

Collected Works 9

In 1938 Subhas Chandra Bose reached the peak of his political life, when he was elected President of the Indian National Congress. Leading the forces of anti-colonialism and socialism, he was re-elected in 1939, having defeated Gandhi's nominee in a bitterly contested election. However, in the face of vehement opposition from the right wing of the Congress and Gandhi, he resigned.

This volume brings together Bose's letters, writings and speeches from January 1938 until just after his resignation in April 1939. It includes the famous Haripura Address of February 1938. Other pieces deal with socialism, national planning, science, Hindu–Muslim relations, the role of women, and European politics. Among the 120 letters here are sets of correspondence with Gandhi, Tagore, Jinnah and Nehru.

Sisir Kumar Bose (1920–2000) founded the Netaji Research Bureau in 1957 and was its guiding spirit until his death in 2000. A participant in the Indian freedom struggle, he was imprisoned by the British in the Lahore Fort, Red Fort and Lyallpur Jail. In the post-independence period he played a key role in preserving the best traditions of the anti-colonial movement and making possible the writing of its history. He authored and edited biographies, memoirs, monographs and research papers on Netaji's life and times. One of India's best pediatricians, he was Director and later President of the Institute of Child Health, Calcutta.

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Bose

COLLECTED WORKS 9: CONGRESS PRESIDENT

Subhas Chandra Bose

Congress President

Speeches, Articles, and Letters

JANUARY 1938–MAY 1939

edited by

Sisir Kumar Bose and Sugata Bose



Netaji: Collected Works
Volume 9

CONGRESS PRESIDENT

Speeches, Articles and Letters
January 1938–May 1939



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Contents

Photographs xi
Acknowledgements xiii
Editor's Introduction xv

SPEECHES, ARTICLES AND STATEMENTS
January 1938–April 1939

1. On Congress and the Constitution, Fascism and Communism: Report of an interview with R. Palme Dutt published in the *Daily Worker*, London, 24 January 1938 1
2. The Haripura Address: Presidential Address at the 51st Session of the Indian National Congress, February 1938 3
3. Municipal Socialism: Address to the Bombay Corporation, 10 May 1938 31
4. Congress Medical Mission to China: Bose's public statement and appeal, 28 June 1938 36
   Bose's speech at University Institute Hall, 12 August 1938 37
   Bose's farewell message to Congress Medical Mission to China 38
5. On the Federal Scheme: Statement issued on 9 July 1938 39
6. Science and Politics: Answers to Questions posed by Meghnad Saha, 21 August 1938 43
7. The Industrial Problems of India: Speech at the Industries Ministers Conference, 2 October 1938 48

8. The Students' Movement: Message to the UP Students' Conference, 29 October 1938 54
9. Our Needs and our Duties: Article in the *National Front*, October 1938 55
10. The European Crisis—Analysis of the Debacle: Article in *The Congress Socialist*, October 1938 58
11. On Kemal Ataturk: Statement issued on Ataturk's death, November 1938 61
12. The National Planning Committee: Inauguration speech, 17 December 1938 62
13. A Minimum Clear-Cut Programme: Statement issued on 17 January 1939 65
14. The Tripuri Presidential Election Debate: Statements and Counter-Statements, 21 January to 4 February 1939 67
15. The Tripuri Address: Presidential address at the 52nd session of the Indian National Congress, March 1939 90
16. My Strange Illness: Article in the *Modern Review*, April 1939 95
17. Statement on Resignation from Congress Presidentship issued on 29 April 1939 107

MAJOR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENCE

1. Bose–Jinnah Correspondence: 110
To Jinnah, 14 May 1938 110
To Jinnah, 15 May 1938 112
From Jinnah, 16 May 1938 112
From Jinnah, 6 June 1938 113
To Jinnah, 21 June 1938 114
To Jinnah, 27 June 1938 114
To Jinnah, 25 July 1938 115
From Jinnah, 2 August 1938 117

To Jinnah, 16 August 1938 119
To Jinnah, 2 October 1938 120
From Jinnah, 9 October 1938 121
To Jinnah, 16 December 1938 121
2. Bose–Gandhi Correspondence: 122
To Gandhi, 21 December 1938 122
To Gandhi, 24 March 1939 126
From Gandhi, 25 March 1939 127
To Gandhi, 25 March 1939 127
To Gandhi, 25 March 1939 127
To Gandhi, 25 March 1939 127
From Gandhi, 24 March 1939 130
To Gandhi, 26 March 1939 131
From Gandhi, 26 March 1939 131
To Gandhi, 29 March 1939 132
To Gandhi, 29 March 1939 133
From Gandhi, 30 March 1939 134
From Gandhi, 31 March 1939 136
To Gandhi, 31 March 1939 136
From Gandhi, 1 April 1939 137
To Gandhi, 31 March 1939 137
To Gandhi, 1 April 1939 143
From Gandhi, 2 April 1939 144
From Gandhi, 2 April 1939 146
To Gandhi, 3 April 1939 147
From Gandhi, 4 April 1939 147
To Gandhi, 5 April 1939 147
From Gandhi, 5 April 1939 148
To Gandhi, 5 April 1939 148
To Gandhi, 5 April 1939 148
From Gandhi, 5 April 1939 148

To Gandhi, 6 April 1939 149
To Gandhi, 7 April 1939 156
From Gandhi, 7 April 1939 156
From Gandhi, 7 April 1939 156
To Gandhi, 10 April 1939 157
From Gandhi, 10 April 1939 164
To Gandhi, 13 April 1939 166
To Gandhi, 14 April 1939 172
From Gandhi, 14 April 1939 172
From Gandhi, 14 April 1939 173
To Gandhi, 15 April 1939 173
To Gandhi, 15 April 1939 174
From Gandhi, 17 April 1939 176
To Gandhi, 18 April 1939 176
From Gandhi, 18 April 1939 177
From Gandhi, 19 April 1939 177
To Gandhi, 20 April 1939 178
To Gandhi, 20 April 1939 178
To Gandhi, 20 April 1939 180
To Gandhi, 22 April 1939 181
From Gandhi, 29 April 1939 181
To Gandhi, 5 May 1939 182
From Gandhi, 6 May 1939 182

3. Bose–Nehru Correspondence:
From Nehru, 23 April 1938 182
To Nehru, 19 October 1938 183
From Nehru, 4 February 1939 184
To Nehru, 10 February 1939 189
From Nehru, 1 March 1939 190
From Nehru, 16 March 1939 191
From Nehru, 22 March 1939 192

To Nehru, 28 March 1939 193
From Nehru, 3 April 1939 217
To Nehru, 15 April 1939 233
From Nehru, 17 April 1939 234
To Nehru, 20 April 1939 235

4. Bose–Tagore Correspondence: 236
From Tagore, 20 November 1938 236
To Tagore, 14 December 1938 237
From Tagore, 20 December 1938 237
From Tagore, 14 January 1939 238
From Tagore, 19 January 1939 238
Tagore's Call to Bose, 21 January 1939 240
Bose's response to Tagore, 21 January 1939 243
From Tagore, 27 January 1939 246
Tagore's Deshnayak Address 247
From Tagore, 2 April 1939 250
From Tagore, 27 May 1939 251

OTHER LETTERS

1. To E. Woods, 16 January 1938 252
2. To Naomi Vetter, 21 January 1938 253
3. From Rash Behari Bose, 25 January 1938 253
4. To Basanti Devi, 6 February 1938 257
5. To H.V. Kamath, 12 February 1938 258
6. From Will Richter, 4 March 1938 258
7. To Mrs Dharmavir, 22 March 1938 260
8. To Sita Dharmavir, 22 March 1938 261
9. To Naomi Vetter, 26 March 1938 262
10. To Naomi Vetter, 9 April 1938 263
11. To Santosh Sen, 20 May 1938 264
12. To Sita Dharmavir, 21 May 1938 264

13. To Atul Chandra Kumar, 3 June 1938 265
14. To Sita Dharmavir, 23 June 1938 265
15. From B.C. Roy, 18 July 1938 266
16. To Biswanath Das, 15 August 1938 267
17. From Aparna Devi, 23 August 1938 268
18. To B.C. Roy, 2 September 1938 268
19. To Amita Purkayastha (Guha), 3 September 1938 270
20. From B.C. Roy, 10 September 1938 271
21. To Sita Sen, 10 October 1938 272
22. To (Unclear) in Jamnalal Bajaj Papers, 21 October 1938 273
23. From M.N. Roy, 22 October 1938 275
24. To 'Daily Doorbin', 23 October 1938 278
25. To Amala Nundy (Shankar), 11 November 1938 279
26. From M.N. Roy, 1 February 1939 280
27. To Mustapha El Nahas Pasha, 7 February 1939 284
28. To Acting General Secretary, AICC regarding visit of Egyptian Delegation, 28 February 1939 285
29. From M.N. Roy, 5 March 1939 286
30. To Jacob Gunanidhi Biswas, 14 April 1939 287
31. To Amiya Nath Bose, 17 April 1939 289
32. From M.N. Roy, 18 April 1939 290
33. To Acting General Secretary, AICC, 18 April 1939 292
34. To Sita Sen, 19 April 1939 293

Photographs

(between pp. 166 and 167)

1. President, Haripura Congress, February 1938
2. Inaugurating National Planning Committee, November 1938
3. Facsimile of Tagore's 'Deshnayak' address
4. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Rajendra Prasad, Bose and Nehru at AICC meeting, Calcutta, April 1939

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SISIR KUMAR BOSE
SUGATA BOSE

Editors' Introduction

'My personal view today', Subhas Chandra Bose said in an interview to Rajani Palme Dutt in January 1938, 'is that the Indian National Congress should be organised on the broadest anti-imperialist front, and should have the two-fold objective of winning political freedom and the establishment of a socialist regime'.[1] As President-elect of the Congress Bose was on a short visit to London, his first since his years as a student in Cambridge. On the night of 15 January 1938 he had a 'long talk' with another anti-imperialist, President De Valera of Ireland.[2] During the course of his stay in London he had several meetings with an array of British politicians, especially leaders of the Labour Party. 'English people who met Bose for the first time', wrote the Manchester Guardian, 'were impressed alike by his pleasant, quiet manner and the decisiveness with which he discussed Indian affairs'.[3] Bose arrived back in India on 23 January 1938, his 41st birthday, and during his tenure as Congress President worked towards the two-fold objective he had set himself.

This key volume of Bose's Collected Works brings together his speeches, writings and letters from January 1938 until just after his resignation as Congress President on 29 April 1939. In these he deals with the themes of imperialism and nationalism, socialism, national planning, science, constitutional issues, Hindu–Muslim relations, the role of women, European politics, etc. Perhaps the single most important document included in this volume is the famous Presidential Address delivered at Haripura

[1] See p. 3 in this volume.
[2] See p. 252 in this volume.
[3] Cited in Sisir K. Bose et al., *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose* (New Delhi, 1973), p. 71.

in February 1938.[4] Written in a day at his Calcutta home on the eve of his departure for Haripura, the speech provided an incisive analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the worldwide structure of British imperialism and an egalitarian vision of the socio-economic reconstruction of free India. It was marked by a remarkable lack of rancour towards the colonial masters whom he challenged to transform the empire into 'a federation of free nations'. Quoting Lenin on how 'reaction in Britain [wa]s strengthened and fed by the enslavement of a number of nations, Bose claimed:

> We who are fighting for the political freedom of India and other enslaved countries of the British empire are incidentally fighting for the economic emancipation of the British people as well . . . once we have real self-determination, there is no reason why we should not enter into the most cordial relations with the British people.

While sounding a note of warning against accepting colonial constitutional devices designed to divide and deflect the anti-colonial movement, Bose could see that 'the policy of divide and rule' was 'by no means an unmixed blessing for the ruling power'. Bose saw the 'principle of partition' ingrained in the 'juxtaposition of autocratic princes and democratically elected representatives of British India', and called for uncompromising opposition to the federal part of the Government of India Act of 1935. If that scheme got rejected, Bose feared that the British would 'seek some other constitutional device for partitioning India and thereby neutralising the transference of power to the Indian people'. But equally Bose could see Britain getting 'caught in the meshes of her own political dualism' resulting from divisive policies, whether in India, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq or Ireland. He, therefore, resolved to urgently address the minorities question in India, advocating a policy of 'live and let live in matters religious and an understanding in matters economic and political'. He also wanted justice done to the so-called 'depressed classes'. While promoting 'cultural autonomy for the different linguistic areas', Bose urged the acceptance of Hindustani (a mixture of Hindi and Urdu) in the Roman script as lingua franca. The objective of unifying India through 'a strong central government' would have to be balanced by the imperative 'to put all the minority communities as well as the provinces at their ease, by allowing them a large measure of autonomy in cultural as well as governmental affairs'.

4. See pp. 3–30 of this book.

Convinced of the need to be prepared for independence, Bose outlined his 'long-period programme for a Free India'. The 'first problem to tackle', according to him, was 'increasing population'. He was probably the first among India's political leaders to articulate a policy of population control. As regards 'reconstruction', the 'principal problem' would be 'how to eradicate poverty from our country'. That would 'require a radical reform of our land system, including the abolition of landlordism'. 'Agricultural indebtedness' would 'have to be liquidated and provision made for cheap credit for the rural population'. But to 'solve the economic problem' agricultural improvement would 'not be enough' and an ambitious plan for state-directed industrial development would be necessary. 'However much we may dislike modern industrialism and condemn the evils which follow in its train', Bose declared, 'we cannot go back to the pre-industrial era, even if we desire to do so'. The state in independent India would, 'on the advice of a planning commission', have 'to adopt a comprehensive scheme for gradually socialising our entire agricultural and industrial system in the spheres of both production and appropriation'.

Bose believed in 1938 that the Congress party could not be asked to wither away but, on the contrary, had a key role to play in the work of national reconstruction after independence. The 'existence of multiple parties and the democratic basis of the Congress Party,' he trusted, would 'prevent the future Indian state becoming a totalitarian one'. Inner-party democracy would also 'ensure that leaders are not thrust upon the people from above, but elected from below'. Subsequent developments were soon to show that Bose's views regarding the Congress party's commitment to internal democracy were overly optimistic. His opinions in favour of the Congress's granting collective affiliation to peas-

ants' and workers' organizations, and being poised to take advantage of the international situation were not shared by several of his colleagues within the Congress.

During 1938 Subhas Chandra Bose sought to act on most of the items on his Haripura agenda. As initial steps towards drawing up a blueprint for the socio-economic reconstruction of India, he convened conferences of Congress premiers and industries' ministers of provinces, and held meetings with leaders of the scientific community. In the course of a conversation with Meghnad Saha at a meeting of the Indian Science New Association he called for 'far-reaching co-operation between science and politics'.[5] Finally, in October 1938, Bose announced the formation of the National Planning Committee. 'I hope you will accept the Chairmanship of the Planning Committee', he wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru on 19 October 1938. 'You must if it is to be a success.'[6] In his speech inaugurating the work of the Committee on 17 December 1938 Bose argued that there could be a symbiosis between planning for heavy industries and stimulating the revival of cottage industries.

Another issue high on Bose's list of priorities in 1938 was the improvement in relations between religious communities. Bose had long believed that Hindu–Muslim unity was not only essential for the anti-colonial struggle but that in independent India there ought to be an equitable dispersal of power among religious and linguistic communities. Bose called on M.A. Jinnah, the President of the All India Muslim League, in Bombay on 14 May 1938, and began a fresh attempt to negotiate a settlement of the Hindu–Muslim question. The pitch had been queered by Jawaharlal Nehru, his predecessor as Congress President, who had declared after the 1937 elections that there were only two parties in India—the British government and the Congress. Nehru had looked 'through a telescope', Jinnah had been told, for a Hindu–Muslim problem and had failed to spot it. As the Bose–Jinnah correspondence printed in this volume[7] reveals, the latter insisted on the

[5] See p. 47 in this volume.
[6] See p. 183 of this book.
[7] See pp. 110–22 in this volume.

Muslim League being recognized as the representative organization of the Muslims of India as the basis for any substantive negotiations between the Congress and the League. The Congress could not possibly accept the implication that it was merely a 'communal' organization. 'Is it not enough,' Bose asked Jinnah on 25 July 1938, 'that the Congress is not only willing but eager to establish the friendliest relations with the League and come to an honourable understanding on the much vexed Hindu–Muslim question?' Jinnah replied on 2 August 1938 that while the League was 'equally anxious' for a settlement, it needed to 'inform the Congress of the basis on which the negotiations between the two organizations should proceed' since the 'very existence' of the League had been called into question by Nehru. The exchanges of 1938 foundered on the inability of the Congress and the League to agree on 'the basis' for negotiations.

In order for the Congress to be able to present a united national demand to the British, Bose felt that at least one of two conditions had to be met: a settlement at the all-India level with the Muslim League; or coalition governments with Congress participation or support in most, if not all, of the Muslim-majority provinces. As Congress President Bose was instrumental in installing the coalition ministry headed by Gopinath Bardoloi in Assam and lending support to Allah Bux's ministry in Sind. In their efforts towards working out a coalition arrangement in their home province of Bengal, Subhas Chandra Bose and his elder brother Sarat were thwarted by the Congress High Command and by Gandhi himself, acting under the dubious influence of G.D. Birla and Nalini Ranjan Sarkar.[8] Bose had been opposed in principle to office acceptance in 1937, but in the absence of a mass satyagraha campaign, and given the decision to form ministries in seven provinces, he felt coalition governments in the remaining provinces would improve the communal situation and strengthen nationalist resistance to British rule. On 21 December 1938 he wrote to Gandhi:

> While endeavouring to bring about a Coalition Ministry in the remaining three provinces, we should lose no time in

[8] See Bose to Gandhi, 21 December 1938, pp. 122–6 of this book.

> announcing our decision on the various Hindu–Muslim problems that would have come up for discussion if negotiations had taken place between the Congress and the Muslim League. Simultaneously, we should hold an enquiry into the grievances of the Muslims against the Congress Governments. These two steps will help to satisfy reasonable Muslims that we are anxious to understand their complaints and to remedy them as far as humanly possible.

Bose's approach to the intertwined challenges to the construction of an all-India nationalism presented by affiliations of religious community and linguistic region was significantly different and substantially more generous than that of most others among the Congress leadership.

During 1938 Bose continued the strong interest in international affairs he had developed during his years of European exile. He sent the Congress Medical Mission to China as a symbol of solidarity against Japanese aggression and closely monitored developments in Europe. By the end of the year he had come to the conclusion that the international situation was favourable for the launch of another mass movement against colonial rule.

Bose's political programme of uncompromising anti-colonialism and socialist reconstruction of free India placed him at odds with Gandhi and the majority of his colleagues in the Working Committee, who, led by Vallabbhai Patel, vehemently opposed his re-election as Congress President. With Maulana Azad unwilling to contest the election, a small coterie within the Working Committee, in consultation with Gandhi, set up another member of the High Command, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, as their nominee. Bose was insistent that a leftist should be Congress President, and in the absence of anyone unanimously acceptable decided to stand himself. There had been differences between Bose's radicals and the right-wing professing loyalty to Gandhi on the need for a coalition government in Bengal—that was opposed by Birla—and on the socialist agenda of the National Planning Committee. At least one complaint had been carried to Gandhi by K.M. Munshi that Bose was seeking German help against the British, even though it turns out that at a meeting Bose had had with some

German businessmen (misreported as a conspiratorial meeting in Bombay with the German consul), Bose had been sharply critical of German policies. The Presidential election debate that regard for two weeks in late January 1939 in the form of press statements and counter-statements was dominated by two issues—the attitude to the Federal Scheme and the question of inner-party democracy within the Congress.[9] As early as 9 July 1938 Bose had stated that any back room deal on Federation would 'amount to treachery of the first magnitude to the cause of India's freedom'. When he pointed out the widespread belief in the course of the election debate in the 'prospect of a compromise on the Federal Scheme between the right-wing of the Congress and the British Government', he was accused of casting an 'aspersion' on his colleagues. It is now well-known from a range of archival sources that Bose was well on the mark in his suspicion that informal talks were being held between top British officials and a number of Congressmen close to Patel on the federal part of the Government of India Act of 1935. Yet, since he was not able to provide hard evidence at the time, the 'aspersion affair' was not allowed to be forgotten even after the election was over. On the question of inner-party democracy Bose was of the opinion that 'to have a proper election by the delegates and not nomination by a group within the Working Committee', it was 'essential that the delegates should have a free and unfettered choice. . . . If this freedom is not guaranteed to them, then the constitution of the Congress would cease to be a democratic one'.

The democratic verdict of the delegates on 29 January 1939 went in favour of Subhas Chandra Bose by a margin of more than two hundred votes. In a statement on 31 January 1939 the Mahatma declared that since he had been

> instrumental in inducing Dr Pattabhi not to withdraw his name as a candidate when Maulana Saheb withdrew, the defeat is more mine than his. And I am nothing if I do not represent definite principles and policy. Therefore, it is plain to me that the delegates do not approve of the principles and policy for

[9] See pp. 67–90 of this book.

> which I stand. I rejoice in this defeat. . . . After all Subhas Babu is not an enemy of his country. He has suffered for it.

In his public response issued on 4 February 1939 Bose stated:

> . . . I have on some occasions felt constrained to differ from Mahatma Gandhi on public questions, but I yield to none in my respect for his personality . . . it will always be my aim and object to try and win his confidence for the simple reason that it will be a tragic thing for me if I succeed in winning the confidence of other people but fail to win the confidence of India's greatest man.

Bose seems to have believed that the controversies surrounding the election could be left behind and an understanding reached with Gandhi whom he distinguished from Gandhi's lieutenants. M.N. Roy was more accurate in his reading of Gandhi's mood. He interpreted Gandhi's statement as

> a declaration of war which may be waged in true Gandhian fashion, namely, non-cooperation which, under the given relation of forces inside the Congress, can only be wilful sabotage for discrediting yourself and your supporters. The clear implication of Gandhiji's statement is that, at the head of the Congress, there is no room for you and those who opposed your election; one must go.[10]

The Congress crisis deepened as Bose fell seriously ill in mid-February and all the members of the Congress Working Committee excepting Jawaharlal Nehru and Sarat Chandra Bose resigned on 22 February 1939. At the Tripuri session of the Congress in early March 1939 Bose was too ill to deliver his own Presidential address, and it was read by his elder brother Sarat. In an uncharacteristically short speech[11] Bose called upon the Congress to submit its national demand in the form of an ultimatum to the British government and to resort to mass civil disobedience if no satisfactory reply was received. He wanted the Congress to guide the

[10] See M.N. Roy to Subhas Chandra Bose, 1 February 1939, pp. 280–3 of this book.

[11] See pp. 90–5 in this volume.

popular movements in the princely states 'on a comprehensive and systematic basis' instead of doing work in this area of 'a piecemeal nature'. He was unequivocal on the need for 'close co-operation with all anti-imperialist organisations in the country particularly the Kisan movement and the Trade Union movement'.

At the Tripuri Congress the right-wing successfully struck a calculated political blow in their campaign to avenge their defeat in the Presidential election. As the Congress Socialist Party abstained, they were able to pass a resolution moved by Govind Ballabh Pant that 'the Congress executive should command [Gandhiji's] implicit confidence and requests the President to nominate the Working Committee in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji'. The atmosphere at Tripuri was so suffused with the spirit of vendetta among the votaries of truth and non-violence that Subhas Bose left the place with 'a loathing and disgust for politics'.

Since Gandhi had occupied himself with the politics of Rajkot, a small princely state, and absented himself from Tripuri, the task of consulting him to form a new Working Committee had to be initially carried out by correspondence.[12] While Bose wished to form a 'composite' cabinet drawn from the various strands in nationalist politics, Gandhi expressed his preference for a 'homogeneous' cabinet of those who happened to be in the majority. In a classic manoeuvre of non-cooperation Gandhi refused to suggest any names for the Working Committee and asked Bose to form his own executive. This, as Bose pointed out, might be acting 'in accordance with Gandhiji's wishes', but would not result in an executive that commanded his 'implicit confidence' as the Pant resolution demanded. 'The more I study it (Pant's resolution)', Gandhi replied, 'the more I dislike it'. Although Bose's own preference was to have six members each from the two 'wings' of the Congress, he was prepared to let Gandhi nominate the Working Committee in an attempt to resolve the crisis. If Gandhi refused to do so, Bose wondered if the All India Congress Committee (AICC) might elect the Working Committee. A call for

[12] See pp. 126–81 in this book.

more democracy within the Congress was certain not to warm Mahatma Gandhi's heart at this critical moment when his authority had been successfully challenged. Talks held in Sodepur for several days in late April 1939 failed to break the impasse. Unable to form a Working Committee, Bose submitted his resignation as Congress President 'in an entirely helpful spirit' at the meeting of the AICC in Calcutta on 29 April 1939.

Jawaharlal Nehru, who was staying in Sarat Bose's house at the time, brought a resolution asking the AICC not to accept Bose's resignation and calling upon Bose to renominate the old Working Committee and nominate two new members of his choice to fill vacancies. Since Bose demanded a more representative Working Committee, Nehru withdrew his resolution and Bose's resignation took effect. Throughout the crisis Nehru had sought to play a mediating role, keeping at least a slight distance from the joint actions of the rest of the Working Committee led by Patel. The long letters they exchanged[13] show, however, that Bose felt completely betrayed by Nehru's latest attempt at 'riding two horses'. He had regarded Nehru as his 'elder brother' who had abetted his political opponents in their 'vendetta'. 'The unity that we strive for or maintain', he wrote to Nehru, 'must be the unity of action and not the unity of inaction'. Bose was certainly too harsh and perhaps unfair in his criticism of Nehru's vacillation at this decisive moment. But years later Nehru was to concede in his interviews to Taya Zinkin that in 1939 he had 'agreed with' what Subhas was trying to do but had 'let him down'.

Tripuri and its aftermath clearly represented a defeat for Bose who was temperamentally and organizationally incapable, despite his personal popularity, of matching the political cunning of Gandhi and his followers. But Gandhi came out of the events of this period with his aura tarnished; India's greatest man, as Hiren Mukherji put it, had allowed himself to look 'small and peevish'. Bose's conduct, by contrast, won the approbation of no less a person than Rabindranath Tagore who said in a message:

[13] See pp. 193–236 in this volume.

> The dignity and forbearance which you have shown in the midst of a most aggravating situation has won my admiration and confidence in your leadership. The same perfect decorum has still to be maintained by Bengal for the sake of her own self-respect and thereby to help to turn your apparent defeat into a permanent victory.

Robbed of the Presidentship of the Congress by the Mahatma, Subhas Chandra had been, unbeknown to him, granted the appellation of 'Deshnayak' by the Gurudev. Rabindranath Tagore had favoured Subhas Bose's re-election as Congress President and felicitated him at Santiniketan on 21 January 1939. He had written his 'Deshnayak' address[14] for Subhas Chandra to be delivered at a public reception in Calcutta in early February which had to be postponed. 'As Bengal's poet', Rabindranath wrote,

> I invite you to the honoured seat of the leader of the people. We have the sacred assurance of Gita that from time to time the Divine champion of the good arises to challenge the reign of the evil. When misfortune from all directions swarm to attack the living spirit of the nation, its anguished cry calls forth from its own being the liberator to its rescue. . . . Let nobody make such a grievous mistake as to think that, in foolish pride of narrow provincialism, I desire to see Bengal as an entity separate from the rest of India, or dream of setting in my own province a rival throne to the one on which is seated a majestic figure representing a new age in the political history of the world. . . . Let it be your untiring mission to claim of your countrymen the resoluteness, the unyielding will to live and conquer, strengthened by the inspiration of your own life. . . . Long ago at a meeting, I addressed my message to the leader of Bengal who was yet to seek. After a lapse of many years, I am addressing at this meeting one who has come into the full light of recognition. . ... I may not join him in the fight that is to come. I can only bless him and take my leave knowing that he has made his country's burden of sorrow his own, that his final reward is fast coming as his country's freedom.

[14] See pp. 247–9 of this book.

In addition to Gurudev's blessings, Subhas Chandra also had 'a genuine feeling of sympathy and affection' of a very large number of common people. In his article 'My Strange Illness'[15] he mentioned the letters and telegrams as well as parcels and packets of medicines, flowers and amulets he had received:

> I was trying to analyse the above writers and senders according to their religious faith, and I found that every religious denomination was represented. And not only every religious denomination, but every system of medicine (all the 'pathies', if I may use the word) and both the sexes! Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, etc.—Allopaths, Homeopaths, Vaids, Hakims, Naturopaths, Astrologers, etc.—men and women—all have been writing to me, giving me their advice and sometimes also samples of medicine and amulets.

It was this outpouring of love and concern which restored Bose's faith after being subjected to the 'morally sickening atmosphere of Tripuri'. 'This is the India', he concluded, 'for which one toils and suffers. This is the India for which one can even lay down his life. This is the real India in which one can have undying faith, no matter what Tripuri says or does.'

SISIR KUMAR BOSE
SUGATA BOSE

[15] See pp. 95–106 of this book.

Speeches, Articles and Statements

On Congress and the Constitution, Fascism and Communism

Report of an interview with R. Palme Dutt, published in the *Daily Worker*, London, January 24, 1938.

Question: National Government spokesmen here claim that the new Constitution in India is a great success, and that the acceptance of office by the Congress is proof of this. What is the opinion of the National Congress on this view?

Answer: The acceptance of office is no proof that the Congress is going to work the Constitution for all time. The Congress Party has gone into office with considerable misgiving.

Its object in doing so is two-fold: firstly, to consolidate its own position; and secondly, to demonstrate that within the conditions of the present Constitution it is not possible to achieve anything really big or substantial. If contrary to its apprehension something substantial is achieved, then that will strengthen the political organisation of the people in their struggle for freedom.

Question: Is there any likelihood of the Congress accepting the Federal part of the Constitution?

Answer: There is no possibility of the Congress changing its mind and agreeing to work the Federal part of the Constitution, as it did in the case of the provinces. There is no analogy between the Provincial part and the Federal part of the Constitution.

Question: What in your view is the next stage of the national struggle? Is it true that there is rapid development of peasant unrest and of the strike movement?

Answer: The next stage of the national struggle will be a further growth of mass consciousness at an increasing tempo. The

problem for the Congress will be to mobilise this strength and direct it along the right lines.

In other words, the problem will be to build up the Party organisation on a broad anti-imperialist front. If we can do that, we shall be prepared to face with hope and courage any crisis that the future may have in store for us. Peasant unrest and labour strikes are an expression of the further growth of mass consciousness since the Congress Party took office.

Question: Are you in favour of broadening further the mass basis of the National Congress as an all-inclusive national front by this collective affiliation of labour and peasant organisations?

Answer: Yes, definitely.

Question: What policy would you like to see the British Labour Party or a future Labour Government adopt in relation to India?

Answer: We would like the British Labour Party to stand for the Congress objective in its entirety.

Question: Many questions have been asked about the references to Fascism in the closing part of your book *The Indian Struggle*. Would you care to make any comment on your view of Fascism?

Many questions have also been asked about your criticisms of Communism in the same section. Would you care to make any comment on this?

Answer: My political ideas have developed further since I wrote my book three years ago.

What I really meant was that we in India wanted our national freedom, and having won it, we wanted to move in the direction of Socialism. This is what I meant when I referred to 'a synthesis between Communism and Fascism'. Perhaps the expression I used was not a happy one. But I should like to point out that when I was writing the book, Fascism had not started on its imperialist expedition, and it appeared to me merely an aggressive form of nationalism.

I should point out also that Communism as it appeared to be demonstrated by many of those who were supposed to stand for it in India seemed to me anti-national, and this impression was

further strengthened in view of the hostile attitude which several among them exhibited towards the Indian National Congress. It is clear, however, that the position today has fundamentally altered.

I should add that I have always understood and am quite satisfied that Communism, as it has been expressed in the writings of Marx and Lenin and in the official statements of policy of the Communist International, gives full support to the struggle for national independence and recognises this as an integral part of its world outlook.

My personal view today is that the Indian National Congress should be organised on the broadest anti-imperialist front, and should have the two-fold objective of winning political freedom and the establishment of a socialist regime.

The Haripura Address

Presidential Address at the 51st Session of the Indian National Congress held at Haripura in February, 1938.

MR CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am deeply sensible of the honour you have done me by electing me as the President of the Indian National Congress for the coming year. I am not so presumptuous as to think for one moment that I am in any way worthy of that great honour. I regard it as a mark of your generosity and as a tribute to the youths of our country, but for whose cumulative contribution to our national struggle, we would not be where we are today. It is with a sense of fear and trepidation that I mount the tribune which has hitherto been graced by the most illustrious sons and daughters of our motherland. Conscious as I am of my numerous limitations, I can only hope and pray that with your sympathy and support I may be able in some small measure to do justice to the high office which you have called upon me to fill.

At the outset, may I voice your feelings in placing on record our profound grief at the death of Shrimati Swaruprani Nehru, Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose and Dr Sarat Chandra Chatterji? Shrimati Swaruprani Nehru was to us not merely the worthy consort of Pandit Motilal and the revered mother of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Her suffering, sacrifice and service in the cause of India's freedom were such as any individual could feel proud of. As compatriots we mourn her death and our hearts go out in sympathy to Pandit Nehru and other members of the bereaved family.

To Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose India will always remain beholden for being the first to secure for her an honoured place in the modern scientific world. A nationalist to the core of his heart, Acharya Jagadish gave his life not merely to science, but to India as well. India knows it and is grateful for it. We convey our heartfelt sympathy to Lady Bose.

Through the untimely death of Dr Sarat Chandra Chatterji, India has lost one of the brightest stars in her literary firmament. His name, for years a household word in Bengal, was not less known in the literary world of India. But if Sarat Babu was great as a litterateur, he was perhaps greater as a patriot. The Congress in Bengal is distinctly poorer today because of his death. We send our sincerest condolence to the members of his family.

Before I proceed further I should like to bow my head in homage to the memory of those who have laid down their lives in the service of the country since the Congress met last year at Faizpur. I should mention especially those who died in prison or in internment or soon after release from internment. I should refer in particular to Sjt. Harendra Munshi, a political prisoner in the Dacca Central Jail, who laid down his life the other day as a result of hunger-strike. My feelings are still too lacerated to permit me to say much on this subject. I shall only ask you if there is not 'something rotten in the state of Denmark' that such bright and promising souls as Jatin Das, Sardar Mahabir Singh, Ramkrishna Namadas, Mohit Mohan Maitra, Harendra Munshi and others should feel the urge not to live life but to end it.

When we take a bird's-eye view of the entire panorama of

human history, the first thing that strikes us is the rise and fall of empires. In the East as well as in the West, empires have invariably gone through a process of expansion and after reaching the zenith of prosperity, have gradually shrunk into insignificance and sometimes death. The Roman empire of the ancient times and the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian empires of the modern period are striking examples of this law. The empires in India—the Maurya, the Gupta and the Mogul empires—are no exceptions to this rule. In the face of these objective facts of history, can anyone be so bold as to maintain that there is in store a different fate for the British empire? That empire stands today at one of the crossroads of history. It will either go the way of other empires or it must transform itself into a federation of free nations. Either course is open to it. The Czarist empire collapsed in 1917 but of its debris sprang the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. There is still time for Great Britain to take a leaf out of Russian history. Will she do so?

The British empire is a hybrid phenomenon in politics. It is a peculiar combination of self-governing countries, partially self-governing dependencies and autocratically-governed colonies. Constitutional device and human ingenuity may bolster up this combination for a while, but not for ever. If the internal incongruities are not removed in good time, then quite apart from external pressure, the empire is sure to break down under its own strain. But can the British empire transform itself into a federation of free nations with one bold sweep? It is for the British people to answer this question. One thing, however, is certain. This transformation will be possible only if the British people become free in their own homes—only if Great Britain becomes a socialist state. There is an inseparable connection between the capitalist ruling classes in Great Britain and the colonies abroad. As Lenin pointed out long ago, 'reaction in Great Britain is strengthened and fed by the enslavement of a number of nations'. The British aristocracy and bourgeoisie exist primarily because there are colonies and overseas dependencies to exploit. The emancipation of the latter will undoubtedly strike at the very existence of the capitalist ruling classes in Great Britain and precipitate the establishment of a

socialist regime in that country. It should, therefore, be clear that a socialist order in Great Britain is impossible of achievement without the liquidation of colonialism and that we who are fighting for the political freedom of India and other enslaved countries of the British empire are incidentally fighting for the economic emancipation of the British people as well.

It is well-known truism that every empire is based on the policy of divide and rule. But I doubt if any empire in the world has practised this policy so skilfully, systematically and ruthlessly as Great Britain. In accordance with the policy, before power was handed over to the Irish people, Ulster was separated from the rest of Ireland. Similarly, before any power is handed over to the Palestinians, the Jews will be separated from the Arabs. An internal partition is necessary in order to neutralise the transference of power. The same principle of partition appears in a different form in the new Indian Constitution. Here we find an attempt to separate the different communities and put them into water-tight compartments. And in the Federal Scheme there is juxtaposition of autocratic princes and democratically elected representatives from British India. If the new Constitution is finally rejected, whether owing to the opposition of British India or owing to the refusal of the princes to joining it, I have no doubt that British ingenuity will seek some other constitutional device for partitioning India and thereby neutralising the transference of power to the Indian people. Therefore, any Constitution for India which emanates from Whitehall must be examined with the utmost care and caution.

The policy of divide and rule, though it has its obvious advantages, is by no means an unmixed blessing for the ruling power. As a matter of fact, it creates new problems and new embarrassments. Great Britain seems to be caught in the meshes of her own political dualism resulting from her policy of divide and rule. Will she please the Muslim or the Hindu in India? Will she favour the Arab or the Jew in Palestine—the Arab or the Kurd in Iraq? Will she side with the King or the Wafd in Egypt? The same dualism is visible outside the empire. In the case of Spain, British politicians are torn between such alternatives as Franco and the lawful government—and in the wider field of European politics, between France and Germany. The contradictions and inconsistencies in Britain's foreign policy are the direct outcome of the heterogeneous composition of her empire. The British Cabinet has to please the Jews because she cannot ignore Jewish high finance. On the other hand, the India Office and Foreign Office have to placate the Arabs because of imperial interests in the Near East and India. The only means whereby Great Britain can free herself from such contradictions and inconsistencies is by transforming the empire into a federation of free nations. If she could do that, she would be performing a miracle in history. But if she fails, she must reconcile herself to the gradual dismemberment of a vast empire where the sun is supposed not to set. Let the lesson of the Austro-Hungarian empire be not lost on the British people.

The British empire at the present moment is suffering from strain at a number of points. Within the empire, in the extreme West, there is Ireland and in the extreme East, India. In the middle lies Palestine with the adjoining countries of Egypt and Iraq. Outside the empire, there is the pressure exerted by Italy in the Mediterranean and Japan in the Far East, both of these countries being militant, aggressive and imperialist. Against this background of unrest stands Soviet Russia, whose very existence strikes terror into the heart of the ruling classes in every imperialist state. How long can the British empire withstand the cumulative effect of this pressure and strain?

Today, Britain can hardly call herself 'the Mistress of the Seas'. Her phenomenal rise in the 18th and 19th centuries was the result of her sea power. Her decline as an empire in the 20th century will be the outcome of the emergence of a new factor in world history—Air Force. It was due to this new factor, Air Force, that an impudent Italy could successfully challenge a fully mobilised British Navy in the Mediterranean. Britain can rearm on land, sea and air up to the utmost limit. Battleships may still stand up to bombing from the air, but air force as a powerful element in modern warfare has come to stay. Distances have been obliterated and despite all anti-aircraft defences, London lies at the mercy of any bombing squadron from a continental centre. In short, air

force has revolutionised modern warfare, destroyed the insularity of Great Britain and rudely disturbed the balance of power in world politics. The clay feet of a gigantic empire now stand exposed as these have never been before.

Amid this interplay of world forces India emerges much stronger than she has ever been before. Ours is a vast country with a population of 350 millions. Our vastness in area and in population has hitherto been a source of weakness. It is today a source of strength if we can only stand united and boldly face our rulers. From the standpoint of Indian unity the first thing to remember is that the division between British India and the Indian states is an entirely artificial one. India is one and the hopes and aspirations of the people of British India and of the Indian states are identical. Our goal is that of an Independent India and in my view that goal can be attained only through a federal republic in which the provinces and the states will be willing partners. The Congress has, time and again, offered its sympathy and moral support to the movement carried on by the states' subjects for the establishment of democratic government in what is known as Indian India. It may be that at this moment our hands are so full that the Congress is not in a position to do more for our compatriots in the states. But even today there is nothing to prevent individual Congressmen from actively espousing the cause of the states' subjects and participating in their struggle. There are people in the Congress like myself who would like to see the Congress participating more actively in the movement of the states' subjects. I personally hope that in the near future it will be possible for the Indian National Congress to take a forward step and offer a helping hand to our fellow-fighters in the states. Let us not forget that they need our sympathy and our help.

Talking of Indian unity the next thing that strikes us is the problem of the minorities. The Congress has, from time to time, declared its policy on this question. The latest authoritative pronouncement made by the All-India Congress Committee at its meeting in Calcutta in October, 1937, runs thus:

The Congress has solemnly and repeatedly declared its policy

in regard to the rights of the minorities in India and has stated that it considers it its duty to protect these rights and ensure the widest possible scope for the development of these minorities and their participation in the fullest measure in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation. The objective of the Congress is an independent and united India where no class or group or majority or minority may exploit another to its own advantage, and where all the elements in the nation may co-operate together for the common good and the advancement of the people of India. The objective of unity and mutual co-operation in a common freedom does not mean the suppression in any way of the rich variety and cultural diversity of Indian life, which have to be preserved in order to give freedom and opportunity to the individual as well as to each group to develop unhindered according to its capacity and inclination.

In view, however, of attempts having been made to misinterpret the Congress policy in this regard, the All-India Congress Committee desire to reiterate this policy. The Congress has included in its resolution on Fundamental Rights that:

(i) Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for a purpose not opposed to law or morality;

(ii) Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to the public order and morality;

(iii) The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected;

(iv) All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex;

(v) No disability attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling;

(vi) All citizens have equal rights and duties in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort,

maintained out of state, or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public;

(vii) The state shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions;

(viii) The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage;

(ix) Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to acquire property and to follow any trade or calling, and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India.

These clauses of the Fundamental Rights resolution make it clear that there should be no interference in matter of conscience, religion, or culture, and a minority is entitled to keep its personal law without any change in this respect being imposed by the majority.

The position of the Congress in regard to the communal decision has been repeatedly made clear in Congress resolutions and finally in the Election Manifesto issued last year. The Congress is opposed to this decision as it is anti-national, anti-democratic and is a barrier to Indian freedom and the development of Indian unity. Nevertheless, the Congress has declared that a change in or supersession of the Communal Decision should only be brought about by the mutual agreement of the parties concerned. The Congress has always welcomed and is prepared to take advantage of any opportunity to bring about such a change by mutual agreement.

In all matters affecting the minorities in India, the Congress wishes to proceed by their co-operation and through their goodwill in a common undertaking and for the realization of a common aim which is the freedom and betterment of all the people of India.

The time is opportune for renewing our efforts for the final solution of this problem. I believe I am voicing the feelings of all Congressmen when I say that we are eager to do our very best to arrive at an agreed solution, consistent with the fundamental principles of nationalism. It is not necessary for me to go into details as to the lines on which a solution should take place. Much

useful ground has already been covered in past conferences and conversations. I shall merely add that only by emphasising our common interests, economic and political, can we cut across communal divisions and dissensions. A policy of live and let live in matters religious and an understanding in matters economic and political should be our objective. Though the Muslim problem looms large whenever we think of the question of the minorities and though we are anxious to settle this problem finally, I must say that the Congress is equally desirous of doing justice to other minorities and especially the so-called depressed classes whose number is a very large one. I would put it to the members of the minority communities in India to consider dispassionately if they have anything to fear when the Congress programme is put into operation. The Congress stands for the political and economic rights of the Indian people as a whole. If it succeeds in executing its programme, the minority communities would be benefited as much as any other section of the Indian population. Moreover, if after the capture of political power, national reconstruction takes place on socialistic lines—as I have no doubt it will—it is the 'have-nots' who will benefit at the expense of the 'haves' and the Indian masses have to be classified among the 'have-nots'. There remains but one question which may be a source of anxiety to the minorities, viz., religion and that aspect of culture that is based on religion. On this question the Congress policy is one of live and let live—a policy of complete non-interference in matters of conscience, religion and culture as well as of cultural autonomy for the different linguistic areas. The Muslims have, therefore, nothing to fear in the event of India winning her freedom—on the contrary, they have everything to gain. So far as the religious and social disabilities of the so-called depressed classes are concerned, it is well-known that during the last seventeen years the Congress has left no stone unturned in the effort to remove them, and I have no doubt that the day is not far off when such disabilities will be things of the past.

I shall now proceed to consider the method which the Congress should pursue in the years to come as well as its role in the national struggle. I believe more than ever that the method should

be Satyagraha or non-violent non-co-operation in the widest sense of the term, including civil disobedience. It would not be correct to call our method passive resistance. Satyagraha, as I understand it, is not merely passive resistance but active resistance as well though that activity must be of a non-violent character. It is necessary to remind our countrymen that Satyagraha or non-violent non-co-operation may have to be resorted to again. The acceptance of office in the provinces as an experimental measure should not lead us to think that our future activity is to be confined within the limits of strict constitutionalism. There is every possibility that a determined opposition to the forcible inauguration of Federation may land us in another big campaign of civil disobedience.

In our struggle for independence we may adopt either of two alternatives. We may continue our fight until we have our full freedom and in the meantime decline to use any power that we may capture while on the march. We may, on the other hand, go on consolidating our position while we continue our struggle for Purna Swaraj or complete independence. From the point of view of principle, both the alternatives are equally acceptable and *a priori* considerations need not worry us. But we should consider very carefully at every stage as to which alternative would be more conducive to our national advancement. In either case, the ultimate stage in our progress will be the severance of the British connection. When that severance takes place and there is no trace left of British domination, we shall be in a position to determine our future relations with Great Britain through a treaty of alliance voluntarily entered into by both parties. What out future relations with Great Britain will or should be, it is too early to say. That will depend to a large extent on the attitude of the British people themselves. On this point I have been greatly impressed by the attitude of President de Valera. Like the President of Éire, I should also say that we have no enmity towards the British people. We are fighting Great Britain and we want the fullest liberty to determine our future relations with her. But once we have real self-determination, there is no reason why we should not enter into the most cordial relations with the British people.

I am afraid there is a lack of clarity in the minds of many Congressmen as to the role of the Congress in the history of our national struggle. I know that there are friends who think that after freedom is won, the Congress Party having achieved its objective, should wither away. Such a conception is entirely erroneous. The party that wins freedom for India should be also the party that will put into effect the entire programme of post-war reconstruction. Only those who have won power can handle it properly. If other people are pitchforked into seats of power which they were not responsible for capturing, they will lack that strength, confidence and idealism which is indispensable for revolutionary reconstruction. It is this which accounts for the difference in the record of the Congress and non-Congress ministries in the very narrow sphere of Provincial Autonomy.

No, there can be no question of the Congress Party withering away after political freedom has been won. On the contrary, the Party will have to take over power, assume responsibility for administration and put through its programme of reconstruction. Only then will it fulfil its role. If it were forcibly to liquidate itself, chaos would follow. Looking at post-war Europe we find that only in those countries has there been orderly and continuous progress where the party which seized power undertook the work of reconstruction.

I know that it will be argued that the continuance of a party in such circumstances, standing behind the state, will convert that state into a totalitarian one; but I cannot admit the charge. The state will possibly become a totalitarian one, if there be only one party as in countries like Russia, Germany and Italy. But there is no reason why other parties should be banned. Moreover, the party itself will have a democratic basis, unlike, for instance, the Nazi Party which is based on the 'leader principle'. The existence of more than one party and the democratic basis of the Congress Party will prevent the future Indian state becoming a totalitarian one. Further, the democratic basis of the party will ensure that leaders are not thrust upon the people from above, but are elected from below.

Though it may be somewhat premature to give a detailed plan

of reconstruction, we might as well consider some of the principles according to which our future social reconstruction should take place. I have no doubt in my mind that our chief national problems relating to the eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease and to scientific production and distribution can be effectively tackled only along socialistic lines. The very first thing which our future national government will have to do, would be to set up a commission for drawing up a comprehensive plan of reconstruction. This plan will have two parts—an immediate programme and a long-period programme. In drawing up the first part, the immediate objectives which will have to be kept in view will be threefold—first, to prepare the country for self-sacrifice; secondly, to unify India; and thirdly, to give scope for local and cultural autonomy. The second and third objectives may appear to be contradictory, but they are not really so. Whatever political talent or genius we may possess as a people, will have to be used in reconciling these two objectives. We shall have to unify the country so that we may be able to hold India against any foreign invasion. While unifying the country through a strong central government, we shall have to put all the minority communities as well as the provinces at their ease, by allowing them a large measure of autonomy in cultural as well as governmental affairs. Special efforts will be needed to keep our people together when the load of foreign domination is removed, because alien rule has demoralised and disorganised us to a degree. To promote national unity we shall have to develop our lingua franca and a common script. Further, with the help of such modern scientific contrivances as aeroplanes, telephone, radio, films, television, etc., we shall have to bring the different parts of India closer to one another and through a common educational policy we shall have to foster a common spirit among the entire population. So far as our lingua franca is concerned, I am inclined to think that the distinction between Hindi and Urdu is an artificial one. The most natural lingua franca would be a mixture of the two, such as is spoken in daily life in large portions of the country and this common language may be written in either of the two scripts. Nagari or Urdu. I am aware that there are people in India who strongly favour either of the two scripts

to the exclusion of the other. Our policy, however, should not be one of exclusion. We should allow the fullest latitude to use either script. At the same time, I am inclined to think that the ultimate solution, and the best solution would be the adoption of a script that would bring us into line with the rest of the world. Perhaps, some of our country-men will gape with horror when they hear of the adoption of the Roman script, but I would beg them to consider this problem from the scientific and historical point of view. If we do that, we shall realise at once that there is nothing sacrosanct in a script. The Nagari script, as we know it today, has passed through several phases of evolution. Besides, most of the major provinces of India have their own script and there is the Urdu script which is used largely by the Urdu-speaking public in India and by both Muslims and Hindus in provinces like the Punjab and Sind. In view of such diversity, the choice of a uniform script for the whole of India should be made in a thoroughly scientific and impartial spirit, free from bias of every kind. I confess that there was a time when I felt that it would be anti-national to adopt a foreign script. But my visit to Turkey in 1934 was responsible for converting me. I then realised for the first time what a great advantage it was to have the same script as the rest of the world. So far as our masses are concerned, since more than 90 per cent are illiterate and are not familiar with any script, it will not matter to them which script we introduce when they are educated. The Roman script will, moreover, facilitate their learning a European language. I am quite aware how unpopular the immediate adoption of the Roman script would be in our country. Nevertheless, I would beg my countrymen to consider what would be the wisest solution in the long run.

With regard to the long-period programme for a Free India, the first problem to tackle is that of our increasing population. I do not desire to go into the theoretical question as to whether India is over-populated or not. I simply want to point out that where poverty, starvation and disease are stalking the land, we cannot afford to have our population mounting up by thirty million during a single decade. If the population goes up by leaps and bounds, as it has done in the recent past, our plans are likely

to fall through. It will, therefore, be desirable to restrict our population until we are able to feed, clothe and educate those who already exist. It is not necessary at this stage to prescribe the methods that should be adopted to prevent a further increase in population, but I would urge that public attention be drawn to this question.

Regarding reconstruction, our principal problem will be how to eradicate proverty from our country. That will require a radical reform of our land system, including the abolition of landlordism. Agricultural indebtedness will have to be liquidated and provision made for cheap credit for the rural population. An extension of the co-operative movement will be necessary for the benefit of both producers and consumers. Agriculture will have to be put on a scientific basis with a view to increasing the yield from the land.

To solve the economic problem agricultural improvement will not be enough. A comprehensive scheme of industrial development under state-ownerships and state-control will be indispensable. A new industrial system will have to be built up in place of the old one which has collapsed as a result of mass production abroad and alien rule at home. The planning commission will have to carefully consider and decide which of the home industries could be revived despite the competition of modern factories and in which sphere large scale production should be encouraged. However much we may dislike modern industrialism and condemn the evils which follow in its train, we cannot go back to the pre-industrial era, even if we desire to do so. It is well, therefore, that we should reconcile ourselves to industrialisation and devise means to minimise its evils and at the same time explore the possibilities of reviving cottage industries where there is a possibility of their surviving the inevitable competition of factories. In a country like India, there will be plenty of room for cottage industries, especially in the case of industries including hand-spinning and hand-weaving allied to agriculture.

Last but not the least, the state on the advice of a planning commission, will have to adopt a comprehensive scheme for gradually socialising our entire agricultural and industrial system in the spheres of both production and appropriation. Extra capital will

have to be procured for this, whether through internal or external loans or through inflation.

Opposing or resisting the provincial part of the Constitution will be hardly possible now, since the Congress Party has accepted office in seven out of eleven provinces. All that could be done would be to strengthen and consolidate the Congress as a result of it. I am one of those who were not in favour of taking office—not because there was something inherently wrong in doing so, not because no good could come out of that policy, but because it was apprehended that the evil effects of office acceptance would out-weigh the good. Today I can only hope that my forebodings were unfounded.

How can we strengthen and consolidate the Congress while our ministers are in office? The first thing to do is to change the composition and character of the bureaucracy. If this is not done, the Congress Party may come to grief. In every country, the ministers come and go, but the steel frame of the permanent services remains. If that is not altered in composition and character, the governmental party and its cabinet are likely to prove ineffective in putting their principles into practice. This is what happened in the case of the Social Democratic Party in post-war Germany and perhaps in the case of the Labour Party in Great Britain in 1924 and 1929. It is the permanent services who really rule in every country. In India they have been created by the British and in the higher ranks they are largely British in composition. Their outlook and mentality are in most cases neither Indian nor national and a national policy cannot be executed until the permanent services become national in outlook and mentality. The difficulty, of course, will be that the higher ranks of the permanent services being, under the Statute, directly under the Secretary of State for India and not under the Provincial Government, it will not be easy to alter their composition.

Secondly, the Congress ministers in the different provinces should, while they are in office, introduce schemes of reconstruction in the spheres of education, health, prohibition, prison reforms, irrigation, industry, land reform, workers' welfare etc. In this matter, attempts should be made to have as far as possible, a

uniform policy for the whole of India. This uniformity could be brought about in either of two ways. The Congress ministers in the different provinces could themselves come together—as the Labour Ministers did in October, 1937, in Calcutta—and draw up a uniform programme. Over and above this, the Congress Working Committee, which is the supreme executive of the Congress could lend a helping hand by giving directions to the different departments of the Congress-controlled provincial governments in the light of such advice as it may get from its own experts. This will mean that the members of the Congress Working Committee should be conversant with the problems that come within the purview of the Congress governments in the provinces. It is not intended that they should go into the details of administration. All that is needed is that they should have a general understanding of the different problems so that they could lay down the broad lines of policy. In this respect, the Congress Working Committee could do much more than it has hitherto done and unless it does so, I do not see how that body can keep an effective control over the different Congress ministries.

At this stage I should like to say something more about the role of the Congress Working Committee. This Committee, in my judgement, is not merely the directing brain of the national army of fighters for freedom. It is also the Shadow Cabinet of Independent India and it should function accordingly. This is not an invention of my own. It is the role which has been assigned to similar bodies in other countries that have fought for their national emancipation. I am one of those who think in terms of a Free India—who visualise a national government in this country within the brief span of our own life. It is consequently natural for us to urge that the Working Committee should feel and function as the Shadow Cabinet of a Free India. This is what President de Valera's Republican Government did when it was fighting the British Government and was on the run. And this is what the Executive of the Wafd Party in Egypt did before it got into office. The members of the Working Committee while carrying on their day to day work should accordingly study the problems they will have to tackle in the event of their capturing political power.

More important than the question of the proper working of the Congress Governments is the immediate problem of how to oppose the inauguration of the federal part of the Constitution. The Congress attitude towards the proposed Federal Scheme has been clearly stated in the resolution adopted by the Working Committee at Wardha on February 4, 1938, which will be placed before this Congress after the Subjects Committee has considered it. That resolution says:

> The Congress has rejected the new Constitution and declared that a Constitution for India which can be accepted by the people must be based on Independence and can only be framed by the people themselves by means of a Constituent Assembly without the interference by any foreign authority. Adhering to this policy of rejection, the Congress has, however, permitted the formation in provinces of Congress Ministries with a view to strengthening the nation in its struggle for Independence. In regard to the proposed Federation, no such consideration applies even provisionally, or for a period, and the imposition of this Federation, will do grave injuries to India and tighten the bonds which hold her under the subjection of an imperialist domination. This scheme of Federation excludes from the sphere of responsibility the vital function of a government.
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> The Congress is not opposed to the idea of Federation but a real Federation must, even apart from the question of responsibility, consist of free units, enjoying more or less the same measure of freedom and civil liberty and representation by a democratic process of election. Indian states participating in the Federation should approximate to the provinces in the establishment of representative institutions, responsible government, civil liberties and the method of election to the Federal House. Otherwise Federation as it is now contemplated will, instead of building Indian unity, encourage separatist tendencies and involve the states in internal and external conflict.
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> The Congress, therefore, reiterates its condemnation of the proposed scheme and calls upon Provincial and Local Congress Committees and the people generally as well as Provincial Governments and Ministries to prevent its inauguration.

In the event of an attempt being made to impose it, despite the declared will of the people, such an attempt must be combated in every way and the Provincial Government and Ministries must refuse to co-operate with it.

In case such a contingency arises, the A.I.C.C. is authorised and directed to determine the line of action to be pursued in this regard.

I should like to add some more arguments to explain our attitude of uncompromising hostility towards the proposed Federation. One of the most objectionable features of the Federal Scheme relates to the commercial and financial safeguards in the new Constitution. Not only will the people continue to be deprived of any power over defence or foreign policy, but the major portion of the expenditure will also be entirely out of popular control. According to the budget of the Central Government for the year 1937–38, the army expenditure comes to 44.61 crores of rupees (£ 33.46 million) out of a total expenditure of 77.90 crores of rupees (£ 58.42 million)—that is, roughly 57 per cent of the total expenditure of the Central Government. It appears that the reserved side of Federal Government which will be controlled by the Governor-General will handle about 80 per cent of the Federal expenditure. Moreover, bodies like the Reserve Bank and the Federal Railways Authority are already created or will be created which will work as *imperium in imperio* uncontrolled by a Federal Legislature. The Legislature will be deprived of the powers it possesses at present to direct and influence railway policy, and it will not have any voice in determining the currency and exchange policy of the country which has a vital bearing on its economic development.

The fact that external affairs will be a reserved subject under the Federal Government will prejudicially affect the freedom of the Indian Legislature to conclude trade agreements and will seriously restrict, in effect, fiscal autonomy. The Federal Government will not be under any constitutional obligation to place such trade agreements before the Legislature for their ratification, even as they decline at present to give an undertaking to place the

Indo-British Trade Agreement before the Indian Legislative Assembly. The so-called fiscal autonomy convention will have no meaning unless it is stipulated that no trade agreement on behalf of India shall be signed by any party without its ratification by the Indian Legislature. In this connection, I should like to state that I am definitely of opinion that India should enter into bilateral trade agreements with countries like Germany, Czechoslovakia, Italy and the United States of America with whom she had close trade relations in the past. But under the new Constitution, it will not be within the power of the Federal Legislature to force the Federal Government to enter into such bilateral trade agreements.

