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Domestic Pressures

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Kashmir and Hyderabad had spilt over into foreign affairs. But there were other problems as pressing, even if of a long-term nature, which were almost purely domestic. They caused a quick waning of Nehru’s confidence that, after the strains of the first few months, the forces of democratic and secular progress seemed to be prevailing.¹ Under the first shock of Gandhi’s murder, Hindu communal forces lay low and public opinion supported drastic action against them. “These people have the blood of Mahatma Gandhi on their hands, and pious disclaimers and disassociation now have no meaning.”² The Muslim League showed sign of disintegrating, and Tara Singh’s arrest in February 1949 decapitated the Akali movement. But there were other growing elements of dissension. Indeed, Nehru’s own political position was becoming isolated. Gandhi’s death had removed a primary support and there was both an increasing alienation of left-wing elements outside the Congress and a weakening of radical forces within the Party itself. The decision of the members of the Congress Socialist Party in 1948 to leave the Congress had been a blow for Nehru, who sympathized with their general viewpoint and liked many of their leaders. Until now, in the long history of the Congress Party, it had always been the more conservative elements that had been regularly shed; and it was not a pleasant reflection that for the first time there had been a major withdrawal of progressive forces. He was particularly sorry that Jayaprakash Narayan should have been lost to the Congress. To many in India Narayan appeared cross-grained, woolly-minded and exasperatingly self-righteous; but Nehru recognized his physical courage and moral integrity and even in 1946 had seen in him a future prime minister.³ Their personal relations too were knit close by affection; and Narayan was one of the two

¹ Nehru to Chief Ministers, 20 February 1948.
² Nehru to G. C. Bhargava, 11 February 1948.
persons outside the family — the other being the scientist Homi Bhabha — who addressed Nehru as bhai (brother). So Nehru worried about the expanding breach between Narayan and himself. Narayan was apt to go astray very often and act in an irresponsible manner. But he is one of the straightest and finest men I have known, and if character counts, as it does, he counts for a great deal. It seems to me a tragedy that a man like him should be thrust, by circumstances, into the wilderness.⁴

With the hope, therefore, of making the return of the Socialists easier he advised his colleagues to say and do nothing which might add to the rift.⁵ He also, in an effort to win the Socialists back, wrote to Jayaprakash offering to consider how the gulf could be bridged and requesting him to do the same. 'I am greatly distressed at many things in India. But perhaps what distresses me most is the wide gap which is ever growing between many of us and the Socialist Party.' This was not good for the Socialists, who would find themselves either isolationists or cooperating with groups with whom they had little in common; it was not good for the Congress; and it was not good for the country.

I cannot, by sheer force of circumstance, do everything that I would like to do. We are all of us in some measure prisoners of fate and circumstance. But I am as keen as ever to go in a particular direction and carry the country with me and I do hope that in doing so I would have some help from you... It may be that we are not strong enough or wise enough to face these problems, but for the moment I do not see any other group that can do so more successfully. You will remember the least that the recent history of Europe has taught us, that an attempt at premature leftist may well lead to reaction and disruption.⁶

These approaches to the Socialists proved fruitless. Jayaprakash was severely critical of Nehru's general outlook. 'You want to go towards socialism, but you want the capitalists to help in that. You want to build socialism with the help of capitalism. You are bound to fail in that.'⁷ He ignored an appeal not to launch a railway strike⁸ and objected vehemently to the legislation outlawing strikes in the essential services, describing it as 'an ugly example of growing Indian fascism.'⁹ There was also severe

⁴ Nehru to G. B. Pant, 1 July 1948.
⁵ Nehru to Chief Ministers, 1 April 1948.
⁶ To Jayaprakash Narayan, 19 August 1948.
⁸ Nehru to Jayaprakash Narayan, 22 December 1948.
⁹ Jayaprakash Narayan's telegram to Nehru, first week of March 1949.
criticism of the decision to maintain India’s link with the Commonwealth. Criticism in itself was not unacceptable to Nehru. ‘I am not afraid of the opposition in this country and I do not mind if opposition groups grow up on the basis of some theory, practice or constructive theme. I do not want India to be a country in which millions of people say “yes” to one man, I want a strong opposition.’

But leftism in India seemed to him an infantile phenomenon, a collection of odd elements united by frustration and a dislike of the Congress. The Socialists had no positive alternative to offer and contented themselves by giving petty trouble on minor issues to the government. Nehru was not prepared to endow them with popular sympathy by keeping them in jail and ordered their immediate release whenever they were arrested for disorderly demonstrations. ‘As for the Socialists, they continue to show an amazing lack of responsibility and constructive bent of mind. They seem to be all frustrated and going mentally to pieces.’

While office was corrupting the Congress, irresponsibility was corroding the opposition.

Of course, there is nobody and no group that can take our place, and yet we grow stale and the mere fact that we appear immovable annoys and irritates many people. It would be a good thing if they were given a chance to have some other people. Whether they will take their chance or not, it is for them to decide. But anyhow this will clear up the atmosphere.

The Socialists also sought to regard Nehru as standing apart from Patel and the other Congress leaders; but the Prime Minister, while pressing his colleagues in private to be more flexible and to agree to judicial inquiries in case of use of firearms by the police, presented a united front to the outside world. ‘All I can do’, Jayaprakash wrote to him, ‘is to wonder how far apart we have travelled in looking at things. No doubt I am academic and doctrinaire.’ They drew even further apart when a crisis developed in Nepal. The King of Nepal, until then a figurehead, fell out with the powerful Ranas and took refuge in the Indian Embassy, from where he was flown out to Delhi. With China consolidating her position in Tibet, Nepal was obviously a sensitive area. Nehru had always intended to make it clear that India’s strategic frontier lay on the northern side of Nepal, and any attack on Nepal would be regarded as aggression on India. Now an occasion had arisen which could be utilized to strengthen India’s position in Nepal, but clearly the cards would have to be played carefully. China was

10 Speech at Trivandrum, 2 June, National Herald, 3 June 1950.
11 Nehru to Chief Ministers, 15 August 1949.
12 To Patel, 30 June 1949.
13 To Krishna Menon, 1 July 1949.
14 18 October 1950.
on the alert, while the British Ambassador, who exercised a powerful influence in Nepal, was in sympathy with the Ranas. Nehru's policy was to compel the Ranas to carry out political reforms which would reduce their autocracy and to receive the King back, and to effect this by pressure rather than by open support of the Nepal Congress. It was not that Nehru disapproved of the Congress, but he did not wish to promote a messy and drawn-out situation of fighting between popular elements and the loyal Nepal army. So, when the Nepal Congress started a revolt and B. P. Koirala came to Delhi seeking military support, Nehru declined to see him but kept Koirala informed of his attempts to prevent a civil war and establish constitutional government in Nepal. Such efforts at subtlety angered Jayaprakash.

So this is how you wish to treat a democratic revolution in a neighbouring state! ... You are destroying yourself. One by one you are denying your noble ideals. You are compromising, you are yielding. You are estranging your friends and slipping into the parlour of your enemies ... And please learn to discipline your temper.16

At least on this occasion Nehru did not lose his temper and explained carefully to Jayaprakash the elements of the situation as he saw them.

I am distressed at the lack of understanding that you have shown and I am more than distressed by the astonishing stupidity of some of the things that the leaders of the Nepal Congress have been responsible for ... I quite agree with you that the opportunity of securing freedom for Nepal has come and that the trump cards are there. When I see this opportunity being almost lost and every kind of bungling being done by amateur politicians who know nothing about politics and less about insurrection, I have a right to be upset ... Nothing can stop a revolution in Nepal except the folly of those who are supporting it ... Widespread propaganda is being carried on by our opponents abroad to show that this is just an example of Indian imperialism and that we have engineered all this. This obviously can do a great deal of harm to the whole movement. We cannot ignore external forces at work against us. What Koirala suggested would have put an end to the idea of an indigenous movement and made it just an adventure of the Indian government.

That is just what I am afraid of. Adventurist tactics in politics or warfare seldom succeed. Daring does succeed and risks may be taken, but adventurism is infantile.16

Nehru’s policy was successful. The British Government, informed by Nehru that it might become almost impossible for him to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ Conference in January 1951 if they recognized the boy king, whom the Ranas had enthroned in place of his grandfather in exile,\(^{17}\) modified their attitude; the Ranas agreed to a compromise, and the king returned in triumph to Kathmandu. But the Socialists continued to be aggrieved.

The Communists were even fiercer during these years in their opposition to Nehru’s government. The escapist mood of the Socialists was as nothing compared with their disruptive tactics. For the first few months after the transfer of power, the Communist Party supported the new Government. Palme Dutt, still the mentor of Indian Communists, praised Nehru’s opposition to foreign intervention in India and his efforts to seek a basis for cooperation with Pakistan;\(^{18}\) and P. C. Joshi, the secretary of the Party, urged all progressives to rally round Nehru.\(^{19}\) But the attitude of the Soviet Union was different, and this was soon reflected in the attitude of the Communists. Foreigners are thought, at a meeting of the Indian Communist Party, to have denounced the Government of India and secured a change of communist leadership.\(^{20}\) Joshi was replaced in December 1947 by the more militant B. T. Ranadive, who first supported Nehru against what he described as the reactionary elements in the Congress,\(^{21}\) but later criticized ‘opportunist illusions about bourgeois leadership’ and attacked the Government as a whole. ‘In the absence of strong mass pressure from the left, Nehru’s utterances remain mere words and Nehru becomes more and more the democratic mask for Patel.’\(^{22}\) There should be violent opposition to the Government ‘in all spheres and on all fronts’, and by waging ‘serious, very serious battles’, power should be seized in a short time. ‘The day of veiled imperialism under the form of slave-controlled “independence” will not last long.’\(^{23}\)

The Communists then began, in March 1948, militant mass movements in various areas; and these appeared to Nehru to have developed into an anti-national campaign, worse than an open rebellion and aiming at total disruption which would result in widespread chaos, regardless of consequences.\(^{24}\)

I have not the least feeling against communism or against communists

\(^{17}\) Nehru’s telegram to Krishna Menon, reporting conversation with British High Commissioner, 24 November 1950.

\(^{18}\) Daily Worker, 8 October 1947.

\(^{19}\) Public statement, 9 October 1947.

\(^{20}\) See Nehru to Vijayalakshmi, 15 April 1948.

\(^{21}\) See his article in World News and Views, 6 December 1947.

\(^{22}\) C.P.I. Statement, 21 December 1947.

\(^{23}\) R. Palme Dutt in February 1948.

as such. As you know, the British Tory press often describes me as a pal of Stalin. But I must confess that the way the communists are carrying on in India in the shape of the most violent activity and writing is enough to disgust anyone. There is a complete lack of integrity and decency.26

This agitational activity lasted for nearly three and a half years and at its height seriously affected Telengana in Hyderabad, Travancore-Cochin, Tripura, Manipur, Malabar in Madras, Andhra and parts of west Bengal, Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. In Hyderabad the Communists seemed to be with the Razackars against the Indian army, denouncing the occupation of the State. ‘Sardar Patel’s army went to Hyderabad to stop the onward march of history, to save the Nizam and the oppressive feudal order, to save the bourgeois-feudal rule from the rising tide of the forces of the democratic revolution.’27 It was then decided to organize an upheaval all over India, built round a railway strike, on 9 March 1949, and Nehru was fiercely condemned for a ‘fascist offensive’ against the working class ‘at the dictates of Anglo-American capital’ and for a ‘policy of national treachery’.28 But the strike proved a failure, and from then on the agitation moved downhill, with the emphasis shifting to rural guerilla warfare, not violent action in the cities. Conditions remained disturbed in Telengana, and there seemed no intention of calling off the struggle. India was said to be still ‘a colonial and semi-feudal country’, with a government that represented ‘the anti-national big bourgeois and feudal classes’.29

Even with the Korean war and Nehru’s support for People’s China, there was no immediate shift in thinking. The Nehru Government was still condemned for ‘compromise, collaboration and national betrayal.’30 But Palme Dutt believed that Nehru’s foreign policy showed indications of divergence — ‘even though still hesitant and limited’ — from the imperialist war policy;31 and a few months later he advised the Indian Communist Party to move along an Indian path in relation to concrete Indian conditions.32 In October 1951 the Telengana struggle was finally called off.

Nehru was firm in resisting such activity and sabotage while it lasted, but was anxious to do so by open tactics. Obviously action would have to be taken against persons subverting law and order, but he insisted that this should be in accordance with normal legal processes. Repeatedly he urged

26 To Mountbatten, 4 August 1948.
28 C.P.I. statement, 2 March 1949.
29 C.P.I. statement, 7 April 1950.
32 *Cross Roads*, 29 June 1951.
the Chief Ministers to respect civil liberties.1 E.g. to S. K. Sinha, Chief Minister of Bihar, 8 June and to O. P. R. Reddiar, Chief Minister of Madras, 10 August 1948.

2 To G. Bardoloi, Chief Minister of Assam, 4 September 1948.


4 To Chief Ministers, 1 April 1948 and 16 April 1949.

5 Nehru to Roy, 13 May 1949.

6 "Question: Between communism and communalism, which is the lesser evil? Nehru: An extraordinary question to ask. Which do you prefer, death by drowning or falling from a precipice?" Report of press conference, 5 August, Hindustan Times, 6 August 1949.

7 To ban the Communist Party, as proposed by some, would only intensify its underground activities and by implying condemnation of its ideology evoke a measure of public sympathy. The Party had adopted a wrong course even from its own viewpoint, caused division in its ranks and isolated itself; as he said later, the greatest enemy of communism in India was the Communist Party of India.8 It was not for the Government to redress the balance at a time when momentous developments were taking place in China and the negotiations regarding the Commonwealth were at a delicate stage. There should not even be large-scale arrests, but individual members suspected of organizing trouble should be taken into custody.9

Only Bengal, under the determined but reactionary leadership of Bidhan Roy, ignored Nehru’s directive, banned the Communist Party and took recourse to repressive action. Nehru warned Roy:

There is always the grave danger of this kind of thing becoming almost a normal routine for our police. It is a slippery slope and the police have to be continually kept in check. There is no doubt in my mind that ultimately the only way to check and suppress all these violent and objectionable tendencies is to have a positive programme of approach to the people and that pure repression will fail.10

Communist leadership in India was to Nehru’s mind devoid of any moral standard or even any thought of India’s good; and for once he saw little difference between communism and communalism.11 But a distortion of leftist ideology, of which he thought the Communists guilty, could be defeated not at its own level but by a higher idealism. The real problem was something deeper than the killing and violence of the Communists; it was the need to deal with the economic distemper at a time when expectations had been aroused and a political consciousness had spread among vast masses of the people.

The point was driven home by a by-election in Calcutta, where the Congress candidate was routed. Everywhere the Congress, living on its
past prestige, was losing touch with the people, but nowhere more so than in Bengal; and old majorities in assemblies were to Nehru no solace for a general weakening of the moral fibre, and rule by repression. The Congress should be in office because the people wanted it and not merely because there was no other party worth mention. 'We as a government, whether at the Centre or in the Provinces, have no desire to continue governing people who do not want us. Ultimately, people should have the type of government they want, whether it is good or bad.'

The first personal reaction was one of weariness and vexation of spirit. 'There is', he had written in the spring of 1949, 'gradually back in India an air of optimism in spite of everything. Whether that is justified or not I do not know. But I share it and in any event that does create a helpful atmosphere.' This cheerfulness now slumped. 'Ever since I returned from England, I have had to face very heavy weather here. Somehow quite a number of difficult problems all collected together to bear down upon me. All this, added to the heat, has not made life very pleasant or agreeable. Here we carry on from day to day, thankful that that day is over and rather apprehensive of what the next day might bring.' But he was soon bouncing back.

