APPENDICES
At the time of the All Parties Conference in Lucknow in August 1928, Subhas Chandra floated the idea of organising an Independence for India League. There on 30 August the following Resolutions were passed:

1. Resolved that we the members of the Indian National Congress present at this meeting being firmly of opinion that the immediate goal of the people of India should be full independence, do hereby form the Independence League for India.

2. The object of this League is achievement of independence for India and the League shall carry on propaganda in this behalf.

3. Members of the League shall also be members of the Indian National Congress.

4. No member of the League shall advance any claim on behalf of himself or another person or group for political or economic rights based on membership of religion or sect, nor shall he work for or advocate what has come to be called communalism in India.

5. No member of an organisation which has for its object the attainment of political or economic rights based on membership of religion or sect can be a member of the League.
6. The League shall oppose communalism in every way, but it may support it when it considers it proper and necessary by mutual arrangement between two or more groups or communities.

7. Every member of the League shall pay a subscription of Re. 1 per annum subject to rules to be framed hereafter.

8. A provisional committee consisting of Messrs. Subhas Chandra Bose, Dr. Zakir Hussain and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is formed to draw up a Constitution and rules of the League, to arrange for enrolment of members and the holding of a full meeting of members of the League to adopt this Constitution and to lay down the future programme of the League.


Quoted in, Shankari Prosad Basu, *Samakalin Bharate Subhas Chandra (Subhas Chandra in Contemporary India)* Volume I. Mandal Book House, p. 476.)
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Note on the Election of the President of the Indian National Congress, 29, January, 1939.

Secret
D.O. No. 6-GG2/39

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL (PUBLIC)
New Delhi, the 31st February 1939.

Dear Dibdin,

In continuation of the Governor General’s telegram No. 428-G of date, I am desired to enclose for the information of the Secretary of State a note on the election of Subhas Bose as President of the Indian National Congress, 1939.

Your sincerely,
Sd/- illegible

A. Dibdin, Esquire,
Secretary,
Public and Judicial Department,
Indian Office, LONDON.
Note on the election of the President of the Indian National Congress, 29 January, 1939.

The Result. Somewhat strangely, the Congress has issued no authoritative statement. Newspaper versions vary as to Subhas Bose's majority, putting it at 199, 203, or 207. The details for the middle figure are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>SUBHAS BOSE</th>
<th>PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA</th>
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<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
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<td>Utkal</td>
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<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>110</td>
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<td>Nagpur</td>
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<td>N.W.F.P.</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mahakoshal</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>68</td>
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Total: 1,580 1,377
These may be taken as correct, or approximately so. The total number of voters is said to be 3,300: Thus, with allowance made for a few invalid votes, about 90% of the votes were cast.

2. Noticeable features of the "provincial" figures are:

(i) Of the important "provinces" Pattabhi Sitaramayya obtained a large majority in Bihar, Andhra (his own "province"), Gujarat, and Utkal (Orissa); and a smaller majority in Maharashtra and Mahakoshal. Subhas Bose's majority was large in Bengal (his own province), Punjab, United Provinces, Kerala, and Karanatak; and small in Tamil Nadu.

(ii) of the four "provinces" that comprise the Madras Presidency only one (Andhra) gave Sitaramayya a majority.

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote the following 'anonymous article' in the Modern Review in November, 1937. It was entitled "The Rashtrapati" and was signed with the pseudonym "Chankya". Here Jawaharlal in a jocular vein makes a sort of self-assessment and admits the presence of two contradictory trends - socialism and individualism in his nature.

"Rashtrapati Jawaharlal ki Jai!" The Rashtrapati looked up as he passed swiftly through the waiting crowds, his hands went up and were joined together in salute and his pale hard face was lit up by a smile. It was a warm personal smile and the people who saw it responded to it immediately and smiled and cheered in return.

The smile passed away and again the face became stern and sad, impassive in the midst of the emotion that it had roused in the multitude. Almost it seemed that the smile and the gesture accompanying it had little reality behind them; they were just tricks of the trade to gain the goodwill of the crowds whose darling he had become. Was it so?

