to be settled either by the consent of parties or ultimately by plebiscite of all the inhabitants of an area on a precise and defined issue. The C. A. will, however, prepare a single constitution for India, with two lists of Central subjects, one minimum and compulsory, and the other optional.
9. The questions of defence and allied questions (foreign affairs, communications as well as currency) are obviously central and common subjects which cannot be given up. Even if some kind of separation is envisaged some common arrangements for these will be necessary.

10. There may be a demand or suggestion for new demarcation of provincial boundaries resulting in division of the Punjab and Bengal, so that parts of these provinces should be predominantly Muslim. We should agree to any demarcation which creates cultural and linguistic areas which satisfy the majority of the people concerned.

11. In regard to the States we should follow more or less the same policy, *mutatis mutandis*, as in regard to the provinces. That is, it should be open to the States to join the C.A. or not. There should be no compulsion. Provided of course that the States are represented predominantly by elected representatives (we may allow, in view of the special circumstances, the Ruler to have a representative or so), and provided also that the States agree to have the same or similar democratic forms of government and administrative and judicial efficiency as the provinces. It should be a privilege to be admitted to the C.A., a privilege which will not be extended to States which fall below the standard.

12. There will be some difficulty in arranging for the representation of the States as many of them have no proper democratic machinery. Also most of them are too small. But these matters can be considered more fully later. A full analysis of States, their elective assemblies where such exist, and other facts concerning them, is being prepared.

13. It is clear that only the big States (say from 15 to 20) can become units of the Federation. The others have either to be absorbed in provinces or can form a large enough group to form a unit.

14. Our claim must be that the new Central Government of India inherits the power and authority of the present Government of India or the Crown Representative in regard to the States. However, we need not settle this matter finally at this stage, if some States object. We can allow matters to drift for a while, and allow the C.A. to begin functioning when it will inevitably draw the States. The new Government of India will of course be a joint affair of all constituent units—provinces and States. If any States are left out to begin with, we shall have to deal with them later.

15. We cannot, however, recognise the independence of the States though we may recognise their autonomy (if they are big enough) within the Federation. Nor can we accept the stationing of foreign troops there.

16. It is possible that the Muslim League may suggest Dominion Status, with defence in British hands, for their Pakistani areas. This might be considered an inducement to the British Government. Such a development is likely to be advantageous to us and is bound to weaken the League position.

17. These are brief notes very hurriedly written. The main points are:

- (1) Discussion on the basis of independence.
- (2) C.A. to have final authority.

- (3) No compulsion of a province or a State to join C.A. but if any wants to keep out in the beginning, it can be bypassed.
- (4) There should be no delay. Time is the essence of the matter and we must not get entangled in long discussions about details.
- (5) The main principles having been accepted, we go ahead with the C.A. and then representatives elected by the C.A. discuss with British representatives our future contacts, relations, etc.
- (6) No entanglements in war or joining of imperialist blocs against another group.
- (7) Co-operation in UNO.

18. The formation of a provisional Central Government is essential. This also should proceed on the basis of Provincial Governments as far as possible. This Government in practice act freely as a Cabinet with no obstruction from the Viceroy or any other outside authority. The India Office should not function.

15 March 1946

Jawaharlal Nehru

254

Office of Cabinet Delegation
The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
11 April 1946

Dear Mr. Patel,

Lord Pethick-Lawrence and members of the British Cabinet Delegation would very much like an opportunity of meeting members of the Congress Working Committee and it would therefore give them great pleasure if you would care to come to No. 2, Willingdon Crescent, on Friday, 12 April, for drinks, etc., from 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

I should be grateful if you could kindly let me know at this address, (or telephone 2061, Extension 42) whether you are able to come.

Yours sincerely,
G. B. Blaker

Private Secretary to Sir Stafford Cripps

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

255

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
15 April 1946

Dear Sardar Sahib,

There are one or two matters not connected with the constitutional discussions which H.E. would be grateful to have an opportunity of discussing with you at a convenient time. He asks whether you could come and see him at 2-30 p.m. tomorrow the 16th. If this is not convenient, perhaps you would let me know and I will suggest another time.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell
[Private Secretary to the Viceroy]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

256

Camp Birla House
Albuquerque Road
New Delhi
15 April 1946

Dear Mr. Abell,

I have just received your note of date. I will be glad to be at the Viceroy's House at 2.30 p.m. tomorrow, the 16th.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

G.E.B. Abell, Esq.

246

257

Office of the Cabinet Delegation
The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
15 May 1946

My dear Sardar Patel,

If it is convenient to you I would like our Committee of Three to meet here at 5 p.m. tonight to go through the documents for publication.

There is one possible gap in our records and that is any correspondence that passed between Mr. Jinnah and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. If there were any letters exchanged during the period they were negotiating on the question of arbitration, these should obviously be included, and perhaps you could therefore bring copies with you so that we can complete all the documents.

Yours sincerely,
Stafford Cripps

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

258

Office of the Cabinet Delegation
The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
18 May 1946

Dear Sardar Patel,

It was agreed at the last meeting between Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan and Sir Stafford Cripps, after you had said that you did not mind when the correspondence about the Simla conference was published, that the agreed documents would be released for publication this afternoon, Saturday 18 May, at 4 p.m.

I enclose a copy in advance for your information.

Your very truly,
G. B. Blaker
Private Secretary

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

247

27 July 1946

My dear Rajaji,

I have not heard from you since you left. There has been complete dislocation of communications owing to the post and telegraph strike. The Working Committee is meeting on 8 August at Wardha and we may have to go there, unless we are called earlier at Delhi, which is not unlikely. There are many things to talk to you, but as we expect to meet early, I do not want to write much. May I suggest that you should think out a provisional programme and general outline of the plan that we may have to follow on the first sitting of the Constituent Assembly? It would be better also if you and some of your friends there were to evolve a rough scheme of the provincial constitution and also of the Union constitution that we may like to push through.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

60 Bazulullah Road
Thyagarayanagar
Madras
1 August 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I got your letter of 27 July sent through a friend by hand. I had written to you before that. I hope you got my letter in spite of postal dislocations. I had written about the need for somehow getting on with the Constituent Assembly without breaking up on any ground or giving occasion for it. Since I got your letter—almost about the same time—Jinnah's declaration of civil war has come! I feared this would throw the British [Government] into confusion and a moral breakdown might result. So I thought

a sign of courage on our part and readiness to face situations would be useful. That was the only reason I issued a brief statement, though at first I [thought I] might keep silent until we met.

Now that Jinnah and the League are certain to create trouble it has become our unavoidable and bounden duty to accept the challenge. We cannot refuse any offer about the Interim Government now, without opening ourselves to the charge that we funk accepting responsibility under difficult conditions. We should take up government and carry on anyhow. It is more important now than even the Constituent Assembly. That too we must tackle. I shall be in Wardha on the 8th morning.

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

261

Madras,
29 July 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

The violence of Mr. Jinnah's chagrin is the measure of wisdom of our decision at a critical moment. It is all due to your firm and thoughtful stand. I have been considering how best to conserve this victory. If we commit a mistake we may easily lose all this advantage.

What we have to secure is not any spectacular victory, but something to make the franchise regulations of the provincial constitutions in B & C groups subject to ratification of the province or of the whole Constituent Assembly. The section's decision on these fundamental points should not be binding on the provincial units unless it is agreed to by the latter or confirmed by a decision of the whole Constituent Assembly by a majority vote. This will prevent any mischief by way of reducing the province to incapacity to combat the group decision ultimately by gerrymandering the franchise. This can, I believe, be secured as a condition precedent to sections B & C being participated in initially by the NWFP and Assam.

I wonder if the League will stay out altogether. If they do that, we must be in the Central Interim Government in order to give any form of reality and substance to the Constituent Assembly.

If they come into the Constituent Assembly we must keep them somehow until the task progresses substantially.

I hope to meet you in good health. My teeth are causing some trouble.

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

PS.

I note Kashmir has got on smoothly.

262

Pilani
Jaipur State
4 August 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I arrived here on 24 July and have somewhat improved in health. There is no active complaint now but I do not like to risk a setback which a visit to Sevagram, where it must be raining more or less constantly, is likely to cause. I am therefore not coming, although I should have very much liked to know the developments that are taking place. I hope you will please let me know whatever is worth knowing and can be trusted to the post in these times. Unless I am called away by some urgent business, I propose to stay here till the rains are over, that is, nearabout the Dussehra.

I have read your speech at the Tilak anniversary and I am glad you have spoken so convincingly. I have been wondering why some newspaper has not published in parallel columns extracts from the speeches of Mr. Jinnah and the resolution of the Council of the League and the Congress Working Committee resolution and letters relating to the statement of May 16. This would at once dissipate all the cloud which Mr. Jinnah and his Council have sought to raise about our not accepting that statement. If we have not accepted it, neither Mr. Jinnah nor his Council did so; and if they did so, we have done nothing else. The sentiments and even the language used as also the effective part are so similar in both that one wonders how they can talk in the way they have been doing. You have done that in your speech, but I still think a reproduction of relevant extracts in parallel columns will be useful. Only there is one difference. They object to the paragraphs dealing with Pakistan and in spite

of the fact that the statement has in most emphatic and categorical terms rejected Pakistan, they see the foundations for it and propose to build upon it. We object to the statement relating to grouping and say that the statement itself leaves the provinces free to join or not to join not only a group after the constitution has been framed but also not to join a section at the initial stage also and propose to work on the basis of our interpretation to achieve our objective which is the independence of India. However, I need not labour the point any more.

The League decision has created a situation about which we have to take our decisions as also have the British Government. If there be anything that I should know you will please see that it reaches me.

I hope you are well.

With love,

Yours,
Rajendra Prasad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

CHAPTER IX
INTERIM GOVERNMENT—TWO PHASES

263

RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE
AT ITS MEETING [AT WARDHA] ON 9 AUGUST 1946

Resolved that a Parliamentary sub-committee consisting of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Dr. Rajendra Prasad be appointed to keep in close, constant touch with the Congress parties in all legislatures, to advise them in all activities and to take necessary action in case of emergency.

264

18 Hardinge Avenue
New Delhi
20 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

In consultation with my colleagues I am suggesting the names given below for membership of the Interim Government. We should very much like to have fifteen members of this Government, both because we consider this number suitable and because this will enable us to include an Anglo-Indian representative. If the list is to contain fourteen names only, then I am afraid there will be no room in it at present for an Anglo-Indian. We have not decided yet in regard to one Muslim name for the list. I hope to supply this later. I might add that we have secured the consent of all those mentioned in the list except one, Mr. Asaf Ali, whom we have not been able to contact. He has been in Kashmir and is on his way back. Apparently he has been held up somewhere owing to a stoppage of the air service. We hope to be in touch with him soon.

I have decided to join the Provisional Government myself. In addition to my name, therefore, there will be the following:

1. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
2. Dr. Rajendra Prasad

3. Mr. M. Asaf Ali
4. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
5. Mr. Fazlul Huq
6. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose
7. Dr. John Matthai
8. Sardar Baldev Singh
9. Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan
10. Mr. Jagjivan Ram (President, All India Depressed Class League)
11. Syed Ali Zaheer (President, All India Shia Conference)
12. Mr. Cooverji Hormusji Bhabha
13. A Muslim name to be supplied later
14. Mr. Frank Anthony (President, Anglo-Indian Association)

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

His Excellency Field Marshal Viscount Wavell
The Viceroy's House
New Delhi

265

New Delhi
22 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have consulted my colleagues about the date of announcement. We feel that any delay will be inadvisable. As it is, all manner of rumours are spreading and newspapers are even publishing lists of names of the Interim Government. This kind of thing keeps up a certain excitement and is more likely to lead to trouble than a formal announcement which brings definiteness. We would, therefore, prefer as early an announcement of the Interim Government as possible and we would like to impress upon you the advisability of doing so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

His Excellency Field Marshal Viscount Wavell
New Delhi

Valmiki Mandir
 Reading Road
 New Delhi
 28 August 1946

Dear Friend,

I write this as a friend and after deep thought.

Several times last evening you repeated that you were a "plain man and a soldier" and that you did not know the law. We are all plain men though we may not all be soldiers and even though some of us may know the law. It is our purpose, I take it, to devise methods to prevent a repetition of the recent terrible happenings in Calcutta. The question before us is how best to do it.

Your language last evening was minatory. As representative of the King you cannot afford to be a military man only, nor to ignore the law, much less the law of your own making. You should be assisted, if necessary, by a legal mind enjoying your full confidence. You threatened not to convene the Constituent Assembly if the formula you placed before Pandit Nehru and me was not acted upon by the Congress. If such be really the case, then you should not have made the announcement you did on 12 August. But having made it you should recall the action and form another ministry enjoying your full confidence. If British arms are kept here for internal peace and order your Interim Government would be reduced to a farce. The Congress cannot afford to impose its will on warring elements in India through the use of British arms. Nor can the Congress be expected to bend itself and adopt what it considers a wrong course because of the brutal exhibition recently witnessed in Bengal. Such submission would itself lead to an encouragement and repetition of such tragedies. The vindictive spirit on either side would go deeper, biding for an opportunity to exhibit itself more fiercely and more disgracefully when occasion occurs. And all this will be chiefly due to the continued presence in India of a foreign power strong in and proud of its arms.

I say this neither as a Hindu nor as a Muslim. I write only as an Indian. Insofar as I am aware, the Congress claims to

know both the Hindu and Muslim mind more than you or any Britisher can do. Unless, therefore, you can wholly trust the Congress Government which you have announced, you should reconsider your decision, as I have already suggested.

You will please convey the whole of this letter to the British Cabinet.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. the Viceroy
The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
(True Copy)

267

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
28 August 1946

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of today. I have telegraphed the whole text to HMG in accordance with your wish.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi Esq.
(True Copy)

268

SUGGESTED PORTFOLIOS FOR MEMBERS OF THE PROVISIONAL
GOVERNMENT

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. External Affairs and Commonwealth Affairs | Jawaharlal Nehru |
| 2. Defence (or War) | Sardar Baldev Singh |
| 3. Home, including Information and Broadcasting | Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel |
| 4. Finance | Dr. John Matthai |
| 5. Communication (War Transport and Railways) | Mr. M. Asaf Ali |

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 6. Agriculture and Food | Dr. Rajendra Prasad |
| 7. Labour | Mr. Jagjivan Ram |
| 8. Health | Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan |
| 9. Education and Arts | |
| 10. Legislative | Syed Ali Zaheer |
| 11. Posts and Air | |
| 12. Industries and Supplies | Mr. C. Rajagopalachari |
| 13. Works, Mines and Power | Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose |
| 14. Commerce | Mr. C. H. Bhabha |

NOTE:

1. The above arrangement is to be considered provisional and after some experience there may be a reshuffling of portfolios and a rearrangement of subjects under each portfolio.
2. As at present there are only twelve members available out of a total of fourteen; some portfolios have been temporarily grouped together. As soon as the two additional members are appointed, these portfolios may be separated or such other arrangements made as are considered suitable.
3. It has not been possible to consult Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan about the allotment of portfolios but so far as our information goes, the suggestions made will be agreeable to them. A suggestion was made that Mr. Rajagopalachari might take Finance and Dr. John Matthai should take Industries and Supplies. The choice might be made by those two themselves. We are informed, however, that Mr. Rajagopalachari is very much averse to taking charge of Finance, and so the arrangement given in the list above should stand.
4. Some of the members, namely Messrs Rajagopalachari, John Matthai, Sardar Baldev Singh, Shafaat Ahmad Khan and C. H. Bhabha, are unable to take charge owing to ill-health or other reasons for a week or so. Some temporary arrangements have to be made for these portfolios for this week or ten days, as the case may be.

New Delhi
1 September 1946

Jawaharlal Nehru

Valmiki Mandir
 Reading Road
 New Delhi
 12 June 1946

Dear Friend,

From you, almost straightaway, I went to the Working Committee which, owing to his illness, was held at Maulana Sahib's quarters. I gave them the gist of our conversation, told them that I gladly endorsed your suggestion about the parties meeting to fix up names subject to the proviso that no party should talk of parity, you should invite them simply to submit to you a joint list of the Cabinet of the provisional Interim Government which you would approve or, if you did not, you would invite them to submit a revised list bearing in mind your amendments, that the list should represent a coalition Government composed of persons of proved ability and incorruptibility. I suggested too that in the place of parity there should be active enforcement of the long-term provision in your joint statement that in all major communal issues there should be communal voting to decide them. I suggested also that in the event of absence of agreement between the parties in spite of all effort, you should examine the merits of the respective lists of the two parties and accept either the one or the other (not an amalgam) and announce the names of the Interim Government but that before that final step was taken you should closet yourselves until a joint list was prepared. I told the Working Committee that you had seemed to endorse my suggestions.

I told them further that, so far as I knew, it was a point of honour with Congressmen that there could be no joint consultations in which Maulana Sahib was not associated with the talks. You said it was a sore point with Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah and I replied that the soreness was wholly unwarranted and that the Congress could not be expected to sacrifice its faithful servant of twenty-five years' standing whose self-sacrifice and devotion to the national cause had never been in question. But I told you that your great experience and ability to handle delicate matters would show you the way out of the difficulty.

Finally, I told the Committee that I drew your attention to the fact that the European vote which was being talked of was unthinkable in connection with the Constituent Assembly and nothing but a public declaration by the European residents of India or one by you on their behalf could make possible the formation of the Constituent Assembly. I gathered from you that the question was already engaging your attention and that it should be satisfactorily solved.

Probably you have already moved in the matter of the joint talk. Nevertheless, I thought that I owed it to you and the Working Committee to put on record what I had reported about our talks. If I have in any way misunderstood you, will you please correct me?

I may say that the Working Committee had its draft letter ready, but at my suggestion it postponed consideration of it pending the final result of your effort adumbrated in this letter. The draft letter takes the same view that I placed before you yesterday on parity and the European vote and their election as members of the contemplated Constituent Assembly.

I close with the hope that your effort will bear the fruit to which all are looking forward.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. the Viceroy
New Delhi

270

18, Hardinge Avenue
New Delhi
22 July 1946

My dear Vallabhbai,

I am sending you a sheaf of papers

Copy of two letters which I have addressed to the Congress Premiers;

Copies of letter from Viceroy and my answer;

Letter with its enclosure from Colonel Gill [of the INA];

Copy of a letter to [Gopinath] Bardoloi.

About the Sikh position, I have definitely told Gill to approach you and he has agreed to do so. The kind of assurances he wants from the Congress have partly been given by you and me, and

for the rest I do not think, especially at the present moment, that it will be desirable for us to make any public statements. However, it is for you to judge. I have met Pratap Singh [Kairon¹] also and heard his tale of woe. He showed me the telegram you have sent him. About Gill, I am afraid that he is totally inexperienced in political matters and he is thinking only of Panthic unity. He is very able and he created a good impression upon me, but he has a reputation for unreliability.

I saw the Viceroy today and we talked about a variety of subjects. About Sikhs, he was perfectly prepared to give them another chance of election, but somebody must approach him and ask him for it. I asked him as to who was to approach him. He wasn't quite clear as he said there were so many groups among the Sikhs. Anyway, he is quite willing to fix another election up and I believe he has written to the Governor about it. I am likely to see some people in Lahore on my way to Kashmir. I shall mention this fact to them. You can also take such steps as you consider proper.

I spoke to the Viceroy about Sind also. He agreed that many mistakes have been made, but he cast the blame more on the Speaker than on [Sir Francis] Mudie. However, he said that he would try to have an early session of the Sind Assembly arranged. His only difficulty was, he said, the month of Ramzan.

I had a telegram from Jairamdas today asking what they should do. He said that a majority of the members of the Assembly were prepared to declare themselves in writing against grouping. I have suggested to him that these members should so declare themselves and ask for an early session of the Assembly for this purpose as well as for a no-confidence motion against the Provincial Government.

You will see what I have written to the Congress Premiers. I need not add anything to it.

The Viceroy's letter and my reply to it will speak for themselves. I think we should have an early meeting of the Working Committee to consider all these vital problems before us. I

¹ Was actively associated with Ghaddar Party working for India's liberation from foreign rule; joined Congress, 1930; sentenced to five years' imprisonment in 1932 Civil Disobedience movement; elected MLA, Punjab, 1936; re-elected, 1946; led Kisan agitation, 1938; elected to CA, 1946; Minister in Bhargava Cabinet, 1947-49; General Secretary, Punjab PCC, 1939-46; elected President, PPCC, 1950-52; member, Congress Working Committee, 1946-53; Development Minister, Sachar Cabinet, April 1952—January 1956; Chief Minister of Punjab, 1956-61; assassinated in 196

wired to Bapu inquiring what date and place would suit him. He has said Wardha after 7 August. So I am thinking of fixing 8 August at Wardha.

The expert committee has done some good preliminary work here. [K.M.] Munshi¹ will tell you about it. I am thinking of calling the next meeting of this committee in Bombay on 12 August immediately after the Working Committee.

My provisional programme is: Kashmir 24th to 27th or 28th, then back to Allahabad via Delhi reaching Allahabad on the 30th. I shall remain there for a few days and then go to Wardha.

I am writing to Maulana Azad also in regard to some of the subjects mentioned above and sending him copies of my correspondence with the Viceroy. I am not sending these or mentioning anything about them to anyone else. You will, of course, when you have the chance, show them to Bapu.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
68 Marine Drive
Bombay
PS.

I saw Rajendra Babu today. He was on his way to Pilani.

ENCLOSURE I

Camp: 18 Hardinge Avenue
New Delhi
22 July 1946

Dear Friend,

As you know, there has been considerable feeling in Congress circles in regard to the events that took place in August 1942 and subsequently and the official repression that followed. There has been and is a strong popular demand for an inquiry and punishment of officials and others who are found guilty of inhuman acts or any activity which normally civilised governments do not indulge in. This matter is continually being raised in provincial Congress committees and among Congressmen and the public. Letters

¹ Started political career as joint editor of Young India, elected member of Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1927; AICC member, 1930-36; Home Minister (Bombay), 1937-39; member, CA, 1946-50; in between Agent-General, Government of India in Hyderabad, 1948; Central Food Minister; Governor of UP; Founder of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay

are appearing in the Press and recently discussions have taken place in some Provincial Assemblies. I have no doubt that you have had to face this problem from day to day and have given it serious thought. I have been unhappy over the lack of action thus far. Yet I realised the many difficulties in the way and the undesirability of doing something which might distract us for the moment from other vital problems.

During the last year I had occasion to discuss this problem several times with the Viceroy. This was always at his instance. We expressed our opposing viewpoints to each other. My own viewpoint was that it was not our desire to punish as such any individual even though such punishment might have been richly deserved. Nor was it my desire to have roving inquiries into past events; but I told him that I had no doubt in my own mind from the facts placed before me that there have been numerous cases of inhuman conduct and extreme corruption on the part of many members of the services. Also it was undoubted that there was strong popular feeling on the subject. Because of this it was inevitable that our popular Assemblies should reflect this feeling and our Governments be influenced by it. Quite apart from the question of punishment, it was impossible for us to co-operate in governmental or other work with persons who had been guilty of what we considered inhuman conduct or corruption. We did not desire to discredit any service as a whole or to break up the morale of a service. Nevertheless, even in the interest of morale both of the services and the public, it was necessary that people against whom there was such evidence and so much popular ill-will should be removed from service. This was the general attitude I took up.

I have now had occasion to have another talk with the Viceroy on this subject. I repeated what I have previously said. The Viceroy was anxious, for reasons which will be obvious to you, that he should protect his services. He said that any roving inquiry would be very undesirable and would lead to a great deal of bitterness. He admitted that much that was very wrong had been done by certain government officials, just as, he added, the people had misbehaved greatly on their part. He appreciated, however, that there was popular feeling on this subject and it was difficult for an officer to continue in his place if there was some evidence of grave misconduct against him and popular ill-will. Such an officer, he was of the opinion, might resign.

In view of what I have said above, I suggest to you that you might approach this question in the following manner. There need not be any large-scale or public inquiry, but your Government might inquire into specific and flagrant cases which are well known. Such an inquiry can be private. Where your Government is satisfied that there is a *prima facie* case of extreme misconduct or corruption, you might take up this case with the Governor and arrange for the retirement from service of such a person. It is obvious that

a person against whom there is a great deal of popular ill-will should not continue in service. If this method is adopted, it should lead to the purification of the services as well as to soothing public sentiment which has been rightly excited over such matters.

I need not go into any greater detail as you will, no doubt, know best how to proceed. I think that there should be no delay about this.

Of course, if you find that there is a very flagrant case of corruption, it is certainly open to you to take such other steps as you like. I am in no way suggesting a limitation of your discretion in such matters. What I have suggested is a quick, smooth, and relatively easy way of dealing with a matter which has long troubled us all.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Sent to all Congress Premiers
Info. M. Azad and S. Patel

ENCLOSURE II

Camp 18 Hardinge Avenue
New Delhi
22 July 1946

Dear Friend,

In regard to the Constituent Assembly, it seems to me desirable that persons elected to it should bring their credentials with them for presentation before the Assembly or some proper authority appointed by the Constituent Assembly. These credentials can take the shape of letters of delegation issued by the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly. This is not a mere matter of form.

We want this Assembly to function as much as possible as an independent sovereign authority and the less it has to do with the Government of India apparatus the better. The bringing of the letters of delegation by the members of the Constituent Assembly and their proper presentation to the Chairman would add to the solemnity of the procedure and would emphasise the independence of the Constituent Assembly.

The Viceroy may, of course, issue a summons to the members. If this is done we can treat it as a mere formality, attaching far more importance to our letters of delegation from the Speaker of our own Legislative Assembly.

I would request you to pass on this suggestion to the Speaker of your Legislative Assembly. Such letters of delegation should be issued not only to

the members of the Provincial Assembly who have been elected but also to non-members who have been elected.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Sent to all Congress Premiers
Info. M. Azad and S. Patel

ENCLOSURE III

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
22 July 1946

Dear Pandit Nehru,

I declared my intention of replacing the present caretaker Government of officials by an Interim coalition government as soon as possible; and am now putting to you as President of the Congress and to the President of the Muslim League the proposals set out below.

2. I think you will probably agree with me that our negotiations both this summer and last year were hampered by the attendant publicity. I am therefore seeking your co-operation in conducting at any rate the preliminary stages of the negotiations on a strictly personal and secret basis between myself and the two Presidents [of the Congress and the Muslim League.] I very much hope that you will prevent this correspondence being known to or discussed in the Press until we have seen whether we can find some basis of agreement. I realise of course that you will have at some stage to secure the approval of your Working Committee; but I believe it will be best to try and reach some basis of agreement between ourselves as a first step. I propose the following for your consideration:

- (a) the Interim Government will consist of 14 members;
- (b) six members (to include one Scheduled Caste representative) will be nominated by the Congress.

Five members will be nominated by the Muslim League.

Three representatives of minorities will be nominated by the Viceroy. One of these places will be kept for a Sikh. It will not be open to either the Congress or the Muslim League to object to the names submitted by the other party, provided they are accepted by the Viceroy.

- (c) Distribution of portfolios will be decided after the parties have agreed to enter the Government and have submitted their names. The Congress and the Muslim League will each have an equitable share of the most important portfolios.

(d) the assurances about the status of the Interim Government which I gave in my letter dated 30 May to Maulana Azad will stand.

3. I would welcome a convention, if freely offered by the Congress, that major communal issues can only be decided by the assent of both the major parties, but I have never thought that it was essential to make this a formal condition since in fact a coalition government could work on no other basis.

4. I sincerely trust that your party will agree to co-operate in the administration of India on the above basis, while the work of constitution-making proceeds. I am confident that this will be of the greatest possible benefit to India. I suggest that we should not spend further time in negotiation, but should try out at once a government on the basis proposed above. If it does not work, and you find the conditions unsatisfactory, it will be open to you to withdraw, but I am confident that you will not.