Oddly enough, after a long period of something approaching depression I feel revitalized now. Why? Because I suppose things are pretty bad in so many directions and all the spirit of defiance and rebellion in me rises up to meet this challenge on whatever front it might exist. I am not, repeat not, going into a monastery. I am just going to fight my hardest against all this sloth and inertia and corruption and self-interest and little-mindedness that we see around us. Whether I or you succeed or not is after all a little matter. The main thing is throwing off one's energy into a struggle for something one considers worthwhile.

This even brought reward of a kind.

The world is a difficult place to live in wherever we might be, and life becomes more and more complicated with its unending problems. If we are fortunate, we can sometimes feel the fragrance of it and some glimpses of reality.

The first round of this struggle was a visit to Calcutta. Bidhan Roy believed that repression was the only answer to opposition and thought

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88 To N. R. Sarkar, acting Chief Minister of Bengal, 2 July 1949.
89 To Krishna Menon, 21 March 1949.
90 To Mountbatten, 29 June 1949.
41 To Asaf Ali, 2 July 1949.
42 To Maria Lorenzini, 2 July 1949.
that Nehru was weakening his position by displaying no resistance to communism. Roy, however, had to take leave on medical grounds and the ministers in charge could not prevent Nehru from coming to Calcutta and holding, despite their discouragement and a call from the opposition parties for a total boycott, a public meeting which was the largest even in Nehru’s memory. Though the police were in a state of acute nervous tension, the large crowd remained generally inert and passive. But the atmosphere in Bengal was saturated with suspicion, violence and a feeling of martyrdom. ‘The Bengali terrorist mentality of extreme emotionalism colours their so-called communist viewpoint and makes them look sometimes quite insane. There is a violence and an intense hatred looking out of their eyes.’ Nehru believed that his visit had, to some extent, exorcised their passions, helped towards restoring the general confidence and given the local Congress a healthy jolt. But Calcutta and Bengal were only part of the general problem of the decline of the Congress and of political standards.

Nehru’s own disillusion with the job-hunting, factional struggles and money-making in the Congress ranks was intense. ‘It is terrible to think that we may be losing all our values and sinking into the sordidness of opportunist politics.’ The Congress was converting itself from a party of broad principle to a narrow-minded caucus living on past capital. But resignation from office or abandonment of the Congress did not seem to him to be the answer. He had also persuaded R. A. Kidwai, who was closer to him than most others in the Cabinet, not to resign. Kidwai did not intend to join the Socialists, but he had been disappointed with the Congress and had wished to work from outside for its reform.

Nehru replied:

I am, I suppose, at least as much distressed by recent developments as you can possibly be. Indeed I shoulder a greater responsibility, so my distress is all the greater. I doubt myself if existing conditions can continue for long. Obviously I cannot run away from a difficult situation. So I have given the most intense thought to this matter. It will I think be very wrong and injurious for you either to resign immediately or to take part in the U.P. election campaign, or indeed to issue any statement. It is often better to be silent than to have one’s say.

The hostile postures of the Communists and the Socialists made it to Nehru all the more necessary to restore right direction to the Congress. For this reason he paid no heed to the advice of those such as Kingsley Martin,

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43 See his letter to Patel, 20 June 1949, Sardar Patel’s Correspondence, Vol. 6, pp. 152-3.
44 Nehru to Krishna Menon, 16 July 1949.
45 Nehru to Krishna Menon, 14 April 1948.
46 R. A. Kidwai to Nehru, 11 April 1948.
47 Nehru to Kidwai, 11 April 1948.
48 K. Martin to Nehru, 5 August 1948.
who wished him to divide the Congress and join forces with the Socialists. Though sometimes, in the depressed moods which regularly flitted across his quicksilver nature, he himself thought of taking the step against which he had advised Kidwai, he swiftly shook off these feelings of defeatism.

If I chose according to my own inclination, I would like other people to carry on the business here and to be left free to do some other things that I consider very important. Yet with all modesty, I think that my leaving might well be in the nature of a disaster. No man is indispensable, but people do make a difference at a particular time.40

It was as part of this effort to rally round him those in the Congress who shared his viewpoint that Nehru brought Rajagopalachari to Delhi. Nehru had not forgotten Rajagopalachari's weakening of the Congress in the years from 1942 to 1945.60 But he had been impressed by Rajagopalachari's balance and clarity of mind while holding office in the interim Government, and later as Governor of Bengal; and Rajagopalachari had officiated as Governor-General when Mountbatten was on leave for a fortnight, and had borne himself with unassuming dignity. Mountbatten too supported his name for the permanent vacancy.61 So, in the spring of 1948, Nehru offered Rajagopalachari the governor-generalship.

I have little doubt that we are rapidly deteriorating and becoming reactionary in our outlook and activities. Each step can often be justified by something else, but the net result is progressively bad. On account of all this sometimes I feel that it will be good for me as well as for India if I were out of the picture for a while.

I have been anxious for you to come here because I feel that you might help me a little to get my bearings. You know that I have often disagreed with you and I suppose we shall continue to disagree about many matters. But somehow these disagreements seem rather trivial when we come up against some basic factors. It is in regard to these that I want to seek your help and guidance.58

Rajagopalachari indicated his unwillingness and suggested that Nehru should be Governor-General and Patel Prime Minister.

* This would be an arrangement of great international value besides being an efficient arrangement for internal affairs. Much preferable to my appointment. You are big enough to understand the spirit in

40 Nehru to Krishna Menon, 24 August 1949.
41 'As for Rajagopalachari — is there a more dangerous person in all India'. Entry in Nehru’s diary maintained in Ahmednagar prison, 5 August 1944.
50 See Nehru to Rajagopalachari, 30 March 1948.
58 To Rajagopalachari, 6 May 1948.
which I suggest this. I feel your power will be greater in the set-up I propose which is what I want.\textsuperscript{63}

For once in those years, it would seem, Rajagopalachari had not dissembled his thoughts and had stated clearly that he would have preferred Patel as Prime Minister. But Nehru, without doubting his intent, brushed aside the suggestion and insisted that he succeed Mountbatten. So Rajagopalachari came to Delhi and got on well with Nehru. They shared a common viewpoint, in contrast to Patel, on the need to deal gently with the minorities; and this support was helpful because Patel represented the viewpoint of a large majority of Congressmen. The Hindu communal outlook, whose rapid spread in India caused Nehru more concern than anything else,\textsuperscript{64} had not been extinguished even in the higher levels of the Congress Party and was inspiring the decisions of the central and provincial governments. Both Bidhan Roy in Bengal and Patel had had to be snubbed for suggesting that the Pakistan Government be informed that if Hindus migrated from East Bengal, India would expel an equal number of Muslims from West Bengal.\textsuperscript{65} Mohanlal Saxena, an old colleague of Nehru, was the Union Minister for Rehabilitation; and he ordered the sealing of Muslim shops in Delhi and the United Provinces. To Nehru this was much more than merely an erroneous administrative decision.

I suppose you know me well enough to realize that the personal equation does not interfere very much with my impersonal reactions to events and things. I do not very much care what happens to me. If something that I care for goes wrong, in the ultimate analysis it is not important where I am and where you are . . . We deal and we have been dealing in the past two years with problems of tremendous psychological importance. People of little wit and no vision think of them in petty terms of rupees, annas and pies or of retaliation and the like, forgetting that we might thus be undermining our whole future and shattering such reputation as we may still have.

Personally I care little for what happens to me, but I do care a great deal for what I have stood for throughout my life. I have repeatedly failed and made a mess of things, but I hope I have not forgotten the major ideals which Gandhiji taught us. As I see things happening in India, in the Constituent Assembly, in the Congress, among young men and women, which take us away step by step from those ideals, unhappiness seizes me. Gandhiji’s face comes up before me, gentle but reproaching. His words ring in my ears. Sometimes I read his writings

\textsuperscript{63} Rajagopalachari’s telegram to Nehru, 12 May 1948.

\textsuperscript{64} ‘I am not alarmed at anything in the world today, but at this narrow-mindedness in the human mind in India. This is a most terrible thing.’ Speech to students of Allahabad University, 3 September, \textit{National Herald}, 4 September 1949.

\textsuperscript{65} Nehru to B. C. Roy, 25 August, and to Patel, 27 October 1948.
and how he asked us to stick to this or that to the death, whatever others said or did. And yet those very things we were asked to stick to slip away from our grasp. Is that to be the end of our lives’ labour? . . . All of us seem to be getting infected with the refugee mentality or worse still, the R.S.S. mentality. That is a curious finale to our careers.\textsuperscript{56}

It was in this context that Nehru relied heavily on Rajagopalachari. Moreover, Rajagopalachari’s conversation was stimulating; he was not above attempts at ingratiatiation;\textsuperscript{57} and he enjoyed the confidence of the Mountbattens. So Nehru favoured Rajagopalachari’s continuance as President after the promulgation of the Republic. But Rajagopalachari’s past vacillations had not been forgiven by the rank and file of the Congress; they preferred Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Constituent Assembly, a loyal party man but of inferior intellectual quality and with a social outlook which belonged to the eighteenth century. When this feeling in the Parliamentary Party in favour of Prasad surfaced, a surprised Nehru wrote to Prasad hinting that he should announce his lack of interest in the office and propose Rajagopalachari’s name. Prasad declined to oblige, and said he left it to Nehru and Patel to edge him out if they so desired. What Nehru did not know was that Patel favoured Prasad, and had arranged for a widespread expression of opinion in Prasad’s favour at an informal meeting of the Party. So Nehru had to accept defeat and let Rajagopalachari retire. But from the start relations between the new President and his Prime Minister were uneasy. Prasad’s known dislike of the Hindu Code Bill, reforming the personal laws of the Hindus, to which Nehru was fully committed, was only one indication of the wholly different viewpoints of the two men. Prasad objected to 26 January 1950 as the date for inaugurating the Republic on astrological grounds and drew a withering reply from Nehru.

I am afraid I have no faith in astrology and certainly I should not like to fix up national programmes in accordance with the dictates of astrologers. The change of date 26th January for another date would require a great deal of explanation and would not redound to our credit in the world or, for the matter of that, with large numbers of people in India. Many indeed would resent it greatly and there would be a bitter controversy from which we would not emerge happily. I rather doubt if millions and millions of men and women are represented by the writer of the letter sent to you. If they are so

\textsuperscript{56} Nehru to Mohanlal Saxena, 10 September 1949.

\textsuperscript{57} E.g., ‘I have pronounced the thousand names of God to bless you and your work.’ Rajagopalachari to Nehru on the latter’s birthday, 14 November 1948. ‘Your generosity, your trust and your affection have made life worth living for me. My only sorrow is that I should not deserve it all even more than I do.’ Rajagopalachari to Nehru, 25 May 1950.
represented, then we can either combat this delusion, if we consider it so, or allow others, who believe in astrology, to take charge of the destiny of the nation.88

TWO

There was also, throughout these years, the continuous work of framing the Constitution. While Nehru served as chairman of the committee of experts set up by the Congress in 1946 as well as of three special committees instituted by the Constituent Assembly, his major contribution was in settling the general lines on which the Constitution was to be drawn up. He drafted and moved in December 1946 the objectives resolution, stipulating that India would be an independent sovereign republic, free to draw up her own constitution, which would provide for all social, economic and political justice, equality of status and of opportunity and before the law and personal and civil liberties; and adequate safeguards would be ensured to the minorities and the tribal and backward areas. His interest thereafter was to see that the Constitution created a parliamentary democracy which would enable these objectives to be realized. The details he left to the lawyers and the specialists, interfering only occasionally and even then not insisting on acceptance of his viewpoint. He controlled the enthusiasts for Hindi and secured the retention of English as one of the official languages until at least 1965. "Language ultimately grows from the people; it is seldom that it can be imposed."89 He voiced the feeling of the majority in securing the rejection of proportional representation. Apart from the fact that in countries where it had been tried proportional representation had usually led to unstable governments, it was impracticable in India, from both the organizational viewpoint and that of the voter who would not understand it. He also favoured amendment of the Constitution by a simple majority in Parliament during the first five years, but did not feel strongly enough to move an amendment to this effect.90 He could not prevent the mention of the banning of cow-slaughter among the directive principles of state policy, although he, following Gandhi, regarded it as an aspect of Hindu revivalism.91

On two more serious issues, the difference in outlook between Nehru and Patel assumed prominence. Patel demanded that the privy purses sanctioned to the Princes as the price for accession be guaranteed to them by the Constitution for perpetuity. He felt so keenly about this that he was prepared, despite his illness, to come up from Bombay to sponsor this

88 27 September 1949.
91 See his letter to Rajendra Prasad, 7 August 1947. Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
clause in the Constituent Assembly. Nehru and the rest of the Cabinet thought it unrealistic to bind the country to pay these pensions, which amounted in 1949 to Rs 4.66 crores free of tax, for all time. 'I confess that I had not realized this fact of perpetuity before. I am not sure in my own mind if any government is capable of guaranteeing any payment in perpetuity.' But it was decided to postpone the final decision until Patel's return to Delhi; and in fact the commitment was formally made in the summer of 1950, when Nehru was away in Indonesia.

These lavish privy purses irked Nehru; but he was not prepared to repudiate them unilaterally. 'There is such a thing as a Government's word and a Government's honour.' What he hoped for was a voluntary surrender by the Princes of a large part of their privy purses. This, coupled with a similar reduction in the President's salary, would have a healthy psychological effect. As there was obviously no hope of the Princes themselves taking the initiative, Nehru wrote to them in the autumn of 1953 a long, educative letter with no specific proposal but a general argument which could only lead to one conclusion. He pointed out that, while covenants could not be set aside lightly, the rapid pace of events and the urgent demands of the times could also not be ignored. The continuance of a functionless group and the payment to it of large sums of money could not be justified by any moral, political or social theory. Apart from theory, in a democracy where the masses were growing in awareness and struggling hard to better their wretched lot, privy purses were an anachronism. 'Should we wait till the people put an end to this? Political wisdom consists in anticipating events and guiding them.'

Nehru's invitation to the Princes to make specific recommendations brought no response; so he wrote again the next year, making a 'minimum possible suggestion' of a voluntary contribution to the public revenue of ten to fifteen per cent of the privy purse, depending on its size. This again evoked no constructive reply, and during Nehru's term as Prime Minister, no way of even reducing this unproductive public expenditure could be found.

Property was the other controversial item. Nehru had opposed the listing of the right to property among the fundamental rights, but had to give in. From this arose the question of the right to compensation in case of expropriation of private property. Patel sent from Bombay a note arguing that the right to fair and equitable compensation was a logical

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63 Patel to Nehru, 9 August 1949.
64 Nehru to Patel, 11 August 1949.
65 Nehru to B. Ramakrishna Rao, 14 March 1953.
66 Nehru's note, 25 August 1952.
67 Nehru's letter to 102 Princes, 10 September 1953.
68 Nehru to Rajendra Prasad, 14 June 1954.
69 Nehru to the Princes, 15 June 1954.
consequence of the right to property. To remove all stimulus to private enterprise at that juncture in the country’s history was to sign the death-warrant of India. Nehru stopped the circulation of this note, presumably more because of its strong wording in favour of private property than because of any objection to the principle of compensation. There was no difference in the Congress Party on the latter issue. But Nehru, Pant and others who were eager to press forward with the abolition of the zamindari system wished to make it clear that it was for the legislature and not the courts to lay down the principles on which compensation should be paid. So Article 31 stipulated that the law must specify the compensation or the principles on which it should be paid. The courts would have no say unless the compensation was so grossly inadequate as to amount to a fraud on the right to property.

Patel appears to have been satisfied with this, but Nehru found later that there was enough room for the courts to hold up the land reform statutes; and as a result a revolutionary situation was being created in some rural areas. So in 1951 the Constitution was amended, enabling the acquisition of estates despite any inconsistency with fundamental rights. Even this did not fully shelter land legislation from judicial scrutiny. Nehru believed that there should be a ceiling on compensation.