The iniquitous and inequitable commercial safeguards embodied in the Act will make it impossible for any effective measure to be adopted in order to protect and promote Indian national industries especially where they might, as they often do, conflict with British commercial or industrial interests. In addition to the Governor-General's special responsibility to see that provisions with regard to discrimination, as laid down in the Act, are duly carried out, it is also his duty to prevent any action which would subject British goods imported into India to any kind of discriminatory or penal treatment. A careful study of these stringent and wide provisions will show that India can adopt no measures against British competition which the Governor-General cannot, in effect, stultify or veto, whether in the legislative or in the administrative sphere. It is, of course, preposterous to permit foreigners in this country to compete with the nationals on equal terms and there can be no genuine Swaraj if India is to be denied the power to devise and adopt a national economic policy including the right, if her interests so require, of differentiating between nationals and non-nationals. In a famous article in *Young India*, under the caption 'The Giant and the Dwarf' written soon after the conclusion of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in 1931, Mahatma Gandhi declared plainly that 'to talk of no discrimination between Indian interests and English or European, is to perpetuate Indian helotage. What is equality of rights between a giant and a dwarf?' Even the meagre powers enjoyed by the Central Legislature at present to enact a measure like the reservation of the Indian coastal

trade for Indian-owned and Indian-managed vessels has been taken away under the so-called reformed Constitution. Shipping is a vital industry which is essential for defensive as well as for economic purposes, but all the accepted and legitimate methods of developing this key industry including those adopted even by several British Dominions are henceforth rendered impossible for India. To justify such limitations on our sovereignty on the ground of 'reciprocity' and 'partnership' is literally to add insult to injury. The right of the future Indian Parliament to differentiate or discriminate between nationals and non-nationals, whenever Indian interests require it, should remain intact and this right we cannot sacrifice on any account. I would like in this connection to cite the Irish parallel. The Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act of 1935 provides for a distinct Irish citizenship in connection with the electoral system, entry into public life, merchant shipping law, aircraft, as also in connection with special privileges which it thought proper to reserve for Irish nationals, such as those conferred through measures for assisting Irish industry. Irish citizenship, in other words, is distinct from British, which cannot claim equal rights in the State of Eire (or Ireland) on the basis of British citizenship, which is not recognised there. I feel that India must similarly seek to develop her own distinct nationality and establish a citizenship of her own.

While on the question of fiscal autonomy and commercial safeguards, I might refer briefly to the need of an active foreign trade policy for India. India's foreign trade should be viewed not in a haphazard or piecemeal manner as is often done in order to provide some immediate or temporary benefit to British industry, but in a comprehensive manner so as to co-ordinate India's economic development with its export trade on the one hand and its external obligation on the other. The very nature of India's export trade makes it essential that it should not have any restrictive agreement with England such as would jeopardise its trade with the various non-empire countries which have been in several respects its best customers, or such as would tend to weaken India's bargaining power *vis-à-vis* other countries. It is unfortunate that the protected negotiations for an Indo-British Trade Agreement

are still proceeding, while the Ottawa Agreement, even after the expiry of its notice-period and despite the decision of the Legislative Assembly to terminate it, still continues, and along with the differential duties on British steel and textiles, the said Ottawa Agreement secures the prevailing advantages for British industries. There is no doubt that under the existing political conditions, any trade agreement between England and India is bound to be of an unequal character because our present political relationship would weigh the scales heavily in favour of England. There is also no doubt that the British preferential system is political in origin and before we permit non-Indian vested interests to be established or consolidated in this country under the shelter of a trade agreement, we should be careful as to its political repercussions and economic consequences. I trust that the present Indo-British Trade negotiations will not be allowed to impede the conclusion of bilateral trade agreements with other countries whenever possible and that no such trade agreement will be signed by the Government of India unless it is ratified by the Indian Legislature.

From the above, it will be quite clear that there is no analogy between the powers of the Provincial Ministries and those of the proposed Federal Ministry. Moreover, the composition of the Federal Legislature is reactionary to a degree. The total population of the Indian states is roughly 24 per cent of that of the whole of India. Nevertheless, the Rulers of the States, not their subjects, have been given 33 per cent of the seats in the Lower House and 40 per cent in the Upper House of the Federal Legislature. In these circumstances, there is no possibility, in my opinion, of the Congress altering its attitude towards the Federal Scheme at any time. On our success in resisting the imposition of Federation by the British Government will depend our immediate political future. We have to fight Federation by all legitimate and peaceful means—not merely along constitutional lines—and in the last resort, we may have to resort to mass civil disobedience which is the ultimate sanction we have in our hands. There can be little doubt that in the event of such a campaign being started in the future, the movement will not be confined to British India but will spread among the states' subjects.

To put up an effective fight in the near future, it is necessary to put our own house in order. The awakening among our masses during the last few years has been so tremendous that new problems have arisen concerning our party organisation. Meetings attended by fifty thousand men and women are a usual occurrence nowadays. It is sometimes found that to control such meetings and demonstrations, our machinery is not adequate. Apart from these passing demonstrations, there is the bigger problem of mobilising this phenomenal mass energy and enthusiasm and directing them along proper lines. But have we got a well-disciplined Volunteer Corps for this purpose? Have we got a cadre of officers for our national service? Do we provide any training for our budding leaders, for our promising young workers? The answers to these questions are too patent to need elaboration. We have not yet provided all these requirements of a modern political party, but it is high time that we did. A disciplined Volunteer Corps manned by trained officers is exceedingly necessary. Moreover, education and training should be provided for our political workers so that we may produce a better type of leaders in future. This sort of training is provided by political parties in Britain through Summer Schools and other institutions—and is a speciality in totalitarian states. With all respect to our workers who have played a glorious part in our struggle, I must confess that there is room for more talent in our party. This defect can be made up partly by recruiting promising young men for the Congress and partly by providing education and training for those whom we already have. Everybody must have observed how some European countries have been dealing with this problem. Though our ideals and methods of training are quite different from theirs, it will be admitted on all hands that a thorough scientific training is a requisite for our workers. Further, an institution like the Labour Service Corps of the Nazis deserves careful study and, with suitable modification may prove beneficial to India.

While dealing with the question of enforcing discipline within our own party, we have to consider a problem which has been causing worry and embarrassment to many of us. I am referring to organisations like the Trade Union Congress and the Kisan

Sabhas and their relations with the Indian National Congress. There are two opposing schools of thought on this question—those who condemn any organisations that are outside the Congress and those who advocate them. My own view is that we cannot abolish such organisations by ignoring or condemning them. They exist as objective facts and since they have come into existence and show no signs of liquidating themselves, it should be manifest that there is a historical necessity behind them. Moreover, such organisations are to be found in other countries. I am afraid that whether we like it or not, we have to reconcile ourselves to their existence. The only question is how the Congress should treat them. Obviously, such organisations should not appear as a challenge to the National Congress which is the organ of mass struggle for capturing political power. They should, therefore, be inspired by Congress ideals and methods and work in close co-operation with the Congress. To ensure this, Congress workers should in large numbers participate in trade union and peasant organisations. From my own experience of trade union work I feel that this could easily be done without landing oneself in conflict or inconsistency. Co-operation between the Congress and the other two organisations could be facilitated if the latter deal primarily with the economic grievances of the workers and peasants and treat the Congress as a common platform for all those who strive for the political emancipation of their country.

This brings us to the vexed problem of the collective affiliation of workers' and peasants' organisations of the Congress. Personally, I hold the view that the day will come when we shall have to grant this affiliation in order to bring all progressive and anti-imperialist organisations under the influence and control of the Congress. There will, of course, be difference of opinion as to the manner and the extent to which this affiliation should be given and the character and stability of such organisations will have to be examined before affiliation could be agreed to. In Russia, the united front of the Soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers played a dominant part in the October Revolution—but, on the contrary, in Great Britain we find that the British Trade Union Congress exerts a moderating influence on the National Executive of the

Labour Party. In India, we shall have to consider carefully what sort of influence organisations like the Trade Union Congress and the Kisan Sabhas will exert on the Indian National Congress in the event of affiliation being granted and we should not forget that there is the possibility that the former may not have a radical outlook if their immediate economic grievances are not involved. In any case, quite apart from the question of collective affiliation, there should be the closest co-operation between the National Congress and other anti-imperialist organisations and this object would be facilitated by the latter adopting the principles and methods of the former.

There has been a great deal of controversy over the question of forming a party, like the Congress Socialist Party, within the Congress. I hold no brief for the Congress Socialist Party and I am not a member of it. Nevertheless, I must say that I have been in agreement with its general principles and policy from the very beginning. In the first place, it is desirable for the leftist elements to be consolidated into one party. Secondly, a leftist bloc can have a *raison d'être* only if it is socialist in character. There are friends who object to such a bloc being called a party, but to my mind it is quite immaterial whether you call that bloc a group, league or party. Within the limits prescribed by the Constitution of the Indian National Congress, it is quite possible for a leftist bloc to have a socialist programme, in which case it can be very well called a group, league or party. But the role of the Congress Socialist Party, or any other party of the same sort, should be that of a left-wing group. Socialism is not an immediate problem for us—nevertheless, socialist propaganda is necessary to prepare the country for socialism when political freedom has been won. And that propaganda can be conducted only by a party like the Congress Socialist Party, which stands for and believes in socialism.

There is one problem in which I have been taking a deep personal interest for some years and in connection with which I should like to make my submission—I mean the question of a foreign policy for India and of developing international contacts. I attach great importance to this work because I believe that in the years to come, international development will favour our

struggle in India. But we must have a correct appreciation of the world situation at every stage and should know how to take advantage of it. The lesson of Egypt stands before us as an example. Egypt won her Treaty of Alliance with Great Britain without firing a shot, simply because she knew how to take advantage of the Anglo-Italian tension in the Mediterranean.

In connection with our foreign policy, the first suggestion that I have to make is that we should not be influenced by the internal politics of any country or the form of its state. We shall find in every country men and women who will sympathise with Indian freedom, no matter what their own political views may be. In this matter we should take a leaf out of Soviet diplomacy. Though Soviet Russia is a communist state, her diplomats have not hesitated to make alliances with non-socialist states and have not declined sympathy or support coming from any quarter. We should, therefore, aim at developing a nucleus of men and women in every country who feel sympathetic towards India. To create and develop such a nucleus, propaganda through the foreign press, through Indian-made films and through art exhibitions would be helpful. The Chinese, for example, have made themselves exceedingly popular in Europe through their art exhibitions. Above all, personal contacts are necessary. Without such personal contacts it would be difficult to make India popular in other countries. Indian students abroad could also help in this work, provided we in India look to their needs and requirements. There should be closer contact between Indian students abroad and the Indian National Congress at home. If we could send out cultural and educational films made in India, I am sure that India and her culture would become known and appreciated by people abroad. Such films would prove exceedingly useful to Indian students and Indian residents in other countries, who at present are like our non-official ambassadors.

I do not like the word propaganda—there is an air of falsity about it. But I insist that we should make India and her culture known to the world. I say this because I am aware that such efforts will be welcomed in every country in Europe and America. If we go ahead with this work, we shall be preparing the basis for our

future embassies and legations in different lands. We should not neglect Great Britain either. We have even in that country a small but influential group of men and women who are genuinely sympathetic towards Indian aspirations. Among the rising generation and students, in particular, interest in and sympathy for India is rapidly on the increase. One has only to visit the universities of Great Britain to realise that.

To carry on this work effectively, the Indian National Congress should have its trusted agents in Europe, Asia, Africa and in North, Central and South America. It is a pity that we have so far neglected Central and South America where there is profound interest in India. The Congress should be assisted in this work of developing international contact by cultural organisations in India, working in the field of international culture and by the Indian Chambers of Commerce working in the sphere of international commerce. Further, Indians should make it a point to attend every international congress or conference; participation in such conferences is a very useful and healthy form of propaganda for India.

While talking of international contacts, I should remove a misgiving which may be present in some minds. Developing international contacts does not mean intriguing against the British Government. We need not go in for such intrigues and all our methods should be aboveboard. The propaganda that goes on against India all over the world is to the effect that India is an uncivilised country and it is inferred therefrom that the British are needed in order to civilise us. As a reply, we have only to let the world know what we are and what our culture is like. If we can do that, we shall create such a volume of international sympathy in our favour that India's case will become irresistible before the bar of world opinion.

I should not forget to refer to the problems, the difficulties and the trials which face our countrymen in different parts of Asia and Africa—notably in Zanzibar, Kenya, South Africa, Malaya and Ceylon. The Congress has always taken the keenest interest in their affairs and will continue to do so in future. If we have not been able to do more for them it is only because we are still slaves at home. A free India will be a healthy and potent factor in world

politics and will be able to look after the interests of its nationals abroad.

I must in this connection stress the desirability and necessity of developing closer cultural relations with our neighbours, viz., Persia, Afghanistan, Nepal, China, Burma, Siam, Malay States, East Indies and Ceylon. It would be good for both parties if they knew more of us and we knew more of them. With Burma and Ceylon, in particular, we should have the most intimate cultural intercourse, in view of our agelong contacts.

Friends, I am sorry I have taken more of your time than I had intended at first, but I am now nearing the end of my address. There is one important matter—the burning topic of the day—to which I should now draw your attention—the question of the release of detenues and political prisoners. The recent hunger-strikes have brought this question to the forefront and have focussed public attention on it. I believe that I am voicing the feelings of at least the rank and file of the Congress when I say that everything humanly possible should be done to expedite release. So far as the Congress ministries are concerned, it would be well to note that the record of some of them has not come up to public expectation. The sooner they satisfy the public demand, the better it will be for the Congress and for the people who are suffering in provinces ruled by non-Congress ministries. It is not necessary for me to labour this point and I fervently hope that in the immediate future, the public will have nothing to complain of so far as the record of the Congress ministries on this point is concerned.

It is not only the detenues and political prisoners in jail and detention who have their tale of woe. The lot of those who have been released is sometimes no better. They often return home in shattered health, victims of fell diseases like tuberculosis. Grim starvation stares them in the face and they are greeted, not with the smiles but with the tears of near and dear ones. Have we no duty to those who have given of their best in the service of their country and have received nothing but poverty and sorrow in return? Let us, therefore, send our heart-felt sympathy to all those who have suffered for the crime of loving their country and let us

all contribute our humble mite towards the alleviation of their misery.

Friends, one word more and I have done. We are faced with a serious situation today. Inside the Congress there are differences between the right and the left which it would be futile to ignore. Outside, there is the challenge of British Imperialism which we are called upon to face. What shall we do in this crisis? Need I say that we have to stand foursquare against all the storms that may beset our path and be impervious to all the designs that our rulers may employ? The Congress today is the one supreme organ of mass struggle. It may have its right bloc and its left—but it is the common platform for all anti-imperialist organisations striving for Indian emancipation. Let us, therefore, rally the whole country under the banner of the Indian National Congress. I would appeal specially to the leftist groups in the country to pool all their strength and their resources for democratising the Congress and reorganising it on the broadest anti-imperialist basis. In making this appeal, I am greatly encouraged by the attitude of the leaders of the British Communist Party whose general policy with regard to India seems to me to be in keeping with that of the Indian National Congress.

In conclusion, I shall voice your feelings by saying that all India fervently hopes and prays that Mahatma Gandhi may be spared to our nation for many many years to come. India cannot afford to lose him and certainly not at this hour. We need him to keep our people united. We need him to keep our struggle free from bitterness and hatred. We need him for the cause of Indian Independence. What is more—we need him for the cause of humanity. Ours is a struggle not only against British Imperialism but against world Imperialism as well, of which the former is the keystone. We are, therefore, fighting not for the cause of India alone but of humanity as well. India freed means humanity saved.

Bande Mataram

Municipal Socialism

Address to the Bombay Corporation, May 10, 1938

MR MAYOR, MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION AND FRIENDS,

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the great honour you have done me this afternoon. I am not so presumptuous as to think that I am in any way worthy of this great honour. On the contrary, I feel I am before you here this afternoon, in spite of my own shortcomings and limitations, as a symbol. I am here as a servant of the Indian National Congress and of the Indian public at large.

The very kind words which have fallen from your lips, Mr Mayor, are a token of your generosity and the largeness of your heart. I take it that this generosity and largeness of heart show your real feelings towards the movement for Indian emancipation and towards all those who stand for that movement. We are living today in the midst of momentous times. You have referred also to international affairs. The day is gone when India was a country isolated from the rest of the world. Today, thanks to scientific achievement and to our own development, intellectual and moral, the whole world is one entity. What happens in one remote corner of the present world has far-reaching repercussions all over the globe. What we achieve in one city in India has, therefore, an importance not merely for that city, not merely for that country but, if I may say so, for the whole of humanity. This is true not only of political affairs but of civic affairs as well. I remember that during the few years that I had the occasion to spend in Europe, one of the most striking things which came to my notice was the achievement of the Socialist Municipality of Vienna. I believe nobody, no matter to what nationality he belonged, nobody who had occasion to see some of the achievements of that Municipality went back without a conviction that here was an achievement of much importance and significance to all those human beings who were interested in civic welfare. The Vienna Municipality, in the course of twelve years, provided housing accommodation for at

east 2,00,000 persons and this arrangement for housing 2,00,000 persons was made without any additional taxation and without any loans. The entire charge was met from revenue and that revenue was collected by taxing amusements. We know that amusements are taxed in this country also but unfortunately the cities do not have the benefit of that taxation. What impressed me most, therefore, was the fact that so much could be achieved in one city without any additional taxation and without loans. That is why I was stressing the point that if you could achieve something in one city, that would have significance and importance for the whole world.

It is exceedingly gratifying to note that in Bombay you have done away with limited franchise, that you are going to have adult franchise and that you have done away with nominations. Once again I will say that this has significance not only for the city of Bombay but for the whole of India and probably for other countries circumstanced like India. I think we should offer our congratulations to the present Government of Bombay for this change. We all wish that other cities, particularly the premier cities in India, would take a leaf out of Bombay's history in this respect, introduce adult franchise and abolish the system of nominations.

Now, Sir, the city of Bombay has a splendid situation surrounded by the sea. It is situated in the midst of fine natural scenery and the streets and buildings of Bombay—at least the better and richer parts of Bombay—can compare favourably with any city in this world; but that is only one side of the picture. We cannot forget the poverty which we have in this city and the slums in which our poorer countrymen have to live. We have, therefore, to address ourselves to the task of looking after the poorer and less fortunate sections of our countrymen. One of the greatest sons of India, Deshbandhu C.R. Das, once said that the ideal of civic bodies should be to make them poor men's corporations and in his first speech as the Mayor of Calcutta he laid down a programme of service to the poor. That programme was in many ways an ideal programme and has afforded an inspiration to the corporation of Calcutta and indirectly to other civic bodies as well. I think we have yet to travel a long way before we can honestly claim that

our civic bodies are in reality poor men's corporations. There is a great deal of work to be done but what is needed most is inspiration, zeal and passion to serve the poor. It is that zeal, that passion which is the motive power that will enable us to travel along the path of service and to convert our cities into poor men's corporations. Sir, here in Bombay you have achieved much, specially, in the field of primary education. Your achievements in the sphere of education as also in other spheres have been of immense benefit to the citizens of Bombay and afforded an inspiration to others who have been entrusted with civic government elsewhere. I do hope that you will not rest content with what you have already done but that you will move with the times and travel fast in the direction of making your Municipal Corporation an ideal one.

Civic progress all over the world is moving in the direction of what may be called Municipal Socialism. 'Socialism' is a word which is sometimes a bogey to many, but I believe if we analyse and try to understand what socialism really stands for, and particularly what Municipal Socialism stands for, we shall have no reason to fight shy of it. Consciously or unconsciously we have been moving in the direction of Municipal Socialism. Today every modern municipality has taken upon its shoulders immense duties which were unthinkable twenty or thirty years ago. The sphere of these social duties and responsibilities is, we may well say, fast expanding from day to day. Today a modern municipality has to furnish not merely pure drinking water, roads, lighting, etc., but it has to provide primary education and it has to look after the health of the population and to tackle problems of infant mortality, maternity, drainage and the like-problems which the municipalities did not think of a few years ago. It is difficult to say where you are going to draw a line in future. You have in the case of the Birmingham Municipality a Municipal Bank and there are other municipalities in the West which have taken upon their shoulders duties and responsibilities which were unheard of and unthinkable a few decades ago. That is why I say that we have been moving consciously or unconsciously in the direction of Municipal Socialism. Municipal Socialism is nothing else but a collective effort for the service of the entire community. With this

ideal before us, if we address ourselves to the task that awaits us and fulfil our duties in the most satisfactory manner, we shall be serving not merely the cause of our cities but the cause of humanity as well. We, who are interested in civic affairs, must take lessons not merely from the achievements of our own municipalities but we travel abroad, in Europe and America and also in the Far East, read literature and collect information about municipal problems there, so that we may work more efficiently and satisfactorily in our own cities. That is why I have stressed the point that your achievements here in Bombay are not only for your own fellow-citizens but have a much wider significance.

Apart from the opportunities which we get by joining civic bodies—opportunities of civic service—there is another positive gain which we can derive out of our association with them and that is this: our work in connection with these bodies equips us for the larger duties in public life. I think it was Bryce, one of the foremost political thinkers of England, who said that the real school of democracy is local self-government. Professor Laski and others have sung in the same tune. Today it is realised by all political thinkers and students of civic affairs that the real school of democracy is local self-government. Therefore, there is a double advantage which we derive from our association with local bodies.

One word more and I have done. We are frequently told by foreigners that municipal development, like other attempts at social progress in this country, have been the result of our contact with the West and that before we came into intimate touch with Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, very little had been achieved in the direction of civic progress. Sir, I should like to take this opportunity of giving the lie direct to this charge. In the sphere of municipal progress we are not creating something out of nothing, but we are building on ancient foundations. As in the sphere of village self-government we are building on very ancient foundations, so also in the sphere of local self-government we are doing the same. One has only to turn to the ancient relics of Mohenjodaro to realise what a high degree of civic achievement our forefathers in this ancient land could boast of. And after the age of Mohenjodaro if you come to the Mauryan empire and study

the records and descriptions of the capital of the empire, viz., Pataliputra, you will find that the city of Pataliputra was not only a highly developed city but the municipal government of that city had varied functions, functions which can compare very favourably with those of any modern municipality. For words like Mayor and other modern municipal terms you will find synonyms in our ancient language which were then in vogue. Then came what may be called the Dark Age in Indian history. During this Dark Age there was a set-back not only in municipal progress but in other departments of national life as well. But because of the Dark Age one should not conclude that prior to that, we had not achieved any progress in civic affairs. It is necessary to remind our countrymen about this, because unfortunately as a result of our agelong servitude we have to a large extent forgotten our own past. It is only on account of the researches, past and present, made by our own scholars and historians that have unravelled to us our own forgotten past, that we can now realise what progress our forefathers had once made in the domain of civic affairs. Therefore, we can claim that in the matter of civic progress we are building on ancient foundations. That I think will give us inspiration in addressing ourselves to the problems of the present and of the future.

Sir, I am afraid my reply which was meant to be a short one has developed into something like a sermon. I had no intention of sermonising. I had got up with the intention of primarily thanking you from the bottom of my heart for the very great honour you have done me—honour, which I take it, is meant for the Indian National Congress of which I am a humble servant. Let me express a fervent hope that your city will make progress from day to day in the domain of civic affairs and will set an example to other civic bodies in this country and abroad. I wish you, Sir, and the corporation all success in the arduous task that awaits you at present and in the future. Once again I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Congress Medical Mission to China

Bose's Public Statement and Appeal June 28, 1938

I have been informed by the Chinese Consulate in India that the Chinese Government have accepted the offer of the Congress Working Committee to send an ambulance unit to China. It now behoves us to push on with our arrangements and send out the medical mission as early as possible.

All-India China Day was successfully observed throughout the country on the 12th June. I am grateful to the public for their splendid response on that day. It is, however, to be regretted that collections could not be made satisfactorily on that occasion owing to shortness of notice. It has been suggested by friends in different parts of the country that some day or days be fixed in July exclusively for collecting funds for our medical mission.

Much Needed Fund

I heartily approve of the idea and fix the 7th, 8th and 9th July as China Fund Days. The dates 7th and 9th July are of great historical importance so far as the Chinese people are concerned. I request Congress organisations all over the country to make an intensive drive on these days for collecting funds. All sums collected should be sent to the All-India Congress Committee office at Allahabad. Let us not forget that we must collect a sum of Rs 22,000 on that occasion.

It would be a token of our regard for the Chinese people and would also help considerably to collect funds if miniature Chinese flags are sold on these days. This device should prove useful in the big cities and I hope that wherever possible these three days will also be observed as China Flag Days.

In places where there are members of the China Sub-Committee, they could make the necessary arrangements for the collection of funds in consultation with the local Congress organisations. In Bombay in particular, Sj. G.P. Hutheesingh, the Secretary of the China Sub-Committee is authorised to make the necessary arrangements in consultation with the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee.

I do hope that our collections will be enough to keep our medical mission at work for at least one year.

Order for Ambulance Car

In conclusion I should like to inform the public that orders have already been placed with Fords for a fully equipped ambulance which will be sent by them straight to Hongkong. The ambulance together with the medical staff will be living emblem of India's sympathy and good will for the great Chinese people in the darkest hour in their history. I earnestly hope and trust that the response of the public will be worthy of the Congress and of the Indian nation.

Bose's speech at University Institute Hall, August 12, 1938*

We in India have also our troubles. We are painfully conscious of the fact that we can do very little to help China in her present difficulties. But we have our heart with the Chinese people and as a token of our sympathy we are sending out a small medical mission to China.

I doubt what practical value this medical mission to China has. But it has a moral value, because this mission will go out as a token of our heartfelt sympathy with brothers and sisters in China.

I believe Prof. Tao and his countrymen are aware of the great interest and sympathy with which we in India are following the struggle in China. Chinese people are now passing through what we may regard as one of the darkest periods in her history. Whatever the present may show to us and to the world there is no doubt that the Chinese people will in the long run emerge triumphant

* Subhas Chandra Bose delivered the above speech at a reception to Professor Tai-Chi Tao, Director of People's Education and Member of Political Council of China. Eds.

out of this struggle, as we are aware Chinese civilisation is one of the most ancient in this world and the Chinese people have passed through various vicissitudes in their national history. In spite of all these vicissitudes, ups and downs of human history, the Chinese people have been marching on forward towards a common goal of mankind. It is because of the traditions of the Chinese people and also because of the strength and character which modern China possesses that we are so confident about the future of Sino-Japanese conflict.

Bose's farewell message to Congress Medical Mission to China

The departure to China of the medical mission organised by the Indian National Congress is a historic occasion. Our thoughts naturally go back to the days of old when international links were first forged binding India with the nations abroad. With China our relations have always been intimate and cordial. Both our nations are peace-loving and have a culture and a philosophy akin to each other. Like the Indian missionaries of old our medical men are now going out to China as ambassadors of service, good-will and love. We are painfully conscious of the fact that our gift to China in this fateful hour of her history is but a small one. Nevertheless behind this small gift there is the soul of the Indian people. I am sure that the telegraphic message which I am despatching to our medical mission will voice the innermost feelings of all my country. It is not a small thing that India is appearing on the international stage to-day as a bulwark against forces of imperialism, autocracy and spiritual wickedness. Let us, therefore, extend our warmest sympathy to our non-official ambassadors to China, wish them all *bon voyage* and pray for the success of their noble mission.

Message to Dr Atal

In a most critical hour in China's history when she fights for life and liberty you and your comrades are being sent by Indian National Congress as symbol of India's good-will, esteem and sympathy for great Chinese nation. At considerable risk and inconvenience you will embark tomorrow on your mission of service and love. The missionary zeal with which you are animated is redolent of the spirit that inspired Indian missionaries of old. May you by your work bring credit and honour to country to which you belong and help link her up with another oppressed nation. We wish you at success in your noble task for that will be India's glory—Bande Mataram.

On the Federal Scheme

Netaji's first statement on the Federal Scheme produced strong reaction among members of the Congress Right-wing. The second statement was made in defence of his original stand on the question.

I

July 9, 1938

There have been from time to time statements or insinuations in the British press to the effect that some influential leaders of the Congress have been negotiating with the British Government over the Federal Scheme as envisaged in the Government of India Act. I believe that the last statement which I noticed was that of the *Manchester Guardian* to which I gave an immediate and emphatic denial. In the absence of any proof, I cannot and do not believe that any influential Congress leader has been negotiating with the British Government with a view to arriving at a compromise behind the back of the Congress.

I may add that there is no analogy between Provincial

Autonomy and the Federal Scheme and the acceptance of office in the provinces by the Congress should not be construed as a stepping-stone towards the acceptance of the Federal Scheme at the Centre. I have no doubt in my mind that any effort to foist the Federal Scheme on the Congress will inevitably fail. If unfortunately it succeeds, it will break the Congress, because I do not see how those who are conscientiously opposed to the Federal Scheme can take it lying down.

Personally I think that any weakness shown by the Congress or any section thereof during this fateful hour in India's history will amount to treachery of the first magnitude to the cause of India's freedom. We are in such a sound strategic position today that if only we could unite and speak with one voice, we should be able to induce the British Government to concede the whole of our national demand. The slightest weakness in our attitude towards the Federal Scheme is bound to weaken our hands and strengthen those of the British Government.

So far as I am concerned, should the unthinkable contingency arise of the Federal Scheme being adopted by a majority within the Congress, it would probably be my duty to relieve myself of the trammels of office so that I would be free to work for what I consider to be the best interests of the country, namely, open, unmitigated and unrelenting opposition to the monstrous Federal Scheme.

II

July 15, 1938

It is neither my intention nor my duty to participate in a press controversy on this question. I have done what I felt it my duty to do, viz., to call public attention to the attitude of the Congress towards the Federal Scheme embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935. The statement I issued on the 9th July was nothing more than a forceful reiteration of the Congress view on Federation. That view was clearly expounded by the All-India Congress

Committee in October, 1937, and it was subsequently re-affirmed by the Haripura Congress in February last.

The resolution of the All-India Congress Committee was as follows:

> The All-India Congress Committee reiterate their emphatic condemnation of and complete opposition to the scheme and their decision to combat it in every possible way open to them. An attempt to inaugurate this scheme, despite the clearly expressed will of the nation, will be a challenge to the people of India. The Committee therefore call upon the provincial and local Congress committees and the people generally, as well as the provincial governments and ministries, to prevent the imposition of this federation which will do grave injury to India and tighten the bonds which hold her in subjection to imperialist domination and reaction. The committee are of opinion that the provincial governments should also move their legislatures to give formal expression to this opposition to the proposed Federation and to intimate the British Government not to impose it on their provinces.
>
> The Congress therefore reiterates its condemnation of the proposed Federal Scheme and calls upon the provincial and local Congress committees and the people generally, as well as the Provincial Government and Ministries, to prevent its inauguration. In the event of an attempt being made to impose it, despite the declared will of the people, such an attempt must be combated in every way, and the Provincial Governments and Ministries must refuse to co-operate with it. In case such a contingency arises, the All-India Congress is authorised and directed to determine the line of action to be pursued in this regard.

Before I issued my statement on the 9th July, reports had reached me of efforts being made by the British Government to enlist the sympathy and support of Congressmen in favour of the Federal Scheme. It was therefore my duty to take the earliest opportunity of combating this sinister move in obedience to the mandate of the Haripura Congress. If I had not done that, I would

have failed in the proper discharge of the responsibilities of my office.

I can legitimately claim that my statement emanated from a sense of implicit loyalty to the resolution of the Haripura Congress. If I used strong language it was partly because I feel strongly on the question and partly because the attitude of the Congress itself is a strong one, viz., an attitude of 'emphatic condemnation' of and 'complete opposition' to the Federal Scheme. Let me make it quite clear that the Congress resolution which was adopted unanimously at Haripura leaves no room for equivocation and it is not open to any Congressman, however highly placed he may be, to endeavour to weaken the bold and uncompromising position of the Congress on this issue. Nothing has happened since the Haripura Congress met which can induce us to modify our attitude towards Federation in the slightest degree.

On the contrary, the international situation has developed in such a favourable direction that it is all the more incumbent on us to maintain the stand we took at Haripura.

If there was any doubt as to the necessity of issuing such a statement, the developments subsequent to its publication should remove it once for all. And if we hold ourselves in patience for a time, I believe we shall soon be convinced that my statement was issued not a day too soon.

With regard to the probable consequences of an attempt to force the Federal Scheme down our throats, though it is inconceivable that the Congress will ever repudiate its previous attitude, it is well for everybody concerned to anticipate what will happen if that unthinkable contingency does arise by some chance. Judging from the present temper of the Congress, there can be no doubt whatsoever that acceptance of the Federal Scheme by a majority in the Congress will inevitably cause a serious split within that body. If we are practical politicians, we shall not shut our eyes to the actualities of the situation and we shall not delude ourselves with the hope that the acceptance of the Federal Scheme by a majority will be meekly tolerated by the dissentient minority.

I am surprised and pained at some of the criticisms made of my statement. It is absurd to label as a threat what is nothing more than a forceful exposition of the Congress view on Federation. It is equally absurd to allege that I shall walk out of the Congress if that body goes back on its previous attitude. Nothing will ever make me give up the Congress which is like the very breath of my life. The last and equally absurd criticism made of my statement is that I have not got the liberty to resign even if I find the majority bent on taking a step which amounts to national 'harakiri'. Acceptance of the Federal Scheme by the Congress will amount to nothing short of political suicide and if the unthinkable contingency arises that the majority decide to go in for it, who can reasonably expect me to join in that game of suicide? In conclusion, I hope and trust and pray that all attempts on the part of Congressmen to whittle down our national demand will cease once for all. Let us not reduce ourselves to the level of parliamentary busybodies by offering Delhi and Whitehall amendments of the unwanted Federal Scheme. On the contrary, let us sink our differences and present a united front to the British Government and let us be firm in our conviction that British Imperialism can no longer ignore the national demand of a united and renascent India.

Science and Politics

Answers to Questions posed by Meghnad Saha.

The Indian Science News Association invited Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the then President of the Congress to preside over the third general meeting of the Association on August 21, 1938. Professor Meghnad Saha put certain questions to Netaji at the meeting. Here are the relevant proceedings.

Question: May I enquire whether the India of the future is going to revive the philosophy of village life, of the bullock-cart—thereby perpetuating servitude, or is she going to be a modern industrialised nation which, having developed all her natural resources, will solve the problems of poverty, ignorance and defence and will

:ake an honoured place in the comity of nations and begin a new :ycle in civilisation?

If the Congress High Command decides on a policy of industrialisation, are they going to set up a rationalised scheme of industrialisation and establish a National Research Council and mobilise the scientific intelligentsia of the country? I put the question because the Congress has come into power in several provinces and because there is a great confusion of ideas regarding the future industrialisation of India.

Answer: The movement for Indian emancipation has reached a stage when Swaraj is no longer a dream—no longer an ideal to be attained in the distant future. On the contrary, we are within sight of power—seven out of eleven provinces of British India are now under Congress ministries. Limited though the powers of those governments are, they have yet to handle the problems of reconstruction within their respective domains. How are we to solve these problems? We want, first and foremost, the aid of science in this task.

The Congress and the task of National Reconstruction: I have always held the view and I said so in my presidential speech at the Haripura Congress that the party that fights for freedom cannot liquidate itself when power is won. That party should face the tasks of post-war reconstruction as well. Hence, Congressmen of today have not only to strive for liberty, but they have also to devote a portion of their thought and energy to problems of national reconstruction. And national reconstruction will be possible only with the aid of science and our scientists.

May I now, with your permission, place before you some of my ideas on the problems of national reconstruction? We hear very often nowadays of schemes for bringing about industrial recovery in this land. An officer in this province recently wrote a voluminous book on a recovery plan for Bengal. The problem we have to face is not industrial recovery, however, but industrialisation. India is still in the pre-industrial stage of evolution. No industrial advancement is possible until we first pass through the throes of an industrial revolution. Whether we like it or not, we have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that the

present epoch is the industrial epoch in modern history. There is no escape from the industrial revolution. We can at best determine whether this revolution, that is industrialisation, will be a comparatively gradual one, as in Great Britain, or a forced march as in Soviet Russia. I am afraid that it has to be a forced march in this country.

I have no doubt that when we have a national government for the whole country, one of the first things we shall have to do is to appoint a National Planning Commission for the whole country. As a matter of fact our ministries in the seven provinces have already been feeling the need of a uniform industrial policy and programme. Anticipating this, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution a year ago, soon after the Congress ministries came into existence, to the effect that it was necessary to appoint a committee of experts to advise the Congress governments on industrial matters. This view was confirmed by the Congress Premiers' Conference which met in May, 1938, in Bombay under my chairmanship. Thereafter, the appointment of the committee of experts has been before the Working Committee and at its last meeting in July, the Working Committee decided that as a preliminary step, I shall convene a conference of the Industries Ministers of seven Congress-administered provinces. I am stating all these facts to show that without waiting for the advent of Purna Swaraj, we are moving in the direction of economic planning.

Though I do not rule out cottage industries and though I hold that every attempt should be made to preserve and also revive cottage industries wherever possible, I maintain that economic planning for India should mean largely planning for the industrialisation of India. And industrialisation, as you will all agree, does not mean the promotion of industries for manufacturing umbrella-handles and bell-metal plates, as Sir John Anderson would have us believe.

I gratefully recognise the fact that your magazine *Science and Culture* has helped to direct intelligent thoughts in this country towards the problems of industrialisation. The articles published periodically on Electric Power Supply, Flood-control, River-

physics, need for establishing a National Research Council, etc., have been highly illuminating and instructive.

I should now like to make a few observations on the principles of national planning:

(1) Though from the industrial point of view the world is one unit, we should nevertheless aim at national autonomy, especially in the field of our principal needs and requirements.

(2) We should adopt a policy aiming at the growth and development of the mother industries, viz., power supply, metal production, machine and tools manufacture, manufacture of essential chemical, transport and communication industries, etc.

(3) We should also tackle the problem of technical education and technical research. So far as technical education is concerned, as in the case of Japanese students, our students should be sent abroad for training in accordance with a clear and definite plan so that as soon as they return home, they may proceed straightaway to build up new industries.

So far as technical research is concerned, we shall all agree that it should be free from governmental control of every kind. It is only in this unfortunate country that government servants are entrusted with scientific research on receipt of princely salaries and we know very well what results have been obtained therefrom.

(4) There should be a permanent National Research Council.

(5) Lastly, as a preliminary step towards national planning, there should be an economic survey of the present industrial position with a view to securing the necessary data for the National Planning Commission.

These are, in brief, some of my ideas on the problems of industrialisation and national reconstruction and I believe they are held in common by scientific men and women in this country. We, who are practical politicians, need your help, who are scientists, in the shape of ideas. We can, in our turn, help to propagate these ideas and when the citadel of power is finally captured, can

help to translate these ideas into reality. What is wanted is far-reaching co-operation between science and politics.

Professor Saha has in the course of his illuminating address, asked me what the attitude of the Congress is towards the problems of industrialisation. I must say that all Congressmen do not hold the same view on this question. Nevertheless, I may say without any exaggeration that the rising generation are in favour of industrialisation and for several reasons. Firstly, industrialisation is necessary for solving the problem of unemployment. Though scientific agriculture will increase the production of the land, if food is to be given to every man and woman, a good portion of the population will have to be transferred from land to industry. Secondly, the rising generation are now thinking in terms of Socialism as the basis of national reconstruction and Socialism presupposes industrialisation. Thirdly, industrialisation is necessary if we have to compete with foreign industries.

Lastly, industrialisation is necessary for improving the standard of living of the people at large.

Professor Saha has asked another question, viz., whether India will be one nation when she is freed from British control. To this I may reply that we of the Congress are conscious of our responsibility in matter of achieving Indian unity and solidarity. We want to go not the way of China, but the way of Turkey. But we shall have to work very hard indeed, if we want to hold together as one nation when we are free. For promoting national unity and solidarity, many things are needed, viz., a common lingua franca, a common dress, a common diet, etc. The Congress, as you are aware, has been advocating Hindustani as the lingua franca of this country. But I believe that what is wanted most of all is the will to be one nation and to hold together as one nation, when foreign domination ceases. Thus, to my mind, the problem of unity is largely a psychological problem. The people must be educated and drilled to feel that they are one nation. Other factors, like language, dress, food, etc., may help unity, but cannot create it. In addition to this national will, what is needed for maintaining national unity and solidarity is an all-India party. That party is the Congress. We find in history that each country has produced a party for the

purpose of unifying the people of that country. The Communist Party in Russia, the Nazi Party in Germany, the Fascist Party in Italy and Kemal's Party in Turkey are instances in point. The Congress Party in India will play the unifying role which the above parties have played in their respective countries.

The Industrial Problems of India

Full text of address delivered at the Industries Ministers' Conference in Delhi, October 2, 1938.

Let me at the outset thank you all heartily for responding to my invitation and attending this conference in spite of inconvenience and loss of time. This conference is the first of its kind since the Congress undertook the responsibility of government in the provinces. Ever since it was decided to permit Congressmen to accept ministerial office, the problem of developing the industries of our country and the question of co-ordination of our resources with a view to that end has been engaging the earnest attention of the Working Committee.

At its sitting in August, 1937, the Working Committee adopted the following resolution:

> The Working Committee recommends to the Congress Ministries the appointment of a Committee of Experts to consider urgent and vital problems, the solution of which is necessary to any scheme of national reconstruction and social planning. Such solution will require extensive surveys and the collection of data, as well as a clearly defined social objective. Many of these problems cannot be dealt with effectively on a provincial basis and the interests of the adjoining provinces are interlinked. Comprehensive river surveys are necessary for formulation of a policy to prevent disastrous floods, to utilize the water for purposes of irrigation, to consider the problem of soil erosion, to eradicate malaria, and for the development of hydro-electric

> and other schemes. For this purpose the whole river valley will have to be surveyed and investigated, and large-scale state planning resorted to. The development and control of industries require also joint and co-ordinated action on the part of several provinces. The Working Committee advises therefore that, to begin with, an inter-provincial Committee of Experts be appointed to consider the general nature of the problems to be faced, and to suggest how, and in what order, these should be tackled. This Experts Committee may suggest the formation of special committees or boards to consider each such problem separately and to advise the provincial governments concerned as to the joint action to be undertaken.

In May last, I convened in Bombay a conference of the Premiers of the seven Congress Provinces which was attended by some members of the Working Committee and also by several ministers. On that occasion, we discussed, as some of you will remember, the problems of industrial reconstruction, development of power resources and power supply as well as the general question of co-ordination and co-operation among the Congress Provinces. If I remember aright, those who attended the conference were of the view that the Working Committee should take the initiative in appointing a committee of experts to advise the Congress ministries on the above problems.

The Working Committee in July last adopted the following resolution:

> With reference to the resolution passed by the Working Committee at Wardha on August 14–17, 1937, relating to the appointment of an Experts Committee to explore the possibilities of an All-India Industrial Plan, it is resolved that as a preliminary step the President be authorized to convene a conference of the Ministers of Industries at an early date and call for a report of the existing industries in different provinces and the needs and possibilities of new ones.

This Conference has been called in pursuance of this resolution.

It is needless for me to point out that with the problems of

poverty and unemployment looming so large in our national life today, the question of utilising all our resources to the best advantage of the nation has assumed enormous importance. It is essential to improve the miserable lot of our peasantry and to raise the general standard of living. This cannot be achieved merely by the improvement of agriculture. Greater efficiency in agricultural methods, which is certainly desirable, may give us more and cheaper food and other necessities of life obtained from agriculture, but it will not solve the problem of poverty and unemployment. This may appear paradoxical but a little consideration will show that greater efficiency means that the same production in agriculture can be effected by less than the present number of agriculturists. In that eventuality the present situation of unemployment may become worse as a result of scientific agriculture.

How then shall we tackle this formidable problem? It is our aim to see that everybody—man, woman and child, is better clothed, better educated and has sufficient leisure for recreation and for cultural activity. If this aim is to be realised the quantity of industrial products has to be increased considerably; necessary works have to be organised and a large proportion of village population have to be diverted to industrial occupations.

India is a country with resources similar to those of the United States of America. Her mineral wealth and other natural resources are superabundant. What is wanted is their systematic and organised exploitation by us in the best interests of the nation. Every country in the world that has grown rich and prosperous has done so through the fullest development of its industries. I shall here cite the example of only one country. Before the Great War, Russia was no better than India. She was mainly an agricultural country and nearly 70 per cent of the population were peasants, almost as miserable and wretched as our peasants today. Industries were in a backward state, power was undeveloped and was considered a luxury. She was without knowledge of her power resources, without experts and technicians. But within the last sixteen years she has passed from a community of primarily half-starved peasants to one of primarily well-fed and well-clothed industrial workers. She has achieved a considerable measure of success in her efforts

to solve the problem of poverty, disease and famine which perpetually haunted her peasant population before the Revolution. This has been largely due to planned industrialisation of the whole country which presupposed a scheme of planned electrification. This marvellous progress in Russia in a very short period deserves our careful study and attention, irrespective of the political theories on which this State is based. I have quoted the example of Russia merely because of the resemblance which the pre-war conditions there bear to those in our country and to show how far a scheme of planned industrialisation can take us on the path to all-round prosperity.

We Congressmen of today have not only to strive for liberty but have also to devote a portion of our thought and energy to problems of national reconstruction, considering that we are within sight of power and Swaraj is no longer a dream to be realized in the distant future. National reconstruction will be possible only with the aid of science and our scientists. There is at the present day a lot of loose talk about schemes for bringing about industrial recovery in this land. To my mind the principal problem that we have to face is not industrial recovery but industrialisation. India is still in the pre-industrial stage of evolution. No industrial advancement is possible until we pass through the throes of an industrial revolution. If the industrial revolution is an evil, it is a necessary evil. We can only try our best to mitigate the ills that have attended its advent in other countries. Furthermore, we have to determine whether this revolution will be a comparatively gradual one, as in Great Britain, or a forced march as in Soviet Russia. I am afraid that it has to be a forced march in this country. In the world, as it is constituted today, a community which resists industrialisation has little chance of surviving international competition.

At this stage I should like to make it perfectly clear that there need not be a conflict between cottage industries and large-scale industries. Such conflict, if any, arises out of misunderstanding. I am a firm believer in the need of developing our cottage industries, though I also hold that we have to reconcile ourselves to industrialisation. We find that in the most industrially advanced

countries of Europe a large number of cottage industries still exist and thrive. In our country we know of cottage industries—like the handloom industry for instance—which have withstood competition with Indian and foreign mills and have not lost ground. Industrialisation does not therefore mean that we turn our back on cottage industries. Far from it. It only means that we shall have to decide which industries should be developed on a cottage basis and which on a large-scale basis. In the peculiar national economy which exists in India today, and in view of the limited resources of our people, we should do our very best to develop cottage industries, side by side with large-scale industries.

Industries may be roughly classified under three heads—heavy, medium and cottage industries. Heavy industries at the present time are no doubt of the greatest value for the rapid economic development of the country. They form the backbone of our national economy. We cannot unfortunately make much headway in this direction until we capture power at the Centre and secure full control of our fiscal policy. The medium-scale industries can be started by business leaders with Government co-operation and help. As regards cottage industries, I have already observed that there need not be any conflict between their development and that of large-scale industries.

I should now like to make a few observations on the principles of national planning:

(a) Though from the industrial point of view the world is one unit, we should nevertheless aim at national autonomy especially in the field of our principal needs and requirements.

(b) We should adopt a policy aiming at the growth and development of the mother industries, viz., power supply, metal production, machine and tools manufacture, manufacture of essential chemicals, transport and communication industries, etc.

(c) We should also tackle the problem of technical education and technical research. So far as technical education is concerned, as in the case of Japanese students, our students should be sent abroad for training in accordance with a clear and definite plan so that as soon as they return home they may proceed straight-away to build up new industries. So far as technical research is concerned, we shall agree that it should be freed from governmental control of every kind.

(d) There should be a permanent national research council.

(e) Last but not the least, as a preliminary step towards national planning, there should be an economic survey of the present industrial position with a view to securing the necessary data for the National Planning Commission.

I shall now draw your attention to some of the problems which you may have to consider at this conference:

(1) Arrangement for a proper economic survey of each province.

(2) Co-ordination between cottage industries and large-scale industries with a view to preventing overlapping.

(3) The advisability of having regional distribution of industries.

(4) Rules regarding technical training in India and abroad for our students.

(5) Provisions for technical research.

(6) Advisability of appointing a committee of experts to give further advice on the problems of industrialisation.

If these problems could be tackled at this conference, I am sure that our purpose in meeting here this afternoon would be fulfilled. As I have indicated at the outset, we have to go into the question of the existing industries in the different provinces and the needs and possibilities of new ones. We can fulfil this task only if we tackle a variety of problems some of which I have indicated above.

In conclusion, I express the ardent hope that through your help and co-operation the conference may prove to be a success and may afford a powerful impetus to the industrial regeneration of our poor and exploited country.

The Students' Movement

Text of message to the U.P. Students' Conference held at Allahabad on October 29, 1938.

I have always had a close touch with the Students' Movements in India and for various reasons. My experiences as a student convinced me years ago that students must have an organisation of their own, if they want to exist as self-respecting individuals and prepare themselves for their future career as citizens of a great country. When I ceased to be a student in the narrow sense of the term, I resolved within myself that I would do my very best to lend a helping hand to the future generation of students if and when necessity arose.

Students all over the world, regardless of their national barriers, look upon themselves as a fraternity and rightly too. It is not a mere truism that the students of today are the leaders of tomorrow and that they are the living embodiment of a nation's hopes and aspirations. The students represent, as a rule, the most idealistic part of a nation and it is because of their innate idealism that the students of the world feel that they are members of one great fraternity. It should be our duty to foster this sense of solidarity among our students, so that through them, the Indian people may be welded into one nation for all time to come.

The students of a free country enjoy the rights which free men and free women usually enjoy but this is not the case with our students. Our students suffer from the handicaps which members of a subject race cannot avoid. They are looked upon as minors by their guardians, at home and outside; by the state, they are usually regarded as political suspects. (Things have improved since the Congress Governments came into existence.) In such circumstances, students must learn to help themselves. They must insist on being treated as grown-up men and women and demand those rights which members of a free nation are entitled to.

Not infrequently students come into conflict with the authorities, both educational and Government. Conflicts with the educational authorities usually arise when they are denied their

rights as students and with the government authorities when they are denied their rights as citizens. In either case, students can hope to vindicate themselves only when they are properly organised. Organisation, therefore, is their first and foremost task. Students' Conferences can be of lasting benefit only when they afford impetus. Organisation for vindicating students' rights is not, however, enough. Organisation should also aim at providing physical, intellectual and moral training so that students may, individually and collectively, turn out to be better men and better citizens.

I am most decidedly of opinion that the platform of the Students' Movement should be a broad-based one and should be open to students of all shades of opinion. It would be a disaster if students belonging to a particular party or group or ideology were to attempt to capture office to the exclusion of other students. If this happens, the Students' Movement will split and several students' federations will come into existence. In your deliberations, hold aloft your eyes to the ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity and progress and remember always that liberty means emancipation from bondage of every kind—political, social and economic.

Our Needs and Our Duties

Full text of a signed article in the *National Front*, October, 1938.

If we analyse the secret of the influence and strength of the Indian National Congress today, we come down to three factors:

(1) the large membership of the Congress,
(2) the organisation and discipline of the Congress, and
(3) the spirit of service and sacrifice demonstrated by Congressmen during the last fifty-three years.

Since its birth in 1885, the Congress has made considerable headway and has brought the Indian people nearer to their goal of Swaraj or Independence. But though we are within sight of power, there is yet a struggle ahead of us. If we desire that this struggle should be the last hurdle in our march towards freedom, we have to do three things. The membership of the Congress should be so enlarged as to embrace the vast majority of our countrymen. Our organisation and discipline have to be perfected and last, but not least, we have to be prepared for greater suffering and sacrifice.

In this short article, I desire to deal mainly with the first of the above three requisites.

In a political organisation which uses the method of non-violence, as opposed to armed struggle, the question of numbers assumes great importance. The ultimate weapon in a non-violent struggle is Satyagraha or mass civil disobedience which presupposes the rallying of the masses under one banner. In proportion, as the Congress has been able to draw the masses to its fold, it has increased its influence and strength.

When the first session of the Congress was held in Bombay in 1885, only a handful of middle and upper class intellectuals assembled on the occasion. Today a session of the Congress can draw as many people as it can accommodate.

There is no doubt that Mahatma Gandhi was the first leader to bring the Congress into intimate contact with the masses of this country. I do not propose to attempt an analysis of the personality and programme of Mahatma Gandhi which enabled him to attract the masses towards the Congress in an unprecedented manner. The process which Mahatma Gandhi set on foot has now to be brought to fruition. How can this be done? There are so many false and extraneous issues which tend to mislead the dumb millions, to create differences and dissensions and to emphasise fissiparous tendencies. Our weapon against them is a two-fold one—political and socio-economic. On the political side we must stress the nationalist appeal as against the lure of narrow communalism.

We must all learn to think and feel n terms of the nation and

not in terms of a group or sect. On the socio-economic side, we must open the eyes of our illiterate countrymen to the fact that despite differences of religion, caste or language, our economic problems and grievances are the same and can be solved only when we are free and have a national Government, truly representative of the will of the people.

It is absolutely necessary to stress the economic issues which cut across communal divisions and barriers. The problems of poverty and unemployment, of illiteracy and disease, of taxation and indebtedness affect alike the Hindus and Muslims and other sections of the people and it should be easy to explain to our masses that their solution depends on the prior solution of the political problem, i.e., on the establishment of a national, popular and democratic Government.

Scientific mass propaganda on the above lines, if persisted in, is sure to bring the people of all religions and castes under the banner of Swaraj. When the masses come to the Congress in their thousands and lacs, the influence and strength of the Congress will increase proportionately. The only problems that will then remain will be to organise and discipline this vast membership and prepare them for the suffering and sacrifice which the future struggle for Swaraj will involve.

There is, however, a relevant question to which I should like to refer here. The new members that will come into the Congress as a result of scientific propaganda should not be like dumb-driven cattle. They should be live human beings, with plenty of initiative. If the individual members lack initiative, the Committees which they will form will also lack dynamism. In that event, democracy may prove to be a failure. The success of democracy in India depends on the initiative of the individual and on the dynamism of the subordinate Congress Committees. If the initiative has to come from the top and not from the bottom, democracy may be well-nigh reduced to totalitarianism. But that is not what we are working for. Let us, therefore, remember that individual initiative has to be unceasingly encouraged and developed and subordinate Congress Committees have to be maintained in a state of eternal vigilance and activity.

Our needs and our duties at the present time are simple indeed. But to fulfil them requires herculean efforts. There is no time to lose; let us, therefore, put our shoulders to the wheel at once.

The European Crisis—Analysis of the Debacle

Full text of a signed article in *The Congress Socialist*, October, 1938.

The recent European crisis has been studied and explained by different people from different points of view. Herein the reader will find another such study.

On the 19th January, 1938, I passed through Prague and had the honour of being received by Dr Benes, then President of the Czechoslovak Republic. I had had the privilege of meeting him twice before, when he was the Foreign Minister under President Masaryk. President Benes during the course of a one-hour talk told me that never before had Czechoslovakia felt so safe and secure as then. By common consent, Dr Benes is one of the cleverest statesmen in Europe but even he did not realise that he was sitting on a volcano. Verily, the cleverest of us can sometimes err grievously. The Czech Maginot Line and the newly developed air-force had lulled the President into a sense of security.

The next day I passed through Vienna. Everything was quiet there, as in Austria generally. Schuschnigg seemed to be safely installed as Chancellor and backed by the black-robed clergy and the black-shirted Fascists was ruling Austria without any difficulty. Little did he know that within a few months, the Nazis were going to march into Austria and he was to be made a prisoner, like so many of the Austrian Socialists whom he had imprisoned.

The Nazis had previously torn up the Treaty of Versailles and marched into the Rhineland to occupy it militarily. The French

secret service had reported to the French Government that Hitler's instructions to the Reichswehr (German Army) were that if the French Army invaded Germany, the Reichswehr were to fall back and avoid a war. Blum had not the guts to call Hitler's bluff.

Austria's independence had been guaranteed by the big powers but when the Nazis invaded Austria and occupied it, nobody had the courage to lodge a protest even. In July, 1934, Italy had threatened invasion if the Germans entered Austria when Dolfuss was murdered, but in 1938, Italy was completely changed.

Small wonder then that in a few months, not content with grabbing Austria, Germany wanted to annex the Sudetenland. Once again Hitler thought that nobody would venture to call his bluff.

What made Hitler contemplate a fresh invasion? He was assured that Italy would not object to it and the big powers would not venture to fight him. Their armament programme was not ready, particularly that of England. Now or never was, therefore, Hitler's motto.

It is urged that Hitler was on the point of invading Czechoslovakia when Chamberlain rushed to meet him in an aeroplane. Was this projected invasion a make-believe or a reality? If you ask me, I shall say that Germany would never have ventured into a war, knowing that Great Britain would be arrayed against her. Therefore, in my opinion, British politicians were either befooled by Hitler or they deliberately lent a helping hand to German hegemony over the continent. British surrender to Hitler meant the virtual substitution of the Anglo-German Alliance in place of an Anglo-French Alliance. The pro-French group in the Cabinet was overthrown by the pro-German group in the Cabinet.

But why did France surrender to blackmail? That is a question I find difficult to answer. Since the Great War, there was French hegemony on the continent. That hegemony has disappeared overnight and France is now a second class European power. I did not think that French Imperialists would go down without a fight. And the French Socialists? Why did they agree to toe the line? I am inclined to think that they have been suffering from an

inferiority complex. That is why they could not stand up to Hitler. Blum was much too frightened at the prospect of war to be able to do the right thing.

But France could have saved Czechoslovakia and at the same time prevented war. If the French had firmly told Britain and Germany that she would stand by Czechoslovakia, then Russia would have come in. And since the frontiers of Great Britain are now the Rhine, she would have never deserted France. I am told by a friend who is just back from Europe that in Belgium all arrangements for a war were complete. Thus the history of 1914 would have repeated itself. I know sufficiently of Nazi Germany to be able to say that the Nazis would have quailed before a situation similar to that of 1914.

It is my considered opinion that a word from Britain to Germany to the effect that she would stand by France and Czechoslovakia would have sufficed to make Hitler give up all his plans for attacking Czechoslovakia.

In the face of French and British betrayal, what could Czechoslovakia have done? I have a feeling that had she withstood a German invasion, she might have dragged in France and Russia into the arena and ultimately Great Britain also. But this is after all a speculation. Dr Benes had before his eyes the fate of Abyssinia. Perhaps he thought that it would have been better for the Negus as a practical politician to have accepted the proposals of the Hoare-Laval Pact. That is why he surrendered Sudetenland to Germany and kept what remained of his country after appeasing the Poles and the Hungarians.

What we have just witnessed is the first scene of a drama which will possibly end with a Four-Power Pact, the victory of France and the elimination of Soviet Russia from European politics. These, at any rate, are the plans of Fascist politicians all over Europe. Will they succeed? Who can tell?

One thing seems to be clear. If Soviet Russia wants to stage a come-back, she will first have to convince the Big Powers that her war-machine is as formidable as it was at the time the Franco-Soviet Pact was first broached by Laval.

On Kemal Ataturk

Tribute to the Leader of Turkey on his death, November, 1938.

Of the romantic figures thrown up by the Great War, Kemal Pasha was undoubtedly one of the most striking. His meteoric rise to fame and popularity is indeed rare in history. Kemal Pasha was, however, much more than a romantic figure or a conquering hero. He was at the same time a shrewd strategist and an acute diplomat and his unprecedented success in life would hardly have been possible without a unique combination of manifold qualities of head and heart. Kemal Pasha was revolutionary not merely on the battlefields of Anatolia, but also in the field of national reconstruction.