5. Would you be good enough to let me know very soon whether the Congress will enter the Interim Government on this basis? I have written in similar terms to Mr. Jinnah and enclose a copy of my letter to him.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

ENCLOSURE IV

18 Hardinge Avenue
New Delhi
23 July 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have given careful consideration to your letter of 22 July which you gave me yesterday. I agree with you that publicity in the Press or otherwise does not do any good when delicate negotiations have to be carried on. So far as I am concerned, I shall see to it that the Press has no knowledge of it. But it is not possible for me, even as Congress President, to function by myself in such matters without any reference to my colleagues. Inevitably I shall have to consult my colleagues.

This becomes even more necessary because the situation itself has changed in many ways since we discussed these matters and much has happened which has to be taken into consideration in arriving at a decision. You will remember our telling you at our last meeting that it would not be possible to pick up again the old threads where they had been left off. That chapter had come to an end and an entirely new approach would have to be made. Since then a meeting of the All India Congress Committee has been

held and the whole subject reviewed. A new Working Committee (though it has many of the old members in it) has been formed.

Apart from this, our experience of the previous talks has demonstrated that there is little hope of a successful issue along the old line of approach. And even if there was some temporary arrangement, this could not last or be capable of dealing with the urgent problems of the day. The all-India strikes that are taking place are evidence of the tension in the country and the accumulation of many problems whose solution has been postponed for so long. Only a strong government with clear objectives can deal with this situation effectively. Such a government cannot be formed in the manner suggested.

You have referred to the letter you wrote to Maulana Azad on 30 May regarding the status of the Interim Government. The assurances you gave then were very far from satisfying us, but in our urgent desire to find a way out, we did not raise any further objections on this score. You will remember that we have all along attached the greatest importance to what we have called the "independence in action" of the provisional government. This meant that the Government should have perfect freedom and that the Governor-General should function as a constitutional head only. Anything else would be more or less a copy of the Executive Council with, of course, some obvious differences.

It is on the basis of this "independence in action," and on this basis only that a satisfactory approach to the problem can be made. Once this is acknowledged and admitted you will find, I think, that other relatively minor issues do not offer much difficulty. That acknowledgement would affect even the formation of the Government. It would not be proper then for the Governor-General to select representatives of the minorities, as you have suggested in your letter.

This question of the status and powers of the provisional Interim Government has, therefore, to be decided first in unambiguous language. That status does not mean some kind of vague international status but internally—the functioning at home as an independent Government though with certain inevitable drawbacks due to the existing circumstances.

I am not writing to you about the other matters mentioned in your letter as those can only be considered after the status and powers have been finally and satisfactorily decided. But I shall have much to say about other matters also at a later stage.

In view of what I have written above, I am wholly unable to co-operate in the formation of a government as suggested by you. So far as I know the mind of the Congress, they would want the political independence issue settled before they can enter any Government.

I am going to Kashmir tomorrow morning. On the 29th I shall be passing through Delhi on my way to Allahabad. On 8 August and subsequent days we are having a meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Wardha.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal [Nehru]

His Excellency Field Marshal Viscount Wavell
The Viceroy's House
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE V

Lahore
20 July 1946

My dear Panditji,

I had written the other letter giving a review of the circumstances which led to our boycott for your information and I still think it best to send it. Since then I have read your statements and am deeply grieved at the situation which has caused you such anxiety and inconvenience. But I have to leave that till we meet you next. Meanwhile, all I can say is that I have not varied one single jot from the object I have set before me and I have every hope of success. This morning I have sent you a telegram as a result of the [Panthic] board's decision yesterday and in continuation forward this letter through Gilaniji, who will also personally explain the position.

I enclose a suggested resolution [or] statement or letter (the stronger the better) to be issued by the Congress which should enable me to bring all Sikhs alongside the Congress. I respectfully suggest that it will be well worth it, and I hope you will be able to agree to it in full so that even the Sikh extremists cannot disagree. This suggested draft has been agreed to by even the extremist section.

At any rate, if you are good enough to agree, I pledge my full support, even to the extent of breaking the Panthic Board and joining the Congress Sikhs. But I am fairly certain that the break can be avoided and all Sikhs brought to the Congress platform. Personally I can come to you any time you want me, that goes without saying, but I want to bring others and break the back of the anti-Congress elements, and it is for this that I have been asking continual support. I repeat that the Congress Sikhs have little hold among the Sikh masses, and it is for that reason that I have to be a little soft with the Akalis and achieve my object.

If by some chance this suggested draft cannot be agreed to (which I think will be against our interests) there will be a split. I shall leave the

board and support the Congress. But I feel the Akalis will have the better of the Congress Sikhs (with whom I am not really impressed) and I do not want that to happen. It is not due to their personalities but to the Congress prestige that the Congress won 10 Sikh seats. The Congress is certainly the favourite amongst the educated classes, and [in the] towns, but among the masses the Akalis still hold sway and it is the masses I want.

So please do be good enough to agree to this and then we can get on. The alternative is not good.

I have to approach you and keep touch direct because lately I have not been impressed by the local Congress leaders and I fear that they may not always give you the correct picture, or rather paint a rosy picture when it is not so rosy.

Gilani Sahib and myself entirely agree in these matters and he will explain anything not explained here. I would have come myself but have full engagements for the next few days, so forgive me.

How I wish I could bare to you my real heart. Anyhow I pray that you understand me.

With faith in God and the victory of the cause and among the Sikhs,

Yours affectionately,
Niranjan Singh Gill

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

PS.

You will remember that I pressed for a resolution or something of a definite nature at Bombay. Please do not consider it bargaining but kindly give this little to me now.

Anything further to clarify we can talk at your convenience and I will await your message before the next step.

(1) The Congress considers that injustice has been done to Sikhs in the long-term proposals and that the Sikhs are entitled to the same safeguards in Section B, Constituent Assembly, as have been accorded to the two other communities in the all-India sphere.

(2) The Congress is of the view, and agrees, that this injustice is a major issue and will give its full support to the Sikhs for the removal of this injustice.

(3) The Sikhs consider that this injustice should be removed before Section B begins to function and the Congress concurs with this view.

(4) The Congress will either obtain redress of this injustice or give the Sikhs, including Congress Sikhs, full liberty of action in their fight for the removal of this injustice, giving them the most feasible support the Congress deems fit.

(5) In all matters relating to Sikh interests, settlement will be by agreement between the Sikhs and other communities; and in case of no agreement, then by arbitration, whose decision will be binding on all concerned.

(6) In the event of Congress agreeing to the above, the Pratinidhi Panthic Board will

(a) join the Constituent Assembly; and

(b) stand by the Congress in its struggle for freedom.

Niranjan Singh Gill

271

26 July 1946

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have received your letter of the 22nd inst. along with its enclosures yesterday through the messenger sent by you.

About the Sikh position, I have a feeling that Gill, in his anxiety to secure his position over the community, is consciously or unconsciously creating a situation by which the Sikhs will automatically go out of the Congress. After his appointment as "Dictator," he met us at Delhi along with a deputation of the Akalis in the Working Committee. After a full and frank discussion, the deputation left completely satisfied, except one amongst them, viz. Giani Kartar Singh,¹ who kept mum and who gave me an impression that he was suppressing himself for the time being.

Gill told me when he left Delhi that he was thoroughly satisfied and his work in future amongst the Akalis will be easy. A few days after he sent me a long letter asking for clarification of certain points, which had been raised by Giani Kartar Singh's group in their meeting which was held in connection with their interview with the Congress Working Committee. I wrote to him a letter which would satisfy his purpose and he met me in Delhi again after receipt of that letter and expressed gratitude for my help. When he came to Bombay at the time of the AICC meeting, he again asked for some further assurances and suggested that Sardar Pratap Singh may be taken in the Working Committee. We did our best, to some extent going out of our way, to please them and yet when he went back again to Amritsar they started an agitation and passed a resolution for the boycott of the Constituent Assembly. Subsequent events are known to

¹ Prominent Akali leader, Minister in two Cabinets in East Punjab; was principal aide of Master Tara Singh

you. In the rivalry for power over the Akalis and probably in the hope of getting majority in the gurdwara elections, Gill, I am afraid, is running a race with Giani Kartar Singh and Master Tara Singh.¹ Further complications have been created now by Gen. Mohan Singh² joining the CSP on the eve of Jai Prakash's³ [Jayaprakash Narayan] visit to Lahore. You know Gill takes his orders from Mohan Singh and I suspect deeper forces working in this business. Under the circumstances, unless we stand firm and ask the Congress Sikhs to contest the elections even if the Akalis oppose it, I am afraid in the re-election we will find ourselves in a much worse position. There is bound to be a split amongst the Sikhs if we insist and it is possible that the Coalition Ministry may break, but I see no other alternative if the Congress is to survive in the Punjab.

On your return from Kashmir, you will, I expect, meet some of these people and also some of the other Congress leaders. I shall expect to hear from you about your assessment of the present situation there. We will have to take a firm attitude about the re-election, if it is held, and it is likely that it may cause a split in the Sikh community. But we must take the risk. We gain nothing by this false show of unity, which Gill has created and which in the end is to result in taking all the Sikhs out of the Congress.

I am afraid the Viceroy will not be able to do much in Sind. Mudie is a sworn enemy of the Congress and the surroundings of the Viceroy in Delhi are probably supporting him throughout in all his pranks in Sind.

I do not know why Jairamdas thinks that the majority of members of the Sind Assembly are against grouping. In the Constituent Assembly election, the result has been in favour of the League. All the three Muslim candidates elected are Muslim Leaguers and therefore I am unable to understand what Jairamdas means when he sends such a telegram. Unfortunately, the post and telegraph strike has put us out of action altogether. It is difficult to have any contact.

¹ Akali Sikh leader of Punjab; Secretary and later President, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee; resigned from Congress after World War II and organised Panthic Akali party which agitated for separate State for Sikhs

² Officer of Indian National Army of Subhas Bose; entered politics after independence and elected to Punjab Assembly

³ Founder-Secretary of Socialist Party of India; prominent member of Congress till 1948, when he left that party; since then engaged in sarvodaya [public welfare] activities, including bloodan movement

Munshi met me before he went to Delhi and has met after his return also. I have seen all the preliminary work that has been done and we are covering some more ground now for the next meeting.

I am waiting to hear from you all about Kashmir.

I learn from the Press that Maulana Azad is going to Dehra Dun for a month, and he may be in Delhi on the 28th on his way there. Does it mean that he won't be able to come to attend the meeting of the Working Committee at Wardha on 8 August?

I have much to talk to you about the strike fever in the country. It seems our people in these organisations are being dragged and, instead of giving a lead, they are being pushed into indefensible positions. The conflict or non-co-operation between the Centre and the provinces has become a fruitful field for the Communists to play their part in fomenting strikes. The post and telegraph strike could have been easily avoided if the situation had been handled with foresight. It has caused tremendous loss of business and inconvenience to the public. I do not know why Dewan Chamanlal threatens strike with 48 hours' notice immediately after the adjudicator's award was published. How can responsible men refuse to accept the award, after having asked for adjudication and after having placed the case before the adjudicator? As there is no contact between us, I am unable to understand the situation.

The Viceroy has also contributed much to the bungling in this affair. He has written a letter to Jinnah saying that as he would shortly be shouldering the responsibility of government, he must use his influence to bring about a settlement. It is said that he has written a similar letter to you also. Jinnah, having received this letter, called the strike leaders yesterday and asked them to give him their demands. This has given them false hopes and led them to believe that he might be able to get something more for them.

Bapu is coming to Poona on the 28th and is holding conferences of Education and Industries Ministers of all the provinces in Poona on the 29th and 30th.

I am going to stay in Bombay for the present, as apart from the postal strike there are other contributing factors which have created tension in the city. Shri Abid Ali¹ is fasting against some

¹ MP; Vice-President, INTUC; President, Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh; joined Bardoli struggle, 1928; General Secretary, BPCC, 1929-34; member, AICC; MLA, Bombay, 1949-52; was founder of INTUC, 1947; President, Bombay INTUC, 1948-51; Deputy Labour Minister, Government of India, 1952-62

mill management for the dismissal of an officer of that mill. Abid Ali wants that man to be reinstated. The management has refused. I understand that he has no just cause for the fast, but he is guilty of very great indiscipline in selecting Congress House for his fast against the wishes of the Congress Committee. Abid Ali is very popular amongst some of the union workers, of which he is the president, notably the tram and bus servicemen. They are likely to organise demonstrations in sympathy and they are none too disciplined or non-violent. I tried to persuade him to leave Congress House but he is adamant. It is possible that if his fast prolongs, and which is likely, there may be undesirable demonstrations and dislocation of business and traffic.

You must have known that Col. Sehgal has returned to Delhi. He writes to me that there is no atmosphere for collecting money for the INA but as Maj. Gen. [B.] Chatterjee¹ wired to me to issue the appeal, I had to do so and you must have seen it in the Press.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

272

New Delhi
25 August 1946

My dear Sardar Patel,

I am writing to send you my hearty congratulations and good wishes on the successful issue of the Interim Government negotiations in which you have played such a decisive part. No team can consist only of star performers and while the new team is no exception yet, taken as a whole, it is a strong team. I am so glad that the Interim Government has at last come about, and now I feel more hopeful of our country's future than I dared to do during the past few months.

I am going on leave as from 2 September and after picking up my wife and the family in Simla we hope to leave Simla for Kashmir towards the third week in September. I am taking four months' leave, but I have expressed my willingness to cut short my leave, should my services be required earlier.

I must thank you again for all the help you gave me in Bombay and your and Miss Patel's kindly hospitality.

¹ Member of Indian National Army; Military Secretary to Governor-General C. Rajagopalachari and later to President Rajendra Prasad

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
A. Hydari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

273

New Delhi
25 August 1946

My dear Sir Akbar Hydari,

I have just received your letter of today, and I have to thank you for it. I am glad that we have been able to get through the negotiations and see the Interim Government formed at last. Many people were sceptical about the result but all is well that ends well.

Unfortunately the success of our efforts has been marred by what has happened in Calcutta. No Indian can help feeling sorry about it. It has brought discredit to all and disgraced those who have organised these horrible crimes.

You must have heard about the shocking, deplorable and dastardly attack on Sir Shafaat Ahmad yesterday evening. Where this kind of leadership is leading the Muslims one cannot say. It is very unfortunate that the ignorant Muslims have to suffer and those who lead them remain unaffected. In Calcutta, I hear that about 6,000 people died, of whom 4,500 were Muslims who never wanted to have anything to do with this affair. How sad is this unfortunate episode!

We propose to take charge on 2 September and we hope to put our best efforts for the general good of all and we shall need sympathy and support from all.

You deserve rest and you have earned leave but if we can usefully utilise your services, we will not hesitate to take advantage of your offer, for which I have to thank you. It may be possible that I may meet you and Lady Hydari in Kashmir by the end of September, when I propose to go there to straighten the affairs in Kashmir regarding the political struggle there and its aftermath.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sir Akbar Hydari
New Delhi



MEMBERS OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT AT DUM DUM AIRPORT ON A TOUR TO STUDY THE COMMUNAL RIOTS IN CALCUTTA AND NOAKHALI IN 1946. LEFT TO RIGHT: SARDAR ABDUR RAB NISHTAR, LIAQUAT ALI KHAN, JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, MAULANA AZAD AND SARDAR PATEL

Camp Birla House
New Delhi
24 August 1946

My dear Rajaji,

I have sent you a telegram this morning which is quoted below:

“SORRY HEAR ABOUT YOUR ILLHEALTH. RECEIVED MESSAGE THROUGH RAU. YOUR HELP NECESSARY FOR PUTTING THROUGH YOUR SUGGESTION. IF YOU CANT ATTEND MEETING TWENTYSEVENTH MUST REACH DELHI THIRTYFIRST MORNING LATEST.”

Sir B. N. Rau¹ met me this morning. He conveyed to me your message. I am sorry to hear that you are not keeping well and you would not be able to attend the Working Committee meeting. We will have to discuss many important problems this time, including the election of the next President as a sequel to the expected resignation of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

We will have to discuss about allocation of portfolios also. For that all the members of the Interim Government are expected to meet on the 31st. We intend to take charge on 2 September. We must fix the portfolios on 31 August or 1 September. You must be here at that time without fail. I hope you will be all right by that time. If you could come at the time of the Working Committee meeting, it would be better still.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

¹Jurist and administrator; ICS, 1910; Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, 1944-45; President, UN Security Council; Judge, International Court of Justice

275

TELEGRAM

Madras
28 August 1946

Sardar Patel
New Delhi

YOUR LETTER 24TH. DEEPLY REGRET THOUGH IMPROVING
IMPOSSIBLE LEAVE BED FOR ONE WEEK MORE. SEE AIR LETTER
POSTED TODAY.

RAJAGOPALACHARI

276

New Delhi
29 August 1946

My dear Rajaji,

I have received your telegram of the 28th this morning. Your absence at this juncture is greatly regretted. New intricate problems and difficulties arise every day and we have to face them without your help or advice. The sooner you come, the better.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

277

Stanley Hospital
Madras
28 August 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am sorry to say that my recovery is not as quick as I had hoped it would be. I shall have to be in hospital for another week

274

and I shall be able to undertake a flight and reach Delhi therefore only on the evening of 9 September. That means eight days behind the present schedule.

I very much regret that I have caused this delay in the programme. I have requested today the Governor of Madras to send this information to the Viceroy and to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with the request that suitable arrangements may be made so that technically and formally I may take up office on the same day with you and others, although some official arrangements have to be made to cover the period of the delay in my reaching Delhi. I hope the message will reach Jawaharlalji through the Viceroy's House. But in any case you will kindly show this letter to him and do the needful.

I am under penicillin and the case is under the best attention. I shall be much relieved if I hear from you what is being done either direct or through the Governor of Madras in code.

Kindly explain to Bapu that I am very sorry for this mishap. But apart from physical pain and great discomfort, there is no anxiety of any kind.

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

278

Camp Birla House
New Delhi
31 August 1946

My dear Rajaji,

I have received your letter of the 28th inst. Your absence is very much regretted by me because your co-operation and advice would have been of great help to me. Difficulties crop up at every stage, but I cannot write to you about them in correspondence. I hope you will recover soon and join us as early as possible. In the meanwhile, I must get on as best as I could.

The Calcutta tragedy has created a different atmosphere and has given an excuse for anti-Congress forces to play mischief. I will not write more about it here.

We are taking charge on the 2nd. Some of you will come later. Dr. John Matthai, Shri Bhabha, Sardar Baldev Singh and

276

SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE

Sir Shafaat [Ahmad Khan] will probably come at the time when you are expected to come. In the meanwhile, eight of us will carry on.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Stanley Hospital
Madras

279

TELEGRAM

Madras
7 September 1946

Sardar Patel
New Delhi

AM ARRIVING NINTH EVENING DECCAN AIRWAYS.

RAJAGOPALACHARI

280

TELEGRAM

15 August 1946

Rajendra Prasad
Birla House
Pilani

YOUR LETTERS FOURTH AND EIGHTH RECEIVED. YOU MUST HAVE RECEIVED JAWAHARLALJI'S WIRE. EXPECT YOU DELHI SEVENTEENTH. WE BOTH REACHING DELHI SEVENTEENTH. GLAD YOUR HEALTH IMPROVING.

VALLABHBHAI

281

TELEGRAM

Pilani
23 August 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

PREFER STAYING HERE TILL END OF AUGUST. PLEASE ADVISE IF
PRESENCE TWENTYSEVENTH ESSENTIAL.

RAJENDRAPRASAD

282

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
24 August 1946

- (1) Ali Zaheer (Lucknow)
- (2) Jagjivanram (Patna)
- (3) Bhabha (Bombay)
- (4) Sir Shafaat Ahmad (Simla)

PLEASE COME HERE LATEST THIRTYFIRST.

VALLABHBHAI

283

TELEGRAM

Bombay
27 August 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

THANKS YOUR TELEGRAM. ARRIVING FRIDAY.

COOVERJI BHABHA

277

284

TELEGRAM

Lucknow
27 August 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

INTENDING LEAVE LUCKNOW 30TH EVENING IF ARRANGEMENT FOR
DEPARTURE COMPLETE.

ALI ZAHEER

285

TELEGRAM

Lucknow
30 August 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

REACHING SATURDAY MORNING 8 O'CLOCK.

ALI ZAHEER

286

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
24 August 1946

Dr. John Matthai
Care Tatasons
Bombay

PLEASE COME DELHI SATURDAY THIRTYFIRST FOR TWO DAYS DISCUSSING
ALLOCATION PORTFOLIOS. WE PROPOSE TAKING CHARGE SECOND
SEPTEMBER BUT YOU CAN GO BACK FIRST EVENING AND RETURN
AFTER SETTLING JAMSHEDPUR AFFAIR. WIRE REPLY.

VALLABHBHAI

278

287

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
25 August 1946

Sir Shafaat Ahmad
Walker Hospital
Simla

GREATLY SHOCKED AND DISTRESSED HEAR ABOUT COWARDLY
ASSAULT. PRAY FOR SPEEDY RECOVERY. ANXIOUS HEAR DETAILS.
VALLABHBHAI

288

TELEGRAM

Patna
25 August 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

REACHING TWENTYSEVENTH MORNING DELHI EXPRESS.

JAGJIVANRAM

289

[Points made in Mr. Jinnah's letter of 3 October 1946 to
Lord Wavell]

1. The total number of the members of the Executive Council to be 14.
2. Six nominees of the Congress will include one Scheduled Caste representative, but it must not be taken that the Muslim League has agreed to, or approves of, the selection of the Scheduled Caste representative, the ultimate responsibility in that behalf being with the Governor-General and the Viceroy.

279

3. That the Congress should not include in the remaining five members of their quota a Muslim of their choice.
4. Safeguards: That there should be a convention that on major communal issues, if the majority of Hindu or Muslim members of the Executive Council are opposed, then no decision should be taken.
5. Alternative or rotational Vice-President should be appointed in fairness to both the major communities as it was adopted in the UNO Conference.
6. The Muslim League was not consulted in the selection of the three minority representatives, i.e. Sikh, Indian Christian and Parsi, and it should not be taken that the Muslim League approves of the selection that has been made. But in future, in the event of there being a vacancy owing to death, resignation or otherwise, representatives of these minorities should be chosen in consultation with the two major parties—the Muslim League and the Congress.
7. Portfolios: The most important portfolios should be equally distributed between the two major parties—the Muslim League and the Congress.
8. That the above arrangements should not be changed or modified unless both the major parties—the Muslim League and the Congress—agree.
9. The question of the settlement of the long-term plan should stand over until a better and more conducive atmosphere is created and an agreement has been reached on the points stated above and after the Interim Government has been reformed and finally set up.

290

4 October 1946

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

Thank you for your letter dated yesterday. My replies to your nine points are as follows:

1. This is agreed.
2. I note what you say and accept that the responsibility is mine.
3. I am unable to agree to this. Each party must be equally free to nominate its own representatives.
4. In a Coalition Government it is impossible to decide major matters of policy when one of the main parties to the

coalition is strongly against a course of action proposed. My present colleagues and I are agreed that it would be fatal to allow major communal issues to be decided by vote in the Cabinet. The efficiency and prestige of the Interim Government will depend on ensuring that differences are resolved in advance of Cabinet meetings by friendly discussions. A Coalition Government either works by a process of mutual adjustments or does not work at all.

5. The arrangement of alternative or rotational Vice-President would present practical difficulty, and I do not consider it feasible. I will however arrange to nominate a Muslim League member to preside over the Cabinet in the event of the Governor-General and the Vice-President being absent.

I will also nominate a Muslim League member as Vice-Chairman of the Co-ordination Committee of Cabinet, which is a most important post. I am Chairman of this Committee and in the past have presided almost invariably, but I shall probably do so only on special occasions in future.

6. I accept that both major parties would be consulted before filling a vacancy in any of these three seats.
7. In the present conditions all the portfolios in the Cabinet are of great importance and it is a matter of opinion which are the most important. The minority representatives cannot be excluded from a share of the major portfolios and it would also be suitable to continue Mr. Jagjivan Ram in the Labour portfolio. But subject to this, there can be equal distribution of the most important portfolios between the Congress and the Muslim League. Details would be a matter for negotiation.
8. I agree.
9. Since the basis for participation in the Cabinet is of course acceptance of the Statement of 16 May, I assume that the League Council will meet at a very early date to reconsider its Bombay resolution.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. A. Jinnah, Esq.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CONGRESS, THE MUSLIM LEAGUE
AND THE NAWAB OF BHOPAL OF 4 OCTOBER 1946

- I. The Congress does not challenge and accepts that the Muslim League now is the authoritative representative of an overwhelming majority of the Muslims of India. As such and in accordance with democratic principles they alone have today an unquestionable right to represent the Muslims of India. But the Congress cannot agree that any restriction or limitation should be put upon the Congress to choose such representatives as they think proper from amongst the member of the Congress as their representatives.
- II. It is understood that all the Ministers of the Interim Government will work as a team for the good of the whole of India and will never invoke the intervention of the Governor-General in any case.

I accept this formula.

M. K. Gandhi
4-10-46

Hamidullah [Nawab of Bhopal]
4-10-46

Shoaib Qureshi
4-10-46

17 York Road
New Delhi
6 October 1946

My dear Mr. Jinnah,

I have consulted some of my colleagues about the matters discussed by us yesterday and over the possibility of a rapprochement between the Muslim League and the Congress. We are all agreed that nothing could be happier and better for the country than that these two organisations should meet again as before as friends having no mental reservations and bent on resolving all their differences by mutual consultation and never desiring or

allowing the intervention of the British Government through the Viceroy or others or of any other foreign power. We would, therefore, welcome the decision of the League to join the Interim Government for it to work as a united team on behalf of India as a whole.

The points put forward by you in our conversation yesterday were:

- (1) the formula suggested to you by Gandhiji,
- (2) the League not being responsible for the members at present representing the Scheduled Castes and the minorities,
- (3) what should be done in case any vacancy should arise among the members representing the minorities other than the Scheduled Castes,
- (4) the procedure to be adopted over what may be called major communal issues, and
- (5) alternating Vice-Presidentship.

Regarding No. 1, we feel that the formula is not happily worded. We do not question the purpose underlying it. We are willing, as a result of the elections, to accept the Muslim League as the authoritative representative organisation of an overwhelming majority of the Muslims of India and that as such and in accordance with democratic principles they have today the unquestionable right to represent the Muslims of India, provided that for identical reasons the League recognises the Congress as the authoritative organisation representing all non-Muslims and such Muslims as have thrown in their lot with the Congress. The Congress cannot agree to any restriction or limitations to be put upon it in choosing such representatives as they think proper from amongst the members of the Congress. We would suggest, therefore, that no formula is necessary and each organisation may stand on its merits.

Regarding No. 2, I am to say that the question of the League being responsible does not arise and, as you do not raise any objections to the present constitution of the Government in this respect, there is no question to be solved.

Regarding No. 3, I am to say that if any such vacancy arises, the whole Cabinet will consider what should be done to replace the vacancy and advise the Viceroy accordingly. There can be no question of right in the matter of consultation with the League in regard to the representation of these minorities.

Regarding No. 4, your suggestion about the Federal Court is not feasible. Matters coming before the Cabinet cannot be

made the subject-matter of references to court. We should thrash out all such matters amongst ourselves and bring up agreed proposals before the Cabinet. In the event of failure to reach an agreed decision, we should seek the method of arbitration of our own choice. We hope, however, that we will act with such mutual trust, forbearance and friendliness that there will be no occasion to go to such arbitration.

Regarding No. 5, it is out of the question to have any rotation in the Vice-Presidency. We have no objection if you desire to have an additional Vice-Chairman for the Co-ordination Committee of the Cabinet, who can also preside at such committee meetings from time to time.

