Correspondence between C. Rajagopalachari and the Government for the release of communist leaders in order to oppose the '42 Resolution / Collected from Government of India, Home Department File - F.N. 7/15/42 - Poll (I), 1942.

48 Bazelullah Road
Thyagarayanganagar, Madras
July 6, 1942.

Dear Sir Reginald,

I was glad to see the Government of India making progress in the discharge of Communist detainees and prisoners and I must convey my sincere thanks to you. I am not unaware of the difficulties that were overcome, though I do not know anything definite.

I am very sorry to note, however, that a few important detainees like S.V. Ghate are still not released. I am quite certain that though they may be connected with labour organisations, they will not be a source of trouble. Rather I believe that their association with labour will be added strength to the movement for national defence. I should like you to hasten the cancellation of warrants against E.M. Sankaran Nambudiripad of Malabar and P. Sundarayya of Nellore and others of that kind. Their being underground prevents a lot of good work which may otherwise be done. Again, I wish to remind you that time is precious.

The Hon'ble Sir Reginald Maxwell,
Home Member of Council,
New Delhi.

Yours Sincerely,

C. Rajagopalachari.
Extracts from R.M. Maxwell's reply to C. Rajagopalachari on 18th July 1942.

"S.V. Ghaté, whose release you particularly recommend, was not one of those on our programme for earliest release. He has in fact in the past been regarded as one of the more dangerous communists and until the effects of other releases were seen we were advised that it would be safer to keep him back for a while. The strong belief expressed in your letter must, however, have considerable weight with us and it would seem to indicate that you are confident that if Ghaté were released you would be able to exercise some influence on him and to see that his undoubted ability was not used for any harmful purpose. Would you kindly let me know whether this is the case and whether you are satisfied that the release of Ghaté at an early date would serve a really useful purpose? . . . . As regards the other two persons whom who mention in your letter, one, whom you call P. Sundarayya of Nellore, must, I think, be the same as P. Sundarama Reddi against whom there is an outstanding warrant issued by the Central Government. If so, in accordance with the general policy of selective release of the Communists at first - Ref. Government of India, Home Department File - F.N. 7/6/42-Poll(I), 1942 - we are prepared to cancel his warrant. The warrant against the other person whom you mention was issued by the Madras Government who will, no doubt, deal with it in accordance with their working out of the general policy."
C. Rajagopalachari's Reply

48 Bazlullah Road
Thyagarayanagar, Madras

July 23, 1942.

Dear Sir Reginald,

Thank you for your kind letter of 18th July. P. Sundarayya of Nellore that I referred to is P. Sundarama Reddi as you pointed out. I hope his warrant will be cancelled at once.

I have written to Sir Arthur Hope again about E.M. Sankaran Nambudiripad as well as about the removal of the ban on local peasant unions in Malabar. The Communists in Malabar have done better work than their confreres in other places and do not deserve to be under any kind of ban at the present moment when their presence and open work among the people would be most useful. I should like you to something to see that all the provincial governments act quickly. At any rate, Communist members of the All India Congress Committee should not be absent from the meeting shortly to be held in Bombay by reasons of being detained in prison.

I shall write to you about Sri S.V. Chate again.

Yours Sincerely,

Sd/-
C. Rajagopalachari.

The Hon'ble Sir Reginald Maxwell,
Home Member of Council,
New Delhi.
C. Rajagopalachari's letter.

Have we any information about Ghate?

48 Bazlullah Road
Thyagarayanagar, Madras
Sd/- R.M.
7/8.
August 1, 1942.

Dear Sir Reginald,

I have just returned from Wardha. I am not yet in a position to write precisely about S.V. Ghate in answer to your letter. Meanwhile may I request that Chitale, who is in Nasik Jail, and who is a member of the All India Congress Committee, may be released in time? He would be a source of strength to his Party /Communist Party/ at the discussions on 7th August.

Yours Sincerely,
Sd/-
C. Rajagopalachari.

The Hon'ble Sir Reginald Maxwell,
Home Member of Council,
New Delhi.