Watch him again. There is a great procession and tens of thousands of persons surround his car and cheer him in an ecstasy of abandonment. He stands on the seat of the car balancing himself rather well, straight and seemingly tall, like a god, serene and unmoved by the seething multitude. Suddenly there is that smile again, or even a merry laugh, and the tension seems to break and the crowd laughs with him not knowing what it is laughing at. He is godlike no longer but a human being claiming kinship and comradeship with the thousands who surround him, and the crowd feels happy and friendly and
takes him to its heart. But the smile is gone and the pale stern face is there again. If all this, natural or the carefully thought out trickery of the public man? Perhaps it is both and long habit has become second nature now. The most effective pose is one in which there seems to be least of posing, and Jawaharlal has learnt well to act without the paint and powder of the actor. With his seeming carelessness and insouciance, he performs on the public stage with consummate artistry. Whither is this going to lead him and the country? What is he aiming at with all his apparent want of aim? What lies behind that mask of his, what desires, what will to power, what insatiable longings?

These questions would be interesting in any event; for Jawaharlal is a personality which compels interest and attention. But they have a vital significance for us, for he is bound up with the present in India, and probably the future, and he has the power in him to do great good to India or great injury. We must therefore seek answers to these questions.

For nearly two years now he has been President of the Congress and some people imagine that he is just a camp-follower in the Working Committee of the Congress, suppressed or kept in check by others. And yet steadily and persistently he goes on increasing his personal prestige and influence both with the masses and with all manner of groups and people. He goes to the peasant and the worker, to the zamindar and the capitalist, to the merchant and the peddler, to the Brahmín and the untouchable, to the Muslim, the Sikh, the Parsi, the Christian and the Jew - to all those who make up the great variety of Indian life. To all these he speaks in a slightly different language, ever seeking to win them over to his side. With an energy that is astonishing at his age, he has rushed about across this vast land of India, and everywhere he has received the
most extraordinary of popular welcomes. From the far North to Cape Comorin he has gone like some triumphant Caesar passing by, leaving a trail of glory and a legend behind him. Is all this for him just a passing fancy which amuses him, or some deep design or the play of some force which he himself does not know? Is it his will to power of which he speaks in his autobiography that is driving him from crowd to crowd and making him whisper to himself:

I drew these tides of men into my hands and wrote my will across the sky in stars.

What if the fancy turn? Men like Jawaharlal with all their capacity for great and good work are unsafe in a democracy. He calls himself a democrat and a socialist, and no doubt he does so in all earnestness, but every psychologist knows that the mind is ultimately a slave to the heart and that logic can always be made to fit in with the desires and irrepressible urges of man. A little twist and Jawaharlal might turn a dictator sweeping aside the paraphernalia of a slow-moving democracy. He might still use the language and slogans of democracy and socialism, but we all know how fascism has fattened on this language and then cast it away as useless lumber.

Jawaharlal is certainly not a fascist either by conviction or by temperament. He is far too much of an aristocrat for the crudity and vulgarity of fascism. His very face and voice tell us that:

"Private faces in public places
are better and nicer than
Public faces in private places."

The fascist face is a public face and it is not a pleasant face in public or private. Jawaharlal's face as well as his voice are definitely private. There is no mistaking that even in a crowd, and his voice at public meeting is an intimate voice which seems to speak to individuals separately in matter-of-fact homely
way. One wonders as one hears it or sees that sensitive face what lies behind them, what thoughts and desires, what strange complexes and repressions, what passions suppressed and turned to energy, what longings which he dare not acknowledge even to himself. The train of thought holds him in public speech, but at other times his looks betray him for his mind wanders away to strange fields and fancies and he forgets for a moment his companion and holds inaudible converse with the creatures of his brain. Does he think of the human contacts he has missed on his life's journey, hard and tempestuous as it has been; does he long for them? Or does he dream of the future of his fashioning and of the conflicts and triumphs that he would fain have? He must know well that there is no resting by the wayside on the path he has chosen, and that even triumph itself means greater burdens. As Lawrence said to the Arabs:

"There can be no rest houses for revolt, no dividend of joy paid out."