I am hoping that if your Committee finally decide upon the League joining the National Cabinet, they will also decide simultaneously to join the Constituent Assembly, or recommend to your Council to this effect.

I need hardly mention that when an agreement has been reached by us it can only be varied by mutual agreement and not otherwise.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

M. A. Jinnah Esq.
10 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi

293

10 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi
7 October 1946

My dear Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,

I am in receipt of your letter of 6 October 1946 and I thank you for it; I appreciate and reciprocate your sentiments expressed in paragraph 1 of your letter.

With regard to the 2nd paragraph of your letter, point No. 1, the formula, it was accepted by Mr. Gandhi and me and the meeting between us was arranged on that basis in order to negotiate and settle a few other points remaining for the purpose of reconstituting the Interim Government. The formula runs as follows:

“The Congress does not challenge and accepts that the Muslim League now is the authoritative representative of an overwhelming majority of the Muslims of India. As such and in accordance with democratic principles, they alone have today an unquestionable right to represent the Muslims of India. But the Congress cannot agree that any restriction or limitation should be put upon the Congress to choose such representatives as they think proper from amongst the members of the Congress as their representatives.”

And now, in your letter under reply, not only you have made changes in it but you consider no formula is necessary! I regret I cannot agree to any change in the language or otherwise, as it was the agreed basis of our discussion on other points; nor can I agree with you that no formula is necessary. It was signed by Mr. Gandhi and accepted by me.

As the whole basis of our talk on other matters was the formula agreed to by Mr. Gandhi, I don't think we can make any further progress unless it is accepted by you as a basis upon which we can proceed to discuss other points we have already discussed orally in the course of our conversation, and now I am enclosing herewith a copy of the various points put by me before you, in writing.

Even the four points, excluding point No. 1 regarding the formula which I have already dealt with above, you don't agree with any one of them. I am still willing, on the basis of the formula being accepted by you, to further discuss the various points with a view to settle them in the spirit of the sentiments expressed by you in paragraph 1. I am anxious that we should come to our own settlement without undue delay.

Yours sincerely,
M. A. Jinnah

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
17 York Road
New Delhi

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
12 October 1946

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

I confirm what I told you this evening, that the Muslim League are at liberty to nominate anyone they wish for their own quota of seats in the Cabinet, though any person proposed must of course be accepted by me and by His Majesty before being appointed.

2. My intention is to discuss portfolios when all the names have been received both from the Muslim League and the Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. A. Jinnah, Esq., MLA

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
13 October 1946

Dear Pandit Nehru,

I have now been informed by Mr. Jinnah that the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League have agreed to nominate five persons on their behalf as members of the Interim Government. Will you therefore please let me know as soon as possible what changes you wish to recommend in the present Government to make room for the representatives of the Muslim League as I wish to obtain the approval of the King to the necessary changes and to reform the Government as soon as possible?

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
15 October 1946

Dear Pandit Nehru,

I enclose a Press Note which I should like to issue this evening when the names have been settled. If we are able to settle the distribution of portfolios also this evening the last paragraph can be changed accordingly and the portfolios announced.

I have sent the draft also to Mr. Jinnah.

Perhaps you would be good enough to ask the members who are resigning to send their resignations to me. I shall of course see them later and thank them for their services and for their action in resigning.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

ENCLOSURE

[DRAFT PRESS NOTE]

The Muslim League have decided to join the Interim Government, and in order to make it possible to reform the Cabinet the following members have tendered their resignations:

His Majesty the King has been pleased to appoint the following to be members of the Interim Government:

- Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan
- Mr. I. I. Chundrigar
- Mr. Abdur Rab Nishtar
- Mr. Ghazanfar Ali Khan
- Mr. Jogendra Nath Mandal

The distribution of portfolios will be settled early next week and the new members will then be sworn in. Meanwhile His Excellency the Viceroy has asked the resigning members to continue in charge of their portfolios.

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
15 October 1946

Dear Pandit Nehru,

I send you herewith a copy of the Press Note which is being issued tonight.

Yours sincerely,
I. D. Scott

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
PS.

I hope you have a successful tour of the Frontier.

ENCLOSURE

[PRESS NOTE]

The Muslim League have decided to join the Interim Government, and His Majesty the King has been pleased to appoint the following to be Members of the Interim Government:

Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan
Mr. I. I. Chundrigar
Mr. Abdur Rab Nishtar
Mr. Ghazanfar Ali Khan
Mr. Jogendra Nath Mandal

In order to make it possible to reform the Cabinet the following Members have tendered their resignations:

Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose
Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan
Syed Ali Zaheer

The Members of the present Cabinet who will continue to serve are the following:

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
 Mr. M. Asaf Ali
 Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
 Dr. John Matthai
 Sardar Baldev Singh
 Mr. Jagjivan Ram
 Mr. Cooverji Hormusji Bhabha

The distribution of portfolios will be settled early next week and the new Members will then be sworn in. Meanwhile H.E. the Viceroy has asked the resigning Members to continue in charge of their portfolios.

298

The Viceroy's House
 New Delhi
 15 October 1946

Dear Pandit Nehru,

Thank you for your letter of yesterday. I enclose a copy of my letter to Mr. Jinnah dated 12 October. There have been no assurances or explanations to Mr. Jinnah that go beyond the terms of the broadcast and the letters of 4 and 12 October.

Yours sincerely,
 Wavell

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

299

The Viceroy's House,
 New Delhi
 26 October 1946

My Dear Sardar Sahib,

His Excellency asks me to send you the following message which has been received from the Prime Minister for the first meeting of the reconstituted Government:

"On occasion of this first meeting of reconstituted Interim Government His Majesty's Government send their cordial greetings and warmest wishes for future."

Yours sincerely,
 G.E.B. Abell

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

28 November 1946

My dear Rajkumari,

I have received your letter of the 16th instant. There have been developments since then which you must have seen from the Press. The British Government invited the Viceroy and the Congress, the League and the Sikh representatives (five in number, 2:2:1) to come to London for consultation. We have declined the invitation; so have the Sikhs. But the League and the Viceroy who are now in open alliance are proceeding to London. The Viceroy gave us an assurance, and so did Jinnah to the Viceroy at the time of the League's entry into the Interim Government. He has repudiated his assurance publicly and now they want to placate him. Every time the League takes a recalcitrant attitude, they try to placate them. The result is that the League gets stronger and stronger, and their attitude of violence gets encouragement. It is a misfortune that the British Government are unable to take a firm stand and call off the bluff. Perhaps they have been misled into this by one-sided representations of the reactionary group here, but they should have known better before inviting us. The invitation, in spite of all denials to the contrary, means either the reopening of the question or putting pressure on the Congress to make some more concession to the League. It is clear from the pronouncements made by H. M. G.'s representatives that they want to settle a procedure for the Constituent Assembly amicably between the parties. This is not possible, nor is it the function of the British Government. The document is there and the procedure laid down in it will be followed by the Constituent Assembly. If any interpretation is in question, it will be referred to the Federal Court. Any effort to give an assurance to Jinnah at this stage as to what procedure will be followed by the Sections would lead to disastrous consequences. The Sikhs would go out; the Congress will also have to give it up; and it will again be reverting to the minority holding the veto.

I hope you are having a good time and keeping good health. Hope you will return soon.

Bapu is still in East Bengal and we hardly get any news from him.

Yours affectionately,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Smt. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur
35 Avenue Hoche
Champs Elysees
Paris

PS.

After this was finished we got a cable from the Prime Minister appealing to [us to] reconsider the decision and it is possible that Jawahar may decide to go.

301

Malta
2 December 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

We are hung up here as our plane gave trouble. We are waiting for another which has been directed from Marseilles much to the annoyance of its passengers. We are now due to leave after midnight. This means reaching London all.....out. As it is I am not feeling too well. Our conversations start tomorrow morning when I meet the Prime Minister.

Whatever the nature and result of our talks, I understand the Viceroy will stay on for a week or two in London. So also probably Jinnah.

When I return to India I fear I shall be a little worn out and not too fit for strenuous work for a few days.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

CHAPTER X
PROBLEMS CONFRONTING COALITION GOVERNMENT

302

TELEGRAM

Peshawar
20 October 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

JUST RETURNED FROM KHYBER. AM GOING MALAKAND THIS AFTERNOON. DON'T WORRY ABOUT EXAGGERATED COLOURFUL PRESS REPORTS. AM THOROUGHLY ENJOYING MYSELF. AM QUITE WELL. RETURNING DELHI TWENTYSECOND FORENOON WITH DR. KHANSAHEB. INFORM BAPU.

JAWAHARLAL

303

TELEGRAM

Peshawar
21 October 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

JUST RETURNED FROM MALAKAND. PANDITJI SUSTAINED MINOR INJURIES ON CHIN AND EAR RESULT OF GLASS SPLINTERS DUE TO STONE THROWING. NOTHING SERIOUS AT ALL. PLEASE INFORM MAHATMAJI. ARRIVING DELHI TOMORROW MORNING ELEVEN.

MATTHAI¹ [M. O.]

¹ Special Assistant to Nehru

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
30 October 1946

Dear Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,

You mentioned yesterday that Pandit Pant had asked to be relieved of his office on account of the difference of opinion between the Ministry and the Governor about the I.G. of Police.

2. The immediate point, I understand, is that Sir P. Measures resigned in the belief that he had been let down by the Government of the UP on a point of principle—i. e., that correspondence between Government and police officers must be through the I.G. of Police as laid down in the Police Regulations. Actually the Governor had had to overrule his Ministry on this point, and the decision of Government therefore upheld Sir P. Measures. If he insists on resigning in full knowledge of the facts, no one can compel him to stay. But it is due to him and to the service that the facts should be clear.

It was with my concurrence that the Governor insisted on upholding the point of principle, which I think you will agree was a vital one; and it was with my concurrence that the Governor held in his individual judgment that the I.G. of Police must not be forced to resign on account of an error of judgment for which he had already apologised. These decisions must stand, and I can hardly believe that the UP Ministry, which has done much good work, or its Premier, would wish to resign on such an issue.

I understand the Governor and the Premier are discussing this matter shortly; and I hope Pandit Pant may be persuaded to appreciate that the decision taken by the Governor in his individual judgment was both constitutional and just.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
15 November 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

H.E. has received a telegram from the Governor of Assam to the effect that in spite of his attempts to dissuade them and in spite of a warning from the Defence Department that troops cannot be spared to deal with communal disturbances the Assam Ministry persist in their programme of eviction of Bengali Muslims from the Assam Valley.

2. It is anticipated that the result will be retaliatory attacks on Hindus in the Surma Valley.

3. There have, as the Home Department have already been informed by the Assam Government, been two incidents connected with the preparations for these evictions.

4. It seems that H. E. will have to consider whether he should not advise the Governor to overrule his Ministry, but as he is on tour I think I ought first to write and ask you whether as a result of your discussion with H.E. you have felt able to make any approach on party lines to the Assam Ministry and whether you have any reason to suppose that they will be prepared to postpone this dangerous action.

Yours sincerely,
G.E.B. Abell

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

New Delhi
15 November 1946

My dear Abell,

I have just received your letter of today regarding eviction of illegal immigrants in Assam.

2. In pursuance of my discussion with H. E. on the subject, I sent a telegram to the Assam Premier on the afternoon of 13

November enquiring if it was correct that the Government of Assam had decided to implement their eviction policy with effect from 14 November, whether he apprehended any trouble and, if so, whether he was prepared to deal with it. I am still awaiting a reply to this telegram.

3. There is no dispute about the unauthorised and illegal nature of the possession of these immigrants, as H.E. himself had agreed with me. The action of the Ministry would be in defence of Government's lawful right to evict these trespassers on Government land as they propose to continue in unlawful possession. It would not be justifiable to overrule the Ministry in such lawful action. I have no doubt that it would be improper; besides such action is likely to encourage intransigence and violence. It is impossible to believe that His Excellency would contemplate such consequences to arise from his advice. If the Muslims of Surma Valley take any retaliatory steps on the innocent Hindus of the district, the Ministry will have to take strong measures to suppress their illegal and criminal actions and we will have to support them in doing so.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

G. E. B. Abell Esq.
New Delhi

307

New Delhi
16 November 1946

My dear Abell,

In continuation of my letter of yesterday regarding the eviction policy of the Assam Government, I send herewith a copy of a telegram which I have just received from the Premier on this subject. From this telegram you will see that for the next fortnight at least there is no question of any physical eviction of the old immigrants who have illegally occupied Government land.

From the telegram it is clear that the problem is entirely different. Fresh hordes of immigrants are making an organised attempt to take forcible possession of both Government and private lands on a very large scale. No government with any sense of responsibility can submit to forcible action of this nature.

The only way to avoid an unpleasant situation in Assam seems to be that you should approach the Muslim League leaders here to advise their followers to desist from these organised efforts to obtain forcible possession of Government and private lands and thus render orderly government impossible.

It seems the information originally supplied to H.E. was inaccurate. This is a case in which there is no question of forcible eviction of old illegal occupants but of preventing fresh trespassers from taking forcible possession.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

G. E. B. Abell Esq.
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE
TELEGRAM

Shillong
15 November 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ASSAM GOVERNMENT AT PRESENT HAVE DECIDED REAPING ATTACHED PADDY IN RESERVES EVICTED BY LAST GOVERNMENT AND PRESENT GOVERNMENT. THIS WILL TAKE AT LEAST FORTNIGHT. ACTUAL EVICTION FROM OTHER RESERVES TAKES PLACE AFTERWARDS. MEANTIME RESERVES AND LANDS PROPOSED BY GOVERNMENT FOR PLANNED SETTLEMENT OF PROTECTED IMMIGRANTS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE FORCIBLY TAKEN POSSESSION OF BY HORDES OF IMMIGRANTS MAKING ORDERLY SETTLEMENT AND GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY IMPOSSIBLE. LATELY THOUSANDS OF MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS ARE COMING IN BOATS AND TRAINS AND FORCIBLY SQUATTING OVER ANY VACANT LAND INCLUDING SOME PRIVATE POSSESSION ALSO. SOME VILLAGERS HAVE LEFT THEIR ABODES. GOVERNMENT DECIDED EVICTION IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES ALTHOUGH PREPARED DISCUSS WITH ANY PARTY WITH AUTHORITY FOR PLANNED SETTLEMENT ABOVE. THE OBJECT OF MAKING THIS A COMMUNAL QUESTION AND STOP ACTION BY GOVERNMENT IS OBVIOUS. WE PREPARED ACCORDING TO OUR APPREHENSION BUT PRAY FOR MILITARY EMERGENCY.

BARDOLOI

308

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
16 November 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Thank you for your two letters about Assam. I am sending them out to the Viceroy on tour, and have informed him by telegram of the position, which seems to have dangerous possibilities.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

309

New Delhi
19 November 1946

My dear Abell,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a letter which I have just received from the Prime Minister of Assam giving a detailed account of the actual state of things regarding evictions.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

G. E. B. Abell Esq.
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Shillong
15 November 1946

Respected Sardarji,

Your telegram as well as one from the Defence Department of the Government of India have been duly received. As a matter of principle, Government have accepted the policy of eviction as there is no option left for any Government to do otherwise in the existing circumstances. But actual evictions are yet to begin, and they will begin only after Government have finished action

297

in certain reserves from which the trespassers were evicted by the last Government as also by the present Government. This is proposed to be done by the reaping of attached paddy by Government in reserves from which the encroachers were evicted by the last Government as well as by the present Government. This may take at least a fortnight, and actual eviction in respect of other reserves will begin only after we have finished with these operations. Government propose to settle some of the immigrants protected under certain terms of the agreement which the League Government of Assam entered into with the leaders of other parties in the province. But instead of acting according to the agreement, reserves and lands proposed by Government for planned settlement of such protected immigrants and indigenous people have been forcibly taken possession of by hordes of immigrants making orderly settlement impossible and setting at naught all Government authority. In addition to encroachments which are subsisting from before thousands of Muslim immigrants are of late coming by boats and trains to almost all the riverine areas and are forcibly squatting on any vacant land including a considerable area in private possession also. As a result, lately two villages have left their abode. In one reserve, even on the 9th of November, a large party of immigrants attacked the cattle and the graziers at night, causing injuries to six persons and injuring a large number of buffaloes. Orderly government, therefore, has been made impossible in the ordinary circumstances and the propaganda that is now being raised in the country for stopping eviction on the ground of communal tension seems to Government to be only a ruse to make a difficult position more difficult than what it is. Eviction, therefore, must be taken recourse to if the Government is to exist at all as a government. There are undoubtedly apprehensions of communal tension, but Government under no circumstance can submit to illegal and forcible mass occupation of their land and must do all that is possible to do if it is to exist at all. In these circumstances, to interfere with the policy of eviction is in the opinion of Government not only exceedingly wrong but will be suicidal to any government that is worth the name. This Government, therefore, have made whatever preparation it is possible for it to make to meet what is apparently a grave menace to the country. It is, however, painful to find that the Government of India, instead of assuring help to maintain peace and order by the military even in extreme emergency, proposes to take away under order of the Defence Department a battalion of the Assam Regiment which was taken into consideration for use in extreme emergency for maintaining peace and order in the province. I hope the Government of India in the Defence Department will not withdraw this battalion but on the other hand will make arrangements to give us more help in case of extreme emergency.

We have not, however, shut our door for peaceful settlement of the situation. We have already informed the Leader of the Opposition (of course on his appeal for staying eviction) that [if] they (the Muslim League) could

persuade these encroachers in the reserves, from which their Government and our Government evicted them, to abide by the wishes of Government in carrying out their policy in respect of these reserves without the employment of any force we would discuss the whole question of eviction from other reserves which we have not yet taken up and which we propose to take up only after we have cleared the already evicted reserves from illegal occupation by the re-entry of trespassers. I only hope that my appeal will not go in vain.

Yours sincerely,
G. N. Bardoloi

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

310

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
20 November 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

H.E. asks me to thank you for sending with your letter of 19 November a copy of a letter from Mr. Bardoloi about the eviction problem in Assam.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

311

Hubli
18 September 1946

Dear Sardarji,

One Rev. Keithahn, an American missionary, was deported out of India in August 1943 in execution of an order passed by the then Government of India. His only sin was that he espoused the cause of India. He was doing very good work along with the members of his family in Bangalore among labourers and students with whom he was very popular. All of them want him back in India. Now that there is a National Government functioning, it is desirable that the deportation order is cancelled. I therefore request that you may kindly see your way to have the matter of

Rev. Keithahn's deportation looked into and necessary orders passed to enable him to be back in India to carry on his good work.

I remain,
Yours sincerely,
S. Nijalingappa¹

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

312

New Delhi
22 September 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 18th instant.

Why should you think that as the National Government has come into existence, orders of externment against foreigners should be cancelled? You do not mean to suggest that India is a place where all foreigners are welcome? There is something like reciprocity and few Indians are welcome outside their own country. If some foreign missionaries were deported by the past Government, why should this Government cancel their deportation orders? The past Government might have had good reasons to do so. The present Government evidently has no reason to change those orders.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

S. Nijalingappa Esq.
President
The Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee
Camp Hubli

¹ President, Karnatak PCC, 1945-46; member, CA and Parliament, 1947-56; Chief Minister, Mysore State, 1956-57 and 1962-68; Congress President at the time of party split in 1969

Board of Trade
Millbank
S. W. 1
23 September 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

This is a note to say how useful Sudhir [Ghosh] has been during his short stay here. He has made many contacts and has helped in the formation of a wide public opinion on Indian matters. He is now returning but you might think it well to consider whether he might not come back in a more official capacity attached to your mission in this country.

It has been very nice to see him here and we shall hope for his return which will, I am sure, help Anglo-Indian relations.

You are having a pretty tough time, I am afraid, but I have been delighted with the way things have developed generally—not in Calcutta!—I only hope you will be able to come to a reasonable settlement with the Muslims.

My very best wishes to you and your colleagues,

Yours sincerely,
Stafford Cripps

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

New Delhi
20 October 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan's speech (copy herewith) is disconcerting and bodes ill for the future. It should be noted that the speech was made before impressionable students on the 19th instant, i.e. after his name was sent by Mr. Jinnah as a Member of the Interim Government on behalf of the Muslim League.

Should he not withdraw the speech before he takes the oath of office?

Is the Interim Government to be the arena of party politics and intrigues and for driving in the very partition wedge which the long-term arrangement has withdrawn once for all and replaced it by grouping, which in itself seems to be voluntary? What it is and what is its scope is for the Federal Court to decide, unless the parties agree among themselves.

In any event, the forum for every discussion on the subject is not the Interim Government but the Constituent Assembly.

The Interim Government is to run the Government machinery smoothly during the interim period on purely nationalist, democratic lines. Removal of corruption, communications, scarcity of food and clothing, health of the millions, their education, removal of chronic poverty and crying social reforms, including removal of untouchability, are the immediate needs of the country. If wrangles over partition and fomenting of trouble are to take the place of the immediate work of the administration, it would be a question for the Congress to revise its attitude about shouldering the burden it has taken over in response to your invitation.

And probably the Raja is not the only League Member to think as he has spoken. Who can say that he does not voice the mind of the League?

It seems to be quite clear that before the coalition comes into being and portfolios are re-distributed, besides the withdrawal of the speech in question, there should be a clear announcement by the Council of the League accepting the long-term arrangement, and the text of the resolution of the League Working Committee should be supplied to the present Members of the Cabinet. The date fixed for the meeting of the Council of the Muslim League for the cancellation of the resolution rejecting the long-term schemes by its Bombay meeting should also be announced by the Muslim League.

I am sure you will yourself recognise the necessity of the foregoing requirements if the Interim Government is to run well and the present trouble is to subside.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Field Marshal Viscount Wavell
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Lahore
19 October 1946

Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Member-designate [of] the Interim Government, addressing Islamia College students in Lahore today said: "We are going in the Interim Government to get a foothold to fight for our cherished goal of Pakistan and I assure you that we shall achieve Pakistan. The disturbances which have occurred in many parts of the country after the installation of the purely Congress Government at the Centre have established the fact beyond the shadow of a doubt that the 10 crores of Indian Muslims will not submit to any government which does not include their true representatives. The earlier the Congress realises this the better—that no power can suppress the freedom upsurge among the Muslim nation. We irrevocably stand for Pakistan [as] our ultimate goal, and I assure you that under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah we shall achieve our goal. In the Interim Government all our activities should be guided by [two] considerations, that is to convince the Congress that no government in India can function smoothly without the co-operation of the Muslim League and that the League is the sole representative organisation of the Indian Muslims. The Interim Government is one of the fronts of the direct action campaign and we shall most scrupulously carry out the orders of Mr. Jinnah on any front he orders us.

315

SARDAR PATEL'S NOTE TO LORD WAVELL ON THE SITUATION IN BENGAL

Home Department
25 October 1946

I desire to bring up the question of Bengal before the full Interim Government for immediate discussion and decision. I have been told by the Hon'ble Vice-President that Your Excellency's view is that the problem of restoring peace and tranquillity in Bengal is your special responsibility and that the Government of India as such, i.e. the Governor-General-in-Council, cannot do anything to give relief to the people of that unfortunate province. It would, indeed, be a tragic paradox if we who have undertaken the responsibility of the Government of India should be powerless to do anything to terminate the reign of terror which prevails in East Bengal, even according to the obviously

303

minimised accounts of those responsible for allowing such a state of things to come into being under their eyes. The whole country is deeply agitated about the events as well as about our share of responsibility in the matter. And the question will have to be dealt with in the Legislative Assembly when Members raise the question in some form or another. It will not be possible for us to deal with it as former governments could.

2. I have examined the Government of India Act and in particular the 9th Schedule to see whether the Constitution under which we have undertaken this grave responsibility of the governance of India is indeed such as Your Excellency has stated. After an examination of the 9th Schedule of the Act and in particular Section 41 thereof, I find that I, as Member in charge of Home Affairs, and each one of my colleagues is competent to propose measures to restore tranquillity in the large and spreading area involved in the present disturbed conditions of Bengal. Though, under the letter of that Section, Your Excellency has power in your discretion to overrule our proposals, our understanding is that Your Excellency will act in accordance with the collective advice of the Cabinet.

3. I and my colleagues whom I have consulted before writing this are emphatically of opinion:

- i. that the Government of India should at once authorise, if necessary by ordinance, special officers assisted by adequate staff and military support to proceed to and function in the areas affected and arrest and detain offenders and take all other steps necessary to restore order and tranquillity.
- ii. that we should recommend to Your Excellency that you should immediately exercise the powers attaching to your special responsibility as Governor-General and take all steps necessary to take over the duties of law and order in the affected areas, if not in the whole of Bengal, from the hands of the present Government of Bengal who have totally failed in their duties in that respect.

4. I request, therefore, that this matter may be discussed at the Cabinet meeting tomorrow when we shall have to decide our attitude in regard to adjournment motions coming up before the Assembly.

Vallabhbhai Patel
H. M. Home

His Excellency the Governor-General
Field Marshal Viscount Wavell

New Delhi
25 October 1946

My dear Sardar Patel Sahib,

With reference to my talk in the Cabinet meeting today I mentioned the letter of the Chief Commissioner of Delhi in which he had raised many objections to the proposed committee for the Corporation of Delhi. The letter is irregular and he has taken the extraordinary step of sending copies of this letter to Sir Eric Coates,¹ to Mr. Moon, Secretary, Development Board, and others. I do not know why he took this unusual step. I am not prepared to accept his views as the views of the Municipal Committee of Delhi and until the Municipal Committee communicate their views to us it is not possible for the Department to deal with the subject. He has also sent a copy of his letter to the Secretary, Home Department. Your Secretary will give you the copy of the letter of the Chief Commissioner.

Yours sincerely,
Shafaat Ahmad Khan
[Minister of Health, Education and Arts,
Interim Government]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Member for Home and Information

New Delhi
1 November 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

In some recent appointment cases my attention has been drawn to an Office Memorandum dated 10 August 1946, issued by "the Secretariat of the Executive Council" regarding the so-called Patronage Lists [See enclosure].

2. To my mind, the term "Patronage List" is a reminder of the days which had better be forgotten. Constitutionally, too,

¹ICS: Financial Adviser, Military Finance; served in Bengal, 1921-28 and thereafter in various posts under Finance Department, Government of India

the term seems to be most inappropriate. As far as I can see, the appointments fall into two categories—those vesting in the Governor-General in his discretion and others vesting in the Governor-General-in-Council. All, or at any rate a large majority of appointments, covered by the above-mentioned memorandum, seem to fall in the latter category and I have been carefully considering for some time the best way of dealing with these.

3. I do not think that even under the present (but in the context of present-day conditions, rather out-of-date) Rules of Business it would be appropriate for a case of appointment to go from an Honourable Member to Your Excellency for sanction. At the same time I feel that it would be unnecessary to trouble the whole Cabinet with the various appointments. I would, therefore, suggest that the appointments referred to in that memorandum and other appointments which are dealt with by the Selection Board and the Establishment Committee should go with the recommendation of the Member-in-Charge to a small committee of the Cabinet. The procedure thus would be that these appointments would first be discussed in the department or the Selection Board or the Establishment Committee, as may be appropriate, then the recommendation of the Department or the Selection Board or the Establishment Committee would be considered by the Member-in-Charge and thereafter the proposal would go for the decision of the Cabinet committee. In accordance with the usual Cabinet procedure, the minutes of the Cabinet committee will, of course, go to Your Excellency for approval.

4. I am asking my Secretary to prepare a summary on these lines for being placed, with Your Excellency's permission, before the Cabinet. I feel that it would be a natural corollary to this proposal that the Establishment Officer should be placed under the Department of the Government of India.