My views about compensation for land are very definite. Beyond a certain figure, I do not think any compensation should be given. The whole social purpose of our land legislation is defeated if we give exorbitant compensation... We have got into strange ideas of thinking private property sacrosanct, and unfortunately our Constitution makes us partly succumb to these ideas. The only thing sacrosanct is the human being and other matters should be judged from the social point of view of human betterment.

This view was not shared by the Supreme Court. It held that if state action withheld any property from the possession and enjoyment of the owner or materially reduced its value, this amounted to deprivation which necessitated compensation. The Court also defined property very widely to include contractual rights; and it held that whether the compensation paid was a just equivalent was a justiciable issue. In 1955, therefore, the Constitution was again amended, at Nehru’s instance, debarring the courts from examining the adequacy of compensation; and it was also laid down that deprivation short of actual transfer of ownership could not be deemed to be compulsory acquisition entitling the owner to compensation.

*Patel’s note, 3 August 1949.*

*Nehru to G. Mavalankar, Speaker of Lok Sabha, 16 May 1951.*

*Nehru to K. N. Katju, 28 August 1953.*
THREE

The proclamation of the Republic on 26 January 1950 offered a new opportunity for fresh endeavour. For it fulfilled the pledge taken twenty years earlier, and Nehru’s colleague John Matthai drew his attention to what seemed to Nehru a very apposite text in the Bible: ‘And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof, it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his family.’ Of the messages of congratulation that came from abroad, the one which moved Nehru most was that from Malan:

This happy outcome to many years of struggle is above all due to the wise statesmanship of Mr Gandhi and yourself and to the firm determination to seek a settlement of India’s problems on a basis of negotiation and discussion rather than by other means. May the new Republic of India long continue to be inspired by this the example of her greatest sons.

Yet Nehru had no deep sense of exhilaration. Apart from the personal deprivation in the departure of Rajagopalachari, he sensed a reluctance in the country to confront the problems which were piling up on every side.

I entirely agree with you that as a people we have lost the public sense of social justice. To put it differently, our standards have fallen greatly. Indeed, we have hardly any standards left except not to be found out . . . We drift along calmly accepting things as they are. We see the mote in other people’s eyes and not the beam in our own or our friends’ eyes. We are strong in condemnation of those who are our opponents, but we try not to see the obvious faults of our friends. What are we to do? I confess my mind is not clear, although I have thought of this a great deal.

The inauguration of the Republic was an appropriate occasion for at least new resolves, for starting afresh with open minds and with open hearts even for those who differed from India, for deciding to function rightly and with integrity of mind. But even the desire to do well seemed to Nehru to be lacking.

On the eve of a new phase in our history, what is most necessary is a flaming enthusiasm for the tasks in hand — faith, confidence, energy and the spirit of concerted effort. Do we find any of these today in

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78 Leviticus, xxv, 10.
74 Nehru to B. G. Kher, 26 July 1949.
76 To Chief Ministers, 18 January 1950.
India? Certainly in some measure in some people. But, certainly also, a lack of all of them in most people most of the time. Disruptive forces grow and people’s minds are full of doubt as to what they should do and so they turn to criticism of others without doing much themselves. The tone of our public life goes down. We take the name of Gandhi, as we did before and as no doubt we shall continue to do in the future, and yet I often wonder what he would say if he saw us now and looked at the picture of India.

The Communists had practically become terrorists, the communalists had the same mental attitude as the Nazis and fascists, and the capitalists and landowning classes were singularly lacking in a social outlook. ‘We talk of capitalism and socialism and communism, and yet we lack the social content of all of these.’

This disappointment with the general mood gradually extended into a sense of his own isolation from the rank and file of the party. To Nehru the issue of secularism was always one on which no compromise was possible.

So far as I am concerned, my own mind is perfectly clear in these matters and I have viewed with dismay and sorrow the narrow and communal outlook that has progressively grown in this country and which shows itself in a variety of ways. I shall cease to be Prime Minister the moment I realize that this outlook has come to stay and that I cannot do my duty as I conceive it.

Such a moment now seemed to have been reached. A rapid increase in February 1950 of migration of Hindus from East Bengal was followed by a panic among Muslims in Calcutta and a mounting war fever in Pakistan. But Nehru, while fully prepared for every possible development, was keen that India should not be dragged into the vicious circle of mutual recrimination. ‘India-Pakistan relations are certainly pretty bad. I suppose we have to go through this business and live down our past karma in regard to it.’ But here was a chance for the new Republic to demonstrate its desire to make a fresh start. Rather than pay attention to the Security Council, which refused to come to grips with the basic facts of the Kashmir dispute, he made direct approaches to Pakistan and sought to secure a no-war declaration. He also telegraphed to Liaquat Ali Khan suggesting that the two Prime Ministers should together tour the two Bengalis. It was not a matter of arranging for the smooth transfer of populations, for, apart from

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76 To Chief Ministers, 2 February 1950.
77 Nehru to Mehr Chand Khanna, 6 June 1949.
78 Nehru to Sri Prakasa, 4 January 1950.
everything else, it seemed quite impossible for India once again to absorb and rehabilitate a few millions. The real necessity was to provide the Hindus of East Bengal with a sense of security so that they would remain where they were, and for this Nehru would have to don the mantle of Gandhi. Any such striking act was, however, in total discord with the views of a substantial section of the Congress Parliamentary Party which, even on such a subordinate issue as evacuee property, adopted an attitude which seemed to Nehru communal. So, acting on an idea which had been in his mind for sometime, Nehru offered to resign the prime ministership for at least a few months and visit East Bengal in a private capacity.

The Party has repeatedly made it clear by their [sic] speeches that they disapprove of much that we have done in regard to Pakistan. Now this is a very vital matter and I entirely disagree with many of the criticisms made by the Party. The difference is basic. If that is so then it is improper for me to continue guiding some policy which does not meet with the approval of members of the Party. On the other hand, I could not possibly act against my own convictions on vital issues . . . That is a negative approach to the problem. The positive approach is a strong and earnest desire on my part to spend some time in the Bengals. This is apart from that joint tour with Liaqat Ali Khan that I suggested. I think I could make a difference there and it is of the highest importance that we should not allow ourselves to be submerged by the Bengal problem. Hence I come to the conclusion that I should get out of office and concentrate on one or two matters in which I think I can be helpful. The principal matters would be the Bengal problem and Kashmir. I cannot do this as Prime Minister, more especially because the views of the Party are not in line with my own . . . I have considered all the arguments for and against and I suddenly realized that whatever I might do would bring a certain amount of confusion. In the balance, however, I am quite convinced that I would serve the cause of our country much better today in a private capacity than in the public office that I hold . . . I wish to repeat that, constituted as I am, I find it more and more difficult not to take some such action.81

Patel sought to dissuade him with little effect.

I have no illusions about my ability to stop the course of fate, if fate it is, or break the chain of action and circumstances. Yet I have, at the same time, some faith in myself, if I throw myself into a task with all the strength and energy that I possess. There is this positive feeling in

80 See Nehru to John Matthai, 29 December 1949.
81 Nehru to Patel, 20 February 1950, with a copy to the President, Dr Prasad.
me that I must devote myself to this Bengal problem and do so on the spot. The problem itself demands that. But in addition to that, the memory of Bapu and all he did in Bengal comes back to me and I grow restless and unhappy . . . it is time we all shook ourselves up. We grow too complacent and smug. We want a little fire in our minds and in our activity.\textsuperscript{82}

But the personal crisis was postponed by Liaqat Ali Khan's rejection of the proposal for a joint visit and there was no hope of Pakistan permitting Nehru to wander about on his own in East Bengal.

The exodus of Hindus from that State continued and Nehru, instead of being a messenger of peace, was forced to think in terms of even war being better than a tame submission to fate and tragedy.\textsuperscript{83} In his first draft of a statement to be made in Parliament he had hinted at resignation: 'It may be that I can serve these causes better by some other method than is open to me at present or in some other capacity than I occupy. I am deeply troubled by recent events and my mind is constantly trying to find out how best I can discharge my duty and my obligation to my people.' Patel requested him to revise this paragraph as it would cause bewilderment and, even from Nehru's own point of view, weaken the shock therapy by providing advance information. So Nehru reworded these sentences, but in a manner which hinted at not merely resignation but war as well:

If the methods we have suggested are not agreed to, it may be that we shall have to adopt other methods. I am deeply troubled by recent events and my mind is constantly trying to find out how best I can serve these causes and discharge my duty and my obligation to my people.\textsuperscript{84}

So Nehru was ready to face war and to let this be known. The Government of India redeployed the army in fresh dispositions which did not long remain a secret from Pakistan. The British Government were also informed, with the obvious intention of the message reaching Pakistan, that if confidence were not restored expeditiously and effectively among the minorities in Pakistan, Parliament and public opinion would force the Government of India to undertake the protection of the minority in East Bengal.\textsuperscript{85} Yet Nehru strove not to be driven into war on what was basically a communal issue. The Hindus continued to leave East Bengal and the situation in West Bengal, as well as in some other parts of northern India,

\textsuperscript{82} Nehru to Patel, 21 February 1950.
\textsuperscript{83} To C. Rajagopalachari, 21 February 1950.
\textsuperscript{85} Bajpai's telegram to Krishna Menon, 25 February 1950.
deteriorated. Muslims in India began to lose their sense of security and mass hysteria spread among the general population. Nehru, because of his efforts to break the spiral of inhumanity, was the recipient of a large mail of abusive letters and even threats of assassination. ‘An evil fate seems to pursue us, reducing many of us to the level of brutes.’

The answer obviously lay in some common effort by India and Pakistan to create confidence in the minorities in each State. Nehru, despite the rebuff of his first proposal by Liaquat Ali Khan and considerable opposition from some members of his Cabinet, proposed a joint declaration by the two governments. There being again no constructive response from Pakistan, Nehru wrote to Attlee, hoping that the British Government would help him out. What he wanted was not their mediation, and he rejected Krishna Menon’s suggestion that Lord Addison come out and be present at any talks between India and Pakistan. But he hoped that Britain would bring pressure to bear on Pakistan to negotiate with India. To Nehru Attlee sent only a general disapproval of theocratic states; but on Liaquat Ali Khan he seems to have urged negotiations.

Baffled, and nostalgic for the days when he was a popular leader unloaded with office, Nehru once again acted on his hunch and wrote formally to the President indicating his resolve to resign.

I feel that I have practically exhausted my utility in my present high office and that I can serve my country and my people better in other ways. My heart is elsewhere and I long to go to the people and to tell them how I feel. If they accept what I say, well and good. If not, then also I shall have done what I felt like doing... It is my intention, soon after the Budget is passed, to offer you my resignation, and together with it, the resignation of the present Cabinet. Thereupon a new Council of Ministers will have to be formed. I would beg of you then not to charge me with this responsibility.

That the intention to resign was serious is substantiated by Nehru’s letters to Vijayalakshmi, Krishna Menon and Bajpai directing them not to resign their posts along with him. Though the immediate purpose of resignation had been thwarted in February by Liaquat Ali Khan, perhaps there might be some advantage in administering a ‘psychological shock’ to the people. Something had to be done, and functioning on a different plane seemed a gamble worth taking, if only for lack of any other remedy.

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86 To Aruna Asaf Ali, 12 March 1950.
87 See Nehru to G. S. Bajpai, 13 March 1950.
88 Nehru to Attlee, 20 March, Krishna Menon’s telegram to Nehru, 27 March, and Nehru’s telegram to Krishna Menon, 28 March, and letter, 30 March 1950; Attlee to Nehru, 29 March 1950.
89 Nehru to President Rajendra Prasad, 20 March 1950.
89 To Vijayalakshmi and Krishna Menon, 20 March, and Bajpai, 21 March 1950.
90 See his letters to Sri Prakasa, 5 March, and to Rajagopalachari, 10 March 1950.
Thinking of this Bengal problem, as well as all that has gone before it and might possibly follow after it, I am filled with deep distress and a sense of failure. All the ideals we have stood for in the past seem gradually to fade away and new urges and emotions fill the people. Circumstance drives us onward from one position to another, each further away from what we used to consider our anchor. We cannot run away from the task that history sets us. But a cruel destiny seems to pursue us and nullify all our efforts.\(^{98}\)

Nehru, however, changed his mind about resignation when he discovered that intrigues were afoot to push him out of office. Patel, though he accepted the secular ideal, attached more blame to Pakistan than Nehru did; and he also believed that the Muslims in India should be obliged to assert and give proof of their loyalty. But to Nehru it was patently wrong to seek guarantees of loyalty; that could not be produced to order or by fear but could come only as a natural product of circumstances, and it was for the majority, in India or in Pakistan, to create such circumstances. This difference of approach was not merely voiced in the Cabinet but reflected in discussions in the Party and in the conduct of senior officials. It was reported that Patel had convened a meeting of Congressmen in his house at which he had been strongly critical of Nehru’s policy and disclaimed any responsibility for it. The officials of Patel’s line of thinking took their cue from this, and V. P. Menon was said to have spoken to the British and American envoys of the near prospect of war.\(^{99}\) So Nehru now wrote to Patel not of resigning but of referring the whole issue to the Working Committee and an emergency meeting of the AICC or even a full session of the Congress. They had pulled together, despite differences of temperament and viewpoint, in the larger interest and because of Gandhi’s wishes; but now

new developments have taken place which have made me doubt seriously whether this attempt at joint working serves a useful purpose or whether it merely hinders the proper functioning of Government... As a Government we seem to be fading out of the picture and people publicly say that our Government has contradictory policies and, as a result, no policy at all. The belief that retaliation is a suitable method to deal with Pakistan or what happens in Pakistan is growing. That is the surest way to ruin in India and Pakistan... In these circumstances, the fact that you and I pull in different directions, and in any event the belief that we do so, is exceedingly harmful... The matter is far too important for a decision by individuals. It involves national policy. The Party of course must have a say in the matter.

\(^{98}\) Nehru to Chief Ministers, 19 March 1950.
\(^{99}\) See Nehru to V. P. Menon, 29 March 1950.
When Patel protested his loyalty, Nehru replied that he was troubled by something more basic and fundamental.

The personal aspect is that in spite of our affection and respect for each other, we do things differently and therefore tend to pull differently in regard to many matters... The second, impersonal aspect is the drift in the country, whether it is governmental, Congress or other... I see every ideal that I have held fading away and conditions emerging in India which not only distress me but indicate to me that my life's work has been a failure...

However, the mood of abdication had given way to a determination to stop the rot and give a different direction to events. Authorizing strong action and even, if necessary, the imposition of martial law in parts of West Bengal, Nehru invited Liaqat Ali Khan to Delhi. The only choices open were war, a massive exchange of populations, international intervention or negotiation. War, even a successful one, would result in no gain and would be regarded in the world as initiated by India; a transfer of minorities was neither feasible nor desirable; intervention by other powers was unwelcome; so it only remained to negotiate with Pakistan and devise a machinery for implementing whatever assurances could be secured. But if India was to negotiate with any confidence, the internal situation had first to be toned up. A proclamation of emergency was kept ready for West Bengal, and the governments of other provinces were ordered to control communal pressures and request those officials who did not accept this policy to leave the service. 'For my part, my mind is clear in this matter and, so long as I am Prime Minister, I shall not allow communalism to shape our policy, nor am I prepared to tolerate barbarous and uncivilized behaviour.' The Government of India themselves, both ministers and officials, were divided in counsel and action. 'Things here,' reported Nehru from Delhi to Rajagopalachari, 'are in a perfect jam or, to put it differently, they seem to be moving in various directions at their sweet will. The outlook is none too hopeful.' But, fortunately, Liaqat Ali Khan accepted the invitation and arrived in Delhi; and Nehru got the chance to seek an understanding.