He was a magnificent example of the dictum that those who strive for liberty and win it should also put into effect the programme of post-war reconstruction. Great as a general, great as a diplomat, great as a social reformer, great as a statesman, great as a fighter and great as a builder—Kemal Pasha, or Kemal Ataturk, is undoubtedly one of the greatest men of this century. To him goes the credit of saving his country from the jaws of the European Powers and of building up a rejuvenated Turkey on the ashes of the erstwhile Ottoman Empire. Should the European Powers try once again to overrun Asia, Kemal's Turkey will guard the western flank of our continent. The death of such a unique personality cannot but move the whole world and particularly all oppressed and exploited nations like ours.

It is our bounden duty to pay our respectful homage to this great lover of freedom and of humanity. I, therefore, suggest that we observe 'Kemal Day' on the 19th November next and utilise the occasion for holding meetings at which resolutions should be passed paying our respectful homage to the memory of Kemal Ataturk and conveying our friendly greetings to the emancipated people of his beloved Turkey and our heart-felt sympathy for them in their national bereavement.

The National Planning Committee

Inauguration speech at the first meeting of the All-India National Planning Committee at Bombay on December 17, 1938.

In the beginning of his speech Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, the Congress President, outlined the industrial possibilities of the country and emphasised the need for the Committee to see that in whatever suggestions it made for the industrial regeneration of the country, the interests of the smaller village industries were strictly safeguarded. He said:

During the last few weeks, I have noticed an apprehension in certain quarters as to the possible effects of our efforts to industrial planning on the movement that has been going on since 1921 for the production of Khadi and the promotion of cottage industries under the auspices of the All-India Spinners Association and the All-India Village Industries Association respectively. It may be remembered that at Delhi I made it perfectly clear in my opening speech that there was no inherent conflict between cottage industries and large-scale industries. As a matter of fact, I divided industries into three classes: cottage, medium-scale and large-scale industries and I pleaded for a plan which would lay down the scope of each of these classes. Not only that. In the National Planning Commission we have reserved a seat for a representative of the All-India Village Industries Association and a similar seat could also be arranged for in the National Planning Committee. It would be doing us a grave injustice if it be urged or even apprehended that the promoters of the National Planning Commission want to sabotage the movement for the revival of cottage industries.

Everybody knows or should know that even in the most industrially advanced countries in Europe and Asia, e.g., Germany and Japan, there are plenty of cottage industries which are in flourishing condition. Why then should we have any apprehension with regard to our own country?

I may now add a few remarks on the relation between cottage industries and large-scale industries. Among large-scale industries,

mother industries are the most important, because they aim at producing the means of production. They put into the hands of artisans necessary appliances and tools for facilitating quicker and cheaper production. For example, if in the city of Benares we could supply electrically driven looms along with electrical power at the rate of half-anna per unit, it would be possible for the artisans working in their own homes to twin out sarees and embroidered cloth of different varieties at about five or six times the present rate of production and it would enable them to compete successfully with foreign imported goods of this description. With a good marketing organisation and an organisation for the supply of raw materials, these artisans can be rescued from the depths of poverty and misery to which they have fallen.

This is not the only instance which I can give. If the power industry and the machinery manufacturing industries are controlled by the State for the welfare of the nation, a large number of light industries like the manufacture of bicycles, fountain pens and toys can be started in this country by men of the artisan class working with the family as a unit. This is exactly what has been done in Japan. Success depends entirely upon the fact that power and machinery are extremely cheap and the Japanese Government have set up boards for the supply of raw materials and for proper marketing. I believe that this is the only way by means of which the handloom industry and the silk industry of our country can be revived.

The National Planning Committee will have to tackle specific problems. It will have first to direct its attention to the mother industries, i.e., those industries which make the other industries run successfully—such as the power industry, industries for the production of metals, heavy chemicals, machinery and tools, and communication industries like railway, telegraph, telephone and radio.

Our country is backward in respect of power supply compared with other industrially advanced countries. In the matter of electrical power particularly India's backwardness can be gauged from the fact that while in India we have at present only seven units per head, a backward country like Mexico has ninety-six units per

head and Japan about five hundred units per head. In developing electrical power, the Government has squandered money: take the instance of the Mandi Hydro-Electric Scheme on which the Government has spent ten times as much as other countries have done on similar efforts. How I wish an enquiry could be made into the manufacture of machinery and machine tools with a view to keeping up supplies in the event of interruption of communications with foreign countries owing to war or any other causes. The other key industries into which an inquiry should be started are the fuel industry, the metal production and heavy chemical industries. In this respect the resources of the country have not been properly investigated and, whatever little industry there is, is being controlled by foreigners, with the result that there is a lot of wastage. This is particularly true of the fuel industry.

The last key industry is the transport and communications industry which includes railways, steamships, electrical communications, radio, etc. At present the railways are controlled by the Railway Board, which is entirely under European management and only a small fraction of the requirements of the railways is manufactured in the country. As regards steam navigation, excepting coastal traffic, the entire communication is in the hands of non-Indians owing to unfair privileges enjoyed by them. Electrical goods are entirely supplied by foreign countries. As regards radio, I would like to suggest the setting up of a special sub-committee to investigate its possibilities.

Lastly, we will have to consider the most important problem of finding the necessary capital and credit for our plan of industrialisation. Unless this problem is solved, all our plans will remain mere paper schemes and we shall not make any headway in our industrial progress.

A Minimum Clear-Cut Programme

Text of statement issued from Bombay on January 17, 1939.

I have nothing special to add to what I have been saying during the last few months. Today when I analyse the situation in the country, I find that on the Right there is a drift towards constitutionalism while on the Left there is a drift towards irresponsibility and indiscretion.

The acceptance of office has undoubtedly enhanced the strength and prestige of the Congress, but simultaneously it has helped to accentuate the weaker elements in the national character. I find that today there are many people who are thinking and dreaming of progress towards our goal of Purna Swaraj without any further fight.

Other people are now coming into the Congress who have their own axes to grind or who consider the Congress to be a safe organisation. This is what largely accounts for the tendency towards enlisting bogus members which one finds in several provinces.

On the Left I find that there are far too many groups who have their petty differences and dissensions. The Left elements in the Congress have during the last few months lost ground instead of gaining it. Individuals have, on certain occasions, been behaving in such a way as to enable their critics to say that they are consciously or unconsciously promoting violence.

I am definitely of opinion that the present opportunity of pushing on towards the goal of Purna Swaraj should not be lost, for such an opportunity is rare in the lifetime of a nation. To that end the Left should co-operate with the Right, so long as it is possible for them to do so. But what co-operation can they offer when they are so disorganised and indisciplined? Those who believe in Leftism would do well to consider what steps they could take to organise and discipline all radical elements in the Congress on the basis of a clear-cut programme. When they are so organised and disciplined, they will be able to offer real co-operation to the Right in the task of winning Purna Swaraj.

The first thing that we need is that all Congressmen should speak with one voice and think with one will. I regret that of late there has been a tendency on the part of certain individual Congressmen to whittle down the Congress resolution of uncompromising hostility to Federation. I desire to make it perfectly clear that no Congressman has any authority to do so. I hope that such an attempt will not be made in future. I also hope that nobody will be misled by the uncalled-for advice given to the British Government by such irresponsible individuals.

I should like to add that if the Federal Scheme is forcibly introduced, a fight will have to be waged on all fronts and if such a fight does begin, I am sure it will not be confined to the people of British India. We have, however, reached a stage when the main problem is not how we shall fight Federation, but what we should do if the Federal Scheme is quietly dropped over us or its promulgation postponed sine die. That there is every possibility of Federal Scheme being quietly shelved is not only my personal opinion but it is also the view hinted at the other day by Lord Meston. To this question the Tripuri Congress will, I hope, give a proper reply. My own view on this point is perfectly clear and I have already given expression to it. All those who honestly believe that Swaraj will not be won without a fight, should consider it their sacred duty to prepare in everyway for the coming developments in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Congress. This will mean preparation for greater service and sacrifice, self-purification, sinking of all petty differences and organisation of all the anti-Imperialist elements in the Congress on the basis of a minimum clear-cut programme. Such organisation will materially help to stem the tide towards constitutionalism on the one hand and irresponsibility and indecision on the other.

The Tripuri Presidential Election Debate

Statements and Counter-Statements, January 21 to February 4, 1939

First Statement of Subhas Chandra Bose

January 21, 1939

In view of the situation created by the withdrawal of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and after reading the statement that he has issued, it is imperative for me to say something on the subject of the impending Presidential election. In discussing this question all sense of false modesty will have to be put aside for the issue is not a personal one. The progressive sharpening of the anti-imperialist struggle in India has given birth to new ideas, ideologies, problems and programmes. People are consequently veering round to the opinion that as in other free countries the Presidential election in India should be fought on the basis of definite problems and programmes so that the contest may help the clarification of issues and give a clear indication of the working of the public mind. An election contest in these circumstances may not be an undesirable thing.

Up-till now I have not received any suggestion or advice from a single delegate asking me to withdraw from the contest. On the contrary I have been nominated as a candidate from several provinces without my knowledge or consent and I have been receiving pressing requests from Socialists as well as non-Socialists in different parts of the country urging me not to retire. Over and above this there seems to be a general feeling that I should be allowed to serve in office for another term. It is possible that this impression of mine is not correct and that my election is not desired by the majority of delegates. But this could be verified only when voting takes place on the 29th January and not earlier.

As a worker my position is perfectly clear. It is not for me to say in what capacity I should serve. That is a matter to be decided by my countrymen and in this particular case by my fellow-

delegates. But I have no right to decline to serve if and when I am ordered to a particular place. As a matter of fact, I shall be failing in my duty if I shirk any responsibility which may be cast on me. In view of the increasing international tension and the prospective fight over Federation the new year will be a momentous one in our national history. Owing to this and other reasons, if my services in office are demanded by the majority of the delegates with what justification can I withdraw from the contest when the issue involved is not a personal one at all? If, however, as a result of the appeal made by eminent leaders like Maulana Azad the majority of the delegates vote against my re-election I shall loyally abide by their verdict and shall continue to serve the Congress and the country as an ordinary soldier. In view of all these considerations I am constrained to feel that I have no right to retire from the contest. I am, therefore, placing myself unreservedly in the hands of my fellow delegates and I shall abide by their decision.

Telegrams exchanged between Vallavbhai Patel and Sarat Chandra Bose, members of the Congress Working Committee, on the 24th January, 1939:

(1) From Patel to Bose:

FEEL SUBHAS BABU'S STATEMENT. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION NEEDS COUNTER STATEMENT FROM MEMBERS WORKING COMMITTEE WHO FEEL RE-ELECTION THIS YEAR UNNECESSARY. BRIEF STATEMENT READY. IT SAYS RE-ELECTION ONLY EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES. NO SUCH PRESENT FOR RE-ELECTING SUBHAS BABU. IT REBUTS SUBHAS BABU'S CONTENTION ABOUT FEDERATION, ETC., AND SAYS PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES FIXED NOT BY PRESIDENT BUT CONGRESS OR WORKING COMMITTEE. COUNTER STATEMENT COMMENDS DR PATTABHI FOR ELECTION AND APPEALS SUBHAS BABU NOT DIVIDE CONGRESSMEN ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

(2) From Bose to Patel:

RECEIVED TELEGRAM THIS MORNING. READ MAULANA'S AND SUBHAS'S STATEMENT DURING JOURNEY FROM SYLHET. IN MY VIEW SETTING UP DR PATTABHI AFTER MAULANA'S WITHDRAWAL UNDESIRABLE. COMING YEAR MORE CRITICAL AND EXCEPTIONAL FROM EVERY VIEWPOINT THAN 1937. STRONGLY FEEL NO MEMBER WORKING COMMITTEE SHOULD TAKE SIDES IN CONTEST BETWEEN COLLEAGUES. YOUR PROPOSED STATEMENT WOULD ACCENTUATE DISSENSIONS BETWEEN RIGHT AND LEFT-WINGS WHICH SHOULD BE AVOIDED. DR PATTABHI WILL NOT INSPIRE COUNTRY'S CONFIDENCE IN COMING FIGHT. PLEASE DO NOT DIVIDE CONGRESS.

(3) From Patel to Bose:

APPRECIATE YOUR TELEGRAM. NOTHING BUT SENSE OF DUTY COMPELS STATEMENT. DIFFERENCE IS NOT BETWEEN PERSONS BUT PRINCIPLES. IF CONTEST INEVITABLE HOPE IT WILL TAKE PLACE WITHOUT BITTERNESS AND IMPUTATION OF MOTIVES. RE-ELECTION IS HELD TO BE HARMFUL TO COUNTRY'S CAUSE.

Statement of Vallavbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Jairamdas Doulatram, J.B. Kripalani, Jamnalal Bajaj, Shankarrao Deo and Bhulabhai Desai, all members of the All-India Congress Working Committee.

January 24, 1939

We have read Subhas Babu's statement with the care it deserves. So far as we know, hitherto Presidential elections have been unanimous. Subhas Babu has set up a new precedent which he had a perfect right to do. The wisdom of the course adopted by him can be known only by experience. We have grave doubts about it. We could have waited for a greater consolidation of the Congress ranks, greater toleration and greater respect for one another's opinions before making the Congress Presidential election a matter of contest. We would have gladly refrained from saying anything upon the statement. But we feel that we would be neglecting our clear duty when we had strong views about the forthcoming election.

It was a matter of deep sorrow to us that Maulana Sahib felt called upon to withdraw from the contest. But when he had finally

decided to withdraw, he had advocated Dr Pattabhi's election in consultation with some of us. This decision was taken with much deliberation. We feel that it is a sound policy to adhere to the rule of not re-electing the same President, except under very exceptional circumstances.

In his statement Subhas Babu has mentioned his opposition to Federation. This is shared by all members of the Working Committee. It is the Congress policy. He has also mentioned ideologies, policies and programmes. All this we feel is not relevant to the consideration of the choice of Congress President.

The Congress policy and programmes are not determined by its successive Presidents. If it were so, the constitution would not limit the office to one year. The policy and programmes of the Congress, when they are not determined by the Congress itself, are determined by the Working Committee. The position of the President is that of a Chairman. More than this the President represents and symbolises as under a constitutional monarchy, the unity and solidarity of the nation. This position, therefore, has rightly been considered as one of very great honour and as such the nation has sought to confer it on as many of its illustrious sons as would be possible by annual elections. The election, as befits the dignity of this high office, has always been unanimous. Any controversy over the election, even on the score of policies and programmes, is therefore to be deprecated. We believe that Dr Pattabhi is quite fitted for the post of the President of the Congress. He is one of the oldest members of the Working Committee and he had a long and unbroken record of public service to his credit. We, therefore, commend his name to the Congress delegates for election. We would also, as his colleagues, urge on Subhas Babu to reconsider his decision and allow Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya's election to be unanimous.

Second Statement of Subhas Chandra Bose

January 25, 1939

It is an extremely painful task for me to engage in a public

controversy with some of my distinguished colleagues on the Working Committee but, as matters stand, I have no option in the matter. The first statement which I issued on the 21st instant was my enforced reaction to the statement of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Sahib and what I am saying now is my enforced reply to the challenging statement of Sardar Patel and other leaders. The responsibility for starting this public controversy does not rest with me but with my distinguished colleagues. In an election contest between two members of the Working Committee, one would not expect the other members to take sides in an organised manner, because that would obviously not be fair. Sardar Patel and other leaders have issued the statement as members of the All-India Congress Working Committee and not as individual Congressmen. I ask if this is fair either when the Working Committee never discussed this question. In the statement we are told for the first time that the decision to advocate Dr Pattabhi's election was taken with much deliberation. Neither I, nor some of my colleagues on the Working Committee, had any knowledge or idea of either the deliberation or the decision. I wish the signatories had issued the statement not as members of the Working Committee but as individual Congressmen.

If the Presidential election is to be an election worth the name, there should be freedom of voting without any moral coercion, but does not a statement of this sort tantamount to moral coercion? If the President is to be elected by the delegates and not be nominated by influential members of the Working Committee, will Sardar Patel and other leaders withdraw their whip and leave it to the delegates to vote as they like? If the delegates are given the freedom to vote as they like, there would not be the slightest doubt as to the issue of the election contest. Otherwise why not end the elective system and have the President nominated by the Working Committee.

It is news to me that there is a rule that the same person should not be re-elected President except under exceptional circumstances. If one traces the history of the Congress one will find that in several cases the same person has been elected more than once. I am also surprised at the remark that Presidential elections have

hitherto been unanimous. I remember to have voted for one candidate in preference to another on several occasions. It is only in recent years that the election has been unanimous.

Since the adoption of the new constitution of the Congress in 1934, the Working Committee is being nominated, theoretically at least, by the President. Since that year the position of the Congress President has been raised to a higher level. It is, therefore, but natural that new conventions should now grow up around the Congress President and his election. The position of the President today is no longer analogous to that of the Chairman of a meeting. The President is like the Prime Minister or the President of the United States of America who nominates his own Cabinet. It is altogether wrong to liken the Congress President to a constitutional monarch. I may add that the questions of policy and programme are not irrelevant and they would have been raised long ago in connection with the election of the Congress President had it not been for the fact that after the Congress of 1934, a leftist has been elected as President every time with the support of both the right and left-wings. The departure from this practice this year and the attempt to set up a rightist candidate for the office of President is not without significance. It is widely believed that there is a prospect of a compromise on the Federal scheme between the right-wing of the Congress and the British Government during the coming year. Consequently the right-wing do not want a leftist President who may be a thorn in the way of a compromise and may put obstacles in the path of negotiations. One has only to move about among the public and enter into a discussion with them in order to realise how widespread this belief is. It is imperative, in the circumstances, to have a President who will be an anti-federationist to the core of his heart.

It is really a regret to me that my name has been proposed as a candidate for presidentship. I had suggested to numerous friends that a new candidate from the left should be put up this year, but unfortunately that could not be done and my name was proposed from several provinces. Even at this late hour I am prepared to withdraw from the contest if a genuine anti-federationist, like Acharya Narendra Deo for instance, be accepted as the President

for the coming year. I feel strongly that we should have, during this momentous year, a genuine anti-federationist in the Presidential chair. If the right-wing really want national unity and solidarity they would be well-advised to accept a leftist as President. They have created considerable misapprehension by their insistence on a rightist candidate at any cost and by the unseemly manner in which they have set up such a candidate who was retiring and who had been surprised that his name had been suggested for the presidentship.

In the exceptional circumstances which prevail just at this moment in our country, the presidential election is part of our fight against the federal scheme and as such we cannot afford to be indifferent to it. The real issue before the country is the federal scheme. All those who believe in fighting Federation and in maintaining our national solidarity in this crisis—should not endeavour to split the Congress by insisting on a candidate who was voluntarily retiring.

The presidential election is wholly an affair of the delegates and should be left to them. Let the right-wing who are in a decided majority in the Congress make a gesture to the left-wing by accepting a leftist candidate even at this late hour. I hope that my appeal will not be in vain.

Statement of Pattabhi Sitaramayya

January 25, 1939

Now that the contest for the presidential place has become inevitable, it is meant that I as one of the two contestants, should make a statement relating to certain aspects that have figured somewhat prominently in the public eye in the literature that has recently been published on the subject.

I had left Bardoli on January 17 after the conclusion of the sittings of the Congress Working Committee and reached Bombay that very evening; and the impression left in my mind at the time

was that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was marked out for the presidentship of the forthcoming session of the Congress.

This was the view I had all along entertained myself, for more reasons than one. When, however, I reached my lodgings in Bombay at 7 p.m. I had a telephone message waiting for me from the Maulana asking me to ring him up as soon as I arrived. I did so and was asked by the Maulana to meet him.

I could not guess why he should have wanted me, but I left it at that and hastened to take my dinner as I had decided to leave Bombay that very night by the Madras Mail at 10–20 and in the interval call on the Maulana.

At this juncture some newspaper friends happened to go to my place and incidentally, informed me that there were three candidates, of whom I was one. As I had reason to believe that the Maulana was the candidate who was considered deserving for the presidentship, I hastened to dictate to the Press a message withdrawing my own candidature, which was telephoned out on the spot.

Then I started for the Maulana's place, and on the way bought my ticket for Bezawada, and when I saw the Maulana and somewhat hurriedly informed him that I had withdrawn, he stated that he himself was withdrawing and would be proceeding to Bardoli next morning, and he pressed me to cancel my withdrawal.

I implored him for some time that he should not think on those lines, and when I was impressed with the transparent sincerity that had prompted his decision, I went up to telephone and withdrew my withdrawal.

I left Bombay the next evening and on the evening of January 21 had a telegram from the Maulana announcing his withdrawal in my favour and wishing me unanimous election.

It is true that my nomination took place without my knowledge, but I had reason to expect it, because for some time past there has been a unanimous desire among the people of South India in general and Andhra in particular, that the turn should be given to Congressmen from the South and that too to Andhra.

I have all along discouraged such ambitions, as well as limited the range of choice for their fulfilment.

The Congress should each year have as its President a person, who answers the need of the hour, and the choice of the President should not be made a question of equitable distribution of honours among the various suitors of the various provinces.

Moreover, personally I, who have been in the public life as a whole time worker since I gave up my medical practice in 1916, have always been actuated by one motive of service, and have never in the remotest recesses of my heart, so much as entertained any ambition. But when the Maulana had withdrawn, when there was a widespread desire on the part of Congressmen and others, of the venerable patriarch, and of elderly men of position, in a word of public men belonging to different schools of thought, when again the Maulana had withdrawn from the contest and had coupled that withdrawal with his good wishes and hopes for my success, when too I had reason to believe that, as alternative to the Maulana's candidature, mine would commend itself to many of my colleagues on the Working Committee and elsewhere—I felt that my nomination as a candidate was a call to duty from the public, which I should not lightly discard.

Now I should like to make a statement regarding my position in relation to the burning questions of the day. That I am an ardent devotee of the cult of Gandhism is a fact fairly well-known in the country.

I have spoken often and written profusely on this subject as well as on purely political questions of the day. I have done as much as any one else in the country in exposing the dangers of the scheme of Federation as envisaged in the Government of India Act of 1935.

During the interval between the Lucknow Congress and the Haripura session, I had greater latitude, which I turned to best account in tearing to pieces the Indian Constitution that was sought to be thrust upon us.

Since Haripura I have had to be necessarily restrained, being a member of the Cabinet.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, there is no attempt on the part of any member of the Working Committee to enter into a compromise with the British on the question of Federation.

I myself have made it clear recently in an unmistakable manner that the Viceroy's statement was a gentle knock at the door of the Congress, but that the answer of the Congress to him had already been given by the Congress President.

I may be permitted to say a word on the question of States. During the past three years I have interested myself in this subject in the firm conviction that we cannot afford to allow our country to be cut up territorially any more than we are prepared to allow it to be dismembered communally.

Federation we want undoubtedly, but a Federation on the lines contemplated by the British is sure to make India lopsided and paralytic—a country, one side of which is whole, while the other is crippled.

The great awakening in the States may well absorb the bulk of the Congress time. If I am elected I should regard my election as an appreciation of my effort on behalf of the States.

I am working as President at the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee and as a member of the Working Committee. I have come across cases of indiscipline and corruption in Congress ranks. If elected I should devote my energy also to putting our own house in order.

One thing remains to be explained. Why should I not withdraw in favour of Mr Subhas Chandra Bose? I cannot, because I must not resist the will of valued colleagues.

I would gladly have withdrawn, if I had not shared the opinion of my colleagues that there should be no consecutive re-election except under extraordinary circumstances. No such circumstances exist in the present case.

Statement of Vallavbhai Patel

Bardoli,
January 25, 1939

Mr Subhas Bose's is an amazing statement. Here are the facts. In almost every case since 1920 some members of the Working

Committee have held informal consultation. When Mr Gandhi was in the Working Committee he used to give a lead by recommending for election a name for the presidential chair, but after his withdrawal from the Congress he has ceased to issue such statements.

Nevertheless, members, individually and collectively, have consulted him about the choice. This year, too, I have had consultations with several members. Everyone of us had felt that Maulana Azad was the only possible choice. But he could not be persuaded.

In Bardoli during the week when the Working Committee was in session, Mr Gandhi appealed to the Maulana to allow himself to be nominated. But he was adamant. On January 15, however, he came to Mr Gandhi early in the morning and told him that it went against his grain to resist him, and to our great relief he decided to stand for election.

We knew at that time that Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya had been nominated by some Andhra friends, and we knew, too, that Mr Subhas Bose had been nominated. We felt sure that both would withdraw from the contest and that Maulana Sahib would be unanimously elected.

At an informal consultation at Bardoli at one stage or the other, at which Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Mr Bhulabhai Desai, Acharya Kripalani, Mr Gandhi and myself were present, not by design but by accident, it was agreed that if, perchance, the Maulana remained adamant in his resistance, according to the constitution, Dr Sitaramayya was the only choice left, since we were clearly of the opinion that it was unnecessary to re-elect Mr Subhas Bose. In our minds there were never any questions of Leftist or Rightist.

Let it be noted that Mr Subhas Bose knows that the procedure adopted for his own election last year was precisely the same as that which is being adopted now. Only at that time we had no difficulty in persuading the other candidates to withdraw.

To resume the thread, though the Maulana Sahib had consented, on reaching Bombay his mind again became disturbed and as he thought that he could not shoulder the burden of high office,

he rushed back to Mr Gandhi to ask him to relieve him. Mr Gandhi did not feel like pressing the Maulana any further. What happened after, the country knows.

It pains me to find that Mr Subhas Bose imputes motives to the signatories (of the Bardoli statement) and to the majority of the Working Committee. I can only say that I know of no member who wants the Federation of the Government of India Act.

And, after all, no single member, not even the President for the time being of the Congress, can decide on such big issues. It is the Congress alone that can decide, and therefore, the Working Committee collectively, when the Congress is not in session.

And even the Working Committee has no power to depart from the letter or spirit of the declared policy of the Congress.

I wholly dissent from the view that the President of the Congress has any powers of initiating policies, save by the consent of the Working Committee.

More than once, the Working Committee has asserted itself in the teeth of the opposition of the Presidents, who, be it said to their credit, have always bowed to the will of the Working Committee.

All the colleagues not being in Bardoli and the time being short, I have taken the liberty of answering Mr Subhas Bose's statement without reference to my colleagues, who are free to give their own opinion.

For me as for those with whom I have been able to discuss the question, the matter is not one of persons and principles, not of Leftists and Rightists. The sole consideration is what is in the best interest of the country.

Those who have spoken had, in my opinion, a perfect right to guide the delegates. I receive almost daily wires or letters from delegates for guidance, and I expect other colleagues too must be receiving them.

In the circumstances, the right becomes also a duty. But the guidance having been given it is solely for the delegates to exercise their votes in the manner they think best.

Statement of Jawaharlal Nehru

Almora,
January 26, 1939

For the last ten days, I have been somewhat isolated in the Kumaun Hills where newspapers reach me late, and sometimes my information is derived from news given on the Radio. Under these circumstances I have no business to intervene in a controversy, and in any event I had no desire to do so. But from the little news that has reached me, I feel that the presidential controversy has taken an unfortunate turn and wrong issues have been raised. I venture, therefore, to put certain matters before the public which might help to clarify the situation. I have so far not read the various statements that have been issued, except the Congress President's first statement.

To begin with I should like to make it clear that I am not making this statement in support of or in opposition to any candidate for the presidentship. Important as the presidential election is, it is a secondary matter. What is far more important is the policy and programme of the Congress. I have seen in the past the presidential elections do not make much difference to this policy which is ultimately laid down by the Congress itself, or the A.I.C.C. A President can, ~~however~~, make a difference in the carrying out of a policy, and a Congress President is not in my opinion merely a speaker.

May I also say that I am not opposed to an election contest, and I think that when definite policies and programmes are in conflict, a contest is usually desirable ~~and~~ helps clarification. What are the different programmes in conflict in this presidential election? There are many vital problems in India, but as reference has been made only to the Federation, I take it that there is no conflict in the presidential election in regard to the others. Is there a conflict regarding the Federation? I am not aware of it, and the Congress attitude is definite and clear. I gave expression to this attitude in an unambiguous language in England, and in doing so I was not merely expressing my opinion, but that of the Working Committee.

I took care to send full reports of what I said and did to the Congress President and the Working Committee and asked for direction. I was informed that the attitude I had taken up in regard to Federation met with the approval of the Working Committee and of Gandhiji. Since then the position has hardened considerably and it seems to be monstrous for any Congressmen to think in terms of compromising on Federation. Is the growing struggle in the Indian States a prelude to our flirting with Federation? We drift rapidly towards a crisis in India as in the world and it is in terms of this crisis that we should think.

I think it is time that we pushed away Federation from our minds as something that cannot come because we will not have it and thought more positively in terms of self-determination, of our own future apart from international reasons. The foreign policy of the British Government is so utterly bad and hateful that I want my country to have nothing to do with such a Government. There is thus no question of conflict over the Federation in this election. There are of course many conflicts within the Congress but none of them are affected much by this election. I should personally like a clarification of these conflicts and problems. The vital question before us is how we are to shape in the coming international and national crisis? We may not do anything which might create a domestic conflict and thus disable us when we most need our united strength.

I have had some experience of the Congress presidentship during trying times and on several occasions I was on the point of resigning, because I felt that I could serve our cause and the Congress better without office. This year some colleagues urged me to stand again for the presidentship. I refused absolutely for reasons which I need not discuss here.

For those and other reasons I was equally clear that Subhas Babu should not stand. I felt that his and my capacity for effective work would be lessened by holding this office at this stage. I told Subhas Babu so.

I was equally clear in my mind that the obvious person for presidentship this year was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Every line of reasoning led me to this conclusion. He was peculiarly fitted

to deal with some of our vital problems. He had that delicate insight and sensitiveness which understood and appreciated the viewpoints other than his own. He was an elder statesman of the Congress, respected and trusted by all and most fitted to keep our varied ranks together. May I add that my admiration for his keen intelligence and rare insight has grown from year to year during the past twenty years that I have been privileged to know him? I pressed him to agree to stand for the presidentship and so did many others. We had thought that we had convinced him but unfortunately he did not agree finally. His weak health and his dislike of publicity and election contests came in his way.

Personally I do not see what principles or programmes are at stake in this election. I do not want it to be said at the end of the contest that a particular programme had been rejected when in fact it was not in issue. Whoever wins, federation loses. I trust that if there is a contest the high dignity of our cause will be borne in mind by all concerned and nothing will be done which may weaken the great organisation in whose service so many of us have spent their lives. The future is dark with conflict and we shall have to brace ourselves to meet it as a united people with courage and confidence, forgetting persons and remembering principles and our cause.

Statement of Rajendra Prasad

Patna,
January 27, 1939

It is not fair to sidetrack the real issue by reference to imaginary difference on the question of Federation between Subhas Babu and certain other members of the Working Committee. On that point there is absolutely no difference of opinion. The Haripura Congress resolution is clear and was passed without any opposition or reservation and so late as the last meeting of the A.I.C.C., the resolution was reiterated without a single dissentient voice. It is easy to understand that there are differences between Subhas Babu and others on other questions. If the presidential election is to be

made the basis of such difference in political opinion and programme, the points at issue should be clearly stated and not be fogged by putting forward an imaginary difference.

With regard to Federation Sj. Bose said that the plan of Congress opposition to the Federal Scheme contained in the Government of India Act, 1935, would be on the whole in accordance with the general policy and principle of Congress policy, namely, non-co-operation. What steps this non-co-operation would take, whether there would be non-co-operation even at the stage of federal election or at the stage of acceptance of office after election was a matter of detail and tactics which would be decided on the exigencies of the situation then existing.

Asked whether Congress Ministers would be called upon to resign as part of the Congress campaign against Federation the Congress President said, at this stage I can only say if there is a struggle we shall offer opposition from every quarter. It is quite possible we may not call upon the Ministers to resign, if we feel that their remaining in power will strengthen our struggle. On the contrary, if we feel that our struggle will be stronger if they resigned, we shall do so.

As the *Modern Review* has pointed out, there are several 'ifs' in the Congress President's replies to the queries. Two of them are: if there is a struggle we shall offer opposition to contest the elections to the Federal Legislature even if the Congress policy would be to offer an uncompromising attitude towards Federation. The first 'if' may perhaps lead to the assumption that struggle is not inevitable. The second 'if' leaves room for anticipating that the Congress attitude may not after all be one of uncompromising opposition to the British made Federal Scheme.

I wonder if any so-called Right-wing member of the Working Committee has said anything approaching this. Not that Subhas Babu is not entitled to have his own opinion. But why damn others for their imaginary views when his own views are not crystallised enough to discard 'ifs' which have led a distinguished journalist to read so much devastating meaning in them.

Now that there is going to be a contest, let delegates vote according to their choice and free will. It is an insult to their intelligence and sense of responsibility to suggest that they should vote as dictated by some members of the Working Committee. It is wrong to impugn their integrity or independence if they choose to vote for Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya.

Third Statement of Subhas Chandra Bose

January 27, 1939

Once again I am forced into a public controversy by the statements of Dr Pattabhi and Sardar Patel. The former says that there has been a unanimous desire among the people of South India in general and Andhra in particular that the next President should be an Andhraite.

It is difficult to believe that Congressmen in any part of India think in terms of provincialism. Moreover, I have before me at the present moment telegrams from Andhradesa voluntarily assuring me of support. And so far as Tamil-Nad is concerned, friends there are among those who are most insistent that I should not withdraw from the contest.

Sardar Patel's statement contains a rather damaging confession. He says that some members of the Working Committee held an important consultation among themselves and came to a certain decision. Is it not surprising that neither the President nor other members of the Working Committee knew anything of this?

It is clear that he wants a President who will be a mere figurehead and a tool in the hands of other members of the Working Committee. The above confession also confirms the general impression that the Working Committee is really controlled by a group within it and that the other members are there on sufferance.

Though the Congress resolution on Federation is one of uncompromising hostility, the fact remains that some influential Congress leaders have been advocating conditional acceptance of the Federal scheme in private and in public.

Up-till now there has not been the slightest desire on the part of the Rightist leaders to condemn such activities. It is no use

shutting one's eyes to the reality of the situation. Can anybody challenge the fact that the belief is widely held that during the coming year, a compromise will be effected between the British Government and the Right-wing of the Congress? This impression may be entirely erroneous, but it is there all the same and nobody can deny its existence. Not only that. It is also generally believed that the prospective list of Ministers 'for the Federal Cabinet has been already drawn up'.

In the circumstances it is natural that the Left or radical bloc in the Congress should feel so strongly on the question of the Federal Scheme and should desire to have a genuine anti-federationist in the Presidential chair. The determination of the Congress High Command to have a Rightist in the chair at any cost has only served to make the radical elements feel more suspicious. The whole trouble has arisen because of the attitude of the Right-wing towards the Presidential election.

Even at this late hour if they accept an anti-federationist President, they can end this controversy at once and thereby avert dissensions within the Congress. Speaking for myself I have already announced in public that the real issue is that of Federation. If a genuine anti-federationist is accepted as the President, I shall gladly retire in his favour. This offer, publicly announced, will stand till the eve of the election.

Fourth Statement of Subhas Chandra Bose

January 28, 1939

On the eve of Sunday's Presidential election I desire to say a few words through the press in order to explain why I have agreed to be put up as a candidate. It will be remembered that during the last four or five months Congressmen in different parts of the country have, individually and collectively, publicly advocated my re-election. When my name was formally proposed as a candidate from several Provinces it was done without my knowledge or consent. Rightly or wrongly, a very large body of opinion within the Congress wanted me to be elected for another term. It now

appears that some important members of the Working Committee, for reasons which it is difficult to comprehend, did not approve of the idea. It cannot be doubted that my re-election would have been virtually unanimous if they had not sent out a mandate to vote against me. It now appears that they would rather have anybody else than my humble self.

Since the Haripura Congress my relations with the other members of the Congress Working Committee have been cordial and on the whole our work in the Committee has been conducted very smoothly. In the circumstances one may endeavour to infer why some important members of the Working Committee are so much against me, though there was a general desire in the Congress ranks for my re-election. Do they object to me because I would not be a tool in their hands? Or do they object to me because of my ideas and principles? The arguments so far put forward are not in the least degree convincing. It is said that re-election is an exceptional event. The obvious reply to that is that there is nothing in the constitution to prevent re-election—that several ex-presidents of the Congress have held that office for more than one term —that the coming year is going to be an exceptional and momentous one and that there was a general desire for my re-election.

Another argument put forward by Sardar Patel in his telegram to Mr Sarat Chandra Bose is that re-election will be harmful to the country's cause. This argument is such an astounding one that it hardly needs any refutation. If the above leaders had not thrown all the weight of their influence against me and issued a mandate opposing my candidature, we would have known the real opinion of the Congress delegates and I have no doubt that opinion would have come as an utter surprise to the Sardar.

It is erroneously urged in certain quarters that an election contest is going to take place for the first time this year. It is true that during the last few years there has been no contest. It is also true that this year the contest is going to be a spectacular one. But it would be a mistake to forget that previously election contests did take place, though not in such a spectacular manner as appears inevitable this year. It is, therefore, too much for a group within the Working Committee to claim that they will

dictate the selection of the President every time. If we are to have a proper election by the delegates and not nomination by a group within the Working Committee, then it is essential that the delegates should have a free and unfettered choice. At the present moment not only has the mandate gone out but moral pressure is being brought to bear on the delegates in order to make them vote in accordance with it.

Sardar Patel has said in his statement that the procedure adopted last year is precisely the same as this year. This is far from true. If the ruling group within the Working Committee had made a happy choice, no contest would have taken place this year either. But if their choice or suggestion does not meet with popular approval, should not the delegates be free to exercise their vote as they think best? If this freedom is not guaranteed to them, then the constitution of the Congress will cease to be a democratic one. It is no use having a democratic constitution for the Congress, if the delegates do not have the freedom to think and vote as they like.

Besides the issue of democracy there are other issues and more important ones too involved in the present election. If we are to maintain unity and solidarity within the Congress and if the Right and Left-wings are to work hand in hand for the attainment of India's independence, it is essential that the President of the Congress should command the confidence of both the wings. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru fulfilled this role in a magnificent manner. And perhaps, I may humbly claim that I did so though to a much lesser degree. That is why, along with a large body of Congressmen, I insist that for the coming year we should have as President a person who will be anti-Federationist to the core of his heart—a person who will command the respect and confidence of not merely the Right-wing, but also of the Left. This is all the more necessary not merely because of the coming fight against Federation but also because there is a widespread apprehension in the public mind as to the intentions of certain Right-wing leaders. To sum up, the two important issues involved in the present election are those of democracy and uncompromising opposition to the Federal Scheme. There is nothing personal in this contest

and I would beg my fellow delegates to forget or ignore altogether all personal questions. I am a candidate by mere accident, simply because nobody else from the left came forward to contest the election. And as I have already stated more than once it is still possible to avoid a contest if the Right-wing will accept as President somebody who will command the confidence of the Left. If a contest does take place, as it appears inevitable at the moment of writing, the responsibility for dividing the Congress will devolve entirely on the Right-wing. Will they shoulder that responsibility or even at this late hour, will they decide to stand for national unity and solidarity on the basis of a progressive programme?*

Statement of Mahatma Gandhi

Bardoli,
January 31, 1939

Mr Subhas Bose has achieved a decisive victory over his opponent Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya. I must confess that from the very beginning I was decidedly against his re-election for reasons into which I need not go. I do not subscribe to his facts or the arguments in his manifestos. I think that his references to his colleagues were unjustified and unworthy. Nevertheless, I am glad of his victory; and since I was instrumental in inducing Dr Pattabhi not to withdraw his name as a candidate when Maulana Saheb withdrew, the defeat is more mine than his. And I am nothing if I do not represent definite principles and policy. Therefore, it is plain to me that the delegates do not approve of the principles and policy for which I stand. I rejoice in this defeat.

It gives me an opportunity of putting into practice, what I preached in my article on the walk-out of the minority at the last A.I.C.C. meeting in Delhi. Subhas Babu instead of being President on the sufferance of those whom he calls Rightists is now President, elected in a contested election. This enables him to choose a

*The election of the President by the delegates to the 52nd session of the Indian National Congress was held all over India on 29th January, 1939. Subhas Chandra Bose defeated Pattabhi Sitaramayya by a little over 200 votes—Ed.

iomogeneous Cabinet and enforce his programme without let or iindrance.

There is one thing common between the majority and the ninority, viz., insistence on internal purity of the Congress or-ganisation. My writings in the *Harijan* have shown that the Con-gress is fast becoming a corrupt organisation in the sense that its registers contain a very large number of bogus members. I have been suggesting for the past many months the overhauling of these registers. I have no doubt that many of the delegates who have been elected on the strength of these bogus voters would be unseated on scrutiny.

But I suggest no such drastic step. It will be enough if the registers are purged of all bogus voters and are made fool proof for the future. The minority has no cause for being disheartened. If they believe in the current programme of the Congress, they will find that it can be worked, whether they are in a minority or a majority and even whether, they are in the Congress or outside it. The only thing that may possibly be affected by the changes is the Parliamentary programme.

The Ministers have been chosen and the programme shaped by the erstwhile majority. But Parliamentary work is but a minor item of the Congress programme. Congress Ministers have after all to live from day to day. It matters little to them whether they are recalled on an issue, in which they are in agreement with the Congress policy or whether they resign, because they are in dis-agreement with the Congress.

After all Subhas Babu is not an enemy of his country. He has suffered for it. In his opinion his is the most forward, the boldest policy and programme. The minority can only wish it all success. If they cannot keep pace with it, they must come out of the Congress. If they can, they will add strength to the majority. The minority may not obstruct on any account. They must abstain, when they cannot co-operate. I must remind all Congressmen that those, who being Congress-minded remain outside it by design, represent it most. Those, therefore, who feel uncomfortable in being in the Congress, may come out, not in a spirit of ill will, but with the deliberate purpose of rendering more effective service.

Fifth Statement of Subhas Chandra Bose

February 4, 1939

I have read the statement of Mahatma Gandhi on the recent presidential election with all the attention that it deserves. It gives me pain to find that Mahatma Gandhi has taken it as a personal defeat. I would respectfully differ from him on this point. The voters, that is the delegates, were not called upon to vote for or against Mahatma Gandhi. Consequently, the result of the contest does not in my view and in the view of most people affect him personally.

Much has been said in the Press during the last few days about the right and left-wings in the Congress. Several persons have interpreted the result of the election as a victory for the leftists. The fact is that I placed before the public two main issues, namely, the fight against Federation and free and unfettered choice for the delegates in the matter of choosing their President. These issues must have greatly influenced the voting and over and above these, the personality of the candidates might have had some effect. In the circumstances, I feel that while analysing the significance of the election we should not draw on our imagination nor should we read into it more than it contains.

Assuming for argument's sake that the result of the election implies a victory of the left, we should stop to consider what the leftists' programme is. For the immediate future the leftists stand for national unity and unrelenting opposition to the Federal Scheme. In addition to this, they stand for democratic principles. Leftists will not take the responsibility of creating a split within the Congress. If a split does come it will come not because of them, but in spite of them.

Personally I am definitely of opinion that there is neither reason nor justification for a split within the ranks of the Congress. I, therefore, earnestly hope that there will be no occasion now or in the near future for the so-called minority party to non-co-operate with the so-called majority party. I need hardly add that I shall try till the last to avert a split whenever any such likelihood appears before us.

A certain amount of apprehension has been caused in the minds of many as to the policy which people like myself will follow in future. Let me make it quite clear that there will be no violent break with the past in the Parliamentary or in the extra-Parliamentary sphere. So far as the Parliamentary programme is concerned, we shall only try to implement our election pledges and our Parliamentary programme with greater speed than in the past. In the extra-Parliamentary sphere, we shall endeavour to rally all our strength and resources for combating Federation and for pushing on towards 'Purna Swaraj' and we shall, of course, act in accordance with the principles and policy of the Indian National Congress.

In this connection I should also like to say that I have on some occasions felt constrained to differ from Mahatma Gandhi on public questions, but I yield to none in my respect for his personality. If I have understood him correctly, he too would like to see people think for themselves even though they may not always agree with him. I do not know what sort of opinion Mahatmaji has of me. But whatever his view may be, it will always be my aim and object to try and win his confidence for the simple reason that it will be a tragic thing for me if I succeed in winning the confidence of other people but fail to win the confidence of India's greatest man.

The Tripuri Address

Presidential address at the 52nd Session of the Indian National Congress held at Tripuri in March, 1939.

COMRADE CHAIRMAN, SISTER AND BROTHER DELEGATES,

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the great honour you have done me by re-electing me to the Presidential chair of the Indian National Congress and also for the warm and cordial

welcome you have given me here at Tripuri. It is true that at my request you have had to dispense with some of the pomp that is usual on such occasions—but I feel that enforced step has not taken away one iota of the warmth and cordiality of your reception and I hope that nobody will regret the curtailment of it on this occasion.

Friends, before I proceed any further, I shall voice your feelings by expressing our joy at the success of Mahatma Gandhi's mission to Rajkot and the termination of his fast in consequence thereof. The whole country now feels happy and tremendously relieved.

Friends, this year promises to be an abnormal or extraordinary one in many ways. The Presidential election this time was not of the humdrum type. The election was followed by sensational developments culminating in the resignation of twelve out of fifteen members of the Working Committee, headed by Sardar Vallavbhai Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Dr Rajendra Prasad. Another distinguished and eminent member of the Working Committee, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, though he did not formally resign, issued a statement which led everybody to believe that he had also resigned. On the eve of the Tripuri Congress, events at Rajkot forced Mahatma Gandhi to undertake a vow of fast unto death. And then the President arrived at Tripuri a sick man. It will, therefore, be in the fitness of things if the Presidential address this year can claim to be a departure from precedent in the matter of its length.

Friends, you are aware that the Wafdist Delegation from Egypt have arrived in our midst as guests of the Indian National Congress. You will join me in according a most hearty welcome to all of them. We are extremely happy that they found it possible to accept our invitation and make the voyage to India. We are only sorry that political exigencies in Egypt did not permit the President of the Wafd, Mustapha El Nahas Pasha, to personally lead this Delegation. Having had the privilege of knowing the President and leading members of the Wafdist Party, my joy today is all the greater. Once again, I offer them on behalf of our countrymen a most hearty and cordial welcome.

Since we met at Haripura in February, 1938, several significant events have taken place in the international sphere. The most important of these is the Munich Pact of September, 1939, which implied an abject surrender to Nazi Germany on the part of the Western Powers, France and Great Britain. As a result of this, France ceased to be the dominant power in Europe and the hegemony passed into the hands of Germany without a shot being fired. In more recent times, the gradual collapse of the Republican Government in Spain seems to have added to the strength and prestige of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The so-called democratic powers, France and Great Britain, have joined Italy and Germany in conspiring to eliminate Soviet Russia from European politics, for the time being. But how long will that be possible? There is no doubt that as a result of recent international developments, in Europe as well as in Asia, British and French Imperialism have received a considerable set-back in the matter of strength and prestige.

Coming to home politics, in view of my ill-health, I shall content myself with referring to only a few important problems. In the first place, I must give clear and unequivocal expression to what I have been feeling for some time past, namely, that the time has come for us to raise the issue of Swaraj and submit our national demand to the British Government in the form of an ultimatum. The time is long past when we could have adopted a passive attitude and waited for the Federal scheme to be imposed on us. The problem no longer is as to when the Federal scheme will be forced down our throats. The problem is as to what we should do if the Federal scheme is conveniently shelved for a few years till peace is stabilized in Europe. There is no doubt that once there is stable peace in Europe, whether through a Four-Power Pact or through some other means, Great Britain will adopt a strong-Empire policy. The fact that she is now showing some signs of trying to conciliate the Arabs as against the Jews in Palestine is because she is feeling herself weak in the international sphere. In my opinion, therefore, we should submit our national demand to the British Government in the form of an ultimatum and give a certain time-limit within which

a reply is to be expected. If no reply is received within this period or if an unsatisfactory reply is received, we should resort to such sanctions as we possess in order to enforce our national demand. The sanctions that we posses today are mass civil disobedience or Satyagraha. And the British Government today are not in a position to face a major conflict like an All-India Satyagraha for a long period.

It grieves me to find that there are people in the Congress who are so pessimistic as to think that the time is not ripe for a major assault on British Imperialism. But looking at the situation in a thoroughly realistic manner, I do not see the slightest ground for pessimism. With Congress in power in eight provinces, the strength and prestige of our national organization have gone up. The mass movement has made considerable headway throughout British India. And last but not the least, there is an unprecedented awakening in the Indian States. What more opportune moment could we find in our national history for a final advance in the direction of Swaraj, particularly when the international situation is favourable to us? Speaking as a cold-blooded realist, I may say that all the facts of the present-day situation are so much to our advantage that one should entertain the highest degree of optimism. If only we sink our differences, pool all our resources and pull our full weight in the national struggle, we can make our attack on British Imperialism irresistible. Shall we have the political foresight to make the most of our present favourable position or shall we miss this opportunity, which is a rare opportunity in the life-time of a nation?

I have already referred to the awakening in the Indian States. I am definitely of the view that we should revise our attitude towards the States as defined by the Haripura Congress resolution. That resolution, as you are aware, put a ban on certain forms of activity in the States being conducted in the name of the Congress. Under that resolution, neither parliamentary work nor struggle against the State should be carried on in the name of the Congress. But since Haripura much has happened. Today we find that the Paramount Power is in league with the State authorities in most places. In such circumstances, should we of the Congress not draw

closer to the people of the States? I have no doubt in my own mind as to what our duty is today.

Besides lifting the above ban, the work of guiding the popular movements in the States for Civil Liberty and Responsible Government should be conducted by the Working Committee on a comprehensive and systematic basis. The work so far done has been of a piecemeal nature and there has hardly been any system or plan behind it. But the time has come when the Working Committee should assume this responsibility and discharge it in a comprehensive and systematic way and, if necessary, appoint a special subcommittee for the purpose. The fullest use should be made of the guidance and co-operation of Mahatma Gandhi and of the co-operation of the All-India States' Peoples Conference.

I have referred earlier to the advisability of our making a final advance in the direction of Swaraj. That will need adequate preparation. In the first place, we shall have to take steps to ruthlessly remove whatever corruption or weakness has entered our ranks largely due to the lure of power. Next, we shall have to work in close co-operation with all anti-imperialist organisations in the country particularly the Kisan movement and the Trade Union movement. All the radical elements in the country must work in close harmony and co-operation and the efforts of all anti-imperialist organisations must converge in the direction of a final assault on British Imperialism.

Friends, today the atmosphere within the Congress is clouded and dissensions have appeared. Many of our friends are consequently feeling depressed and dispirited. The cloud that you see today is a passing one. I have faith in the patriotism of my countrymen, and I am sure that before long we shall be able to tide over the present difficulties and restore unity within our ranks. A somewhat similar situation had arisen at the time of the Gaya Congress in 1922 and thereafter, when Deshbandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru, of hallowed memory, started the Swarajya Party. May the spirit of my late Guru, of revered Motilalji and of other great sons of India inspire us in the present crisis and may Mahatma Gandhi, who is still with us to guide and assist our nation, help the Congress out of the present tangle is my earnest prayer.

My Strange Illness

Full text of an article in the *Modern Review*, April, 1939.

The 15th February, 1939. After meeting Mahatma Gandhi at Shegaon and having a long talk with him, I returned to Wardha at about 6 p.m. At night, some friends came to see me and in the absence of anything urgent or important to do, we were having a chat. I had begun to feel unwell, so I took my temperature in their presence. It was 99.4. I did not take it seriously however.

The next morning, 16th February, I was to leave Wardha for Calcutta. In the morning, instead of feeling fresh, I felt out of sorts. I thought that that was due to disturbed sleep the night before. At Wardha and Nagpur stations, a large number of friends had come to see me and I had no time to think of myself. Only after the train steamed out of Nagpur station did I realise that I was extremely unwell. When I took my temperature this time, it was 101. So I went straight to bed.

After a couple of hours or so, an Anglo-Indian gentleman came into my compartment. I did not welcome his presence, particularly when I gathered that he would be travelling all the way to Calcutta—because I wanted to be left quite alone with my fever. But there was no help; he had as much right to be there as I had. After a while he looked intently at me and in a kindly tone, asked: 'What is wrong with you? You look completely washed out.' I replied that I was not feeling well and that I had a temperature. Then he continued, 'You are perspiring I see. You must have got influenza.'

The whole day and night I lay on my berth, perspiring all the time. Again and again I pondered over his words, 'you look completely washed out'. How could I look so bad as that? My facial expression always was such that even after a prolonged illness I rarely 'looked' really bad. Besides, how could a day's illness make me look pulled down to such a degree? I was puzzled.

The next morning I got up with a determination to look fit. I went into the bathroom, had a good wash and shave and came out looking somewhat better than the day before. My fellow-passenger sympathetically asked me how I was feeling and after

hearing my reply, remarked, 'Yes, you are looking better this morning. Yesterday you were looking completely washed out.'

From the station I went home only to find that some friends were waiting to see me. With some exertion I managed to carry on a conversion with them, but by 11 a.m. I felt to tired that I took leave of them and retired. I had to go to bed—the bed I was destined to stick to for several weeks.

The doctor came in and after a thorough examination, shook his head and took a serious view of the case. The pathologist was then sent for and he took specimens of blood, etc., for the usual tests. Later, other doctors were brought in, including the First Physician to the Calcutta Medical College, Sir Nilratan Sircar, etc.

While the doctors were feeling worried about the disease and were taxing their brains as to how best they could combat it, I was concerned more with my public engagements. On the 18th and 19th February, I had public engagements at Hajipur and Muzaffarpur in Bihar and on the 22nd February, the Working Committee of the Congress was to meet at Wardha. I reached Calcutta on the 17th February from Wardha and I was due to leave the same evening for Patna. Telegrams and telephone-calls came in from Bihar enquiring if my previous programme was O.K., and I would adhere to it. I replied in the affirmative, adding that though I was unwell, I would come at any cost. I only wanted that they should cancel all processions and make my programme as light as possible. To my people at home I said that I would leave by the night train from Patna, *en route* to Hajipur, the same evening (17th February) notwithstanding what the doctors were saying, as I was determined to fulfil my engagements on the 18th and 19th February. On being pressed to listen to medical advice I retorted that I would start even if I had a temperature of 105. Thereafter I gave instruction for my ticket to be purchased and berth reserved.

But as the hours rolled by, my temperature began to mount up and up. What was worse—a splitting headache got hold of me. And when the time came for me to start, though everything was ready, I could not lift my head. To my great sorrow I had to humble myself and give up my determination. Telegrams had to be sent regretfully that it was impossible for me to start that night,

but that I would make every possible effort to start the following night. The next day my condition was no better, in fact it was worse. Moreover, all arrangements had been upset by my not leaving on the 17th. So the Muzaffarpur tour had to be abandoned altogether. Nothing can describe my deep regret over this unexpected development.

Though Muzaffarpur was out of my programme after the 18th February, my mind was not at ease. I began to plan for the Wardha meeting of the Working Committee. Doctors began to give me repeated warnings that it was impossible to go to Wardha. If I gave up all thought of the Working Committee and concentrated my mind on getting well, I might be able to go to the Tripuri Congress—otherwise, even Tripuri might have to be dropped. But all these warnings were like speaking to a deaf person. My preparations went on despite medical advice, and, thanks to friends, I had an aeroplane ready to take me to Nagpur on or about the 22nd February.

On the 21st, I slowly began to realise that the doctors were right and that it was quite impossible to go to Wardha either by train or by plane. I informed Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel by wire to that effect and suggested postponement of the Working Committee meeting till the Tripuri Congress. At that time I had not the faintest idea that twelve (of thirteen) members of the Working Committee would resign almost immediately.

Much fuss has been made by interested parties over the above two telegrams and it has been alleged that I did not permit the Working Committee to transact even routine business. Such an allegation is altogether unfounded. In the first place, there was nothing in the telegrams to indicate that I did not want the Working Committee to go through routine business. My concern was over the draft resolutions for the Congress, which are usually framed by the Working Committee on the eve of its annual plenary session. In the second place, in my telegram to Sardar Patel, after giving my view regarding postponement, I requested him to ascertain the views of other members and wire same to me. The reply to my telegrams was the resignation of twelve members of the Working Committee. If these members had desired to frame

the resolutions for the Tripuri Congress in my absence, I would certainly not have stood in their way. Regarding the transaction of business, if the other members of the Working Committee did not agree with me regarding postponement or if they were in doubt as to what my real intentions were, they could very easily have put through a trunk-call or telegraphed to me. To the transaction of routine business there was not the slightest objection on my part. And as to other and more important business they would have found, if only they had enquired, that there would have been no obstruction from my side if they had desired to carry on in my absence. My only anxiety was to have such draft resolutions for the Congress prepared by the Working Committee as all the members would agree to—otherwise there was this danger that when the 'official' draft resolutions came up before the Subjects Committee, members of the Working Committee would be found arrayed on different sides. To obtain this unanimity, my presence was necessary when the draft resolutions were being prepared by the Working Committee. Hence I had suggested the postponement of the Working Committee meeting till the Tripuri Congress. My proposal would have worked very well indeed if twelve (of thirteen) members had not responded by throwing the bombshell of resignation.

The following telegram was sent by me to Sardar Patel on the February 21st:

Sardar Patel, Wardha

KINDLY SEE MY TELEGRAM TO MAHATMAJI. REGRETFULLY FEEL WORKING COMMITTEE MUST BE POSTPONED TILL CONGRESS. PLEASE CONSULT COLLEAGUES AND WIRE OPINION—SUBHAS.

But I am sorry that I have digressed. This is not a 'political' article and when I began scribbling, I wanted to write about 'My Strange Illness' and to explain why I called my illness 'Strange'. I shall now continue my story.

Till the evening of the 21st February, I was hoping against hope that I would be able to attend the Wardha meeting of the Working Committee or at least fly there on the 22nd. But the

doctors had no such worry. For them, Wardha was out of the question—their eyes were on Tripuri. Their one effort was to pull me up to such a condition during the next few days that I could at least undertake the journey to the Tripuri Congress. Sir Nilratan Sircar's bulletin had banned even the Tripuri Congress, but I pleaded and argued with my doctors and ultimately told them plainly that so long as I was alive, I could not keep away from the Tripuri Congress during such a crisis in our history. I gratefully confess that they did all that was humanly possible for them to enable me to attend the Congress.

As I look back on my five week's illness, I must make one confession. From the beginning, I did not take my illness as seriously as the doctors did—in fact I thought that they were unduly alarmist—and I did not co-operate with them as much as I should have. On the other hand, I have a legitimate excuse to offer. It was quite impossible for me to take complete physical and mental rest. I fell ill at a most critical period. The resignation of the members of the Working Committee aggravated the crisis. Statement after statement was being issued attacking me. The 'unkindest' cuts came from a quarter where they were least expected. The General Secretary of the Congress having resigned, I had perforce to attend to urgent business sent in by the office of the All-India Congress Committee. Regarding interviews, while I could decline to see local friends and visitors, I could not very well refuse to see Congressmen coming to see the Congress President on Congress business from far-off places. Owing to these and other factors, even with the best will in the world, I could not have complied with the advice of my doctors regarding physical and mental rest. I shall give one relevant instance here. When statement after statement was being issued against me, my silence was being misconstrued and friends in different. and even remote provinces began to urge me to issue some sort of a reply in order to meet at least some of the unfounded charges levelled against me. After a great deal of procrastination due to my ill-health, I made up my mind one afternoon to write my statement that day—come what may. It was not an easy affair, however. I had first to wade through some of the statements that had appeared so far, in order to

understand what the charges were. Only after that could I commence dictating my statement. By the time I finished glancing through the typed copy and gave orders for issuing it to the Press, it was mid-night. Then the temperature was taken and it was 103. Prior to that there was an improvement in my general condition and the evening temperature was not rising beyond 101 for the last two days. The doctors, therefore, deplored the set-back caused by my voluntarily undertaking mental work prematurely, but I could not help it, circumstanced as I was.