5. In regard to appointments vesting in the Governor-General in his discretion, I would suggest that, as in some cases, e.g. Chief Commissioners, Your Excellency should refer such cases to the proposed Cabinet committee for their advice before making the appointments.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Field Marshal Viscount Wavell

ENCLOSURE

Government of India
Secretariat of the Executive Council
New Delhi
10 August 1946

[Office Memorandum]

The undersigned is directed to forward to all Departments of the Government of India an Order made by H. E. under the provisions of section 40, sub-section (2) of the Ninth Schedule of the Government of India Act, 1935.

1. H.E. has considered the report of the committee set up to examine the so-called "Patronage Lists". He agrees that the lists should be shortened and made simpler, and he approves the proposal that only the following classes of appointments need be referred to him in future:

Category I

Appointments carrying a monthly pay (or a maximum pay, if graded) of Rs. 3,000 or over.

Category II

Appointments of the principal representatives in countries abroad of the Government of India (at present designated Agent General, High Commissioner, Representative), if they do not come under Category I.

Category III

Appointments carrying a pay (or a maximum pay, if graded) of less than Rs. 3,000 and not less than Rs. 2,000 per month, if the appointment

- (a) is made by promotion and an act of selection is involved; or
- (b) is ordinarily made by promotion when, in any individual case, it is proposed not to appoint by promotion; or
- (c) is made by deputation or transfer; or
- (d) not falling within class (a), (b) or (c) above, is made otherwise than in consultation with the F.P.S.C. [Federal Public Service Commission]

Category IV

Appointments in the Secretariat, not falling within the above categories, down to and including Deputy Secretaries and officers of equivalent rank.

2. H.E. agrees that the decision in regard to categories I and III may have to be reconsidered if there is a revision of pay scales. He also agrees that in regard to categories III and IV, his sanction is not required in the case of

temporary or officiating appointments for a period which, either alone or aggregated with other temporary or officiating service of equal status, does not exceed six months.

H. M. Patel

Joint Secretary to the Executive Council

All Departments of the Government of India,
G. G. (Public) and G. G. (Reforms),
Political Department
Copy to F.P.S.C.

318

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
13 November 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

H. E. asks me to let you know with reference to your letter of 1 November that he will speak to Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan as soon as possible after his return from his tour, about the proposal that there should be an Appointments Committee.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

319

New Delhi
28 December 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

You will recall that in my letter to you dated 1 November 1946 I raised the question of an Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. Abell's letter of 13 November stated that the question was awaiting your discussion with Mr. Liaquat Ali on your return from the Frontier. I feel that it is high time that we came to a decision on that question and would be glad to know what the present position is.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Viscount Wavell
New Delhi

320

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
30 December 1946

Dear Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,

Thank you for your letter of 28 December. I am sorry I did not have an opportunity of discussing the Appointments Committee question with Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan before I went to England. He is coming to see me on 7 January, and I shall speak to him then about it.

With best wishes for the New Year,

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

321

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
7 November 1946

Dear Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,

I discussed with you and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan last night the need to control the Press. I am sure we must take urgent action and I hope you will go into the matter at once. I see that the contents of Dawn today are by no means helpful. Probably the best remedy would be a gentleman's agreement, but if this cannot be secured we must clearly consider legal action, which would of course mean enforcing the law against the Press of all parties.

I am sending a similar letter to Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

309

New Delhi
7 November 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Many thanks for your letter dated 7 November 1946.

I have called a conference of the Editors of important newspapers in Delhi at 11 a.m. on Sunday 10 November 1946 to consider the ways and means of securing the co-operation of the Press in relieving the existing tension and the sense of insecurity prevailing in the country. I must, however, confess that I do not expect that a gentleman's agreement would emerge. The attitude of the Dawn and other papers of that type has been progressively deteriorating rather than improving even under the stimulus provided by recurrent tragedies. Its latest activity is a cleverly disguised and mischievously conceived incitement to violence to the Muslims of the Punjab in retaliation for what has happened in Bihar. I doubt whether the approach of this section of the Press would at all be helpful.

I am, however, glad to note that Your Excellency has now come to the same view which I expressed some time back regarding the desirability of taking action in respect of the continuous outpourings of communal venom and hatred which is being indulged in by a section of the Press and is largely responsible for the recent unfortunate happenings.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Field Marshal Lord Wavell

New Delhi
12 November 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Your Excellency will recall that at last week's meeting of the Cabinet a suggestion was made that the Home Department should keep Hon'ble Members apprised of such information as

it gets regarding communal incidents. You expressed the view that information on the subject was mainly in [the Home Department.

2. I have had this matter examined. We have two sources of information, the Intelligence Bureau and the Provincial Governments. The Intelligence Bureau gets reports from Central Intelligence officers, who in their turn obtain them from their own sources or from Provincial Government officers. These reports, I am afraid, are rather sketchy and, being second-hand, sometimes confusing and not quite accurate. Also, there is an element of hearsay, and occasionally they are contradicted by the same source at a later stage. I do not think that any useful purpose will be served by Hon'ble Members seeing any reports of this description or a statement based on such reports.

3. As regards Provincial Governments, our main source of supply is the Fortnightly Reports which are sent to departments and presumably each Hon'ble Member sees these reports in due course. These Reports reach us regularly and even when they do come in time, the information will be already much out of date and is only infrequently in great detail.

4. Provinces are under no constitutional liability to send information of reports of public order to the Central Government. Bombay is the only province which appears to send us prompt details. We have not yet had, apart from the summaries in the Fortnightly Reports, any account of the riots in Calcutta, and only recently we had a very incomplete report of the Noakhali disturbances. Up to the present we have not received any report at all from the Bihar Government. In fact, my information on these disturbances is based on the copies of Governors' telegrams which I have been receiving from your office and on such other news as I get from the present non-official sources. The Governors' telegrams are already being sent to all Hon'ble Members by your office.

5. By the courtesy of the Defence Department we receive copies of the reports prepared by the Director of Military Intelligence on the basis of the information which is received from the military commanders.

6. In these circumstances, no useful purpose will be served by our circulating the reports which we receive in the Home Department. The report prepared by the Director of Military Intelligence could be circulated direct to Hon'ble Members by the Defence Department. I, however, feel that the position in this

respect is most unsatisfactory. It is here that we are not interested in the day-to-day administration of law and order in the provinces but in emergencies, particularly those requiring military aid, we cannot be entirely disinterested. We should, therefore, have detailed daily reports from Provincial Governments. As far as I can see, there are only two methods of obtaining these reports which are likely to be successful. Either the Governors should be asked by Your Excellency to send daily reports or the Defence Department can ask for such reports from Provincial Governments in order properly to assess and discharge their responsibility to aid civil power in dealing with public disorder. Either of these alternatives would have constitutional sanction, and it would thus be possible to supply other Hon'ble Members promptly with accurate information on this subject.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Field Marshal Lord Wavell

324

Lucknow
7 November 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I have just received your letter of 5th instant about the film named Gangadin. I remember seeing something in this connection in the papers some years ago. As I have hardly any contact with the cinema houses, I have little knowledge of the films that are exhibited there. I did not know that this film was being displayed in this province. From the note attached to your letter it does not seem to me to be free from objection. I am calling for previous papers and looking into the matter.

I have been trying to contact you on the telephone since the morning, but have not succeeded so far. After I had the talk with you yesterday I was informed that the Governor had withdrawn his objections to the despatch of the letter to the Inspector-General of Police which had been withheld since 1 October. The Chief Secretary sent it to him in the evening yesterday. So after all the hurdle seems to have been got over. You will permit me to offer you my grateful thanks.

The communal situation seems to have further deteriorated since we last met at Delhi. Bihar seems to be still in the grip

of fury and frenzy. I am deeply concerned over the reduction in diet that Bapu has already made, and still more over the reports about his likely fast. I earnestly hope that he will not take such a step. Believe you are using all possible influence to dissuade him from doing so.

Trust this finds you well.

Yours sincerely,
G. B. Pant¹

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

325

RAJAJI'S TELEPRINTER MESSAGE TO SARDAR PATEL THROUGH API

Madras
13 December 1946

QUOTE RAJAJI SENDS THANKS TO SARDAR FOR MESSAGE. HE WANTS SARDAR TO ARRANGE FOR SUITABLE RESOLUTION OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY FOR REFERENCE OF QUESTION TO FEDERAL COURT. ACCORDING TO TERMS OF IIMG'S STATEMENT IT IS ASSEMBLY THAT HAS TO EXPRESS A DESIRE FOR REF TO COURT UNQUOTE

326

15 December 1946

My dear Sir Stafford,

In my last letter I gave you some idea of the amount of strain that was being put on us at this end. Since then events have happened one after another leading up to our being invited to London for discussion. The climax was reached when Jawaharlal returned almost heart-broken. I had no intention of writing to you, but I could not resist the gentle pressure of Lady Cripps who induced me to give you some idea of our feelings.

When the invitation came, our first instinct was to decline to accept it. But the Prime Minister's appeal and his assurance in

¹ Minister of Home Affairs, Government of India, 1955-61; member, AICC, 1916; UP Legislative Council, 1923; member, Congress Working Committee, from 1931; General Secretary, All India Parliamentary Board, 1934; elected MLA (Central), 1934 and Deputy Leader of Congress party; Premier of UP, 1937-39; member, Central Parliamentary Board and Chairman, UP Parliamentary Board; Chief Minister, UP, April 1946-January 1955; Home Minister, Government of India and Deputy Leader, Congress Parliamentary Party, until death on 7 March 1961

reply to our cable created a feeling in Pundit Nehru's mind that refusal to accept the invitation may be regarded as an act of discourtesy; and he left India full of hopes for a message of goodwill and sympathy, but he returned sadly disappointed. He now realises his mistake and the amount of harm that has been done to India by his having accepted the invitation.

We have full appreciation of your difficulties over there. But I must frankly confess that there is very little understanding over there of our difficulties here. You called the League delegation there at a time when there was some realisation that violence is a game at which both parties can play and the mild Hindu also, when driven to desperation, can retaliate as brutally as a fanatic Muslim. Just when the time for settlement was reached Jimmah got the invitation, and he was able to convince the Muslims once again that he has been able to get more concessions by creating trouble and violence.

Sudhir [Ghosh] has, I believe, after his return to [London], given you some idea of what has happened here and I need not bother you with details. But I will only say that if strong action had been taken, or had been allowed to be taken here, when "Direct Action Day" was fixed by the Muslim League and when 16 August was fixed as a day of demonstration in Calcutta, all this colossal loss of life and property and blood-curdling events would not have happened. The Viceroy here took the contrary view, and every action of his since the "Great Calcutta Killing" has been in the direction of encouraging the Muslim League and putting pressure on us towards appeasement.

In London the stage was set against us, and I do not know whether there is any realisation of the amount of mischief that has been done by the statement and by the subsequent debate. With great difficulty, we were able to build a bridge between England and India by our joint efforts—and you know my own contribution. I regret to say that the sense of faith and confidence about the sincerity of Britain that was created by our settlement is fast being dissipated and the bridge is about to crack or collapse.

Your interpretation means that Bengal Muslims can draft the constitution of Assam. It is amazing. Do you think that such a monstrous proposition can be accepted by the Hindus of Assam, particularly after the sad experience of wholesale forcible conversions, arson, looting, rape and forcible marriages? You can have no idea of the resentment and anger caused by your emphasis on

this interpretation. If you think that Assam can be coerced to accept the domination of Bengal, the sooner you rid of that disillusion the better. What can we do to satisfy the Sikhs who have admittedly been unjustly treated? If they frame the constitution of Assam in such a way as to make Assam's opting out impossible, what is the remedy in your statement?

You know that Gandhiji at the age of 77 is spending all his energy in the devastated Hindu homes in Eastern Bengal and trying to recover the lost girls and bring back those forcibly converted to their old faith. But he is working against heavy odds, and I have great apprehension that he will end his life there in this fruitless mission. He is surrounded by a very hostile atmosphere. In the event of his death there in these circumstances, what will happen no one can say. I shudder to think of the consequences. But the anger and resentment of the whole [of] India will be not only against the Muslims, but also against the British to a large extent.

You must have seen what Jinnah has said in London immediately after the debate. He swears by Pakistan, and everything conceded to him is to be used as a lever to work to that end. You wish that we should agree to help him in his mad dream. I am sorry to write to you in this strain, but I feel sad over the whole affair. You know when Gandhiji was strongly against our settlement I threw my weight in favour of it. You have created a very unpleasant situation for me. All of us here feel that there has been a betrayal.

The solution has now been made more difficult, nay, almost impossible. The settlement can only be made if there is no outside interference and the parties left alone. The Viceroy would not give us peace and he and his advisers are all pro-League. We have to work through them. It is an impossible situation, but I do not know whether you will be able to do anything in the matter.

Hope you are doing well.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Rt. Hon. Sir Stafford Cripps

Board of Trade
 Millbank
 London S. W. 1.
 21 December 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you very much indeed for writing me your frank letter after your talk with Isobel [Lady Cripps]. She was so thrilled by her visit to New Delhi and the great kindness that she received from you all and your daughter especially.

I know that you realise our difficulty in trying to struggle with this very complex situation and to do what it is best and what is right.

I am very much aware of the points that you stress in your letter and I have them fully in mind in the discussions which are now going forward on this side.

I know that you have done very much to help and I am conscious of how much we are indebted to you for your wisdom and guidance.

You need not have any doubt or hesitations about our determination to go through with our programme as quickly as possible. We may sometimes seem to you to wander off the path—but be patient with us!

I hope that in the next few weeks there may come a clarification of the situation, and in the meanwhile we shall be considering the whole matter here with the object of seeing how best we can help toward India's independence with the minimum of disturbance and suffering.

I send you and your daughter my warmest greetings for the New Year.

Yours sincerely,
 Stafford Cripps

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

New Delhi
20 December 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just arrived and I send herewith a letter from Pyarelal with which I was entrusted. I have also a verbal and written message from Gandhiji which I shall communicate later on after I have finished the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee which may be after 5 o'clock. More when we meet.

Yours affectionately,
Asaf [Ali]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

MAHATMA GANDHI'S NOTE

In my opinion, it will be a grave mistake if the Constituent Assembly attempts, in the face of the boycott by the Muslim League, to frame a constitution for the whole of India. If and when the Muslim League boycott becomes an established fact, the Constituent Assembly should have a right to frame a constitution of independence for all the provinces, States and units that may be represented at the Constituent Assembly. This will be an honourable and consistent position for the Constituent Assembly as it is at present constituted. There should be no fear of another or for that matter more constituent assemblies sitting, if the attitude advised by me is taken up. No other such constituent assembly can sit or function except under the aegis of the British Government whilst the latter functions in India. If the British Government wills it, such other constituent assemblies cannot be prevented except through a terrible struggle put up by the Congress, whether of a violent or non-violent nature.

I feel too that the Congress can subscribe to the contention of the British Government about grouping, if it allows Assam and the Frontier Province to secede from the Congress for the purposes of the Constituent Assembly. The Congress has no power save the moral to compel obedience by a province or a group such as Sikhs.

Srirampur

17 December 1946

16 December 1946

Dear Sir John Colville,

There are two important matters ripe for discussion in the Cabinet which I feel should be taken up as soon as possible this week. The first refers to the question of compensation for the Secretary of State's Services on which the Secretary of State has proposed, and I also agree, that an announcement should be made before 1 January 1947. His proposals were received a day or two before I left for Bombay and have been considered by the Home Department in consultation with other departments. I have already indicated my views, and a summary on this subject should be on its way to Your Excellency. My views are at variance with the conclusions reached by the Secretary of State, and it is only fair that the Secretary of State should have some time to consider those views if they are finally accepted by the Cabinet. From this point of view it seems to me essential that our reply to the Secretary of State's despatch should be in his hands before the end of this week.

2. The second proposal relates to the issue of an ordinance entrusting certain powers to the Central Government in regard to the Press in the Chief Commissioners' provinces. I received a letter from Lord Wavell before he left for England suggesting that action should be taken against a section of the Press for inflammatory writings on communal matters. I wrote to him in reply that in certain matters referred to our legal advisers the latter had advised that under the existing law as it stood action would not be advisable, and I therefore suggested the issue of an ordinance. At the same time I informed him that in view of the urgency of this matter, it might have to be taken up in his absence which was then only for a week or so. It is now two weeks, since then and I feel that action should no longer be delayed. The summary on this subject is, I understand, already with P. S. V. [Private Secretary to Viceroy]. If your Excellency agrees, I suggest that these two matters might either be discussed at the next meeting of the Cabinet due to be held on the 18th,

or a special meeting of the Cabinet may be called a day or two later.

Yours sincerely,
V. J. Patel
H. M.

His Excellency the Right Hon'ble
Sir John Colville, GCIE, TD
Acting Viceroy & Governor-General of India

330

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
16 December 1946

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,

Thank you for your letter of today's date. As I write the Home Department summary about compensation for the Services has not yet reached me, and I shall reply separately about it. 2. I have kept back from this week's Cabinet meeting the proposal relating to the issue of an ordinance to control the Press in Chief Commissioners' provinces. I wished to make myself familiar with the background of this matter and required a little time to study it as you will agree it is an important and serious step.

I feel that control of the Press by ordinance is a most delicate matter, and I should like to have your opinion as to whether, in view of the meeting of the Central Assembly next month, it would not be sounder policy to achieve the same object by the introduction of a Bill. If you feel that a discussion about this would be of any use, I shall be glad to see you at any time.

I have directed that the summary be returned to the Department so that the ordinance may be finalised. Apart from the desirability or otherwise of issuing the ordinance, I do not feel that the Cabinet should be called upon to make a decision on a matter of such importance until it has before it the proposal in exact and final form.

Yours sincerely,
John Colville

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

New Delhi
17 December 1946

My dear Sir John Colville,

Many thanks for your letter dated 16 December 1946.

2. I understand there has been some delay in the Home Department about the submission to you of the summary regarding compensation for the Services. The summary is now in the Cabinet Secretariat and I hope it will reach you some time today.

3. As regards the ordinance for the control of the Press, Lord Wavell in his two letters sent to me prior to his departure himself commented on the urgency of taking action against certain papers. The matter had been referred to the Legal Advisers, who felt that under the existing law any prosecution or demand of security in respect of material referred to them would be inadvisable, as such action, apart from involving delay, was not likely to be sustained by the courts.

4. In the meantime, at Lord Wavell's suggestion, I convened a meeting of the editors of important local newspapers and members of the Central Press Advisory Committee and informed them of the mischief that was likely to result from the almost unrestrained manner in which certain papers were publishing and commenting on news of a communal character. As a result of the discussions, the conference evolved a code of voluntary restrictions, which we regarded as inadequate, but to which we were prepared to give a fair trial. That code has been in operation for a month, and already we have sufficient material to establish that that code is not being observed either in letter or in spirit by some newspapers.

5. The taking of powers by ordinance to control the Press is equally distasteful to me. In fact, in my speech to the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference, I emphasised the importance of maintaining the liberty of the Press, though I stressed at the same time the obligations which that liberty involved. In ordinary times, Government can afford to give more latitude to the Press, but in the prevailing communal tension in the country when a slight deviation from the path of responsibility and rectitude is likely to cause untold harm, I feel that the freedom

of the Press will have to be controlled as a matter of painful necessity. Both the Governments of the Punjab and Bombay have been representing to us about the urgency of taking action against certain papers in Delhi. In fact, it was the letter of the Governor of the Punjab that prompted Lord Wavell's second letter. In the Punjab, the Muslim League workers are reported to be drawing up a programme of 'Direct Action.' The Governments of the Punjab, Bihar and Bengal have had to meet the emergency by promulgating ordinances and taking action against several papers. Unlike these provinces I have restricted the provisions of the ordinance strictly to communal matters. The need for an ordinance has been felt in Bombay also, but the Bombay Government have held their hand so far, as they feel that unless and until some action is taken in Delhi, which is the main source from which poison spreads to other centres, any action in Bombay is likely to prove inadequate. It would not be desirable to wait for the Assembly session which will probably not be held next month and the legislative programme of which is already overcrowded. The situation requires urgent and swift action. Apart from this, the emergency, I hope, will be of a temporary duration and an ordinance might cover the period for which control might be necessary. Any prolongation of the present position would only add to the prevailing tension without being in any way beneficial. In these circumstances, I personally feel that the case for legislation, and that too at a very early date, is unanswerable. I would therefore repeat my earlier suggestion that the matter may be taken up some time before the end of this week.

6. I understand that it is the usual practice for the Cabinet's approval to legislation being obtained on general lines and then for the draft to be finalised by the department concerned in consultation with the Legislative Department. If Your Excellency feels that a different course should be followed on this occasion, I have no objection, and I would instruct my Secretary to see that this is done as expeditiously as possible, so that Cabinet discussion is not held up on this account.

Yours sincerely,
V. J. Patel

His Excellency the Right Hon'ble Sir John Colville
Acting Viceroy & Governor-General of India
The Viceroy's House
New Delhi

The Viceroy's House
New Delhi
19 December 1946

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,

I am sorry that I could not reply earlier to your letter of 17 December.

2. I have been in communication with Lord Wavell about the case of compensation for the Services. I am now informed that Lord Wavell is returning early next week, and that immediately after Christmas Mr. Arthur Henderson, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for India, will come out here in order to explain more fully to you the position of the Secretary of State in this matter, and the proposals which he has made and to hear in person your views. I think therefore that it would be well not to take this matter in the Cabinet until Lord Wavell returns, and until the Under-Secretary of State has had the opportunity of meeting you.

3. In the matter of the Press ordinance, I agree that it is desirable to deal with this in Cabinet as soon as possible; and I therefore propose to call a meeting on Monday next. I understand from Mr. [I. I.] Chundrigar¹ that he is likely to have an item which he urgently wishes to be considered and this may come at the same meeting.

Yours sincerely,
John Colville

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

¹Lawyer and Muslim League leader from Bombay; Commerce Member, Interim Government, 1946-47

EXTRACTS

Raja Road
Dehra Dun UP
15 November 1946

Shriman Vallabhbhai Patel,

Jai Hind. I am taking the liberty to write you only because I know and am sure that your goodself shall pay necessary heed to it.

You are aware that the Hindustan Scout Association is the only organisation that can raise the Indian youth from communalism and provincialism to a much higher plane of true nationalism.

I feel confident that if proper steps had been taken to spread this movement in the country, we would not have seen the plight of Bihar, Bengal, Meerut etc., engaged in such deadly communal riots.

Yours truly,
N. K. Jain

New Delhi
18 November 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 15th instant.

The question of strengthening the Scout Association or utilising it for purposes of restoring and maintaining communal peace is a provincial matter, and the Central Government cannot interfere in it. If you think that the Scout Association can raise the Indian youth from communalism and provincialism, you can prove it by example which you can set in your province and not by arguments. National Guards, which in some provinces the provincial Governments are raising, is not a rival to the Scout Association, and if the Scout Association can prove that its utility is greater than the National Guards, I am sure the provinces

would readily welcome that organisation, but today, in the present atmosphere, many such organisations have proved ineffective.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Narendra Kumar Jain Esq.
Asst. Dist. Scout Commissioner
Dehra Dun

335

New Delhi
26 November 1946

My dear Pantji,

Your Government in the Rural Development Department have, in their official letter dated 15 October 1946 addressed to the Department of Information and Broadcasting, suggested that as an experimental measure the Lucknow station of AIR should be placed directly under their control so that in the light of the experience gained they might consider whether they should take over control permanently.

Apart from the fact that this temporary transfer involves the difficult questions of the transfer of control of the staff and equipment and of broadcasting policy, I feel that it would be particularly inappropriate at the present juncture to raise the issue of Central versus provincial broadcasting. Communications, as you know, would be a Union subject, and we do not wish to give the idea that it is open for consideration that broadcasting should be transferred to the provinces. In fact, under present conditions, it might be inadvisable to disturb the position under which all broadcasting stations in India are being controlled from the Centre. I hope, therefore, that you will agree to drop the matter for the present and, if so, please send an official letter to that effect.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
Prime Minister of UP
Lucknow

Kashi
15 December 1946

Dear Shri Patelji,

This is to introduce to you Shri Khushal Chand Jain, M. A., of Kashi Vidyapith. The institution itself, I am sure, needs no introduction. Founded in 1920 by Mahatmaji, it has continued to serve the country all these years and its professors and students have always been in the forefront of the fight for freedom. We shall be celebrating our silver jubilee on Vasant Panchami day, 27 January 1947. I am sure you are interested in the progress of the institution. We shall be very grateful for a message of goodwill from you. It will also be published in the Commemoration volume we intend to publish on the occasion and be a permanent record of your appreciation of our efforts in the cause of national education and political emancipation.

Yours sincerely,
Sampurnanand¹

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

25 December 1946

My dear Sampurnanand,

I have received your letter of 15 December through Shri Khushal Jain of Kashi Vidyapith. I hope you will find the following message of some use:

I congratulate Kashi Vidyapith on its silver jubilee. The institution was one of the first to bear the unmistakable impress of the national awakening and struggle which followed the disillusionment after the First World War. Since it has throughout made a valuable contribution to the struggle for freedom and its staff and its students have always been willing to respond to the needs of the hour, no institution could have better

¹ Education and Labour Minister in Pant Ministry after independence; succeeded Pant as Chief Minister, UP; Governor of Rajasthan; Sanskrit scholar

claims on the sympathies and support of the public, and I wish Kashi Vidyapith all success.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Sampurnanand
Minister for Education
Government of the United Provinces
Lucknow

CHAPTER XI
FERMENT IN INDIAN STATES

338

[These two notes embody the substance of conversations which took place between the Ruler of Bhopal and Jawaharlal Nehru at Chiklod, Bhopal State, on 21 and 22 April 1946. The conversations lasted over six hours in all and covered many other subjects also, notably the international situation, which are not referred to in these notes.]

The notes were hastily dictated soon after each talk and hence there is much repetition in them. The first note, dated 21 April, was meant to be given to the Nawab and was in fact given to him. The second note was meant for my personal use only. But when I was asked if I had prepared any note of the second day's talks, I decided to hand over this also. I gave a copy to Shuaib Qureshi.¹

During the conversations the only other person present was Shuaib Qureshi.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Bhopal
22 April 1946

339

This note was prepared for my personal use only and was not intended to be handed over. This fact might be borne in mind in reading it.

If any incorrect statements or inference have been made in it, I shall be grateful if a correction is sent to me.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Bhopal
22 April 1946

¹ Muslim Nationalist who became adviser to Nawab of Bhopal and took political office in Pakistan after partition

NOTE ON CONVERSATIONS THAT TOOK PLACE ON 21 APRIL, 1946,
MORE ESPECIALLY IN REGARD TO THE SMALLER STATES

It was stated that references to the merger of the small States to larger units of the federation had alarmed some of the Rulers of these smaller States. While some such merger might ultimately take place, it was desirable not to raise this issue at this stage as it would lead to unnecessary complications. The present issue was the attitude of the States as a whole towards the independence of India. Other matters were secondary and should be dealt with later as occasion arises.

It is perfectly true that the fundamental issue today was one of the independence of India and the withdrawal of every form of British authority from India as a whole, including the States. This would include inevitably the withdrawal of British armed forces from India, including the States. Once this primary objective was attained the other issues could be viewed in an entirely different context and would be easier of solution with a larger measure of consent of the parties concerned. It is desirable, therefore, to lay emphasis on this primary and fundamental issue of independence.

Nevertheless it is difficult to avoid references occasionally to other important aspects of our problems, more especially when these are raised and we have to express our views in regard to them. Broadly speaking the problems can be divided into two parts—national and local. The former means our problem vis-a-vis Great Britain that is to say the independence of India. Another aspect of this national problem is the kind of federation that might be built up in India. The local aspect of the States problem especially would include the changes that are necessitated within the States in order to fit them into the national structure on an equal basis. This local aspect, important as it is, can be considered after the national aspect, though to a large extent the two are intertwined.