What made this easier was that Liaqat Ali Khan too seemed to shy away from the brink of war and was as keen on a settlement as Nehru. The talks lasted a week and eleven drafts were produced before an agreement was finally signed. Liaqat Ali Khan was at pains to contend that Pakistan was a democratic state and that was meant by an Islamic state was that

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84 Nehru to Patel, 26 March, Patel to Nehru, 28 March, and Nehru to Patel, 29 March 1950.
85 Telegram to B. C. Roy, 26 March, and letter, 29 March 1950.
86 Telegram to Liaqat Ali Khan, 26 March 1950.
87 To Chief Ministers, 1 April 1950.
88 1 April 1950.
Muslims would have their personal laws, but no special privileges. Azad asked him to affirm this in public and Liaqat Ali Khan replied that he was prepared to make this perfectly clear at any time, though he could not denounce the concept of an Islamic state. The Indian side pressed for a joint commission for East Bengal, West Bengal and Assam to secure fair treatment of minorities, but Liaqat Ali Khan was willing to go no further than joint meetings of two separate commissions, his fear being that a joint commission might create the impression that this was the first step to the unification of Bengal.\footnote{Nehru to B. C. Roy, 4 April 1950.} Azad proposed that there should be ministers for minority affairs in the two Bengals. Liaqat’s response was that the principle should be accepted for the two countries and not just for the two Bengals; but the idea of a minister for minority affairs in the central Government met with vehement opposition in the Indian Cabinet. ‘I am quite sure that the party will not accept it and the country will not swallow this bitter pill. We have conceded one Pakistan; that is more than enough. We cannot promote any further such mentality, let alone do anything which will perpetuate it.’\footnote{Patel to N. G. Ayyanger, 6 April 1950.}

The agreement signed on 8 April reiterated the policy of both governments to ensure complete equality of citizenship to minorities. Migrants would be given all facilities and not deprived of their immovable property. Commissions of inquiry would be established to report on the disturbances and, to prevent their continuance, each government would depute a minister to the affected areas. Representatives of the minority communities would be included in the cabinets of East Bengal, West Bengal and Assam and minority commissions constituted.

Nehru was aware of the imperfections in the agreement, but he believed that it expressed the desire of the large majority in India, which was eager for peace and better relations with Pakistan. So his despondency vanished. ‘Do not give up hope about me so easily. I have still enough energy and strength left in me to face many storms and I have every intention of overcoming and controlling the present storm.’\footnote{To Sri Prakash, 6 April 1950.} The agreement should be implemented without reserve as it afforded the first chance since 1947 to set relations with Pakistan on a new road. ‘We have to go full steam ahead. We have taken a turn in life’s journey, so far as our nation is concerned, and it would be foolish for us now to loiter or linger on the way or to hesitate.’\footnote{To Gopinath Bardoloi, Chief Minister of Assam, 8 April 1950.} He tried to persuade Syama Prasad Mookerjee and, even more, K. C. Neogy, the members of the Cabinet who disapproved of the talks with Liaqat, not to resign, but to accept the agreement, however unsatisfactory, and work it.\footnote{To K. C. Neogy, 7 April and to S. P. Mookerjee, 12 April 1950.}
At this moment, however, it was Patel who stole the scene. He had earlier been in favour of a military occupation of East Bengal but had given up the idea on hearing of terrorization of Muslims in West Bengal, for this to him deprived India of any moral authority to take action against Pakistan.\(^{104}\) Once an agreement had been reached, he appealed at the meeting of the Party, though without success, to the two Bengali ministers to remain in office, for both honour and self-interest demanded that India should fully implement the agreement; not to do so would bring not only discredit but harm, and to do so half-heartedly would bring discredit and no benefit. Then, in contrast to Rajagopalachari who declined Nehru’s suggestion that he visit the two Bengals unless he was given ‘an independent and higher position’ than that of a mere minister,\(^{105}\) Patel visited Calcutta, calmed Bengali opinion, and secured support for the agreement from quarters which refused to listen to Nehru. ‘Vallabhbhai’, remarked Nehru, ‘has been a brick during these days.’\(^{106}\) Patel proved that, whatever his personal prejudices, he would abide by his last promise to Gandhi to support Nehru, and was equal to the demands of circumstance. It was at this time that he stood forth in the full stature of his greatness.

At the start, the agreement worked well, particularly on the Pakistan side. Dawn, the leading newspaper of Karachi, ‘has undergone a sea change for the better’\(^{107}\) and dropped its vituperative tone. A meeting of Indian and Pakistani editors in Delhi ended in much fraternizing, ‘Literally these fire-eaters wept on each other’s shoulders and became quite soppy. How extraordinarily emotional our people are.’\(^{108}\) The migrations from both sides diminished in number, and Nehru urged some prominent Congressmen from East Bengal to go back.\(^{109}\) A temporary trade agreement was also concluded. ‘There is no doubt’, reported Nehru, ‘that the Agreement and what has followed it have changed the whole atmosphere of India and Pakistan. It has brought immediate relief to millions and a certain glimmering hope for the future.’\(^{110}\)

The first setback to the new understanding between the two countries came soon after, when Liaqat Ali Khan visited the United States and he and his wife made speeches which Patel regarded as a ‘diabolical breach’ of the Delhi agreement.\(^{111}\) Nehru sent Liaqat Ali Khan a telegram of protest, but the Indian Ambassador, Vijayalakshmi, did not deliver it as the speeches were being revised for publication.

\(^{104}\) H. V. R. Iengar (then Home Secretary), ‘Bangladesh’, Swarajya (Madras) annual number, 1972.
\(^{105}\) Rajagopalachari to Nehru, 14 April 1950.
\(^{106}\) To Rajagopalachari, 14 April 1950.
\(^{107}\) Nehru to Sri Prakasa, 16 April 1950.
\(^{108}\) Nehru to Krishna Menon, 8 May 1950.
\(^{109}\) See his letter to P. C. Ghosh, 19 April 1950.
\(^{110}\) Nehru to Chief Ministers, 2 May 1950.
\(^{111}\) Nehru to Rajagopalachari, 11 May 1950.
FOUR

The Kashmir issue had also got bogged down; but this being a national conflict, which had nothing to do with the communal aspect of the problem between the two Bengals, there was to Nehru no question of a compromise. Secularism demanded both the retention of Kashmir and the avoidance of war in the east. Nehru had hoped, in place of McNaughton, for a single mediator rather than an arbitrator. Sir Owen Dixon, an Australian jurist, was appointed by the United Nations to mediate. Dixon’s impartiality was beyond doubt, but his approach was legalistic without regard to the principles or the practical difficulties involved. Agreement on the preliminaries for an overall plebiscite proving impossible because of his inclination, despite recognition that Pakistan’s actions in Kashmir were contrary to international law, to permit Pakistan to retain some of the advantages of her presence in Kashmir, Dixon sought to arrange zonal plebiscites. India’s willingness to consider this was quickly dissolved by Dixon’s proposal, which Nehru promptly rejected, to replace the regular government of Kashmir by an administrative body consisting of officers of the United Nations. In fact, Pakistan virtually ceased to think in terms of any settlement. Liaqat informed Dixon that public opinion in Pakistan would never permit him to concede the Valley to India, and there was nothing Pakistan could offer to India to induce her to give up the Valley. Nehru’s reaction was ‘to go back to where we started from’ and, instead of the ‘Alice in Wonderland business’ of vague proposals for replacing the existing government in Kashmir, consider the ‘fundamental realities’ of the situation.

Dixon himself confessed that he could think of no solution. But his report was, on the whole, unjust to India. He acknowledged that Pakistan had been guilty of aggression in Kashmir, but concluded that no fair plebiscite could be held unless the government in Kashmir was changed. He did not take note of India’s offer that no arrests or detentions, even in the normal course of maintaining law and order, would be effected before and during the period of plebiscite without the approval of the plebiscite commission, and refused to see that a change of government would in itself influence the voting and be regarded as the beginning of Pakistan’s final victory. Dixon’s ‘astonishing’ formula amounted to converting the Valley and other parts of Kashmir into ‘a kind of half Pakistan’ even before the plebiscite.

So Nehru rejected outright the suggestion to replace the Kashmir

118 Nehru’s telegram to Bajpai in New York, 7 January 1950.
119 Nehru’s telegram to Dixon, 16 August 1950 and Bajpai’s note on conversation with Dixon, 19 August 1950.
114 Press conference in Delhi, 24 August, National Herald, 25 August 1950.
115 See Rau’s telegram to Bajpai, 13 September 1950.
116 Nehru to Chief Ministers, 1 November 1950.
DOMESTIC PRESSURES

Government. His faith in the United Nations was rapidly evaporating.

I am a little tired of the intrigues and various moves of Britain, the United States etc. in Kashmir and have lost interest in them. It should be made perfectly clear to Britain that we are not prepared to change our position in the slightest degree . . . This Kashmir question would have been settled long ago but for the pro-Pakistan attitude and activities of Britain and some other countries.¹¹⁷

If a solution could not be attained by agreement between the parties concerned, the alternative was a continuing stalemate; for India had ruled out war, and though Pakistan declined to sign a no-war declaration, Liaquat Ali Khan had declared that Pakistan would not attack India. Nehru’s general policy now was to try and improve relations between the two countries in every way without giving in on any important or vital issue. Looking at a world where every problem got mixed up with others, it seemed to Nehru an achievement just to hold on and prevent a worsening of the situation.

FIVE

Nehru also utilized the crisis in East Bengal to carry through a cleansing and toning up of the Congress Party. The decay in the character and discipline of the Party was particularly noticeable in the United Provinces, where the organization was, from the start, riven by cliques and individual ambition. He had urged Kidwai and Purushottam Das Tandon not to pit themselves against each other publicly and, while his sympathy lay with Kidwai, he had appealed to Tandon to show a greater spirit of accommodation.

We should at least try to understand each other as we have done in the past, even though we might not wholly agree. I hope that however we might differ in our views, we have respect and affection for each other and that after all is the fundamental thing in human relationships. All of us have to carry our burden ourselves and decide what course we have to pursue in this dense jungle that is called public life and public affairs.¹¹⁸

But such advice was little heeded by any of the groups. Worse, when the mass migration of Hindus from East Bengal began in the spring of 1950, a narrow, bigoted outlook invaded the U.P. Congress. Even the State

¹¹⁷ To B. N. Rau, 17 November 1950.
¹¹⁸ Nehru to Tandon, 7 June 1948.
Government was not immune; despite repeated directives from Nehru, it took little action to curb Hindu communalism and, as a result, over 200,000 Muslims began to migrate from the province. Tandon, now President of the provincial Congress, called upon Muslims, even after the signing of the agreement with Liaqat Ali Khan, to adopt ‘Hindu culture’.

People die and the fact of killing, though painful, does not upset me. But what does upset one is the complete degradation of human nature and even more, the attempt to find justification for this . . . Indeed the U.P. is becoming almost a foreign land for me. I do not fit in there. The U.P. Congress Committee, with which I have been associated for thirty-five years, now functions in a manner which amazes me. Its voice is not the voice of the Congress I have known, but something which I have opposed for the greater part of my life. Purushottam Das Tandon, for whom I have the greatest affection and respect, is continually delivering speeches which seem to me to be opposed to the basic principles of the Congress . . . communalism has invaded the minds and hearts of those who were pillars of the Congress in the past. It is a creeping paralysis and the patient does not even realize it . . . The fact of the matter is that for all our boasts, we have shown ourselves a backward people, totally lacking in the elements of culture, as any country understands them. It is only those who lack all understanding of culture, who talk so much about it.\(^{119}\)

Such protests and exhortations had little, if any, impact, and the deterioration in the spirit of the Congress in the U.P. and elsewhere continued. Pant, though personally close to Nehru, was not as firmly opposed to communalism as Nehru would have liked, and the Prime Minister planned to move him from the U.P. and bring him to the central Cabinet. Muslims who had been given personal assurances by Nehru were harassed by officials of the central Ministry of Rehabilitation. ‘Human beings are more important than property and the word of a prime minister ought to have some importance in this country.’\(^{120}\) Patel himself, after his splendid showing in the East Bengal crisis, was relapsing into his old attitude of suspecting the loyalty of Muslims in India.\(^{121}\) It seemed to Nehru that, whether because of the inherent weakness of the people or the self-complacency of the leaders, the country generally and the Congress Party in particular were going to pieces. ‘We have lost something, the spirit that moves and unless we recapture that spirit, all our labour will yield little profit.’\(^{122}\)

\(^{119}\) Nehru to Pant, 17 April 1950.
\(^{120}\) Nehru to Mohanlal Saxena, 18 April 1950.
\(^{122}\) Nehru to B. C. Roy, 8 July 1950.
Matters came to a head in August 1950 with manoeuvres for the election of the president for the annual session of the Congress. None of the candidates, Tandon, Kripalani and Shankarrao Deo, inspired any enthusiasm; but Nehru believed that it would be Tandon's election which would be the most harmful. So he took the honest course of writing directly to Tandon.

The Congress is in a bad way and, unless some steps to rejuvenate it are taken, is likely to fade away. As it is, it seems to have lost such inner strength that it possessed and we are concerned chiefly with faction fights and manoeuvring for position and place. It is sad to see this great organization function in this petty way... It has been our misfortune during the past two or three years or so to have drifted apart to some extent... Probably you think that much that I say or do is wrong. For my part, I have often read your speeches with surprise and distress and have felt that you were encouraging the very forces in India which, I think, are harmful... I think the major issue in this country today, if it is to progress and to remain united, is to solve satisfactorily our own minority problems. Instead of that, we become more intolerant towards our minorities and give as our excuse that Pakistan behaves badly... Unfortunately, you have become, to large numbers of people in India, some kind of a symbol of this communal and revivalist outlook and the question rises in my mind: Is the Congress going that way also? If so, where do I come into the picture, whether it is the Congress or whether it is the Government run by the Congress? Thus this larger question becomes related to my own activities.

It became, therefore, as he saw it, his public duty to give expression to his opinion about Tandon's unsuitability for the presidency.128

Tandon, however, had the support of Pant and the U.P. ministry as well as of Patel, who wrote to Nehru not to oppose Tandon but to talk to him about their differences. But Nehru refused to weaken, this being to him not a personal matter but the major issue of stopping the inner rot in the Congress.124 He informed Patel that if Tandon were elected he might find it difficult to continue as a member of the Working Committee or even of the Government and issued a public statement which made clear where his sympathies lay. 'I have committed myself so far that I cannot possibly continue as I am if Tandon is elected. If I did so, I would be completely helpless and no one would attach much value to me or to what I said or did.'126

128 Nehru to Tandon, 8 August 1950.
124 Patel to Nehru, 9 August, and Nehru's reply of the same date.
126 To Krishna Menon, 25 August 1950.
The election was now generally interpreted not solely as a clash between individual viewpoints but as a tussle for supremacy between Nehru and Patel.\(^{186}\) So, with Tandon's victory, all seemed set for the kill. Nehru himself was willing to give in.