I must now come to the crux of my difficulties, because only that will explain much of what has happened. When I was lying ill in Calcutta after my return from Wardha on the 17th February, it was widely propagated by interested people that my illness was a 'fake' and that my 'political' fever was being utilised for avoiding the meeting of the Congress Working Committee on the 22nd February. This news was communicated to me by friends from a number of provinces and I cannot doubt its authenticity. Even the bulletin issued by Sir Nilratan Sircar made no impression at all on the people who were consciously and maliciously carrying on the above false propaganda. The same propaganda was carried on at Jubbulpore and Tripuri. When I reached Jubbulpore on the 6th March at about 4 p.m., my temperature was 101. When I reached my camp at Tripuri after an ambulance-ride, it shot up to 103. On my arrival at Tripuri the Reception Committee Doctors took charge of me. After examining me, one of them looked significantly at the other and this struck me at once as strange. After a couple of days I learnt the whole story. Everybody in Tripuri had been told that I was not really ill and this propaganda had affected the doctors as well. When they examined me after my arrival and discovered that I was seriously ill, they were surprised and they then felt indignant about the false and malicious propaganda that had been carried on. What increased their indignation was that even their bulletins were not believed by interested people in Tripuri. For instance, an important ex-member of the Working Committee one day asked one of the Reception Committee Doctors if I really had a temperature of 102 and if he (the doctor) had taken the temperature himself. Reports

came to me from several independent sources that even in the highest circles, my illness was not believed in. One day out of sheer exasperation, the Reception Committee Doctors sent for a Medical Board consisting of the Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals, C.P. and Berar, and the Civil Surgeon of Jubbulpore. After their joint statement was issued, there was a change in the atmosphere. But the result of bringing in these big officials was that my attending the open session of the Congress was definitely banned. I could have somehow coaxed and cajoled the Reception Committee Doctors into allowing me to attend the plenary session of the Congress. But this was not possible with the officials. Before issuing their report, they were clever enough to ask me if I would trust their opinion and accept their advice. Naturally, I had to reply in the affirmative and I was, as it were, trapped—for I was then told that I could not attend the open session of the Congress. The arrangements made by the Reception Committee for myself were quite satisfactory and, from the physical point of view, I had nothing to complain of. But owing to the above and other reasons, the moral atmosphere of Tripuri was sickening to a degree. I have not experienced anything like it at any previous session of the Congress.

The letters, telegrams, etc., I have been receiving since the 17th February, not only make interesting reading but when piled up make a regular volume. Everyday they pour in—and not only do letters and telegrams come, but parcels and packets containing medicine of all kinds and amulets of every description. I was trying to analyse the above writers and senders according to their religious faith and I found that every religious denomination was represented. And not only every religious denomination, but every system of medicine (all the 'pathies', if I may use that word) and both the sexes! Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, etc.—Allopaths, Homeopaths, Vaids, Hakims, Naturopaths, Astrologers, etc.—men and women—all have been writing to me, giving me their advice and sometimes also samples of medicine and amulets. Naturally, it is quite impossible for me now to write and thank them for their kindness. Sometimes they write more than once when they do not get a reply from me. Now what am I to do with

all these prescriptions? The first thing I do is to hand them over to my doctors, who can best judge how to utilise them. But in most cases, the doctors are reluctant to make any use of the prescriptions or the medicine sent. Is it ungracious on their part or on my part? I wonder.

Besides prescriptions and medicine, I have been receiving numbers of letters and parcels of a different sort. Astrologers and *Sadhus* send me amulets and blessings. And unknown well-wishers and sympathisers send me *ashirvàdi* flowers, etc., after offering prayers for my health and welfare at some temple or place of worship. According to prevailing custom these *ashirvàdi* flowers, leaves, sacrificial ashes, etc. (or *nirmalya*) have to be received with reverence and placed on the head or against the forehead for a while. But the fairer sex go even further. They are reluctant to throw them away after this operation is over, with the result that any number of these packets and amulets can be found underneath my pillow. And they are daily growing in number. Personally, I am of an exceedingly rationalistic frame of mind, but I respect the feelings and sentiments of others even where I do not agree with them.

So I go on pondering within me as to the real value of these prescriptions, medicine, amulets, flowers, sacrificial ashes, etc. It moved me profoundly to find that they came from every section of the vast Indian community and from every corner of India—from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. It brought tears of gratitude to my eyes when I found that I had such a large circle of well-wishers and sympathisers. I had never imagined it even in my dreams. It may be that a few of the writers wanted some sort of advertisement for themselves—but there is no doubt that the vast majority were actuated solely by a genuine feeling of sympathy for me in my suffering. The prescriptions or medicine or amulets may have no objective value, but behind them all there was a genuine feeling of sympathy and affection which had for me unbounded value and deep significance. I have no doubt that these good wishes will help me greatly in my recovery—much more than earthly medicine or astrological amulets. Even where I cannot make use of medical advice or

medicine or amulets, I gratefully accept the good-wishes that move the hearts of the senders.

Owing to the morally sickening atmosphere of Tripuri, I left that place with such a loathing and disgust for Politics as I have never felt before during the last nineteen years. As I tossed in my bed at Jamadoba, by day and by night, I began to ask myself again and again what would become of our public life when there was so much of pettiness and vindictiveness even in the highest circles. My thoughts naturally turned towards what was my first love in life—the eternal call of the Himalayas. If such was the consummation of our Politics—I asked myself—why did I stray from what Aurobindo Ghose would describe as 'the life divine'. Had the time now come for me to tear the veil of *Maya* and go back to the fountain-head of all love? I spent days and nights of moral doubt and uncertainty. At times the call of the Himalayas became insistent. I prayed for light in my dark mind. Then slowly a new vision dawned on me and I began to recover my mental balance—as well as my faith in man and in my countrymen. After all, Tripuri was not India. There was another India revealed by these letters, prescriptions, medicine, amulets, flowers, etc. What grievance could I have against that India—which was perhaps the real India? Then again, it struck me that at Tripuri there were two worlds. The pettiness and vindictiveness that I had experienced, referred only to a part of Tripuri. What about the other part? What grievance could I have against that part? Further, in spite of what I had experienced at Tripuri, how could I lose my fundamental faith in man? To distrust man was to distrust the divinity in him—to distrust one's very existence. So, gradually all my doubts were dispelled till I once again recovered my normal robust optimism. In this effort to regain my normal self, these prescriptions, medicine, amulets, flowers, etc., were a great help.

I have suffered a lot physically and have had experience of a large number of diseases. Sometimes I think that I have exhausted the whole gamut described in text-books of Pathology. I have fallen ill at home and abroad as well as in prison. In fact, I often wonder that I am still alive and kicking. But in all my life I have not experienced such acute and concentrated physical suffering continuously

for a month, as I have since the 17th February, 1939. True, I have suffered much in prison. But that suffering was spread out over comparatively long periods. What has happened to me this time? I looked comparatively hale and hearty during the first part of last month. Why and how did I suddenly fall so seriously ill? Perhaps, doctors alone should attempt the answer, but cannot a lay-man—the patient himself—also try?

Doctors have before them heaps of pathological test-reports. They have, moreover, examined me repeatedly. Though they are not communicative to the patient as to the exact disease he has been suffering from, I gather that my present malady is some kind of pneumonia with perhaps liver and intestinal complications. Blood-pressure—they add—is abnormally low. Moreover, power of resistance as revealed by sedimentation tests, etc., is also very low and weakness is excessive. The system lacks sufficient strength to combat infection and recover normality. Is this explanation sufficient and adequate? I don't know.

Beyond the explanation that my vitality, for some reason or other, is exceedingly low at present—I wonder if all the clinical and other forms of examination have revealed the real causes of this prolonged illness and this acute physical suffering. A few days after I fell ill, I began to receive letters and telegrams from different places suggesting the nature of my malady. Among them were some telegrams suggesting that I had been poisoned. My doctors were amused at first. Then they gave thought to the matter but could not find any clinical data to support this theory. So they put it aside.

A few days later I was visited by a Professor of the Calcutta University, an erudite scholar in Sanskrit Literature and a man of exemplary character, for whom our family has high regard and esteem. He had been commissioned to deliver a message to us. A number of Pundits and astrologers including himself had met the day before to discuss my illness. They had come to the conclusion that ordinary causes could not account for my strange and acute illness. They were of the view that somebody in some part of the country had been practising what is known in the Tantra-Shastra as *Marana-Kriya*—that is, attempt to kill by tantric process or

will-power. Everybody was intrigued and amused as well. Without disbelieving the possibility of exerting abnormal will-power in accordance with tantric mental exercises—was it possible in the year of grace, 1939, for such mental phenomena as *Maran, Uchchatan, Basheekaran,* etc., to take place? Our visitor was definite that, though such phenomena were rare now, they did take place nevertheless. And he cited instances. He added that, though *Marana-Kriya* had taken place, owing to my strength, it would not have any fatal result, but would only damage my health. And he concluded by offering some advice as to how I should be careful in protecting my health.

I confess that all this talk did not convince me in the least, but it nevertheless left an uncanny feeling within me. At the back of my mind there was the faint impression of a question mark. Any other man talking in the above manner would have been dismissed with scant courtesy—but this gentleman of undoubted integrity, unimpeachable character and profound scholarship—who had nothing to do with Politics and had no axe to grind—had to be listened to even if he was not to be taken seriously.

About this time—that is a few days before I left for Tripuri—a number of friends began to press me to wear amulets in order to help me in recouping my health. My rationalistic mind revolted against this at first, but in a moment of weakness, I yielded. I accepted a couple of rings and four amulets. I accepted only those from friends whom I knew and who were not actuated by any professional motive. Amulets from people whom I did not know personally I did not wear and there were any number of them. To wear all of them would be tantamount to converting myself into an amulet-exhibition. I was so anxious to be well during the Tripuri Congress that I argued within myself that even if there was mere five per cent chance of my getting well by using amulets, why should I miss it? So I compromised with my innate rationalism—but as soon as the Tripuri Congress was over, I relieved myself of the two rings and four amulets. And now my rationalism is safe and I can trust to nature and my luck!

There are certain things about my illness which I at least as a lay-man cannot account for. There is no regularity or periodicity.

For some days the temperature would begin to rise at noon, reach its maximum at about 6 p.m. and then slowly decline. Next morning it would be normal. Rise of temperature would be accompanied by unbearable headache which would subside only after four or five hours' continuous application of ice. Remission would be accompanied by heavy perspiration and complete prostration. Then suddenly this order would change. Fever would persist day and night without any remission on the one side and high increase on the other. Sometimes the symptoms would point to malignant malaria, sometimes to enteric fever and sometimes to something else.

But every time the pathological test would be negative. If one day the fever shot up to 104 degrees, the next day it would come down to normal and people would expect a permanent remission. But the third day it would mount up again. The arbitrariness of the fever and the variety of symptoms would baffle both doctors and lay-men. And the excessive weakness and exhaustion which have got hold of me remain a mystery. Even today I do not think I look half as bad as I really am.

During the last five weeks or more, though I have been cut off from the outside world to a large extent—in another sense I have been in close touch with it. People who have no connection whatsoever with Politics, whom I do not personally know at all, people in remote corners of the country—even orthodox Pundits have shown such solicitude and sympathy for me in my illness that I could never imagine. I have often asked myself—'What is the bond that binds us? Why do they feel for me? What have I done to merit such affection?' The answer to these questions can be given by them alone.

One thing I know. This is the India for which one toils and suffers. This is the India for which one can even lay down his life. This is the real India in which one can have undying faith, no matter what Tripuri says or does.

Jamadoba,
Jealgora P.O.,
District Manbhum

Statement on Resignation from Congress Presidentship

Statement made at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held in Calcutta on 29 April, 1939.

Friends,

You are aware of the resolution that was passed at the Tripuri Congress relating to the formation of the new Working Committee. That resolution was as follows:

'In view of various misunderstandings that have arisen in the Congress and the country on account of the controversies in connection with the Presidential election and after, it is desirable that the All-India Congress Committee should clarify the position and declare its general policy.

The Committee declares its firm adherence to the fundamental policies of the Congress which have governed its programme in the past years under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and is definitely of opinion that there should be no break in these policies and that they should continue to govern the Congress programme in future. The Committee expresses its confidence in the work of the Working Committee which functioned during the last year and regrets that any aspersions should have been cast against any of its members.

In view of the critical situation that may develop during the coming year and in view of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi alone can lead the Congress and the country to victory during such crisis, the committee regards it as imperative that the Congress executive should command his implicit confidence and requests the President to nominate the Working Committee in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji'.

I regret very much that since the Tripuri Congress I have not been able to announce the personnel of the new Working Committee. But this has been due to circumstances beyond my control. Owing to my illness, I could not proceed to meet Mahatma Gandhi. In lieu thereof, I started correspondence with him. This enabled us to clarify our ideas and viewpoints, but did not bring

us to a settlement. When I realised that correspondence had proved ineffective, I wanted to make a frantic effort to meet Mahatmaji at Delhi—but that effort also failed.

After Mahatmaji's arrival in Calcutta we have had prolonged conversations, but unfortunately they did not lead to any solution. Mahatmaji's advice to me is that I should myself form a Working Committee leaving out the members who resigned from the previous Working Committee. This advice I cannot give effect to for several reasons. To mention two of the principal reasons I might say that such a step would be contrary to the directions given in Pantji's resolution, which provides inter alia that the Working Committee should be formed in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji and should command his implicit confidence. If I formed such a Committee as advised above, I would not be able to report to you that the Committee commanded his implicit confidence. Moreover, my own conviction is that in view of the critical times that are ahead of us in India and abroad, we should have a composite Cabinet commanding the confidence of the largest number of Congressmen possible and reflecting the composition of the general body of Congressmen.

Since I could not implement Mahatmaji's advice, I could only repeat my request that he should kindly shoulder the responsibility vested in him by the Tripuri Congress and nominate the Working Committee. And I told him that whatever Committee he appointed would be binding on me, since it was my determination to implement Pantji's resolution.

Unfortunately for us Mahatmaji has felt unable to nominate the Working Committee.

As a last step, I tried my best to arrive at an informal solution of the above problem. Mahatmaji told me that the prominent members of the previous Working Committee and myself could put our heads together and see if we could arrive at an agreement. I agreed and we made the attempt. If we had succeeded in coming to a settlement, we would then have come up before the A.I.C.C. for formal ratification of our informal agreement. Unfortunately, though we spent several hours in discussing the matter, we could not arrive at a settlement. I have therefore to report to you with

deep regret that I have been unable to announce the personnel of the new Working Committee.

I have been pondering deeply as to what I could do to help the A.I.C.C. in solving the problem that is now placed before it. I feel that my presence as President at this juncture may possibly be a sort of obstacle or handicap in its path—for instance the A.I.C.C. may feel inclined to appoint a Working Committee in which I shall be a misfit. I feel, further, that it may possibly be easier for the A.I.C.C. to settle the matter if it can have a new President. After mature deliberation, therefore, and in an entirely helpful spirit I am placing my resignation in your hands.

The time at my disposal has been very short and hence I could prepare only a brief statement. Nevertheless, this brief statement will, I hope, succeed in clarifying the situation as it now stands. Friends, I shall now request you to elect a Chairman to conduct the proceedings of this house.

Rabindranath Tagore's Message to Netaji on His Resignation

The dignity and forbearance which you have shown in the midst of a most aggravating situation has won my admiration and confidence in your leadership. The same perfect decorum has still to be maintained by Bengal for the sake of her own self-respect and thereby to help to turn your apparent defeat into a permanent victory.

Major Political Correspondence

Bose–Jinnah Correspondence
(May-December, 1938)

To M.A. Jinnah

Note handed over by the Congress President to Mr M.A. Jinnah on May 14, 1938.

Confidential

In the course of the talks between the Congress President and Mr Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, Mr Jinnah suggested that any agreement that might be arrived at should be based on a clear understanding of the position of the Congress and of the Muslim League. He proposed that the conversation should proceed on the following lines:

> The All-India Muslim League as the authoritative and representative organisation of the Indian Muslims and the Congress as the authoritative and representative organisation of the solid body of Hindu opinion have hereby agreed to the following terms by way of a pact between the two major communities and as a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question.

After further consideration a somewhat different wording was suggested by him as follows:

> The Congress and the All-India Muslim League as the authoritative and representative organisation of the Mussalmans of India have hereby agreed to the following terms of a Hindu-Muslim settlement by way of a pact.

This second statement, though shorter, apparently embodies the same idea which is given in the first—that is, that the Congress should represent the Hindus and the Muslim League the Mussalmans.

The Congress cannot possibly consider itself and function as if it represented one community only even though that might be the majority community in India. Its doors must inevitably be open to all communities and it must welcome all Indians who agree with its general policy and methods. It cannot accept the position of representing one community and thus itself becoming a communal organisation. At the same time the Congress is perfectly willing to confer and co-operate with other organisations which represent minority interests.

It is obvious that the Mussalmans of India, though a minority in the whole country, form a very considerable part of the population and their wishes and desires must be considered in any scheme affecting India. It is also true that the All-India Muslim League is an organisation representing a large body of Muslim opinion which must carry weight. It is for this reason that the Congress has endeavoured to understand the viewpoint of the League and to come to an understanding with it. The Congress, however, would be bound to consult other existing Muslim organisations which have co-operated with the Congress in the past. Further, in the event of other group or minority interests being involved, it will be necessary to consult representatives of such interests.

To Jinnah

26, Marine Drive, Bombay
15th May, 1938

Dear Mr Jinnah,

Last night I gave you a note explaining our position. You asked me what constructive proposals we had to make. I think the note is self-explanatory. Having made known the Congress reaction to your suggestion, according to us it remains now to proceed to the next stage, namely, appointment of respective committees which will jointly settle the terms of understanding.

Yours sincerely

Subhas C. Bose

From Jinnah

Little Gibbs Road
Malabar Hill, Bombay
16th May, 1938

Dear Mr Bose,

I acknowledge the receipt of a note you handed over to me on behalf of the Congress on the 14th and also I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 15th of May, 1938. The matter will be placed before the Executive Council and the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League at a meeting to be called in the first week of June and I will communicate to you the decision as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

M.A. Jinnah

From Jinnah

6th June, 1938

Dear Mr Bose,

I am enclosing herewith the unanimous opinion of the Executive Council of the All-India Muslim League as promised on the note given to me by you on behalf of the Congress on the 15th May, 1938.

Yours sincerely

M.A. Jinnah

Resolution No. 1

The Executive Council of the All-India Muslim League has considered the note handed by the President, Mr Subhas C. Bose, on behalf of the Congress to Mr Jinnah, the President of the All-India Muslim League, on the 14th May and his letter of the 15th May, 1938, and find that it is not possible for the All-India Muslim League to treat or negotiate with the Congress the question of Hindu-Muslim settlement except on the basis that the Muslim League is the authoritative and representative organisation of the Mussalmans of India.

Resolution No. 2

The Council have also considered the letter of Mr Gandhi, dated the 22nd May, 1938, and are of opinion that it is not desirable to include any Muslim in the personnel of the proposed committee that may be appointed by the Congress.

Resolution No. 3

The Executive Council wish to make it clear that it is the declared policy of the All-India Muslim League that all other minorities should have their rights and interests safeguarded so as to create a

sense of security amongst them and win their confidence and the All-India Muslim League will consult the representatives of such minorities and any other interest as may be involved when necessary.

To Jinnah

The following telegram sent by the Congress President to Mr Jinnah on June 21, 1938.

RETURNED YESTERDAY. RECEIVED LETTER. THANKS. REGRET DELAY ACKNOWLEDGMENT—SUBHAS BOSE.

To Jinnah

38/2, Elgin Road, Calcutta,
June 27, 1938

Dear Mr Jinnah,

Your letter of the 6th instant forwarding the resolutions of the Executive Council of the Muslim League reached Calcutta duly, but as I was on tour, I did not get them till my return on the 20th instant. I telegraphed to you the next day, acknowledging the receipt of your letter.

The Working Committee of the Congress will meet at Wardha on the 9th July. Your letter and the resolutions of the Muslim League will be placed before the Committee and I shall acquaint you with its decision as soon as possible thereafter. I had been to Wardha and have just returned from there.

With best regards.

Yours sincerely

Subhas C. Bose

To Jinnah

Wardha
25th July, 1938

Dear Mr Jinnah,

The Working Committee has given all the attention it was possible for it to give to the resolutions of the Council of the Muslim League which you were good enough to enclose with your letter of the 6th June, 1938. The first resolution of the League Council defines the status of the League. If it means that before we proceed to set up a machinery for considering the terms of settlement of the communal question, the Congress should recognise the status as defined in that resolution, there is an obvious difficulty. Though the resolution does not use the adjective 'only', the language of the resolution means that the adjective is understood. Already the Working Committee has received warnings against recognising the exclusive status of the League. There are Muslim organisations which have been functioning independently of the Muslim League. Some of them are staunch supporters of the Congress. Moreover, there are individual Muslims who are Congressmen, some of whom exercise no inconsiderable influence in the country. Then there is the Frontier Province which is overwhelmingly Muslim and is solidly with the Congress. You will see that in the face of these known facts, it is not only impossible but improper for the Congress to make the admission, which the first resolution of the League Council apparently desires the Congress to make. It is suggested that status of organisations does not accrue to them by any defining of it. It comes through the service to which a particular organisation has dedicated itself. The Working Committee, therefore, hopes that the League Council will not ask the Congress to do the impossible. Is it not enough that the Congress is not only willing but eager to establish the friendliest relations with the League and come to an honourable understanding over the much vexed Hindu-Muslim question? At this stage it may perhaps be as well to state the Congress claim. Though it is admitted that the largest number of persons to be found on the

numerous Congress registers are Hindus, the Congress has a fairly large number of Muslims and members of other communities professing different faiths. It has been an unbroken tradition with the Congress to represent all communities, all races and all classes to whom India is their home. From its inception it has often had distinguished Muslims as presidents and as general secretaries who enjoyed the confidence of the Congress and of the country. The Congress tradition is that although a Congressman does not cease to belong to the faith in which he is born and brought up, no one comes to the Congress by virtue of his faith. He is in-and-out of the Congress by virtue of his endorsement of the political principles and policy of the Congress. The Congress, therefore, is in no sense a communal organisation. In fact, it has always fought the communal spirit because it is detrimental to the growth of pure and undefiled nationalism.

But whilst the Congress makes the claim, and has sought, with more or less success, to live up to the claim, the Working Committee would be glad if your Council would come to an understanding with the Congress in order that we might achieve national solidarity and whole-heartedly work for realising our common destiny.

As to the second resolution of the Council, I am afraid that it is not possible for the Working Committee to conform to the desire expressed therein.

The third resolution, the Working Committee is unable to understand. So far as the Working Committee is concerned, the Muslim League is a purely communal organisation, in the sense that it seems to serve Muslim interests only and its membership too is open only to Muslims. The Working Committee also has all along understood that so far as the League is concerned, it desires, and rightly, a settlement with the Congress on the Hindu-Muslim question and not on questions affecting all minorities. So far as the Congress is concerned, if the other minorities have a grievance against the Congress, it is always ready to deal with them, as it is its bounden duty to do so being by its very constitution representative of all India without distinction of caste or creed.

In view of the foregoing I hope that it will be possible for us

to take up the next stage in our negotiations for reaching a settlement.

It is suggested that as the previous correspondence has already been published, it would be wise to take the public into confidence and publish the subsequent correspondence between us. If you are agreeable, these documents will be immediately released for publication.

Yours sincerely

S.C. Bose

From Jinnah

Malabar Hill, Bombay,
August 2, 1938

Dear Mr Bose,

I placed your letter, dated the 25th of July, 1938, before the meeting of the Executive Council of the All-India Muslim League.

The Executive Council gave its earnest attention and careful consideration to the arguments which were urged in your letter for persuading it not to claim the status it has done in its resolution No. 1, already communicated to you.

I am desired to state that in defining the status the Council was not actuated by any motive of securing an admission, but had merely stated an accepted fact.

This Council is fully convinced that the Muslim League is the only authoritative and representative political organisation of the Mussalmans of India. This position was accepted when the Congress-League Pact was arrived at in 1916 at Lucknow and ever since till 1935 when Jinnah-Rajendra Prasad conversation took place, it has not been questioned. The All-India Muslim League, therefore, does not require any admission or recognition from the Congress nor did the resolution of the Executive Council at Bombay. But in view of the fact that the position—in fact the very

existence—of the League had been questioned by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then President of the Congress, in one of his statements, wherein he asserted that there were only two parties in the country, viz., the British Government and the Congress, it was considered necessary by the Executive Council to inform the Congress of the basis on which the negotiations between the two organisations could proceed.

Besides the very fact that the Congress approached the Muslim League to enter into negotiations for a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question, it presupposed the authoritative and representative character of the League and as such its right to come to an agreement on behalf of the Mussalmans of India.

The Council are aware of the fact that there is a Congress Coalition Government in N.W.F.P. and also that there are some Muslims in the Congress organisation in other provinces. But the Council is of opinion that these Muslims in the Congress do not and cannot represent the Mussalmans of India for the simple reason that their number is very insignificant and that as members of the Congress they have disabled themselves from representing or speaking on behalf of the Muslim community. Were it not so, the whole claim of the Congress alleged in your letter regarding its national character would fall to the ground.

As regards 'the other Muslim organisations' to which reference has been made in your letter, but whom you have not even named, the Council considers that it would have been more proper if no reference had been made to them. If they collectively or individually had been in a position to speak on behalf of the Mussalmans of India, the negotiations with the Muslim League for a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question would not have been initiated by the President of the Congress and Mr. Gandhi.

So far as the Muslim League is concerned, it is not aware that any Muslim political organisation has ever made a claim that it can speak or negotiate on behalf of the Muslims of India. It is, therefore, very much to be regretted that you should have referred to 'other Muslim organisations' in this connection.

The Council is equally anxious to bring about a settlement of 'the much vexed Hindu-Muslim question' and thus hasten the

realisation of the common goal, but it is painful to find that suitable arguments are being introduced to cloud the issue and retard the progress of the negotiations.

In view of the facts stated above, the Council wishes to point out that it considers undesirable the inclusion of Mussalmans in the Committee that might be appointed by the Congress, because it would meet to solve and settle the Hindu-Muslim question and so in the very nature of the issue involved, they would not command the confidence of either Hindus or the Mussalmans and their position indeed would be most embarrassing. The Council, therefore, request you to consider the question in the light of the above negotiations.

With reference to the third resolution, it was the memorandum of the conference referred to in your letter dated the 15th of May, 1938, in which mention of other minorities was made and the Muslim League expressed its willingness to consult them if and when it was necessary in consonance with its declared policy.

As regards your desire for the release of the correspondence, including this letter, for publication, the Council has no objection to your doing so.

Yours sincerely

M.A. Jinnah

To Jinnah

38/2, Elgin Road, Calcutta
August 16, 1938

Dear Mr Jinnah,

Many thanks for your letter of the 2nd August, 1938. I regret the delay in replying to it. As the issue is a very important one, I desire to place your letter before the Congress Working Committee at

its next meeting in September. Thereafter you will hear from me again.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely

Subhas C. Bose

To Jinnah

Delhi
October 2, 1938

Dear Mr Jinnah,

Your letter of the 2nd August, 1938, has been placed before the Working Committee. After due deliberation, it has resolved to reply as follows:

Though there are inaccuracies in your letter, no purpose will be served by dwelling on them. The substance of your letter seems to be that the League does not expect the Congress either implicitly or explicitly to acknowledge its status as the authoritative Muslim organisation of India. If this view is accepted by the League, I am authorised to state that the Working Committee will confer with the Committee that may be appointed by the League to draw up the terms of settlement. The Working Committee will be represented by at least five of its members at the sittings of the conference.

As the previous correspondence has already been released for publication, I am taking the liberty of issuing this to the press.

Yours sincerely

Subhas C. Bose

From Jinnah

Karachi
October 9, 1938

Dear Mr Bose,

I am in receipt of you letter dated October 2, which was placed before the Executive Council of the League. I am authorised to state in reply that the Executive Council regret very much that the Working Committee of the Congress should have entirely misread my letter of August 2, which was quite clear and did not require any elucidation or further interpretation. The Muslim League is still ready to proceed with negotiations for a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question on the basis defined in my letter referred to above and would appoint its representatives to meet a committee that may be appointed by the Congress on the footing indicated by us in our three resolutions of June 5, already communicated to you.

Yours sincerely

M.A. Jinnah

To Jinnah

December 16, 1938

The Working Committee of the Congress, during its deliberations in Wardha from the 11th to 16th December, 1938, considered Mr Jinnah's letter dated October 9, 1938, and authorised the President to write to Mr Jinnah in the following terms closing the correspondence:

Dear Mr Jinnah,

The Working Committee have considered your letter of October 9, 1938, and regret the decision contained therein. Since the Committee do not find it possible to agree with the Council of the Muslim League as to the basis of the negotiation and since the

Council insist that an agreement as to the basis is a *sine qua non* of any negotiations between the Congress and the League, the Working Committee regret that they are not in a position to do anything further in the direction of starting negotiations with the League with a view to arriving at a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question.

I am sorry for the delay in replying to your letter but I did not want to say anything till the Working Committee met and considered the matter.

Since the previous correspondence has been published already, I am taking the liberty of issuing this to the press.

Yours sincerely

Subhas C. Bose

Bose–Gandhi Correspondence
December 1938–May 1939

To Mahatma Gandhi

26, Marine Drive, Bombay
21st Dec. 1938

My Dear Mahatmaji,

The letter which Sjt. G.D. Birla brought from Wardha came as a profound shock to me. I remember to have discussed the Bengal situation with you time and again. The other day at Wardha it was discussed between us once again. My brother Sarat also discussed the matter with you. Both of us have the clear impression that you have always agreed with the idea of a Coalition Ministry for Bengal. I do not know what has happened since I left Wardha to make you

alter your view so completely that you now write—'I am more than ever convinced that he should not aim at ousting the ministry etc.' The papers say that after I left Wardha, Sjt. N.R. Sarkar, Sjt. G.D. Birla and Moulana Azad Sahib have seen you. Evidently you have altered your view after talking to them. The position, therefore, is that you attach more value and importance to the views of these three gentlemen than to the views of those who are responsible for running the Congress organisation in Bengal.

You are not in the habit of writing anything light heartedly—hence I shall be justified in attaching the fullest weight to what is your considered opinion. Your letter has given rise to a crisis in which it is necessary for me to speak very frankly and I crave your pardon at the outset for doing so.

To come straight to the point—there is a fundamental difference between Moulana Sahib and myself on the point at issue. This became manifest when we were confronted with the ministerial crisis in Assam. I can perhaps now claim that I was right and Moulana Sahib was wrong. But if Sardar Patel had not providentially come to my rescue, Moulana Sahib would never have given in at Shillong and perhaps you would not have supported my view-point against that of Moulana Sahib when the Working Committee met at Delhi. In that case there would not have been a Coalition ministry in Assam.

Over Sindh, there has been a difference between Moulana Sahib on the one side and several members of the Working Committee including myself on the other. And now comes the Bengal situation on which our views are diametrically opposed.

Moulana Sahib's view seems to be that in the Muslim-majority provinces like Bengal, the communal-Muslim Ministries should not be disturbed. The Huq Ministry and the Sikandar Hyat Ministry should be allowed to continue in office. Moulana Sahib is evidently unhappy over our lending support to the Allah Bux Ministry in Sindh.

I hold, on the contrary, that it is imperative in the national interest that we should pull down the Huq Ministry as early as possible. The longer this reactionary Ministry remains in office, the more communal will the atmosphere of Bengal become and

the weaker will the Congress grow, vis-a-vis the Muslim League. The same argument applies to the Sikandar Hyat Ministry also.

At long last, early in November Sjt. Nalini Sarkar had been convinced that he should resign from the Huq Ministry. He assured me for the last time on the 9th December, before I left Calcutta for Wardha, that he would resign his office before the next Budget Session. What made him resile from that position within one week, I do not know. Your influence is going to be used not to get Nalini Babu to resign but to get him to stick to office at a time when even his closest friends want him to get out of the Huq Ministry. It has astonished me that you did not feel it necessary to even consult me before you arrived at a decision on such a serious matter.

In these circumstances, there are only two alternatives in front of us. If you still feel that the decision contained in your letter is the right one and should be adhered to—I shall have to carefully consider my position. Obviously I cannot be a party to a policy which I am convinced is wholly wrong. In the alternative, those who are responsible for running the Congress organisation in Bengal should be treated with more consideration and their work should not be sabotaged by other people who seem to delight in ignoring the provincial authorities whenever they have a chance to do so.

It is necessary for me to explain at length why I attach so much value to a Coalition Ministry in provinces like Bengal. You may remember that I spoke to you at Shegaon on this subject but now I shall repeat what I have to say.

The position today is such that a Coalition Ministry in Sindh, Bengal and Punjab is within the domain of practical politics. If this change could be brought about (and in my humble opinion it can be)—the Congress will be in a position to speak to the British Government on behalf of eleven provincial governments. This will mean that even without a Hindu-Muslim settlement, the Congress will be able to officially represent the people of British India while dealing with the British Government, and we shall not be seriously handicapped because there has been no settlement with the Muslim League.

While endeavouring to bring about a Coalition Ministry in the remaining three provinces, we should lose no time in announcing our decision on the various Hindu-Muslim problems that would have come up for discussion if negotiations had taken place between the Congress and the Muslim League. Simultaneously, we should hold an enquiry into the grievances of the Muslims against the Congress Governments. These two steps will help to satisfy reasonable Muslims that we are anxious to understand their complaints and to remedy them as far as humanly possible.

If we carry out the above programme before the next Congress meets at Tripuri, we shall be in a position to put our national demand (for Purna Swaraj) before the British Government and ask for a definite reply within a specified period. With a background of acute international tension, it will not be possible for the British Government to reject our demand lightly. And if they do reject it or give us an unsatisfactory reply, we should start our Satyagraha campaign after giving due notice. As far as one can judge, the present international tension will continue for another 12 or 13 months. In such a critical situation the British Government cannot permit a major struggle to go on in India. They will have to make peace with India if they are to avoid weakening themselves in Europe. Consequently, a Satyagraha campaign on a big scale in 1939 will inevitably lead to a Peace Conference between the Congress and the British Government as a stepping-stone to our victory.

In this plan, as outlined above, Coalition ministries in the remaining three provinces will have an important part to play. Personally I have no doubt in my mind that if there be Congress-Coalition ministries in Bengal and Punjab and a widespread awakening among the States' subjects, the position of the British Government vis-a-vis the Congress will be very weak. (We all know that they are at present banking on the support of Bengal and Punjab in British India and of the Princes in Indian India.) A Satyagraha campaign in 1939 will be launched under the most favourable auspices, considered from the internal as well as from the external point of view.

I am inclined to attach added value to Coalition ministries in

the remaining three provinces owing to the above considerations. But even without these considerations, Coalition ministries would in my judgment, be desirable.

I may add that if some member or members of the Working Committee be commissioned now, we may have three more Coalition ministries before the Congress assembles at Tripuri. I would be prepared to undertake this responsibility if worthier members of the Working Committee do not feel like coming forward.

In conclusion, I may say that I feel so strongly on this point that a contrary policy appears to me to be suicidal. I hope that after you reconsider the matter, you will find it possible to let us continue along the above lines and give us your blessings. On the contrary, if you still adhere to the decision contained in your letter, I shall beg you to permit me to relieve myself of my present responsibilities at an early date for I cannot be a party to a policy which I sincerely believe is harmful to the national interest.

I should have left for Madras on the 19th instant but I am held up for 2 or 3 days because of throat trouble.

With pranams.

Yours affly

Subhas

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 24th March, 1939. Mahatma Gandhi—Birla House, New Delhi

IN VIEW OF YOUR SUGGESTION TO SARAT REGARDING CONGRESS WORK AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF MY MEETING YOU IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, I CONSIDER IT NECESSARY TO START CONSULTATIONS WITH YOU THROUGH POST. I AM WRITING—SUBHAS.

From Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 25th March, 1939. Rashtrapati Bose—Jealgora

YOUR WIRE. I WAS YESTERDAY AT ALLAHABAD TO SEE MOULANA AZAD AS HE WAS ANXIOUS FOR A TALK AND I POSTED A LETTER FROM THE TRAIN. AWAITING YOUR COMMUNICATION. HOPE YOUR PROGRESS IS STEADY. LOVE—BAPU.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 25th March, 1939. Mahatma Gandhi—Birla House, New Delhi

YOUR TODAY'S TELEGRAM. I AM WITHHOLDING POSTING MY LETTER TILL I RECEIVE YOURS—SUBHAS.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 25th March, 1939. Mahatma Gandhi—New Delhi

YOUR LETTER NOT RECEIVED. I AM, THEREFORE, POSTING MINE—SUBHAS.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora
25th March, 1939

My dear Mahatmaji,

I hope you have seen the statement I issued to-day (Saturday, the 25th instant) in reply to those who were blaming me for causing a stalemate in the affairs of the Congress. The immediate and

urgent problem before us is the formation of the new Working Committee. A satisfactory solution of this problem entails a prior consideration of some other problems of wider significance. Nevertheless, I shall take up the former problem first.

With regard to this problem, I shall be grateful if you kindly let me know your opinion on the following points:

(1) What is your present conception of the composition of the Working Committee? Must it be a homogeneous body or should it be drawn from different parties or groups within the Congress, so that the Committee, as a whole, may represent, as far as possible, the composition of the general body of the Congress?

(2) If you still adhere to the view that the Committee should be homogeneous in character, then obviously people like myself on the one side and Sardar Patel and others on the other, cannot be on the same Committee. (I must mention here that I have always combated the idea that the Working Committee should be homogeneous in character.)

(3) If you agree that different parties or groups should be represented on the Working Committee, what should be their numerical representation?
In my view there are 2 main parties or 'blocs' in the Congress. They are probably more or less equally balanced. At the Presidential Election we had a majority. At Tripuri it was the other way, but this was due to the attitude of the Congress Socialist Party. If the C.S.P. had not remained neutral, then in spite of various handicaps, (I shall refer to them in a subsequent letter or when we meet) we would have had a majority in the open session.

(4) It appears to me as an equitable arrangement if I suggest the names of seven members and if you ask Sardar to suggest seven.

(5) Further, if I am to continue as President and function properly, it is necessary that the General Secretary must be a man of my choice.

(6) The Treasurer's name may be suggested by Sardar Patel.

I shall now refer to one or two salient implications of Pandit Pant's resolution. (I shall write on this topic at length in a separate letter.) Firstly, do you regard it as a resolution of no-confidence in me and would you like me to resign in consequence thereof? I ask this question because several interpretations have been put on this resolution, even by the supporters of that resolution.

Secondly, what exactly is the position of the President after Pandit Pant's resolution was passed. Article XV of the Congress Constitution confers certain powers on the President in the matter of appointing the Working Committee and that article in the constitution stands unaltered to this day. At the same time, Pandit Pant's resolution lays down that the Working Committee is to be constituted by me in accordance with your wishes. What is the net result? Do I count at all? Are you to draw up the full list of the members of the Working Committee according to your free choice and will, and I am merely to announce your decision? The effect of this would be to nullify Article XV of the Congress Constitution without amending it.

In this connection I must state that the above clause in Pandit Pant's resolution is clearly unconstitutional and ultra vires. In fact, Pandit Pant's resolution itself was out of order, having been received too late. I would have been within my rights in ruling out of order Pantji's entire resolution, just as Maulana Azad was within his right in ruling out of order Shri Sarat Chandra Bose's amendment to the National Demand Resolution in the open session of the Congress. Further, from the purely constitutional point of view, even after admitting Pandit Pant's resolution, I should have ruled out of order the last clause pertaining to the formation of the Working Committee, since it militated against Article XV of the Constitution. But I am temperamentally too democratic to attach importance to technical or constitutional points. Further, I felt that it would be unmanly to take shelter behind the Constitution at a time when I felt that there was the possibility of an adverse vote.

Before I close this letter I shall refer to one other point. If I am to continue as President, despite all the obstacles, handicaps and difficulties—how would you like me to function? I remember

that during the last twelve months you occasionally (perhaps often) advised me to the effect that you did not want me to be a dummy President and that you would like to see me asserting myself. At Wardha on the 15th February, when I found that you did not agree with my programme, I told you that there were two alternatives before me—either to efface myself or to stand up for my honest convictions. If I remember aright, you told me in reply that unless I voluntarily accepted your viewpoint, self-effacement would in reality amount to self-suppression and that you could not approve of self-suppression. If I am to continue as President, would you still advise me not to function as a dummy President as you advised me last year?

All that I have said above presupposes that it is still possible for all parties or groups in the Congress to work together in spite of all that has happened since the Presidential Election and particularly at the Tripuri Congress.

In my next letter I shall deal with general problems, to some of which I referred in my press statement of to-day.

I am progressing steadily though rather slowly. The main obstacle to rapid recovery seems to be want of sufficient sleep.

I hope you have been improving steadily, despite your heavy pre-occupation.

With pranams.

Yours affectionately

Subhas

From Mahatma Gandhi

On the train
(Birla House, New Delhi)
24th March, 1939

My dear Subhas,

I do hope this will find you steadily progressing towards complete recovery.

I enclose herewith a copy of Sarat's letter to me and my reply. If it represents also your sentiments then and then only my suggestions are applicable. Anyway the anarchy at the centre should end. In accordance with your request, I am keeping absolutely silent though pressure is being put upon me to give my opinion on the crisis.

I saw the resolution for the first time in Allahabad. It seems to me to be quite clear. The initiative lies with you. I do not know how far you are fit to attend to the national work. If you are not, I think you should adopt the only constitutional course open to you.

I shall have to be in Delhi still for a few days.

Love

Bapu

To Mahatma Gandhi

Rashtrapati Subhas Bose's telegram from Jealgora, March 26, 1939

AWAITING YOUR LETTER, AS YOU SAY IN YOUR STATEMENT, IT IS DESIRABLE WE MEET—SUBHAS.

From Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhiji's telegram to Subhas Bose, March 26, 1939

RAJKOT AFFAIR TIES ME DOWN TO DELHI OR I WOULD RUN TO YOU DESPITE WEAKNESS. I SUGGEST YOUR COMING HERE AND LIVING WITH ME. I UNDERTAKE TO NURSE YOU TO HEALTH WHILE WE ARE SLOWLY CONFERRING. LOVE—BAPU.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora
March 29, 1939

My dear Mahatmaji,

I shall write to you again within a day or two; meanwhile an urgent matter has cropped up. Shri Narsingh, the Acting General Secretary of the A.I.C.C., writes to say that he wants about 20 days' notice for the meeting of the A.I.C.C.

Under the rules, the members of the A.I.C.C. must have 15 days' notice. Then again 4 or 5 days are required, according to him, for the notice to reach the remotest parts of the country. Consequently, in all we want about 20 days' time.

Subject to your approval, I am thinking that a date round about the 20th April would be suitable. But there is a difficulty. I am told that the Gandhi Seva Sangh Conference will be meeting in Bihar about the 20th April. So the two meetings will clash. The A.I.C.C., as also the Working Committee, will be meeting in Calcutta. Your presence there at the time is indispensably necessary. May I suggest that the A.I.C.C. meet either before or after the Gandhi Seva Sangh Conference. In the former case you could come to Calcutta first and then proceed to Bihar. In the latter case, you could go to Bihar first and then proceed to Calcutta. In the former case, the Sangh Conference will have to be postponed for a week. In the latter case the A.I.C.C. meeting will have to be fixed for the end of April.

Kindly consider the matter and let me have your 'Upadesh' as to when the A.I.C.C. should meet. Lastly, we must have you at the time of the A.I.C.C. meeting.

I am progressing. I am anxious to hear that your blood pressure has gone up again. I am afraid you have been overworking yourself.

With pranams.

Yours affectionately

Subhas

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora
March 29, 1939

My dear Mahatmaji,

I received your letter of the 24th instant from the train along with the enclosures.

Firstly, my brother Sarat wrote to you on his own. You will see from his letter that he got your telegram on his return to Calcutta from here and then he wrote to you. If he had not got your telegram, I doubt if he would have written.

There are, of course, certain things in his letter which echo my feelings. But that is a different matter. The main problem appears to me as to whether both parties can forget the past and work together. That depends entirely on you. If you can command the confidence of both parties by taking up a truly non-partisan attitude, then you can save the Congress and restore national unity.

I am, temperamentally, not a vindictive person and I do not nurse grievances. In a way, I have mentality of a boxer—that is, to shake hands smilingly when the boxing-bout is over and take the result in a sporting spirit.

Secondly, in spite of all the representations that I have been receiving, I take the Pant resolution as it has been passed by the Congress. We must give effect to it. I myself allowed the resolution to be moved and discussed, despite the ultra vires clause in it. How can I go back on it?

Thirdly, there are two alternatives before you (1) either to accommodate our views with regard to the composition of the new Working Committee, or (2) to insist on your views in their entirety. In the case of the latter, we may come to the parting of the ways.

Fourthly, I am prepared to do all that is humanly possible for me to expedite the formation of the new Working Committee and the summoning of the Working Committee and A.I.C.C. But I am so sorry that it is not possible for me to come to Delhi now

(Dr Sunil has wired to you this morning on this point). I got your telegram only yesterday.

Fifthly, I was surprised to learn from your letter that the A.I.C.C. Office had not sent you a copy of Pant's resolution. (This has since been done.) I was still more surprised that the resolution had not been brought to your notice till you came to Allahabad. At Tripuri, the air was thick with the rumour that the resolution had your fullest support. A statement to that effect also appeared in the daily Press while we were at Tripuri.

Sixthly, I have not the slightest desire to stick to office. But I do not see reason for resigning because I am ill. No President resigned when he was in prison, for instance. I may tell you that great pressure is being brought to bear on me to resign. I am resisting because my resignation will mean a new phase in Congress politics which I want to avoid till the last.

I have been attending to urgent A.I.C.C. work during the last few days.

I shall write to you again to-morrow or the day after. I am progressing. I hope your blood pressure will soon go down again.

With pranams.

Yours affectionately

Subhas

PS This letter is not exactly a reply to yours. I have just jotted down the points which were in my mind. I wanted to convey them to you.

From Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi
30.3.39

My dear Subhas,

I have delayed my reply to your letter of 26th instant for the

sake of having your reply to my wire. I got Sunil's wire last night. I have now got up before morning prayer time to write this reply.

Since you think that Pant's resolution was out of order and the clause relating to the Working Committee is clearly unconstitutional and ultra vires, your course is absolutely clear. Your choice of the Committee should be unfettered.

Your several questions on this head therefore do not need any answering.

Since we met in February my opinion has become strengthened that where there are differences on fundamentals, as we agreed there were, a composite Committee would be harmful. Assuming therefore that your policy has the backing of the majority of the A.I.C.C. you should have a Working Committee, composed purely of those who believe in your policy.

Yes, I adhere to the view expressed by me at Segaon at our February meeting that I would not be guilty of being party to any self-suppression by you, as distinguished from voluntary self-effacement. Any subordination of a view which you may strongly hold as in the best interest of the country would be self-suppression. Therefore, if you are to function as President your hands must be unfettered. The situation before the country admits of no middle course.

So far as the Gandhiites (to use that wrong expression) are concerned they will not obstruct you. They will help you where they can, they will abstain where they cannot. There should be no difficulty whatsoever, if they are in a minority. They may not suppress themselves if they are clearly in a majority.

What worries me however is the fact that the Congress electorate is bogus and that therefore majority and minority lose their full meaning. Nevertheless till the Congress stable is cleansed, we have to manage with the instrument we have for the time being. The other thing worrying me is the terrible distrust among ourselves. Joint work is an impossibility where the workers distrust one another.

I think there is no other point in your letter that needs answering.

In all you do, may you be guided by God. Do be well quickly by obeying the doctors.

Love

Bapu

Note So far as I am concerned our correspondence need not be published. But you have my permission to publish it, if you think otherwise.

From Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 31st March, 1939

YOUR LETTER, REPLY TO FIRST LETTER POSTED YESTERDAY. ALL-INDIA MEETING MUST HAVE PRECEDENCE. PROCEDURE RULE 2 SAYS EMERGENCY MEETING REQUIRES SEVEN DAY'S NOTICE WHICH CAN BE GIVEN THROUGH PRESS. LOVE—BAPU.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 31st March, 1939

YOUR TODAY'S TELEGRAM. FROM MY HEALTH VIEWPOINT ANY DAY AFTER 20TH PREFERABLE. WORKING COMMITTEE MEETS BEFORE ALL-INDIA. NO OBJECTION TO GANDHI SEVA SANGHA CONFERENCE MEETING BEFORE ALL-INDIA. IN FACT WOULD PERSONALLY SUIT ME BETTER. HOWEVER REGARDING DATE SHALL BE GUIDED BY YOUR WISHES. PRANAMS—SUBHAS.

From Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 1st April, 1939

YOUR WIRE. FIX DATE THAT SUITS YOU BEST. I SHALL ACCOMMODATE MYSELF TO YOUR DATE. LOVE—BAPU.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora
March 31st, 1939

My dear Mahatmaji,

I saw your telegram to Sunil which you sent in reply to his long telegram regarding my health. When you wired suggesting my going to Delhi, I thought it best to let the doctors speak out their mind on the subject. So Sunil wired to you.

I have been pondering over the various points in your letter of the 24th instant to me (from the train) and your letter to Sarat of the same date and over the situation in general. It is really unfortunate for me that I fell ill at such a critical time. But events have so moved in rapid succession that I have not had a chance of quick recovery. Besides, both before Tripuri and after, I have not been treated in certain influential quarters (there is no reference to you at all in this—let me make it clear) with the consideration that was due to me. But there is no reason for me to resign on account of my illness. As I stated in my letter of yesterday (my second letter to you) no President, to my knowledge, resigned when he was in prison even for a long period. It may be that I shall have to resign after all—but if that takes place, it will be due to quite different reasons.

I think I said in my second letter that though pressure was being brought to bear on me to resign, I was resisting. My resignation would mean the beginning of a new phase in Congress politics which I want to avoid till the last. If we come to the parting

of the ways, a bitter civil war will commence and whatever be the upshot of it—the Congress will be weakened for some time to come and the benefit will be reaped by the British Government. It is in your hands to save the Congress and the country from this calamity. People who are bitterly opposed for various reasons to Sardar Patel and his group, still have confidence in you and believe that you can take a dispassionate and non-partisan view of things. To them you are a national figure—above parties and groups—and you can therefore restore unity between the warring elements.

If for any reason that confidence is shaken—which God forbid—and you are regarded as a partisan, then God help us and the Congress.

There is no doubt that there is to-day a wide gulf between the two main parties or blocs in the Congress. But the gulf can yet be bridged—that by you. I cannot say anything about the mentality of our political opponents—Tripuri had given us a very bad experience of them. But I can speak for our side. We are not vindictive and we do not nurse grievances. We are prepared to 'forgive and forget'—as they say—and join hands once again for the sake of the common cause, viz., the political and economic emancipation of India. When I talk of 'our side,' I exclude the official C.S.P. We discovered for the first time at Tripuri what a small following the official C.S.P. had. The C.S.P. has now split the rank and file and several provincial branches having revolted against the official leaders because of what is called their vacillating policy. A large section of the C.S.P. will move with us in future, in spite of what the top leadership may do. If you have any doubts on this score you have only to wait and see.

The letter of my brother Sarat to you shows that he is feeling very bitter. This, I presume, is due largely to his experiences at Tripuri, because he had no such feeling when he left Calcutta for Tripuri. Naturally, he knows more about the happenings at Tripuri than I do—because he could move about freely, meet people and obtain information. But though I was confined to bed, I got enough information from several independent sources regarding the attitude of responsible circles politically opposed to us—to make me feel thoroughly sick of the whole affair, I may say further

that, when I left Tripuri, I felt such a loathing and disgust for Congress politics as I have not done for the last nineteen years. Thank God, I have got over that feeling now and have recovered my composure.

Jawahar, in one of his letters (and possibly press statements), remarked that the A.I.C.C. office had deteriorated under my presidentship. I resent that remark as unfair and unjust. He did not perhaps realise that in trying to damn me, he has damned Kripalaniji and the entire staff. The office is in the hands of the Secretary and his staff and if it deteriorates, it is they who are responsible for it. I am writing to Jawahar at length on this point. I am mentioning this to you because you have said something about the interim administration in your letter to Sarat. The only way in which we can help the office is to appoint a permanent Secretary at once, even if there is delay in appointing the rest of the Working Committee. But if the Working Committee is going to be appointed soon, we need not appoint the General Secretary in advance.

I shall be grateful if you could let me know your reaction to Pant's resolution. You are in this advantageous position that you can take a dispassionate view of things—provided, of course, you get to know the whole story of Tripuri. Judging from the papers, most of the people who have seen you so far seem to belong to one school—namely those who supported Pant's resolution. But that does not matter. You can easily assess things at their proper value, regardless of the persons who visit you.

You can easily imagine my own view of Pant's resolution. But my personal feelings do not matter so much. In public life we have often to subordinate personal feelings to public considerations. As I have said in a previous letter, whatever one may think of Pant's resolution from the purely constitutional point of view, since it has been passed by the Congress, I feel bound by it. Now do you regard that resolution as one of no-confidence in me and do you feel that I should resign in consequence thereof? Your view in this matter will influence me considerably.

Perhaps you are aware that at Tripuri it was given out by those who were canvassing in support of Pant's resolution, that

telephonic conversation had taken place with Rajkot and that resolution had your full support. A report to that effect appeared in the daily Press also. It was further given out in the private conversation that nothing short of that resolution in its entirely would satisfy either you or your orthodox followers. Personally, I did not and do not believe in such reports, but they undoubtedly had their vote-catching value. When Pant's resolution was shown to me for the first time by Sardar Patel, I suggested to him (Rajen Babu and Maulana Azad were also there at the time) that if certain changes were made, the resolution in the amended form would be passed by the Congress unanimously. The amended form of the resolution was also sent to Sardar Patel, but there was no response from his side. Their attitude seemed to be—not a word, not a comma, should be changed. I suppose Rajkumari Amrit Kaur has handed over to you the amended form of the resolution. If the object of Pant's Resolution was to reiterate faith in your principles and your leadership and guidance, that was provided in the amended resolution—but if the object was to avenge the result of the Presidential Election, then, of course, the amended resolution did not suffice. Personally I do not see how Pant's Resolution has enhanced your prestige, influence and authority. 45 votes were cast against you in the Subjects Committee and, in the open session, whatever interested parties may say, my information from various independent sources is to the effect that in spite of the neutrality of the Congress Socialist Party, at least 800 votes, if not more, out of about 2200 were cast against you. And if the Congress Socialist Party had voted as they did in the Subjects Committee, then the resolution would have been defeated. In any case, the result of the voting would have been problematical. With slight changes in the resolution, not one vote would have been cast against the resolution and your leadership would have had the unanimous support of all Congressmen. Your prestige before the British Government and before the whole world would have gone up like a shot. Instead, your name and prestige were exploited by those who wanted to wreak vengeance on us. Consequently, instead of enhancing your prestige and influence they have dragged it down to an unimaginable depth—for the whole world now

knows that though you or your followers managed to get a majority at Tripuri, there is an existence of a powerful opposition. If matters are allowed to drift, this opposition is bound to gain in strength and in volume. What is the future of a party that is deprived of radical, youthful and progressive elements? The future is similar to that of the Liberal Party of Great Britain.

I have said enough to acquaint you with my reaction to Pant's Resolution. I shall now be grateful if you kindly let me know what your reaction is. Do you approve of Pant's Resolution or would you rather have seen it passed unanimously in an amended form on the lines that we had suggested?

There is one other matter to which I shall refer in this letter—that is the question of our programme. I submitted my views to you on the 15th February at Wardha. What has happened since then has served to confirm my views and to justify my prediction. For months I have been telling friends that there would be a crisis in Europe in spring which would continue till summer. The international situation, as well as our own position at home, convinced me nearly 8 months ago that the time had come for us to force the issue of Purna Swaraj. Unfortunately for us and for the country, you do not share our optimism. You are obsessed with the idea of corruption within the Congress. Moreover, the bogey of violence alarms you. Though I am at one with you in your determination to root out corruption within the Congress, I do not think that taking India as a whole, there is more corruption today than before and so far as violence is concerned, I feel sure there is far less of it to-day than before. Previously, Bengal, Punjab and United Provinces could have been regarded as the home of organized revolutionary violence. To-day there is much more of the spirit of non-violence there. And speaking for Bengal, I can say with full authority that the province was never more non-violent during the last 30 years than today. For these and other reasons we should lose no time in placing our National Demand before the British Government in the form of an ultimatum. The idea of an ultimatum does not appeal to you or to Pandit Jawaharlal. But in all your public life, you have given any number of ultimatums to the authorities and have advanced the

public cause thereby. The other day at Rajkot you did the same thing. What objection can there be, therefore, to submitting our National Demand in the form of an ultimatum? If you do so and prepare for the coming struggle simultaneously, I am sure that we shall be able to win Purna Swaraj very soon. The British Government will either respond to our demand without a fight—or, if the struggle does take place, in our present circumstances, it cannot be a long-drawn one. I am so confident and so optimistic on this point that I feel that if we take courage in both hands and go ahead, we shall have Swaraj inside of 18 months at the most.

I feel so strongly on this point that I am prepared to make any sacrifice in this connection. If you take up the struggle, I shall most gladly help you to the best of my ability. If you feel that the Congress will be able to fight better with another President, I shall gladly step aside. If you feel that the Congress will be able to fight more effectively with a Working Committee of your choice, I shall gladly fall in line with your wishes. All that I want is that you and the Congress should in this critical hour stand up and resume the struggle for Swaraj. If self-effacement will further the national cause, I assure you most solemnly that I am prepared to efface myself completely. I think I love my country sufficiently to be able to do this.

Pardon me for saying that the way you have been recently conducting the States people's struggle, does not appeal to me. You risked your precious and valuable life for Rajkot and while fighting for the Rajkot people you suspended the struggle in all other States. Why should you do so? There are six hundred and odd States in India and among them Rajkot is a tiny one. It would not be exaggeration to call the Rajkot struggle a flea-bite. Why should we not fight simultaneously all over the country and have a comprehensive plan for the purpose? This is what millions of your countrymen think, though out of personal reverence for you, they may not say so openly.

In conclusion, I may say that many people like myself cannot enthuse over the terms of the Rajkot settlement. We, as well as the Nationalist Press, have called it a great victory—but how much have we gained? Sir Maurice Gwyer is neither our man nor is he

an independent agent. He is a Government man. What point is there in making him the umpire? We are hoping that his verdict will be in our favour. But supposing he declares against us, what will be our position?

Moreover, Sir Maurice Gwyer is a part and parcel of the Federal Scheme we have resolved to reject. In the case of a conflict with the British Government, if we decide to have a High Court judge or a Sessions Judge as umpire we can always have a settlement with the British Government. But what shall we gain from such a settlement? Further, there are many people who fail to understand why after the interview with the Viceroy, you should be waiting in Delhi. Perhaps, in view of your weak health, a rest was necessary before undertaking another long journey. But to the British Govt. and its supporters it may appear as if you are attaching too much importance to the Federal Chief Justice and thereby enhancing his prestige.