The changes that are envisaged in India lead up to a new situation, to an independent India which is to consist of autonomous units federating together. While this new situation is being hammered out, given shape and given effect to, some kind of interim arrangement is necessary. This is necessary for two reasons: (1) The present system, from the Government of India downwards, is completely out of date and incapable of dealing with any of our problems. (2) If a big change is to come in the near future we have to prepare for it from now onwards and make the necessary adjustments during this interim period so that the change-over might be smooth.

The interim period thus has great importance, for out of it will arise the structure of independent India. It may be said with perfect justification that it is not necessary for us to consider internal problems at this stage in any detail because these matters will have to be considered and decided by the Constituent Assembly. The only fact on the basis of which we need proceed is the objective of independence, a federation of autonomous units of equal status and equal standards of democratic organisation. The rest can be left to be decided by the Constituent Assembly or such other processes which might accompany it. Nevertheless, many other matters do arise for consideration even though we might leave their decision to a later stage. Also we must have some blueprint of the future before us so that we might mould the interim period accordingly. It is difficult to fix the exact limit of the interim period. Usually a year is suggested for it. It may be a little less or a little more. But in view of the inevitability of rapid changes in the world situation as well as in India, it is highly unlikely that this period will be much longer than a year unless catastrophes overtake us in the world or in India. Such catastrophes may hasten the end of the period or lengthen it. It is desirable in any event for this interim period also to be in effect, if not in law, a period of real transfer of power to India from England. Probably it is not desirable to fix the nature of this changing period in terms of law, though some legal changes might be made easily and these might help, but generally speaking it will be a flexible and continually changing period when the law remains much the same as it is but the practice is entirely different, leading up to independence. During this interim period not only will the Constituent Assembly be drawing up a constitution for India but at the same time the whole Indian States problem in its national and local aspects will have to be considered carefully by all the parties concerned so that the Indian States and their people should have a fitting and equal place in India.

It has been said that the Indian Federation will consist of autonomous units. A very large measure of autonomy has been promised to the units, but the Federation, if it is to function effectively, cannot be a weak or disjointed Federation. It may be a limited one so far as the number of subjects are concerned but it must be a strong one more especially in regard to defence and allied subjects, such as external affairs, communications, tariffs, customs and currency. The Federation, in other words, must be an organic Federation and not a loosely-joined structure which threatens to fall apart. This is necessitated both by the international situation and by the urgent need of economic, industrial and social advance in India on all fronts. Considerations of defence are paramount in the world situation today and ignoring of them may lead to Indian freedom and independence being lost.

Just as the Federation must be organic, so also each federating unit must be organic and not a loosely connected grouping. This is necessary even

more than the other, for if a unit is not organic it is not a unit in the real sense of the word and its administrative and economic machinery cannot function effectively. What must a unit of the Federation be? It must have sufficient resources in terms of size, population, revenue and otherwise, to be able to maintain modern standards of social and economic welfare. If it is to have an equal status with other units, as it must, it must have a political and economic structure which is in harmony with the structure of other units, for obviously if it conflicts there will be continuous pulls in different directions within the Federation. It is recognised today that the structure throughout India be democratic and must aim at the well-being of the people. There may be minor variations between the internal structure of one unit and another, but in essentials there will have to be a large measure of uniformity. This will be necessary also from the point of view of large-scale planning which is so essential if India is to make rapid progress in raising standards of living.

It is difficult to say how many of the existing States are capable of forming units of the Federation as they are. It is, however, clear that only a very few of them can be considered, in their present form, suited to become units of the Federation. Various estimates have been made varying from a dozen to about twenty. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar¹ has stated that the number of such States should not in any case exceed fifteen or twenty. The number is not important at present. What is important is the qualification of such States and that is the ability to pull together with the other units and to have the resources to progress rapidly with the rest of India. To join the Federation as a unit is not merely [an] obligation; it should be a privilege to which certain qualifications and obligations in regard to standards and methods of administration attach.

In any event it is perfectly clear that a very large number of States cannot, as they are, form units of the Federation. They cannot, it is admitted, remain attached to British authority and paramountcy. Obviously also they cannot remain in the air. What then is to happen to them?

They may form groups amongst themselves so that each such group might be big enough and strong enough, in the manner mentioned above, to form an effective unit of the Federation. This is certainly possible in many parts of the country, more especially in Rajputana, Central India, and the Maharatta States, possibly also in Kathiawar and elsewhere. It must be remembered, however, as has been mentioned above, that such grouping has to be an organic grouping, otherwise it is not a real unit.

Even after such grouping to form units has been made, it is possible for a number of smaller States to be left out. Obviously, these small States cannot

¹ Secretary, All India Congress, 1917-18; Advocate-General, Madras, 1920-23; Law Member, Madras Government, 1923-28; attended London Round Table Conference, 1930-32; Dewan of Travancore, 1936-42; Member, Viceroy's Executive Council for brief period in August, 1942; reappointed Dewan of Travancore, 1942-47

function for themselves in any way at all. There appears to be no way out other than absorption in some neighbouring unit. Grouping of States can only be effected when such States are contiguous.

Some eight years ago the All-India States Peoples' Conference passed a resolution in regard to States and the proposed Federation of India. This has been called the Ludhiana Resolution and it laid down a test in population and revenue. Since then many changes have occurred and the matter was considered afresh last January at Udaipur. The following resolution was then passed:

“This conference is of opinion that only such States as have a sufficient population and revenue to be able to maintain modern standards of social and economic welfare should continue as units which can join as such in the proposed Federation of India. The primary consideration must be people's welfare and progress. The Ludhiana resolution which laid down that only those States which have a population of 20 lakhs of people and over, or a revenue exceeding Rs. 50 lakhs, should be examined from this point of view so that the States forming autonomous units in the Federation fulfil these fundamental considerations.

“The smaller States which are unable to come up to these standards should generally be absorbed in the neighbouring provinces. Where this is considered feasible and necessary for cultural and other reasons, a measure of autonomy may be granted to them within the province. In States so absorbed in, or attached to, provinces suitable provisions should be made for the present Rulers and their personal dignity and position safeguarded.”

It is to be noted that stress is laid in this resolution not on population or revenue but on the ability to maintain modern standards of social and economic welfare. Another notable feature of this resolution is the suggestion that a measure of autonomy might be granted to a small State within a larger unit where this is considered feasible and necessary for cultural and other reasons. The States Peoples' Conference was anxious to work out a solution as far as possible with the concurrence and goodwill of the Rulers and the people and, therefore, suggested this autonomy so as to enable a State with a cultural or other background to maintain a certain individuality. This autonomy would, of course, be a limited one and for economic and administrative purposes the autonomous area would be a part of the larger unit. The desire of the States Peoples' Conference to proceed in a manner friendly to the Princes, as far as possible, is evidenced by a statement that in States absorbed to a larger unit suitable provisions should be made for the present Rulers and their personal dignity and position safeguarded.

That is the present policy of the States Peoples' Conference in regard to this matter. It would appear to be the policy of almost everyone who has

given thought to this subject. There is no other way out. It is not a question of doing anything which may be disagreeable to the Rulers concerned but of following the inevitable logic of events which no one can ignore.

As has been said above, this question should be considered in its details at a later stage. No stress need be laid on it at present when larger issues are at stake. But when and where the question arises, it would be unfair to all parties concerned not to face it in its obvious implications. It would be unfair because this would lead to misapprehension and subsequent charges of having been misled. It is clear that very great changes are coming over India and these changes will affect the States equally with the rest of India. It is clear also that India as a whole has to hang together and develop a certain uniformity, though it may preserve in many ways its rich variety and distinctiveness. Some of the States have long traditions and a historical background behind them and they might well preserve that identity and tradition but even those can only be preserved if they are in harmony with the dynamic and progressive tendencies of the country. To come into conflict with these tendencies or to obstruct them is more likely to injure them and to shorten their life. Democratic institutions are bound to come all over India and ultimately the shape that India takes, and that will include the States, will depend on the will of the people. There is no essential difference between the people of a State and those of an adjoining area, whether it is a province or a State, though there are differences between the people of some provinces and others in regard to language and other matters. Common movements have affected and will still more affect in the future the people of the States and the rest of India. There is no escape from this and wisdom leads to only one conclusion: to line up with these movements and indeed to lead them. Obstruction is likely to be harmful both to the large cause and to the individual concerned. It is possible, and in some cases probable, that particular States with their special cultural background may have a distinctive role to fulfil in the India of the future. But that role itself will only come in evidence if it is a harmonious part of the larger movement of the Indian people for national development. The future of India is potentially one of a great power advancing all along the line. That greatness and progress will be the heritage of all who help in bringing it about. The Rulers of the States, whether big or small, cannot only be sharers in that heritage but can play a notable part in the India that is going to take shape. Their position can in reality be greater and more honourable if they have the capacity and the will for it than their present position.

This note has rather strayed from the narrower issue for which it was intended. But it is difficult to separate entirely one aspect of a large problem from the others. The broad framework of the problem has to be kept in view even if we are to understand a small part of it. It is desirable to proceed in

the solution of this as of other problems in a co-operative and friendly way. Certainly nothing should be said or done which creates ill-will and distrust, but at the same time one cannot forget the realities of the situation. This reality includes many factors, among them being the great awakening of the people of the States and the growing and insistent demand on their part to be full and equal sharers in India's freedom to come. To make the people think that they are going to be ignored or bypassed is obviously a policy full of dangerous implications. This factor has always to be borne in mind. Indeed it has been sufficiently recognised by many Princes and many of their Ministers.

Though there are 560 or 601 States in India the problem is essentially one of the bigger States. The smaller States will have to fall in line with others and, therefore, their problem can well be considered at a somewhat later stage when the compulsion of events makes people think more in terms of reality. Among these events is the major one of the inevitability in the near future of the withdrawal of the British power from India and the growth of democratic institutions and some form of responsible government.

The position taken up on behalf of the Princes before the British Cabinet Delegation in regard to Indian independence and the withdrawal of British power and authority as well as paramountcy has been welcomed generally in so far as that goes. On some other matters there may be and there is some difference of opinion. But it is fully recognised and appreciated that the primary issue has been put first and dealt with firmly. On that there can and must be unity of opinion and demand. As and when other issues arise they should be dealt with in a friendly and co-operative manner as between the Princes and the people's representatives, and it is highly likely that a great deal of agreement will emerge. The approach can only be one of serving the cause of India as a whole, of the States and their people. With that common objective it should be possible to find a common path.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Chiklod

Bhopal State

21 April 1946

FURTHER NOTE ON CONVERSATION AT CHIKLOD, BHOPAL STATE,
ON 22 APRIL 1946

Yesterday and today I have had lengthy conversations with the Ruler of Bhopal in regard to the problem of the Indian States in the future constitution of India. He spoke to me, as a rule, as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and as such he was a little afraid of committing himself to anything specific. Sometimes he would add that in his personal capacity he was prepared to go

much further but he wanted to carry others with him and this required tactful handling. He emphasised on several occasions, and I agreed with him, that the major issue was Indian independence and the rest would follow. On that issue he said that the Princes have put up a straight front. I appreciated this, whatever the reasons behind this attitude might have been.

When we discussed other matters there was a great deal of reluctance to agree to anything which seemed to limit the rights and privileges of the Princes. Of course a Federation with common subjects had already been agreed to. Apart from this everything was rather vague. It was admitted that the Federal Centre would be the supreme authority regarding the common subjects. But the rest was supposed to be almost entirely in the domain of the States, or at any rate no commitment at this stage was liked. The reason for this was partly the fact that there was doubt as to the nature of this Federation. Was there going to be one Federation or two, one Constituent Assembly or two? So far as I was concerned I made it clear that I was proceeding on the basis of one Constituent Assembly and one Federation.

One rather surprising suggestion was thrown out: that the States should join the Federation in a body, maybe through the Chamber of Princes. This in effect was some kind of a Rajasthan, though this word was not used. I pointed out that any such conception appeared to me to be wholly wrong and rather fantastic. Apart from many other defects that it suffered from, it would be a kind of loose sub-federation not even geographically connected together and varying in quality as between its different parts to an enormous extent. As such it could not become a unit, much less an equal unit, in the central Federation. The point was not pressed and was only casually mentioned.

Another system casually mentioned was that there should be regional grouping of States, each region becoming a unit of the Federation. For this too I expressed my dislike for more or less the same reasons.

Ultimately it seemed that the only feasible way for the States to join the Federation was as suggested in my first Note, i.e., for major States to join as units, for smaller States to group themselves together if geographically so situated and then form a unit or units, and for the remaining States to be absorbed in some existing unit.

We discussed various other matters, such as the preparatory period during which the States could come up to the common level of democratic, representative and responsible government which might prevail in the rest of India, the interim period from now till the framing of the Federal Constitution by the Constituent Assembly; fundamental rights etc. On most of these points there was considerable divergence of opinion and approach between us, and yet I was repeatedly assured that there was no great difference in regard to the final objective, i.e., the building up of a great Indian nation or, as it was termed, a greater India.

Preparatory Period: This refers to the period that might be necessary to bring up the administrative structure of the States on a par with the rest of India. It was pointed out to me that the States, or many of them, were so backward and so lacking in trained human material that any attempt to establish full-fledged responsible government would end in failure and would delay progress. It was necessary, therefore, to have a preparatory period during which representative institutions could be progressively introduced and the people trained in their use. It was suggested that during this period the Ruler should have considerable authority. The period may vary in the case of different States and some might hardly require it. Vaguely a time limit of fifteen years was suggested.

I agreed that many of the States were terribly backward and there might be difficulty in the way of finding suitable human material within the State to start with. That indeed was a reason why there should be a closer union with the Federation which would help in many ways. That was also a reason for avoiding backward areas to remain isolated from the rest of India. A backward area attached to a progressive area would be pulled up. Several backward areas grouped together would simply remain where they were.

Also it was not really possible to train people for responsible government without casting responsibility upon them even at some risk. Without responsibility they develop only the agitational aspect and this will give rise to continuous conflict and difficulty. It might be possible for a brief period to give full responsibility, but at the same time to have some checks to prevent misuse. A very important factor in the present situation was the awakening of the States people. It would be almost impossible to maintain institutions in the States which compare very unfavourably with those of the rest of India. Besides it is highly probable that in some of the major States responsible government in some shape or form might be established in the near future. If this is done in some States the people of the other States would become even more restive and would refuse to submit to any form of autocratic rule. It must be remembered that the tempo of change in India, whatever the future might hold for us, was going to be rapid and inevitably the States would have to fit into this tempo.

The result of this talk was that the Ruler of Bhopal expressed every sympathy for change in the States and for a rapid association of the people with the government. But he added that we must take things as they are and a preparatory period was essential. In his opinion full responsible government was not possible in most of the States today and would not even be in the interest of the people because it would be exploited for the advantage of some small group. Meanwhile, however, steps should be taken towards that end.

Interim Period: This refers to the period from now onwards to the establishment of the new Federal Constitution, a period during which it is presumed an interim national government would be functioning. Speaking as

Chancellor B (Bhopal) wanted to have no constitutional relations with the interim government though he hoped that there would be friendly relations. As there were certain common interests he suggested the formation of an advisory committee consisting of, say, three representatives of the Rulers, presumably nominated by the Chamber of Princes, and three of the interim government. This advisory committee would consider matters of common concern and would advise the Viceroy who will still function during this interim period as Crown Representative. The States, however, had made it perfectly clear that even during this period British paramountcy must go. This did not mean, according to him, that paramountcy should vest in the interim national government. B suggested, however, that he was prepared that a decision in regard to common interests may be left for the time being to the interim government and its legislature provided that there was full consultation with the princes prior to any such decision especially in regard to policy. It might be mentioned that the common subjects at present are:

- (1) customs tariff
- (2) salt tax
- (3) any other form of central taxation affecting Indian States
- (4) railway policy
- (5) air communications
- (6) trunk roads
- (7) posts and telegraphs
- (8) wireless
- (9) currency and coinage
- (10) commerce, banking and insurance, so far as the matters affect both the States and British India
- (11) opium policy
- (12) Indians overseas
- (13) League of Nations, presumably now the UNO, and its ancilliary bodies

I suggested that it would be highly desirable to associate the people of the States with this advisory committee during the interim period. To this B would not agree though he expressed sympathy with the idea underlying it. He said that only governments could be represented in such a committee. Indeed it would be no easy matter to represent State Governments because of the conflicting interests of some States, such as maritime States and others.

The Crown Representative would in form continue but this advisory committee for joint subjects was not supposed to advise the Crown Representative. Indeed the Crown Representative should be eliminated from any consideration of these common subjects.

Political Department: Presumably this department would continue during the interim period though some of its functions might be transferred to the

advisory committee. At present the Crown Representative can demand any sum he likes from the Indian revenues for this Political Department. This, I am told, is a non-votable item in the Central Legislature. I said that the interim national government must have a say about this sum. B did not know anything about it and said the matter did not concern him or the other Princes. So far as he was concerned the interim government could do what it chose in regard to it.

I suggested that it would be desirable for the Political Adviser during this interim period to be appointed by the Crown Representative in consultation with the interim government. B said that the interim government did not come into the picture and the Political Adviser should be appointed in consultation with the Princes or their representatives. He would, of course, want some one who was also persona grata with the interim government. The question really was one of informal consultation between various parties concerned. It would be difficult and undesirable for any fixed arrangement during the brief interim period. After this period both the Political Department and the Political Adviser would presumably go, at any rate in so far as the States adhering to the Federation were concerned.

The objection to the interim government having nothing to do with the appointment of the Political Adviser to the Crown Representative was resisted by B as establishing an undesirable precedent of interference by "British India" in matters peculiarly relating to the States, such as dynastic matters, question of deposition of a Ruler, etc. Few such matters would probably arise during the brief period and in case there was a serious complaint against a Ruler's conduct B suggested that the matter should be formally placed before a judicial tribunal. The question had little intrinsic importance except that it brought out the fear of the Princes of intervention from what they call "outside" and the development of a kind of paramountcy by the interim government.

Constituent Assembly: When this matter was raised immediately the question was put: Is there going to be one such assembly or two? It was difficult to decide till the picture of the Constituent Assembly emerged. Would there be treaties or instruments of accession? I said I was discussing the whole problem on the basis of one Constituent Assembly which would draft the Federal constitution. It would not presumably go into the matter of the constitution of the federating units, but it might well lay down certain fundamental aspects of these local constitutions. No federal constitution could be framed without a certain unanimity in the internal structure of the units. That uniformity would mean a democratic basis, fundamental rights etc. The question of fundamental rights (which it must be remembered has been formally agreed to by the Chamber of Princes) gave rise to another query: Does this mean that the Federal Government would interfere with or intervene

in matters of local concern like law and order etc.? I said that the proper course seemed to me when the Federation objected to any infringement of fundamental rights or provisions of the constitution, the matter be referred to the Supreme Court for its decision. That seemed the proper method to deal with any such conflict. This was not interference with the unit's powers.

As for treaties or instruments of accession I could not quite make out where they came into the picture at all. States joining the Federation came in on the basis of the Federal constitution and ceased to have any distinctive feature as the State as opposed to a province.

B said that the Princes have taken no decision yet about joining the Constituent Assembly except that they have said that they might join it when they saw the full picture. He himself was not sure whether it was desirable for them to join it to begin with or to wait till a later stage. He asked me what I would prefer in the matter. I said that I would not like any compulsion to be exercised on a State in regard to joining the Constituent Assembly. I would like the States to join provided, of course, it was in a position to function as a unit and provided also that it was prepared to bring up its administrative and other machinery to the common level.

The question of representation on the Constituent Assembly was considered. I pointed out that there was a strong feeling on the subject and if the people of the States were not directly represented there would be trouble.

B said that the prevailing idea among the Princes was that only governments could be represented but no definite decision had been taken. They were waiting still for the picture of the Constituent Assembly before they decided. It was quite possible that a measure of representation from elected members of States legislatures could be arranged for. Indeed there was a definite trend in this direction. This would apply only to such States as had such legislatures. But most of the major States had them. The course even then will be for the State Government either to appoint the leader of the elected majority party or to allow the elected members to choose one person who would then be nominated by the government, or for a panel to be chosen by the elected members out of which the State Government might choose one person. This kind of representation could only come in where a State had more than one representative in the Constituent Assembly.

If there was only one representative, then some government official would be that one; if two, then there would be one government official and one chosen from the elected members. There was no means of providing for elected representation, according to B, from the smaller States.

I pointed out that ever since the idea of a Constituent Assembly had been placed before the country stress had always been laid on the States being represented by their elected representatives. In 1942 the National Congress

had rejected the Cripps proposals *inter alia* on this ground. There was no doubt at all that the Congress would adhere to that position. Today the States people, of course, were very anxious about it and I could not imagine their submitting to being represented purely by the Ruler's nominees. B said that the situation today was different from what it was in 1942. In 1942 the Rulers had opposed Indian independence and more or less lined up with the British power asking it to preserve their interests. Now the States stood for Indian independence. They wanted to give up their association with the British Crown completely. They relied on their own people and their fate in future would be linked with them. Therefore the previous divergence had largely gone now. Then again, he added, the Constituent Assembly would deal with the Federal constitution only and not with internal matters affecting the States. Because of this he thought the interest of the States people would not be so great. He was afraid also that States peoples' representatives might put up a very poor show, through lack of competence, in the Constituent Assembly.

B added, however, that as he hoped the Princes would consider the principle of some representation of the elected element, in the manner indicated above, no great difficulty would remain. I said that it might be possible to bring in the elected element with mutual consent but I was quite clear that on this issue there would be much heart-burning and trouble if any attempt was made to bypass it in any way. It had become a vital test for all of us.

B added finally that he had been speaking to me as Chancellor and he was unable to commit himself more because of that in regard to the many matters that we had discussed. He wanted to assure me, however, that all the States were fully aware of the vastness of the issues at stake and of the inevitability of change. In fact they were taking steps towards that end even now. They had already done a big thing by lining up with the demand for India's independence and the elimination of the British. He hoped that we would all avoid argument about details and bickering over relatively small matters and concentrate on the bigger issues which would lead to the greater India of our dream.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Chiklod

Bhopal State

22 April 1946

Deccan States' Union

340

Hubli
18 July 1946

Dear Friend,

As the Deccan States' Union is in active formation, I thought it advisable to place my views before you [see enclosure]. I shall be glad to know your opinion on the subject.

Yours sincerely,
R. R. Diwakar

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

ENCLOSURE

SOME ASPECTS OF THE UNION OF DECCAN STATES

[By R. R. Diwakar]

1. THE BACKGROUND:

The Constituent Assembly includes 93 representatives of States in India, out of a total representation of 389 for the whole of India.

The Cabinet Mission has declared that paramountcy is going to end. The actual words are: It is quite clear that with the attainment of independence by British India, whether inside or outside the British Commonwealth, the relationship which has hitherto existed between the Rulers of the States and the British Crown will no longer be possible. Paramountcy can neither be retained by the British Crown nor transferred to the new Government.

The States are proceeding on the assumption that sovereignty vests in them as soon as the British withdraw from India.

At the same time, all the small States at any rate, have realised that they cannot continue to be independent units in any way and that even for efficient administration on modern lines, they have to combine.

The Standing Committee of the States People's Conference in its meeting at Delhi in September 1946 has laid down that an administrative unit can be efficient only if there is a population of fifty lakhs and a revenue of three crores.

The Chamber of Princes, having realised that small States ought to combine if they want to survive, have made certain recommendations regarding forming unions. The Political Department of the Government of India is of the same opinion and has expressed frankly its opinion through the Residents in the respective States and through Mr. Herbert while he visited the Deccan States.

The Chamber of Princes has appointed a Negotiating Committee to negotiate with the Constituent Assembly (before the entry of the States representatives), with the Congress and the League.

It is yet not definite as to what is going to be the proportion of representation as between the Princes and the people of the States, when State representatives are sent to the Constituent Assembly.

The total population of all the Deccan States is about 2,800,000 and revenue about Rs. 1,60,00,000. Out of the 18 Deccan States, about 12 have now decided to form a Union.

Kolhapur, which is the biggest (about 11,00,000 population), Mudho, Savanur, etc. have not yet decided to join for various reasons.

The uniting States seem to have decided to do so under the guidance of the Political Resident. The meeting of all the uniting Princes was held in Kolhapur under the Presidentship of the Resident. The Dewans met and discussed and have now decided to set up a Constituent Assembly to forge a Union Constitution which is supposed to be based on full responsible government with a Board of Princes at the head. What that Constitution is going to be like is yet to be seen. The Princes and their Dewans are seeking the support of Congress leaders for this plan.

The question is: Should the Congress or its leaders support such a move? Some of the Congress leaders and workers seem to say that since it is a forward step, it should be supported and thus say that since it is bound to come, what is the use of opposing it? Let us try to make the step as progressive as possible.

My humble view is that we should not either consent to it or encourage it. If possible, we should oppose it and see that it does not materialise.

Apparently it is a step forward in the direction of giving more power to the subjects. But, this union should not be viewed from the point of view of immediate gains but from the point of view of long range policy.

My reasons are as follows:

1. All the areas sought to be brought under one administration are not contiguous. There will be a number of islands separated by long stretches of non-union territory.

2. The said areas are not homogeneous. There are Kannada and Marathi populations which properly belong to Karnataka and Maharashtra provinces respectively.

3. The above two difficulties would make it impracticable the plan commonly for the union area.

4. The union territory would be too small both in area and population for any planning on a large and efficient scale. It would have about 17 lakhs of people and at the most a crore of revenue.

The revenue would be saddled with the civil lists or privy purses of a dozen Princes who have been living in high style.

5. The fundamental point is that this union does not take cognisance of the sovereignty of the people. The people have never been consulted so far. Many Praja Mandals have already declared themselves against them.

6. This union, once formed, will come in the way of the natural destiny of the people which lies in merger with the neighbouring linguistic areas and people.

7. This move is sure to consolidate the Princes concerned, though at the same time it is promised that there will be responsible government given to the people. One does not know as to what is the sanction behind this promise and what shape the so-called responsible government will take. While the consolidation of the princes is a certainty, the other part of it, since it is within the gift of the Princes, is yet amorphous and uncertain.

8. Generally the princely order is a reactionary force. Any consolidation of it at this stage is not in the interest of the progress of the nation.

9. It may be that the Indian Constituent Assembly may, after all, come to nothing since there are so many hurdles. Then in those circumstances, this consolidated force would serve imperial interests more efficiently than now.

10. Practically, the whole princely order of India have appointed a negotiations committee for negotiating with the British and the parties in India. Nobody knows the nature of those negotiations. In the meanwhile why this arrangement which is bound to be temporary?

Under any circumstances, it is advisable that the Congress or its leaders do not either consent to or encourage this union or any similar unions in other parts of India. It is a different matter if such unions are formed in spite of our opinion against them.

11. What we ought to press for is simply full responsible government in each State.

Poona
22 July 1946

My dear Sardar,

As advised by you, with Shankarrao Deo¹ I went and met Bapuji in Panchgani on the 20th. My father was also present during our talks regarding the formation of the Deccan States' Union and in particular regarding the convention of the Deccan States peoples to be held at Aundh under the presidentship of Shankarraoji and which we want you to inaugurate.

Bapuji approved of the idea of the peoples' convention which you should guide. Shankarraoji will tell you of the advice Bapuji gave us in the matter of the formation of the Union when he goes to Bombay next week.

After our talks with Bapuji we met some of the Deccan princes and they have decided, on the advice of Shankarraoji, to meet Bapuji during his stay in Poona.

Bapuji has also advised that the princes should attend this convention of the peoples at Aundh. It is most likely that the princes will accept this advice.

In view of all this I feel that it is essential that you come and help us at this most critical moment in the history of the Deccan States. Both from the point of view of the people and the princes I would again urge you to accept our invitation.