I cannot possibly continue to function as I have done when I receive a public slap on my face and an expression of Congress disapproval of what I stand for... There is no point in my being Prime Minister in these circumstances. I shall be frustrated and disheartened and totally ineffective.\(^{187}\)

But, even if he continued in office, his opponents were confident that they could diminish his effective authority. Indeed, this would have suited them better than Nehru's total withdrawal, and there is a strong hint of a gang up against Nehru for this purpose. Patel, believing that Nehru, as in Gandhi's time, would adjust himself to the new situation, offered to make defeat less galling by issuing with Nehru a joint statement to the press that no personal issues were involved in Tandon's election.\(^{188}\) Rajendra Prasad, as President, delayed assent to the Bihar Land Bill which had been strongly recommended to him by the Cabinet meeting without Patel, and Nehru had to force the President's hand, despite a protest from Patel, by threatening the resignation of himself and the Government.\(^{189}\) Rajagopalachari, whom Nehru had brought back in the summer as minister without portfolio because he seemed the one senior leader who supported Nehru's secular policy and enjoyed the friendship of the Mountbattens and of Sir Archibald Nye, the British High Commissioner,\(^{180}\) and Lady Nye, was now characteristically playing both sides. Nehru had objected to the Home Ministry's proposal that Muslim officials who wished to visit Pakistan should secure permission because this would suggest a general lack of confidence in those officials. Rajagopalachari informed Nehru that he wholly agreed with him, but wrote to Patel that he thought the proposal was reasonable but should not be pressed in view of the Prime Minister's strong views on the subject.\(^{181}\) Patel forwarded Rajagopalachari's letter to

\(^{186}\) Cf. K. Hanumanthaiya, then Chief Minister of Mysore, to Tandon, 22 August 1950: 'So far as Mysore votes are concerned, almost to a man, they will stand by you and by the policies you have publicly propounded. I had also [a] discussion with Sardar Patel. I expect you and the Sardar to work unitedly in all matters affecting the destinies of our country and lead us all out of the chaos and confusion that Pandit Nehru's leadership has landed us in.' Tandon Papers, N.A.I.


\(^{189}\) Nehru to Rajendra Prasad, 11 September and Rajendra Prasad's reply of the same date, Patel to Nehru, 11 September, and Nehru to Patel, 12 September 1950.

\(^{180}\) Sir Archibald Nye had earlier been Governor of Madras.

\(^{181}\) Patel to Nehru, 11 September, Nehru to Patel, 12 September, Patel to Nehru, 13 September, Nehru to Patel, 14 September, and Patel to Nehru, with two enclosures, 16 September 1950.
Nehru, and this gave Nehru the first clear indication that Rajagopalachari’s personal loyalty to him was not cast-iron.

When he became aware that he was being pushed into surrender or continuance in office without power, Nehru accepted battle and conducted the fight with a political skill which was not generally associated with him. He had both a relish for conflict and a killer instinct. He did not meekly hand over his resignation or agree to remain on the terms hinted at by his antagonists.188 Rather, with a series of hard-hitting speeches,188 he secured acceptance by the Congress bodies of resolutions which all expressed his own viewpoint. Then, fortified by this, he declined to serve on the Working Committee formed by the new President. He also seriously considered depriving Patel of the States Ministry. He drafted a letter drawing Patel’s attention to the reports that pressure had been applied on governments in the erstwhile States to secure votes for Tandon. The States Ministry functioned as a general overlord over the State governments, assuming authority in matters which properly pertained to other ministries, and referred matters to the Cabinet only very rarely. Hyderabad, in particular, was being administered as an estate by a local government set up by the States Ministry and acting under its orders.

We have developed in these States a peculiar form of government which is certainly not democratic and is at the same time not directly under the Government of India . . . Then there is the fact that all this tremendous burden, and together with it the other great burden of the Home Ministry, rests on you. Your shoulders are broad enough, but it is inevitable that you cannot have the time or energy to pay special attention to the many important matters that arise. The result is likely to be that much is disposed of without your knowledge or with only a brief reference to you. I should like you to give thought to these matters so that we can discuss them at a later stage.184

The letter was not sent, probably because Nehru knew that Patel was by now a dying man; but he let it be known through Rajagopalachari that he was dissatisfied with the conduct of the States Ministry, particularly in Hyderabad.185 He also wrote directly to Patel on the same lines, but without

188 Later, Nehru stated that he had decided to continue in office principally because of his interest in foreign affairs: 'I think that I can do something in the international field.' Speech at Lucknow, 3 October, National Herald, 4 October 1950. This was for him to underrate his own political vitality and instinct for resistance.

189 E.g., 'If democracy means surrendering one's judgement to the crowd, then let this democracy go to hell. I will fight such mentality wherever it raises its head. Yes, democracy can ask me to quit the prime ministership. I will obey this order. If Congressmen think of giving up their ideal simply for the consideration of a few votes in the coming elections, then the Congress will become lifeless. I do not need such a corpse.' Speech at the Congress session at Nasik, 21 September, National Herald, 22 September 1950.

188 Draft letter to Patel, 28 September 1950.

188 To Rajagopalachari, 13 October 1950.
any suggestion of divesting him of the States portfolio.\footnote{Two letters to Patel on 19 October 1950 and again on 29 October 1950.} He agreed to serve on the Working Committee but made known his disapproval of the selection of many other members by Tandon, and claimed the right to raise basic issues at the first meeting of the new committee. ‘Having acted against my own logic and inner urge as well as my intuitive feeling in the matter, I feel as if I had done something wrong, that I had indulged in something approaching disloyalty to myself.’ He could only continue as a member if he felt that the situation in the Congress would be grasped in the way he wanted and a new turn given to the organization.\footnote{To Tandon, 16 October 1950.}

\section*{SIX}

Over all these personal and political confrontations lay the need to work out a plan to ensure economic progress. If this was started satisfactorily, other issues would gradually fall into what were really minor places. In the early years, with crises seeming to threaten India’s existence, the struggle for national survival pushed all else to the background. ‘All I can do is to hope and work and pray.’\footnote{Nehru’s remark in 1950, quoted in Y. Menuhin, \textit{Unfinished Journey} (London, 1977), p. 254.} But even then, Nehru did not forget the crucial significance of planning.

We have many important preoccupations, but the fundamental and basic problem still continues to be the economic problem. This may well break us if we cannot deal with it satisfactorily. We have at present no method of dealing with it properly. Our effort to have a Cabinet committee on the subject has been a complete failure. It is no one’s responsibility to look on the broad economic picture and to suggest ways and means of tackling our economic problems as a whole.\footnote{Nehru to Patel, 6 June 1948.}

The Government were doing no more than watch passively the continuous rise of the cost of living index.\footnote{Nehru’s note to Cabinet, 26 June 1948.} He suggested to the Cabinet that it approve the appointment of a minister for social and economic affairs, with no administrative functions and solely to give continuous consideration to economic problems. He would be assisted by a council of economic advisers who would collect and coordinate data and statistics and look at the picture as a whole.\footnote{Nehru’s note for Cabinet, 4 August 1948, Prime Minister’s Secretariat File 37(114)/54-PMS Vol. II, Serial 1A.} Nehru saw this as a prelude to the establishment of suitable machinery for the consideration of economic problems, but the
8 Nehru, Patel and Pant, Congress session, December 1948

9 Nehru and Eden, Delhi, 22 March 1949
10 Commonwealth prime ministers at Downing Street, London, April 1949

11 Nehru and Churchill, April 1949
DOMESTIC PRESSURES

proposal was not accepted by the Cabinet and the economic situation continued to deteriorate with little effort at general understanding or control. Indeed, I have almost come to the conclusion that it would be a good thing if we stopped all other work and concentrated on our economic and food policy and how to implement it with the greatest rapidity. A firm decision should be taken to make India self-sufficient in food and stop all import of grains within two years, the provinces should be geared to cooperate with the central Government in this task and overall planning and agrarian reforms should be given concrete shape.

The unprecedented and in many quarters unexpected success of your Government in taking over so smoothly the control of the country is a tremendous achievement; but the great ideals for which India has fought will disappear like burst soap bubbles unless the next step is taken without delay. That step must be the rapid increase of agricultural production for food, clothing and housing.

This warning came as no surprise to Nehru. Even to secure the newly won political freedom, it seemed essential to him that the people of India should feel that they were heading towards prosperity; and agrarian reforms, which had made some progress and alone gave the Government stability and the Congress backing among the peasantry, had to be carried much further. Particularly in face of the communist successes in China and South East Asia, the vital issue was an improvement in the standards of the masses. The Manchester Guardian summed up the problem in words of which Nehru approved:

The underlying social and economic problems need more radical treatment than the new government has yet been able to give them . . . If the economic stagnation continues India will not be able to bring into play the power and influence which it should exercise internationally. However impressive its outside, it will be what the Chinese call a 'paper tiger'. It will also be very vulnerable to Communist propaganda. The remedy is social and economic reorganization on the largest scale . . . By looking northwards, at their neighbour China, the two Dominions can draw constant warning of what happens when a country has too much politics and does not solve the basic problems of the agrarian system.

Any effort at advance, however, was impeded at the source itself once more by a problem of personalities. Those in charge of economic policy 'cannot get out of the old ruts of their thinking and are frightened at the

148 To J. Daulatram, Food Minister, 7 January 1949.
149 Lord Boyd Orr to Nehru, 2 May 1949.
144 13 January 1949. For Nehru's approval, see his letter to Matthaï, 23 January 1949.
prospect of any marked change. Yet, if change does not come on our initiative, it will come without it and in a much worse way. Jairamdas Daulatram, the Food Minister, was unequal to his job, and John Matthai, the Finance Minister, did not believe in planning. Daulatram was quietly replaced in the summer of 1950, but Matthai proved more difficult to handle. Nehru had respect for Matthai’s integrity and polished mind and therefore tried, over a period of weeks, to persuade him of the virtues, and in fact the necessity, of planning. It was not a matter of greater expenditure than India could afford, but a clearer vision of the objectives and a definite notion of the approach to these objectives. There was plenty of money available in the country and the problem was to secure it for public purposes by a definite overall plan and a raging campaign to secure popular support and participation. The capitalist classes had ‘proved totally inadequate to face things as they are today in the country. They have no vision, no grit, no capacity to do anything big. The only alternative is to try to put forward some big thing ourselves and rope in not only these classes but the people as a whole. Otherwise we remain stagnant and at the most ward off catastrophe.’ Dealing with specific problems separately left the major problem of general economic progress unsolved; and for this both a more effective machinery and a more far-reaching outlook were required. Each province too was functioning more and more as a separate unit, not thinking of the rest of India or sometimes even of its own coordinated development. ‘The more I think of it, and I have given it a great deal of thought during the past few months especially, the less I understand myself what we are aiming at. If I do not understand this clearly, how much less can we expect the intelligent or unintelligent public to understand it.’ A negative policy could never be sufficient, especially when it had been a failure. The changes required were not easy to determine, but changes there had to be.

We may make mistakes and pay for them, but surely the greatest mistake is not to view the whole scheme of things in its entirety, realistically and objectively, and to decide on clear objectives and plans. If once this is done, the next step of complete coordination follows much more easily and only by coordinated effort can real results be achieved.146

Finding that the approach of Matthai, with his long association with private industrialists, was different and not likely to be revised, Nehru, without pressing the issue, suggested full discussions in Cabinet and directed senior officials to examine all aspects of national planning. His intention was to appoint a planning commission with Prasad as chairman;

146 Nehru to Krishna Menon, 24 August 1949.
147 To John Matthai, 13 September 1949.
148 To John Matthai, 29 September 1949.
when Prasad preferred the presidency of the Union he first offered the post to Rajagopalachari and then finally, and wisely, decided to retain direct control. No one else in the Congress leadership could be expected to guide planning on the right lines, for no one else had so clear an understanding or strong a faith in planning as Nehru himself.

The creation of the planning commission early in 1950 brought the differences with Matthaï to a head. He knew that Nehru was less inclined than before to stress production rather than distribution and was keener on industrial development in the public sector. Matthaï saw the planning commission as a tool of Nehru to reduce the importance of the industrial and commercial classes, whom Nehru now openly criticized, and to: ‘balance the various social forces at work in India, and pay more attention to what might be called the vital forces which will ultimately lead to progress.’ Matthaï was certain that the planning commission and the Cabinet Economic Committee (of which Nehru at this time was not a member) would be in conflict with the Finance Ministry, particularly as the Government still was, in its general policy, friendly to the industrialists and seeking to win their support.

The difference of opinion between Nehru and his Finance Minister on this specific issue of the planning commission soon spread to other areas and even affected their personal relations. In the Cabinet Matthaï supported Syama Prasad Mookerjee in opposing the talks with Liaquat Ali Khan, not from any communal viewpoint but on the grounds that the Government had not sufficiently utilized the many levers it possessed to force Pakistan into more moderate behaviour. Nehru, on the other hand, did not fail to point out that he was somewhat of a political missionary responsive to the masses and ready for action in their interest, in contrast to men such as Matthaï, who had spent their lives in offices irrespective of whether the government was British or Indian. ‘I owe something to the people who have trusted me and to the leader under whose sheltering care I grew up.’

In these circumstances, both men were pained at what each regarded as the other’s discourteous attitude; and early in June, when Nehru was on the high seas on his way to Indonesia, Matthaï announced his resignation with a bitterly worded statement, accusing Nehru of wasteful expenditure, appeasement and the surrender of vital national interests. But some even of the ministers who remained had no liking for the planning commission and failed to cooperate with it and facilitate its working. Nor was there much progress in planning itself. ‘We seem to have lost all capacity to consider anything from the point of view of a new approach. We go round and round in circles and cannot get out of our grooves.’

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148 Nehru to Matthaï, 16 February 1950.
149 Nehru to Matthaï, 4 May 1950.
150 See Nehru to Munshi, 2 September, and to H. K. Mahab, 7 October 1950.
151 Nehru to Rajagopalachari, 15 April 1951.
Korea and Tibet

War broke out in Korea on 25 June 1950, and the same day a resolution was brought forward in the Security Council blaming North Korea for an armed attack and calling on all members of the United Nations to render every assistance to the organization in securing the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of North Korean forces to the 38th parallel. B. N. Rau had no time to consult his government and voted for this resolution on his own initiative. Delhi believed that Rau had been justified in considering North Korea an aggressor; but he was directed not to commit India further without prior consultation, and he abstained from voting on the resolution of 27 June directing member states to furnish such assistance as might be required to South Korea to repel the armed attack. However the Cabinet, after two meetings held without Patel, issued a statement accepting this resolution too. The reshuffle in May had given the right wing of the Congress greater weight in the Cabinet, and Patel’s presence was not necessary to make sure that no decision savouring of support for communism would be taken. ‘U.S.S.R.’, wrote Munshi, a new entrant, to the Prime Minister, ‘never has been a friend and never will be. Why should we lose the goodwill of friends without whom we cannot face Russian expansion? If they fall, we go under.’ But, although Nehru accepted the two resolutions without the least enthusiasm, it was not as if he was acting against his better judgment. He was convinced of the rightness of the decision; well-planned aggression had taken place and to surrender to it was wrong and would have meant the collapse of the United Nations structure as well as leading to other dangerous consequences. Having accepted the first resolution, the second followed. ‘I think that logically and practically there was no other course open to us.’ But he thought that the Government’s statement, while satisfying the United States and Britain, yet maintained the balance and left India with freedom of action. In fact, it was

1 29 June 1950.
2 To Chief Ministers, 2 July 1950. Nehru also stated this publicly at a press conference on 7 July, National Herald, 8 July 1950.
3 To Patel, 29 June 1950.
reiterated, almost, as Patel complained,\textsuperscript{4} in a defensive tone, that the support of the United Nations resolution did not involve any modification of India’s foreign policy, which would continue to be an independent one based on the development of friendly relations with all countries. ‘No country can be hundred per cent independent in such matters because every act or policy flows from other acts done before and other things happening in the world. But within those limitations one can be more or less independent. We have preferred to be more independent.’\textsuperscript{5}

This reassertion of non-alignment was meant to indicate India’s refusal to accept the United States Government’s effort to link up the Korean issue with Formosa and Indo-China. Nor was military assistance provided in Korea; India’s armed services were intended solely for defence at home, financial stringency did not allow any expansive gestures, and it was embarrassing to put Indian troops in the charge of MacArthur, who was in command not only in Korea but over the whole area. ‘Our moral help is a big enough thing, which out-balances the petty military help of some other countries.’\textsuperscript{6} Such help, of course, annoyed Russia and China, and Nehru realized that India’s acceptance of the two resolutions of the Security Council had weakened even the little influence which she had with the Communist Powers. ‘Still we have not quite lost our old position and there is some hope that we might be able to play a useful role in preventing the conflict from spreading or in bringing the warring factions nearer to one another.’\textsuperscript{7}

Having, in fact, supported the American side of the argument in the first instance, Nehru disliked the hustling which was then attempted and which hindered his effort to persuade Russia and China to help in localizing the conflict in Korea.