Rec'd. on 6/8. - not in time to consider before AICC meeting.
Addl. Secy. to see. I think he has Mr. C.R's last letter about release of Ghate, AICC member.
Sd/-
R.M.M.
6/8.

C. Rajagopalachari's letter.

48 Bazlullah Road,
Thyagarayanagar, Madras.
August 1, 1942.

Dear Mr. Bryant,

Thank you for your letter of 30th July /Copy not rec'd in H.D. Government of India, New Delhi - Govt. note/. I am
very glad that the detention order against Sankaran Nambudiripad is cancelled and that the warrant against P. Sundararama Reddi is also withdrawn.

I am very sorry that the case for the removal of the ban on the Malabar Peasant Unions has not been favourably considered. What these Unions did in the past should be forgotten and buried. They will be a source of great strength for those who are against the present Congress programme of civil disobedience and who wish to organise opinion in favour of national resistance against the Axis. These are the only organisations of the kind that reaches the masses and which can be requisitioned for service on the side of national resistance at present. It is a great pity that His Excellency has not been advised to remove the ban. I wish I could convince him.

May I suggest to His Excellency that the case of the four persons sentenced to death in the Kayyar Case (Sessions case 44 of 1941 of South Kanara) must be immediately considered for commutation. The offence was not pre-meditated out of personal motive or malice, but was committed in the course of mob frenzy. I understand that in the opinion of the Sessions Judge (Para 180 of his judgment) "the person who dealt the fatal blow could not with certainty be picked out of the group or, perhaps he is not even before the Court." The prisoners condemned to death are all very young men who were all village public workers. In view of the decision of the government in
In the case of K.P.R. Gopalan, it is right that these young men should also be saved from death and the sentence commuted. There seems to be no reason for making any distinction between Gopalan's case and the Kayyar case.

I shall be very grateful if you will kindly place this letter before His Excellency.

Yours Sincerely,

Sd/-

C. Rajagopalachari.

W.T. Bryant Esq., I.C.S.,
Private Secretary to H.E. the Governor,
Madras.

C. Rajagopalachari's letter.

48 Bazlullah Road,
Thyagarayanagar, Madras.

August 2, 1942.

Dear Sir Reginald,

Since I wrote to you yesterday I see in the papers that Mr. Chitale has been released.

(1) As regards Mr. S.V. Ghate, I should strongly advise you to accept his assurance contained in the enclosed letter and release him. From all that I understand he is one of the saner elements among labour workers. I do not think he will be a source of trouble. On the contrary he may be of great help. His coming out will improve the Communist leadership in Madras. I hope you will decide to take whatever risk is involved and release him at once.

contd...
(2) I understand that though the ban on the Communist Party of India has been removed, the ban on Peasant unions in Malabar has not been removed by the Madras Government. There is no great object gained in keeping the ban. The Peasant Unions in Malabar are completely identified with the Communist Party. These Unions will give the Communist Party contact with the peasantry and enable them to oppose contrary movements which may tend to prove beneficial to the Axis. I am sending you a copy of a letter I have addressed to Sir Arthur Hope/\_\_copy not in file\_/\_. I hope you will kindly help by seeing to the enforcement of a uniform policy in regard to Kisan Sabhas and Peasant Unions throughout India at the present juncture in all cases where they adopt the Communist Party's policy of opposing Axis aggression.

(3) I have addressed H.E. the Governor of Madras for commutation of the death sentence passed on the Kayyar prisoners. They are all very young people and the case is an all forms with that of K.P.R. Gopalan's.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

C.Rajagopalachari.

The Hon'ble Sir Reginald Maxwell,
Home Member of Council,
New Delhi.
Dear Mr. Rajagopalachari,

I thank you for your kind letter of the 22nd inst., which I received yesterday. I am very grateful to you for your efforts for the release of all of us.

As a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, I am entirely under the discipline of the Party. I should have thought that since the legalisation of the Party all suspicion and distrust against individual members of the Party would have disappeared, and particularly when one knows the iron discipline of the Communist Party. I can only state that my activities in future, as in the past, will be guided by the line and policy laid down by my Party.

With esteemed regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/—

S.V. Ghate.