With respects,

Yours sincerely,
Apa Pant²

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

¹ Congress leader from Maharashtra; joined non-co-operation movement in 1920; member, AICC and Working Committee; member, CA

² Apasaheb Balasaheb Pant—Prime Minister of Aundh State until its merger with Bombay State in March 1948; member, AICC, 1948; alternate delegate at UN, 1951-52; Commissioner for India in Kenya; successively Ambassador of India in Indonesia, Norway and UAR; now High Commissioner for India in London

Shivaji Nagar
Poona
23 July 1946

Dear Sardarji,

It seems as if we have not met or exchanged views for a long time though only two weeks have passed since the meeting of the AICC in Bombay. As per your advice I with Sjt. Apa Pant had been to Panchgani to see Mahatma Gandhi in connection with the Deccan States' Union and the peoples' convention. I had sent him in advance a copy of the draft constitution of the Union prepared by the Ministers for submission to the princes as well as the copies of the summaries of the conversation which the princes had with Jawaharlalji and yourself. The Raja of Aundh was also present at our meeting. Mahatma Gandhi was not much impressed by the scheme, but was rather opposed to it from his own point of view. I conveyed the gist of our conversation to some of the princes and their representatives. I suggested to them that the princes should see Gandhiji personally and hear from him what he has to say about their scheme. They readily agreed and asked me to arrange for [an] interview. They will see him on the 28th night at 8 o'clock when he returns to Poona from Panchgani.

As for the peoples' convention, Gandhiji liked the idea and told us that it should be held so that peoples' representatives may express their views on the proposed union. He would like the princes to attend the convention, and I think they would most probably do so. Gandhiji has also agreed to your attending the convention and guiding the people on the lines of the Congress policy.

I request you now to give your final consent so that arrangements may be made accordingly. It is high time now that the people got an opportunity to express their views on the scheme. We propose to fix up a date convenient to you in the first week of August. Sjt. Apa Pant has also sent a letter to you in this connection. I am coming to Bombay on the morning of the 27th and shall stay there for two days in connection with the Maharashtra Unification Conference. I shall see you personally

then and talk over the matter in detail. I read in the papers that you were a little indisposed. I hope now you are well.

I am sending this letter as well as Apa's with Sjt. Koranne as the postal strike is still going on.

Yours sincerely,
Shankarrao Deo

Sjt. Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

[RESOLUTION PASSED AT A MEETING OF THE RULERS AND
MINISTERS OF DECCAN STATES]

The meeting of the Rulers and Ministers of the Deccan States, assembled at Poona on 29 July 1946 at which Sjt. Shankarraoji Deo was very kindly present on invitation, resolved that the desirability of forming a Union on the lines proposed in the Ministers' report or on any other lines should be referred to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the All-India States Peoples' Conference, for his advice and suggestions.

It was also resolved that Sjt. Shankarraoji Deo should convey this resolution to Panditji and ascertain his reaction.

N. T. Patwardhan
(Ruler of Miraj Senior)

Malojirao
(Ruler of Phaltan)

J. L. Sathe
(President, Executive Council, Sangli)

Vallabhbhai Patel
Camp, Wardha

Bhawanrao
(Ruler of Aundh)

R. S. Pant Sachiv
(Ruler of Bhor)

V. V. Yargop
(Dewan, Miraj Junior State)

FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE REPRESENTA-
TIVES OF THE PARTICIPATING DECCAN STATES RULERS
(APPOINTED ON 22 MAY 1946 TO MAKE PRELIMINARY
ARRANGEMENTS FOR SETTING UP A CONSTITUTION-
MAKING BODY FOR FRAMING A CONSTITUTION
FOR THE DECCAN STATES' UNION)

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The Deccan States Group, excluding Kolhapur State and the Wadi Estate, consists of 16 States.

The area of the remaining 15 States is 7,323.86 sq. miles; population 15,88,579 persons; and gross revenue about one crore and a half.

They extend from Bhor State in the north-west to Savanur in the south.

They have been enjoying powers of full internal sovereignty from the beginning.

People of these States are, comparatively speaking, more advanced in point of education and political consciousness.

Most of the Deccan States have Legislative Assemblies and other representative institutions.

If the Deccan States wanted a place in the proposed all-India constitutional set-up without losing their individuality altogether, this individuality presupposes not simply the continuation of the ruling families, but also the securing to the people of the States of all the advantages and benefits which are implicit in the personal contact.

To implement these ideas a scheme was proposed to be drawn up based on the fundamental and now generally accepted principles of 'one State one vote' and 'chairmanship of the Board of Rulers by rotation'.

A committee consisting of the representatives of all the Rulers who have agreed to form the Union has been appointed. The committee will draw up a schedule specifying the rights to be reserved to the Rulers of the Union State and of the subjects to be administered by them. The committee will also frame terms of reference for the constitution-making body, and will suggest the procedure to be followed at the various stages of the constitution-making process. The committee has been further asked to go into the question of associating the representatives of the people in a suitable manner with the work of drawing up the constitution and to submit its report to the Rulers by the middle of July. The constitution-making body will be set up immediately afterwards.

343

Asha
Pedder Road
Bombay
15 August 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I hope you remember that you had given me and the other Rulers of the Deccan an interview at the Taj Mahal Hotel on 11 July. That interview was in connection with the Union of Deccan States which we have been proposing to form. After we had the pleasure of meeting you and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, we had a talk with Mahatma Gandhiji on 28 July, the substance of which was published in the Harijan and the Times of

India and might have probably been noticed by you. Panditji has very kindly agreed that I should again see him tomorrow at 10.30 a.m. and it is my earnest desire to see you in the same connection. I am fully conscious how difficult it must be for you and Panditji to spare some time for us at this critical juncture when the Congress is engaged in a task, which must evoke the admiration of the whole country. Mr. Shankarrao Deo might have told you how the progress of our scheme for a Union has been held up for definite and conclusive advice and guidance in the matter.

I should therefore be very grateful if you kindly give me an opportunity to call on you and explain to you the matter further before you leave for Delhi. Any time today or tomorrow will do, as may be convenient to you.

I shall not at all mind if it is not possible for you to give me an interview this time. For, I fully understand how preoccupied you must be.

Please forgive me for troubling you. If you grant me an interview, I shall be accompanied by my Dewan, Rao Bahadur K. V. Godbole.

With assurances of deep regard,

Yours sincerely,
Malojirao
[Ruler of Phaltan]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
68 Marine Drive
Bombay

344

Phaltan
24 August 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I hope you remember that Panditji and you were good enough to grant me and my Dewan, Rao Bahadur K. V. Godbole, separate interviews at Bombay on 16 August. I therefore take the liberty of enclosing herewith, for your information, a copy of the circular letter, dated 17 August which I have addressed to my brother Rulers. I have today sent another copy of it to Panditji also.

2. As you very kindly indicated in the personal interview, I hope to have your and Panditji's written advice in the matter of our proceeding with the formation of the Union of the Deccan States on the lines of the tentative report, a copy of which was presented to you personally.

With assurances of high respect,

Yours sincerely,
Malojirao

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

CIRCULAR LETTER ADDRESSED BY THE RAJA SAHIB OF
PHALTAN TO HIS BROTHER RULERS

17 August 1946

My dear Shrimant Raja Saheb,

You are aware that the Rulers and Representatives after meeting Mahatma Gandhiji on 28 July, had again met together on the next day morning and in response to the wishes of Mahatmaji passed a resolution seeking further advice of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the question of forming the Union of the Deccan States. Since then this question has naturally remained in a status quo position. Like you and the other Rulers I was therefore naturally anxious to know Panditji's reaction to the resolution we had passed, or in the alternative remind him of its urgency, if he had not had time to consider our proposal. Hence, when I heard that Panditji was making a brief stay in Bombay while en route to Delhi from Wardha, I thought of taking a bare chance of meeting him in Bombay. You will appreciate from the published reports of the Congress President's activities in Bombay on 15 and 16 August, the reason why I was rather apprehensive that he might not be able to agree to see me. But—thanks to his extreme courtesy and kindness—he readily agreed, and accordingly I met him on Friday, i.e. yesterday morning. He said that Mr. Shankarrao Deo had presented our resolution of 29 July to him. But he was inclined to think that it would be better if, as Mahatmaji had indicated, full responsible government was first given to the people of each State by its Ruler and then the people asked to form a Union, if they so wished. In reply I explained that this would involve unnecessary delay and that the same results would be achieved by the method which we had in mind especially since in almost all the Deccan States there were Legislative Assemblies, the elected element in which had already been asked to choose the people's representatives for the

constitution-making body, who would occupy a position of predominating majority in that body. It would thus be giving the elected representatives of the States an opportunity to express a considered and authoritative opinion as to whether they would like to have the Union or not. This, I further explained, would perhaps be a better and more methodical way of ascertaining the real wishes of the people. For in their capacity as members of the constitution-making body, they would naturally be in a better position to express the people's view, as they would then be at grips with the important issues involved in the question and also with the best means of solving them. Mere casual and informal consultations with the people of one or even all the States participating in the Union, would hardly be enough to elicit their real view. To elicit that, they must be faced with the responsibility of settling the future fate of their States, as constitution makers. Besides, by inadequate understanding of the opinion expressed by Mahatmaji on this subject, the people are apt to look at our proposal with suspicion. It was also not impossible that the people in the few financially better off States might feel that they should not be deprived of their prosperity by joining the Union; and the general opinion of the people in all the States might further be inclined to think that the prospects which they had in their respective small areas, would be lost, or to a considerable extent minimised, if their States joined the proposed Union. But, as a matter of fact, it could be easily foreseen that within only a few years' time the Union State was bound to prosper and the talent in each area equally certain to receive due recognition. But suspicions and doubts like the above would naturally prevail among people in the absence of responsibility and also of proper knowledge and appreciation of the facts relating to the problem. I therefore queried if it would not be better to give the people an opportunity to express themselves authoritatively through the constitution-making body. They would, of course, be free to include the village community or panchayat system—which is Mahatmaji's favourite theme—in the constitution which they might recommend for the Union State. But I importuned him that in any case, let the proposal be first thoroughly examined before the pronouncement of any judgment on it. I further stated that it had to be borne in mind that our States were too small to be fitted as separate units in the all-India set-up and further that singly they would not be able to meet the ever increasing financial responsibilities.

Another aspect of this question which I explained to Panditji and which was perhaps the most important of all, was this: The union scheme offered a unique opportunity to the people of all the States in the Deccan to get responsible government at one stroke and this was perhaps a great advantage from the people's point of view.

2. On hearing the above points which I made during our meeting, Panditji said that he too thought that there would be no harm in proceeding with

the scheme in the circumstances which I had mentioned. I told him that all progress with the scheme had been held up at present and the position might further deteriorate if the matter was not vigorously pursued. I therefore requested him that I would like to have a written indication of his views, as that would go a long way in allaying the doubts and apprehensions of the people and the Union would then have a chance of being judged only on its merits. To this he agreed; but added that, owing to his very heavy pre-occupations at the moment, he would not be able to write immediately. He would however do so a little later when he was comparatively free. I asked him whether I might remind him of this after a few days, to which he replied that it would be better if that were done.

3. So much then regarding my interview with Panditji. But when proceeding to Bombay, I had one other thing in my mind. It was to meet Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel also in this connection, if possible. You know that we had met and consulted him on 11 July last and sought his advice; and although, like Panditji, he was equally preoccupied, the Sardar Sahib was good enough to agree to meet and hear what I had to say. Sardar Sahib, as you well know, is, like Panditji, a pillar of popular strength and a mirror of their will. You know that he too had evinced great sympathy for our States when we last met him. I therefore explained to him the same points which I had explained to Panditji. Sardar Sahib in reply said that he would consult Panditji and give his considered view after a few days, as at the moment they were both extremely busy.

4. I wanted to approach the two leaders through another important leader and a colleague of theirs, I mean Mr. Shankarraoji Deo, who had helped and intervened on our behalf with Mahatmaji, Panditji and Sardar Patel, to promote a better understanding of our proposal. But on inquiry it was learned that he had gone to Jalgaon and other places and was not expected to be in Bombay on the 15th or 16th instant. Instead, therefore, waiting and doing nothing and losing this opportunity of meeting Panditji and Sardar Patel while they were in Bombay, I met them as stated above and have hastened to give you a full account of our meeting. We are no doubt anxious to hear from Mr. Shankarrao Deo about this matter and I trust he will communicate with us as soon as he returns to Poona. In any case, I would not hazard any guess about the position that might develop until the authoritative view of Pandit Nehru became available.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Malojirao

New Delhi
29 August 1946

My dear Raja Sahib,

I have received your letter of 24th instant along with its enclosure.

After our last meeting at Bombay, I have seen a report in the Press from which it appears that the people of the States concerned have passed a resolution against the proposed formation of the Union of Deccan States. I have not been able to ascertain Panditji's views on the subject but I shall do so at the earliest possible moment. I, however, feel that it would be unwise to do anything against the popular will expressed through the Praja Mandal.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Highness the Raja of Phaltan
Phaltan

Phaltan
14 September 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I have been favoured with a letter dated 8 September from the Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru regarding the question of the Union of Deccan States. I am sure the letter represents the joint views of you both. I can indeed never be too grateful to you for carrying out the assurance which you gave me in my personal visit to you in Bombay on 16 August. The views expressed by Panditji in his letter clearly bear the impress of the joint consultation of you both. I am fully satisfied at the attitude displayed in the letter. I shall now take up the matter with my brother rulers and I feel it will be up to us all to act up to the advice.

I shall never forget the kindness and courtesy which you have shown to me personally. The stress and strain under which all of you have been working for the past few months only heightens our admiration for you.

With renewed thanks and deep respects,

Yours sincerely,
Malojirao

347

Lalgarh
Bikaner
Rajputana
22 July 1946

My dear Sardar Patel,

You will remember the talk we had in Bombay a few days ago on the question of display of the flag of the Indian National Congress in the States by the Praja Parishad workers. I also mentioned to you at the time the settlement arrived at in Mysore State in 1938 between the Government of Mysore and the State Congress through, I understand, the medium of Mahatma Gandhi and yourself, in which you played such a prominent part.

2. I have since then been giving a great deal of thought to this important question, a satisfactory agreement in regard to which will, in my opinion, solve one of the major problems which confront all the States of India and one over which there is so much unpleasantness and conflict between British Indian leaders and States Governments.

3. I earnestly believe that the present state of affairs is actively coming in the way of the establishment of those cordial relations which should exist at this all important juncture between the States and the rest of India, and as a true and patriotic son of our motherland who has the best interests of India at heart, I cannot too strongly urge a speedy settlement of this matter.

4. I enclose a note that has been prepared on the subject which I trust will help to bring out the point of view of the States and successfully go to show that the tricolour flag cannot be taken as a mere party flag and thus may be ignored.

5. As in the case of Mysore State where a special settlement was arrived at, I hope in the case of Bikaner State also you will use your good offices in evolving a satisfactory formula acceptable to

both parties, particularly in view of the recent announcement made by me in regard to constitutional reforms in the State and I sincerely hope that early steps will be taken to arrange a meeting between one or two of the eminent Congress leaders and ourselves.

6. I would at the same time strongly suggest as the best and most speedy way of satisfactorily settling the general question that a committee may be appointed consisting of two or three Congress leaders and a few Ministers of States in order to arrive at a formula which will be mutually acceptable to the parties concerned. Such a committee should, in my view, be appointed as early as possible, as the longer the delay in tackling this question the greater the difficulties which come in the way of its solution.

7. If however you find it possible to take up this question on an all-States basis, it would also be very desirable. I have consulted His Highness the Nawab Sahib of Bhopal, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, and His Highness is in agreement with the view that this question should be discussed and satisfactorily settled.

8. As pointed out by me in our talks, trouble arose over the flag issue at Raisinghnagar in Bikaner State which unfortunately resulted in firing. Moreover on account of the recent unfortunate communal troubles, which happily have now subsided, it has become necessary for my Government to ban all meetings for a period of three weeks in certain parts of the State where trouble is likely to occur. There are indications that not only will attempts be made to break the ban by Praja Parishad workers in regard to meetings, but forcibly to hoist the flag in certain public places or to take it out in procession. In the circumstances, a settlement of this question is all the more urgently called for so as not to compel my Government into taking action for the purpose of ensuring public peace and maintaining law and order.

9. I am making an important speech in the course of the next three or four days dealing with various political problems. I also intend to announce then the release of the political offenders in the State who are undergoing punishment, as I informed you myself I intended to do, so as to bring about a happy atmosphere for ushering in the new reforms and for the proclamation which I propose to issue on 31 August outlining the new constitution.

10. In my speech I propose to advise all concerned in Bikaner not to force the issue of the flag, and I think it would strengthen my hands if I could state that the matter is under consideration

and negotiation with eminent Congress leaders like yourself and that until the matter has been definitely settled nothing should be done by anyone which would in any way aggravate the situation or otherwise create trouble which might come in the way of a settlement being arrived at.

11. I consider it important to state this fact and if you do not wish it I need not take your name or that of anyone else, but can say that the question of the flag is under negotiation and discussion with the political leaders in the highest quarters.

12. I am sending Captain K. P. U. Menon (who was formerly my assistant private secretary and is now Deputy Foreign and Political Secretary to my Government) with this personal letter to you and shall be most grateful if you will kindly let me know whether I may make this announcement either with or without bringing in your name as mentioned above. In view of the urgency of the matter I would much appreciate a reply at your earliest convenience which may kindly be handed over to Captain Menon.

13. As mentioned above, I propose issuing a formal proclamation outlining the new constitution on my birthday on 31 August. Soon after that it will give me the greatest pleasure if you will be able to pay a visit to Bikaner some time in the first week of September when I need hardly say a warm welcome will await you. It will also enable you to see and judge for yourself the real conditions and the most cordial relations which by the grace of God exist between me and my beloved people in spite of the so-called 'tyranny and atrocities' alleged in certain quarters. I do hope that you will be able to come and shall in due course be grateful for an indication of the dates which will be convenient to you.

Yours sincerely,
Sadul Singh

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Home Minister
Govt. of India
New Delhi

New Delhi
24 July 1946

Dear Maharaja Sahib,

Captain Menon has delivered your Highness' letter dated 22nd instant together with its accompaniments. The question of the display of Congress flag by Praja Parishad workers, so far as I know, is not so acute in any other State, but I had gathered from our conversation and from the recent incident of firing that took place in Bikaner that it has assumed such proportion as would give cause for anxiety.

The real question which comes in the way of establishment of cordial relations between the States and their people is the reluctance on the part of most of the States to recognise the fundamental rights or civil liberties and to meet with the people's natural demand for responsible government. This demand has become more incessant and urgent owing to the unequivocal declaration and determination of the British power to withdraw from India. If there could be a settlement on this question between the British Indian leaders and the State Governments, the question of flag would be solved without any difficulty. I believe that efforts should be made to have a solution of this question for all the States. It is true that the conditions in all the States are not uniform and it may not be possible to have a common formula but the general principles applicable to all the States can be easily agreed upon by mutual discussion and then individual questions affecting individual States can be tackled separately.

So far as Bikaner is concerned, the flag question can be easily settled by adoption of the Mysore formula, for the time being till an all-India solution is found at a later stage. If Praja Parishad workers in Bikaner are unwilling to accept that solution, I am prepared to use my influence and induce them to abide by it till the general all-India question is settled.

About your suggestion for the appointment of a committee for settling the general question, it would, I think, be better to wait till the question of representation of the States in the Constituent Assembly is settled with the Negotiating Committee.

I see no objection in your stating that the question is under consideration and negotiation with the Congress leaders and in that connection also making reference to my name as mentioned in para 10 of your letter. I believe with the release of political prisoners and the announcement of granting of responsible government to the people of Bikaner as contemplated by your Highness, the sting of the agitation will disappear and the people will readily accept your advice not to force the issue of the flag or to aggravate the situation or to create any trouble.

I am awaiting with great interest the formal issue of a proclamation outlining the new constitution, which as I have understood from our conversation, is going to give a lead to all the States in India, on your Highness' birthday on 31 August.

I am grateful for your Highness' kind invitation to visit Bikaner in the first week of September, but I am afraid we will all be so very busy in those days with the inauguration of the Constituent Assembly and, I hope, with the formation of Provisional National Government, that it will not be possible for me to accept it. I hope that your Highness will appreciate my difficulty and excuse my inability to accept the invitation, the warmth of which I fully appreciate.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbai Patel

His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner
Lalgarh
Bikaner
Copy to: Mahatma Gandhi

349

Bikaner
1 September 1946

Dear Sardar Patel,

I enclose herewith for your perusal the proclamation issued by His Highness on 31 August announcing the steps we are taking to implement his promise of responsible government. I trust you will find time to read it.

With high esteem,

Yours sincerely,
K. M. Panikkar

Sardar Vallabhbai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

PROCLAMATION BY HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF BIKANER

. . . I feel convinced that the time has now arrived when my beloved people should be entrusted with even greater powers of self-government and further powers and functions could be entrusted to the Assembly.

In pursuance of this belief, I have already, on 21 June last, declared my intention of establishing a form of government which under the aegis of the Ruler will be responsible to the people, thus fully associating them with the administration of the State, within a specified time, taking into due considerations the conditions and circumstances existing in the State.

. . . In order to implement this object I have decided to reconstitute the present Legislative Assembly on a more popular basis with as little delay as possible. The legislature will be elected on a wide and liberal franchise from suitably demarcated territorial and other constituencies. A Constitution Act will be promulgated by me which will provide for the automatic attainment of responsible government. That is to say, it will embody both the transitional and the permanent provisions of the Constitution.

So far as the transitional arrangements are concerned, they should provide for the appointment by me of not less than half the number of Members of my Executive Council from among the elected members of the Legislature, who will be in charge of the following Departments—

- (1) Public Works and Works of Public Utility
- (2) Railway and Civil Aviation
- (3) Electrical and Mechanical Department
- (4) Education
- (5) Medical and Public Health
- (6) Revenue and Irrigation
- (7) Customs and Excise
- (8) Industries, Mines and Minerals
- (9) Local Self-Government
- (10) Rural Uplift and Improvement
- (11) Agriculture
- (12) Co-operative Credit Societies
- (13) Labour Welfare
- (14) Food and Civil Supplies

I have decided that this interim arrangement should not extend beyond a period of three years or the inauguration of the Union of India, whichever is earlier.

At the end of the interim period, the entire Council of Ministers, including the Prime Minister, will be appointed by me from among those enjoying the confidence of the elected legislature.

The functions of the Franchise and Constituencies Committee will be to examine the question of a suitable franchise which will give the right of vote to as large a section of my people as possible, taking into due consideration the circumstances and conditions existing in the State.

. . . It is further my pleasure to direct that the work of the committees shall be completed and the draft constitution should be submitted to me not later than 1 March 1947. It is my intention that the new Legislature should be constituted and the interim government commence to function from not later than November 1947.

Sadul Singh

Lalgarh
Bikaner
31 August 1946

350

New Delhi
7 September 1946

Dear Sardar Panikkar,

I thank you for your letter of the 1st inst. I regret the delay in answering owing to pressure of work.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that you have taken the lead in the matter and I hope that the other Rajputana States will follow suit. His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner deserves congratulations for the bold step he has taken and if the reforms announced are worked in a spirit of goodwill and co-operation, Bikaner will open a new chapter in the history of Indian States.

I thank you for your congratulations and good wishes.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sardar K. M. Panikkar
Prime Minister of Bikaner
Bikaner

Baroda
23 July 1946

Dear Mr. Vallabhbhai,

I had the pleasure of meeting you at Birla House in Delhi and on the strength of it I am taking the liberty of writing to you and sending you a copy of my speech at the Dhara Sabha. I hope you will find time to read it.

I have been endeavouring to work in co-operation [with] the local Praja Mandal, but the members are making it difficult for me. Here is the latest instance.

I introduced a Bill to amend our Income-tax Act, primarily in discharge of our obligation under the convention made with the Government of India and incidentally to find money to balance the budget. The increase is 25% only. I expected that our Praja Mandal members would fight capitalism, and, indeed, the speeches they made were generally in favour of taxing the rich. But, to my surprise, they threw out the first reading of the Bill, in the interest of the capitalists.

I have no option but to certify the Bill.

In fact, my efforts to liberalise the administration are frequently frustrated by the Praja Mandal members. It damps one's ardour.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
B. L. Mitter¹

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

¹ Member, Viceroy's Executive Council; Federal Advocate-General; Dewan of Baroda; acting Governor of West Bengal

New Delhi
29 July 1946

My dear Dewan Sahib,

I have received your letter of the 23rd instant only today, owing to the postal strike.

I am sorry to hear that you are not getting the requisite co-operation in your efforts to liberalise the administration from the Praja Mandal members. I was under the impression that things were going on smoothly in Baroda, particularly because Shri Chhotubhai Sutaria, who is one of the trusted and responsible leaders of the Praja Mandal, happens to be in your council. Now that you have brought this matter to my notice, I will certainly look into the matter and try to be as helpful as possible.

Baroda has got a good opportunity. It has got resources, traditions and materials enough to give a lead to all the States in India at this critical period of our history. It is so surrounded and intermingled with British Gujarat and the general level of the people is so advanced that with goodwill, trust and co-operation, the State can safely start an experiment of full responsible government straightaway and take the credit of being the pioneer State, which, in fact, is in consonance with its past traditions.

My services would be at your disposal, as I am interested in Baroda as one of the ex-presidents of the Baroda Praja Mandal and as one who has numerous friends and relations in Baroda State.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbai Patel

Sir B. L. Mitter
Dewan Sahib of Baroda
Baroda

Kamla Cottage
 Juhu
 Bombay
 20 August 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I think you should see the enclosed letter from B. L. Mitter.

We have every reason to be grateful to Providence to have given us such a unique opportunity to bend our energies for the welfare and re-orientation of the country. But times are difficult and we shall have to develop and tap fresh sources of strength, discipline and clear thinking more than ever. Firm and unflinching action is necessary to ride the storm that has already burst in Calcutta and might burst elsewhere any time in the near future. Action more than eloquence, I should even say reticence, combined with strength, is needed now more than ever, particularly to deal with people who want to disrupt the unity of the country. I do hope our ministries in the provinces won't let themselves be swamped by files and that they would go ahead with their schemes for planning and organising the productive capacity of our people. It is good that you would be at Delhi.

Wishing you all success.

With kindest regards,

I remain,
 Yours sincerely,
 Nanalal
 [N. C. Mehta]¹

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
 Birla House
 Albuquerque Road
 New Delhi

PS.

Just received Vivekanand's new book—Thoughts of Power. He means to say that we must chant the mantra of fearlessness and chivalry.

¹ ICS; Sugar Controller during World War II; Secretary, Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; Minister in Gwalior State for a year

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACTS

Baroda

8 August 1946

My dear N. C.,

I am more and more inclining to the view that civil commotion in India is inevitable. We had recently a communal riot at a small taluka town which had always enjoyed rural peace and prosperity. From personal interviews with both Hindus and Moslems I have formed the following conclusion.

A Moslem's bullock straying into a Hindu's field led to an altercation which eventually developed into a riot.

The former set fire to a Hindu shop and fired two blank shots. The Hindu crowd scattered helter-skelter and hid themselves. The wind carried the fire from shop to shop, but no Hindu would come out to extinguish it. The Moslems saved most of their own shops and houses. When the suba [village headman] arrived on the spot the fire was still raging.

The Hindus' deputation asked me to disarm the Moslems. I promptly refused and administered a sharp rebuke to the cowards and offered to give them arms if they wanted. I said further that if they were willing, I would be prepared to arrange for military training with instruction and equipment. The Hindu deputation then suggested that Government should pay them compensation for the loss and recover the same from the Moslems. I repudiated this as fantastic. Government was not the wrong-doer and thus was not liable to pay damages. The courts were open where they could go for relief. The next request was for posting military guards permanently in the town. I assured them that the military would be there so long as the tension lasted, but after that they must organise their own defence against sudden outbursts which no Government could anticipate.