I must say that the Americans, for all their great achievements, impress me less and less, so far as their human quality is concerned. They are apt to be more hysterical as a people than almost any others except perhaps the Bengalis. The Russians follow wrong courses often enough, but they remain calm and collected about it and do not show excitement.\textsuperscript{8}

His unease was doubtless increased by Krishna Menon’s rejection of the Government’s Korean policy and his offer to resign on that issue,\textsuperscript{9} Radhakrishnan’s dislike of the policy, and the widespread criticism of it in India.

\textsuperscript{4}To Nehru, 3 July 1950.  
\textsuperscript{5}To Chief Ministers, 15 July 1950.  
\textsuperscript{6}Nehru to B. N. Rau, 1 July 1950.  
\textsuperscript{7}Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{8}To C. Rajagopalachari, 3 July 1950.  
\textsuperscript{9}Krishna Menon to Nehru, 2 July 1950.
Not being swept away by passion, not possessing a single-track mind, trying to judge of events as objectively as possible, and at the same time having to consider all kinds of forces at work in India and outside, it is no easy matter to come to a decision . . . It is always a frightfully difficult matter to try to balance oneself on the edge of a sword. Whether India's policy will turn out to be right or wrong, the future will show. Meanwhile, we have of course displeased very much many people and countries and not pleased anybody.\(^10\)

His suspicions of the Soviet Union were unchanged, but he was worried about the implications of the American position.

We face today a vast and powerful Soviet group of nations, which tends to become a monolithic bloc, not only pursuing a similar internal economic policy but a common foreign policy. That policy is an expansionist one and thus there is a tendency for it to come into conflict with others. It is expansionist not only in the normal political sense but also in encouraging internal trouble in other countries . . . On the other hand, the approach of the rival group, though democratic in theory, tends more and more to encourage reactionary and military elements in various countries, especially of Asia. By the logic of events it supports the relics of colonial rule.\(^11\)

It was all the more necessary, therefore, to follow a policy which was not only expedient but in keeping with the temper of Asia. To fall blindly into line with anybody was to walk into a trap.

The war hysteria and the drift to a world conflict gathered pace, and at this moment Nehru found his cluster of powerful ambassadors almost an embarrassment, for they began to display the disadvantages of their eminence. Each pursued an almost independent foreign policy. Vijayalakshmi was eager to talk to President Truman, Krishna Menon met Attlee repeatedly, Panikkar saw himself as China's line of communication to the world, Radhakrishnan, with his formidable personal prestige, conducted his own private negotiations for peace with the Soviet Foreign Office and the American Ambassador in Moscow, and B. N. Rau at Lake Success assumed all too willingly, without awaiting the approval of Delhi, the leadership of the non-permanent members of the Security Council. But guiding this team with a much lighter rein than was approved by his officials at headquarters, Nehru sent personal messages to Stalin and Acheson stressing the need to admit People's China to the United Nations and bring back the Soviet Union to the Security Council.\(^12\) Nothing came

\(^{10}\) To Vijayalakshmi, 8 July 1950.
\(^{11}\) To Chief Ministers, 15 July 1950.
\(^{12}\) 13 July 1950.
of the messages beyond indicating India’s desire to arrest a drift to war and perhaps weakening the general feeling of fatality that nothing more was possible except to jump into the abyss; ‘we have made everybody sit up a little and think, and that is some small achievement, when passion and prejudice govern people’s minds.’ It also improved relations with the Communist Powers. The Soviet Union appeared more appreciative of India’s attitude and China expressed her gratification at India’s support for her entry into the United Nations. Nehru had legitimized China’s interest in the Korean war and may have fortified the Soviet Union in its decision to lift its boycott of the Security Council. Even the United States took advantage of this rapport by requesting Nehru to convince China that her own interests required that she should avoid intervention in Korea or an attack on Formosa. Nehru agreed to forward this message but grew increasingly concerned by the bellicosity which seemed to underlie such acts of United States policy as the widespread and indiscriminate bombing of North Korea and MacArthur’s visit to Formosa. There was no clear realization by the Western Powers of the mood in Asia, and a too facile impression that military strength and economic resources would win the battle. If, in pushing back aggression, the spirit of vengeance led to the destruction of the whole of Korea, then the effort of the United Nations would have resulted in total failure. ‘They may win a war. But how can they possibly deal with any part of Asia afterwards? They will have fewer and fewer friends here, if they behave as they have been doing.’ The future of Asia depended to a large extent on what happened in China. Isolation from the rest of the world would subdue the powerful national characteristics of the Chinese people and strengthen Soviet influence; and the United States was achieving just that. ‘The United States policy is the one policy which will make China do what the United States least wants. That is the tragedy or comedy of the situation.’ He did not expect the United States to call off the military operations or even to desist from crossing the 38th parallel, though in September Britain and the United States assured him that their forces would not cross the parallel without a directive from the United Nations. Soon after, the United States requested India to represent to Peking not to react sharply to the success of the American forces in South Korea. Panikkar did not act on this suggestion, but reported back that direct participation by China in the fighting in Korea seemed ‘beyond range of possibility’ unless Russia intervened and a world war resulted. While the

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13 To S. Radhakrishnan, 6 August 1950.
15 Acheson to Nehru, 26 July 1950.
16 Nehru to Acheson, 29 July 1950.
17 The visit, as we now know, was not authorized by the United States Government. D. S. Mclellan, Dean Acheson The State Department Years (New York, 1976), p. 279.
18 To B. N. Rau, 10 August 1950.
19 To Vijayanlalshmi, 30 August 1950.
Chinese saw Korea as the cover for a general Western effort to recover lost authority throughout Asia, they would not move even under provocation as they knew they were not ready. This feeling of assurance, passed on to the United States, may have encouraged the United States to adopt a more rigid line and veto the admission of China to the United Nations, a step which seemed to Nehru foolish and ‘the policy of a destructive nation’.

China’s reaction was also bitter, and on 21 September Chou En-lai for the first time repeatedly warned Panikkar that ‘if America extends her aggression China will have to resist’, for it would endanger China’s security. Nehru sent Chou a personal message urging patience.

New China is strong enough to face the future with dignity and calm. The countries of Asia more especially look to China as a friendly neighbour with respect . . . By waiting a little longer China will, I feel sure, achieve all that she desires, peacefully and thus earn the gratitude of mankind.

But this effort was stultified by the Western Powers who, believing that Russia and not China was the main opponent, decided to cross the 38th parallel. Nehru pressed on Bevin the vital need to act with circumspection and secured the omission from a United Nations resolution of the possibility of crossing the parallel; but he could not alter the decision to move into North Korea. Possibly the doubts cast by officials in New Delhi on the accuracy of Panikkar’s reporting weakened the force of Nehru’s warnings. Chou reiterated to Panikkar that if MacArthur’s troops continued to advance, China would be compelled to take immediate steps. Again Nehru appealed to Chou to hold his hand; but in face of the continued progress of MacArthur’s troops beyond the 38th parallel and the call to North Korea to surrender, Chinese ‘volunteers’ began to cross the Manchurian border.

The phase of the Korean crisis when all sides turned to Nehru and sought the support of his influence, when, as Nehru proudly phrased it, ‘the world looks upon us as representing the centre of Asian feelings’, now seemed past. No heed was paid to his urging that military methods need not be pursued ‘to the utmost and the last’, and the proper psychological moment, when North Korean forces had been defeated,
should be seized to rebuild a united Korea.\textsuperscript{25} All that such unpalatable advice secured Nehru was severe censure in the United States. Both the Government and the press were critical of India, and in particular of her Prime Minister, for mobilizing support for China’s admission to the United Nations.\textsuperscript{26} Nehru’s public replies were cool and unyielding,\textsuperscript{27} and he ordered his representatives in the United States to continue to repeat India’s views politely but forcibly.\textsuperscript{28} ‘It really is amazing how great nations are governed by very small people.’\textsuperscript{29}

The Korean situation was now complicated by developments in Tibet. Nehru had never taken seriously suggestions, made even by Panikkar during the civil war in China, of establishing an independent Tibet,\textsuperscript{30} and he realized at the time the Communists came to power that Tibet was likely to be soon invaded. ‘The result of all this is that we may have the Chinese or Tibetan Communists right up on our Assam, Bhutan and Sikkim border. That fact by itself does not frighten me.’\textsuperscript{31} But later he thought the Chinese might prefer to send trained Tibetans from China to weaken or even upset the Dalai Lama’s administration.\textsuperscript{32} So, on hearing in the autumn of 1950 that a military invasion of Tibet was imminent, the Government of India were surprised and decided to represent to China the advantage of desisting from any such action. Probably Nehru was encouraged into taking this indiscreet step by Panikkar’s assurance that People’s China was desirous of maintaining the friendliest relations with India.\textsuperscript{33} Anything in the nature of pressure tactics was ruled out, because ultimately India had no effective sanction and to take up an attitude of resistance without the strength to follow it up would have been, as Nehru later observed, ‘political folly of the first magnitude’.\textsuperscript{34} But Nehru felt that India, while recognizing China’s suzerainty over Tibet, had a right to express her interest in the maintenance of Tibetan autonomy; and a friendly caution might not be misunderstood.

\textsuperscript{25} Press conference at Delhi, 30 September, \textit{National Herald}, 1 October 1950.
\textsuperscript{26} ‘India’s title to leadership in the new Asia is unquestioned. But an ineluctable condition of leadership is that one should lead. A mere wringing of the hands over all the obvious difficulties and perils of a situation is not leadership; and until the Indian statesmen can show a more precise power of decision they will inevitably find themselves swept along upon a current of events which they cannot hope to control.’ \textit{India’s position}, editorial in \textit{New York Herald Tribune}, 5 October 1950. ‘Pandit Nehru purports to speak for Asia, but it is the voice of abnegation; his criticism now turns out to have been obstructive, his policy is appeasement. Worst of all, one fails to find a valid moral judgement in his attitude. One can feel certain that history will condemn the Nehru policy as well-intentioned but timid, shortsighted and irresponsible.’ ‘Plain words to Indians’, editorial in the \textit{New York Times}, 12 October 1950.
\textsuperscript{28} Telegrams to Vijayalakshmi and Rau, 25 October 1950.
\textsuperscript{29} To K. M. Panikkar, 25 October 1950.
\textsuperscript{30} Panikkar’s note from Nanking, 20 November 1948.
\textsuperscript{31} Nehru to John Matthai, 10 September 1949.
\textsuperscript{32} Nehru’s notes for speech at conference of foreign ministers at Colombo, 9 January 1950.
\textsuperscript{33} Panikkar to Nehru, 2 August 1950.
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Note}, 5 March 1953.
However, in reply to India’s suggestion, made ‘without any political or territorial ambition’, that a peaceful settlement be worked out, China asserted that Tibet was Chinese territory which it was China’s sacred duty to liberate, even though this problem should be solved by peaceful and friendly means. This satisfied Nehru, though, as he later said, it was not quite clear from whom Tibet was to be liberated, and it seemed to him that China was showing, at least at that time, a desire to be friendly to India. ‘I attach great importance to India and China being friends. I think the future of Asia and to some extent of the world depends on this.’ But the official reply expressing appreciation of China’s assurance misled the Chinese about India’s understanding of the status of Tibet by stating the hope ‘that the forthcoming negotiations will result in a harmonious adjustment of legitimate Tibetan claims to autonomy within the framework of Chinese sovereignty.’ By an oversight the word ‘sovereignty’ had been used instead of ‘suzerainty’ and, though it was later decided to correct this error, the Chinese were never formally informed of this correction. Panikkar had a nimble, reactive and uncommitted mind, and while he shrewdly projected China’s views to the world, he was not as successful in making China aware of the weight and force of India’s attitude on various questions.

Nehru’s assessment of China’s attitude to India was also naive.

The change in relations between India and China during the past few weeks has been rather remarkable. I think this began slowly after my visit to America last year when they realized that I was not exactly anybody’s stooge, as they had imagined. Our championing China’s case in the United Nations has gone a long way also. Panikkar has done a good job and gets on very well with the Chinese Government. I have no doubt that the friendly influence we have exercised on China during the past few months has helped the cause of peace. They listen to us, even though they might not agree, because they feel that our advice is disinterested.

So when, in October, there were reports of military action without waiting for a Tibetan delegation to reach Peking, the Government of India unhesitatiely expressed their surprise and regret and pointed out that this would give a handle to those who were opposing China’s admission to the United Nations. The problem of Tibet was not urgent or serious, and a delay would not have affected Chinese interests or a suitable final
solution. Because of the shortcomings of Indian diplomacy in Peking, the Chinese reacted to the Indian protest with a surprise which was not wholly feigned. There had been a failure to convey, between August and October, India’s deep interest in this matter. Nehru’s concern at the end of August at possible Chinese intervention in Formosa and Tibet had not been communicated to the Chinese Government; and later Panikkar was content with Chou’s public reference to peace negotiations in Tibet. He now explained to his own Government what he described as a sudden change of Chinese policy in Tibet by their expectation of a general war, in which case Tibet might also be stirred up by unfriendly countries; he did not add that the use now, without explanation, by India of the word ‘suzerainty’ perhaps seemed to them a shift in policy as the result of foreign influence. As Bajpai observed, Panikkar’s protests on Tibet compared closely with Neville Henderson’s protests in Nazi Germany on behalf of Czechoslovakia.

What interest the Ambassador thinks he may be serving by showing so much solicitude for the Chinese Government’s policy of false excuses and wanton high-handedness towards Tibet passes my understanding... I feel it my duty to observe that, in handling the Tibetan issue with the Chinese Government, our Ambassador has allowed himself to be influenced more by the Chinese point of view, by Chinese claims, by Chinese maps and by regard for Chinese susceptibilities than by his instructions or by India’s interests.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Chinese reply was sharp. Tibet, asserted the Chinese Government, was an integral part of Chinese territory and they were resolved on a military occupation of Tibet in order to liberate the Tibetan people and defend the frontiers of China. This was entirely a domestic problem in which no foreign interference would be tolerated, and it had nothing to do with the admission of China to the United Nations. As for India’s protest, China ‘cannot but consider it as having been affected by foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet...’

Resentful of such accusations, Nehru thought that China was not playing fair with India.

If the Chinese Government distrust India and think that we are intriguing against it with the Western Powers, then all I can say is that they are less intelligent than I thought them to be. The whole cornerstone of our policy during the past few months has been friendly

40 Unofficial and unsigned note handed by Indian Ambassador to Chinese Foreign Office, 21 October 1950.
41 Bajpai’s notes to Prime Minister, 27 and 31 October 1950.
42 Note of the Government of India, 30 October 1950.
relations with China and we have almost fallen out with other countries because of this policy that we have pursued.  

He repudiated the insinuation of foreign influence, pointed out that the military action had affected not only friendly relations between India and China but also the interest of world peace, and stressed that it was with no desire for advantage that India had recommended a peaceful adjustment. But he refused, as advised by Patel and Rajagopalachari, to push matters to an open breach, and ignored a vague hint from Loy Henderson, the United States Ambassador, that the State Department would be glad to help if asked. Chinese action in Tibet was to him not a demonstration of general unfriendliness or studied deception but an act of extreme discourtesy, explicable to some extent by misunderstanding, reliance on Soviet sources of information and a belief that a general war was imminent and Tibet was part of the overall strategy of the United States. So, even as the flow of Chinese troops into Korea grew in volume, China had strengthened her position in Tibet.