My letter has become too long, so I must stop here. If I have said anything which appears to you to be erroneous, I hope you will pardon me. I know you always like people to speak frankly and openly. That is what has emboldened me in writing this frank and long letter.

I have been progressing steadily though slowly. I do hope this will find you better and your blood pressure much lower.

With respectful pranams.

Yours affectionately

Subhas

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 1st April, 1939. Mahatma Gandhi, New Delhi

MAY I ANNOUNCE WORKING COMMITTEE 28TH AND ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE 30TH TO AVOID DISTURBING GANDHI SEVA SANGHA CONFERENCE DATES ALREADY ANNOUNCED—SUBHAS.

From Mahatma Gandhi

Birla House, New Delhi
2nd April, 1939

My dear Subhas,

I have yours of 31st March as also the previous one. You are quite frank and I like your letters for the clear enunciation of your views.

The views you express seem to me to be so diametrically opposed to those of the others and my own that I do not see any possibility of bridging them. I think that each school of thought should be able to put forth its views before the country without any mixture. And if this is honestly done, I do not see why there should be any bitterness ending in civil war.

What is wrong is not the differences between us but loss of mutual respect and trust. This will be remedied by time which is the best healer. If there is real non-violence in us, there can be no civil war, much less bitterness.

Taking all things into consideration, I am of opinion that you should at once form your own Cabinet fully representing your views, formulate your programme definitely and put it before the forthcoming A.I.C.C. If the Committee accepts the programme, all will be plain-sailing and you should be enabled to prosecute it unhampered by the minority. If on the other hand your programme is not accepted, you should resign and let the Committee choose its President. And you will be free to educate the country along your own lines. I tender this advice irrespective of Pandit Pant's Resolution.

Now for your questions. When Pandit Pant's Resolution was produced, I was on my bed. Mathuradas, who happened to be in Rajkot that day, one morning brought me the message that there was to be a resolution expressing confidence in the old horses. I had not the text before me. I said it would be good so far as it went, for I had been told at Segaon that your election was not so much confidence in you as censure of the old horses especially the Sardar. After this I saw the actual text only in Allahabad when I went to see the Maulana Sahib.

My prestige does not count. It has no independent value of its own. When my motive is suspected or my policy or programme rejected by the country, the prestige must go. India will rise and fall by the quality of the sum total of her many millions. Individuals, however high they may be, are of no account except in so far as they represent the many millions. Therefore let us rule it out of consideration.

I wholly dissent from your view that the country has been never so non-violent as now. I smell violence in the air I breathe. But the violence has put on a subtle form. Our mutual distrust is a bad form of violence. The widening gulf between Hindus and Mussalmans points to the same thing. I can give further illustrations.

We seem to differ as to the amount of corruption in the Congress. My impression is that it is on the increase. I have been pleading for the past many months for a thorough scrutiny.

In these circumstances I see no atmosphere of non-violent mass action. An ultimatum without effective sanction is worse than useless.

But as I have told you, I am an old man, perhaps growing timid and over-cautious and you have youth before you and reckless optimism born of youth. I hope you are right, I am wrong. I have the firm belief that the Congress as it is today cannot deliver the goods, cannot offer civil disobedience worth the name. Therefore if your prognosis is right, I am a backnumber and played out as the generalissimo of Satyagraha.

I am glad you have mentioned the little Rajkot affair. It brings into prominent relief the different angles from which we look at things. I have nothing to repent of in the steps I have taken in connection with it. I feel that it has great national importance. I have not stopped civil disobedience in the other States for the sake of Rajkot. But Rajkot opened my eyes, it showed me the way. I am not in Delhi for my health. I am reluctantly in Delhi awaiting the Chief Justice's decision. I hold it to be my duty to be in Delhi till the steps to be taken in due fulfilment of the Viceroy's declaration in his last wire to me are finally taken. I may not run any risk. If I invited the Paramount Power to do its duty, I was bound

to be in Delhi to see that the duty was fully performed. I saw nothing wrong in the Chief Justice being appointed the interpreter of the document whose meaning was put in doubt by the Thakor Sahib. By the way, Sir Maurice will examine the document not in his capacity as Chief Justice but as a trained jurist trusted by the Viceroy. By accepting the Viceroy's nominee as Judge, I fancy I have shown both wisdom and grace and what is more important I have increased the Viceregal responsibility in the matter.

Though we have discussed sharp differences of opinion between us, I am quite sure that our private relations will not suffer in the least. If they are from the heart, as I believe they are, they will bear the strain of these differences.

Love

Bapu

From Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 2nd April, 1939

POSTED FULL REPLY TO YOUR LETTERS. MY ADVICE THEREIN IS IRRESPECTIVE OF PANDIT PANT'S RESOLUTION AND IN VIEW OF DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSITE VIEWS HELD BY TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT, YOU SHOULD FORTHWITH FORM YOUR OWN CABINET FULLY REPRESENTING YOUR POLICY. YOU SHOULD FRAME AND PUBLISH YOUR POLICY AND PROGRAMME AND SUBMIT THE SAME TO A.I.C.C. IF YOU SECURE MAJORITY YOU SHOULD BE ENABLED TO CARRY OUT POLICY UNHAMPERED. IF YOU DO NOT SECURE MAJORITY, YOU SHOULD RESIGN AND INVITE A.I.C.C. TO ELECT NEW PRESIDENT. GIVEN HONESTY AND GOOD WILL, I DO NOT FEAR CIVIL WAR. LOVE—BAPU.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 3rd April, 1939

YOUR LETTER AND TELEGRAM IN REPLY TO MY LETTER. I AM CONSIDERING THEM. MEANWHILE I FEEL THAT MY POSITION REGARDING THE PANT RESOLUTION IS MISUNDERSTOOD BY YOURSELF AND A SECTION OF PUBLIC. THOUGH THE LAST CLAUSE IS STRICTLY UNCONSTITUTIONAL, I ALLOWED IT AND AM BOUND BY THE VERDICT OF THE CONGRESS. I CONSIDER A SHORT PRESS STATEMENT NECESSARY TO EXPLAIN THIS POSITION. KINDLY WIRE IF YOU HAVE ANY OBJECTION. PRANAMS—SUBHAS.

From Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 4th April, 1939

NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS ASKING ALL KINDS OF QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR CORRESPONDENCE. I HAVE REFERRED THEM ALL TO YOU. I HAVE DISCLOSED NOTHING TO ANYONE EXCEPT COLLEAGUES AND CO-WORKERS. LOVE—BAPU.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 5th April, 1939

ASSOCIATED PRESS YESTERDAY REQUESTED AUTHORITATIVE REPORT SAYING UNITED PRESS ISSUING FORECAST. HAVE INFORMED THEM IMPOSSIBLE DISCLOSE ANYTHING NOW, HAVE SHOWN PAPERS ONLY ONE PERSON AND MAY SHOW THREE MORE FRIENDS DURING THIS WEEK. MY VIEW PUBLICITY SHOULD BE ARRANGED IN FULNESS BY OUR MUTUAL AGREEMENT. PAPERS REPORT FROM NEW DELHI, ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE FIXED 28, BUT NO REPLY RECEIVED FROM YOU—SUBHAS.

From Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 5th April, 1939

YOUR WIRE. NO DATE GIVEN OUT FROM HERE. MISSED CONFIRMING YOUR WIRE FORGIVE. I LEARN TODAY GANDHI SEVA SANGH HAS BEEN POSTPONED OWING TO PLAGUE. FIX ANY DATE CONVENIENT TO YOU. AS TO PUBLICATION I LEAVE IT ENTIRELY TO YOU. LOVE—BAPU.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 5th April, 1939

AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA PUBLISHES TODAY A REPORT OF OUR CORRESPONDENCE FROM DELHI. THOUGH NOT QUITE CORRECT, IT CLEARLY SHOWS NEWS IS LEAKING FROM THERE—SUBHAS.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 5th April, 1939

SINCE MY LAST TELEGRAM I HAVE SEEN OTHER PAPERS INCLUDING 'LEADER'. CLEAR INDICATION NEWS OF OUR CORRESPONDENCE IS LEAKING FROM DELHI, KINDLY DO THE NEEDFUL—SUBHAS.

From Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 5th April, 1939

NEWSPAPERS HAVE A KNACK OF HIDING TRUTH. THEY MANUFACTURE NAMES OF PLACES OF ORIGIN ALSO AND IMAGINE

THINGS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED. CAN ONLY ASSURE YOU THAT NO ONE TO MY KNOWLEDGE HERE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR NEWS. TELL ME WHAT YOU WOULD HAVE ME TO DO. LOVE—BAPU.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora
6th April, 1939

My dear Mahatmaji,

In one of your letters to Mejdada, my brother Sarat, you suggested a heart-to-heart talk between the leaders of both parties with a view to clearing the ground for united action in future. I think it is a magnificent idea and I am fully prepared to do my best in this matter regardless of what has happened in the past. Will you kindly let me know if you would like me to do anything in this behalf and if so, what? Personally, I feel that your influence and personality could achieve much in this endeavour to bring about unity. Will you not make one last supreme effort to bring everybody together before we give up all hope of unity? I would beg of you once again to remember in what light the country still regards you. You are not a partisan, and people, therefore, still look up to you to bring together all the warring elements.

I have been pondering deeply over the advice you have given me regarding the formation of the Working Committee. I feel that your advice is the counsel of despair. It destroys all hope of unity. It will not save the Congress from a split—on the contrary, it will make the path safe for such a contingency. To advise a homogeneous cabinet in the present circumstances will mean advising the parties to part company now. Is that not a terrible responsibility? Do you feel quite sure that joint work is impossible? On our side we do not think so. We are prepared to do our best to 'forgive and forget' and join hands for the sake of common

cause and we can look up to you to bring about an honourable compromise. I have already written and spoken to you that the composition of the Congress being what it is—and there being no possibility in the immediate future of any remarkable change, the best course would be to have a composite cabinet, in which all the groups would be represented as far as possible.

I understand that you are against this idea of a Composite Cabinet. Is your opposition due to the grounds of principle (viz., joint work is impossible in your view) or is it because you feel that the 'Gandhiites' (I am using this expression in the absence of anything better and you will please pardon me for doing so) should have a larger representation on the Cabinet? In the latter case, please let me know so that I may have an opportunity of reconsidering the matter. In the former case, please reconsider the advice you have already tendered in the light of what I am submitting in this letter. At Haripura, when I suggested inviting the Socialists to serve on the Cabinet, you told me distinctly that you were in favour of my doing so. Has the situation changed so materially since then as to induce you to insist on a homogeneous cabinet?

You have referred in your letters to the two parties being so 'diametrically opposed'. You have not amplified the point and it is not clear if the opposition you refer to is based on programme or on personal relations. Personal relations are in my view, a passing phenomenon. We may quarrel and fight, but we can shake hands and make up our differences. Take for instance, Swarajist episode in recent Congress history. As far as I am aware, after a period of opposition the relations between Deshbandhu and Pandit Motilalji with yourself became as sweet as humanly possible. In Great Britain, the three major parties can always join hands and work on the same Cabinet when an emergency arises. In continental countries like France, every Cabinet is normally a composite Cabinet. Are we less patriotic than Britishers and Frenchmen? If we are not, then why cannot we have composite cabinets functioning effectively?

If yon think that your opposition is based on programme, etc., rather than on personal considerations, I should like very much to have your view in this matter.

Wherein do you think that our programmes differ, and that too so fundamentally that joint action is not possible? I know that we have certain differences, but as I wrote to my ex-colleagues of the Working Committee in reply to their letter of resignation, our points of agreement are, in my view, more numerous than our points of difference. I still adhere to this view—Tripuri notwithstanding.

You have said in one of your letters in connection with my idea of an ultimatum on the issue of Swaraj that there is no atmosphere for non-violent mass action. But did you not have non-violent mass action in Rajkot? Are you not having it in some other States also? These States' people are comparatively untrained in the practice of Satyagraha. We in British India can claim more experience and training—comparatively speaking at least. If the States' people can be permitted to resort to Satyagraha in their struggle for civil liberty and responsible government, why not we in British India?

Now take the National Demand Resolution passed at the Tripuri Congress with the support of the Gandhiites. Though it has beautifully vague phrases and several pious platitudes, it has in a certain sense, much in common with my idea of an ultimatum and preparing for the coming struggle. Now, do you approve of this resolution? If you do, then why cannot you go a step further and accept my plan?

I shall now come to Pandit Pant's Resolution. The important part of it (last portion, I mean) contains two points. Firstly, the Working Committee must command your confidence—implicit confidence. Secondly, it must be formed in accordance with your wishes. If you advise a homogeneous Cabinet, and such a Cabinet is formed, one could perhaps say that it has been formed 'in accordance with your wishes'. But could it be claimed that it commands your confidence? Will it be open to me to get up at the meeting of the A.I.C.C. and tell the members that you have advised the formation of a homogeneous Cabinet and that the new Cabinet commands your confidence? On the other hand, if you advise the formation of a Cabinet which does not command your confidence, will you be giving effect to the Pant Resolution;

will you be doing the right thing, from your point of view? I would beg of you to consider this aspect of the question. If you take cognisance of the Pant Resolution, you will not only have to communicate your wishes regarding the new Working Committee, but you will, at the same time have to advise the formation of such a Committee as will command your confidence.

You have not yet said anything as to the merits of the Pant Resolution. Do you approve of it? Or would you rather have had a unanimously passed resolution, more or less on the lines suggested by us—which would reiterate faith in your principles and confidence in your guidance, without the controversial clauses? Then, what is the President's position regarding appointing the W.C. after this resolution was passed? I am again asking this question because the present Constitution is practically your handiwork and your opinion in this matter will carry great weight with me. There is another question in this connection which I have been asking you. Do you regard this resolution as one of no confidence in me? If so, I shall resign at once and that too unconditionally. Some papers have criticised this question of mine in my Press statement on the ground that I should decide for myself what the significance of the resolution is. I have sense enough to give my own interpretation, but there are occasions when personal interpretations should not be one's sole guide. Speaking quite frankly, I feel that my stand has been justified by the result of the Presidential election. I have now no desire whatsoever to stick to office for one day unless I can thereby advance the public cause as I understand it. The hesitation or the delay that has arisen on my side is because it is not so easy to decide. Among my supporters there are two schools of thought—one holding that I should break off negotiations at once as being a hopeless effort and tender my resignation. The latter have been bringing great pressure to bear on me, but I am resisting. I want to be clear before my own conscience that I have striven till the last to preserve unity within our ranks. Moreover, I know what my resignation will mean in the present circumstances and what its consequences will be. I should add here that the first school, viz., those who want me to exhaust all possibility of a compromise—believe that you will be

able to take a thoroughly non-partisan view of things and thereby bring the two parties together.

I must explain further why I say that I shall resign automatically if you tell that Pant's Resolution signifies no-confidence. You know very well that I do not follow you blindly in all that you say or believe as so many of my countrymen do. Why then should I resign if you opine that the resolution signifies no-confidence? The reason is plain and simple. I feel it as galling to my conscience to hold on to office, if the greatest personality in India today feels—though he may not say so openly—that the passing of the resolution should automatically have brought in my resignation. This attitude is perhaps dictated more by personal regard for you and your opinion in this matter.

Perhaps, as some papers suggest, you have an idea that the Old Guard should be put back into office. In that event I would beg of you to come back to active politics, become a four-anna Congress member and assume direct charge of the Working Committee. Pardon me for saying so and I say this without meaning offence to anybody—there is a world of difference between yourself and your lieutenants, even your chosen lieutenants. There are people who will do anything for you—but not for them. Will you believe me when I say that at the Presidential election even some Gandhiites in several provinces voted for me, against the direction of the Old Guard? If your personality is not dragged into the picture, I shall continue to have their support—the Old Guard notwithstanding. At Tripuri the Old Guard cleverly dropped out of the picture and more cleverly pitted me against you. (But there was no quarrel between yourself and myself.) Afterwards they said that Tripuri was a great victory for them and a defeat for me. The fact of the matter is that it was neither a victory for them nor a defeat for me. It was a victory for you (without any cause for a fight with you at all) but a Pyrrhic victory—victory purchased by a certain loss of prestige.

But I am digressing. I wanted to appeal to you to come forward and directly and openly conduct the affairs of the Congress. This will simplify matters. Much of the opposition against the Old

Guard—and opposition there certainly is—will automatically vanish.

If you cannot do this, then I have an alternative suggestion to make. Please resume the national struggle for Independence as we have been demanding and begin by delivering the ultimatum to the British Government. In that event we shall all gladly retire from our official positions. If you so desire, we shall gladly hand over these positions to whomsoever you like or trust. But only on one condition, the fight for Independence must be resumed. People like myself feel that today we have an opportunity which is rare in the life-time of a nation. For that reason we are prepared to make any sacrifice that will help the resumption of the fight.

If till the last you insist that a composite Cabinet is unworkable and a homogeneous Cabinet is the only alternative before us, and if you want me to form a Cabinet of my choice, I would earnestly request you to give me your vote of confidence till next Congress. If in the meantime, we fail to justify ourselves by our service and suffering, we shall stand condemned before the Congress and we shall naturally and quite properly be kicked out of office. Your vote of confidence will mean the vote of confidence of the A.I.C.C. in the present circumstances. If you do not give us your vote of confidence but at the same time ask us to form a homogeneous Cabinet, you will not be giving effect to Pant's Resolution.

Once again I would beg of you to let me know if your opposition to a composite Cabinet is due to considerations of principle or to the fact that you would like the Old Guard to have a larger representation on the Cabinet than I suggested in my first letter to you, dated the 25th March.

Before I close this letter I shall refer to one or two personal things. You have remarked in one letter that you hope that whatever happens, 'our private relations will not suffer'. I cherish this hope with all my heart. May I say in this connection that if there is anything in life on which I pride myself, it is this that I am the son of a gentleman and as such I am gentleman. Deshbandhu Das often used to tell us, 'Life is larger than politics'. That lesson I have learnt from him. I shall not remain in the political field one single day if by doing so I shall fall from the standards of

gentlemanliness which are so deeply ingrained in my mind from infancy and which I feel are in my very blood. I have no means of knowing how you view me as a man, in a way, you have seen so little of me. And my political opponents have carried so many tales against me to you. In recent months, I have come to know that for the last few months I have been the victim of subtle but sinister propaganda carried on against me from mouth to mouth. I would have brought this matter to your notice long ago but I could not get sufficient tangible evidence of what was being said and by whom. Lately, I have come to know much as to what has been said, though I am still in the dark as to who exactly the propagandists are.

Once again I have digressed. In a letter you expressed the hope that in whatever I did, I would 'be guided by God'. Believe me, Mahatmaji, all these days I have been praying for only one thing—viz., for light as to the path that would be best for my country and my country's freedom. I have asked for strength and inspiration to completely efface myself—should the need and occasion arise. It is my firm conviction that a nation can live, only if the individuals composing it be ready to die for its sake whenever it is necessary. This moral (or spiritual) *harakiri* is not an easy thing. But may God grant me the strength to face it whenever the country's interests demand it.

I hope you will maintain your improvement. I am progressing steadily.

With respectful Pranams.

Yours affectionately

Subhas

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, April 7, 1939

IN CONTINUATION TO RAJEN BABU'S TELEPHONIC TALK WITH YOU TODAY, I EARNESTLY BESEECH YOU TO MAKE POSSIBLE OUR MEETING BEFORE LEAVING DELHI FOR RAJKOT. THIS MEANS FOR YOU MAXIMUM THREE DAYS DELAY. OUR CORRESPONDENCE IS NOT LEADING TO SETTLEMENT AND I FEEL PERSONAL TALK WOULD GREATLY FACILITATE MATTERS. REGARDING PLACE OF MEETING IF NOT POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO COME HERE OWING TO REASONS OF HEALTH, I AM PREPARED TO DEFY DOCTORS AND COME TO DELHI AS I DID FOR TRIPURI. I FEEL I MUST DO MY UTMOST FOR SETTLING THE WORKING COMMITTEE PROBLEM AND PRESERVING CONGRESS UNITY EVEN AT THE COST OF HEALTH. IF MATTER IS LEFT UNSETTLED TILL NEXT A.I.C.C. THE SITUATION WILL WORSEN AND SUSPENSE AND DELAY WILL CAUSE FURTHER CONFUSION IN PUBLIC MIND—SUBHAS.

From Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, April 7, 1939

YOUR TELEPHONE-MESSAGE. RAJKOT WORK TAKES ME TO RAJKOT TONIGHT. COULD NOT POSTPONE WITHOUT SACRIFICING IMMEDIATE DUTY, BUT THE MOMENT I CAN DISENGAGE MYSELF FROM RAJKOT I SHALL BE AT YOUR DISPOSAL. MEANWHILE I URGE YOU TO ACCEPT MY ADVICE AND FORM YOUR CABINET AND PUBLISH YOUR PROGRAMME. REACHING RAJKOT ON SUNDAY MORNING. LOVE—BAPU.

From Mahatma Gandhi

April 7, 1939

YOUR WIRE. I AM HELPLESS. I MUST PROCEED TO RAJKOT. I SUGGEST YOUR SENDING SARAT OR OTHER REPRESENTATIVE TO RAJKOT. HE CAN FLY. DO NOT EXPECT RELEASE FROM RAJKOT FOR TEN DAYS. LOVE—BAPU.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora
April 10

My dear Mahatmaji,

Apart from telegrams and short letters, I have so far addressed four important letters to you dated the 25th March (posted on the 26th), 29th March, 31st March, and 6th April—dealing with Congress affairs in general and the formation of the Working Committee in particular. I am sorry that the correspondence has been so prolonged and I wish I could have said everything in one long letter. But there were two difficulties in the way—first, the strain involved in writing a long and exhaustive letter and secondly, fresh points in your letters which demanded replies from me. I hope that this will be my last letter in this series. Herein, I shall try to clarify some points where I may be open to misunderstanding—recapitulate the principal points in my previous letters and make a final submission and appeal to you.

(1) Re: Corruption and Violence: If I have understood you correctly, you are opposed to the idea of an ultimatum and early resumption of the national struggle because you feel that there is too much of corruption and the spirit of violence among us. We have been discussing that question of corruption in the Working Committee for several months and I think we are in general agreement on this question—with this difference that I do not think that there is so much of it that we are incapacitated for an early struggle for Purna Swaraj. On the contrary, the longer we shall drift along the path of constitutionalism and the longer our people have a taste of the loaves and fishes of office, the greater will be the possibility of corruption increasing. Further, I may say that I have some personal knowledge of political parties in Europe today and I may claim without any fear of contradiction that judged from the ethical point of view, we are in no way inferior to them

and perhaps we are superior in some respects. The spectre of corruption does not therefore appeal to me. Moreover, a call for further sacrifice and suffering in the cause of the country's freedom will be the antidote to corruption and will incidentally expose to the public eye any corrupt person who may have crept into—or gained ascendancy within —our own ranks. To put an analogy, history furnishes instances of astute statesmen launching on a fight with external enemies in order to ward off enemies at home.

Re: The existence of the spirit of violence: I adhere to my previous statement. Within the ranks of Congressmen and of those who are supporters of the Congress, there is, on the whole, less violence to-day than before. I have already given you my arguments for disagreeing with you on this point and need not repeat them. It may be that there is the spirit of violence to-day among the opponents of the Congress, leading to riots which are being forcibly suppressed by Congress Governments. But that is quite a different matter and should not lead us to the view that the spirit of violence has increased among Congressmen or their supporters. Would it not be too much to hold up our fight for Independence till other organisations with which we have no connection whatsoever—for instance, the Muslim League, become non-violent in spirit and in action?

(2) Re: Pandit Pant's Resolution: I wanted to know whether you approve of the form in which the resolution was moved by Pandit Govinda Ballabh Pant and finally passed, or whether you would have preferred an amended form, more or less on the lines suggested by us, which would have been unanimously passed. I should also like to know whether you regard the resolution as a vote of no-confidence in me. For ready reference I am giving below the original form of the resolution and one of the amended forms.

Original Form

In view of various misunderstandings that have arisen in the Congress and the country on account of the controversies in connection with the Presidential Election and after, it is desirable that the Congress should clarify the position and declare its general policy.

(1) This Congress declares its firm adherence to the fundamental policies which have governed its programme in the past years under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and is definitely of opinion that there should be no break in these policies and they should continue to govern the Congress programme in future. This Congress expresses its confidence in the work of the Working Committee which functioned during the last year and regrets that any aspersions should have been cast against any of its members.

(2) In view of the critical situation that may develop during the coming year and in view of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi alone can lead the Congress and the country to victory during such crisis, the Congress regards it as imperative that the Congress executive should command his implicit confidence and requests the President to nominate the Working Committee in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji.

Amended Form

In view of various misunderstandings that have arisen in the Congress and the country on account of the controversies in connection with the Presidential election and after, it is desirable that the Congress should clarify the position and declare its general policy.

(1) This Congress declares its firm adherence to the fundamental policies which have governed its programme in the past years under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and is definitely of opinion that there should be no break in these policies and that they should continue to govern the Congress programme in future. The Committee expresses its

confidence in the work of the Working Committee which functioned during the last year.

(2) In view of the critical situation that may develop during the coming year the Congress considers Mahatma Gandhi's guidance and co-operation to be as essential in the future as it was in the past.

(3) Re: Congress Socialist Party: The remarks in my letter of the 31st March about the Congress Socialist Party were made under the impression I gathered from reports and speculations in the Press at the time. The impression I gathered was that the official leaders of the C.S.P. would continue in their policy of vacillation which might lead to their launching on a new policy in future, viz., supporting the Old Guard. I thought that that might mislead you into thinking that the entire C.S.P. would 'cross the floor' and be at the disposal of the Old Guard. Consequently, I wanted to tell you that a large section of the C.S.P. would move with us, in spite of what the top leadership might do. I could say this, because I had heard of the effect of the leaders' neutrality policy at Tripuri on their followers. Some provinces had revolted—as also the rank and file—many of whom had obeyed the leaders' whip only under moral coercion or out of a sense of discipline. Subsequent to my writing to you the information that has reached me does not warrant the impression that I gathered from the Press about the future policy of the official leaders of the C.S.P. and in that event the question of split within the Party need not arise at all.

(4) Re: Homogeneous *vs.* Composite Cabinet: I have carefully pursued and considered your arguments in this connection, but I remain unconvinced so far. Perhaps you have other arguments also which might help to convince me. Your main point is that we differ so much on fundamentals that joint action is impossible. At the Haripura Congress you were of the same views as ourselves and till the eve of the Presidential election, joint action was possible. What has happened since then to render it impossible? And what, in your view, are our differences on fundamentals?

I should also like to know whether your objection to a composite Cabinet is based solely on grounds of principle or also on the fifty-fifty proportion, which I suggested in my first letter to you, dated the 25th March. I suggested in that letter that I may suggest seven names and Sardar Patel seven, for your approval. But it is equally possible for you to suggest all the fourteen names if you accept the above proportion. In case you do not accept that proportion and that is a stumbling block in the way of our having an agreed Composite Cabinet, you may kindly let me know, so that I may have an opportunity of reconsidering the matter.

(5) Advice to Shri Sarat Bose: Your wrote in your letter to my brother on the 24th March as follows:—'I therefore suggest either a meeting of all of you so that you can pour out your hearts to one another and come to an understanding, or if the poison has gone too deep to be eradicated, etc. etc.' You have not pursued this line in your subsequent letters. I have written to you more than once that on our side we are fully prepared to make a supreme effort to restore unity within the ranks of the Congress. I have said further that on our side there are plenty of people, including myself, who do not regard you as a partisan and who look up to you to bring together the warring elements. I may go further and say that there is no reason why you should regard only the Old Guard and their followers as Gandhiites. You may regard the whole Congress as Gandhiite, if only you accommodate some of our ideas and plans.

(6) Re: My alternative suggestions:

(*a*) My first suggestion is that steps be taken to resume our fight for Independence. In that event, you can demand from us any sacrifice, that you consider necessary, including the surrender of all official positions that we may now have. We pledge our

unconditional support in the event of the fight being resumed.

(*b*) Should you maintain that it is not possible to resume the struggle and should you like to instal the Old Guard in office—I would suggest your becoming a four-anna Congress member again and assuming direct charge of the Working Committee. That would obviate several difficulties which are bound to continue if you merely put the Old Guard in office again keeping yourself out of the picture.

(*c*) Should this suggestion be also unacceptable to you and you persist in advising me to form a homogeneous Cabinet, then I would request you to give me your vote of confidence till the next Congress. Your vote of confidence will ensure the support of your 'orthodox' followers in the A.I.C.C. Thereby a split will be avoided and smooth working will be rendered possible. In this connection, I have humbly reminded you in my last letter of the 6th April that under Pandit Pant's Resolution, the Working Committee has not only to be formed in accordance with your wishes, but it must be so formed as to enjoy your implicit confidence. Once you take cognisance of this resolution, it is not open to you to advise the formation of a Working Committee which does not enjoy your implicit confidence.

(*d*) Should you reject all the three suggestions, the only course left open will be for you to take the full responsibility of forming the Working Committee —leaving to me to determine my future course of action when you have announced your decision.

(7) Re: Your silence: You say in one of your letters that you were observing silence because I had requested you to do so. I must explain why I did so. At Tripuri the position was such and the gulf between Congressman and Congressman had so widened that I felt that the only hope of

maintaining unity rests in you. I felt then that it was necessary that you should take an impartial and dispassionate view of the entire situation. Supporters of the Pant Resolution were making a rush for New Delhi and I naturally thought that they would try to influence you through a one-sided version of the Tripuri happenings. Consequently, I requested you not to make any public statement or utterance before you had heard the whole story of Tripuri—I mean, the different versions of that story. I am deeply grateful to you for complying with my request. The result of that has been that the whole country is still looking up to you to somehow save the Congress from civil war and restore unity within our ranks. If unfortunately the time comes—which God forbid—when you will take a partisan view of things, all hopes of unity will be dashed to the ground and in all probability we shall be plunged in civil war.

But I have now begun to feel that I should no longer put this gag on you. Consequently, if you feel that you should end your silence—or if you feel that you have already heard all the versions of the Tripuri story—you are free to make any public statement or utterance that you like. I shall only beg of you to remember what all sections of Congressmen (and not merely the Old Guard) think and expect of you.

In conclusion, I must say that I was greatly disappointed when I got your telegrams from Delhi just before you suddenly left for Rajkot on the 7th instant. Dr Rajendra Prasad had telephoned to Birla House on my behalf on the 7th morning to inform you how anxious I was to meet you, as I felt that our correspondence was not leading to a solution and a heart-to-heart talk was necessary. Later in the day, my Doctor also telephoned to Birla House and Shri Mahadev Desai, who spoke at the other end, informed him that you would make a desperate attempt to come here and that, in any case, you would not leave Delhi till the next day, i.e. the 8th inst. I am so sorry that Rajkot has taken you away. I can only hope that what will be a blessing

for Rajkot may not prove to be a tragedy for the Congress. If Rajkot had not taken you away suddenly in February, the history of the Tripuri Congress would have been written differently. You had the power to save the situation, but you were not available, inspite of repeated requests from the Reception Committee and myself. In fact though the whole country naturally and spontaneously rallied round you when you sent the ultimatum to the Thakore Sahib, a large section of your countrymen thought and still think that you could have postponed the Rajkot struggle by a few weeks without doing any harm to the cause of the Rajkot State people.

(Regarding the award of Sir Maurice Gwyer I would like to draw your attention to the fact that he signed it not in his personal capacity, but as the Chief Justice of India.)

My letter has already become too lengthy and I must stop here. I hope you have stood the journey well and your improvement is maintained. I have been progressing steadily.

With Pranams.

Yours affectionately

Subhas

From Mahatma Gandhi

Rajkot
April 10, 1939

My dear Subhas,

Your letter of 6th instant has been redirected here. I suggested a meeting of the foes to have it out among themselves without any reservation. But so much happened since that I do not know if it is worthwhile. They will only swear at one another and bitterness

will become more bitter. The gulf is too wide, suspicions too deep. I see no way of closing the ranks. The only way seems to me to recognise the differences and each group work in its own manner.

I feel myself utterly incompetent to bring the warring elements together for joint work. I should hope that they can work out their policies with becoming dignity. If they do so, it will be well with the country.

Pandit Pant's resolution I cannot interpret. The more I study it, the more I dislike it. The framers meant well. But it does not answer the present difficulty. You should, therefore, give it your own interpretation and act accordingly without the slightest hesitation.

I cannot, and will not, impose a Cabinet on you. You must not have one imposed on you, nor can I guarantee approval by A.I.C.C. of your Cabinet, and policy. It would amount to suppression. Let the members exercise their own judgement. If you do not get the vote, lead the opposition till you have converted the majority.

Do you not know that I have stopped C.D. wherever I have influence? Travancore and Jaipur are glaring examples. Even Rajkot I had stopped before I came here. I repeat that I breathe violence in the air. I see no atmosphere for non-violent action. Is not the lesson of Rampur for you? In my opinion it has done immense injury to the cause. It was, so far as I can see, premeditated. Congressmen are responsible for it, as they were in Rampur of Orissa. Do you not see that we two honestly see the same thing differently and even draw opposite conclusions? How can we meet on the political platform? Let us agree to differ there and let us meet on the social, moral and municipal platforms. I cannot add the economic, for we have discovered our differences on that platform also.

My conviction is that working along our lines in our own way we shall serve the country better than by the different groups seeking to work a common policy and common programme forced out of irreconcilable elements.

I sent you wires from Delhi about my utter inability to go to Dhanbad. Rajkot I dare not neglect.

I am well. Ba is down with malignant malaria. This is the fifth day. I brought her with me when she had already commenced it.

I wish you will conserve your health by taking decisive action, leaving the result to God. Your reference to your father is touching. I had the pleasure of meeting him.

I forget one thing. Nobody put me up against you. What I told you in Segaon was based on my own personal observations. You are wrong if you think that you have a single personal enemy among the Old Guard.

Love

Bapu

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora P.O.
District Manbhum
13th April, 1939

My dear Mahatmaji,

I thought that my letter of the 10th was going to be the last, but that is not to be. This morning I got up very early and as sleep had forsaken me I began musing over our common problems in the stillness of the morning twilight. Then I went through our whole correspondence again and found that some points needed further clarification.

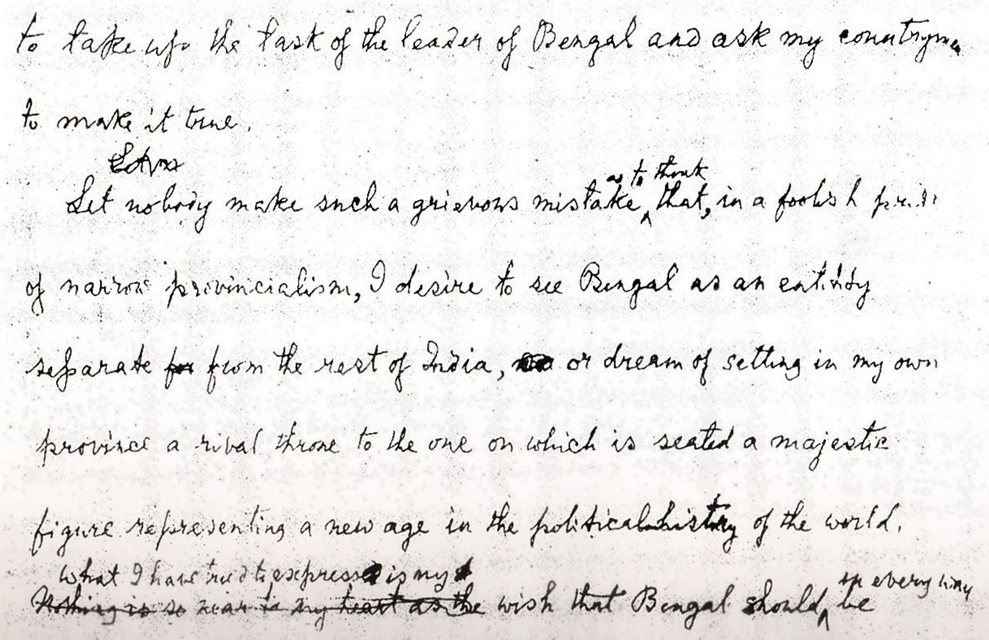
You said in your letter of the 30th March that at Segaon on the 15th February we had agreed that we had differences on fundamentals. We did discover in the course of our conversation certain differences, but I am not sure that one should regard them as differences on fundamentals. You then mentioned many or most of the points you have now touched in your letters. For instance, you gave out your views on the question of corruption, violence, etc., and you spoke strongly against my idea of ultimatum and struggle for Swaraj, as you felt that the atmosphere for non-violent



President, Haripura Congress, February 1938



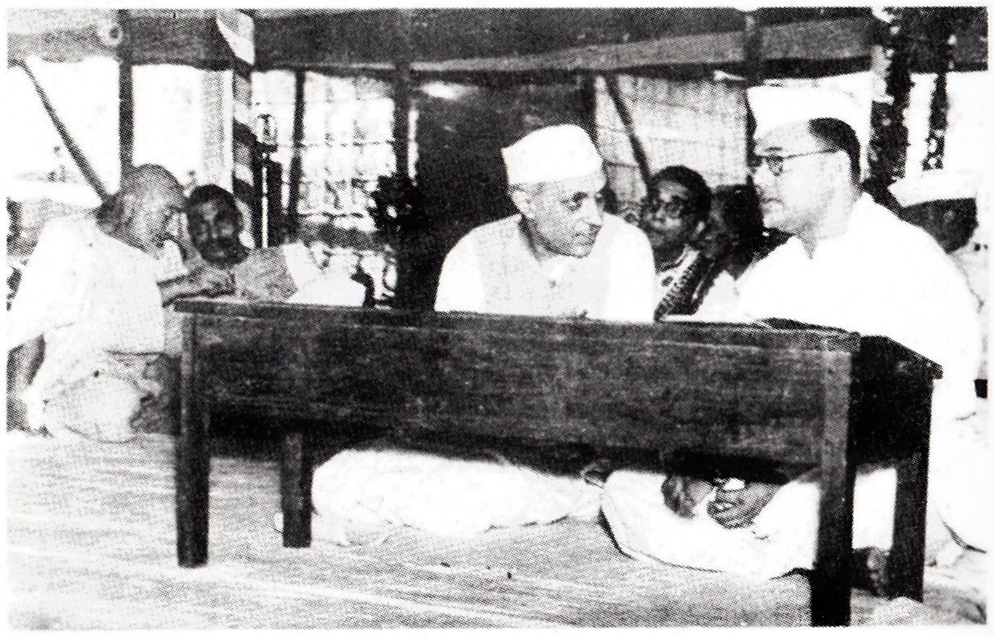
Inaugurating NPC, November 1938



to take up the task of the leader of Bengal and ask my countrymen to make it true.

Let nobody make such a grievous mistake as to think that, in a foolish fit of narrow provincialism, I desire to see Bengal as an entity separate from the rest of India, or dream of setting in my own province a rival throne to the one on which is seated a majestic figure representing a new age in the political history of the world. What I have tried to express is my wish that Bengal should be the very king

Facsimile of Tagore's Deshnayak address



Abdul Gaffar Khan, Rajendra Prasad, Bose and Nehru at AICC meeting, Calcutta, April 1939

mass action did not exist. But are these differences of a fundamental character and should they warrant our giving up all hope of joint action? The question of programme is one for the Congress to decide. We can individually put forward our ideas and plans—but it is for the Congress to adopt them or reject them. My main proposition regarding ultimatum and struggle for Swaraj was turned down by the Tripuri Congress, but I make no grievance on that score. Such delays are inherent in democracy. I still believe that I was right and that the Congress will one day realise it and I only hope that it will not be too late then. Now granting that all the above differences exist, why should we not, nevertheless, be able to work together? These differences have not sprung up suddenly to-day. They have existed for some time and have collaborated together in spite of them. These, or similar differences will exist even in future and we shall have to do the same then (viz., collaborate together for the sake of the common cause).

You will kindly remember that at Segaon we talked for nearly an hour solely on the question of composite *vs.* homogeneous cabinet, but we had to agree to differ. Towards the end of our three-hour talk, I said that I would nevertheless make a last effort to secure the co-operation of Sardar Patel and others when we next meet. Perhaps if I had not fallen ill and if we had met on the occasion of the Working Committee meeting at Wardha on the 22nd February, joint action would have been easier to achieve.

There is another remark in your letter of the 30th March with which I do not agree, but which I did not refer to earlier through oversight. You said in effect that if my policy had the support of the majority in the All-India Congress Committee, I should have a Working Committee composed exclusively of those who believed in that policy. Our viewpoint clearly is that even if we have a majority in the A.I.C.C., we should still have a Composite Cabinet, because the personnel of the Cabinet should reflect as far as possible the composition of the general body of the Congress and it should command the confidence of as large a majority within the Congress as possible. In the circumstances which face us today in India and abroad the principle of a homogeneous Cabinet for the Congress is, in our view, inherently wrong. This is the time

for us to broaden our national front and should we commence doing so by constituting our National Executive—the Working Committee—on a narrow party basis?

On the question of corruption we are in general agreement, except that I feel that you take a somewhat exaggerated view of it. I do not know if taking India as a whole, one could say that there has been an appreciable increase of it. In any case, I do feel that even if there has been an increase, we are not yet incapacitated for a national struggle. And while investigating the cause of corruption we should consider if the suspension of our struggle and the taste of the loaves and fishes of office have not been predominantly contributing factors. And as I said in my last letter, perhaps a call for further sacrifice and suffering will serve as a proper antidote and lift the nation to a higher ethical plane.

Rajen Babu very kindly paid me a visit on the 6th instant. We discussed labour questions of common interest and then turned to Congress affairs. When I first started correspondence with you I had hoped that we would be able to settle the problem of the Working Committee in this way and that the larger problems could be left over for our subsequent meeting. But as our correspondence proceeded, I realised that it was not leading to a solution. By the time Rajen Babu came, I was feeling like making a desperate attempt to meet you, regardless of medical advice, hoping that it might bring us to a settlement. So Rajen Babu at my request, telephoned to Birla House suggesting a meeting. When Rajen Babu did not give me encouraging news, I thought I would try again. So my doctor telephoned to Birla House again in the afternoon and I sent an express telegram—to both of which you replied saying that Rajkot affairs were compelling you to leave Delhi at once. I felt then and I still feel that Rajkot has taken possession of your soul at the cost, and perhaps to the great misfortune of the Indian National Congress. To people like myself, Congress affairs—particularly at the juncture—appear to be a thousand times more important than the call of Rajkot. One should have thought that after the award of Sir Maurice Gwyer, Sardar Patel would be able to handle the Rajkot situation, without requiring your personal presence there for such a long time.

However, it is no use lamenting now, when you have made a decision and have acted in accordance with it.

In one of your telegrams of the 7th April you suggested that my brother Sarat or some other representative could run up or fly to Rajkot and meet you there. I am afraid that this is not a workable proposition. If direct correspondence fails to produce a satisfactory result, what result can talks through a representative bring, when the problem is so difficult and delicate? No, I feel that sending a representative to Rajkot will not improve matters. Only a direct talk between us could have done so.

Your letter of the 10th inst. has just come in and I have to make a few observations on it. I regret to say that your replies to most of the points are disappointing to me. The whole letter breathes the spirit of pessimism which I cannot possibly share. I am afraid also that you have laid too much stress on personal issues. You should have sufficient faith in our patriotism to hope that we shall be able to transcend such issues when a national emergency has arisen. If we cannot restore unity within the Congress, how can we hope for unity in the country.

Regarding the Pant resolution, you have given me practically no advice.

If you feel so hopeless about non-violent mass action in the States also, how do you hope to win civil liberty and responsible government for the State people? After all, our only sanction is non-violent mass action and deprived of it, we have to fall back on a purely moderate policy or your vicarious self-sacrifice. You say that you have stopped civil disobedience wherever you have influence. We know that you did so in Rajkot and there you took the whole burden upon yourself and staked your life for it. Is that fair either to your countrymen or to the Rajkot State people?

Your life is not yours to risk whenever you choose to do so. Your countrymen may legitimately demand your guidance and help in a larger sphere than Rajkot. And so far as the Rajkot people are concerned, if they win their Swaraj not through their own efforts and sacrifices, but through your self-immolation, they will remain politically undeveloped and will not be able to retain the Swaraj which you may win for them. Lastly, when there are so

many battles to be fought and on so many fronts, how often can you stake your precious life in this way?

You have despaired altogether of our collaborating on the political and economic platform. You have added the economic, probably because you disapproved of our idea of industrial planning for India, even though we advocate encouragement of suitable cottage industries along with industrialization. With regard to political differences, I still fail to comprehend what difference you regard as fundamental and as an insurmountable obstacle in the path of unity and joint action. If you still maintain that such action is impossible, then the outlook—at least the immediate outlook—for the Congress is gloomy indeed. I had been hoping all these days that through you the gulf would somehow be bridged and thereby a great national calamity averted.

The irreconcilable elements to which you refer, whether they be good, bad or indifferent, are elements which have come to stay. Consequently if today joint action be impossible, it will be impossible for all time. That means that the future has in store for us nothing but blank despair. With our youthful and robust optimism and our undying faith in India's future, how can we accept such a proposition?

You have suggested in several letters that I should formulate my policy and programme immediately and place them before the A.I.C.C., but I have been commissioned by the Congress to form the Working Committee in a particular way and that is my immediate duty. My programme was placed before the Tripuri Congress in my presidential speech and it was not adopted. At the present moment I do not feel called upon to place a programme before the A.I.C.C. while the issue of the Working Committee remains unsettled.

You said in your first letter that the initiative lies with me. Accordingly I have been placing before you my ideas as well as my solutions of the immediate problems now facing us. I see that all or most of the suggestions put forward by me do not find favour with you. Consequently, it is now time for you to take the initiative and communicate your wishes regarding the personnel of the Working Committee. The Pant Resolution required that the

Working Committee should not only be formed according to your wishes but that it should also enjoy your implicit confidence.

I put forward for your consideration some alternative proposals. In the first place, I suggested a resumption of the national struggle which would automatically solve most of our present difficulties. This suggestion is unacceptable to you. Secondly, I suggested that if I were to form a homogeneous Cabinet according to your advice, you may please give me your vote of confidence. This also you say is not possible. Thirdly, I suggested that you should come forward and assume direct control of the Working Committee which step again would remove many obstacles and obviate many difficulties. You have not replied to this suggestion of mine. If you turn this down as well, then the initiative must pass from my hands to yours and you will have to undertake the responsibility of forming the Working Committee.

One thing is clear in any case. I regret that I cannot possibly give effect to your advice to form a homogeneous Cabinet out of the members of our side. This advice militates against the resolution of the Congress, which provides that the Working Committee must have your implicit confidence. Moreover, in my humble opinion, a homogeneous Cabinet in the present circumstances will be against the best interests of the country. It will not be truly representative of the general body of the Congress and what is more, it will give rise to acute dissensions and possibly civil war among ourselves.

I hope you will now fulfil the task imposed on you by the Tripuri Congress. If you refuse to do even that, what shall I then do? Shall I report the matter to the A.I.C.C., and ask them to elect the Working Committee? Or have you any other advice to give me?

I hope Ba is better now and will soon recover. How is your health and particularly your ~~blood~~ pressure? I am progressing steadily.

With respectful Pranams.

Yours affectionately

Subhas

PS You have said in your letter under reply (of the 10th inst.) in reply to my request for a vote of confidence from you that the A.I.C.C. should exercise their own judgement in dealing with the Working Committee that I may form, without being burdened by your opinion or mandate. It would be far better to let them exercise their own judgement in the very formation of the Working Committee. If I cannot give effect to your advice, which is also against the terms of the Pant Resolution and if you do not form the Working Committee yourself, then the A.I.C.C. must accept the responsibility of electing the Working Committee. Can you suggest any other solution?

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 14th April, 1939

I AM PERTURBED BY PERSISTENT PRESS REPORTS THAT YOURSELF NOT COMING TO CALCUTTA DURING A.I.C.C. MEETING AND GANDHI SEVA SANGH CONFERENCE BEING POSTPONED TILL SECOND WEEK OF MAY. YOUR PRESENCE DURING A.I.C.C. MEETING ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. WILL FIRST WEEK OF MAY FOR A.I.C.C. MEETING SUIT YOU BETTER? KINDLY WIRE—SUBHAS.

From Mahatma Gandhi

Rajkot, 14th April, 1939

MINE CROSSED YOUR LETTER. CAN ADD NOTHING HELPFUL. I

AM CONVINCED BEST COURSE IN NATIONAL INTEREST FOR YOU IS TO FORM CABINET OF YOUR UNFETTERED CHOICE AND FORMULATE PROGRAMME. LOVE—BAPU.

From Mahatma Gandhi

Rajkot, 14th April, 1939

YOUR WIRE. GANDHI SEVA SANGH 3RD MAY TO 10TH. BETTER IF WORKING COMMITTEE 28TH INSTANT, A.I.C.C. 29TH. I SHALL MAKE DESPERATE EFFORT TO ATTEND. BA'S FEVER ABATED. NO DANGER. LOVE—BAPU.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, April 15

RECEIVED YESTERDAY'S BOTH TELEGRAMS. SORRY DON'T FEEL REASSURED ABOUT YOUR COMING TO CALCUTTA. YOUR PRESENCE DURING A.I.C.C. MEETING ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL. TO SUIT YOUR CONVENIENCE MEETING SHOULD BE POSTPONED IF NECESSARY. REGRET I CANNOT GIVE EFFECT TO YOUR ADVICE REGARDING HOMOGENEOUS CABINET, CONSEQUENTLY ONLY ALTERNATIVE IS FOR YOU TO NOMINATE CABINET. I WROTE TO YOU ON 13TH. I AM WRITING TODAY AGAIN. IF FOR ANY REASON YOU DON'T NOMINATE, THEN MATTER WILL GO BEFORE A.I.C.C. I AM UNDECIDED. BEFORE THAT, WE SHOULD MAKE LAST ATTEMPT AT SETTLEMENT THROUGH PERSONAL TALK. THIS MAY ENTAIL POSTPONEMENT OF A.I.C.C. TO SUIT YOUR CONVENIENCE. KINDLY WIRE AFTER CONSIDERING MY LETTERS OF 13TH AND 15TH. PRANAMS—SUBHAS.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora
15th April, 1939

My dear Mahatmaji,

I have wired to you today to say that your presence in Calcutta at the time of the A.I.C.C. meeting is absolutely necessary. It is so essential that, to suit your convenience, the A.I.C.C. meeting should be postponed if necessary. Kindly let me have definite news that you will be able to come by a particular date. I am told by several friends holding different political views that the Working Committee should be formed before the A.I.C.C. meets. They feel so strongly on this point that they say it is no use for the A.I.C.C. to meet if the W.C. has not already been formed. They hold further that if correspondence does not lead to a settlement, then we should make a last desperate attempt through personal talk. In order to enable us to meet, the A.I.C.C. meeting should be postponed if necessary.

Personally I am afraid of postponement (for I may be accused of dilatoriness) unless you approve of it. But I do feel very strongly that if correspondence does not yield satisfactory results, then we must meet and this meeting should take place before the A.I.C.C. meeting is held. If even personal discussion fails to bring about a settlement, one will at least have the satisfaction of having done his very best.

Let me now summarise the latest position. I am sorry I cannot implement your advice regarding forming a homogeneous Cabinet (I shall not repeat the reasons which I have detailed in my previous letters). Consequently you will have to accept the responsibility which has devolved on you as a result of the Pant Resolution. In other words, you will have to announce the personnel of the Working Committee. If you do that, then the stalemate will end—the W.C. will meet and following the W.C. the A.I.C.C. One can hope that all will then be well and that no other contingency will arise.

If for any reason you decline to form the W.C. then we shall be in a quandary. The matter will have to go before the A.I.C.C. in an undecided state. I think it will be universally held that the W.C. problem should be solved before the A.I.C.C. meets so that the A.I.C.C. may not become a battleground like Tripuri.

I do not know how exactly your mind is working at present—but I do hope that you will now proceed to announce the personnel of the W.C. and thereby end the deadlock. Should you think otherwise, I would beg of you to visualise the disastrous consequences that will follow in the event of the A.I.C.C. assembling in Calcutta without the problem of the W.C. having been solved. If such a situation arises, we should meet, if necessary, and postpone the A.I.C.C. meeting so that our meeting may take place.

One thing has struck me presently. We have been discussing a lot about homogeneous Cabinet—but are we sure as to what exactly we mean by homogeneous cabinet? For instance, the Working Committee formed after Lucknow, Faizpur and Haripura Congresses—would you call them homogeneous—then there is no reason to quarrel over the problem of Homogeneous *vs.* Composite Cabinet. If you call them composite then why cannot a composite Cabinet function this year after successfully working for three years? It strikes me that if we put aside the theoretical discussion of homogeneous and composite Cabinets, we may be able to agree upon names which will in their totality command the general confidence of the A.I.C.C. and of the general body of Congress delegates. Kindly consider this aspect of the problem.

Then again you are deeply concerned over such problems as corruption, violence, etc. Perhaps you regard these questions as fundamental. Now we may differ as to the extent of corruption or degree of the spirit of violence which prevails today. But are we not all agreed that corruption, violence, etc. should cease and necessary steps should be taken on that behalf? If so, why should you think that at the time of action we shall not act together or that in important matters, we shall not agree?

I shall not prolong this letter. I have already unburdened myself to you. I shall only repeat that in all probability, we shall find after personal discussion that whatever our theoretical views

on the nature of the Cabinet may be, we shall be able to agree on the actual names—and whatever our theoretical differences on important problems may be, we shall be able to agree where action is called for.

I hope Ba is rapidly improving and that your health is satisfactory despite the heavy strain. I am progressing steadily.

With respectful Pranams.

Yours affectionately

Subhas

From Mahatma Gandhi

Rajkot, 17th April, 1939

YOUR LETTER AND WIRE. PLEASE RETAIN DATE OF MEETING OF A.I.C.C. 28TH. SHALL ATTEND. IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO IMPOSE COMMITTEE ON YOU. IF YOU WILL NOT FORM ONE LET A.I.C.C. DECIDE. COMPOSITE CABINET SEEMS TO ME IMPRACTICABLE. AS YOU HAVE LIFTED THE BAN I SHALL TRY TO ISSUE PUBLIC STATEMENT IF I GET TIME. LOVE—BAPU.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, April 18, 1939

IF YOU ISSUE STATEMENT, KINDLY PERMIT ME TO RELEASE CORRESPONDENCE. MY LAST LETTER POSTED ON 15TH—SUBHAS.

From Mahatma Gandhi

Rajkot, April 18, 1939

CERTAINLY PUBLISH CORRESPONDENCE WHICH WOULD RENDER STATEMENT UNNECESSARY. LOVE—BAPU.

From Mahatma Gandhi

Rajkot, 19th April, 1939

LEAVING DEFINITELY ON 24TH. REACHING CALCUTTA ON 27TH MORNING. MIGHT STAY AT SODEPUR. HEMPROBHA DEVI HAS ALWAYS INSISTED. DOCTOR ROY HAD ANOTHER SUGGESTION FROM MEDICAL STANDPOINT. SINCE YESTERDAY AM LAID WITH FEVER WHICH IS INCREASING. HOPE IT WILL BE UNDER CONTROL BEFORE DEPARTURE. DESPITE MANY SUGGESTIONS CONTAINED IN YOUR LETTERS, I FEEL HELPLESS, CARRY OUT TERMS OF PANT'S RESOLUTION IN THIS ATMOSPHERE OF MUTUAL DISTRUST, SUSPICIONS AND IN FACE OF MARKED DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN GROUPS. I STILL MAINTAIN YOU SHOULD BOLDLY FORM COMMITTEE. IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO YOU WITH THE VIEWS YOU HOLD. LOVE—BAPU.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 20th April, 1939

I

EXTREMELY HAPPY YOU ARE COMING TO CALCUTTA ON 27TH. NO OBJECTION TO YOUR STAYING WHERE YOU LIKE. FOR YOUR PERSONAL COMFORT AND PUBLIC CONVENIENCE I WOULD SUGGEST YOUR STAYING RIVERSIDE GARDEN HOUSE ON OUTSKIRTS OF CITY. HOWEVER SHALL WIRE YOU AGAIN FROM CALCUTTA AFTER CONSULTING SATIS BABU. JAWAHARLALJI WAS HERE YESTERDAY. WE THINK IT DESIRABLE YOU BREAK JOURNEY FOR ONE DAY AT SOME PLACE NEAR CALCUTTA WHERE BOTH CAN MEET YOU FOR PERSONAL TALK. IF YOU APPROVE IDEA AND WIRE ME YOUR ROUTE, I SHALL ARRANGE YOUR HALT AT CONVENIENT INTERMEDIATE STATION. PROCEEDING TO CALCUTTA ON 21ST—SUBHAS.

To Mahatma Gandhi

April 20, 1939

II

EXTREMELY ANXIOUS ABOUT YOUR FEVER. PRAY FOR YOUR SPEEDY RECOVERY. JAWAHARLALJI AND MYSELF EARNESTLY HOPE OUR MEETING WILL YIELD FRUITFUL RESULTS AND MAKE POSSIBLE CO-OPERATION OF ALL CONGRESSMEN IN COMMON CAUSE. IN VIEW OF OUR EARLY MEETING IN CALCUTTA WE BOTH CONSIDER IT UNNECESSARY AND UNDESIRABLE TO RELEASE CORRESPONDENCE BEFORE MEETING. PRANAMS—SUBHAS.

To Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora P.O.
District Manbhum, Bihar
20th April, 1939

My dear Mahatmaji,

I have today sent you the following telegram:

MAHATMA GANDHI, RAJKOT. EXTREMELY ANXIOUS YOUR FEVER, PRAY FOR YOUR SPEEDY RECOVERY. JAWAHARLALJI MYSELF EARNESTLY HOPE OUR MEETING WILL YIELD FRUITFUL RESULTS AND MAKE POSSIBLE CO-OPERATION OF ALL CONGRESSMEN IN COMMON CAUSE. IN VIEW OF OUR EARLY MEETING AT CALCUTTA WE BOTH CONSIDER IT UNNECESSARY AND UNDESIRABLE TO RELEASE CORRESPONDENCE BEFORE MEETING. PRANAMS.

We have had a long correspondence during the last three weeks. This correspondence has not produced any tangible result so far as the formation of the Working Committee is concerned.

Nevertheless it has perhaps been useful in a different way in helping the clarification of our ideas. But the immediate issue has to be clinched now, for we cannot do without a Working Committee any longer. The situation within the country and in the international sphere makes it imperative that Congressmen should close up their ranks at once and present a united front. You are fully aware how the international situation is deteriorating from day to day. The amending Bill now before the British Parliament shows that the British Government are preparing to rob the Provincial Governments of whatever power they now possess in the event of a war-emergency arising. From all accounts it should be clear beyond a shadow of doubt that we are approaching a crisis of unprecedented magnitude. We can hope to cope with it only if we sink our differences at once and do our very best to restore unity and discipline within our ranks. This task can be achieved only if you come forward and take the lead. In that event you will find that all of us will do our very best to co-operate with and follow you. You will also find that there is common ground between us so far as the need of rooting out corruption and checking any tendency towards violence are concerned, though we may differ as to the amount of corruption or the degree or spirit of violence that actually exists today. So far as the programme is concerned, it is for the Congress or the A.I.C.C. to define it—though each individual has the undoubted right to place his ideas before these bodies. In the matter of programme, I have the feeling that the crisis that is soon going to overtake us will largely determine it and then there will be little room for any material differences on this score.