Yours sincerely,

B. L. Mitter

New Delhi
26 August 1946

My dear Nanalal,

I have received your letter of the 20th inst. The enclosure makes painful reading. If the facts are true, it makes us hang our head in shame. The cowardice of the Hindus in those parts is disgraceful but I am not prepared to absolve the State of its share of responsibility. The present Dewan is new but the traditions of the State have always been to prosecute the Hindus in any quarrel of a communal nature between the Hindus and Muslims, in which the State always takes the side of the Muslims. The police have generally harassed the Hindus by arresting and extorting money on such occasions and therefore they have not taken courage to defend themselves. It is the duty of the State to protect their subjects from such inexcusable intolerance and violence as also train the people in the art of self-defence. It cannot take shelter under the excuse that people are so bad. However, we have to confess that we in Gujarat have a large share of responsibility for this weakness.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri N. C. Mehta
Kamla Cottage
Juhu, Bombay

Baroda
8 September 1946

Dear Sardar Sahib,

I am enclosing a note the significance of which you will appreciate better than any of your colleagues.

The constitution of the States Negotiating Committee in keeping with the Political Department's ideas is represented by the Jam Saheb. Gujarat is completely ignored. And spies of the Political

Department are there. In Gujarat and Kathiawar the department is most active and evidence of the brokerage is to be found in the diamond market of Bombay. I shall give you more facts later.

Yours sincerely,
B. L. Mitter

ENCLOSURE

Now that the Interim Government is in the saddle and the Constituent Assembly is about to be summoned, it may be expedient to note the currents and cross-currents which are running. For the moment, the Muslim League is openly hostile but it is hoped that before long it will join hands with the Congress in framing the Indian Constitution. Outside the Muslim League, all British Indian parties are more or less in line, though with different ideologies. The only other big element is the States.

Regarding the States, it must be realised that paramountcy is still in operation and most of the States are in the clutches of the Political Department. That Department is vigorously angling for service as "the honest broker." Let there be no mistake about it that once the "broker" is engaged, he will not take any instructions from the principal, but will play his own hand. It will be on a par with British trusteeship of India in which the trustee was the first beneficiary. Can any one doubt that the object of the Political Department is to prolong paramountcy as long as it can? It is not enamoured of the Interim Government and it will not be too anxious to contribute to the successful termination of the Constituent Assembly. One method of obstruction is to create a division among the States. Some of the big States with strong governments may defy the Political Officer, but the majority are hypnotised by the department. An instance may be given. There is a move to create a Confederacy of Rajput Rulers in Western India. Most of the Kathiawad and Gujarat Rulers claim Rajput descent. The nucleus is Jamnagar and Cutch. If this move succeeds Baroda, the only advanced State in Western India, will be isolated, and feudalism may have a chance of survival. Some of the smaller States adjoining British India are being threatened with absorption with the latter, if they do not join the Confederacy. Muslim States may form another group. The department has also offered to negotiate revision of treaties with the Interim Government. Let the Interim Government beware of the delaying tactics which such negotiation will involve. The "brokerage" which is being vigorously exacted is a matter for the States concerned. Money made by trading with the enemy or in the black market or in dealings in frozen currency notes, can be and is being freely spent.

New Delhi
11 September 1946

Dear Sir Mitter,

I thank you for your letter of the 8th inst, and your note about the intrigues that are going on in the States through the Political Department. We are all conscious of the obstructionist attitude of this Department and there is need to be ever watchful.

Kathiawar has always been the hotbed of intrigues and I am not surprised to hear about what is happening there.

At present, we are engaged in checkmating the moves of the Muslim League, which is engaged in upsetting all that has happened since the Cabinet Delegation left. It is believed that some of the States are in sympathy with the Muslim League and would like to take advantage of the situation created by the withdrawal of the League from the Constituent Assembly to sabotage the whole scheme. I am not sure whether this is a fact and if so what is the strength of that group.

I shall be glad to hear further from you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sir B. L. Mitter
Baroda

357

TELEGRAM

Trivandrum
10 August 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Member Congress Working Committee
Wardha

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU IS REPORTED TO HAVE STATED AS FOLLOWS IN JUBBULPORE: "THE LOSS OF BRITISH PRESTIGE INTERNATIONALLY AND THE PRESSING DEMAND FOR INDIAN

INDEPENDENCE IN CERTAIN QUARTERS HAVE FORCED THEM (BRITISH) TO GIVE INDEPENDENCE BUT THEY TRY TO MINIMISE IT BY CREATING FRESH KNOTS LIKE THE PRINCES AND THE LEAGUE IN OUR WAY. WE WILL TRY TO UNTIE THESE KNOTS BUT IF THEY PROVE OBSTINATE WE WILL CUT THEM OUT."

YOU ARE PERFECTLY AWARE THAT SUCH AN ALLEGATION IS UNFOUNDED WITH REFERENCE TO THE STATES AND IF SUSPICION AND HOSTILITY MANIFESTED IN THE STATEMENT ARE SHARED BY THE CONGRESS IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR THE STATES FULLY TO PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS. I HOPE THAT THE POSITION WILL BE CLARIFIED AND THAT SUCH STATEMENTS WILL BE AT LEAST SUSPENDED UNTIL THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE FINISHED ONE WAY OR THE OTHER AND I TRUST THAT FRIENDLY RELATIONS WILL BE ESTABLISHED AND MAINTAINED BETWEEN THE CONGRESS AND THE STATES WITHOUT WHICH THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY CANNOT FUNCTION TO ANY PURPOSE. YOU MAY SHOW THIS TELEGRAM TO MAHATMA GANDHI AND PANDIT NEHRU.

C. P. RAMASWAMI [Aiyar]

358

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
15 August 1946

Sir C. P. Ramaswami
Dewan
Trivandrum

REFERENCE YOUR TELEGRAM TENTH PANDIT NEHRU SAID HE HAD GIVEN NO INTERVIEW AT JUBBULPORE AND REPORT WAS INCORRECT. NECESSARY CORRECTION ALREADY PUBLISHED. REGRET YOU DID NOT COME BOMBAY. GOING DELHI SEVENTEENTH. TRUST YOUR ATTITUDE WILL BE HELPFUL.

VALLABHBHAI

359

TELEGRAM

Trivandrum
16 August 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR REASSURING TELEGRAM. SHALL GLADLY COOPERATE WITH THE EFFORTS OF YOURSELF AND PANDIT NEHRU AS ALREADY EMPHASISED BY ME. I SHALL BE IN BOMBAY FROM NINETEENTH TO TWENTYSECOND AUGUST AND HOPE TO MEET YOU ON YOUR RETURN FROM DELHI. BEST REGARDS.

C. P. RAMASWAMI

360

New Delhi
21 August 1946

My dear Sir C. P. Ramaswami,

I have received your telegram of the 16th inst. from Trivandrum assuring me of your co-operation. I had to leave Bombay for Delhi and so we could not meet.

You have seen what is happening in Calcutta. When I sent you the first message from Bombay suggesting our meeting, I had information of such events to take place there and I had in mind certain important questions to discuss with you, which would affect both the Congress and the Indian States, as a result of the League's attitude. But you could not come then. I should like to know whether it would be possible for you to come to Delhi in the near future.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar
Dewan
Trivandrum

367

361

TELEGRAM

Trivandrum
31 August 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

PLEASE ACCEPT MY SINCERE THANKS FOR YOUR LETTER OF TWENTYFIRST INSTANT WHICH HAS JUST REACHED ME BELATEDLY OWING RAILWAY STRIKE. I AM ALSO ANXIOUS TO HAVE FULL DISCUSSIONS WITH YOU AND HOPE MEET YOU IN DELHI WHEN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY MEETS IF NOT EARLIER. SHALL GIVE PREVIOUS INTIMATION OF DATE OF MY ARRIVAL.

BEST REGARDS

C. P. RAMASWAMI

362

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
14 August 1946

Balvantrai Mehta¹
Bhavnagar

YOUR LETTER TENTH. MOHANLAL AND HARILAL CAN COME IF THEY LIKE.

VALLABHBHAI

¹ Founder-members of All India States' Peoples Conference, 1927; General Secretary, AICC; Deputy Chief Minister of Saurashtra; President, The Servant of People Society; Chief Minister, Gujarat; died in plane crash during Indo-Pak war in 1965

368

363

TELEGRAM

Bhavnagar
11 September 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

PARISHAD SECURED TWENTYFOUR SEATS LOST FOUR. TWO RIVALS
BHAVNAGAR CITY THREE RIVALS KUNDARA RURAL THREE
RIVALS MAHUVA RURAL FORFEIT DEPOSITS. OUR RESPECTFUL
FELICITATIONS YOUR ASSUMPTION GREAT RESPONSIBILITY.

BALVANTRAI

364

Samaldas College
Bhavnagar
18 September 1946

Most respected Sardar Vallabhbhai,

I venture to submit the following few lines for your consideration.

For 34 years I have been handling the subjects of politics and economics in Samaldas College, Bhavnagar. As one interested in the closest association of the people with the Raj, I enquired if the Praja Parishad party had any clear policy or a set programme for work in the newly elected Dhara Sabha that is to meet very shortly. I understand that the policy and the programme are to be determined by you as President of Bhavnagar Praja Parishad.

It is, indeed, a happy augury for the working of democratic institutions in Bhavnagar that the Praja Parishad representatives have the benefit of your moderating counsels and constructive statesmanship which the Dhara Sabha will need very much at this juncture. Bhavnagar, as you know, has taken a lead in Kathiawar in the direction of the democratisation of the State. All of us are anxious to see that this experiment is a success. Assuredly, it is in your power to make it a success. In my humble opinion, nothing will contribute to this success more than the spirit

369

of real co-operation which the elected members may now give to the Darbar. This spirit of co-operation may first and foremost take the form of ensuring the financial solvency of the State which has already prepared fairly extensive schemes of welfare functions under the Bhavnagar post-war reconstruction plans. For instance, as chairman of the sub-committee on post-war education scheme, I am asking the Darbar to find Rs. 75 lakhs as capital expenditure and Rs. 8 to 10 lakhs as recurring annual expenditure for carrying out our scheme of free and compulsory primary education along with some arrangement for basic education. We have also schemes for health, nutrition, housing and medical relief etc., all over the State. Bhavnagar has a reputation for financial solvency.

I most respectfully submit that under your able guidance the Praja Parishad may continue to consider this point of sound public finance of Bhavnagar as a sacred trust. Even in this point, their spirit of co-operation will be thoroughly appreciated.

You will forgive me, Sir, for this intrusion. My only reason for thrusting myself on you is that though I am an official—a mere salaried servant of the State—I am second to none in my fervent hope that the Bhavnagar people do realise as their own achievement what I have been teaching for years to my classes in this college.

God forbid that anything happens by way of obstruction which may give to the enemies of democracy an occasion for chuckling!

In all humility,
Your most obedient servant,
(T. K. Shahani)
Principal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Home Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
21 September 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 18th instant.

It is not possible for me to determine the policy and programme of the Praja Parishad from this distance, but occasionally the Praja Parishad takes my advice. In all States where I am connected, I am trying my best to divert the activities of the people to constructive channels, but it is unfortunate that little co-operation comes from the States concerned. I am particularly interested in Bhavnagar because the late Sir Prabhashankar Patni was my personal friend and we had common interest in the welfare of the State. As ex-president of the Kathiawar Rajkiya Parishad and as ex-president of the Bhavnagar Praja Parishad, I am naturally interested in seeing that Bhavnagar would lead the other States in Kathiawar which are traditionally backward.

Bhavnagar is no doubt solvent. It is a fortunate circumstance that the Darbar puts no difficulties in the way of the progress of the State, but that is only a negative thing. If you could induce the Darbar to spend the amount suggested by you for the welfare of the State for the constructive schemes of compulsory education and arrangement for basic education as also for the other schemes mentioned in your letter, it would indeed be very good. But mere beneficial activities do not satisfy people's crave for freedom, and unless the State succeeds in enlisting the sympathy and co-operation of the people in the execution of these schemes, the efforts of the State would not yield the desired result. My part will be, you may rest assured, to help the State as well as the people.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

T. K. Shahani Esq.
Principal
Samaldas College
Bhavnagar

The Mysore Congress
Cottonpet
Bangalore City
8 September 1946

Dear Sardarji,

Sjt. K. Changalaraya Reddy, the newly-elected president of the Mysore Congress, myself and one or two other friends will be at Delhi between the 19th and 25th instant. We want to interview Bapuji, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, yourself and Babu Rajendra Prasad to discuss the several problems facing Mysore. You know our problems thoroughly well. The annual session of the Mysore Congress will be held at Bangalore during the middle of next month when we will have to decide on the steps we have to take in furtherance of our political objectives. We want your advice and guidance.

I therefore request that you may be pleased to spare half an hour for us on any day between the 20th and 25th instant at any time convenient to you. We will ascertain the time fixed from your secretary on reaching Delhi. I hope that in spite of heavy pressure of work you will kindly spare us this half an hour.

Yours sincerely,
[S.] Nijalingappa
President

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

Mysore Congress
Camp Mysore City
3 October 1946

Dear Sardarji,

The new Dewan of Mysore, Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, has expressed himself in his opening address to the Representative Assembly on 30 September. A copy of his address is enclosed. Apart from other problems, the reactionary attitude of Sir

Mudaliar and of the Government of Mysore so far as the people's political demand for responsible government is concerned is clear from the last three paragraphs of part 1 (pages 10 and 11) of the said address.

The working committee of the Mysore Congress was in session at the time and passed a resolution expressing their reaction to the address. I have enclosed a copy of the resolution for your consideration. It will certainly interest you to note that all the bills that the Government placed before the Assembly have been thrown out on the ground that the present Ministry has not the confidence of the legislature.

Yours sincerely,
S. Nijalingappa

ENCLOSURE I

EXTRACT FROM THE ADDRESS OF THE DEWAN OF MYSORE TO THE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Members of the Representative Assembly, I have so far dealt with various social and economic problems which concern the citizen and the proper solution of which will promote his prosperity and ultimate happiness. I am not however unaware of the fact that there are some members who are much more keenly interested in what may be termed "political problems" and who perhaps believe that the solution contemplated by them for such problems is the real panacea for all the ills that people are suffering from. I have no desire to canvass such views. But I should be failing in my duty if I did not refer to some aspects of the question as they strike me even at this stage.

There has been an undue insistence in some quarters on parallelism in changes in an Indian State like Mysore and in British Indian provinces. It is as well that we should realise the differences that exist and are inevitable in these two areas partly on historical grounds and partly from the present set of circumstances. The problems that exist in British India may not, and often are not, the same as in Mysore. The passions that have been aroused there may not find equal justification in this State. The insistence on similarity and the raising of slogans and catch words which lose their real significance, and certainly their potency, in the atmosphere of Mysore may perhaps lead us further from that increased association of the representatives of the people with the Government in the administration of the State which successive Rulers have stated to be their cherished and declared policy.

I venture to make an earnest appeal to all good citizens to rally round the Throne and the Person of the Ruler, and in loyalty to him, work for the welfare

of all sections of the people. The conditions prevalent elsewhere, the troubled and anxious times through which many are passing, the general spirit of restlessness which is so widespread, give some indication of what is required of all such citizens in this State. It is not by intemperate language or incitements to lawlessness that progress can be attained. They are the greatest obstacles to the achievement of any orderly and progressive administration. And when those who are responsible for such activities find themselves translated to spheres of responsibility, these very activities will form a boomerang. I venture to suggest in all modesty that what is most required is the cultivation of a spirit of tolerance, a disposition to appreciate the point of view of those who hold opinions different to one's own and above all a catholicity of spirit and outlook which marks the real lover of his country and the true nationalist. When such an atmosphere is created, as I trust it may soon be, when each of us observes, in spirit even more than by the letter, the oath of loyalty we have sworn to the gracious Ruler of our State, when the good of the people is placed above all other considerations, there will exist those conditions which will enable the declared policy of our Ruler to be steadily pursued. And in the meanwhile may we all so act and serve that that day may be hastened, and that the State of Mysore may play a great and leading part in shaping the destinies of greater India.

ENCLOSURE II

RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE MYSORE CONGRESS AT ITS MEETING HELD ON 29 AND 30 SEPTEMBER 1946

Bangalore City
4 October 1946

The Working Committee has reviewed the present political situation in the State in the context of the recent political developments in India and is of opinion that the Government of Mysore continue to be wooden and unresponsive to the just demands of the people.

The Working Committee holds that the present Government which is not responsible to the legislature is incapable of satisfactorily tackling the manifold complex problems facing the country particularly the food problem. The recent speech of the Dewan before the Representative Assembly, far from allaying the apprehensions of the people, tends to accentuate dissatisfaction and unrest. The Working Committee is of the emphatic opinion that the said speech, while utterly lacking in constructive proposals, is reactionary and retrograde and feels that it holds out a veiled challenge and threat to those who are engaged in the establishment of responsible government under the aegis of His Highness.

Under the circumstances, the Working Committee is compelled to come to the conclusion that a struggle involving considerable suffering and sacrifice has become necessary and inevitable for the realisation of responsible government.

The Working Committee will consider further at its next meeting the definite policy and programme to be adopted in this behalf and place the same before the ensuing open session of the Congress for decision.

K. R. Madhava Rao
Joint Secretary

368

New Delhi
10 October 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 3rd instant with its enclosures.

I am not surprised at what you have written about your new Dewan. Mysore began to appreciate Sir Mirza Ismail after he left. It is now beginning to appreciate Sir Madhav Rau¹ after he has left. So in every change of administration you are getting the worst of it, in spite of progress outside Mysore. India is making rapid strides towards independence, but there is no sign of it anywhere in the States. Mysore is no exception.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri S. Nijalingappa
Camp Mysore City

369

TELEGRAM

Alwar
30 August 1946

Sardar Patel
New Delhi

HORRIBLE SCENES PUBLIC BEATEN TERRIBLY. CITY OBSERVING HARTAL FOR SEVEN DAYS. SITUATION CRITICAL INHUMAN BRUTAL TREATMENT OF STATE AUTHORITIES INTOLERABLE. CHILLIES AND LATHIS FORCIBLY THIRUST INTO RECTUM SEVERAL MEN LYING UNCONSCIOUS. PRAY INTERVENE IMMEDIATELY.

ALWAR PUBLIC

¹ Prime Minister of Mysore State

SARDAR PATEL'S MESSAGE TO SHRI E. ELWANDRA WARRIER,
PRESIDENT, COCHIN STATE PRAJA MANDAL

Camp: New Delhi

25 August 1946

The Maharaja of Cochin has given the lead to all the Indian States by his unequivocal declarations in favour of responsible government and the granting of very wide powers to the Ministers immediately, for which he deserves to be congratulated. The Praja Mandal of Cochin representing the people of the State has got a unique opportunity to exploit to the fullest extent the generous offer which has been made to them and of demonstrating to the other States how easily the transfer from autocratic rule to responsible government can be effected by co-operation and goodwill between the Ruler and his people. I would advise the Praja Mandal to unhesitatingly offer its full co-operation by taking over as many departments as may be transferred immediately as well as in the work of drawing up a new constitution wherein responsible government is fully provided for.

TELEGRAM

Ernakulam

9 September 1946

Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

COALITION MINISTRY FORMED COCHIN WITH TWO PRAJAMANDAL
ONE SOCIALIST AND ONE PROGRESSIVE PARTY MEMBERS. PRAY
BLESSINGS.

PRESIDENT, COCHIN STATE PRAJAMANDAL

New Delhi
11 September 1946

Dear Friend,

I have your telegram of the 9th inst., and I congratulate you for the formation of a Coalition Ministry with the Praja Mandal, Socialist and progressive parties. If you will discharge your duty with unity of purpose and solely with a view to do good to the people of Cochin, I have no doubt that Cochin will have the honour of leading the other Indian States.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The President
Cochin State Praja Mandal
Ernakulam

Bikaner House
New Delhi
12 September 1946

Pujya Sardarji,

As suggested by your honour in course of today's interview, I am enclosing herewith copies of correspondence between the Resident and myself.

I should like to draw your kind attention to a statement in para 4 of the Resident's letter of 30 January to the effect that it would be impossible for the Crown Representative to fulfil his responsibility of the introduction of the reforms that I had myself announced so long as I was in Rewa.

Surprising as it may sound that my own presence would have created any difficulty in the introduction of those very reforms which I had myself proclaimed, suffice it to say that the responsible government as granted by me still remains unimplemented and in spite of my enforced absence from my hearth and home for the last 10 months. However, I assure your honour here and

now that my presence in Rewa would cause no impediment in the establishment of full responsible government as I had already granted to my people on the occasion of Dussehra last year.

I now draw your kind attention to paras 2&3 of my letter of 30 March in which I had extended a voluntary assurance to the effect that I was a friend and well-wisher not only of Rewa but also of other Indian States and British India and I can have nothing but the best of good wishes for them all.

I have patiently borne all the inflictions that have been heaped upon me regarding which I have never felt myself as being deserving of any of these hardships. However, to say the least, I see no reason why my entry into any of the Congress provinces, i.e. UP, CP or Bihar should be banned. Bans and restrictions of different kinds and on different people have been removed already and I therefore feel there is no reason why my case need be treated as an exception any longer.

Realising full well how busy Your Honour must be in other more important affairs, I close my letter and thank you very much for your kindness in granting me an interview even during such a busy period.

With best of regards & respects,

Yours sincerely,
Gulab Singh¹

374

Camp Meerut
22 Luker Road
Allahabad
25 September 1946

My dear Puja Vallabhbai,

I am writing this letter to you in connection with my yesterday's talks regarding Rewa.

You know that the Baghelkhand Congress Committee has been working in Rewa for the last 15 years. Now the Rewa Government have set up a constitution committee to advise the Government to what extent popular elements may be introduced in the administration of the State. They have nominated three Congressmen to work on the committee. In addition to this His

¹ Maharaja of Rewa in Vindhya Pradesh, now a part of Madhya Pradesh

Highness the Maharaja has decided to form an Interim Govt., under which he wants the constitution committee to work and elections to be held. For the Interim Government he will invite the Baghelkhand Congress Committee to nominate their nominees to hold ministerial posts.

The recent Wardha resolution of your All India Congress Working Committee has debarred Congress organisations from taking part in political and parliamentary activities. There was no Praja Mandal upto now. After the said resolution a Praja Mandal has just been set up by those who have been so long opposing Congress activities in the State.

You will agree with me, I hope, that it is neither possible nor is it in the interest of the people of the State to let this newly formed Praja Mandal to represent and function on behalf of the people of the State. And, therefore, I request you to kindly permit the Baghelkhand Congress Committee to participate in the constitution-making body and form an Interim Govt., if so desired, in any State within its jurisdiction.

An immediate reply is solicited because the announcement will be made by the Rewa Govt. on 5 October 1946.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Narmada Prasad Singh

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

375

New Delhi
26 September 1946

My dear Narmada Prasad Singh,

I have received your letter of the 25th instant. I have spoken to the General Secretary of the AICC (Mr. Keskar), and it is agreed that where the Congress organisation is strong and is functioning, no new Praja Mandal or other organisations that may arise should be recognised in the States, and instructions will be issued accordingly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sardar Narmada Prasad Singh
Allahabad

Govind Nivas Palace
Datia, CI
14 November 1946

My dear Sardar Patel,

I am taking the liberty of writing this letter to you as I find myself in difficulties with the Political Department for no fault of my own. Sir Walter Campbell, the Resident at Indore, wants to strike me just because the Dewan, Khan Bahadur Ainuddin, who had been thrust on me in 1943 against my protests happens to be a very hot favourite of Sir Walter. Sir Walter when he came to India as a young civilian had his training with Mr. Ainuddin who was then a deputy magistrate in the UP and who did the famous Kakori case.

The recent trouble arose on account of the fact that on the Diwali night some temples in the State were desecrated by some mischief-mongers. The public suspected some of those Mohamedan employees of the State who had been brought by Ainuddin from outside. The public asked the Dewan to dismiss them and on his refusal to do so the public suspected that the Dewan wanted to encourage them and shield them. More so as the Dewan had asked them to start a branch of the League in Datia and had himself contributed in it.

The public went on strike and most of the Hindu officials sent in their resignations. The Political Agent, Mr. Egerton, was sent to Datia and he openly accused me of giving encouragement to the public. He wanted the strike to be called off while the people demanded that the Dewan be sent out first and the hartal will be called off then.

My personal Adviser, Mr. B. B. Tawakley, an advocate of Delhi, was able to bring about a settlement by which the Dewan agreed to resign if he was paid one year's gratuity and three months' leave on full pay. I agreed to it and further ordered that he would be appointed as my adviser on Rs. 500 per month. It was, therefore, announced with the full concurrence of the Political Agent that the Dewan would go away and the Crown Police which had been sent for would also be asked to go away and that no

victimisation would take place. On this announcement the hartal was called off and people returned to their work. The Agent also went away on knowing that everything was so peacefully settled.

The misfortune of the whole thing is that Sir Walter Campbell, the Resident, does not care for the wishes or well-being of my subjects and wants to favour his own man and thereby thrust a Muslim Dewan in a Hindu State against the wishes of all. He has set this settlement aside and when he came here on 11 November, he scolded me and said that the Dewan would not go but that my powers would be taken away and if the strike was not called off by the 15th he would send me out of the State. Immediately on his arrival the Resident ordered the withdrawal of the State forces. A lathi charge was also made and many people were injured. People again got infuriated and resorted to hartal, the only weapon in their hands, to show their resentment. All Hindu officers sent in their resignations again.

Indiscriminate arrests have since been made and children have been sent out miles away from Datia and left in the forest at the mercy of the wild animals and the weather. People are suffering great trouble and misery for the sake of one man and for the sake of the prestige of the Bara Sahib.

At this old age I am insulted in all manner and my wife, the Maharani, has been accused of meeting with people and inciting them to so-called lawlessness. The Maharani is a purdanashin lady and is not capable of inciting any one in any manner.

I look to you for help and succour in this hour of my distress. I may tell you that there is no Hindu-Muslim tension in my State so far and Muslims of Datia have joined the Hindus in their condemnation of the highhanded actions of the Dewan.

I have also written about this to the Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh and I am sure he will come in touch with you.

With my kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Maharaja of Datia

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Home Member
Government of India
New Delhi

New Delhi
20 November 1946

My dear Maharaja Sahib,

Many thanks for your letter of the 14th instant.

I fully appreciate, and sympathise with, your difficulties, but the matter concerns the Political Department and I am afraid we have very little to do with that department. Nevertheless, we shall try to do what we can, and have already taken some action.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

H. H. the Maharaja of Datia
Govind Nivas Palace
Datia, CI

Govind Nivas Palace
Datia, CI
14 December 1946

My dear Sardar Patel,

I am glad to inform you that the Datia affair has been settled and things are assuming normal shape. I am extremely grateful to you for the timely help and assistance rendered by you in my difficulties. You must have read in the papers that I have formed a Council and have given representation to my people in the administration of the State. I propose to appoint a committee very shortly to frame an Act for the future government of my State. I am sure you will always guide me in the future destinies of my people.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Maharaja of Datia

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

[By *Walter Mason*, APA Staff Correspondent]

New Delhi, 9 May—(APA) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel declared today that the current British policy of “remaining neutral but holding power is a way of propagating civil war”, and asserted that India’s political impasse would be broken at once if power were transferred to the Central Government “as it now stands.”

The Home, Information and Broadcasting Member said in an interview that functioning of India’s Interim Government as a Dominion Government “with the Viceroy standing out” would have two immediate results.

1. “There would be peace in the country within a week. Those who commit acts of violence do so because they feel there is no strong Central power to check them. With dominion functions, the Central Government would form a strong centre and would have the necessary power to put down disorder.”
2. “Lacking interference by a third party to whom either side could appeal, the Congress and the Muslim League would settle their differences at once. If there were conflicts in the Cabinet over any question, the majority would rule.”