Nehru did not reply directly to Patel’s letter charging the Chinese with ‘little short of perfidy’ and calling for urgent preparations against ‘a potential enemy’. But in letters to others, of which copies were sent to Patel, he stressed the importance of understanding the new China.

Chinese psychology, with its background of prolonged suffering, struggle against Japan, and successful communist revolution, is an understandable mixture of bitterness, elation and vaulting confidence to which the traditional xenophobia and present-day isolation from outside contacts have added fear and suspicion of the motives of other powers. For inducing a more balanced and cooperative mentality in Peking, it is essential to understand those psychological factors. Whether it was possible for India to have friendly relations with China was not clear, but the attempt had to be made, because anything else would be bad in the long run not only for the two countries but for Asia as a whole. Friendship between India and China would be a very powerful force for peace in the world; conflict or fear of conflict between them would render a vast area of the world a prey to constant fear and apprehension and impede India’s efforts at progress. The invasion of Tibet had been a blow to these efforts and had therefore pleased the Western Powers and, to some extent, even the Soviet Union; but this was all the more reason to persevere and not be swept away by the fears and passions of the moment.

43 To Panikkar, 25 October 1950.
44 Note of the Government of India, 31 October 1950.
45 See Nehru to Vijayalakshmi, 1 November 1950.
46 Nehru to Ernest Bevin, 20 November 1950.
47 Nehru to Chief Ministers, 17 November, and note, 18 November 1950.
be in no doubt that India would defend the Himalayan borders. 'Whether India had the necessary military resources or not, I would fight aggression whether it came from the mountain or the sea . . . I am not thinking in terms of blocs. I am on my side and on nobody else's side. I am on my country's side.'

But this need not mean an open breach with China. The best way to help Tibet retain a large measure of autonomy was not by breaking with China but by retaining some influence with her. For the same reasons, he discouraged the Dalai Lama from fleeing to India.

Nor was the issue of Tibet allowed to cloud the Korean problem. On 9 November India suggested that some territory in North Korea, in which China had a direct interest, might be demilitarized in order to avoid open confrontation; and the idea was taken up by Bevin, whose general policy was not to 'create a situation' even while Britain acted in close cooperation with the United States. But regular Chinese army units had entered the war, President Truman talked about the possible use of the atom bomb and both sides prepared for a general conflict. Power, thought Nehru, had clearly gone to the heads of both the United States and China and the chances of preventing war appeared slender. 'So far as we are concerned, we shall try to keep out of it. We may be benevolently neutral. Whether we can succeed ultimately in keeping out, it is impossible to say.'

In this context, Nehru regarded as impractical the proposal of Lester Pearson, the Foreign Minister of Canada, that he make a public appeal for an immediate cease-fire in Korea and the cessation of Chinese armed intervention as a preliminary to exploring the possibility of a settlement in which China could participate. But India did, along with ten other Asian states, appeal to China and North Korea to declare their intention not to cross into South Korea. Nehru also urged on Attlee, who was on his way to Washington, to work for a cease-fire and demilitarization, to be followed by negotiations, with China participating, to settle the future of Korea and Formosa. The same formula was put to Chou En-lai, who showed interest but would not commit himself without knowing the attitude of the United States. Truman's Government, however, were firm in refusing to discuss Formosa, and would not even consider the other items in Nehru's formula until the fighting in Korea stabilized; and then, when the military situation improved in their favour, their attitude further stiffened. The corollary of this, as usual, was criticism of India. 'Nehru', Truman was reported to have told a Congressman, 'has sold us down the Hudson. His attitude has been responsible for our losing the war in Korea.'

On the verge once more of semi-famine in various parts of the country, the Government of India were obliged again to request the United States to ship 1.5 to 2 million tons of

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48 Speech in Parliament, 7 December, Hindustan Times, 8 December 1950.
49 Nehru's telegram to Indian Consul-General at Lhasa, 2 December 1950.
50 To C. D. Deshmukh, 30 November 1950.
51 Vijayalakshmi to Nehru, 18 December 1950.
foodgrains; but the response was not encouraging.\textsuperscript{59} Krishna Menon suggested that Nehru visit Peking before coming to London for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ Conference and then go on to Washington to meet Truman. ‘On America its effect would be that of an ice bag on a delirious patient with high temperature. It would give time and receptivity for further treatment.’ For lack of a definite and energetic initiative India was in effect becoming a passive accomplice to war and allowing the gathering of prime ministers to assume the shape of a pre-war rally. ‘I am bound to say that you are not allowing the importance of the role you play to have its due weight.’\textsuperscript{60} But Nehru was not to be flattered into empty, dramatic moves. It was foolish for any individual to expect at this stage to thaw the seemingly frozen attitudes of China and the United States. There was a growing appreciation in other countries of China’s case.

I am afraid however that the belief of the Chinese government and people in the inevitability of war is making any attempt at peace more and more difficult. China’s position is strong in every way. They need take no risks and yet they can be a little more accommodating in smaller matters and in approach.\textsuperscript{64}

Nor was there any purpose in flying to Peking unless he had something definite to offer, and this was only possible if the United States took a less rigid attitude on Formosa. So all that Nehru did was to urge on Attlee again to press this viewpoint on the United States.

Neither in Korea nor on Tibet did Nehru, by the end of 1950, have any tangible results to show. The Western Powers involved in Korea had not listened to him; General Wu, the special delegate of China to the United Nations, had told the Secretary-General that India’s views did not count for much since, among other things, India had no soldiers in Korea;\textsuperscript{65} and on the issue of Tibetan autonomy Nehru had been snubbed by China. So the depression that clouded his spirit on his birthday is understandable.

Somehow I have felt very dispirited today because of all kinds of happenings in India and the world. This world and this country of ours seem to go awry and I feel more and more that I am doing little that I want to do. I work hard, but doubts come to me as to the results of that work. So many things happen which depress me. One can only work with energy and a measure of enthusiasm if one has certain

\textsuperscript{59} Nehru’s telegram and letter to Vijayalakshmi, 13 December, and Vijayalakshmi’s letter communicating Acheson’s reply, 18 December 1950.
\textsuperscript{60} Krishna Menon’s personal telegrams to Nehru, 18 and 20 December 1950.
\textsuperscript{64} Nehru’s cable to Panikkar, 30 December 1950.
\textsuperscript{65} Trygve Lie, \textit{In the Cause of Peace} (New York, 1954), pp. 354-5.
definite ideals and objectives. If the ideals fade, then that energy and
enthusiasm also fade.\textsuperscript{54}

Yet it was generally recognized that Nehru, more than any other
individual, had done what little he could to stave off a general war, and had
struck a note of sanity among the loud, shrill voices pressing for a conflict.
James Cameron, who met him in Delhi on the day the United Nations forces
crossed the 38th parallel, recollected what they had always said, that
Jawaharlal Nehru could take the curse off moral platitudes by the curious
method of believing in them; he reminded one momentarily of what one
had almost forgotten, that somewhere between the excesses and threats
that hemmed the world round there was a point of view that put a higher
value on principle than on expediency.\textsuperscript{57} By the end of 1950 Nehru had
become a world figure whose stature had little relation to his country's
strength and whose constituency extended far beyond India. He was the
spokesman of all those, everywhere, who were sick of war and chauvinist
passion and hoped for the dominance of reason, justice and tolerance in
world affairs. While sensitive to India's interests as he saw them, he strove
to reconcile them with civilized values in the highest public sense — civil
liberties, the modernization and development of the countries of Asia and
Africa, and the strengthening of peace everywhere. The slight, trim figure
in the buttoned-up tunic and with a red rose in the button-hole, the tense,
impatient face usually crowned with a Gandhi cap concealing the baldness,
became the chief symbol in the world's eyes of national freedom and
progress and international goodwill.

Nothing made this clearer than the election to the chancellorship of
Cambridge University at the end of 1950. The death of Field-Marshal
Smuts earlier in the year had rendered the office vacant, and a large number
of the younger dons decided to put up the name of Nehru. They soon
derived support from some of the most distinguished figures on the rolls of
the University — Bertrand Russell, E. M. Forster, R. A. Butler, Pethick-
Lawrence, Mountbatten — and eighty-nine members of the Senate for-
mally nominated Nehru. A fly-sheet, signed by six of his most eminent
supporters, was circulated among the voters.

The Prime Minister of India is, among Cambridge men available for
the office of Chancellor, incontestably the most eminent . . . Pandit
Nehru, as Prime Minister of India, has it in his power to offer to a
world distracted by hatred and prejudice services incomparably more
valuable and more pacific than lie within the grasp of any other
Cambridge man at this time. We ask members of the University to

\textsuperscript{54} Nehru to Patel, 14 November 1950, \textit{Sardar Patel's Correspondence}, Vol. 9 (Ahmedabad, 1974),
pp. 290-91.

offer to Pandit Nehru, who is a scholar as well as a statesman, the office of Chancellor as a mark of admiration of his qualities of character and of intellect, and as a sign of our hope for and trust in the peaceful reconciliation of the different races and creeds of mankind.

The other candidate was Lord Tedder, an airman of distinguished service; but his name did not evoke anything like the same excitement as that of Nehru, and it was generally recognized that in any election Nehru would carry the majority. But the forces of reaction were not routed yet. Even though the statutes did not require acceptance of the nomination, the Vice-Chancellor wrote formally wishing to know if Nehru agreed to his name going forward. This immediately raised political and international issues. If Nehru accepted the nomination and then lost the election, Indian opinion would be deeply upset; even if he won, the fact that a number had voted against him might well be resented. Only a unanimous election could be considered; and this was not feasible. So Nehru informed his supporters that his name should be withdrawn. He set aside the gratifying prospect of the most honourable office which his old University could bestow because he could not risk endangering Indo-British relations at a time when he was effecting a transformation of the nature of the Commonwealth. But many would have agreed with E. M. Forster: 'I wish he had risked it.'

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58 To Kingsley Martin, 6 November 1950. Kingsley Martin Papers.
Kashmir 1951-1953

Rejecting U Nu’s offer in December 1950 to mediate on Kashmir, Nehru observed that no other country could help in this matter. ‘The only way to solve it is for India and Pakistan to know that the burden is upon them and on no one else’.¹ But in January 1951 Pakistan demanded that Kashmir be discussed by the prime ministers of the Commonwealth meeting in London. Nehru would have been well within his rights in objecting to it, but he willingly agreed to some of the other prime ministers joining Liaqat and himself in informal talks on the Kashmir question. At these talks Nehru’s line was that nothing should be done to upset the somewhat unstable equilibrium that had been slowly reached in the relations between the two countries; nor could India agree to Pakistan’s claim to Kashmir on the basis of the two-nation theory. This brought the discussion back to a plebiscite and the status of the Abdullah Government. Liaqat rejected any partial plebiscite and insisted that it should cover the whole State. On the question of the Kashmir Government, Menzies proposed as a compromise that that Government need be deprived only of functions relating to the plebiscite and the Commonwealth countries could provide a security force for Kashmir. Nehru rejected the last suggestion on the grounds that the return of British or Dominion troops to India would be highly provocative; nor could a joint Indo-Pakistan force be tolerated as India could never allow the aggressor to send troops to any part of the State. But he was willing to consider the mustering of a local force by the Plebiscite Administrator, even though this raised complicated issues involving India’s responsibility for the defence of Kashmir.²

Nehru’s spirit of accommodation was soon stifled by the attitude of Britain and the United States at the Security Council. Their draft resolution on Kashmir went against India’s position on every issue. It objected to the convening of a constituent assembly in Kashmir and provided for the

¹ U Nu to Nehru, 5 December, and Nehru’s reply, 10 December 1950.
supersession of the Kashmir Government and the possible entry of foreign troops. A United Nations representative should effect demilitarization and raise a neutral or local force and, in the event of the parties failing to agree, there should be arbitration under the auspices of the International Court of Justice. The United States was at this time angry with India and its hostility was expected; but Nehru had hoped that at least now Britain would be less partisan. Rau suggested acceptance of the Anglo-American resolution with reservations, particularly after Britain abandoned the idea of a United Nations force: but Nehru ordered total rejection, whatever the consequences. The resolution amounted to a treatment of India such as no self-respecting country could tolerate. 'It appears to us to be a deliberate attempt to injure us in Kashmir and to discredit our wider policies.' Such a severe reaction, reinforced perhaps in London by Mountbatten, who claimed to have warned Gordon Walker that if Britain questioned the legality of Kashmir's accession he might have to speak out, led the British Government to tone down. They now argued that they had proposed arbitration, not on the general issue of Kashmir but on specific points of varying interpretation of the agreement between India and Pakistan. But the resolution as passed with British support, and the criticism in the British press of India's Kashmir policy, convinced Nehru that no fair play could be expected from Britain on this issue. It seemed to him that, from Attlee downwards, they had convinced themselves from the start that Kashmir, being predominantly Muslim, should go to Pakistan, and they consistently followed a policy to that end. 'They tried to cover this up by a seeming impartiality. But that veil grew thinner and thinner till it was worn away completely.' The speeches of the British and American representatives at the Security Council might have been, in Nehru's view, delivered by the Pakistani delegate. The British Foreign Office appeared to be still relying on Pakistan as a means of retaining British influence in West Asia. Britain and the United States could not grasp that to India Kashmir was not merely a matter of a patch of territory but a basic question of policy.

If Pakistan's communal approach and policy prevail in Kashmir, it would not only be a tragedy for Kashmir, but it would upset the whole scheme of things in India, and of course in Pakistan. We would enter a phase of trying to exterminate each other. These are terrible thoughts which come to me, and I find the American and British people skating merrily on this very thin ice over the deep ocean, and accusing us of intransigence.

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8 Telegram to Krishna Menon, 24 February 1951.
4 Telegram to Rau, 26 February 1951.
8 Mountbatten to Nehru, 25 April 1951.
8 Nehru's note, 26 May 1951.
7 Nehru to Vijayalakshmi, 2 and 25 June 1951.
India, therefore, refused to accept or implement the resolution. Dr Frank Graham, the new United Nations representative, would be received with courtesy and any points raised by him would be explained; but beyond that India would not go, and the constituent assembly for Kashmir would meet as scheduled.

These pressures on India strengthened the belligerent elements in Pakistan. Zafrullah, the Foreign Minister, threatened war, and it seemed possible that Pakistan might attempt to occupy the Valley by a swift military action. Troops were concentrated on the Kashmir border, new divisions raised, reserves called up, leave cancelled and raids and sabotage in Kashmir stepped up. Nehru decided that the best way to prevent escalation was to take counter-measures and let it be known that this was being done. The armoured division was moved up to the Punjab border and no great secrecy was maintained about the fact. It was also stated clearly that if Pakistan took any aggressive action India would carry the war into West Pakistan. These steps had their desired effect soon enough. Liaqat Ali Khan protested both publicly and in a telegram to Nehru about Indian army movements, and there was a diminution of Pakistan’s bluster as well as of preparation. To Graham, the story told was one of fear of India and of her intent to put an end to the partition and to Pakistan. To Nehru it always seemed that the Pakistan authorities kept up the tension and propaganda not just because of their Kashmir policy but for their own domestic reasons. ‘The Government of Pakistan is like someone riding a bicycle. They feel that the moment they return to normalcy, the bicycle stops and they fall down.’

Nehru assured Graham that, apart from Pakistan’s fear being baseless, India was eager to have a speedy settlement in Kashmir by holding a plebiscite. Not just the bulk of Indian troops, but three-quarters or even more, would be brought back if Pakistan troops were withdrawn and the ‘Azad Kashmir’ forces disbanded. The massive victory of the National Conference in the elections to the constituent assembly made Nehru more optimistic than ever about the result of a plebiscite, and he discussed with Abdullah the possibility of a plebiscite in the State, excluding ‘Azad Kashmir’. The United Nations authorities could check the electoral rolls which had been prepared and then hold the plebiscite. Indian troops would be moved to the cease-fire line to prevent incursions, but Abdullah was prepared to permit a few well-known persons from Pakistan or ‘Azad Kashmir’ to come and canvass, provided the same facilities were given to him when a plebiscite was held in ‘Azad Kashmir’.