I am looking forward eagerly and most hopefully to our meeting in or near Calcutta before the A.I.C.C. meeting. Opinion in Bengal as in other provinces is rapidly growing that the problem of the Working Committee should be solved by mutual agreement in spite of any theoretical differences and in spite of past differences or misunderstandings. Under the Pant Resolution, the responsibility of forming the Working Committee is yours and when you undertake the responsibility you will find that we shall co-operate to the best of our ability.

Jawahar was here yesterday. We had a long discussion on the present situation. I was glad to find that our views concurred.

We think that it would be desirable to break journey for a day at some station not far from Calcutta and have a quiet discussion. If you come via Nagpur, then Midnapur (Kharagpur) would be the best place. If you come via Cheoki, then we must think of a place near Burdwan. I have sent you a wire on this point and shall await your reply. Failing this, we shall meet in Calcutta. I have asked Jawahar to join in our talks and he has kindly agreed.

I am feeling anxious about your fever. I am praying that it may soon disappear.

With respectful Pranams.

Yours affectionately

Subhas

To Mahatma Gandhi

Calcutta, 22nd April, 1939

DISCUSSED WITH SATIS BABU. APPROVED YOUR STAYING THERE IN QUIET ATMOSPHERE. CONSEQUENTLY UNNECESSARY TO BREAK JOURNEY EN ROUTE. PAPERS SAY YOU ARE COMING VIA DELHI BUT YOUR WIRE SAID VIA NAGPUR. KINDLY WIRE ROUTE—SUBHAS BOSE.

Note: In the interval between the above correspondence and the last exchange of telegrams given below, the All-India Congress Committee met in Calcutta on the agreed dates. Netaji submitted his resignation on 29 April, 1939 at that meeting; the text of his statement to the A.I.C.C. will be found on page 107. Prior to submitting his resignation, Bose read out the following letter he had received from Gandhi. Eds.

From Mahatma Gandhi

My dear Subhas,

You have asked me to give you in terms of Pant's resolution the names for the Working Committee. As I have told you in my letters and my telegrams, I feel myself utterly incompetent to do so. Much has happened since Tripuri. Knowing your own views, knowing how you and most of the members differ in fundamentals, it seems to me that if I gave you names, it would be an imposition on you. I have argued this position at length in my letters to you. Nothing that has happened during the three days of closest conversation between us has altered my view. Such being the case you are free to choose your own committee. I have told you too that you could discuss with the ex-members the possibility of mutual approach and that nothing would please me better than to know that you were able to come together. Into what has happened since I need not go. You and the ex-members present will make the position clear before the A.I.C.C. Only it has been a matter of the greatest grief to me that a mutual settlement has not been possible. I hope however that whatever is done will be done with mutual goodwill.

With love

Yours

Bapu

Sodepur
29–4–39

To Mahatma Gandhi

Calcutta, 5th May, 1939

DESIRE TO RELEASE OUR CORRESPONDENCE, KINDLY WIRE OPINION—SUBHAS.

From Mahatma Gandhi

Brindaban (Champaran), 6th May, 1939

RELEASE CORRESPONDENCE. LOVE—BAPU.

Bose-Nehru Correspondence

From Jawaharlal Nehru

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad, April 23, 1938

My dear Subhas,

I have your letter and your telegram about the Ministers' meeting and the Working Committee. Will you kindly send directions to our office about the issue of invitations for these meetings. Who is to be invited to the Ministers' meeting? The Prime Ministers of course as well as the members of the Parliamentary Committee. May I suggest that other Working Committee members should be informed of the Ministers' meeting and told that they would be welcome if they choose to attend it. Also that the Prime Ministers should be asked to inform their other Ministers that they would also be welcome at the meeting if they can come.

I am going to Lucknow for three days, returning to Allahabad on the 27th. After that I shall be here for five days and then go to Garhwal. Will you please send your reply to the office addressing it to the assistant secretary so that there might be no delay in carrying out your instructions.

Yours affectionately,

Jawahar

Sjt Subhas Chandra Bose, 38/2 Elgin Road, Calcutta

To Jawaharlal Nehru

In the train
October 19, 1938

My dear Jawahar,

You must be wondering what a strange creature I am, not to have replied to all your letters, I got them all right, however. Your letters to the members of the Working Committee have been shared by all. You have been kept informed by Kripalani and other friends about developments here. Your statements at the time of the war crisis were timely and were helpful to us.

You cannot imagine how I have missed you all these months. I realise, of course, that you needed a change very badly. I am only sorry that you did not give yourself enough physical rest. On the whole, you had a very good press here—thanks to Reuter. The public were kept informed of your movements and activities in Europe and they have been following your utterances with the keenest interest. I am extremely glad that you have been able to do such valuable work during your stay in Europe—though we have missed you very badly here.

Several problems will await solution till you are back. There is the Hindu-Muslim question. Mr Jinnah is unreasonable and intransigent. There is a rift between the right and the left in the A.I.C.C. The latter staged a walk-out which Mahatmaji has taken to heart. Then there is the international question.

I hope you will accept the Chairmanship of the Planning Committee. You must if it is to be a success.

Love,

Yours affectionately

Subhas

PS I am reaching Calcutta tomorrow from Bombay.

From Jawaharlal Nehru

Allahabad
February 4, 1939

Personal and Confidential

My dear Subhas,

We had an hour's talk or more in Santiniketan but I am afraid we did not succeed in clearing up the situation. Indeed we could not, as there are so many uncertainties and I do not know how matters will shape themselves. We have to await these developments but at the same time these developments themselves depend on us, and especially on you.

As I told you, your contested election has done some good and some harm. I recognise the good but I am apprehensive of the harm that will follow. I still think in the balance it would have been better if this particular conflict had not taken place in this way. But that is a thing of the past and we have to face the future. This future we have to view from the larger view-point and not in terms of personalities. Obviously it is not good enough for any one of us to get into a huff because matters have not shaped as we wished them to. We have to give our best to the cause whatever happens. Granting that, it is not easy to see the right path and my mind is troubled about the future.

The first thing we have to do is to understand each other's view-points as fully as possible. The framing of resolutions is simple enough if this is done, but with our minds full of conflicts and doubts as to what the other is aiming at, it is not an easy matter to try to shape the future. During the past few years I have come into intimate contact with Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai and others of his way of thinking. We have had repeated and prolonged discussions and although we had failed to convince each other, we have influenced each other considerably and we have, I believe, understood each other to a large extent. As long ago as 1933, on my coming out of prison, I went to Poona to see Gandhiji when he was recovering from his fast. We had long talks about the

various aspects of our struggle and then exchanged letters which were subsequently published. Those letters and talks revealed both our temperamental and fundamental differences as well as the many things we had in common. Since then, in private and in Working Committee, frequent discussions have taken place. On several occasions I have been on the point of resigning from the presidentship and even the Working Committee. But I refrained because I thought this would precipitate a crisis at a moment when unity was essential. Perhaps I was wrong.

Now this crisis has come in a manner that is unfortunate. Before I can determine on my own course of action I must have some notion of what you want the Congress to be and to do. I am entirely at sea about this. There has been a lot of talk of Leftists and Rightists, of Federation etc., and yet, so far as I can remember, no vital matters affecting these questions have been discussed by us in the W.C. during your presidentship. I do not know who you consider a Leftist and who a Rightist. The way these words were used by you in your statements during the presidential contest seemed to imply that Gandhiji and those who are considered as his group in the W.C. are the Rightist leaders. Their opponents, whoever they might be, are the Leftists. That seems to me an entirely wrong description. It seems to me that many of the so-called Leftists are more Right than the so-called Rightists. Strong language and a capacity to criticise and attack the old Congress leadership is not a test of Leftism in politics. It seems to me that one of our chief dangers in the immediate future is the emergence into office and positions of responsibility of persons who are devoid of any sense of responsibility or any true appreciation of the situation, and are not conspicuous in possessing intelligence of a high order. They will create a situation which is bound to lead to a big reaction and then the real Leftists will be swept away. The example of China is before us and I do not want India to follow that unhappy path, if I can help it.

I think the use of the words Left and Right has been generally wholly wrong and confusing. If instead of these words we talked about policies it would be far better. What policy do you stand for? Anti-Federation, well and good. I think that the great majority

of the members of the W.C. stand for that and it is not fair to hint at their weakness in this respect. Would it not have been better for you to discuss this matter fully in the W.C. or even to bring forward a resolution on the subject and then note the reactions? Surely without first fully discussing a matter with your colleagues it was hardly fair to accuse them en bloc of back-sliding. I will not repeat here what I told you of the extraordinary accusation you made about ministries in the Federation being already divided up. Inevitably most people thought that your colleagues of the W.C. were the guilty parties.

You will remember that I sent long reports from Europe to you and the W.C. I discussed in great detail what our attitude to Federation should be and asked for directions. You sent me none, not even an acknowledgement, Gandhiji agreed with my method of approach and so I was told did most of the members of the W.C. I do not yet know what your reactions were. But apart from informing me, was that not an opportunity for you to discuss this matter thoroughly in W.C. and decide this way or that? Unfortunately in this and other matters you have adopted an entirely passive attitude in the W.C. although sometimes you have given expression to your views outside. In effect you have functioned more as a speaker than as a directing president.

The A.I.C.C. office has deteriorated greatly during the past year. You have not even seen it and letters and telegrams to you are seldom answered with the result that many office matters get hung up indefinitely. Just at the moment when our organisation requires the closest attention, the headquarters functions ineffectively.

We have the States question and the Hindu-Muslim question, and the kisans and the workers. There are many view-points about them and some conflict. Do you hold definite views on any of them which are at variance with those of your colleagues? Take the Bombay Trade Disputes Bill. I disagree with some of its provisions and if I had been here I would have tried my utmost to get them changed. Do you also disagree and if so did you try to get them altered? In regard to the general agrarian situation in the various provinces, including Bengal, I do not know what your specific views are.

The Provincial Congress Governments are rapidly heading towards minor crisis, and it is quite likely that the development of the States movements will lead to a major crisis in which all of us including the Provincial Governments will be involved. What do you think should be the course we should adopt? Your desire to have a coalition Ministry in Bengal seems hardly to fit in with your protest against a drift towards constitutionalism. Ordinarily it would be considered a Rightist step, and especially now when the situation is rapidly developing.

Then there is foreign policy to which, as you know, I attach great importance, especially at this juncture. So do you as far as I can make out. But I do not know yet exactly what policy you envisage. I know generally Gandhiji's viewpoint and I do not wholly agree with it though we can and have pulled on together for the two or three years of international crisis and he has often accepted my view-point without wholly agreeing with it.

These and many other questions arise in my mind and I know that many others are troubled by them, including those who have voted for you in the election. It is quite possible that many of these people may vote quite differently on issues raised in the Congress and a new situation might arise there.

The formation of the Working Committee will raise a host of problems. The final problem will be to have a Committee which commands the confidence of the A.I.C.C. and the Congress generally. This in itself is very difficult under the circumstances. It is not good enough to have a committee which exists on sufferance of people who are not considered responsible and whose chief title to prominence has been criticism of what they consider the 'Right', such Committee will inspire confidence in no one, Left or Right. It will either be thrown out or will fade into insignificance.

It is quite possible that with the development of the States struggle Vallabhbhai and even Gandhiji will get more and more involved in it. This will occupy the centre of the state in Indian politics and a Working Committee, consisting of others, will function ineffectively and lose importance. During the last decade or more the Working Committee has occupied a very high position

in India and even outside. Its decisions meant something, its word had power. It did not shout so much but there was strength and action behind what it said. I fear that many of our so called Leftists believe more in strong language than in anything else. I have no admiration whatever for the Nariman type of public worker and there are a good many of this type about.

We have got into an unhappy tangle and for the moment I see no obvious way out. I am prepared to try my best but the clarification and lead must come from you and then it is possible for others to decide as to whether they fit in or not. I suggest to you therefore to examine the position in all its implications, to consider the various problems referred to above, and to write a detailed note on them. This need not be published but it should be shown to those whom you invite to cooperate with you. Such a note will become the basis for discussion and this discussion will help us in finding a way out of the present impasse. Talks are not good enough, they are vague and often misleading and we have had enough of vagueness already. I should like you to develop your suggestion about giving an ultimatum to the British Government. How exactly do you wish to proceed about it and what will you do afterwards? As I have told you, I do not appreciate this idea at all but it may be possible that if you develop it, I might be able to understand it better.

I have seen your statement in the Press. It is too vague for me to grasp your position. Hence my request for a full elucidation.

Public affairs involve principles and policies. They also involve an understanding of each other and faith in the bona fides of colleagues. If this understanding and faith are lacking, it is very difficult to cooperate with advantage. As I have grown in years I have come to attach more and more importance to this faith and understanding between colleagues. What am I to do with the finest principles if I do not have confidence in the person concerned? The party rivalries in many provinces illustrate this and we find extreme bitterness and often an utter lack of scruple among people who are ordinarily honourable and straight. I cannot stomach this kind of politics and I have kept absolutely aloof from them for these many years. I function individually without any group or

any second person to support me, although I am happy enough to possess the confidence of many. I feel that this provincial deterioration is now being transferred or extended to the All-India plane. This is a matter of the most serious concern to me.

So we come back to this: behind the political problems, there are psychological problems, and these are always more difficult to handle. The only way to do so is perfect frankness with each other and I hope therefore that all of us will be perfectly frank.

I do not expect you to answer this letter immediately. It will take a few days. But I would like you to send me an acknowledgement.

Yours affectionately

Jawahar

To Jawaharlal Nehru

Chauram, Dt. Gaya
February 10, 1939

My dear Jawahar,

I got your long letter in Calcutta. You have referred to my shortcomings. While I am fully conscious of them, I may say that there is another side to the story. Moreover, one should not forget the obstacles with which I had to contend. I do not want to say anything about them in this letter—partly because that would start a controversy and partly because I would have to cast reflection on other people. The main thing now is the programme for the Tripuri Congress. Jayaprakash will be seeing you on the 12th and will convey my ideas about the programme to you. I would have liked to see you at the same time, but I do not think I shall be able to do so. However, I shall try to see (you) at Allahabad on the 20th inst.

I have seen your statement about Rajkot etc. The British

Government want to fight the Congress through the medium of the Princes. But we must not walk into their trap. While fighting the Princes over the States' problems—we should throw out a direct challenge to the British Government over the issue of Swaraj. I have missed that idea in your statement and I feel that we are running the risk of being side-tracked from our main fight, if we drop the issue of Swaraj and begin fighting the British Government and the Princes over States' problems exclusively. More when we meet.

Yours affectionately

'Subhas

From Jawaharlal Nehru

March 1, 1939

My dear Subhas,

Your letter of the 27th about the Egyptian delegation. Sometime back I had written to the Bombay P.C.C. asking them to arrange a suitable reception for Nahas Pasha and party. I had suggested that arrangements for their stay might be made at the Taj Mahal Hotel and that first class railway accommodation should be reserved for them to Jubbulpore. If Nahas Pasha had been coming this was inevitable. Even now I think it best that at any rate upto Jubbulpore they should come first class. After that their programme can be fixed up and you can discuss the matter with them. They might themselves prefer to fall in line with our own practice here.

I think that the expenses of their visit should fall on the A.I.C.C. funds, unless of course in some places the P.C.C. is prepared to shoulder that burden. As a rule they should be put up at first class hotels. Their stay will be of a short duration, only a fortnight, and of this three or four days will be spent at Tripuri

and three days travelling. Thus they cannot visit many places. Delhi seems specially indicated. If possible they might go to Calcutta and Lucknow. I think this can only be fixed up by you in consultation with them after they arrive.

I might mention that we discussed this matter informally in Wardha and if a Working Committee meeting had been held, it was proposed to sanction a sum of money for the expenses of the Egyptian delegation.

I have spoken to the Tripuri Reception Committee people also and I understand that they have provisionally reserved accommodation both in a hotel in Jubbulpore and at the Congress camp.

Yours affectionately

Jawaharlal Nehru

Shri Subhas Chandra Bose,
38/2 Elgin Road,
Calcutta

From Jawaharlal Nehru

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad, March 16, 1939

My dear Subhas,

I hope that you are recovering from your illness and from the strain of Tripuri.

As you might have heard, Maulana Azad had a fall at the Allahabad station day before yesterday and injured himself rather badly. It is feared that there are fractures in the bone near the knee-joint. It is probable that he will have to take complete rest for six or eight weeks. For the present he is here. But after a week he might be sent to Calcutta. I am sending the skiagrams of his knee-joint to Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy for his opinion and advice as well as the opinion of Calcutta surgeons.

The Egyptian Delegation is in Lucknow at present and will go on to Delhi to-night where they will stay three days. Their subsequent programme is Agra, Lahore and Peshawar. On their way back they might visit Aligarh and Benares but this is not certain yet. They will fix their programme finally in Delhi. They intend going to Calcutta for two days. The exact date is not certain yet but it will be round about the 27th. As soon as this is fixed I shall inform you as well as the B.P.C.C.

I suppose they had better stay at a hotel in Calcutta. Both in Lucknow and Delhi they are putting up at hotels. As for their programme in Calcutta you will kindly tell the B.P.C.C. what should be done. We are trying to give them full opportunities of meeting the non-Congress elements like the Muslim League. But functions are held under the Congress auspices or private auspices.

I am going to Delhi tomorrow evening for two days in order to meet Gandhiji. I expect to return here on the 20th noon.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Secretary of the Bengal P.C.C.

Yours affectionately

Jawaharlal Nehru

Shri Subhas Chandra Bose
Dhanbad (Bengal)

From Jawaharlal Nehru

Subhas Chandra Bose
Jealgora

Hope you received my telegram sent Dhanbad Monday awaiting reply stop Egyptian Delegation expect reach Calcutta twenty-seventh morning stay two days.

Jawaharlal Nehru
22.3.39

To Jawaharlal Nehru

Jealgora P.O.
Dt. Manbhum, Bihar,
March 28, 1939

My dear Jawahar,

I find that for some time past you have developed tremendous dislike for me. I say this because I find that you take up enthusiastically every possible point against me; what could be said in my favour you ignore. What my political opponents urge against me you concede, while you are almost blind to what could be said against them. In the course of what follows I shall try to illustrate the above.

Why you should have developed this strong dislike for me remains a mystery to me. On my side, ever since I came out of internment in 1937, I have been treating you with the utmost regard and consideration, in private life and in public. I have looked upon you as politically an elder brother and leader and have often sought your advice. When you came back from Europe last year, I went to Allahabad to ask you what lead you would give us. Usually, when I approached you in this way, your replies have been vague and non-committal. For instance, last year when you returned from Europe, you put me off by saying that you would consult Gandhiji and then let me know. When we met at Wardha after you had seen Gandhiji, you did not tell me anything definite. Later on, you produced some resolutions before the Working Committee in which there was nothing new and there was no lead to the country.

The last Presidential election was followed by an acrimonious controversy in which many things were said—some for and some against me. In your utterances and statements every point was stretched against me. At a speech in Delhi you were reported to have said that you disliked that canvassing should have been done by or for me. I do not know what exactly was in your

mind, but you were blissfully oblivious of the fact that my election appeal was made after Dr Pattabhi's appeared in the Press. As for canvassing, you were, consciously or unconsciously, oblivious of the fact that there was much more canvassing on the other side and the fullest use was made of the machinery of the Congress Ministries in order to secure votes for Dr Pattabhi. The other side had a regular organisation (Gandhi Seva Sangh, Congress Ministries and perhaps also the Charkha Sangh and A.I.V.I.A.) which was immediately set in motion. Moreover, they had all the big guns and yourself against me, as well as the full weight of Mahatma Gandhi's name and prestige—and the majority of the Provincial Congress Committees was also in their hands. As against them, what did I have—a solitary individual? Do you know—as I know from personal knowledge—that in many places canvassing was done not for Dr Pattabhi, but for Gandhiji and Gandhism—though many people refused to be taken in by such disingenuous propaganda. Still, standing in a public meeting, you tried to run me down on what appear to be absolutely false grounds.

Then let me come to the resignations. Twelve members resigned. They wrote a straightforward letter—a decent letter—in which they made their position unequivocally clear. Considering my illness, they did not say one unkind word about me, though they could have criticised me adversely if they had wanted to. But your statement—how shall I describe it? I shall refrain from using strong language and simply say that it was unworthy of you. (I am told that you wanted your statement to be substantially embodied in the general letter of resignation, but that this was not agreed to.) Then your statement gave one the impression that you had resigned, as the other twelve members had done—but up till now, to the general public, your position remains a mystery. When a crisis comes, you often do not succeed in making up your mind one way or the other—with the result that to the public you appear as if you are riding two horses.

To come back to your statement of the 22nd February. You have an idea that you are extremely logical and consistent in what you say or do. But other people are often puzzled and perplexed

at the stand you take on different occasions. Take a few instances. In your statement of the 22nd February you said that you were against my re-election and you gave certain reasons you mentioned in your statement of the 26th January, issued from Almora. You clearly shifted your ground. Then again I was told by some Bombay friends that you had told them previously that you had no objection to my standing, provided I stood as a candidate for the Left. In your Almora statement you concluded by saying that we should forget persons and remember only principles and our cause. It never struck you that you want us to forget persons, only when certain persons are concerned. When it is a case of Subhas Bose standing for re-election, you run down personalities and lionize principles etc. When it is a case of Maulana Azad standing for re-election, you do not hesitate to write a long panegyric. When it is a case of Subhas Bose versus Sardar Patel and others, then—Subhas Bose must first of all clear up the personal issue. When Sarat Bose complains of certain things at Tripuri (viz. of the attitude and conduct of those who call themselves orthodox followers of Mahatma Gandhi)—he is, according to you, coming down to personal questions, when he should be confining himself to principles and programmes. I confess that my poor brain is unable to follow your consistency.

Let me now came to the personal question which in my case becomes so very important in your eyes. You alleged that in my statements I had wronged my colleagues. Evidently, you were not among them—and if I had made any allegation, it was against the others, so you were not speaking on your behalf, but as an advocate for the others. An advocate is usually more eloquent than his client. It will therefore surprise you to know that when I talked to Sardar Patel (and Rajen Babu and Maulana) at Tripuri over this question he gave me the surprising news that his main grievance or allegation against me referred to the period prior to the Bardoli meeting of the Working Committee in January last. When I retorted that the general impression among the public was that the main grievance or allegation against me was in connection with my 'election statements', he said that that was an additional allegation. So, after all, your

clients did not attach as much importance to the 'aspersion affair' as you did as their advocate. At Tripuri, since Sardar Patel and the others left for the A.I.C.C. meeting and did not return after the meeting though they had promised to do so, I could not pursue the matter further, with a view to finding out what exactly were the incidents prior to the Bardoli meeting of the Working Committee which they had referred to. But my brother Sarat had a talk with Sardar Patel on the subject and the latter told him that his main grievance was about my attitude at the Delhi meeting of the A.I.C.C. in September 1938 when there was a walk-out of the Socialists. The allegation came as an utter surprise to both my brother and myself, but incidentally it showed that in the minds of Sardar Patel and others, the 'aspersion affair' did not have the importance which you lent it. As a matter of fact, when I was at Tripuri, several delegates (not my supporters, I may tell you) told me that the 'aspersion affair' had been practically forgotten, until your statements and utterances raised the controversy once again. And in this connection I may tell you that since the Presidential election, you have done more to lower me in the estimation of the public than all the twelve ex-members of the Working Committee put together. Of course if I am such a villain, it is not only your right but also your duty to expose me before the public. But perhaps it will strike you that the devil who has been re-elected President in spite of the opposition of the biggest leaders including yourself, of Mahatma Gandhi and of seven or eight provincial governments, must have some saving grace. He must have rendered some service to the cause of the country during his year of Presidentship to be able to draw so many votes without any organisation behind him and in spite of tremendous odds.

In your statement of the 22nd February you said further, 'I suggested to the Congress President that this was the first and most essential point to be considered, but no attempt has so far been made to deal with it'. Before you penned these lines did it not strike you for once that in order to clear up this misunderstanding, it was necessary for me to meet Sardar Patel and the other members and that the time for doing so was the

meeting of the Working Committee on the 22nd February? Or did you think that I avoided the meeting of the Working Committee? It is true that I did not discuss the 'aspersion affair' with Mahatma Gandhi on the 15th February, though he mentioned it once. But then I was following your own dictum of attaching more importance to principles and programmes than to personal issues. Nevertheless, I may tell you that when Mahatma Gandhi told me that Sardar Patel and the others would not cooperate with me on the same Committee, I told him that I would talk over matters with them when we met on the 22nd February and try to secure their cooperation. You will, perhaps, agree that the aspersions, if any, referred not to Mahatma Gandhi but to the members of the Working Committee and the matter had to be talked over with the latter.

In the above statement you wanted me to define exactly in writing what I meant by the words Left and Right. I should have thought that you were the last person to ask such a question. Have you forgotten the reports submitted by Acharya Kripalani and yourself to the All India Congress Committee at Haripura? Did you not in your report say that the Right had been trying to suppress the Left? If it is permissible for you to use the words Left and Right when necessary, is it not equally permissible for other people?

You have charged me further with not clarifying my policy in national and international affairs. I think I have a policy, whether that policy be right or wrong. In my short presidential speech at Tripuri I gave an indication of it in the most unequivocal terms. In my humble opinion, considering the situation in India and abroad, the one problem—the one duty—before us is to force the issue of Swaraj with the British Government. Along with this, we need a comprehensive plan for guiding the States' people's movement simultaneously throughout the country. I think I gave you a clear indication of my ideas even before Tripuri, when we met at Santiniketan and later at Anand Bhawan: What I have just written is at least a definite policy. May I now ask you what your policy is? In a recent letter, you have referred to the resolution on National Demand passed by

the Tripuri Congress and you seem to think much of it. I am sorry that such a beautifully vague resolution, containing pious platitudes, does not appeal to me. It leads us nowhere. If we mean to fight the British Government for our Swaraj, and if we feel that that the time is opportune, let us say so clearly and go ahead with our task. You have told me more than once that the idea of an ultimatum does not appeal to you. During the last twenty years Mahatma Gandhi has been repeatedly giving ultimata to the British Government. It is only through such ultimata and simultaneous preparation to fight if necessary that he has been able to get so much out of the British Government. If you really believe that the time has come for us to enforce our National Demand, how else can you proceed, except through an ultimatum? The other day Mahatma Gandhi delivered an ultimatum over the Rajkot issue. Do you object to the idea of an ultimatum because I have been suggesting it? If so, why not say it clearly and without ambiguity.

To sum up, I fail to understand what policy you have with regard to our internal politics. I remember to have read in one of your statements that in your view, Rajkot and Jaipur would overshadow every other political issue. I was astounded to read such a remark from such an eminent leader as yourself. How any other issue could eclipse the main issue of Swaraj passes my comprehension. Rajkot is one tiny spot in this vast country. Jaipur has a somewhat bigger area than Rajkot, but even the Jaipur issue is a flea-bite when compared with our main struggle with the British Government. Moreover, we cannot forget that there are six hundred and odd states in India. If we follow the present piecemeal, tinkering and nibbling policy, suspending the popular struggle in every other state, it will take us 250 years to obtain civil liberty and responsible government in the states. And after that we shall think of our Swaraj!

In international affairs, your policy is perhaps even more nebulous. I was astounded when you produced a resolution before the Working Committee some time ago seeking to make India an asylum for the Jews. You were mortified when the Working Committee (with probably Mahatma Gandhi's approval) turned

it down. Foreign policy is a realistic affair to be determined largely from the point of view of a nation's self-interest. Take Soviet Russia, for instance. With all her communism in her internal politics, she never allows sentiment to dominate her foreign policy. That is why she did not hesitate to enter into a pact with French Imperialism when it suited her purpose. The Franco-Soviet Pact and the Czechoslovak-Soviet Pact are instances in point. Even today, Soviet Russia is anxious to enter into a pact with British Imperialism. Now, what is your foreign policy, pray? Frothy sentiments and pious platitudes do not make foreign policy. It is no use championing lost causes all the time and it is no use condemning countries like Germany and Italy on the one hand and on the other, giving a certificate of good conduct to British and French Imperialism.

For some time past I have been urging on everybody concerned, including Mahatma Gandhi and yourself, that we must utilise the international situation to India's advantage and, to that end, present the British Government with our National Demand in the form of an ultimatum; but I could make no impression on you or on Mahatmaji, though a large section of the Indian public approved of my stand and the Indian students in Great Britain sent me a largely-signed document approving of my policy. Today when you must find fault with me for not appointing the Working Committee forthwith, despite the shackles of the Tripuri resolution, the international situation suddenly assumes exaggerated importance in your eyes. What has happened today in Europe, may I ask. Which is unexpected? Did not every student of international politics know that there would be a crisis in Europe in Spring? Did I not refer to it again and again when I pressed for an ultimatum to the British Government.

Let me now take another portion of your statement. You say, 'This Working Committee has for the time being ceased to be and the President, as he probably wishes, has a free hand to frame and put forward his proposals before the Congress. In accordance with his desire, no meeting was held here even to transact routine business'. I wonder how you could be guilty of such half-truths

or shall I say untruths? Twelve members of the Working Committee suddenly and unexpectedly throw their resignation at my face and still you blame me and not them on the supposed ground that I probably wished to have a free hand in framing the resolutions. Then again, when did I prevent you from transacting routine business? Even with regard to the main task of framing resolutions for the Congress, though I suggested postponement of the Working Committee till the Tripuri Congress, did I not ask Sardar Patel, nevertheless, in my telegram, to consult the other members and wire their opinion to me? If you have any doubt on this point, please have a look at my telegram to the Sardar. My telegram was:

Sardar Patel, Wardha.

'KINDLY SEE MY TELEGRAM TO MAHATMAJI. REGRETFULLY FEEL WORKING COMMITTEE MUST BE POSTPONED TILL CONGRESS. PLEASE CONSULT COLLEAGUES AND WIRE OPINION—SUBHAS'.

Seven days after the Tripuri Congress was over you sent me a telegram to the effect that I was responsible for causing a stalemate in the affairs of the Congress. With all your sense of fairness, it never struck you that the Tripuri Congress when passing Pandit Pant's resolution knew full well that I was seriously ill, that Mahatma Gandhi had not come to Tripuri and that it would be difficult for us to meet in the immediate future. It never struck you that the Congress itself was responsible for the stalemate by taking out of my hands in an unconstitutional and ultra vires manner the power of appointing the Working Committee. If the constitution had not been wantonly violated by Pandit Pant's resolution then I would have appointed the Working Committee on the 13th March 1939. You commenced a public agitation against me only seven days after the Congress was over, though you knew quite well the condition of my health and your telegram to me appeared in the press even before it reached my hands. When for a full fortnight there was a stalemate in the affairs of the Congress prior to Tripuri, caused by the resignation of twelve members of the Working Committee,

did you utter one word in protest? Did you offer me one word of sympathy? You say in one of your recent letters that you speak and act for yourself alone and should not be taken as representing anybody else. Unfortunately for us, it never strikes you that you appear to others in the role of an apologist for the Rightists. Take your last letter, dated the 26th March, for instance. You say therein, 'I have today read your statement in the press, I fear that such argumentative statements will not help much'.

At a time when I am being unfairly attacked from several quarters—being hit below the belt, as they say—you do not utter one word of protest—you do not offer me one word of sympathy. But when I say something in self-defence, your reaction is—'Such argumentative statements do not help much'. Have you said the same thing of argumentative statements written by my political opponents? Perhaps you gloat over them.

Again, in your statement of the 22nd February you said, 'There is a tendency also for local Congress disputes to be dealt with not in the usual routine way, but directly from the top, with the result that particular groups and parties are favoured and confusion increased and Congress work suffers . . . It pains me to see that in the very heart of our organisation new methods are being introduced which can only lead to local conflicts spreading to higher planes'.

I was painfully surprised to read such an indictment when you had not cared to ascertain all the facts. The least that you could have done was to have asked me for the facts as I knew them. I do not know what exactly you had in mind when you wrote this. A friend suggested that you were thinking of the affairs of the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee. If so, let me tell you quite plainly that what I did with regard to Delhi was the only right thing for me to do.

In this connection, let me tell you that in the habit of interfering from the top, no Congress President can beat you. Perhaps you have forgotten all that you did as Congress President or perhaps it is difficult to look at oneself objectively. On the 22nd February you charged me with interfering from the top. Did you

forget that on the 4th February you had written me a letter in which you had charged me with being a non-assertive, passive President. You wrote, 'In effect you have functioned more as a speaker than as a directing President'. Most objectionable was your charge that I was acting in a partisan manner and was favouring a particular party or group. Did you not owe it to the official head of the Congress organisation (if not to me personally) to make a proper enquiry before hurling such a serious allegation at him in the public press?

If one takes the election controversy as a whole, one would have thought that after the contest was over, the whole episode would be forgotten, the hatchet would be buried and, as happens after a boxing-bout, the boxers would smilingly shake hands. But in spite of truth and non-violence, this did not happen. The result was not taken in a sporting spirit, a grievance was nursed against me and the spirit of vendetta set to work. You took up cudgels on behalf of other members of the Working Committee and you had every right to do so. But did it never strike you that something could also be said on my behalf? Was there nothing wrong in the other members of the Working Committee meeting in my absence and behind my back and deciding to set up Dr Pattabhi for the Presidentship? Was there nothing wrong in Sardar Patel and the others appealing to the Congress delegates, as members of the Working Committee, to support the candidature of Dr Pattabhi? Was there nothing wrong in Sardar Patel making full use of the name and authority of Mahatma Gandhi for electioneering purposes? Was there nothing wrong in Sardar Patel stating that my re-election would be harmful to the country's cause? Was there nothing wrong in making use of the Congress Ministries in different provinces for canvassing votes?

With regard to the so-called 'aspersions', I have already said what I have to say, both in the press statement as well as in the remarks which I made before the Subjects Committee at Tripuri. But I would like to ask you one question. Have you forgotten that when Lord Lothian was touring India, he remarked publicly that all the Congress leaders did not agree with Pandit Nehru in their

attitude towards the Federal Scheme? What is the implication and significance of this remark?

You have complained of an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and lack of faith at the top in your statement of the 22nd February. May I tell you that till the Presidential election, there was far less suspicion and lack of faith among the members of the Working Committee in my regime than in yours? We never came to the point of resignation in consequence thereof as according to yourself, you did more than once. The trouble, so far as I am aware, started with my success at the election contest. If I had been defeated, then in all probability the public would not have heard of the 'aspersion' affair.

You are in the habit of proclaiming that you stand by yourself and represent nobody else and that you are not attached to any party. Occasionally you say this in a manner as if you are either proud or happy because of it. At the same time, you call yourself a Socialist—sometimes, a full-blooded Socialist. How a Socialist can be an individualist as you regard yourself, beats me. The one is the anti-thesis of the other. How Socialism can ever come into existence through individualism of your type is also an enigma to me. By bearing a non-party label one can be popular with all parties, but what is the value of it? If one believes in certain ideas or principles, one should strive to translate them into reality and that could be done only through a party or an organisation. I have not heard of Socialism being established in any country or progressing in that direction, except through a party. Even Mahatma Gandhi has his party.

There is another idea on which you often harp, regarding which I would like to say something—I mean the idea of national unity. I am all for it as, I believe, the whole country is. But there is an obvious limitation. The unity that we strive for or maintain must be the unity of action and not the unity of inaction. Splits are not an evil under all circumstances. There are occasions when splits are necessary in the interests of progress. When the Social Democrat Party of Russia broke up into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in 1903, Lenin heaved a sigh of relief. He was relieved of the dead-weight of the Mensheviks and felt that the path to speedy

progress was after all thrown open. When in India the 'Moderates' isolated themselves from the Congress, nobody of a progressive frame of mind regretted the split. Subsequently, when a large section of Congressmen withdrew from the Congress in 1920, the rest did not mourn their secession. Such splits were really aids to progress. Latterly, we have been making a fetish of unity. There is a potential danger in this. It may be used as a cover for weakness, or as an excuse for effecting compromises which are inherently anti-progressive. Take your own case. You were against the Gandhi–Irwin Pact—but you submitted to it on the plea of unity. Again, you were against the acceptance of office in the provinces—but when office acceptance was decided upon, you submitted to it perhaps on the same plea. Supposing for argument's sake that somehow the majority in the Congress agreed to work the Federal Scheme, then the anti-federationists, in spite of their strong principles, may be tempted by the selfsame plea of unity to accept the Federal Scheme against the dictates of their political conscience. Unity in a revolutionary movement is not an end in itself but only a means. It is desirable only so long as it furthers progress. The moment it tends to hamper progress it becomes an evil. What would you do, may I ask, if the Congress by a majority resolved to accept the Federal Scheme? Would you abide by that decision or revolt against it?

Your letter of the 4th February from Allahabad is interesting as showing that you had not then hardened against me as you subsequently did. For instance, you said in that letter, 'As I told you, your contested election has done some good and some harm'. Later on, you came to hold the view that my re-election was an unmixed evil. Then again, you wrote, 'This future we have to view from the larger viewpoint and not in terms of personalities. Obviously it is not good enough for any one of us to get into a huff because matters have not shaped as one wished them to. We have to give our best to the cause whatever happens'. It is clear that you had not come to attach the importance to the 'aspersion' affair which you did thereafter. Not only that; as I have already said, the agitation over the 'aspersion' affair that was fomented subsequently was largely of your own making. In this connection, you

may perhaps remember that when we met at Santiniketan, I suggested to you that if in spite of our endeavour we failed to retain the cooperation of the other members of the Working Committee, we should not shirk the responsibility of running the Congress. You then agreed with me. Later on, owing to reasons which I cannot comprehend, you went over, bodily as it were, to the other side. Of course, you have every right to do so, but then what about your Socialism and Leftism?

In the letter of the 4th February you have alleged more than once that vital questions like Federation were not discussed during my presidentship. It is a curious charge to make when you yourself were out of the country for nearly six months. Do you know that when there was a storm over Shri Bhulabhai Desai's supposed speech in London, I suggested to the Working Committee that we should reiterate our resolution against Federation and also carry on an anti-Federation propaganda in the country and that my proposal was regarded as unnecessary? Do you know that when the Working Committee met subsequently in September at Delhi, it was at last considered necessary to have a resolution condemning Federation and that this resolution was adopted by the All India Congress Committee?

Another accusation you made in that letter was that I adopted an entirely passive attitude in the Working Committee and that in effect I functioned more as a Speaker than as a directing President. That was a rather unkind statement to make. Would it be wrong to say that usually you monopolised most of the time of the Working Committee? If the Working Committee had another member as talkative as yourself, I do not think that we would ever have come to the end of our business. Besides your manners were such that you would almost usurp the functions of the President. I could, of course, have dealt with the situation by pulling you up, but that would have led to an open breach between us. To be brutally frank, you sometimes behaved in the Working Committee as a spoilt child and often lost your temper. Now, in spite of all of your 'nerviness' and jumpiness, what results did you achieve? You would generally hold forth for hours together and then succumb at the end. Sardar Patel and the others had a clever

technique for dealing with you. They would let you talk and talk and they would ultimately finish up by asking you to draft their resolution. Once you were allowed to draft the resolution, you would feel happy, no matter whose resolution it was. Rarely have I found you sticking to your point till the last.

Another strange charge against me is that the A.I.C.C. office has deteriorated greatly during the past year. I do not know what you consider to be the functions of a President. In my view, he is much more than a glorified clerk or even a glorified Secretary. As President you were in the habit of usurping the functions of the Secretary, but that is no reason why other Presidents should do the same thing. Apart from this, my chief difficulty was that the A.I.C.C. office was situated at a distance and that the General Secretary was not a man of my choice. It would be no exaggeration to say that the General Secretary was not loyal to me in the sense that a Secretary ought to be loyal to his President (I am purposely putting the case very mildly). As a matter of fact, Kripalaniji was thrust on me against my will. You may perhaps remember that I tried my best to have a part of the A.I.C.C. office transferred to Calcutta so that I would be able to supervise its work properly. All of you set your face against it and now you turn round and blame me for the defects of the A.I.C.C. office! If the A.I.C.C. office has really deteriorated as you allege, it is the General Secretary who is responsible for it and not myself. All that you can charge me with is that during my presidentship there was less interference with the work of the General Secretary and that the latter, in actual practice, enjoyed larger powers than before. Consequently, if the A.I.C.C. office has really deteriorated, it is the General Secretary who is responsible for it and not myself.

I am surprised that without knowing the facts you have alleged that I did not do my best to prevent the enactment of the Bombay Trades Disputes Bill in its present from. In fact, you have latterly developed the art of making accusations, sometimes publicly, without even caring to ascertain facts, where I am concerned. If you desire to know what I did in this connection the best thing would be to ask Sardar Patel himself. The only thing that I did not do was to break with him on this issue. If that be an offence,

I plead guilty to the charge. By the way, do you know that the Bombay C.S.P. lent its support to the Bill in its present form? And now, coming to yourself, may I ask what you did to prevent the enactment of this Bill? When you returned to Bombay, there was still time for you to act and I believe you were approached by a number of Trade Unionists to whom you gave some hopes. You were in a much better position than myself, because you can always influence Gandhiji much more than I can. If you had exerted yourself, you might have succeeded where I had failed. Did you do so?

There is one matter regarding which you often have a fling at me—the idea of a Coalition Ministry. As a doctrinaire politician you have decided once for all that a Coalition Ministry is a Rightist move. Will you kindly do one thing before expressing a final verdict on this question? Will you tour the province of Assam for a fortnight and then come and tell me if the present Coalition Ministry has been a progressive or a reactionary institution? What is the use of your sitting in Allahabad and uttering words of wisdom which have no relation to reality? When I went to Assam after the fall of the Saadullah Ministry, I did not find one single Congressman who did not insist that there should be a Congress Coalition Ministry. The fact is that the province had been groaning under a reactionary Ministry. Things were going from bad to worse and corruption was daily on the increase. The entire Congress-minded public of Assam heaved a sigh of relief and recovered confidence and hope when the new Ministry came into office. If you scrap the policy of office acceptance for the whole country, I shall welcome it, along with Congressmen in provinces like Assam and Bengal. But if the Congress Party accepts office in seven provinces, it is imperative that there should be coalition ministries in the rest. If only you knew the improvement that has taken place in Assam, in spite of all the various obstacles and handicaps, since the Coalition Ministry came into office, you would change your opinion completely.

Regarding Bengal, I am afraid you know practically nothing. During two years of your presidentship you never cared to tour the province, though that province needed your attention much

more than any other, in view of the terrible repression it had been through. Have you ever cared to know what has happened to the province ever since the Huq Ministry came into office? If you did, then you would not talk like a doctrinaire politician. You would then agree with me that if the province is to be saved, the Huq Ministry must go and we should have the best government under the present circumstances, namely, a Coalition Ministry. But while I say all this I must add that the proposal of a Coalition Ministry arises because the active struggle for Purna Swaraj has been suspended. Resume this struggle tomorrow and all talk of a Coalition Ministry will vanish into thin air.

I shall now refer to your telegram of the 20th. March from Delhi. You said therein, 'In view international situation and critical national problems formation Working Committee Office arrangements urgently necessary' etc. Anyone can appreciate the necessity of the early formation of the Working Committee—but what struck me in your telegram was the utter lack of sympathy for my difficulties. You knew full well that if Pant's resolution had not been moved and passed, the Working Committee would have been announced on the 13th March. When that resolution was passed, the Congress knew full well that I was seriously ill—that Mahatma Gandhi had not come to Tripuri and that it would be difficult for us to meet in the immediate future. I can understand that if a month had elapsed without the Working Committee being appointed, people would naturally feel restless. But the agitation was started exactly one week after the Tripuri Congress was over and once again—as in the case of the 'aspersion' affair—it was you who started the campaign against me. Was it easy to form the Working Committee without meeting Mahatma Gandhi? How could I possibly meet Mahatmaji? And did you forget that last year the Working Committee met about six weeks after the Haripura Congress? Do you think that the agitation started by a certain section of the public and the press against me, after your telegram appeared in the press, was an altogether bona fide one? Was I consciously causing a stalemate in the affairs of the Congress by deliberately refraining from appointing the Working Committee? If the agitation against me was not altogether fair, did you not, as

a public leader, feel called upon to put in a word on my behalf at a time when I was laid up in bed?

I have already referred to your accusation that the A.I.C.C. has deteriorated under my Presidentship. I shall add a word in that connection. Did it not strike you that besides damning the General Secretary, you were, while trying to damn me, damning the entire staff as well?

In your telegram, you have referred to 'critical national problems' for which you want the Working Committee to be formed at once—though, as you say, you do not desire to be on that Committee. What are these 'critical national problems' pray? In a previous letter, you said that the most critical problem was the situation in Rajkot and Jaipur. Since Mahatmaji has been handling these matters, they are in a way outside the jurisdiction of the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C.

Then again, in your telegram, you have referred to the international situation. I noticed in the press that after you mentioned this, several persons who have no international sense at all, who have no desire to understand international affairs and who have no intention of using the international situation to India's advantage—suddenly became concerned over the fate of Bohemia and Slovakia. Obviously it was a convenient stick to beat me with. Nothing has happened in Europe during the last two months which was not to be expected. What has happened in Czechoslovakia recently is but a sequel to the Munich Pact. As a matter of fact, I have been telling Congress friends during the last six months, on the basis of information which I had been getting from Europe, that there would be a crisis in Europe in Spring which would last till Summer. I have, therefore, been pressing for a dynamic move from our side—for an ultimatum to the British Government demanding Purna Swaraj. I remember that when I once spoke to you about the international situation recently (at Santiniketan or at Allahabad) and used it as an argument for submitting our National Demand to the British Government, your cold reply was that the international tension would continue for some years. Suddenly you seem to have grown enthusiastic about the international situation! But let me tell you that there is

no sign of any intention on your part or on the part of the Gandhian group to utilise the international situation for our benefit. Your telegram also says that the international crisis demands an early meeting of the A.I.C.C. To what end? To pass a long-worded resolution of no practical consequence? Or will you change your mind and tell the A.I.C.C. that we should now push on towards Purna Swaraj and present the British Government with our National Demand in the form of an ultimatum? No, I feel that either we should take international politics seriously and utilise the international situation for our benefit—or not talk about it at all. It is no use making a show, if we do not mean business.

I am told that when you were at Delhi you carried a message to Mahatmaji to the effect that he should pay a visit to Allahabad to meet Maulana Azad. This information may be quite wrong. But if it is not—did you also suggest to him that he could pay a visit to Dhanbad as well? When my Secretary telephoned to you on the 24th March to contradict the press report that Mahatmaji could not come to Dhanbad because of Doctor's prohibition, you did not show any desire that he should visit Dhanbad, though you were awfully anxious that I should announce the formation of the Working Committee in accordance with Gandhiji's wishes. Over the telephone you said that Dhanbad was not on his programme. Was it so terribly difficult for you to persuade Mahatmaji to come to Dhanbad? Did you try? You may say that he had to go back to Delhi for the Rajkot affair. But he had already finished his interview with the Viceroy. And so far as interviewing Sir Maurice Gwyer was concerned, that was for Sardar Patel and not for Mahatmaji.

Apropos of the Rajkot affair, I want to say a few words. You thought a lot of the terms of settlement which terminated Mahatmaji's fast. There is no Indian who did not feel happy and relieved that Mahatmaji's life was saved. But when one analysed the terms of settlement with the cold eye of logic, what did one find? In the first place, Sir Maurice Gwyer, who is a part and parcel of the Federal Scheme, was recognised as the umpire or arbitrator. Did that not amount to a tacit recognition of that Scheme (Federal)

itself? Secondly, Sir Maurice is neither our man nor an independent agent. He is a Government man—pure and simple. In any conflict with the British Government, if we accept a High Court Judge or a Sessions Judge as umpire or arbitrator, the British Government will very gladly agree to it. For instance, in the matter of State prisoners detained without trial, the Government always boasts that the relevant papers are placed before 2 High Court or Sessions Judges. But we never accept that as a satisfactory settlement. Why then has there been a departure in the case of Rajkot?

There is another point in this connection which I cannot understand and on which you will be able to enlighten me. Mahatma Gandhi went to see the Viceroy and the interview took place duly. Why is he still waiting there? It is Sardar Patel who has to wait, in case Sir Maurice Gwyer wants him. Does it not indirectly enhance the prestige of the British Government, if Mahatmaji lingers on in Delhi after his interview with the Viceroy? You said in your letter of the 24th March that Mahatmaji was completely fixed in Delhi for several days and could not leave at all. I should have thought that there are more important things for Gandhiji to do now than wait in Delhi. The drift, stalemate etc. of which you complain so much could be brought to an end in no time, if Mahatmaji exerted himself a bit. But on that point you are silent and all the blame is reserved for me.

In your letter of the 23rd March you said, 'I found later some vague talk among other people that a meeting of the A.I.C.C. should be held. I do not know exactly who were thinking on these lines and what their objective was in holding the meeting, except in so far as it might be a further clarification of the situation'. News travels fast and far and I got the information that some M.L.A.'s (Central) were trying to get a requisition signed by members of the A.I.C.C. for an early meeting of that body (A.I.C.C.)—as if I was avoiding calling a meeting of the A.I.C.C. and was deliberately causing a deadlock in the affairs of the Congress. Did you not hear anything of this sort—either at Delhi or elsewhere? If so, do you think that such a move was fair and honourable?

In the same letter (of the 23rd March) you refer to the National

Demand resolution and Sarat's opposing it. As for Sarat's attitude, he will probably be writing to you about it. But it is not correct to say that apart from his opposition, the resolution was passed unanimously. I have heard from several people that they opposed the resolution—not because there was anything inherently wrong in it—but because it contained nothing of practical significance. It was like one of those innocuous resolutions which towards the end of every Congress are moved and seconded and passed either unanimously or *nem. con.* Really, I fail to understand how you can enthuse so much over this resolution. What practical lead does it give?

In this connection I cannot help remarking that in recent years Congress resolutions are often too verbose and long-worded. One should call them 'theses' or 'essays' rather than 'resolutions'. Formerly, our resolutions used to be brief, pertinent and practical. I am afraid that you have had a hand in giving this new shape and form to our resolutions. So far as I am concerned, I would rather have practical resolutions than lengthy theses.

More than once you have referred in your letters to the 'adventurist tendencies' in the Congress of today. What exactly do you mean? It strikes me that you have in view certain individuals. Are you against new men and women coming into the Congress and getting prominence? Do you desire that the top leadership in the Congress should be the close preserve of a few individuals? If my memory does not betray me, the Council of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee once adopted a rule to the effect that in certain Congress organisations, the same individual should not continue as an office-bearer for more than three years. Evidently this rule was to apply to subordinate organisations and in the higher bodies, the same individuals could continue in the same post for decades. Whatever you might say, we are, in a sense, all adventurers, for life is one long adventure. I should have thought that those who regard themselves as progressive would welcome fresh blood in all ranks of the Congress organisation.

There is no reason for you to think (here I am referring to your letter of the 24th March) that Sarat's letter was written on my behalf. He has a personality of his own. He got Gandhiji's

telegram asking him to write, after he returned to Calcutta from here. If Gandhiji had not telegraphed in that way, I doubt if he would have written at all. I must say, however, that there are certain things in his letter to Mahatmaji which echo my feelings.

Regarding your letter to Sarat, I have a few observations to make. I must infer from your letter that what he wrote about the atmosphere etc. at Tripuri came as a surprise to you. This surprises me. Though I could not move about freely, I had sufficient reports from independent sources about the morally sickening atmosphere of the place. How you could have moved about the place without sensing it and hearing about it—beats me.

Secondly, you have remarked that at Tripuri personal issues coloured the consideration of other issues. You are right. Only, you did not add that though you did not speak on the subject either in the Subjects Committee or in the open session of the Congress—you did more than any other individual to accentuate these personal issues and make them prominent in the public eye.

You have said in your letter to Sarat, 'It was absurd for anyone to say that Subhas's illness was a fake and none of my colleagues hinted at this to my knowledge'. You must be completely jaundiced to be able to make such a remark when before and at Tripuri, a systematic campaign to that effect was carried on everywhere by my political opponents. This is an additional proof that for some time past you have become completely biased against me (See the beginning of this letter). I do not think that what Sarat has said about the atmosphere etc. at Tripuri is any exaggeration at all.

You have referred to some unsavoury reports which you heard at Tripuri. It is somewhat strange and unbecoming on your part that only such reports impress you as go against us. Let me give you a few examples. Do you know that Bengal is not the only province against which complaints were made regarding the issue of delegates' tickets? Do you know that a similar complaint was made against Andhra province? But you mention only Bengal. Again, do you know that when duplicate receipts were issued by the Bengal P.C.C. office on the ground that the originals were lost, the B.P.C.C. office warned the A.I.C.C. office about the matter and asked the latter to be careful while issuing delegates'

tickets? Do you care to enquire as to who was responsible for the error—the B.P.C.C. office or the A.I.C.C. office?

Further, you have referred to large sums being spent in bringing delegates. Don't you know on which side are to be found the capitalists and moneyed people? Have you heard of lorry-loads of Punjab delegates being brought from Lahore? At whose instance were they brought? Perhaps Dr Kitchlew could throw light on this. A reputed lady Congress worker from the Punjab who saw me here 5 days ago, said that they had been brought under Sardar Patel's instructions. I do not know. But surely, you should have some sense of impartiality.

Regarding the role of the Congress Ministers at Tripuri, I have two remarks to make. I had requests from a large number of A.I.C.C. members to the effect that voting should be by ballot. On my asking why, they said that if they openly voted against the Congress Ministers they would get into trouble. What is the meaning of this? Secondly, I am against the idea of Ministers canvassing in this partisan way. No doubt they have the constitutional right to do so—but the effect of it will be that in every province there will be splits in the Congress Parliamentary Party. How can the Ministers carry on if they do not have the undivided support of all Congress M.L.A.'s and M.L.C.'s in their respective provinces?

Don't you agree that at the Tripuri Congress (including the Subjects Committee), the Old Guard played a passive role in the eyes of the public and that the Ministers dominated the scene? Was Sarat wrong when he made this remark?

It is adding insult to injury—as they say—for you to remark in your letter to Sarat that 'The Tripuri resolution envisaged cooperation between the Congress President and Gandhiji'.

You claim in the above letter that you laboured to bring about cooperation among Congressmen at Tripuri and before. May I tell you the unpleasant fact that other people hold a different view? In their view, you cannot be absolved of the responsibility for the gulf that the Tripuri Congress created between Congressman and Congressman.

I should now invite you to clarify your policy and programme

—not in vague generalities but in realistic details. I should also like to know what you are—Socialist or Leftist or Centrist or Rightist or Gandhiist or something else?

There are two admirable sentences in your letter to Sarat, 'What pains me most is the overshadowing of all political issues by the personal equation. If there is to be conflict among Congressmen, I earnestly hope that it will be kept on a higher level and will be confined to matters of policy and principle'. If only you had adhered to your dictum, what a difference it would have made to our Congress Politics!

When you say that you do not understand what obstruction there was at Tripuri, I cannot help admiring your 'naivete'. The Tripuri Congress, in reality, passed only one resolution, viz. Pant's resolution, and that resolution was charged with the spirit of pettiness and vindictiveness. The protagonists of truth and non-violence had told the world after the Presidential election that they would not obstruct the majority party and out of a spirit of non-obstruction they resigned their membership of the Working Committee. At Tripuri they did nothing but obstruct. They had every right to do so—but why did they make professions which they belied in practice?

I shall refer to a few other things before I finish this unusually long letter.

You referred to the trouble about issue of tickets to Bengal delegates at Tripuri. The other day I read in the papers that at a public meeting in Calcutta, it was stated by a member of the A.I.C.C. that he had heard from some U.P. delegates that similar trouble had taken place with regard to U.P. also.

Don't you think that the fundamental motive behind Pant's resolution was to pit Mahatmaji against me? Do you consider such a move to be an honest one, when no breach had taken place between Mahatmaji and myself, at least from my side? If the Old Guard wanted to fight me, why did they not do so in a straightforward manner? Why did they bring Mahatma Gandhi between us? It was a clever artifice no doubt, but the point is if such a move accords with Truth and Non-violence.

I have already asked you if you consider it fair on the part of

Sardar Patel to declare that my re-election would be harmful to the country's cause. You never said a word that he should withdraw such a remark—thereby indirectly supporting his allegation. Now I would like to ask you what you think of Mahatmaji's remark to the effect that after all, I am not an enemy of the country. Do you think that such a remark was justified? If not, then did you put in a word on my behalf to Mahatmaji?

What do you think of the trick indulged in by some people by publishing in the daily press, while we were at Tripuri, that Pant's resolution had the full support of Mahatmaji?

And now, what do you think of Pant's resolution? There was a rumour at Tripuri that you were one of the authors of it. Is that a fact? Do you approve of this resolution, though you remained neutral at the time of voting? What is your interpretation of it? Was it, in your view, a motion of no-confidence?

I am sorry that my letter has become so long. It will no doubt tire your patience. But I could not avoid it—there were so many things to say.

Possibly, I shall have to write to you again or issue a press statement. There is an unconfirmed report that in some articles you have been adversely criticising my presidentship. When I see your articles I shall be in a position to say something on the subject and to compare our work—particularly how far you have advanced the cause of Leftism in two years and I in one year.

If I have used harsh language or hurt your feelings at any place, kindly pardon me. You yourself say that there is nothing like frankness and I have tried to be frank—perhaps brutally frank.

I am progressing steadily though slowly. Hope you are all right.

Yours affectionately

Subhas

From Jawaharlal Nehru

Allahabad
April 3, 1939

Personal and private

My dear Subhas,

Your long letter of the 28th March has only just reached me and I hasten to reply. First of all I should like to say how glad I am that you have written to me fully and frankly and made it clear to me how you feel about me and about various incidents. Frankness hurts often enough, but it is almost always desirable, especially between those who have to work together. It helps one to see oneself in proper perspective from another's and a more critical viewpoint. Your letter is very helpful in this respect and I am grateful to you for it.

It is not an easy matter to answer a letter which runs into 27 typed sheets and is full of references to numerous incidents as well as to various policies and programmes. I am afraid therefore that my reply will not be as full and detailed as it might be. To endeavour to deal with all these matters properly one would have to write a book, or something like it.

Your letter is essentially an indictment of my conduct and an investigation into my failings. It is, as you will well realise, a difficult and embarrassing task to have to reply to such an indictment. But so far as the failings are concerned, or many of them at any rate, I have little to say. I plead guilty to them, well realising that I have the misfortune to possess them. May I also say that I entirely appreciate the truth of your remark that ever since you came out of internment in 1937, you treated me with the utmost regard and consideration, in private as well as in public life. I am grateful to you for this. Personally I have always had, and still have, regard and affection for you, though sometimes I did not like at all what you did or how you did it. To some extent, I suppose, we are temperamentally different and our approach to life and its problems is not the same.

I shall now deal with your letter and take up the paragraphs one by one.

I forget what I told you when you saw me in Allahabad on my return from Europe last November. You broke your journey here for a short while on your way to Calcutta from Karachi. I cannot imagine what there was for me to refer to Gandhiji at the time before I could give you a definite answer. Nor do I remember what the question was. But probably what I meant was that my own future course of action would depend on Gandhiji's reactions to various matters. You will remember what I told you before and after Haripura. I was greatly troubled then about my association with the Working Committee as a member and I wanted to leave. This was because I had felt more and more that I was performing no useful function there. Also that Gandhiji was thinking in terms of what he called a 'homogeneous' committee and I could not see myself forming part of it. The choice before me then became one of withdrawing myself quietly from it and cooperating with it from outside, or of challenging Gandhiji and his group. I felt that it would be injurious in the interests of India and our cause for me or you to create this definite split. It is of course absurd to say that there should be unity at any cost. Unity may be harmful and injurious at times and then it must go. It all depends on the circumstances then prevailing, and I was convinced at the time that the pushing out, or the attempt to push out, of Gandhiji and his group would weaken us greatly at a critical moment. I was not prepared to face that contingency. At the same time I disliked many of the developments that were taking place and disapproved of the general attitude of Gandhiji in regard to certain matters, such as States and Ministries.