Particular significance was attached to Sardar Patel’s statement in the light of a reliable report that the Viceroy had sent word to His Majesty’s Government that some action must be taken quickly in India to avoid a situation “no one could control,” and in view of Mahatma Gandhi’s recently reiterated opposition to a division of India.

Sardar Patel did not predict what type of settlement might be expected between the League and the Congress over the issue of Pakistan if such a step were taken by the British Government. However, he said the Congress would not coerce any unwilling group or area.

He did say that Section 93 “would vanish in the Punjab” and the Congress and the League would agree, possibly to a Coalition Government.

In the North-West Frontier Province, where the League has carried on an agitation against the Congress Ministry for more than two months, Sardar Patel said, “The Ministry would remain. The election only last year was fought on the issue of Pakistan and the Congress won.”

Sardar Patel characterized the present situation in India as serious and said one of the grave problems was that of private armies now being raised and equipped.

As an alternative in the event the British decided India must be divided, Sardar Patel suggested that power be transferred to the Constituent Assemblies, saying the Muslim League already has a separate Constituent Assembly in the members elected to the Assembly they have consistently boycotted.

"The other way is much easier," he added. "Transfer of power to the Central Government, let the Viceroy stand out and not interfere. Then you have a strong Centre which would be capable of dealing with the problems facing the country, particularly in such places as the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province. Immediately there would be peace in the country."

Sardar Patel reiterated that the Congress stands for the 16 May statement "in toto" and "in spite of its weakness, the Congress would like to have a strong Centre . . . apart from external troubles. It is absolutely essential that there be a strong army and for defence, a strong Central Government.

"The Congress position always has been that it will not coerce any group or area which does not want to remain. At the same time it will not be coerced by any group or community. The Congress has accepted that principle since the Cripps talks in 1942.

"Therefore, if the Muslim League insists that it wants separation then the Congress will not compel them to remain by force. But it will result in dividing Bengal and Punjab. If Bengal and Punjab provinces as they stand today were put into Pakistan, coercion could come in. Non-Muslims would be forced into Pakistan and there would be a civil war.

"Therefore if the League insists on partition of India, the same grounds on which it insists on partition apply in the Pakistan areas."

Sardar Patel remarked that "it is a dangerous game that Mr. Jinnah is playing," pointing out that separation of Burma from India required two years. "And we had nothing in common, no common army, no mixture of communities as we have in India," he added.

He predicted it would take a long time, perhaps years, to divide the Indian Army, let alone separate communications, railroads and similar interlocking services spanning India.

Of the Muslim League President Sardar Patel said that except for the League's temporary acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan Mr. Jinnah's position has remained the same.

"We asked him to refer the question to the United Nations Organisation," Sardar Patel said. "He said no. We asked him to arbitrate. He said no."

APPENDIX TWO

MEMORANDUM PRESENTED BY THE CABINET MISSION TO HIS HIGHNESS THE CHANCELLOR OF THE CHAMBER OF PRINCES ON STATES' TREATIES AND PARAMOUNTCY ON 12 MAY 1946

1. Prior to the recent statement of the British Prime Minister in the House of Commons an assurance was given to the Princes that there was no intention on the part of the Crown to initiate any change in their relationship with the Crown or the rights guaranteed by their treaties and engagements without their consent. It was at the same time stated that the Princes' consent to any changes which might emerge as a result of negotiations would not unreasonably be withheld. The Chamber of Princes has since confirmed that the Indian States fully share the general desire in the country for the immediate attainment by India of her full stature. His Majesty's Government have now declared that if the succession Government or Governments in British India desire independence, no obstacle would be placed in their way. The effect of these announcements is that all those concerned with the future of India wish her to attain a position of independence within or without the British Commonwealth. The Delegation have come here to assist in resolving the difficulties which stand in the way of India fulfilling this wish.
2. During the interim period, which must elapse before the coming into operation of a new constitutional structure under which British India will be independent or fully self-governing, paramountcy will remain in operation. But the British Government could not and will not in any circumstances transfer paramountcy to an Indian Government.
3. In the meanwhile, the Indian States are in a position to play an important part in the formulation of the new constitutional structure for India, and His Majesty's Government have been informed by the Indian States that they desire, in their own interests and in the interests of India as a whole, both to make their contribution to the framing of the structure, and to take their due place in it when it is completed. In order to facilitate this they will doubtless strengthen their position by doing everything possible to ensure that their administrations conform to the highest standard. Where adequate standards cannot be achieved within the existing resources of the State they will no doubt arrange in suitable cases to form or join administrative units large enough to enable them to be fitted into the constitutional structure. It will also strengthen the position of States during this formulative period if the various Governments which have not already done so take active steps to place themselves in close

and constant touch with public opinion in their State by means of representative institutions.

4. During the interim period it will be necessary for the States to conduct negotiations with British India in regard to the future regulation of matters of common concern, especially in the economic and financial field. Such negotiations, which will be necessary whether the States desire to participate in the new Indian constitutional structure or not, will occupy a considerable period of time, and since some of these negotiations may well be incomplete when the new structure comes into being, it will, in order to avoid administrative difficulties, be necessary to arrive at an understanding between the States and those likely to control the succession Government or Governments that for a period of time the then existing arrangements as to these matters of common concern should continue until the new agreements are completed. In this matter, the British Government and the Crown Representative will lend such assistance as they can should it be so desired.

5. When a new fully self-governing or independent Government or Governments come into being in British India, His Majesty's Government's influence with these Governments will not be such as to enable them to carry out the obligations of paramountcy. Moreover, they cannot contemplate that British troops would be retained in India for this purpose. Thus, as a logical sequence and in view of the desires expressed to them on behalf of the Indian States, His Majesty's Government will cease to exercise the powers of paramountcy. This means that the rights of the States which flow from their relationship to the Crown will no longer exist and that all the rights surrendered by the States to the paramount power will return to the States. Political arrangements between the States on the one side and the British Crown and British India on the other will thus be brought to an end. The void will have to be filled either by the States entering into a federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments in British India, or failing this, entering into particular political arrangements with it or them.

NOTE: The following explanatory note was issued by the Cabinet Mission in New Delhi on the date of publication (22 May 1946):

The Cabinet Delegation desire to make it clear that the document issued today entitled "Memorandum on States' Treaties and Paramountcy presented by the Cabinet Delegation to His Highness the Chancellor of Princes" was drawn up before the Mission began its discussions with party leaders and represented the substance of what they communicated to the representatives of the States at their first interviews with the Mission. This is the explanation of the use of the words 'Succession Government or Governments [in] British India' an expression which would not of course have been used after the issue of the Delegation's recent statement.

INDEX

- ABDUL MUTALIB, Assam Minister, 194
Abdullah, Sheikh, 75
Abell, G.E.B., Private Secretary to the Viceroy, 172, 289, 294, 299, 308
Achyutananda, 145
Ahmed, Shafaat, attack on, 83
AITUC, 54
Akalis, 82
Alan, Dr., Sh. Mohammad, 83
Ali Khan, Mir Bunde, 104
Ali, Mir Ghulam, Sind Home Minister 104, 114
Ali Nausher, 179
All India Radio, 161
All-India States Peoples' Conference, 41
Ambedkarites, are conducting so-called satyagraha, 161; their junction with Muslims, 161
Andhra Ministry, 25
Aney, M.S., willing to come to Constituent Assembly, 151
Asaf Ali, 212
Assam Valley, 193
August Atrocity Inquiry Committee, 155
August Revolution, 155
Avari, his fast, 150
Azad, Abul Kalam, 4, 8, 9, 12, 17, 21, 38, 58, 59, 64, 78, 80, 85, 86, 118, 193-96; approves of giving share to Muslim League in Assam Ministry, 197; meets Sir Muhammad Saadullah, 196
- BALDEO SINGH, S., 77
Baluchistan, 106, 107
Banerji, Shibnath, 64
Bardoloi, Gopinath, Assam Chief Minister, 58, 297-99; writes to Sardar Patel about Joint Parliamentary Committee of Bengal and Assam, 194-96
Basant Babu, in Assam Ministry, 194
Bengal famine, 179
Bengal Governor, does not act during period of Bengal terror, 182
Bengal Ministry, 178-81
Betul Jail, 156
Bhabha, C. H., 38
Bhargava, Dr. Gopichand, 76, 79, 81, 86, 89
Bhopal State, 333-39
Bihar, its Communal disturbances, 166-70
Bihar Government, its action not swift & effective, 169
Bihar Ministry, 165, 166, 171
Bikaner Maharaja, 352-58
Birla, G. D., 178; offers Rs. 50 per man p.m. for relief during Bengal anarchy, 187
Black market, 165
Bombay Ministry, 138
Bose, Sarat Chandra, 149, 224, 237-40; his thoughts on Calcutta situation, 177-78
Bowman, A. I., his letter on Bengal atrocities, 185-86
Bretton Woods Agreements, 210-12, 219-21
British Cabinet Mission, comes to India, 58
British Delegation, 22

- Broadcasting station, for Nagpur, 162, 163; for Orissa, 148
- Budget demands, 97
- Bux Haji Maula, 94, 118, 120, 133, 134, 135, 139
- Bux Pir Illahi, Sind Revenue Minister 104, 114
- CABINET MISSION, 4, 99, 105, 107, 108, 153, 242-51
- Calcutta, its "great killing", 168, 182, 184; passes through an unparalleled ordeal, 177
- Central CID, should be allowed to continue, 162, 163
- Central Election Board, 66
- Charkhas, their manufacture, 43
- Chaudhry Krishnagopal Dutt, 81
- Chimur-Ashthi case, 98
- Christian community, favours joint electorates, 51
- Coalition government, 292-326
- Coalition Ministry, 178
- Coalition Party, 94, 102, 110
- Cochin State Praja Mandal, 376-77
- Colville, John, 318-22
- Commissionership, its abolition, 162, 163
- Communal riots, in Orissa, 146
- Communal trouble, 114, 181
- Communists, 33, 55, 64
- Congress, accepts Constituent Assembly proposals, 109; its prestige, 111; its representation in Interim Government, 107
- Congress High Command, 24, 99, 157
- Congress ideology, 126
- Congress Manifesto, 196
- Congress Ministry, 23, 120
- Congress Working Committee, 20, 21, 26, 27, 34, 40, 152-53
- Constituent Assembly, 32, 33, 38, 39, 54, 55, 72, 77, 78, 82, 90, 105-07, 109, 111, 112, 134, 142-44, 147, 150, 151, 154, 155, 190, 198
- Constructive work, 146
- Cripps Mission, 100
- Cripps, Sir Stafford, 38, 40, 99, 181-82, 247, 301, 313-16; impressed by the way in which Indian team is tackling Bengal situation, 184
- DAS, SARANGADHAR, proposes to resign from Orissa Assembly, 147
- Datia Maharaj, 382
- Davis Godfrey, Chief Justice of Sind, 96
- Dawn, 86, 89, 90
- Dearness allowance, 64
- Deccan States, their union, 340-42, 345-46
- Democracy, has a right to go wrong, 8, 105
- Deo, Shankarrao, 66
- Desai, Khandubhai, 54, 63, 66
- Desai, Morarji, 74
- Dewan Chamanlal, 80
- Dharmadhikari, Dada, 155, 156
- Direct Action Day, 41, 177-78
- Diwakar R. R., 63
- EAST BENGAL, about a lakh refugees in—, 176; forcible conversion of a large number of Hindus to Islam, 169; hunting ground of worst communal passion, 183; in great hardships, 182-84
- Educative propaganda, 149
- Elections, in local boards, 21, 22; malpractices in Sind—, 136-37
- Estates Land Act, 56
- European Group, 100

- Europeans, propose to be neutral on motion of no-confidence against Bengal Ministry, 178
- Evacuees, in Bihar, 174
- Excluded areas, 145
- FANATICISM**, 114
- Forward Blockists, 152
- GADGIL**, N. V., 216-22
- Gandhiji, (*passim*), his advice has been disregarded by Andhra Congress, 26; his letter to Pandit Jawaharlal regarding Bihar disturbances, 166-67; resorts to partial fast for Bihar, 167
- Gandhian philosophy, 152
- Gandhian school, 154, 155
- Gazder, 97
- Ghansyam Jethanand, 104, 109
- Gidwani, Dr. Choithram, 94, 115, 120; suggests independent inquiry of Karachi disturbances, 205-06
- Gidwani, Vatanmal, 127; his suggestions to Sardar Patel regarding elections, 126
- Gill, Niranjan Singh, 75, 187, 188, 189; opens relief operations in E. Bengal & other places, 189, 190
- Ginwala, 162
- Giri, V. V., 6-13, 16, 18, 23, 67; replies Sardar Patel regarding nominations, 26-28
- Goa Movement, 41
- Gokhale, secretary to the Department of Works, Mines & Power, 148, 149
- Goonda Act, 161
- Goondalism, 138, 185
- Gour, Sir Hari Singh, 72
- Government of India Act, 110, 111
- Groups, their formation, 105, 106, 107, 109
- Gupta, Deshbandhu, 86
- Gurkhas, to be employed in Bombay, 203
- HARIJANS**, 53; their temple entry, 22
- Hemandas, Dr., 102
- Hindu Mahasabha, 165, 168
- Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh, 66, 68
- Hirakud Dam, 148, 149
- Home Department, 91
- Huq, A. K. Fazlul, 179
- Hurs, 119, 120
- Hussain, Sir Ghulam, 97, 100, 103, 133
- Hydari, Sir, Akbar, 148
- INDIAN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**, does not want separate electorates, 50-51
- Indian Independence League, 200
- Indian National Army, 200; employment of its personnel, 203-04
- Indian National Government, 83
- Indian States, ferment in, 327-82
- Industrial planning, 70
- Industries, their nationalization, 70, 71
- Interim Government, 20, 83, 105, 107, 108, 148, 160, 180, 183; its proposals, 142-43, 242-91
- Irrigation schemes, 110
- JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM**, 104, 105, 112, 113; his letter to Sardar Patel, 138-40
- Jayakar, M. R., 145
- Jinnah, 21, 81, 82, 87-88, 100, 103, 105, 133, 134, 178, 182; his talk of transfer of population, 174

- John, V. K., is against separate electorates & proselytization, 50, 53
- Joint Parliamentary Committee, of Assam & Bengal, 195
- Joint responsibility, 47
- Joshi, N. M., wants to stand for Constituent Assembly, 32-33
- KAK, Prime Minister of Kashmir, 74
- Kalappa, V. R., 55
- Kamaraj, 22
- Kamath, 151, 155
- Karachi disturbances, 205-06
- Kashmir, 103, 154; is part of Indian Empire, 41
- Kaur, Raj Kumari Amrit, 151, 290-91
- Khadi Scheme, 43
- Khan, Abdul Gaffar Khan, 59, 60
- Khan, K. B. Fazal Mohd., 110
- Khan, K. S., Sardar, 110
- Khan, Liaquat Ali, 89, 90, 130, 213
- Khan Sahib, Dr., 58, 59, 60
- Khan, Sir Shafaat Ahmed, ardent believer in Common Hindu-Muslim culture, 158-60
- Khanna, Mehrchand, Finance Minister to NWFP Government, 58-60, 206-07; informs Sardar Patel about election petitions in NWFP, 60-61; requests Sardar Patel to send some money for elections, 62
- Khedgikar, 63, 64, 68
- Kher, Balasaheb, 69, 71
- Khosla, engineer in charge of Hirakud Dam Scheme, 149
- Khubro, M. A., active Muslim Leaguer, 97
- Kitchlew, Dr., 82, 83
- Kripalani, Acharya J. B., 165
- LABOUR MINISTERS' CONFERENCE, 84
- Lalchand Navalrai, 95
- Landlords, encourage disturbances, 165
- Lokhande, Anandrao, 155
- MADRAS ASSEMBLY PARTY, 23
- Madras Government, excludes Indian Christians, who are converts from Harijans, from the benefit of public funds set apart for advancement of Harijans, 53
- Madras Ministry, 154; in a hopeless mess, 37
- Mahanadi Valley Project, 148, 149
- Mahtab, Harekrushna, 142, 146, 147; requests Sardar Patel to give high priority for broadcasting station in Orissa, 148
- Majid, Sheikh Abdul, 105, 118
- Malkani, 104, 110
- Malojirao, of Phaltan, 347-48
- Mane, a scheduled caste candidate for parliament, 67
- Masud, collector of Nawabshah, 119, 120, 130, 131, 132
- Medical missions, to Burma, Malaya etc., 200
- Mehrotra, Lalji, 103; forwards agreement with G. M. Syed to Sardar Patel, 92-94
- Mehta case, 157
- Mehta, Dr., 155, 156
- Mehta, Jamshed, 37
- Mehta, N. C., 361-64
- Menon, Madhava, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 18, 19
- Military, its firing in Bihar, 166
- Ministries, provincial, should not be interfered with, 156-57
- Minority party, to carry on government, 111

- Mir Bundeh Ali, 102
- Mishra, D. P., 152-53, 157; favours Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan, 158-59; makes a number of suggestions regarding MP administration, 161-2
- Mitter, Sir B. L., Dewan Sahib of Baroda, 359-60, 362, 365
- Momins, 168
- Mookerjee, Dr. Syama Prasad, 181
- Mudaliar, Muthuranga, 17
- Mudie, Sir Francis, 96, 98, 99, 128
- Mukhi, Gobindram Putamdas, 135
- Mulshipeta Satyagraha, 150
- Muslim leadership, 83
- Muslim League, 59, 72, 82, 83, 102, 109, 110, 121, 127, 128, 136, 138, 139, 140, 141, 163, 168, 178, 179, 181, 182, 185, 186, 191, 196; boycotts Constituent Assembly, 113; commences non-co-operation, 41; has begun direct action with a vengeance, 40; has sympathy from Europeans, 117; its direct action in Calcutta, 122; its interference in elections, 130-31; its resolution on direct actions & boycott of Constituent Assembly, 111-13; makes position in Sind more difficult, 120; their convention at Delhi, 105
- Muslim League Ministry, 97, 98, 99, 100, 121
- Muslim masses, 111, 113
- Muslim nationalists, 179, 181
- Muslim refugees, 166, 170
- Muslims, in league with Ambedkarite Mahars, 161
- NADAR, KAMARAJ, 2, 4, 7, 13, 18, 19
- Nanda, Gulzarilal. 55, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68
- National Peace Police, 162, 163
- Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal, (*passim*), his letter to Lord Wavell, 183-84; Interim Government with—as its head, 42
- Nehru, Rameshwari, 79
- Nepotism, 84
- News service, 157
- Nijalingappa, S., 299-300, 372-75
- Nishtar, Sardar Abdur Rab, 164
- Noakhali, 182; worse than “Calcutta Killing”, 184
- Noakhali Day, 169
- No-confidence motion, against Sind Ministry, 97, 118
- Non-violence, 152
- NWFP, 106, 107
- ORDINANCE, 91
- Orissa, Broadcasting Station in, 149
- PAKISTAN, 33, 82, 103, 104, 105, 106, 138, 168, 191
- Pant, G.B., 312-13, 324, 343
- Parliamentary Boards, 194
- Parsi Rustomji, 150
- Patel, Dahyabhai, 63
- Patel, Sardar Vallabhbhai, (*passim*), admits the situation is full of difficulties, 154; advises Harekrushna Mahtab to direct peasants’ agitation in proper channels, 150; agrees with Jairamdas Doulatram, 140; approves of taking in Assamese Cabinet some tribal members, 197; argues Madras Government does not discriminate between Harijans & Christians, 53-54; asserts Congress wants to settle Kashmir question constitutionally & peacefully, 41;

- asserts Governor has no right to provide for representation to non-Congress persons, 31-32; complains Andhra Congress ignored Centre's advise & decided to have their own man as premier, 26; condemns Scott's report attempting to put Muslim League in power, 174; directs Gill not to be so lavish in spending for relief operations, 192; directs Sri Krishna Sinha to guard against Muslim League's activities, 174-75; dissuades Saojee from fasting, 158; does not like Assam Ministry to offer any share to Muslim League, 197; draws attention of the Viceroy to communal disturbances in East Bengal & Bihar, 172; his iron leadership, 157; maintains Madras Congress Assembly party has deliberately disregarded Congress advice, 25; maintains success in Sind depends upon Congress ability to win elections, 126; on Muslim League position in provincial ministries, 140-41; suggests to Lord Wavell special powers would be necessary to government, 90; writes a frank letter to Sir Stafford Cripps, 181-82; writes to Lord Wavell regarding Bihar disturbances, 175-76
- Patil, S. K., 63, 66
 Pattabli, Dr., 17, 33, 34
 Patwardhan, Achyut, 68
 Phaltan, its Raja's circular, 348-51
 Political prisoners, 151, 157
 Population, its transfer, 174
 Postal & Telegraph strike, 111, 113, 146, 153, 156
 Power politics, 152
 Prakasam, T., 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 14, 18, 24, 27, 30, 39, 56
 Provincial autonomy, 105, 108, 183, 184
 Punjab Ministry, 84
 Punjab Muddle, 73-79
 Purushottamdas Tricumdas, 205
 "QUIT INDIA" movement, 152
- RAILWAY EMPLOYEES, 64**
 Railwaymen's Federation, 68; passed a resolution on strike, 64
 Rajaji, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 17, 24, 38, 210, 248-49; alone can restore old moral position in Madras, 37; has been re-installed in Congress Working Committee, 37
 Rajendra Babu, 39, 164
 Ramaswami Aiyar, 365-68
 Ranga, N. G., 233-34, 236-241; seeks Sardar Patel's co-operation, 33-34
 Rao, A. Kaleswara, 21, 25, 27
 Rashdi, Pir Ali Mahomed, 119
 Rashtriya Girni Kamagar Sangh, Bombay, 66
 Rashtriya Sangh, 86
 Raza, Collector & Secretary of Sind Delegation to Constituent Assembly, 112, 113
 Reddi, B. Gopala, 4, 24
 Reddy, Sir C. R., 40
 RIN, Commission appointed to enquire into recent disturbances in —, 205-06
 Rohtak disturbances, 86, 89
 Roy, Dr. B. C., 179, 200
 Royists, 64
- SACHAR, BHIM SEN, 73, 76-79, 84-85**
 Sampurnanand, 325-26

- Saojee, B. N., decides to fast unto death before Gandhiji's hut at Sevagram, 157-58; writes to Sardar Patel frankly about CP Politics, 155
- Sapru, Sir Tej Bahadur, 145
- Sarkar, N. R., 181
- Sattar, Pir Abdul, 104
- Scott, favours transfer of Bengal population, 174
- Self-purification, 158
- Servants of India Society, 27
- Sethi, Dev Raj, 86
- Sexena, Mohanlal, 240
- Shah, Abid, 130, 131
- Shah, Mahomed Ali, 131
- Shah, Prof. K. T., 76, 79
- Shah Shantilal, 62, 66, 68
- Shahani, T. K. 369-71
- Sharma, M.S.M., Editor, Daily Gazette, 97, 98 113, 114
- Ship-building industry, 208
- Shiromani, Akali Dal, 74
- Shop Assistants' Act, 22
- Shukla, Pandit Ravishankar, 150-51, 163
- Sidhwa, R. K., 104, 115-16, 121, 122; his letter to Sardar Patel, 116
- Sikhs, of the Congress, 85; Panthic, 86; their election disputes, 82, 154
- Sind Assembly, no-confidence in, 98
- Sind Congress, has lost all along the elections, 137
- Sind elections, Zabardasti in—, 132, 133
- Sind Governor, 111, 115, 117, 118; has a hand in supporting Muslim League, 116
- Sind Ministry, 97
- Sind Muslim League, its circular, 121
- Sind official terrorism, 129
- Sind politics, 110
- Singh, Ch. Sunder, 84
- Singh, Dr. Lehna, 81
- Singh, Narmada Prasad, 278-79
- Singh, S. Sajjan, 84
- Singh, Sadul, 352-54
- Sinha, Sri Krishna, 173
- Smuts, General, 159
- Socialists, 152
- Stabbing, 161
- Subedar, Manu, 210-16, 224-32
- Sudarshan, Seth, 84
- Suhrawardy, H. S., 178, 186
- Suicide battalion, 118
- Surma Valley, 193-96
- Surya Rao, R.K.M., 48, 49
- Syed, G. M., complains of Sind Government's interference in Sind Assembly elections, 129; his conversations with Masud & Mahomed Ali Shah, 127-28; his letter to Governor-General of India, 127-29; his letter to Sind Governor, 123-25; his letter to Sir Francis Mudie, 128; solicits Sardar Patel's help to negate official interference in elections, 131
- Syed group, 105, 139, 140
- Sylhet, with a portion of Cachar to be separated from Assam, 195-96
- TATA HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME, of Bombay, 149
- Tata Iron & Steel Works, 162, 163
- Total prohibition, in Madras, 36
- Trades Policy Committee, 209
- Trade Unions, 54
- Trade Union Congress, 55; should not be allowed to be exploited by communists, 55
- Tribunal, 157
- UNIS, MOHAMMED, 167
- Upper House, 26

- VARADACHARI, N. S., 26, 36
 Vazirani, N. C., 104, 106, 108, 109,
 111, 112, 114, 117-20, 137; on
 Sind elections, 132-33
 Villages, their displacement in dam
 construction, 149
 Violence, 152
- WALCHAND HIRACHAND, 180,
 207-08
- Wavell, Lord, 131-32, 301-02, 305-06,
 309; Sardar Patel's letter to—, 90-91
 White Paper, 107
- YOUNG MEN'S MUSLIM ASSO-
 CIATION, favours joint electo-
 rates, 52-53
- ZAMINDARI, its abolition, 48, 56, 57
-





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They (the correspondence) are certainly excellent material for historians and research scholars, for the Sardar played decisive roles in India's struggle for freedom and its consolidation.

The popular impressions of the great man are likely to be materially revised. He was resolute. He was plain-spoken. He was a realist. He was a great organization man before the phrase was coined. His differences with Gandhi, Nehru, Azad and others were no secret; and he was not ashamed of them. The picture that emerges from the correspondence is that the Congress as a political party was never nearly so united as it appeared even before the birth and rise of the Congress (R) and the decline of the Congress (O). The man of action that Sardar Patel was, he rarely dithered. His decisions, which were prompt and occasionally unpleasant, are reflected in the style of his letters. He kept them short as much because he was a busy man as because he knew the hazards of prolixity.

THE SUNDAY STATESMAN, July 2, 1972

The Volume, which covers the period of the 1946 elections that preceded the transfer of power and the dawn of freedom, highlights the indomitable Sardar's practical wisdom, sagacity and statesmanship in managing the myriad baffling problems that confronted him in his capacity as Chairman of the Congress Election Board. UNI.

PATRIOT, Wednesday, July 12, 1972

It deals with preparations for the Central and provincial elections of early 1946, which turned out to be the basis of partition. More interesting in some ways is the evidence that the unsavoury political practices that are decried so much today were far from unknown even on the eve of independence.

We also see Patel in the little known role of suggesting that the Congress field candidates from the armed forces and the minorities to involve them in struggle for independence. Pointing out that there were less than 300 Muslim votes out of a total of 1,600 in the (Punjab University) constituency, he remarks: "It would indeed be a great gesture to the minority community and vindication of the principle of joint electorate if the Congress could return a Muslim Congressman from this constituency where the Hindu voters are in a very large majority." In several other letters shows concern that the Indian Christian community gets adequate

THE TIMES OF INDIA, Sunday, 1972

The volume is a 'must' for practising as well as budding politicians. As the appropriately-worded blurb states, "Here is a man who, while looking at the broad policy issues with deep comprehension, also painstakingly took in the smallest detail, who gave equal consideration to a small-town politician and national leader and strove, above everything, to be scrupulously fair to aspirants and an inspiration to all."

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