Joy may not be for him, but something greater than joy may be his if fate and fortune are kind - the fulfilment of a life purpose. Jawaharlal cannot become a fascist. And yet he has all the makings of a dictator in him - vast popularity, a strong will directed to a well-defined purpose, energy, pride, organization capacity, ability, hardness, and with all his love of the crowd, an intolerance of others and a certain contempt for the weak and inefficient. His flashes of temper are well-known and even when they are controlled, the curling of the lips betrays him. His overmastering desire to get things done, to sweep away what he dislikes and build anew, will hardly brook for long the slow processes of democracy. He may keep the husk but he will see to it that it bends to his will. In normal times he would just be an efficient and successful executive, but in this revolutionary epoch Caesarism is always at the door, and is it not possible that Jawaharlal might fancy himself as a Caesar?

Therein lies danger for Jawaharlal and for India. For it is not through Caesarism that India will attain freedom, and though she may prosper a little
under a benevolent and efficient despotism she will remain stunted and the day of the emancipation of her people will be delayed.

For two consecutive years Jawaharlal has been President of the Congress and in some ways he has made himself so indispensable that there are many who suggest that he should be elected for a third term. But a greater disservice to India and to Jawaharlal himself can hardly be done. By electing him a third time we shall exalt one man at the cost of the Congress and make the people think in terms of Caesarism. We shall encourage in Jawaharlal the wrong tendencies and increase his conceit and pride. He will become convinced that he alone can bear this burden or tackle India's problems. Let us remember that in spite of his apparent indifference to office he has managed to hold important offices in the Congress for the last seventeen years. He must imagine that he is indispensable, and no man must be allowed to think so. India cannot afford to have him as President of the Congress for a third year in succession.

There is a personal reason also for this. In spite of his brave talk Jawaharlal is obviously tired and stale and he will progressively deteriorate if he continues as President. He cannot rest, for he who rides a tiger cannot dismount. But we can at least prevent him from going astray and from mental deterioration under too heavy burdens and responsibilities. We have a right to expect good work from him in the future. Let us not spoil that and spoil him by too much adulation and praise. His conceit, if any, is already formidable. It must be checked. We want no Caesars.

(According to Jawaharlal, no one except his daughter, Indira, suspected that it was he who had written the above article himself.)

IV

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE WRITES TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Just before resigning from the Presidentship of the Congress on 29/4/1939 Subhas wrote a long letter to Jawaharlal on 28 March, 1939 in which in strong language he ventilated all his accumulated grievances against Jawaharlal. It throws a lot of light on the 'inner mind of Subhas.

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 poltical 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 and 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.

That 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 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 Gandhi 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
postion 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 have 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 come 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 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 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 meet 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 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 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 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 over-shadow 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 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 Mahatma, 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, you 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 co-operation 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 Presidency. 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 are 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 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 presidency 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 form. 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. Gandhi
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 ministry 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 presidency you never cared to tour the province, through 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 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 of the international situation and critical national problems formation of the 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 know 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 Presidency. 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 him interview with the Victory. And so far as interviewing Sir Maurice Gawyer 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 logical, 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? Secondly, Sir Maurice is neither our man nor an independent agent. He is 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 Gandhi to do now than wait in Delhi. The draft, 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 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....
You have said in your letter to Sarat, 'It was absurd for anyone to say that Subhas' 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 works 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 co-operation 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 Gandhiiist or something
else?... 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 nonviolence 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 points 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 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. 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.
This is the reply of Jawaharlal Nehru to the long letter written by Subhas Bose. In this reply Jawaharlal tries to meet the points raised by Subhas vehemently accusing him on various counts. Jawaharlal’s attempt to vindicate his own stand indicates how these two – Subhas and Jawahar – act as a foil to each other.

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 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.

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 not such a 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 cooperation 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 so. 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.
ofice 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 in 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 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 22\textsuperscript{nd} 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 that 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. It 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 to 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 a 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 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 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 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 pressmen. 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.

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 even 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*