I went to Europe and when I came back I was faced by the old problem again. It was then that you met me and probably I told you what I had in mind. My own mind was clear but my action would depend on Gandhiji's reactions to the situation. If he still held to the 'homogeneous' idea, then I was out of it. If not, then I would try to cooperate as a member of the Working Committee. I was not prepared to do anything to split the Congress on this issue. I was full of the developing crisis in India and

outside and felt that we might have to face a big struggle in the course of a few months. That struggle, without Gandhiji's active participation and leadership, was not likely to be an effective one.

My conception of this struggle was not on the basis of Federation. I wanted the Congress to treat Federation as almost a dead issue and to concentrate on the demand for self-determination and Constituent Assembly, and further to place this in relation to the world crisis. I felt that too much positive stress on fighting Federation helped in keeping this issue alive and prevented us from thinking, and later acting, on the more fundamental plane. When I was in England you issued a statement to the effect that you would fight Federation to the last and that if the Congress accepted it, you would still fight it. Now this statement of yours had exactly the contrary effect in England. Everybody said that if the Congress President is thinking in terms of resigning on the issue of Federation, Congress must be on the point of accepting it. I felt helpless and could not easily meet this argument.

I framed two resolutions on this basis. There was nothing extraordinary about them except the stress was different. All our resolutions for the Working Committee, as you know, have to be framed with a view to being agreed to by other members. It is easy enough to draft something, which pleases one better, but which does not meet with the approval of others. My idea in placing these resolutions before the W.C. was to prepare the ground, as well as the mind of the country, for a more comprehensive and far-reaching resolution at the next Congress. However my resolutions were agreed to and I was told that they should be considered at Congress time.

It was at this meeting of the W.C. that I proposed a resolution about the Jews. You will remember that just previously there has been a terrible pogrom in Germany against the Jews and the world was full of this. I felt that we must express our opinion in regard to it. You say that you were 'astounded when I produced a resolution . . . seeking to make India an asylum for the Jews'. I am surprised to learn that you felt so strongly about this as, so far as I remember, you did not express yourself definitely at the time. But is it fair to characterise my resolution as one seeking

to establish an asylum for the Jews in India? I have the old draft before me. It says: 'The Committee see no objection to the employment in India of such Jewish refugees as are experts and specialists and who can fit in with the new order in India and accept Indian standards . . . ' It was not from the point of view of helping Jews that I considered this question, though such help was desirable where possible without detriment to our country, but from the point of view of helping ourselves by getting first rate men for our science, industry etc. on very moderate payment. Quite a number of countries sent special commissions to Vienna, after the Nazi occupation, to pick out good men. Turkey has profited greatly from such specialists. It seemed to me an ideal chance to get the right type of technician and specialist. Their coming here on low salaries would have helped us also to bring down other salaries. They would have come for a period and not to settle down for ever. And only a limited number would have come, and only such as were of definite use to us and accepted our standards and political outlook. However, this resolution also not being agreed to was dropped.

You refer to a speech I delivered in Delhi after the Congress Presidential election. I am sorry I have not seen the press report you refer to although someone told me about it later. As a matter of fact I said nothing at all about you or your election. I was referring to Delhi and Punjab Congress troubles and disputes and said that there was far too much desire for office and canvassing etc. for this, I deprecated this. Probably the pressman had your election in his mind and so distorted what I said. I inquired from others who were present at the meeting and they corroborated my own impression of what I had said.

You are perfectly right in saying that there was a great deal of canvassing for Dr Pattabhi as there was for you. I see no objection to canvassing for an election. I do not exactly know what you mean by saying that the machinery of the Congress Ministries was used to secure votes for Pattabhi. I do not know what machinery there is for this purpose and certainly I did not see it functioning in the U.P., except, in one individual case, in your favour. I have no idea how our Ministers voted but I am inclined to think that

not more than half voted for Dr Pattabhi, and for aught I know there might have been even less. One Minister refused to vote; one actively and publicly canvassed for you, and it was the general opinion that he secured a large number of votes for you.

You are perfectly right in objecting to my running you down in a public meeting. That would have been most improper. But as a matter of fact I did no such thing at Delhi or elsewhere.

I come to my statement which I issued when the twelve members of the W.C. resigned. There were two days of long argument when I ventured to put forward a far less extreme position than the one taken up by some other members of the W.C. Previously to that meeting, when I had heard that there was a possibility of resignation, I had tried to prevent this. Again I tried to do so. But various factors made the position far more difficult than it had been. You know that I had felt strongly about the reflections made on some W.C. members in your Presidential statements. I had mentioned this to you repeatedly. When you were going to see Gandhiji, I had specially tried to impress upon you that this was the first matter to be cleared up before political questions were discussed. Jayaprakash had agreed with me. There can be no political discussion when there is a wall of suspicion and distrust between two persons. What you had said in your statements was totally unjustified. It is obviously not good enough for a person in the inside and responsible position of the Congress President to repeat press rumours or bazar statements. He is supposed to be in the know and even a hint from him brings conviction to others. You did not mention any names, it is true, but every reader of your statements necessarily came to the conclusion that it referred to some members of the W.C. No greater insult could be offered to a person than to suggest that he has secretly betrayed the cause he publicly stands for and even arranged a mutual distribution of Ministries in the Federation. It was a fantastic statement and it hurt to the quick.

Such a statement was an effective barrier to any further co-operation between you and Gandhiji, for the others in a sense represented Gandhiji. I was keen that there should be cooperation between you two as the alternative seemed to me highly injurious.

I pressed you therefore to clear this barrier and to have a frank talk with Gandhiji. I thought you agreed to do sc. I was astounded to find later from Jayaprakash and Gandhiji that you did not even mention the subject. I must confess that this upset me greatly and it made me realise how difficult it was to work together with you.

Gandhiji further told us that the impression he had gathered from your visit to him was that you were not keen on having his cooperation, although you had asked him rather casually for it. It seemed that you were thinking in terms of forming a Working Committee of various persons whom you had already considered (and perhaps promised) for this purpose. You were of course perfectly entitled to do so but all this indicated that you were thinking in terms other than those of cooperation with Gandhiji and his group.

The action you had taken in regard to the Punjab election, the Delhi election, and in Nellore in Andhra alarmed me—not the action so much as the manner of taking it. You took direct action without reference to the A.I.C.C. office or, in the Andhra case, to the P.C.C. In the Punjab you sent a telegram stopping an enquiry on behalf of the A.I.C.C. office. In Delhi you took action without previous reference to the P.C.C. Personally I think that your Delhi decision was incorrect but that is not important. I felt that you were allowing yourself to be influenced directly by individuals and groups and overriding the impersonal and routine method of approach which an office should adopt. This method seemed to me full of dangers.

You say that 'in the habit of interfering from the top, no Congress President can beat' me. I realise that I am an interfering sort of a person, but so far as the work of the A.I.C.C. is concerned I do not recollect having interfered with the work of the office of the A.I.C.C. though I sought to influence it frequently. My deliberate policy was (a circular to this effect was issued) not to interfere and in provincial matters even for the A.I.C.C. office to interfere, unless there was no other way out.

While these various developments were troubling me your telegrams to Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai came and these were interpreted to mean that you did not want us to meet at all in W.C.

or even to transact routine business. As you say you did not mean any such prohibition, but the telegrams were certainly open to this interpretation. It was possible that a further enquiry might have been addressed to you to find out what you meant. But this seemed undesirable as it meant pressing you to allow us to do something which perhaps you did not want done just then.

All this seemed to make clear that you intended to pursue a path with companions of your own choice and that the old members of the W.C. were an encumbrance and not particularly wanted. It became quite essential for them to resign; not to do so would have been unfair to you, to the country and to themselves, and contrary to democratic procedure. I do not understand how they could have stayed on or how their resignation created a deadlock. Not to have resigned would have created an impasse as this would have prevented you from taking such action as you thought proper.

I adopted, as you have rightly pointed out, a rather foolish attitude. I did not actually resign and yet I acted as if I had done so. The reason for this was that I entirely disagreed with the whole approach of my colleagues. I felt strongly that under the circumstances I could not offer you my cooperation, but I felt equally strong that I was in a sense breaking with the others. In fact the latter feeling was the stronger as it meant the end of a chapter which had been a long one. If you will read the first of the series of articles I wrote in the National Herald, you will perhaps get some inkling as to how my mind was functioning.

There was no question of my statement of February 22nd being embodied in the general letter of resignation. My statement was obviously a personal one and it could not be treated otherwise. I had been pressed hard to join the others in their resignation. I had refused. I did not even see their letter of resignation till after it had been sent to you.

May I explain a little further what has troubled my mind very greatly during the past two months or so? I was against your standing for election for two major reasons: it meant under the circumstances a break with Gandhiji and I did not want this to take place. (Why this should have necessarily happened I need not

go into. I felt that it would happen.) It would mean also, I thought a set-back for the real Left. The Left was not strong enough to shoulder the burden by itself and when a real contest came in the Congress, it would lose and then there would be a reaction against it. I thought it probable that you would win the election as against Pattabhi, but I doubted very much whether you could carry the Congress with you in a clear contest with what is called Gandhism. Even if by any chance you secured a majority in the Congress, this would not represent a strong enough backing in the country without Gandhiji and effective work, and even more so preparation for a struggle would be very difficult. There were so many disruptive tendencies already existing in the country and instead of controlling them, we would add to them. All this meant weakening our national movement just when strength was necessary.

These were my two main reasons for my opposition to your re-election. What some Bombay friends told you was not wholly correct. What I said was that if you stood for certain definite Leftist principles and policies, then there might be some point in your seeking re-election, as the election would then be an education in ideas and policies. But an election on a more or less personal basis did not even have this merit. In any event I did not think your standing for election desirable for the reasons I have given above.

My statements of January 26th and February 22nd are of course different but I do not think they represent any change in outlook. The first statement was issued before your election and I wanted to avoid, as far as I could, taking sides. I had been asked to appeal for Dr Pattabhi. I had not agreed to this. My statement was therefore deliberately toned down. Later certain additional facts came to my notice. I saw your election statements and the various other things happened to which I have referred above. I saw also that you were closely associated with a number of odd individuals who were apparently influencing you considerably. These individuals were, some of them, personally desirable but they did not represent to my mind any Leftist opinion, or any organised opinion. That is why I call them adventurist in the technical political sense. A spirit of adventure is of course a very desirable thing in an individual or a nation. But in a political contest the word has a

certain meaning, not by any means dishonourable to the person concerned. I did not like at all this adventurist tendency and considered it harmful to our cause. The association of vague Leftist slogans with no clear Leftist ideology or principles has in recent years been much in evidence in Europe. It has led to Fascist development and a straying away of large sections of the public. The possibility of such a thing happening in India possessed my mind and disturbed me. The fact that in international affairs you held different views from mine and did not wholly approve our condemnation of Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy added to my discomfort, and looking at the picture as a whole, I did not at all fancy the direction in which apparently you wanted us to go.

I was not quite sure of this direction of your views, although the general indications disturbed me. Hence I wrote to you some time early in February and asked you to write a note to clear these matters up. You did not have time to do so and then you fell ill. My difficulties remained and continued to trouble my mind. It is a reflection of all this that you see in my statement of February 22nd and, soon after, in my articles in the National Herald. The possibility of a Working Committee being formed with odd elements in it, holding no consistent viewpoint together but linked merely by a common opposition was not an agreeable one. I did not see how I could join it. I had had difficulty enough with the old Working Committee, although, in spite of differences, we understood each other and had managed to pull on together for years. I had no desire to continue in that position; much less could I welcome association in a small executive, between some of the members of which and we there was not even the link of common understanding.

One personal aspect I should like to mention also quite frankly. I felt all along that you were far too keen on re-election. Politically there was nothing wrong in it and you were perfectly entitled to desire re-election and to work for it. But it did distress me for I felt that you had a big enough position to be above this kind of thing. I felt also that you could influence policies and groups far more if you had acted otherwise.

You remind me of what Vallabhbhai said about you and point

out that I have not criticised him for it. So far as the various statements that were issued at election time are concerned, I did not like them at all. I wish that none had been issued. But, speaking from memory, I do not remember anything special in them which required my intervention. Vallabhbhai's phrase that your election would be harmful to the country's cause was used in a private telegram sent to Sarat. I think it does make a difference whether one says something in a public statement or a private letter or telegram. The fact that this message was sent to your brother is also significant. It is a strong remark to make but not one which has any dishonourable intent. If Vallabhbhai is convinced that India's good requires Gandhiji's leadership, and thus your re-election might deprive India of this leadership, then he can well think and say so. Just as, however much we might respect Gandhiji, we may well come to the conclusion that his leadership is dangerous and harmful to the country.

I wrote to you that your re-election had done some harm and some good. I still hold to that opinion though the harm might outweigh the good, in the sense that it leads to disruption in our ranks. The good was that it shook up the complacency of some of our old leaders. I have no doubt in my mind that the vote in your favour was largely a vote against this complacency and to some extent the methods that had been followed. I have pointed this out repeatedly and strongly to Gandhiji and others and begged of them to pay heed to it. There was substance in the protest which took shape in the voting at the Presidential election.

You remind me that while on the one hand I object to your interfering from the top, I had written to you on February 4th that you were far too non-assertive and passive as President. That is true. The interference to which I referred came just before and mostly after your re-election. It did not refer to the previous period. When I referred to your non-assertiveness I was thinking of your attitude in the Working Committee during the past year. I had hoped that you would give a stronger lead there, though I did not want a split. Nor did I want you to interfere as President in Provincial matters.

You refer to certain members of the Working Committee

meeting in your absence and behind your back and deciding to set up Dr Pattabhi for the Presidentship. I think some misapprehension has been caused by Vallabhbhai's statement about this and I am glad you have given me a chance to clear this up. So far as I know there was no such meeting. What happened at Bardoli was that Maulana Azad was pressed by Gandhiji and me, as well as others, to agree to stand. He was reluctant to do so. The day I was leaving Bardoli (the day after you left) I went to say good-bye to Gandhiji and others. Some of us were standing in the verandah of Gandhiji's cottage. I forget who was there apart from Maulana and Vallabhbhai. Maulana again said that he hesitated to shoulder the responsibility. Thereupon Vallabhbhai said that in the event of Maulana finally refusing, Dr Pattabhi should be asked to stand. I did not fancy Dr Pattabhi's name for this and so, without contradicting it, I again said that Maulana must be made to agree. I left Bardoli soon after. On arrival in Allahabad I had a telegram informing me that Maulana had agreed. I went off straight to Almora and remained there till the day before the Presidential election.

As regards the 'aspersions' resolutions the facts are these. Apart from pressing you more than once to clear this matter up, as I considered joint working between Gandhiji and you impossible unless this was done, I was not further interested in the matter. As to what Gandhiji or Rajendra Babu or Sardar Patel thought about it, it is for them to say. The definite impression they gave me was that they attached great importance to it. When we reached Tripuri, I was told so again. My own definite opinion was that the matter might be referred to you or by Rajendra Babu or both in brief statements to the A.I.C.C. and that no resolution should be brought up about it. The others would not agree to this. A suggestion was made that a resolution should be drafted for the A.I.C.C. The idea was not, I believe, to avoid the Congress but rather to clear the air before the Subjects Committee began. As usual, I was asked to draft the resolution. I said I would try to represent their view-point in so far as I could, although I did not agree with it. I drafted a brief resolution for the A.I.C.C. which expressed confidence in the old Working Committee and in

Gandhiji's leadership and policy and further stated that there should be no break in the policy. There was no reference to 'aspersions' in it nor to the Working Committee being formed according to Gandhiji's wishes. This resolution was not approved and later a longer and amended resolution was produced by Rajendra Babu probably in consultation with others. (Govind Ballabh Pant had not arrived till then.) I did not like this resolution and said so. I said that I did not think the 'aspersion' clause was objectionable per se, as it had been put down, but still it seemed to me undesirable that it would produce resentment, especially as you were ill. I was told that very great importance was attached to some reference to this matter in the resolution as, without some such clearing up of the position for those whose honour had been tarnished, it would be impossible for them to offer their cooperation. For them to function this was essential as well as an adherence to Gandhiji's policy. Further it was added that the reference had been made as mild and as impersonal as possible. Beyond that they could not go.

I had little to say after that. I made it clear that I thought the resolution unfortunate in some particulars, but as it was a matter of honour for them, I had no further concern with it. I would take no part in its discussion.

After that I do not know what happened. It was in the A.I.C.C. meeting that I found that Govind Ballabh Pant was going to move it. You were present there. Later when the resolution was referred to the Subjects Committee, I approached some of the sponsors of the resolution and again suggested that some changes might be made. I pointed out that the original resolution was meant for the A.I.C.C. more or less as ending an episode and a controversy. But now that it was going to the Congress, it should be considered in a different light. Again I was told that it was a question of honour and unless this was cleared, how could they think in terms of cooperation. You will remember that they had prior to the Congress told you that they would be unable to cooperate with you. This resolution was looked upon by them as a possible bridge which might lead to an effort at cooperation. Without it there was no bridge.

I made one more strenuous effort to get the resolution varied on the eve of the open session when you were lying very ill. I failed, though there was ready agreement to accept Mr Aney's proposal to refer to the A.I.C.C. Mr Aney seemed to think, and he gave all of us the impression, that his proposal was approved of by many friends in Bengal. We even gathered the impression (it may have been wrong) that you also approved of his proposal. What happened subsequently you know.

The next day at the Congress session held in the Subjects Committee Pandal as Govind Ballabh Pant was moving the resolution, Suresh Mazumdar came to me and suggested that the resolution be referred to the A.I.C.C. That is he revived Mr Aney's proposal. He said that there had been a misunderstanding the night before and this proposal would be agreed to readily now. I told him that I was helpless in the matter especially at that stage when Pant was actually moving it. I had tried my best in various ways previously and he had better go to the parties concerned. I do not know what he did subsequently.

As for what was happening behind the scenes at Tripuri and in the delegates' camp probably your knowledge is greater than mine. I did not budge out of my hut, except for particular functions and received few visitors. I was also partly occupied with the Egyptian delegates.

You refer to my 'clients'. I fear these 'clients' are not particularly pleased at my advocacy and I have succeeded in becoming very unpopular with them. Quite a remarkable feat—to displease almost everybody concerned.

Whether this 'aspersions' resolution was unconstitutional or ultra vires, it is for you to decide. There is not much point in my giving my opinion on the question. I am naturally interested in Congress work being carried on and to see the removal of the sense of impasse that we have today. I am surprised that you should think that I had commenced a public agitation against you. After my talk with Gandhiji, I was much exercised and thought long over the situation. To my misfortune, I am affected by international happenings more than I should be. A very grave crisis had arisen in Europe which might have led to war. I felt that we should

not passively await events. Sarat's telegram to Gandhiji indicated that he was not coming to see him. So nothing was being done while events marched. Thereupon I decided to send the telegram. I showed it later to Gandhiji and one or two others. I did not give it or show it to any pressman. As a matter of fact I did not mention it to anyone apart from the one or two persons with Gandhiji at the time. Even now I have not shown it to others. Probably somebody got second hand information about it and gave it to the press.

Do you not think that this comparison between the resignation of the 12 W.C. members before Tripuri and the position after the Congress is not a sound one? There was or should have been no stalemate because of their resignation. There might have been a stalemate if they had not resigned and insisted on functioning. Far from protesting against their resignation I think there was no other course open to them on personal as well as public grounds.

When I sent you the telegram from Delhi, I knew well that you could not come over there. I wanted you to suggest that Gandhiji might go to meet you in Dhanbad. I think he would have gone if you had invited him. Naturally he felt rather hesitant to do so uninvited. Whether the Tripuri resolution was valid or invalid, the initiative lay with you. Unless he knew how you would react to it, he could not take any step. Probably you felt that he might not be able to come to Dhanbad. When your secretary telephoned to me here, Gandhiji was actually going to the station on his way to Delhi. Even if a personal meeting in the near future was difficult, I thought you might correspond with each other and thus clear the ground. You are very unjust to me when you suggest that I sent you the telegram from Delhi to embarrass you or to lead an agitation against you.

I might add that, so far as I am concerned, I did not like at all the idea of Gandhiji staying on in Delhi waiting for Gwyer's award. Nor did I fancy his fast or the reference to Gwyer. I did not think a lot of the term of settlement which terminated Gandhiji's fast. I expressed my pleasure at his ending his fast and no more.

This letter is a terribly long one and I have written it almost

at one continuous sitting, immediately after receiving your letter. Yet there are so many other matters which you mention and about which I could say something. There is no need for me to discuss my own failings which you point out. I admit them and regret them. You are right in saying that as President I functioned often as a secretary or a glorified clerk. I have long developed the habit of being my own secretary and clerk, and I fear I encroach in this way on others' preserves. It is also true that because of me Congress resolutions have tended to become long and verbose and rather like theses. In the Working Committee, I fear, I talked too much and did not always behave as I should.

I object to your use of the words Left and Right because I thought that you were using them vaguely and loosely. Of course there is such a thing as a Left and a Right. It exists in the Congress and in the country. But unless the terms are used concisely they might and do create confusion.

I do not think I ever said that Rajkot and Jaipur overshadow other issues. What I probably said was that Rajkot, meaning thereby Gandhiji's fast and its various implications, dominated the scene in many ways.

About the Bombay Trade Dispute Bill, I reached India after it had become law and the firing had taken place in Bombay. I mention this merely as a fact and not as an excuse.

In the U.P. Congress we have a rule that no one can be president for two years running of any committee from the P.C.C. to the village.

You refer to corruption in bringing delegates from various provinces to Tripuri. So far as my own province is concerned I believe that something of this kind was done, though I am not sure. Probably elsewhere it was done also. May I suggest an enquiry in all the provinces? This would tone up our organisation.

You ask me for my interpretation of Pant's resolution. I do not think it was a motion of no-confidence, but it was certainly one which indicated a want of full confidence in your judgment. Positively, it is a vote of confidence in Gandhiji.

Am I a Socialist or an individualist? Is there a necessary contradiction in the two terms? Are we all such integrated human

beings that we can define ourselves precisely in a word or a phrase? I suppose I am temperamentally and by training an individualist, and intellectually a socialist, whatever all this might mean. I hope that socialism does not kill or suppress individuality; indeed I am attracted to it because it will release innumerable individuals from economic and cultural bondage. But I am a dull subject to discuss, especially at the tail end of an inordinately long letter. Let us leave it at this that I am an unsatisfactory human being who is dissatisfied with himself and the world, and whom the petty world he lives in does not particularly like.

I dare not now, in the early hours of the morning, write about my views in regard to national or international affairs. I am not silent about them as a rule. As you have observed, I talk rather a lot and write even more. I shall leave it at that for the present. But I would add that while I champion lost causes frequently and condemn countries like Germany and Italy, I do not think I have ever given a certificate of good conduct to British and French Imperialism.

I sent you, a day or two ago, some of the series of articles I contributed to the National Herald before Tripuri. One was missing. I am now sending the full set separately. I have not written any article for the Free Press Journal or any other paper recently.

Yours affectionately

Jawahar

Shri Subhas Chandra Bose
Congress President
P.O. Jealgora
Dt. Manbhum

To Jawaharlal Nehru

Jealgora P.O.
Dist. Manbhum
Bihar, April 15, 1939

My dear Jawahar,

I do not know if Mahatmaji has been sending you copies of the correspondence passing between us, as he has been sending others. In case you have not received them, I want to acquaint you with the latest position. After that I would like very much to have your reaction as well as your advice as to how I should proceed next.

Mahatmaji has been insisting on a homogeneous cabinet. He wants me to announce such a cabinet and to formulate and announce my programme. I should then approach the A.I.C.C. for its verdict.

I have told Mahatmaji repeatedly that I cannot form such a cabinet for more reasons than one. Further, I have not been commissioned by the Congress to formulate and announce my programme. I have only to form the Working Committee in a particular manner viz. according to Pant's resolution.

After making some alternative suggestions, I have ended by saying that failing everything, he should accept the responsibility of forming the Working Committee—since I cannot give effect to his advice to form a homogeneous cabinet. In the last two letters, I have urged that he should accept this responsibility.

I do not know if Mahatmaji will announce the Cabinet himself. If he does, then the stalemate will be ended. But what if he does not? In that event the matter will have to go before the A.I.C.C. undecided. What the A.I.C.C. will do under such circumstances I do not know.

I feel that if no settlement is effected through correspondence, I should make a last effort at settlement through a personal talk with Gandhiji. But Gandhiji's movements are uncertain in view of Rajkot. It is not even sure that he will come to Calcutta at the time of the A.I.C.C. though he has wired to me that he will make a 'desperate attempt' to come.

Now if Gandhiji does not form the W.C., should I postpone the A.I.C.C. in order to get time to meet Gandhiji? Will the A.I.C.C. members approve of this postponement, or will they accuse me of dilatoriness? Many people hold the view that the A.I.C.C. should not meet till we have met and made a last effort at settlement. Postponement will be necessary only if Mahatmaji cannot come to Calcutta before the 27th instant when the W.C. is timed to meet. Now, what is your view about postponement?

I can send you the full correspondence up to date, if Mahatmaji has not already sent it to you.

One thing more. Will it be possible for you to run up here for a few hours? We could then have a talk and I could have your advice as to how to proceed next.

This letter is brief and hastily written and it is going with a friend. I do not know if I have made the latest position clear—I hope I have.

If you could spare the time to come, you could save time by coming by Toofan Express (8 Down), which reaches Dhanbad at 4.30 p.m. and you could leave by the Bombay Mail which reaches Dhanbad at Midnight. Jamadoba is 9 miles from Dhanbad. The car will meet you at the station.

Yours affectionately

Subhas

From Jawaharlal Nehru

April 17, 1939

My dear Subhas,

I have just received your letter of the 15th April. Pyarelal has been sending me copies of the correspondence between you and Gandhiji. I do not know if all the letters have been sent to me. But some of the earlier ones have certainly come.

I must confess that I am very much distressed by developments and I do not quite see what should be done, or rather, anything that I see is so out of harmony with what you suggest or what Gandhiji suggests, that I am left high and dry. Under these circumstances I feel peculiarly helpless. And yet it is obvious that each one of us must shoulder the responsibility of putting an end to the impasse and cannot shirk it. It is not a personal matter or a question of prestige for the individuals concerned but the far greater question of how the Congress and India are going to function in these critical days.

Your suggestion that I should visit you has come rather suddenly and taken me by surprise. I have a number of engagements during the next few days and for the moment I do not quite see what to do with them. But I cannot say no to you, specially as the question in issue is so important. I shall try my utmost to visit you soon. I shall wire to you when I can come.

Yours affectionately

Jawahar

Shri Subhas Chandra Bose
Congress President
Jealgora
(Bihar)

To Jawaharlal Nehru

Jealgora P.O.
April 20, 1939

My dear Jawahar,

I sent two telegrams to Mahatmaji today, one of which is repeated in my letter of date to him. I am enclosing herewith copies of my letter and telegram.

In the telegram re: non-release of correspondence, I have used your name. I hope you will not object to it.

I am rather worried about Gandhiji's fever. I do hope that it will pass off soon. If however it persists—which God forbid—what shall we do? Please give some thought to this contingency. I am worried because his health is so weak now. Please write to me on this point. I am leaving for Calcutta tomorrow the 21st inst.

Yours affectionately

Subhas

Bose–Tagore Correspondence

From Rabindra Nath Tagore

Santiniketan

Subhas Chandra Bose

My dear Subhas,

I was about to send you my letter of invitation just when I received your letter which made me happy. Please let me know when it will be convenient for you to come here—I shall get ready to welcome you. I have so much to discuss with you. I also join my countrymen to wish you well.

Yours

Rabindra Nath

20/11/38

* Translated from the original Bengali.

To Rabindra Nath Tagore*

Office Bearers For 1938
President:
SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE
Treasurer:
JAMNALAL BAJAJ
General Secretary:
J.B. KRIPALANI

President's Calcutta Address:
38–2 Elgin Road, Calcutta
Telephone: Park 59
Telegram: 'Suvasbos'
All India Congress Committee
Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad
Telephone: 341
Telegram: 'Congress'

Wardha
14/12/38

Revered Sir,

My apologies for the delay in responding to your very kind letter. I wish to come to Santiniketan around middle of January. I shall duly inform you of the exact date and shall fix the date according to your convenience.

Please accept my respectful pranams.

Yours humbly

Subhas Chandra Bose

From Rabindra Nath Tagore*

Santiniketan

My dear Subhas,

I shall expectantly await your visit around the middle of January. The month of December over here is too crowded with people and the entire vacation is completely full of activity. The fall-out

* Translated from the original Bengali.

continues through the first week of January. I am happy to learn that you will avoid the din and bustle when you come.

Yours

Rabindra Nath Tagore

20/12/38

From Rabindra Nath Tagore*

Santiniketan

My dear Subhas,

I shall have to go to Calcutta in the beginning of February. We shall present a dramatic performance in aid of Sangeet-Bhavana. The opening performance is on 4th February. On that day I wish to publicly felicitate you at the theatre. If you can spare the time I shall be most happy. I have been nursing this desire in my mind for quite some time. I hope there will be no difficulty.

Yours

Rabindra Nath Tagore

14/1/39

From Rabindra Nath Tagore

Santiniketan
Uttarayan

Shri Subhas Chandra Bose

My dear Subhas,

I have been requested to publicly support your election as the next

* Translated from the original Bengali.

Congress President. I wish to keep you informed of my standpoint in this regard. You probably know that I have already written to Mahatmaji and Jawaharlal giving expression to my interest in the matter. Now it is not my task to see what result it leads to. Those who run the Congress determine their policy with a particular aim in view—I am a person away from the political arena, I do not know what that aim is, so I have no right to do more than express my wishes as one not belonging to the profession.

The second point, I have come to you to take charge of Bengal's destiny—a mutual exchange of thoughts is in progress. If anybody thinks this intimacy will be furthered by the Presidential election, that will cause you harm. I want to establish my relationship with you without any reservation.

Bengal today is weak. I desire that a worthy person be given full charge of guiding the province of Bengal and assemble all Bengalis around him. Fortified by that unity Bengal will once again be able to prove her excellence. This is the main purpose underlying my resolve to honour you in the theatre. This will that may take shape is deeper and purer than what can be achieved through the Congress. I saw this during the Bengal partition movement—the manner in which Bengal then expressed her will in full vigour has never been seen in India's history. That Realisation must be roused once again and in this effort I shall rely only on you. Discarding all else I want to travel along this road—this is my heart's desire that I wish to communicate to you.

I felt very happy to know that you have expressed your desire to come here.

Yours

Rabindra Nath Tagore

19/1/39

Tagore's Call to Bose*

Rabindra Nath Tagore's welcome address to Subhas Chandra Bose at a public reception at Amra Kunja, Santiniketan on 21 January 1939:

Dear Subhas Chandra!

What we have to say today our seers have said a thousand years ago. The words of welcome you heard here today, they said the same words so long ago in welcoming those for whom the world waits. Those words will never be out-dated. The welcome through which you have travelled, the seat of honour our countrymen have offered you, the meaning of that seat of honour will be found in their sacred message. Their message has brought you the place of honour. The cause of my happiness is that this occasion will give you a chance to know me. You may feel amused to hear me say this, you may say that you know me all right. But that is not the whole real truth. Because there have been serious obstacles in our country to knowing me. I have come to Bengal with only one half of my self open. I am known as a servant of the Muse. It has stopped there. There has been delay in knowing that my country invited me also to fulfil some other mission, there was bound to be hesitation in internalising that in the mind. I do not blame anybody. Our poet Kalidasa has said that the word and the meaning are inextricably linked. The word and the meaning are mutually connected. In that part where I have brought my meaning at the feet of the Muse you have seen me over a long period of time, you may have also derived some pleasure—you may also have been pained from time to time. But the pursuit of the meaning, that pursuit is not for myself, it is to be given away, you must know that. I am a devotee in that pursuit of meaning, otherwise you will fail to know me in totality.

If you see the expression and the essence together you will understand that that unity inside me is all for the good. It is my good fortune that at a certain time the call of the word and that

*Translated from the original Bengali. Eds.

of the meaning together inspired me. At the frontier of youth I came here in response to that call. Thereafter I was engaged in the *Sadhana* without people noticing it. No one needed to see that. And they did not see. That they failed to see was because they saw me only indistinctly. I appear indistinct, I am a seeker after the essence. Whether I have found fulfilment in that mission is another matter. You have heard so much about my success as a servant of the Muse. Those who love me say that I have achieved some success at the blessing of the Muse. But if you come and observe, you will find that this field of activity is what I am. You will see it not because of your generosity but because your experience is world-wide. You have seen—you have seen in Europe the centres where the seekers after the essence are engaged in their *Sadhana*—you have seen how they have grown through sacrifice and work, what offerings they have made to life, from varied aspects. In the midst of all this if there has been realisation here of man's humanity, if that awareness has been roused here, if the opportunity has come to open up the scope for sacrifice and dedicated work, I know you will be delighted. And I want to offer you that awareness with pride, I want to do so because you have come here as the leader of the country, the country has accepted you. You have to know what *Sadhana* for the country has been going on here, you have to recognise it, you have to accept it. If you accept it then the work will find fulfilment for all time. There are plenty of failings here, I have suffered a lot, my sorrow is boundless. Over a period of forty years I have come through so much of bereavement, so much pain, so much poverty, so much ignominy of indebtedness, so much slander, so much of unkind utterances, so much cause for hopelessness. It is my good fortune that I have invited you today to our field of work—not for anything else but that you will know me.

In my mind I have accepted you as the leader of the nation. I have decided to give expression to this message of mine publicly. You have been established as the leader of Bengali nation. I do not know about the rest of the country. I cannot impose my will there. I am a Bengali, I know Bengal. Bengal's need is immense. Therefore, if I invite you for this purpose you have to respond. I

propose to invite you on 3rd February in Calcutta for a national purpose. Here you have come as our friend. After looking around if you can lighten our burden, please do so. If you can spare the time, you have to visit us from time to time. Today I am delighted that today you have agreed to spend some time with us in the midst of pressing national duties.

Here I have arranged to honour those who are humiliated in the country. Boys who are victims of an adverse educational system. Those who suffer innumerable kinds of bondage—are denied peace, beauty and freedom and have nothing but cramming texts. I have endeavoured to liberate as many boys and girls as possible from prison—you will appreciate what happiness that brings because you have yourself suffered imprisonment. All our children are suffering such imprisonment.—I know what pain and torture that means. When childrens' minds should remain intimately tuned to Nature as a whole, when they should be immersed in happiness, united with shrubs and trees, birds and animals, they are made to push the grind-stone—we have seen the kind of education they receive. We create groups of stereotypes like parrots or talking birds; they become birds in the cage who have memorised some foreign jargon. I have failed. I wanted to achieve, whether I succeeded or failed I tried to bring them happiness, the taste of freedom. The happiness that boys and girls in this atmosphere experience is their right, they have been born to it. Why do flowers bloom, why do birds sing at the end of the day if they were to waste the beautiful time of their lives cramming underlined passages in the class rooms? What misfortune, men to be deprived of enjoyment of beauty! That is why I started here. I failed—can one alone carry such a burden? I am going through all kinds of sorrow. I cannot say nothing has been attained. But not to my satisfaction.

Those from other lands who have seen have been appreciative. They have not stopped at praising, they have imitated. You may have seen this. They have realised that education is mixed up with life as a whole. Those who keep education segregated strangle it. They try to save the human mind by cutting it into pieces. Here I have called for education to be linked to life as a whole, to

happiness, to festivities, to life, to the arts, to everything. I have tried to give the taste of freedom and happiness. There is novelty here. My countrymen ask—what is your syllabus, what books do you read, how much of grammar do you have, have you been able to memorise them, and how many buildings do you have—people particularly like to drag Saraswati down and imprison her. Not having seen that phenomenon here they feel sorry. I have said—the treasure and the *Sadhana* deep inside the nation they have emptied out completely. The task in hand has not been completed here. That is not a wilful act of commission. I have failed to link up with everybody, that is beyond my capacity. I shall feel happy if you can recognise my work from the national point of view and accept it.

Bose's Response to Tagore

Subhas Chandra Bose's reply to Rabindra Nath Tagore's address of welcome at Santiniketan, 21 January 1939

Gurudev:

My visit here this time has a new meaning. I have been here in the past several times. Probably twice. But my coming here today has new significance. Principally I have two reasons for this visit. The first is that you have called me. The other reason is that I felt a desire and inspiration from within to come.

It is unfair to expect that ordinary people or ordinary Indians will realise, in the least easily realise, your comprehensive *Sadhana*. I am also one among such ordinary people. Therefore, that I will grasp the greatness and glory of your *Sadhana* is a forlorn hope, that realisation when it comes does not come in a day. The realisation is gradual and takes a lifetime. However I believe if we go on and on in the pursuit the realisation will spread.

There is a sense of pain and remorse inside you—it is probably

* Translated from the original Bengali. Eds.

there—that your countrymen failed to know you, they did not understand your *Sadhana*. But should you for that reason blame your countrymen? If they could understand you so easily, they would be your equals. The truth that reveals itself to the creator, it is as difficult as time-comsuming to comprehend for the ordinary person. We can only claim that we are on our way, trying to go forward. We are trying wholeheartedly to realise the truth of the Creator. We are trying to understand your *Sadhana* to the best of our ability. In that case you cannot accuse your countrymen. It has been seen in all countries and in all people—ordinary people do not appreciate the worth and greatness of those who strike out a new road, those who try to make people realise truth. On the contrary they try to persecute the seekers after truth and the *Sadhana*. Therefore the characteristic you have discovered in your own countrymen is not merely the way of life of our countrymen but that of all humanity. However poor may the human mind be, those of us who are optimists feel that behind all the poverty, meanness and filth there is hidden divinity and that the true *Sadhana* that our countrymen cannot understand today they will understand some day, will try to comprehend.

From time to time the point is made and is discussed amongst us, perhaps this has occurred to you also—as to the future of your *Sadhana* when you are no longer present. The other day I tried to respond to this question in Calcutta. I should like to say that nothing or no *Sadhana* can die so long as it has real worth. So long as your countrymen will not understand and learn what you have been trying to teach them and make them understand, your visible and practical *Sadhana* cannot die. When one day the truth and *Sadhana* represented in your life is established in the heart of every man or woman of India, it will matter little whether Santiniketan lives or dies. So long as that truth and *Sadhana* is not established in the national mind, the usefulness and need of your Santiniketan and Sriniketan will by all means remain. Not only that, this *Sadhana* will be accepted in all places and corners of India.

Those of us who spend most of our time in the political life of the country feel very deeply about the poverty of the inner life.

We want the inspiration of the treasure that enriches the mind without which no man or nation can rise to great heights. Because we know if we can get a taste of that inspiration and truth our *Sadhana* for the fulfilment and success of our working life and outer life can be achieved. We seek that inspiration from you.

We are today no doubt working tirelessly to attain national freedom, but our ideal is greater. We want complete fulfilment in personal and national life. We desire that every man and woman of the country and the entire nation may in every respect realise Truth. In this quest, in this *Sadhana*, political freedom is only a means. The ideal that is in front of us, the dream that has taken possession of us completely is very great. I do now know how far we shall be able to translate that dream and ideal into reality. We do not know ourselves how much strength we have for this purpose. Whatever strength and competence may be there we are trying to go ahead in pursuit of a great ideal. At the same time, regardless of whatever strength and competence we may personally have, the path we have chosen is the path of truth. Those who will follow us will be stronger, more powerful and more competent than us. We are working in the belief that they will be able to rectify our lapses and mistakes. You have shown to the nation—why only the nation, the whole humanity—the road to an ideal, you have not merely indicated the path, you have been to trying to guide people along that road. Thus your efforts were not limited to letters and literature, your *Sadhana* was not limited to worship of the Divine, you have striven to transform your inner ideal into external reality. We only wish to submit to you in all humility—that that ideal is also our life's ideal because it is our national ideal. Whether or not we are able to attain that ideal in our lifetime we have accepted it inside us, in our external existence and we are trying to follow that ideal and shall continue to do so in the future.

Those of us who are trying to work in a small way feel immensely gratified to have boundless affection, encouragement and inspiration from you. What is more, when we have had to face all kinds of hardship and danger, when we suffered the rigours of imprisonment, when we became frustrated and mentally weak, to recall the boundless affection and inspiration we received from

our countrymen, the great leaders of the country and the torch-bearers of freedom, we feel our lives are thrice blessed and that temporary dangers and difficulties do not matter at all.

We are apt to interpret sacrifice wrongly. It looks as if there is in it pain and suffering. In genuine sacrifice there is no pain. Man cannot sacrifice when he has the feeling of pain. The immense happiness in sacrifice has manifested in a big way in your life. Let that happiness inspire and encourage us is our earnest prayer. We seek blessings from you every moment of our lives. Because we know so long as we have your blessings we shall know that we are on the right path. We all feel that your blessings are the greatest asset in our journey.

From Rabindra Nath Tagore

Uttarayan

Mr Subhas Chandra Bose

Om

My dear Subhas,

Owing to reasons completely beyond control and increasing physical weakness I am compelled to postpone your reception meeting for the time being. You will hear a full report from Suren and Sudhakanta.

Please do not have even the slightest doubt in your mind that my respect and affection for you remains unsullied. I shall end here, 27/1/39

Yours

Rabindra Nath Tagore

* Translated from the original Bengali. Eds.

Deshnayak
Leader of the Nation
Rabindra Nath Tagore

Subhas Chandra,

As Bengal's poet I invite you to the honoured seat of the leader of the people. We have the sacred assurance of Gita that from time to time the Divine champion of the good arises to challenge the reign of the evil. When misfortune from all directions swarm to attack the living spirit of the nation, its anguished cry calls forth from its own being the liberator to its rescue . . .

Wearied by the concerted conspiracy of sinister forces, both of outside and within, we are increasingly losing the vital power to resist them and recover from their attack.

At such a juncture of nation-wide crisis, we require the service of a forceful personality, the non-chalant confidence of a natural-born leader, who can defy the adverse fate that threatens our progress.

Subhas Chandra, I have watched the dawn that witnessed the beginning of your political *Sadhana*. In that uncertain twilight there had been misgivings in my heart and I had hesitated to accept you for what you are now . . . Today you are revealed in the pure light of midday sun which does not admit of apprehensions. You have come to absorb varied experiences during these years. Today you bring your matured mind and irrepressible vitality to bear upon the work at hand. Your strength has sorely been taxed by imprisonment, banishment and disease, but rather than impairing, these have helped to broaden your sympathies—enlarging your vision so as to embrace the vast perspectives of history beyond any narrow limits of territory . . .

Bengali mind is nothing if not logical. It takes enormous pleasure in spinning out subtleties of argument for their own futile sake and proudly asserts the independence of its intellect by contradicting all schemes of enterprise from their inception. No practical proposal, no organisation, is safe from its destructive casuistry. But this is not the time for idly indulging in the sterile game of

polemics, splitting things to pieces: We need the creative inspiration that would rouse the nation into a unity of will. Let this united will of Bengal ask you to take your place as our guide and also seek to create you by the force of its claims. Through that creation will be revealed the spirit of the people in this individual personality of yours.

The vision of this will I did once realise during the Bengal partition movement. The sword that was raised to divide her living body into two parts was baffled by its resistance. On that day Bengal did not sit down vainly to argue like a wiseacre, weighing her pros and cons against the decree of mighty imperial power. She willed and the obstruction vanished.

In the following generation we have witnessed the manifestation of this will in the heart of the Bengali youth. They were born with the sacred flame that could light the torch of freedom; but they burnt themselves, they missed their path. Despite the fatal futility of the tragic mistake, they made it reveal the magnanimity of their martyrdom, the kind of which was rare in the other provinces of India. This fact will ever remain luminous in our history, that these young souls personated in their lives the irresistible will of their country and suffered.

The negative testimony of the weakness of our country must not be allowed to breed pessimism in our minds. Wherever the signs of her strength have ever made themselves evident we must know that there lies her truth. They are like living seeds that keep the promise of the future in their core. It should be your life's work to make fruitful in the soil of Bengal all nascent hopes that are waiting in obscurity. Your task will be to know and give recognition to those traits in Bengali character that have permanent worth—their fine sensibility, imagination and understanding, their receptivity—which will guide them into the constructive work of nation building.

The born leaders of men are never alone and they never belong to the fugitive moment. The eternal message of the sunrise of the future they carry in their own lives . . .

As I feel that you have come with an errand to usher in a new light of hope in your motherland, I ask you to take up the

task of the leader of Bengal and ask my countrymen to make it true . . .

Let nobody make such a grievous mistake as to think that, in a foolish pride of narrow provincialism, I desire to see Bengal as an entity separate from the rest of India, or dream of setting in my own province a rival throne to the one on which is seated a majestic figure representing a new age in the political history of the world . . .

Let it be your untiring mission to claim of your countrymen the resoluteness, the unyielding will to live and to conquer, strengthened by the inspiration of your own life. Let Bengal affirm in one united voice that her deliverer's seat is ready spread for you . . . May she offer you honour worthy of a leader by retaining her self-respect in trials as well as triumphs . . .

Long ago at a meeting, I addressed my message to the leader of Bengal who was yet to seek. After a lapse of many years, I am addressing at this meeting one who has come in to the full light of recognition . . . I may not join him in the fight that is to come. I can only bless him and take my leave knowing that he has made his country's burden of sorrow his own, that his final reward is fast coming as his country's freedom.

(This address was written by Rabindra Nath Tagore in January 1939 and was also printed. But for reasons still obscure it was not circulated and the reception Tagore had planned for Bose in Calcutta was postponed. After the end of World War II it was published in newspapers. Tagore died in 1941 and Bose never saw the address. At a reception to Bose at Santiniketan, Tagore made an extempore speech and Bose gave a reply which were reported in newspapers. The speeches have been published in this volume. Eds.)

From Rabindra Nath Tagore

Subhas Chandra Bose

Calcutta

My dear Subhas,

After coming to Calcutta a few days ago I have had the opportunity of assessing the mental attitude of my countrymen. The whole country is waiting for you—if you lose this favourable chance due to hesitation you will never get it back. You will be deprived of the strength that you may get from Bengal, on the other hand the other side will all the time try to sap your strength. Do not by any means commit this big mistake. I am saying not for your own sake but for the sake of the country. Please demand firmly of Mahatmaji to let you have his final answer at an early date. If he procrastinates then you may give up your post on that ground. Tell him that you will have to decide upon your future programme soon, therefore the matter brooks no delay. I hope your health is on the way to recovery. I am returning to Santiniketan today. I shall end here,

2/4/39

Yours

Rabindra Nath Tagore

Tagore gave the date of the letter as 2/4/39 by mistake instead of 3/4/39. Tagore's message of greetings to Bose on his resignation as Congress President has been printed on p. 109 of this volume. Eds.

* Translated from the original Bengali. Eds.

From Rabindra Nath Tagore*

Uttarayan
Santiniketan, Bengal

Om

My dear Subhas,

I am anxious to hear about your illness. Repeated assaults of disease on your health is a matter of concern for the country.

I think your concept of the planned Congress house is appropriate. The need of such a house is diverse and great. I earnestly hope that with the support of all the people its foundation will be laid in the right manner. We shall look forward to the vision of our good fortune and glory through the completion of this house. I shall end here. 27/5/39

Yours

Rabindra Nath Tagore

* Translated from the original Bengali. Eds.

Other Letters

To E. Woods

Artillery Mansions
Victoria Street
London, S.W. 1
Sunday
16.1.38

Dear Mrs Woods,

Many thanks for your letter and telegram received per Sj. Bajaj. I have been frightfully busy from morning till midnight since coming here—hence the delay in writing to you.

You will be glad to know that I had an interview with President De Valera last night. We had a long talk.

I shall be flying back home on the 19th inst. and reaching India in 4 days.

Today I am going to Cambridge and tomorrow to Oxford.

Warmest regards and many thanks for all the trouble you have taken.

Yours ever sincerely

Subhas C. Bose

To Mrs Vetter

Hotel Grande Bretagne
'Le Petit Palais', Athens
21.1.38, Night

My dear Mrs Vetter,

I am sorry that I could not write to you after I passed Munchen on my way to London and even more sorry that I could not visit Vienna—as I had wanted so much to do. England took all my time, till the last minute. The visit was, however, a great success from every point of view. They wanted me to give more time, but I could not—because on the other side, Mahatma Gandhi was wanting me to return as soon as possible. Because of this Vienna had to be dropped and I am so sorry. A very difficult time and hard work await me in India.

We had bad weather between Naples and here and arrived late. Tonight we are spending here (Athens)—tomorrow night at Basra (Iraq)—the next night at Jodhpur (India) and on the 24th noon I shall be at Calcutta.

Please remember me to all friends there are give them my greetings. How is your health? And how is Dr Vetter? Warmest regards to both of you,

Yours ever sincerely

Subhas C. Bose

From Rash Behari Bose*

25.1.38
Tokyo

My dear Subhas Babu,

I am glad to learn from a press despatch from India that you have

* This letter was intercepted by British Intelligence and did not reach Netaji. Ed.

been elected as the President of the next session of the Congress. I offer you my hearty congratulations. I am, as a Bengalee, proud of you. Bengalees were partly responsible for the British occupation of India, and it is, in my opinion, the primary duty of the Bengalees to make more sacrifices to recover the freedom of India. Bengalees by their sacrifices and sufferings are destined to lead India in the battle of freedom. This is my conviction, and hence I expect you to give a definite lead to the Congress for the attainment of our goal.

At present the Congress is passing through a crisis. It is now a constitutional organisation and cooperating with the Government. In a subject country no constitutional and legal organisation can ever secure freedom, because the constitution or law is framed by the rulers for their own benefit and interest. Only unconstitutional or illegal organisations from the British point of view can lead the country to independence. The Congress became an unconstitutional body at the time of the civil disobedience movement and hence it could do immense work. But at present it has reverted to its past position of a harmless body. There is practically speaking no difference between the Congress and other Moderate parties. I do not understand why Congressmen in the past criticised Sir Surendranath Banerji when he accepted office. Congressmen are at present doing exactly what Sir Surendranath and other Moderates did at the time of the last so-called Reforms. Rather, credit should be given to the Moderates of that time for their demand for a general amnesty to all political prisoners. Now only a limited number of political prisoners have been released, at that time all the political prisoners were immediately pardoned and released. What is now wanted for the Congress to lead the country correctly is to have a revolutionary mentality. It is now an evolutionary body. It must be made a pure revolutionary body. When the whole body is poisoned, applying medicine on certain parts will be of no use.

The fetish of non-violence should be discarded, and the creed should be changed. Let us attain our goal 'through all possible means': violence or non-violence. The non-violence atmosphere is simply making Indians womanly men. No nation in the present

world should think of non-violence, if it wants to exist as a self-respecting member of the world. Our difficulty had been the 'other worldliness' dinned into our ears for such a long period. The idea should be completely removed. Instead of 'other worldliness' we must have 'this worldliness' first as Swami Vivekananda preached. *Daridra Narayans* should be fed, clothed and sheltered first. Let them have the enjoyment of the world first. Then we can talk of heaven. The Muslims say: Pir, Amir e Fakir, so that one can defy the world. If you cannot be a Fakir, be an Amir, and enjoy life. If you cannot become an Amir, be a Pir. That means kill a Kafir, and your tomb or you in the other world will be worshipped by the people as a God. The Gita also says so. Let us sacrifice ourselves, so that the future generations may enjoy.

The Congress should devote attention to only one point, i.e. military preparedness. Might is still the right. This we must remember. It is no use deceiving ourselves by sanctimonious phrases. The Congress should agitate for control of the army first, all branches of the army. Education, sanitation, etc. can never make us free. Strength is the real need. You should concentrate your whole energy on this point. I think, Dr Moonje has done much more than the Congress by establishing his military school. Indians should first of all be the masters of the army. They must secure the right to bear arms.

Next important thing is the Hindu solidarity. The Muslims are Hindus too, when they are born in India and when their religious practices differ from those of the Muslims of Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, etc. Hinduism is catholic enough to give a place to Islam within the Hindu fold, as it has done in the past. All Indians are Hindus, though they may believe in different religions, as all Japanese are Japanese though they may be Buddhists, Christians, etc.

The Congress should support the Pan-Asia movement. It should not condemn Japan without understanding her motive in the Sino-Japanese conflict. Japan is a friend of India and other Asiatic countries. Her chief motive is to destroy British influence in Asia. She has begun with China.

The Congress ought to have a world outlook. International

situation should be studied and utilised for India's benefit and interests. We should make friends with Britain's enemies. This should be our foreign policy. Sentiments should find no place in actual politics. Interest is always the basis. Japan is at present the eye-sore of England, Russia and America for obvious reasons. They want to down Japan by hook or crook. (With) Japan's fall will vanish the hope of a regenerated and free Asia. The Congress had made a great mistake by carrying on anti-Japanese movements. We should remember that a time may come when England will shake hands with Japan, and control India pointing to Japan the anti-Japanese activities of the Indians in Japan's hour or trial. It is now the best policy for the Indians to support Japan and utilise this opportunity to increase their influence in world-politics and extract as much concessions from Britain now as possible.

For a subject country, dictatorship is absolutely necessary in a freedom movement. As in time of war, dictatorship is indispensable, at present in India's struggle for freedom dictatorship is equally indispensable. At the time of the civil disobedience movement dictatorship came into being to a certain extent, and hence the movement achieved so much success.

Democracy is all right in peace time, but if it is observed in war time, disaster is surely to overtake that country.

We know not how to enjoy life or how to sacrifice life. There is the difficulty. Let us in this respect follow the Japanese. They are now dying in thousands gladly for the sake of their country. This spirit we must know. We must know how to die and the problem of the freedom of India will be automatically solved.

I have faith in you. Go ahead irrespective of criticisms, obstacles and impediments. Lead the nation along the right path. And success will be yours and India's.

With blessings,

Yours affectionately

Rash Behari Bose

PS Your book is being translated into Japanese and published in a magazine serially. I again stress the point 'Let us have control over the army, navy and air-force and let British rule India in other Departments'.

To Basanti Devi

38–2 Elgin Road
Calcutta

Wardha
6/2/38

Revered Mother,

I am leaving for Calcutta today. I shall start from there on the 11th and reach Haripura on the 13th instant.

Will you not come to Haripura? If you do I shall be very happy. You may easily guess the reason. The man at whose feet I learnt politics is not with us today. How happy he would be if he was with us. I need not write more—you will understand. Please reply to this letter early (in case you are not in Calcutta) because I shall start on the 11th.

Please accept my respectful pranams,

Yours sincerely

Subhas

PS Please do not forget—*'Atmabat Manyate Jagat'* (Translation —Man sees the world in his own image).

To H.V. Kamath

Telephone Park 679

38–2, Elgin Road
Calcutta

Dear Mr Kamath,

I was happy to receive your letter. I would have telephoned to you conveying my congratulations—but I was not sure that you had actually left the service. I shall wait till you are a free man.

I shall look forward eagerly to meeting you when you are out of the service. I do not know where I shall be at this time. I may be touring. But the above address will find me. I am writing this in the train on my way to Haripura.

I shall welcome you into the Congress *with all my heart.* Meanwhile I shall only tell you this that I feel that what will be a loss for the service will be a gain for the country.

Yours in the service of the motherland

Sd/- Subhas C. Bose

Nagpur Mail
12.2.38

From Will Richter

4th March, 1938

Sreejut Subhas Chandra Bose, Esq.,
1 Woodburn Park
Elgin Road P.O.
Calcutta

Dear Mr Bose,

My other letter deals with the intended cooperation in Indian

Insurance. I should like, however, to write you on some more points.

First of all, let me say, although a little late, that my wife and I felt very satisfied indeed about our trip to Badgastein and about the days spent in your good company and in that of your friends. May we thank you once more for your kindnesses and hope that we have not disturbed too much your cure and your work.

Unfortunately, our Continental papers contain very little about Indian politics and particularly about the Haripura meeting.

You mentioned that you would like to read some book on Insurance. Usually they are confined to a particular branch of Insurance and I could not find one which combines the various branches. I therefore send to you herewith a list of the Insurance Books published by Pitmans from which you could perhaps make a choice.

Birla's Company which I had in mind is the Ruby in which another Italian Insurance Company, the Assicurazioni Generali, are said to be interested.

We talked about Continental Banking. I have discussed this with friends who advise me that one of the two leading Swiss Banks would probably suit the purpose, the Schweizerische Kreditanstalt or the Schweizerische Bankverein, both in Zurich. As I happen to know one of the General Managers of the former and my group is also in business relations with both, I could approach them on your behalf if you should want me to.

Anyhow, after having reported on our conversations at my Head-Quarters, I like to add that all of us shall do our best to help you wherever possible and we hope that we shall be able to submit a scheme which will suit your requirements as well as our own.

Meanwhile, I have been in Zurich, Vienna and Berlin. Unfortunately, my wife got a very bad cold here after New Year and is still not quite rid of her fever. This is why even after our return to Vienna she could not yet get into touch with Miss Fulop-Miller and Miss Schenkl and I believe that she has only now sent some

snaps to your nephew. After my next return to Vienna I shall send them also to you as promised.

With my very best regards and wishes,

Yours sincerely

Will Richter

Encl.

To Mrs Dharmavir

38/2 Elgin Road
Calcutta
22.3.38

My dear Didi,

I am very sorry that I have not been able to write to you for a long time, but I believe I am now an object of pity—the way I have to rush through my days and my nights. I am writing this in great haste—nevertheless I hope I shall be able to express my thoughts clearly and fully.

Yesterday, Sita asked me to lunch. There I met Dr Santosh Sen. I had met Dr Sen for the first time in Vienna and I saw much of him there. I came to form a very good opinion of him—both as a man and as a doctor. To that opinion I still adhere. Now, to make a long story short—Sita and Santosh want to get married. They have known each other for a long time and their intimacy has deepened gradually—with the result that they feel that they should be bound in wedlock. For Sita's judgement and character I have great respect. I wrote to you once before about that. Their decision is the result of mature deliberation and I think that it is a wise one. From what I know of both, I feel sure that they will be happy in marriage. I shall feel personally glad—as a well-wisher of both—if you and Doctor approve of the above proposal and give them your blessings.

My letter is rather abrupt and short—but this is only because I have to snatch a few minutes between two appointments. What I am writing is the result of serious consideration on my part. As a matter of fact, when I first saw Sita's photo on Santosh's table in Vienna—I anticipated something of this sort and I always regarded such a proposal as a wise one and a desirable one.

How is your health now? Hope Doctor and Leila are doing well. I am fairly well though overworked.

Yours affly

Subhas

To Sita Dharmavir

38/2 Elgin Road
Calcutta
22.3.38

My dear Sita,

Your letter is O.K. My letter goes herewith. Please revise it and if you approve, post it along with yours.

I am sorry I had no time to write a lengthy letter but I hope this will do. They say 'brevity is the soul of wit'.

I shall be anxious for a reply. Please let me know when you hear.

With love,

Yours affly

Subhas

To Mrs Naomi Vetter

Office-Bearers for 1938
President:
SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE
Treasurer:
JAMNALAL BAJAJ
General Secretary
J.B. KRIPALANI

Telephone: 341
Telegrams: 'CONGRESS'
Ref. Allahabad

All India Congress Committee
Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad

Camp

38/2 Elgin Road
Calcutta
26.3.38

My dear Mrs Vetter,

I am sorry I have not written to you for an age.

A friend of mine Mr M. Ghosh is going on a tour to Europe with his wife. He intends visiting Vienna and seeing something of its life. Mr Ghosh is a grandson of one of the founders of the Indian National Congress, Mr Manmohan Ghosh. I shall be grateful if you could show Mr & Mrs Ghosh round. If Mr Faltis is now in Vienna, kindly introduce them to him—since Mr Ghosh is interested in making business contacts also. I wonder how Vienna is at present. The papers here are full of Austrian news and pictures of Vienna as well. Hope you are all quite well. With warmest regards to Dr Vetter and your good self.

Yours ever sincerely

Subhas C. Bose

Mrs N.C. Vetter

To Mrs Naomi Vetter

Office-Bearers for 1938
President:
SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE
Treasurer:
JAMNALAL BAJAJ
General Secretary
J.B. KRIPALANI

Telephone: 341
Telegrams: 'CONGRESS'
Ref.

All India Congress Committee
Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad

38/2 Elgin Road
(or 1 Woodburn Park)
9.4.38

My dear Mrs Vetter,

I have great pleasure in introducing to you my friend, Mr P.B. Seal, who is visiting Vienna on his way to London. I am asking him to call on Dr Vetter and your good self and convey my warmest compliments. Perhaps you could kindly show him one or two places in Vienna during his short visit.

I am very sorry I have not been able to write to you for a long time—but that does not mean that I have forgotten you.

With warmest regards,

Yours ever sincerely

Subhas C. Bose

I am sorry I could not stay on in Vienna. I hope to come again and see you.

P.B. Seal
Hotel Martinez
Cannes

To Santosh Sen

Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department
20 May 1938

Telegram

Bombay 20 21 Santosh Sen,
Forty-eight Hanuman Road New Delhi

= A WARMEST FELICITATIONS OCCASION MARRIAGE BUT VERY SORRY CANNOT ATTEND IN PERSON LETTER FOLLOWS =

SUBHASBOSE

To Sita Dharmavir

Parnakuti
Yeravda Hill
Poona, 21.5.38

My dear Sita,

I am awfully sorry that I shall not be able to come to Lahore on the occasion of your marriage. I sent you a telegram from Bombay to that effect. I shall return to Bombay on the 23rd or 24th. I hope you will realise my predicament and not feel disappointed. My thoughts will be with you on that day. I hope and pray that God may shower his choicest blessings on both of you and grant you a long and happy life in the service of the motherland.

Please show this letter to Santosh. I am writing to Delhi, but I may miss him there.

I have sent you a small present and shall be happy if you accept it.

With love,

Yours affly

Subhas

To Atul Chandra Kumar

38/2 Elgin Road
Calcutta
3.6.38

Dear Atul Babu,

I have not been to Malda for many years. When I tried to come last time official impediments came in the way. I have therefore accepted your initiative with great pleasure—but for various reasons I cannot come on the 11th or 12th. If dates are fixed according to my convenience I shall be very happy to visit Malda. Please fix the dates after consultation with me in this regard later.

Please convey my affectionate greetings to all fellow workers of Malda District.

Yours sincerely

Subhas Chandra Bose

Srijut Atul Chandra Kumar
M.L.A.

To Sita Dharmavir

23.6.38
(on my way to Wardha)

My dear Sita,

I am sorry I have not yet replied to your letter of the 23rd May from Lahore. Perhaps you are now in Delhi. I need hardly say that it was a great disappointment to me not to be able to come to Lahore. I hope to meet you some time in Delhi.

I am enclosing herewith a few lines for Santosh.

I met several people in Calcutta who know Santosh and are

related to him. Some of them had been present at the time of your marriage.

Hope you are O.K. and are getting on well in every way. Please write to me from time to time.

Love.

Yours affly

Subhas

PS I am keeping well.

From B.C. Roy

36, Wellington Street
Calcutta
The 18th July, 1938.

My dear Subhas,

Your letter of the 8th of May written from the train while travelling from Bombay. You wrote to me that you are going to send me a nomination as soon as a vacancy arises in the Corporation. Maulana Azad must have told you that Dr K.S. Roy has sent me his letter of resignation. Please send me your nomination, so that I can place the same as well as the letter of resignation of Dr K.S. Roy before the Corporation and the Congress Municipal Association. In this connection I would like to make one point clear. I do not propose to go before the Corporation or the Congress Municipal Association except with a letter of nomination from you. If you have any difficulty in nominating me kindly let me know and I shall return the letter of resignation of Dr K.S. Roy to him which he left with me.

A reply by return of post will be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

B.C. Roy

To Biswanath Das

Office-Bearers for 1938
President:
SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE
Treasurer:
JAMNALAL BAJAJ
General Secretary
J.B. KRIPALANI

President's Calcutta Address:
38–2 Elgin Road, Calcutta
Telephone: Park 59
Telegram: 'SUVASBOS'

All India Congress Committee
Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad
Telephone: 341 Telegram: 'CONGRESS'

15th August, 1938

My dear Biswanath Babu,

I am sending herewith a copy of a book by Rezaul Karim. In view of the communal situation in the country a book of this sort may be very helpful. I know the author very well. He is a thorough nationalist and I believe that his book if popularised among the public will help to counteract communalism. I should be very glad if you could possibly make use of this book in your province. This would incidentally help the author and encourage him in his work.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

Subhas C. Bose

The Hon'ble Sj. Biswanath Das
Premier of Orissa

From Aparna Devi

2 Beltala Road
23.8.38

Subhas Babu,

I am sending a copy of Kirtan Padabali (translation—collection of Kirtan lyrics) compiled by us.

I hope you are keeping well.

Yours

Aparnadi

To B.C. Roy

2nd Sept. 1938

My dear Dr Roy,

I am sending herewith a copy of a statement which I intend issuing to the press. I hope I have stated the facts correctly. If you think otherwise, will you kindly let me know?

Yours

Subhas C. Bose

I find from my conversation with several friends that there is some misunderstanding about the manner in which the vacancy caused by the resignation of Sj. Prabhudayal Himatsingka from the Bengal Legislative Assembly was recently filled up. There is an impression that Dr B.C. Roy could have been nominated for that seat. The facts are as follows:—When I was still in internment

and Dr B.C. Roy was in charge of the Assembly election, a settlement was arrived at between the two candidates for the Burrabazar seat, Sj. Prabhudayal Himatsingka and Sj. Iswardas Jalan. According to this arrangement Sj. Prabhudayal Babu was to continue as a member for a year or two. Thereafter he would resign and Sj. Iswardas Jalan would be nominated in his place. Dr B.C. Roy knew of this settlement. A few months ago when Prabhudayal Babu was thinking of resigning Sj. Jalan approached Dr B.C. Roy and asked him if he approved of Sj. Jalan's candidature. Dr Roy asked Sj. Jalan to approach Sj. Sarat Chandra Bose, leader of the Congress Assembly Party, as he was not in a position to help Sj. Jalan. Prabhudayal Babu resigned his seat and in a public statement said that he resigned in favour of Sj. Jalan. When the matter came up before the Executive Council of the B.P.C.C. the Council appointed a sub-committee consisting of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and myself to nominate a suitable candidate. I was then laid up with influenza. When the news got abroad that there was a possibility of Sj. Jalan's case being overlooked, there was excitement in certain circles in Burrabazar. Some deputations from Burrabazar approached Maulana and after discussing the situation with them he telephoned to me to say that after considering all the circumstances, he felt that the claims of Sj. Jalan should not be passed over. I agreed with this opinion and thereupon Sj. Jalan was nominated as the Congress candidate. In this connection I may state that I told Dr Roy long ago that he should come into the Assembly or to the Corporation. In accordance with this statement, I requested Dr K.S. Roy, former Alderman of the Calcutta Corporation to resign his seat and in the vacancy created by his voluntary resignation we were able to bring Dr Roy into the Corporation. If Dr Roy desires at any time to come into the Assembly and if we can get some member to vacate a seat for him it will be possible to get him elected; but in the circumstances referred to above it was not possible to get Dr Roy elected in the Assembly from the Burrabazar Constituency.

To Amita Purkayastha (Guha)

On the way to Wardha
3.9.38

Dear Sister,

I duly received your two letters but did not reply to them. The fault is mine. Please forgive me. There is delay in my replying to letters owing to pressure of work—but I feel happy to receive them. Now I am on my way to Wardha—there is thus some respite on the train. I shall return to Calcutta on the 6th, the next day I shall again be on the way—to Madras.

I was particularly happy to receive your letter. You wish to do some work and have asked me how and in which field you may serve the country. How many women workers raise such questions? There is great dearth of women workers in our country. That need you will be able to fill to a certain extent—about this there is no doubt. Most workers work for some time, then they take leave and go on to other jobs. This applies more to women workers. Owing to social or family reasons women workers cannot go on working for a long time. Besides, there are personal reasons also. Lack of interest and enthusiasm—marriage and household duties —these factors are also there.

I should first like to say, please accept service as a mission. Please resolve in your mind that you will accept service to the country to be the principal aim of your life. Can you do it? I do not see any reason why you cannot.

Then the question of work. You have asked what work should you do. You have answered the question yourself. You have to do Congress work. Certainly and by all means! Because without recovering our country's independence no great work—no big work will be possible. To achieve independence is not merely man's job. It is also woman's job. One half of society are women, therefore 'If India's women do not wake up India will not wake up' (translation). Only women workers can awaken the women in society. Therefore you must enter the field. Obstacles and

* Translated from the original Bengali.

difficulties must not deter you. Obstacles will be there in all fields of activity. If such obstacles deter us man can never achieve anything great. How many among women receive higher education or can afford it? Will you not work for your country even after receiving higher education? In that case on whom shall we depend?

You have formed a 'Women's Welfare Society'—that is very good. Please try to educate uneducated women. Side by side please give them vocational training so that poor women may earn a little. Then go from house to house and enlist women as members of the Congress. Then give physical training to younger women. They have to learn lathi and dagger play etc. Abduction and torture of women by miscreants take place in this country as in no other country in this world. So long the woman was weak—now we must make her strong. This is also your work. We must make women strong and brave. Only then will they give birth to heroes.

I have written a lot. Let me stop now. Please write to me from time to time, I shall be happy to hear from you. I may not be able to write regularly. You will please excuse that lapse. May God bless you.

Yours sincerely

Subhas Chandra Bose

From B.C. Roy

36, Wellington Street
Calcutta
The 10th September, 1938

My dear Subhas,

I am returning the draft that you have sent to me with certain corrections. The corrections are the following:

I. It is not a fact that I approved of the settlement between Iswardas Jalan and Prabhudayal. They made the arrangement and informed me of it.

II. Jalan did not ask me whether the settlement between him and Prabhudayal still held good. What he asked me was whether I approved of his candidature and my reply was that he should approach Sj. Sarat Chandra Bose, the leader of the Congress Assembly Party.

III. It is not a correct position to state that you had told me that you would have no objection if I desired to go to the Assembly or to the Corporation. That is not the position. So far as I am concerned, the position was that if you desired me to go to either of the places I would be glad to serve the interests of the Congress.

There are certain statements made in this note of yours about which I have no personal knowledge; for example, 'There was excitement in certain circles in Burrabazar', 'Some deputation from Burrabazar approached Maulana' and so on. I have only corrected the portion about which I have personal knowledge and which I thought was not correct report.

Yours sincerely

B.C. Roy

To Sita Sen

C/o N.D. Parikh
26 Marine Drive
Fort, Bombay
10.10.38
(Telegram: Care PENDANT Bombay)

My dear Sita,

I am sorry I could not manage to see you all before leaving Delhi—much as I wanted to do. On the last day I was feeling rather out of sorts and had a heavy programme to go through. The morning I left, I wanted to call, but there was no time. On

the whole I was disappointed that I could not see as much of you all as I wanted to. But for that, I and my programme were responsible. However, better luck next time.

This time it is definitely malaria. Perhaps it was also malaria at Cawnpore—who knows? However we have now collared the m.p.

I shall be leaving for Calcutta about the 15th or 16th inst.

I hope Delhi has cooled down by now. It was so hot when I was there. And I positively do not like heat.

Bijoya love and greetings to all of you.

Yours affly

Subhas C. Bose

To (unclear) in Jamnalal Bajaj papers

38/2 Elgin Road,
Calcutta
21st Oct. 1938

I had long talks with Jamnalalji at Bombay and again at Wardha over his resignation. I told him over and over again that I could not reconcile myself to his resignation for various reasons. Moreover, the members of the Working Committee, as far as I could judge, were of the same view as myself. My reasons were as follows:

(1) While I agreed that Jamnalalji should have complete rest for some time, it was not necessary for him to resign, in order to obtain that rest. When members fell ill, they took the necessary rest, but they did not resign.

(2) It would be extremely difficult to find a substitute for him.

(3) Eight months had already elapsed and only four months remained. Why then resign at this stage?

(4) Resignation at this stage would give rise to all kinds of rumours and stories, some of which may be embarrassing to the Working Committee.

At Wardha, Jamnalalji told me that a Nagpur Journal had already written that he was going to resign from the Working Committee because the C.P. Ministry was not working satisfactorily and it was necessary to have Jamnalal as Premier.

This report only confirmed my previous apprehensions. I also pointed out to Jamnalalji that in view of such rumours and gossip, the Working Committee would be forced to make a statement as to why he was resigning. What would we say in the course of such a statement? It would not be the whole truth to say that he was resigning because he was physically and mentally tired and needed prolonged rest. The inquisitive public would say at once that Pandit Jawaharlal was away for 5 months but did not resign.

At the end of our talk at Wardha, Jamnalalji came to appreciate the force of my arguments. I told him that we would do our best to give him complete rest for as long a period as was necessary—but that he should not embarrass us by insisting on resigning. He felt that before he could give me a final reply, he should have a talk with you. Therefore, I told him that I would request him to continue in office till your return to Wardha.

I shall be happy if you could suggest to him that in the circumstances, it is not necessary for him to insist on resigning.

Pranams.

Yours affly

Subhas C. Bose

From M.N. Roy

October 22, 1938

My dear friend,

While at Lucknow last week, I was told that Lala Shankar Lal was there in connection with some business, and wished to see me under your instruction. Unfortunately, I was very busy with the PCC meeting, and he was there on a short visit. So we could not meet. On arriving here, I received a circular letter from him to-day requesting me to sign a draft document attached to the letter, which is to be 'circulated to all the members of the AICC and PCC with the object of forming a left group inside the Indian National congress'. He adds that my name 'has been included in the list on the suggestion of Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose'. The list of those who are expected to sign the document is also attached.

It is needless to say that I wholeheartedly welcome the move and offer you my fullest co-operation as I have done repeatedly in the past. But it is a serious venture, the success of which depends very largely on the initial steps. Therefore, I venture to make one or two suggestions, trusting that they will receive your careful consideration. The document is a draft; therefore, those expected to sign it may recommend amendments or alterations.

On the whole, I agree with everything said in the document. Yet, in my opinion, one or two changes would greatly improve it. Therefore, I am taking the liberty of suggesting them.

1. The expression 'and communal' occurring in paragraph 5 should be deleted. Unconditional acceptance of the principle of constitutional protection for minorities does not mean encouragement of communalism; it is not antagonistic to national unity nor does it contradict democracy.
2. The opening sentence of the next paragraph should be deleted. That statement is like putting the cart before the horse. It implies that we can have civil liberties while India still remains under Imperialism. The establishment of civil liberties is conditional on the success of our movement.

3. I cannot agree with the characterisation of the Congress given in paragraph 9. In my opinion, the task of the left wing is to transform the Congress into a revolutionary democratic party of the Indian people. Only by doing that, we shall frustrate the efforts of the present leadership to reduce the Congress to a 'narrow political party representing the sectional interest of a minority'. For realising the Congress programme of complete independence, for capturing political power, the oppressed and exploited masses of India must have a political party. The Congress, under a democratic revolutionary leadership and with a progressive social ideology, can serve that purpose. This perspective is implied in the document as a whole. Therefore, the paragraph in question does not fit into it.

4. I recommend the deletion of the passage—'in place of negotiations with communal organisations and leaders',—occurring in item 4 of 'the needs of the hour'. We cannot ignore the fact that communal organisations and leaders have influence. In order to free the masses from that influence, we shall have to undermine the position of the communal organisations and leaders. That purpose will be served by exposing them through negotiations on the basis of their own professions and demands.

5. The 'building of a strong volunteer force', mentioned as one of the 'needs of the hour' will mean duplication of efforts. If the purpose is to create an organisation of the fighters for freedom, that will be served by activising the Congress membership. The idea of a volunteer force implies that the ordinary membership of the Congress cannot be relied upon for any effective fighting.

6. I must confess that I cannot help having misgivings about some of the names on the list of prospective signatories of the document. There is no use of forming a left group with people wedded (to) the Gandhist ideology. In addition, I am compelled to draw your attention to the attitude that the CSP under the leadership of Com. Masani, has taken up towards the communists. It is injurious to the formation of a really revolutionary left group inside the Congress. Com. Masani's attitude towards the Bombay Industrial Disputes Bill and towards the projected general strike to protest against it, cannot be very well fitted into the scheme of left wing action. If I were not prepared to go a very long way to promote the formation of a left wing group, I should find it very difficult to associate with people taking up such an attitude as only serves the purpose of the Fascist right wing. I hope that you will exert your influence for checking the anti-communist and opportunist policy of the CSP, so as to guarantee the success of the venture undertaken with your inspiration, if not under actual leadership.

With these remarks, I here by declare my solidarity with the proposed left wing group, and agree to sign the manifesto even if my recommendations are not accepted, although I hope that they will find favour with you and the manifesto will be amended accordingly on your advice.

Yours sincerely

M.N. Roy

A copy of the letter is forwarded to Lala Shankar Lal for information.

Note below for insert after 'Gandhist ideology' section 6 above.

In any case, I would suggest enlisting the support of others would be more reliable assets for the venture. On hearing from you, I may suggest some names.

To
Subhas Chandra Bose
38/2 Elgin Road
Calcutta

To 'Daily Doorbin'

Office-Bearers for 1938
President:
SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE
Treasurer:
JAMNALAL BAJAJ
General Secretary
J.B. KRIPALANI

President's Calcutta Address:
38–2 Elgin Road, Calcutta
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All India Congress Committee
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Telephone: 341 Telegram: 'CONGRESS'

Message

There is great need of a nationalist Muslim daily newspaper in Bengal and Assam. A message of freedom has to be spread among the common people of Bengal and particularly the Muslim public. If the nature of freedom, the means to attain freedom, what economic benefits the common people may derive from independence—all these are propagated the Muslim public of Bengal will inevitably be drawn to the independence movement. They will then realise that as the Congress is the only national organisation, therefore if freedom is to be attained there is no alternative other than to join the Congress.

For Muslim Bengal the nationalist daily 'Doorbin' is being published under the editorship of Moulvi Rezaul Karim. I wish this paper well and continued progress with all my heart.

Subhas Chandra Bose

23.10.38

To Amala Nundy (Shankar)

Office-Bearers for 1938
President:
SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE
Treasurer:
JAMNALAL BAJAJ
General Secretary
J.B. KRIPALANI

President's Calcutta Address:
38–2 Elgin Road, Calcutta
Telephone: Park 59
Telegram: 'SUVASBOS'

All India Congress Committee
Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad
Telephone: 341 Telegram: 'CONGRESS'

11/11/38

Dear Amala,

Your book 'Sat Sagarer Pare' has given me a new kind of pleasure. What esteem respectable people of Europe have for Indian ideals has found expression in many places in your book. I pray that you may become one among those who will in the future bring glory
ndian culture and *Sadhana.*
Please accept my sincerest good wishes.
Wishing you all the best as always I am,

Yours sincerely

Subhas Chandra Bose

dear
ss Amala Nundy
lcutta

ranslated from the original Bengali.

From M.N. Roy

13 Mohini Road
Dehradun
February 1, 1939

My dear friend,

It was not necessary for me to wire my congratulations. We are concerned with more serious things than such formalities. Not knowing whether any advice or suggestion from me would be welcome, I did not presume to express my opinion either publicly or personally to yourself by correspondence. But after your wise pronouncement from Malda, I consider it to be my public duty to write these lines.

In my opinion, Gandhiji's statement does not leave you any alternative. I do not know what impression that statement has made on you. I look upon it as a declaration of war which may be waged in true Gandhian fashion, namely, non-cooperation which, under the given relation of forces inside the Congress, can only be wilful sabotage for discrediting yourself and your supporters. The clear implication of Gandhiji's statement is that, at the head of the Congress, there is no room for you and those who opposed your election; one must go. The logical conclusion of that unreasonableness is that you must sacrifice yourself on the altar of unity of the Congress, under Gandhian leadership. I am decidedly of the opinion that such a sacrifice would be too high a price to pay for a kind of unity which could only do incalculable harm to the Congress. It is altogether wrong to think that the continuation of the reformist Gandhist leadership is the condition, or even a condition, for the unity of the Congress. As a matter of fact, strengthening and development of unity of a revolutionary mass organisation require the elimination, from time to time, of elements who wish to impose their will upon the will of the entire organisation. The election has already proved that the majority of the Congress has lost its confidence in the old leaders. It is your responsibility to make the logical inference from the verdict of the

majority, and act with courage and resolution which are expected from the chosen leader of a great organisation.

As regards what you should do, I have little more to add to the suggestion I made after your election last year. This year, there is absolutely no reason for you not to assert yourself. I have been surprised by statements made by some of your leftist supporters who seem to think that you must go a long way to secure the co-operation of the old leaders who have forfeited the confidence of the majority. The significance of the result of this year's presidential election has been correctly and clearly characterised by Gandhiji himself; *he has been defeated.* There can be little doubt regarding what is to be done in the given situation. The Congress must be given a new leadership, entirely free from the principles and pre-occupations of Gandhism which until now determined Congress politics. Gandhist principles cannot be reconciled with honest anti-imperialist politics. The perspective of the left wing should not be confused by any illusion on this score.

There is no room for the dread of a split. On the other hand, no use ignoring the horizontal line of differentiation. A small group of leaders, having a blind following throughout the organisation, has been trying to take the Congress away from the only road to its goal. When, with the expressed support of the majority, a new leadership takes up the task of bringing the Congress back to the right road, it is for the older leaders to decide whether they want to remain loyal to the Congress, or leave it for the sake of personal vanity. Concretely, you can well afford to retain some of the older leaders still in the Supreme Executive of the Congress to give them the opportunity of serving it even after it has outgrown their domination. But it will be suicidal if any consideration is permitted to interfere with your selecting an Executive according to the verdict of the majority expressed in the presidential election. What is of still more importance, is that the new leadership of the Congress should have the courage and conviction of acting independently even of the wishes of Gandhiji, when these run counter to the objective revolutionary urge of the movement.

Having regard for the fact that the defeated right wing will

have no scruple(s) in utilising the great resources at its command for sabotaging the activities of a younger left-leadership, with the purpose of discrediting it, the latter should apply itself rather to the task of entrenching itself organisationally, than to any spectacular political demonstration. It is too premature to celebrate a leftist victory. Constitutionalism, unfortunately, is not confined to a small circle of top leaders; since the acceptance of ministries, it has penetrated down to the rank and file of the organisation. Many of those apparently siding with the left, are corrupted with reformist preoccupations. As a rule, District Congress Committees throughout the country are still under the control of such elements, and this control is to-day retained by virtue of the advantage gained from the petty offices in local self-governing bodies. The immediate task of the new left leadership will be to purify the lower organisations of those undesirable elements. In other words, it is a problem of organisation that has to be solved in the first place.

This being the case, the composition of the Secretariat of the A.I.C.C. becomes of supreme importance. The responsibility of building up the organisation from the bottom upwards, must be shouldered by the A.I.C.C. Secretariat. Only such a centralised direction and control will put an end to the factional disputes and rival groups which are ruining the Congress as an organisation. The post of the Organising Secretary of the A.I.C.C. should be entrusted to an experienced man.

While suggesting bold and decisive steps, I do not in the least minimise the difficulties that are still to be faced and overcome. I anticipate the new A.I.C.C. to be decidedly inclined towards the Right. It will obstruct the forward policy that a Working Committee composed of a majority of your supporters will be expected to pursue. You may have to repeat the experience of Deshbandhu, and must prepare for the emergency. With the object of going around this difficulty, you could not follow the present practice of superseding the A.I.C.C. But there is a democratic method of overcoming the difficulties created by an A.I.C.C. which does not represent the majority of the membership. (I mean its mood.) The way is to call a Special Session which is sure to endorse the forward

policy advocated by you as against any Rightist A.I.C.C. A decisive majority in the Special Session, which may have to be called eventually, will be secured by the left-wingers applying themselves primarily to the task of capturing District Congress Committees by virtue of activising the lower committees and raising the political level of the primary membership.

Finally, the policy you wish the Congress to pursue should be completely formulated in resolutions to be submitted for the discussion of and the endorsement by the Congress Session. That will give you the opportunity of exposing the old leaders in their true colours. The resolutions shall have to be submitted to the Working Committee which, in its present composition, is not likely to endorse them if they embody the forward spirit represented by you and expressed in the presidential election. In that case, you shall have to submit your resolutions directly before the Congress, and the old leaders will be compelled to oppose a forward policy openly. Thus, the real issues will be cleared, and the controversy will be raised on a high political level. That alone will contribute immensely to the development of the movement.

Needless to say that I am always at your disposal and you can count on my co-operation whenever required. No more can be said in correspondence and many of the suggestions may require further discussion in detail, which can take place only personally. I expect to be in Calcutta by the middle of the month, when we shall have the opportunity of discussing matters personally and I shall expect to know how you wish me to help you.

With best wishes and heartiest greetings,

Yours sincerely

M.N. Roy

To Mustapha El Nahas Pasha

D.L.T.

Mustapha El Nahas Pasha
Heliopolis
Cairo
(Egypt)

= ON BEHALF OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS I CORDIALLY INVITE YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES TO ATTEND OUR ANNUAL SESSION CONGRESS AT TRIPURI ON MARCH TENTH AND SUBSEQUENT DAYS STOP AS LEADER OF EGYPTIAN PEOPLE YOUR VISIT WILL SERVE TO STRENGTHEN SOLIDARITY BETWEEN OUR TWO NATIONS AND WILL ALSO BE AN INSPIRATION TO OUR COUNTRYMEN STOP INDIA WILL GIVE YOU WARMEST WELCOME =

SUBHASBOSE

PRESIDENT

Subhas C. Bose
38/2 Elgin Road,
Calcutta
7th February, 1939

To Acting General Secretary AICC

Office-Bearers for 1938
President:
SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE
Treasurer:
JAMNALAL BAJAJ
General Secretary
J.B. KRIPALANI

President's Calcutta Address:
38–2 Elgin Road, Calcutta
Telephone: Park 59
Telegram: 'SUVASBOS'

All India Congress Committee
Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad
Telephone: 341 Telegram: 'CONGRESS'

28th Feb. 1939

To
The Ag. General Secretary,
A.I.C.C.
Allahabad

Dear friend,

You are aware that the Egyptian Delegation is attending the Tripuri Congress. After the Congress is over we shall have to arrange for a ten days' tour for them. Please send a circular to the important Provincial Congress Committees enquiring if they would like to invite the Delegation to their respective provinces and if they could meet their expenses within the jurisdiction of their provinces. You will have to ask them to provide for their maximum comfort. There will be time only to visit such important places as Lahore, Delhi, Lucknow, Agra, Allahabad, Benares, Patna, Calcutta, Madras, Nagpur etc. We shall have to omit out of the way places. They will be spending in all about a fortnight in India, and out of these days, 3 or 4 days will be spent at Tripuri. The P.C.C.s concerned may reply to you at Tripuri. I have already

asked the Reception Committee to arrange for their accommodation at Tripuri.

Yours sincerely

Subhas C. Bose

From M.N. Roy

3B Store Road
Ballygunge
Calcutta
March 5, 1939

To
Subhas Chandra Bose
President, All-India National Congress
Tripuri

Dear friend,

I returned from my tour with a bad attack of influenza. And learnt to our great distress, that you were also ill. Therefore, it was not possible for us to meet again and discuss outstanding matters. I presume the Conference to meet at Tripuri on the 6th will agree upon resolutions to be submitted to the Congress from the side of your supporters. Being still bedridden, I cannot reach Tripuri before the 6th. Therefore, I have sent to Com. Jaiprakash Narayan drafts of the resolutions which, in my opinion should be sponsored by those who shall have to shoulder the responsibility of guiding the Congress in the future. Copies of those drafts are attached herewith. I can assure a sufficiently large number of votes (of delegates) for these resolutions. If other left groups will give their support, a majority may be almost certain.

I shall reach Tripuri on the 7th by the Bombay Mail.

Hoping that your health will not be greatly impaired by the strain.

Yours sincerely

M.N. Roy

To Jacob Gunanidhi Biswas

Office-Bearers for 1938
President:
SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE
Treasurer:
JAMNALAL BAJAJ
General Secretary
J.B. KRIPALANI

President's Calcutta Address:
38–2 Elgin Road, Calcutta
Telephone: Park 59
Telegram: 'SUVASBOS'

All India Congress Committee
Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad

Jealgora P.O.
Dist. Manbhum
Bihar
14.4.39

My dear Mr Biswas,

Ever since I saw in the papers the list of new nominated Councillors, I have been thinking of writing to you. They have in a way victimised you for acting truthfully and in a straightforward manner when you were a Councillor. Knowing something of your character, I am sure you will not be sorry for being excluded this time.

I have been connected with the Corporation since 1924. You know that I am not in the habit of flattering or humouring anybody. I can say without any exaggeration that this is the first time in all my experience when a nominated Christian Councillor has performed his municipal duties in a truly Christian manner. I value greatly our acquaintance and I earnestly hope that it will ripen into deep and lasting friendship.

I look forward to meeting you when I am back. I have every hope that in future we shall cooperate and collaborate in other spheres of activity.

I am progressing steadily towards recovery.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

Subhas Chandra Bose

To Amiya Nath Bose

Jamadoba
17.4.39

My dear Ami,

It is just 2 months since I took to bed. It is the worst attack I have had for a long time. I had broncho-pneumonia with some complications (liver and intestinal infection). This illness coincided with a period of political crisis causing mental anxiety. I had no rest, physical or mental—and had to work in bed, even with high fever. At times it looked as if I would never get well. But the worst is over and I am on the road to recovery. I am going down to Calcutta on the 21st inst. for the annual meeting of the B.P.C.C., A.I.C.C. meeting etc. Though temperature is nearing normal now, weakness will persist for a long time. I should go in for a change in summer, if I could afford it. Let us see.

You get the papers—so you must have seen the statements and counter-statements before the Presidential election and after.

You must have also seen the accounts of the Tripuri Congress. The Old Guard had estimated that I would get 25 or 30 per cent votes at the contest—consequently the result came like a bolt from the blue. There was consternation in their ranks. They thought that (not) only was power (seven Provincial Governments) slipping out of their hands, but the Gandhiites as a body began to feel that their work of 20 years was undone in the course of a day. All their wrath fell on me. Since Deshbandhu's time nobody had given them such a defeat. Then came Gandhiji's statement—he came to the rescue of the Old Guard and called their defeat his own defeat. Opinion among 'centrists' began to veer round. They were inclined to support us—but were not prepared to kick out Gandhiji—as they said.

My illness was the most tragic thing that occurred. Tripuri was frankly a defeat for us. But as a Bombay friend told me—it was a case of one sick man lying in bed fighting (1) 12 stalwarts of the Old Guard, (2) Jawaharlal Nehru, (3) seven provincial ministries (who were canvassing for the Old Guard), and (4) the name, influence and prestige of Mahatma Gandhi. He ended by calling our defeat a moral victory.

Our defeat was due further to the betrayal of the C.S.P.[1] leadership and some bungling in tactics on our side. The C.S.P. is now being shaken to its foundations owing to revolt among the rank and file against the Tripuri policy of the leaders. The Communist Party was also sailing with the C.S.P. but at the last moment, the revolt of the rank and file brought about a reversal of the policy decided by the C.P. leaders (in secret conclave with the C.S.P. leaders).

Nobody has done more harm to me personally and to our cause in this crisis than Pandit Nehru. If he had been with us—we would have had a majority. Even his neutrality would have probably given us a majority. But he was with the Old Guard at Tripuri. His open propaganda against me has done me more harm than the activities of the 12 stalwarts. What a pity!

The immediate future is very uncertain. Negotiations are going on between Gandhiji and myself. Whether they will lead to

[1] C.S.P.—Congress Socialist Party.

a settlement or not—it is too early to say. It is even possible that ultimately I may have to resign.

The C.S.P. has gone down in public estimation, but that does not mean that M.N. Roy has gained. He is touring Bengal and is getting a good reception everywhere. Bengal naturally has a soft corner for him—but whether he will really get a position depends on his allies—whom he aligns himself with. He is too individualist and cannot go in for team-work. That is a great drawback for him.

The Presidential election and its sequel, however unfortunate, has led to a sharpening of political consciousness. In the long run it will prove to be a great incentive to progress. Whatever the immediate future may have in store for us, we have a bright future. I say this as a realist. The progressive and radical forces are 90% with us. I am sorry that Jawahar's position even among his erst-while admirers has been badly shaken as a result of his stand before and after the presidential election and particularly at Tripuri. The delegates refused to hear him for 1½ hours and they became quiet only when Mejdada[2] appealed to them to be quiet. An unheard-of thing. So long.

Love,

Ever yours

Subhas

From M.N. Roy

3B Store Road
Ballygunge
Calcutta
April 18, 1939

Dear friend,

The Vizianagram District Congress Committee has sent me a copy

[2] Mejdada—Sarat Chandra Bose. Ed.

of the Memorandum which has been submitted to you. I have been asked to urge upon you the necessity of upholding the case of the memorialists. Naturally, I could not do so if I were not convinced of the justice of their case and the bona fide of the party concerned. The District Congress organisation of Vizianagram has been for two years under the control of genuinely radical left wing elements. The P.C.C. has been trying to dislodge them and in that effort all sorts of unfair means have been adopted. Yet, the hold of the radicals could not be weakened simply because they have been doing good work and consequently command the confidence of the membership. The details of the case are set forth in the Memorandum. I trust you will find the time to go through it and issue such instructions as will protect the radicals against the unfair attack from the rightwingers. It may be mentioned that all the thirteen delegates from the district voted for you, and that is another reason for the concerted attack on the D.C.C.

I am glad to know that you are sufficiently recovered to resume your arduous responsibility. You are in an extremely difficult situation and require loyal and firm support from all genuine anti-imperialists. While repeating the offer of my fullest co-operation, I am constrained to have the impression that, for some reason unknown to me, you doubt the sincerity of my offer. As a matter of fact, it has been reported to me that, in a recent conversation with some friends, you have characterised me as a careerist. I could hardly believe it. However, I shall appreciate any gesture on your part to remove the impression. Of course, you shall do so if you think it worthwhile.

With best wishes and heartiest greetings,

Yours sincerely

M.N. Roy

Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose
Jamadoba

To Acting General Secretary AICC

Office-Bearers for 1938
President:
SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE
Treasurer:
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All India Congress Committee
Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad
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Jealgora P.O.
Dist. Manbhum,
Bihar
The 18th April, 39

To
The Acting General Secretary,
All India Congress Committee,
Allahabad

Dear friend,

I sent you the following telegram today:

'Please request telegraphically all P.C.Cs observe 23rd April as anti-war Day stop issued press statement today Subhasbose'.

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the statement I have issued to the press today.

Yours sincerely

Subhas C. Bose

To Sita Sen

Jealgora P.O.
Dt. Manbhum
Bihar
19.4.39

My dear Sita,

I should have written to you long ago to congratulate you on your first child. Leila gave me the news. She said that you had to suffer a lot but that you were doing better. I hope that by now both you and the baby are doing quite well.

I have had a hell of a time during the last two months, largely because my health broke down at the critical moment. However, the worst is over—I am recovering and shall be able to fight the battle of life once again. I am going down to Calcutta on the 21st.

I owe an apology to Santosh for not replying to his last letter—about the Mayo Hospital or something. I wanted to move in the matter, though I was not sure that I would be able to produce any results. But unexpected developments took hold of me and since then I do not know if I have been standing on my feet or on my head. Or rather, I have not been standing at all—being prostrate in bed.

I do not know when I shall be able to write to you again—once I am in harness of aim. But please give me news about yourselves from time to time.

With love to all.

Yours affly

Subhas

Index

Act:
  Government of India 21, 39–40, 75
  Irish Nationality and Citizenship 22
address:
  Bose's:
    to Bombay Corporation 31–5
    at Haripura 3–30
    at Industries Ministers Conference 48–53
    at Tripuri 90–4
  Tagore's:
    welcome to Subhas 240–3
    Bose's reply to 243–6
Agreement:
  Indo-British Trade 21–3
  Ottawa 23
agriculture, improvement of 16, 50
Air Force, importance of 7–8
All India Congress, *see* Congress
All India Congress Committee (AICC), *see* Committee
All India Muslim League 110, 112–13, 115–21, 124–5
  Congress and 110–11, 120–1
  opposition to Muslims in Congress 113, 119
  other minorities and 113–14, 119
  other Muslim organisations and 118
  resolutions of Council 113–14
  Congress response to 115–16
All-India Spinners Association, *see* Association
All-India State's Peoples Conference, *see* Conference
All-India Village Industries Association, *see* Association
Amending Bill, *see* Bill
ancient India, civic achievements of 34–5
ashirvadi flowers 102
aspersions affair, *see* controversy
Assam, Saadullah Ministry in 207
Association:
  All India Spinners 62
  All India Village Industries 62
Ataturk, Kemal 61
Austria, *see* European crisis
Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam 67–71, 74–5, 77–8, 91, 123
  differences with Bose 123
  as presidential candidate 77–8, 80–1, 227
  presidential elections, withdrawal from 69–70, 74–5

Bajaj, Jamnalal 273–4
Banerji, Sir Surendranath 254
Benes, Dr 58, 60
Bengal 207–8, 239
  coalition ministry for 122–4, 208

Huq ministry in 123–4, 208
Muslims of, and independence movement 278
partition movement 239, 248
Tagore's concern for 239, 241, 249
Bill:
Amending 179
Bombay Trades Disputes 186, 206–7
Bose's views on 206–7
Nehru's views on 186
Birla, G.D. 122–3
Biswas, Jacob Gunanidhi 287
Bombay:
adult franchise in 32
Corporation, address to 31–5
Trades Disputes Bill, *see* Bill
Bose, Acharya Jagdish Chandra 4
Bose, Amiya Nath 288
Bose, Rash Behari 253–5
Bose, Sarat Chandra 68–9, 85, 123, 129, 133, 161, 212, 214
Bose, Subhas Chandra:
addresses, *see* address
correspondence:
with Gandhi 122–82
leakage of 148–9
with Jinnah 110–22
with Nehru 182–236
with Tagore 236–51
see also letters below
differences:
with Azad 123
with Gandhi 89–90, 144–6, 165–7, 170
illness of 95–106, 213, 288
letters:
from Bose, Rash Behari 253–7
from Devi, Aparna 268
from Richter, Will 258–60
from Roy, B.C. 266, 271–2
from Roy, M.N. 275, 280–3, 286, 290–1
to Acting General Secretary, A.I.C.C. 285, 292
to Biswas, Jacob Gunanidhi 287–8
to Bose, Amiya Nath 288
to *Daily Doorbin* 278
to Das, Biswanath 267
to Devi Basanti 257
to Dharmavir, Mrs 260
to Dharmavir (Sen), Sita 261, 264, 265–6, 272–3, 293
to Kamat, H.V. 258
to Kumar, Atul Chandra 265–6
to Nundy (Shankar) Amala 279
to Pasha, Mustapha El Nahas 284
to Purkayastha, Amita 270–1
to Roy, B.C. 268–9
to Vetter, Naomi 253–62, 263
to Woods, E. 252
pressure to resign 134, 137, 152
propaganda against 100, 137, 155, 213
re-election of 67–73, 76–81, 83–7, 89–90, 202, 288–9, *see also* election
Nehru's opposition to 184, 223–6
reply to Tagore's address 243–5
statement of resignation 107–9
Tagore's message on resignation 109

victory of 87
views on:
agriculture 16, 50
air force 7–8
Bombay Trades Disputes Bill 206–7
British Communist Party 30
cabinet, *see* Cabinet
Communism 2–3
Congress 55–8
corruption in Congress 141, 157–8, 168, 179
federal scheme 39–43, 66
Pant resolution 139–41, 151–3
Tagore's *Sadhana* 243–5
ultimatum to British 125, 142
violence in Congress 147, 157–8, 175
British:
Communist Party 30
Empire 5–7
Government:
satyagraha and 93, 125
ultimatum to, *see* ultimatum
Labour Party 2
Trade Union Congress 25–6
Imperialism 30
and anti-imperialist organisations 94
and international developments 92
policy, political dualism in 6–7
bureaucracy 17
Burrabazar seat, controversy over 269, 271–2
Cabinet:
composite 108, 154, 161, 167, 175–6
views of Bose on 150
formation of, and Gandhi 135, 144, 146, 149–50, 154, 156
homogeneous 88, 149–51, 154, 162, 167–8, 173–5, 283
views of Bose on 151, 171
Chatterji, Dr Sarat Chandra 4
China:
Congress Medical Mission to 36–9
relations with 38
citizenship, Indian, right to 22
civic:
achievements of ancient India 34–5
bodies 32–5, *see also* municipal corporation
civil disobedience, *see* satyagraha
coalition ministries, *see* Ministry
Committee:
All India Congress 8–9, 139, 170, 206, 211, 222
Federal Scheme and 40–1
leftists and 282–3
M.N. Roy's views on 282–3
Nehru's criticism of 186, 206, 209
office, deterioration of 186
rift within 135, 144, 146, 165
Congress Working 18, 69–72, 78, 83, 187
Bardoli statement and 69–70
Congress President and 71–2, 85–6
crisis 108–9, 135, 144, 146, 161–2, 167, 170–2, 174–5, 179, 223
formation of new 107–8, 128, 133, 170

Gandhi's advice on 135, 144, 146, 149, 173, 181
Nehru's views on 187, 225
meeting, postponement of 97–8, 200
opposition of federation 69–70, 78
Pant resolution and, *see* Pant
provincial governments and 18
resignation of members 91, 97, 99, 194, 200, 215
Nehru's views on 221, 223, 230
of Experts 48–9, 53
National Planning 62–3
subjects 140, 213, 227–8
Vizianagram, District Congress 290–1
communal:
decision 10
organisations, M.N. Roy's views on 275
question, settlement of 110, 113, 115–16, 118–19, 121–2, 124, 183
Communism 2–3
Communist:
International 3
Party, British, *see* British
Conference:
All India States People 94
Congress Premiers' 45
Gandhi Seva Sangh 132, 148
Industries Ministers' 48–53
UP students, Bose's message to 54–5
Congress 1–3, 8–11, 13, 17, 19, 23–5, 29–30, 44, 47, 55–6, 65–6, 71–2, 76, 79, 90, 93–4, 115–16, 130, 137–8, 207, 212, 280–1
coalition ministries and 122, 124–6, 207–8
Constitution, Article XV of 129
corruption in 88, 141, 145, 157–8, 168, 175, 179
Federal Scheme and 19–23, 39–43, 66, 82
federation and 19–23, 43, 66, 70, 75, 78, 82–3, 219
foreign policy of 26–9
industrial policy of 47
left and right wings within 26, 30, 65, 72–3, 78, 82–7, 89–90, 185–6, 188, 197, 224, 275, 282, 287, 291
majority vs minority in 88, 135
medical mission to China 36–9
membership of 55–7, 135, 188, 276
minorities and 8–11, 14
Muslim League and 110–11, 120–1
Muslim organisations and 111
national reconstruction and 13–14, 17, 44
national struggle and 1–2, 11, 13
new Constitution and 1
objectives of 3
old guard 153, 162, 166, 214, 289
opposition to 153–4
support of Congress Socialist Party for 160
defeat of 289
policy on autonomy 11, 14
Premiers' Conference, *see* Conference President 70–2, 75, 78–9

anti-federationist as 72–3, 84, 86
re-election of, *see* Bose
role of 70, 72, 86
provincial governments and 17–18, 187
resolution of fundamental rights 9–10
response to League Council resolution 115–16
Socialist Party, *see* Party
split, danger of 89–162
splits, previous 150; 204
states' subjects movement and 8
swaraj and 56–7
trade union organisations and 25
session:
at Haripura 3, 41–2, 81, 93, 160
federal scheme and 41–2
presidential address at 3–30
resolution at 81
states and 93–4
at Tripuri 97–9, 101, 103, 138–9, 151, 153, 162, 167, 200, 213–15, 229
resolution on working committee at 107, 200, 214–15, 230, *see also* Pant resolution
role of ministers at 214
role of old guard at 153, 214
tickets, issue to delegates at 213–15
presidential address at 90–4
presidential debate at 67–90
unity within 94, 133, 138, 156, 161, 179, 204
Gandhi's role in 138, 149, 163, 165
Nehru's views on 218
use of Indian princes against 190
Constitution:
Congress, Article XV of 129
new 1, 6
Congress and 1
federal part of 1, 19
provincial part of 1, 17
controversy:
aspersions affair 196–7, 202–4, 208
Nehru's views on 227–30
Burrabazar 269, 271–2
over postponement of Working Committee meeting 97–8, 200
re-election, *see* Bose
Corporation:
Bombay, Bose's address to 31–5
Corps:
Labour Service of Nazis 24
Volunteer, training and education of 24
correspondence, *see* Bose
corruption in Congress, *see* Congress
cottage industry, *see* industries
Czechoslovak-Soviet pact, *see* Soviet Russia
Czechoslovakia, *see* European crisis

Daily Doorbin 278
Das, Biswanath 267
Das, Deshbandhu 32, 94, 154, 282, 289
debate, presidential, *see* statements
Delegation, Egyptian (Wafdist), visit of 91, 190–2, 285

Desai, Bhulabhai 205
Devi, Aparna 268
Devi, Basanti 257
Dharmavir, Mrs 260
Dharmavir (Sen), Sita 261, 264–6, 272–3, 293
Dutt, R. Palme 1

education:
  at Santiniketan 242–3
  technical, problem of 46, 52–3
Egypt, Treaty of Alliance 27
Egyptian Delegation, *see* Delegation
election, presidential 84, 203, 290
  controversy over 67–90, 202, 288–9
  canvassing for 193–4
  issues involved 83, 86–9
  statements and counter statements, *see* statements, *see also* Bose
Empire:
  Austro-Hungarian 7
  British 5–7
    rise and fall of 5
    strains on 7
Europe, post-war reconstruction 13
European crisis, analysis of 58–60
Experts, Committee, *see* Committee

Fascism 1–2
Federal:
  Government
    expenditure under 20
    external affairs and 20
    trade agreements under 20–1
  legislature, composition of 23
  Scheme 6, 39–43, 66, 72–3, 82–4, 92, 204
    Bose's views on 39–43, 66
    Congress opposition to 19–23, 39–43, 66, 82
    see also Federation
Federation 12, 19–20, 23, 43, 68, 70, 73, 75–6, 78–83, 90, 205
  Congress and 19–23, 43, 66, 70, 75, 78, 82–3, 219
  Nehru's attitude to 186, 219
  see also Federal Scheme
foreign policy, *see* policy
France, *see* European crisis
Franco-Soviet pact, *see* Soviet Russia
Fundamental Rights, Congress resolution on 9–10

Gandhi-Irwin Pact 21, 204
Gandhi, Mahatma 30, 56, 77, 87, 89–91, 94, 107–8, 162, 193–7, 207, 210–11, 218, 221–2, 226–7, 230, 233, 236, 289
cabinet formation and 135, 144, 146, 149–50, 154, 156
Congress unity, role in 138, 149, 163, 165
correspondence, with Bose, *see* Bose
differences:
  with Bose 89–90, 144–6, 165–7, 170
  with Nehru 218
fast at Rajkot 91
  Nehru's views on 230–1
  see also Rajkot
M.N. Roy's views on 280–1
Pant resolution and 107–8, 151–2, 162, 165, 171, 174, 177, 179, 181
statement on Bose's re-election 87–8

views on:
  corruption in Congress 88, 145
  ultimatum to British 145
Gandhi Seva Sangh Conference, *see* Conference
Gandhiites 135, 150–1, 153, 161, 289
Gandhism, cult of 75, 194, 224, 281
Germany, *see* European crisis
government(s):
  Federal, *see* Federal
  local self 34
  provincial 17–18, 187
    and federation 19–20, 41
    Nehru's views on 187
Great Britain:
  capitalist ruling classes in 5–6
  foreign policy of 6–7
  future relations with 12
  rise and fall of 7
  Socialist order in 6
Gwyer, Sir Maurice 142–3, 146, 164, 210–11
Gwyer's award 230

Haripura, Congress session at, *see* Congress
Himatsingka, Sj. Prabhudayal 269, 271–2
Hindu-Muslim question, *see* communal question
Hitler 59–60
Huq Ministry 123–4, 208

Imperialism, British 30
Indian citizenship, right to 22
Indian National Congress, *see* Congress
Indian states 8, 80, 93–4, 142, 169, 190, 197–8
  and the Haripura Congress resolution 93–4
  non-violent mass action in 151, 169
  peoples movement in 8, 80 93–4, 142, 187
  princes of, and Congress 190
Indo-British Trade Agreement, *see* Agreement
industrial development, *see* industrialization
industrial policy 47
industrialization:
  in India 16, 44–7, 50–3, 64
    Congress and 47
    problems of 48
  planned 51
  in Soviet Russia 50–1
  see also industries
industries 50–2, 62–4
  mother, development of 52, 63
  cottage 16, 45, 51–2, 62
  large scale 51, 53, 62–3
  national planning and 52–3
  Ministers' Conference, *see* Conference
industry, shipping, importance of 22
international affairs 209–10, 225, 232
  Nehru's views on 225, 232
Irish nationality and citizenship 22

Jalan, Sj. Iswardas 269, 271–2
Japan 62–3, 255–6
Jews 6–7
  resolution on 219–20
  Bose's comments on 199
Jinnah, M.A. 110, 112–13, 115, 183
  correspondence with Bose, *see* Bose

see also Muslim League

Kamath, H.V. 258
Karim, Rezaul 267, 278
Kemal Ataturk, homage to 61
Kisan Sabhas 25–6
Kripalani, Acharya 139, 197, 206
Kumar, Atul Chandra 265

labour strikes 2
leftists, *see* Congress
Lenin 3, 5, 203
lingua franca:
  role in national unity 14–15, 47
  scripts for 14–15
local self-government 34

Marana Kriya 104–5
Marx, Karl 3
Masani, Com. 276–7
Maulana Azad, *see* Azad
Message:
  Bose's:
    farewell, to Congress Medical Mission to China 38
    to Dr Atal 38–9
    to UP Students Conference 54–5
  Tagore's:
    to Bose, on resignation 109
Ministers' meeting 182
Ministry:
  Coalition 122, 124–6, 207–8
  Huq 123–4, 208
  Saadullah, in Assam 207
minorities 8–11, 14, 113–14, 119
  Congress policy regarding 8–11, 14
  other, and Muslim League 113–14, 119
Moderates 204, 254
mother industries 52, 63
movement:
  Bengal partition 239
  independence, and Muslims of Bengal 278
  people's, in Indian states 8, 80, 93–4, 142, 187
  students' 54–5
Munich Pact 92, 209
Municipal Socialism 31, 33–4
Municipality, Vienna, achievements of 31–2
Munshi, Sjt. Harendra 4
Muslim(s) 11, 110–11, 115–18, 125
  of Bengal, and independence movement 278
  in congress 115–16
  organisations, other 111, 118
  League, *see* All India Muslim League

Narayan, Jaiprakash 286
National:
  Demand 92–3, 125, 141–2, 197–9, 209–10
  resolution 212
  Planning Commission 16, 45, 53, 62–3
  Planning Committee 62–3
  Research Council 44, 46, 53
Planning, principles of 46, 52–3
reconstruction 44, 46, 48, 51
  agricultural reforms and 16
  science and 44, 51
  socialism and 47
struggle 1–2, 11–13, 154, 157
unity 203–4, 218
  Congress and 47–8
  lingua franca for 14–15, 47
  minorities and 8–9
  states and 8

Nazi(s) 58–60
  invasion of Austria 59
    Labour Service Corps of 24
    Treaty of Versailles and 58
Nehru, Jawaharlal 79, 86, 91, 139, 180, 184–8, 198–9, 203–4, 218–21, 223–32, 289–90
  and A.I.C.C., criticism of 186
  attitude towards federation 186, 219
  and Bose:
    correspondence with, *see* under Bose
    differences with 193–216
  foreign policy of, criticism by Bose 199
  and Gandhi, differences with 218
  Pant resolution and 200, 228–9, 231
  and re-election of Bose, opposition to 184, 223–6
  resolution on Jews 219–20
    Bose's comments on 199
  as a socialist 231–2
  socialism and 203
  statement on presidential election 79–81
  views on:
    aspersions affair 227–30
    Bombay Trades Disputes Bill 186
    Gandhi's fast 230–1
    internal politics 198
    international affairs 225, 232
    leftists and rightists in Congress 185–6, 197
    leftist ideology 224–5
    new working committee 187, 225
    provincial congress government 187
    resignation of working committee 221, 223, 230
    ultimatum to British 188, 198
    unity within congress 218
Nehru, Pandit Motilal 94
Nehru, Swaruprani 4
new Constitution, *see* Constitution
Nundy (Shankar), Amala 279

organisation, party 2, 4
organisations:
  anti-imperialist 94
  communal, M.N. Roy's views on 276
  cultural, role in foreign policy 28
  other Muslim:
    and congress 111
    and Muslim League 118
  peasant (and workers) 25
  trade union 25
  workers and peasants 25
Ottawa Agreement 23

Pact:
  Czechoslovak-Soviet 199
  Franco-Soviet 199
  Gandhi–Irwin 21, 204
  Munich 92, 209
Pant, Govind Ballabh 158, 228–9
Pant resolution 108, 129, 133–5, 139–41, 144, 147, 151–3, 158–60, 162, 170–1, 174, 177, 179, 200, 208, 228–9, 231, 233
  amended form of 140, 159–60
  Bose's views on 139–41, 151–3
  Gandhi and 107–8, 151–2, 162, 165, 171, 174, 177, 179, 181
  Nehru's views on 200, 228–9, 231

original form of 158–9
Parliamentary programme 88, 90
Partition of Bengal, *see* Bengal
Party:
British:
Communist 30
Labour 2
Congress Socialist (CSP) 26, 128, 138, 140, 160, 276–7, 289–90
support to old guard 160
Social Democratic of Russia 203
Swarajya 94
Pasha, Mustapha El Nahas 284
Patel, Vallabbhai 68–9, 71, 83, 91, 97, 138, 196, 202, 205–6, 214, 225–7
statement on presidential election 76–8
telegrams to Sarat Bose 68–9
Pattabhi, Dr Sitaramayya 68, 70–1, 73, 77, 83, 87, 194, 202, 220–1, 227
canvassing for 220
statement of 73–6
peasant:
organisations 25
unrest 1–2
permanent services 17
Planning, *see* National
policy:
Congress, for minorities 8–11, 14
foreign 25–9, 199
of Congress 26–9
of Nehru criticism by Bose 199
role of cultural organisations in 28
industrial 47
trade 20–3
political prisoners, release of 29
population, problem of 15–16
post-war:
Europe 13
national reconstruction 13–14, 17, 44
Prasad, Dr Rajendra 81, 91, 227–8
statement on presidential election 81–3
presidential election, *see* election
princes, Indian and Congress 190
programme, minimum clear cut, *see* under statement
Provincial Government, *see* Governments
Purkayastha, Amita 270
Purna Swaraj 12, 45, 65, 125, 141–2, 157, 208–9, *see also* Swaraj

Rajkot 91, 142, 145, 151, 163–4, 168–9, 198, 209–11, 231
Gandhiji's fast at 91, 210
Nehru's views on 230–1
settlement at 142
reconstruction:
national 13–14, 17, 44, 46–8, 51
agricultural reforms and 16
Congress and 44
social 14, 16–17
re-election controversy, *see* Bose *see also* Election
research, technical problem of 46, 52–3
resolution:
Congress, on fundamental rights 9–10
at Haripura Congress 81
states and 93–4

on Jews 199, 219–20
of League Council 113–14
Congress response to 115–16
Working Committee, at Wardha 19–20
National Demand 212
Richter, Will 258
right-wing, *see* Congress
River Surveys 48–9
Roy, B.C. 266, 268–9, 271
Roy, M.N. 275–7, 280–3, 290
views on:
All India Congress Committee 282–3
communal organisations 276
Gandhiji 280–1
proposed left wing of Congress 275–7
re-election of Bose 280–1
Russia, *see* Soviet Russia

Saadullah Ministry 207
Sadhana, Tagore's 241–3
Bose's view of 243–5
Santiniketan:
education at 242–3
Tagore's address of welcome at 240–3
Sarkar, N.R. 123–4
Satyagraha 12, 56, 145, 151
British Government and 93, 125
in Indian states 151
science 43–4
role in national reconstruction 44, 51
scripts, for lingua franca 14–15
self-government:
local 34
see also Swaraj
Shantiniketan, *see* Santiniketan
shipping industry, importance of 22
social reconstruction, *see* reconstruction
Socialism 2, 26, 33, 47, 203
municipal 31, 33–4
national:
freedom and 2
reconstruction and 47
and Nehru 203
Society, Women's Welfare 271
Soviet Russia 25, 27, 60, 199
industrial development in 50–1
pact:
Czechoslovak–Soviet 199
Franco–Soviet 199
Social Democratic Party of 203
speech:
inauguration, National Planning Committee 62–4
at Industries Ministers Conference 48–53
presidential, at Haripura, *see* address
at reception to Prof Taichi Tao 37–8
split, *see* Congress
statement(s):
Bose's:
on Congress Medical Mission to China 36–7
on Federal Scheme 39–43
on Kemal Ataturk's death 61
on minimum clear-cut programme 65–6
on presidential elections, *see* below
on presidential election:
Bose's 67–8, 70–3, 83–7, 89–90
Gandhi's 87–8

Nehru's 79–81
Patel's 76–8
Pattabhi Sitaramayya's 73–6
Rajendra Prasad's 81–3
states, *see* Indian states
Students' movement 54–5
Subjects Committee, *see* Committee
Swaraj 21, 44, 51, 56–7, 66, 92–4, 151, 190, 197–8
Congress and 56–7
preparation for 94
Swarajist episode 150
Swarajya party 94

Tagore Rabindranath 236, 239–41, 247–9
address, welcoming Bose 240–3
Bengal, concern for 239, 241, 249
correspondence with Bose, *see* Bose
message to Bose on his resignation 109
as a poet 240
Sadhana 241–5
views on:
Bengali character 247–8
Bengal partition movement 239, 248
educational system 242–3
Tao, Tai Chi 37
Trade:
Agreement, Indo-British 21–3
Union Congress 24, 26
policy 20–3
unions, and Congress 25
Trades Disputes Bill, Bombay, *see* Bill
Tripuri congress, *see* Congress
Treaty:
of Alliance 27
of Versailles 58

ultimatum, to British govt 92, 125, 141, 151, 154, 157
Bose's views on 125, 142
Gandhi's views on 145
Nehru's views on 188, 198
see also National Demand Unity
see Congress and national

Vetter, Naomi 253, 262–3
Vienna Municipality, achievements of 31–2
Vizianagram District Congress Committee 290–1

Wafdist delegation, *see* Egyptian delegation
Women(s):
welfare society 271
workers 270–1
Woods, E. 252
Workers and Peasants Organisations 25