Graham’s report was mainly a factual one, though he made some new suggestions which were not in line with the decisions of the United Nations

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9 Nehru’s note for Sheikh Abdullah, 25 August 1952.
10 Note of Nehru, 9 September 1951.
Commission or what had been agreed to earlier.\textsuperscript{11} Liaquat Ali Khan proposed that the Security Council should now impose a solution, but Nehru replied that no imposed formula would be acceptable to India. Once more Pakistan prepared for a quick war which she thought she would win.\textsuperscript{12} At the Security Council, for the first time the Soviet Union adopted a positive attitude and criticized the policies of Britain and the United States. To Nehru this was an embarrassment for it made Kashmir a part of cold war rivalry and stiffened the stance of the other powers. The British and American Governments were therefore informed that India had not sought Soviet support. But when Britain responded by advising further concessions by India, particularly as regards the quantum of forces maintained by her, Nehru reacted sharply. 'It is very good of the British Government to take such a deep interest in our affairs and be so lavish with their advice to us that we should behave. I fear I am a little tired of their good intentions and good offices.'\textsuperscript{13}

The draft resolution introduced by the British delegate at the Security Council persisted, behind a cloak of seeming impartiality, in ignoring India's version of the case as well as past commitments made by the United Nations commission. India and Pakistan were treated alike and asked to reduce their forces to the minimum, just as the 'Azad Kashmir' authorities were treated on a par with the Kashmir Government; and there was once more talk of a neutral force. This refusal to deal with the issue of aggression and a consideration only of a plebiscite in which India and Pakistan were equal parties exasperated Nehru. 'There can be no right decision based on wrong. That wrong has to be righted first.'\textsuperscript{14} The State Department had also been 'made to understand, in the clearest language, that we consider their attitude in this matter completely wrong and unfriendly to India and that this comes more in the way of the development of cordial relations between India and America, that all of us desire, than anything else.'\textsuperscript{15} If the Western Powers insisted on passing the resolution, India would take the matter to the General Assembly; but there was no question of accepting the resolution or revising the Kashmir policy.

Despite India's objection, the resolution was passed. Nehru rejected it, and was prepared for a break with Graham if he wished to have talks on the basis of that resolution. But by now the unfriendly attitude of Britain and the United States seemed less important than developments within Kashmir itself. The attitude of Sheikh Abdullah had, over the years,

\textsuperscript{11} E.g., Graham suggested simultaneous demilitarization while India was prepared to commence it on her side only after Pakistan had completed it.


\textsuperscript{13} Note, 7 April 1952.

\textsuperscript{14} Nehru's telegram to Vijayalakshmi, 10 November 1952.

\textsuperscript{15} Nehru to G. L. Mehta, appointed to succeed Vijayalakshmi as Ambassador in Washington, 1 October 1952.
become increasingly a cause of concern to the Government of India. Nehru had, in a sense, built his Kashmir policy round this man. It was the popular support which Abdullah commanded in Kashmir and his commitment to India and secularism which justified prompt military action and saved India’s troops from being an army of invasion.

The only person who can deliver the goods in Kashmir is Abdullah. I have a high opinion of his integrity and his general balance of mind. He may make any number of mistakes in minor matters, but I think he is likely to be right in regard to major decisions. No satisfactory way out can be found in Kashmir except through him. 16

Such dependence on an individual caused at first no worry. Abdullah’s attachment to India and her Prime Minister seemed unshakable and Nehru had to warn him to avoid references to Pakistan in his speeches, for these were always so critical that they were cited in the Security Council to prove that the Abdullah Government was incapable of impartiality at the time of a plebiscite. 17 Nehru was not aware that at the same time Abdullah, who perhaps from the start had nurtured ideas of independence, 18 had spoken to senior officials in the United States of the advantages of independence and hinted at American and British aid for development. 19

In September 1948 Abdullah’s statement that certain people in India believed in surrendering Kashmir to Pakistan drew a protest from Patel, and Nehru had to explain it away.

Sheikh Abdullah is, I am convinced, a very straight and frank man. He is not a very clear thinker and he goes astray in his speech as many of our politicians do. He is of course obsessed with the idea of meeting the challenge of Pakistan and keeping his own people from being influenced by Pakistan’s propaganda. I made it clear to him that while I entirely agree with this, the approach should be different. 20

But Abdullah himself was unapologetic, and soon the divergence of approach between him and Nehru himself became so marked that in January 1949 the Prime Minister had to appeal to Abdullah not to confuse issues by airing his views in the press. 21 Kashmir, he observed to Krishna Menon a month later, 22 continued to be a headache; there was little

18 Nehru to the Maharaja of Kashmir, 13 November 1947.
17 Nehru to Abdullah, 3 April 1948.
22 19 February 1949.
coordination between the Government of India and Abdullah's Government and this was injuring India's cause. After meeting the United States Ambassador in Srinagar in the spring of 1949, Sheikh Abdullah seems to have got the impression — as against what he had been told in New York in 1948 — that the United States and Britain would favour an independent Kashmir and would provide it with international guarantees. Certainly from 1949 his mind worked clearly on these lines and in numerous speeches and statements he hinted at the advantages of such a development. He was even reported to have suggested this to Sir Owen Dixon in the summer of 1950 as one of the possible solutions of the Kashmir issue and to be contemplating bilateral negotiations with the leaders of 'Azad Kashmir'. All this, of course, embarrassed the Government of India, and Nehru in particular. 'The most difficult thing in life', commented Nehru sadly, having Sheikh Abdullah and Krishna Menon chiefly in mind, 'is what to do with one's friends.'

When Abdullah expressed his resentment at receiving advice from the Government of India on matters lying outside defence, external affairs and communications, the three subjects on which Kashmir had acceded, Nehru wrote directly to Abdullah revealing his distress. Relations with the Kashmir Government were being conducted by India not on a formal footing but on the basis of common objectives and friendship. He had never taken any action with regard to Kashmir without consulting Abdullah fully; but if Abdullah wished only to function on the official level, then Nehru would have to think anew and his interest in Kashmir would be greatly reduced.

I think I told you once before that if there was any vital difference of opinion between you and me, then I would prefer to drop out... I greatly regret that you should have taken up a position which indicates that you do not attach any value to any friendly advice that we might give and, indeed, consider it as improper interference, of which you take a very grave view. If that is so, personally I have nothing further to say. I have not thought of Kashmir or of you in that way and so I am rather at a loss how to act when the very foundation of my thought and action has been shaken up.

Abdullah’s defence was that the States Ministry ordered the Kashmir

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23 It has recently been suggested that some Indian leaders believed that it was Mrs Loy Henderson, the wife of the United States Ambassador, and some C.I.A. agents who encouraged Abdullah to think in these terms. See W. Johnson (ed.), The Papers of Adlai Stevenson Vol. 5 (Boston, 1974), p. 204 fn.

24 See, for example, his interview published in the Statesman, 14 April 1949.

25 To Vijayalakshmi, 10 May 1950. Abdullah's conduct had naturally been seized upon by Nehru's critics. 'I fear Vallabhbhai thinks you have the sole responsibility in respect of Sheikh Abdullah!' Rajagopalachari to Nehru, 23 March 1949.

26 Nehru to Sheikh Abdullah, 4 July 1950.
Government about too much, that they had done nothing new and that it was embarrassing for him to appeal repeatedly to Nehru.

I cannot help feeling loss of confidence in myself in this respect. It is clear that there are powerful influences at work in India who do not see eye to eye with you regarding your ideal of making the Union a truly secular state and your Kashmir policy. Their constant endeavour is to weaken you and in order to achieve this purpose they think it necessary to bring down all those who are loyal and attached to you... While I feel I can willingly go down and sacrifice myself for you, I am afraid as custodian of the destinies of 40 lacs of Kashmiris, I cannot barter away their cherished rights and privileges. I have several times stated that we acceded to India because we saw there two bright stars of hope and aspiration, namely, Gandhiji and yourself, and despite our having so many affinities with Pakistan we did not join it, because we thought our programme will not fit with their policy. If, however, we are driven to the conclusion that we cannot build our state on our own lines, suited to our genius, what answer can I give to my people and how am I to face them?  

This made clear that Abdullah was not merely thinking of independence on its own merits but beginning to contrast India and Pakistan with detriment to the former. He issued a proclamation in defiance of the Government of India which suggested that he was bent on seeking a conflict. Gopalaswami Ayyangar recommended that the central government retort by announcing that the proclamation was not law. But Nehru tided over the problem, and was hopeful that the constituent assembly which Abdullah was establishing for Kashmir would formulate a constitution consonant with the sovereignty of India. Abdullah’s first speech to that assembly, stressing the part which Kashmir could play in strengthening secular forces in India, was a hopeful sign. But his speech at Ranbir Singh Pura on 11 April 1952 revealed the extent of the gulf which had developed between him and his colleagues at Delhi. He made no distinction between India and Pakistan and criticized the Indian press as a whole. Nehru did not wish to take him up on this, but Abdullah, sensing Nehru’s acute concern, complained that his remarks had been distorted by the correspondent of the Press Trust of India because the Kashmir Government had declined to give financial assistance to the Trust for opening an office in the State. He added his grievance that no one in India

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27 Sheikh Abdullah to Nehru, 10 July 1950.
28 To Nehru, 14 July 1950.
29 “From my experience of the last four years, it is my considered judgment that the presence of Kashmir in the Union of India has been the major factor in stabilizing relations between the Hindus and Muslims of India. Gandhiji was not wrong when he uttered words before his death which paraphrase, “I lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.””
had defended his proposals of land reform without compensation and even Nehru, instead of first ascertaining his views, had criticized him publicly on the basis of press reports. But even the authorized version of Abdullah’s speech was not happy, and his later speeches were in the same strain. Nehru did his best to explain them away to the public in the rest of India by pointing out that, however unfortunately worded, there was nothing in them of substance with which one need disagree. But he himself could not help being disheartened by Abdullah’s dispersion of the widespread popular support for him and his policies in India by exaggerating the strength of the communal forces in India. This in itself provided sustenance to these elements and encouraged criticism of India abroad at a time when the Security Council was considering the Kashmir problem.

I have not the wish or the heart to argue about this or any other matter with you. I have felt deeply about Kashmir, because it represented to me many things and many principles. It always has been an axiom with me, quite apart from constitutional position and the like, that the people of Kashmir must decide their own fate. For me the people of Kashmir were basically represented by you. If you feel as you do, then the link that has bound us together necessarily weakens and I have little heart left to discuss these matters. You will do of course as you think right and I shall certainly not come in the way. My only difficulty is that I happen to hold a responsible position in India and therefore have some voice in fashioning our policy. For the moment, it is not clear to me what I should do.

Abdullah’s replies were friendly at the personal level, but unrepentant on the specific issue. He believed that he had been gravely wronged by certain influential sections in India and that this was endangering the communal harmony and goodwill in Kashmir. While claiming that his attachment to Nehru, to their common ideals and to India was unshaken, he insisted that it was necessary to clear up the considerable confusion that seemed to exist regarding the constitutional relationship of Kashmir with India. Nehru could not agree with this, but he decided not to continue a public controversy. ‘Some people thought’, he assured the Chief Ministers but, in fact, seeking to assure himself,

that the leaders of Kashmir were not playing quite fair with India and might even think of a breakaway from India. Naturally this thought was rather painful. As a matter of fact, if one thing is certain it is this:

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80 Sheikh Abdullah to Nehru, 23 April 1952.
81 Nehru’s two letters to Sheikh Abdullah, 25 April 1952.
82 Sheikh Abdullah to Nehru, 1 and 2 May 1952.
83 Nehru to Sheikh Abdullah, 2 and 7 May 1952.
that not only the leaders but the great mass of the people in Kashmir want to be associated with India and want the accession of Kashmir to India to continue... I have no doubt in my mind that the leaders of the people of Kashmir are anxious to continue this accession to India and if there is a plebiscite on this point it will be in India's favour.\textsuperscript{34}

Meantime, a step towards cooperation seemed to have been taken when Nehru and Abdullah reached agreement on some general principles which would govern relations between Kashmir and India. The central government’s authority would extend to the three subjects covered by the instrument of accession, and residuary powers would be vested, unlike the case of all other States in the Union, in the Kashmir Government. The residents of the State would be citizens of India, but the State legislature would have the power to define and regulate the rights and privileges of permanent residents. It was also for future decision whether a chapter on fundamental rights should be included in the Kashmir constitution; and the Supreme Court would have jurisdiction only in regard to such fundamental rights as were agreed to by the State. The State flag would continue along with the national flag, and the head of the Kashmir State would be chosen by the President on the recommendation of the State legislature. The central government could also intervene in the State only on the request or with the concurrence of the State Government.

Obviously, being an international issue, Kashmir required a special status; but the Delhi agreement was too vague to endure as it stood. To avoid head-on collisions with either Sheikh Abdullah, who toyed with ideas of independence, or those elements in India which demanded closer integration, Nehru suggested a more precise definition of Kashmir’s links with India. Abdullah claimed to approve of this, but weakened belief by declining on specious grounds to come to Delhi. He then took steps to provide for the deposition and possible impeachment of the Maharaja and the election of the head of state. While the decision to have an elected head in Kashmir was fully accepted by the Indian Government, deposition and impeachment infringed the President’s prerogatives and were bound to rouse discussion and criticism in India. So Nehru advised Abdullah to proceed slowly. ‘We are a nation of lawyers and every step is examined with a hawk’s eye by the legal fraternity.’ The recent debates in Parliament on Kashmir had created a friendly atmosphere which should not be disturbed by fresh issues and doubts. If Abdullah changed the language of the agreement which Nehru had justified in Parliament, Nehru’s whole argument would fall to the ground.\textsuperscript{35} He also, writing in the general context of the talks with Graham at Geneva, drew attention to the impracticability of an independent Kashmir. The State was so important

\textsuperscript{34} Nehru to Chief Ministers, 16 June 1952.
\textsuperscript{35} Nehru to Abdullah, 6 August (two letters), and 7 August 1952 (two letters).
strategically that India and Pakistan, as well as other powers, would continue to be interested, and the struggle for influence would ensure that Kashmir was neither independent nor peaceful nor normal. Even the suggestion that Kashmir should be partitioned, with Jammu going to India, the north and north-western areas to Pakistan and the Valley becoming independent under a guarantee of India, Pakistan and the United Nations, was unworkable.

Most important of all, we should have no doubts in our minds about these matters. Doubts in the minds of leaders percolate to their followers and the people generally. The weakness of the situation in Kashmir is the constant discussions which go on between people holding different views. What is required is a clear and firm outlook and no debate about basic issues. If we have that, it just does not matter what the United Nations thinks or Pakistan does. Personally I have that clear outlook and have had it for these four years and it has surprised me that there should be so much discussion about obvious matters ... the only possible course for Kashmir is for the state to be closely associated with India, that association not interfering with its autonomy in most respects. If that is so, then it is not wise to say or do things which imperil that association. Our general outlook should be such as to make people think that the association of Kashmir state with India is an accomplished and final fact and nothing is going to undo it ... I have held these views concisely and precisely for the last four years and nothing has happened during this period which has made me change them in the slightest. So meetings with United Nations officials or developments in Pakistan do not worry me in the least. What has sometimes worried me is what happens in Kashmir, because I have found doubt and hesitation there, and not clarity of vision or firmness of outlook.²⁸

Abdullah’s ambivalence, however, continued and resulted, as was to be expected, in fanning Hindu communal resentment. By the end of 1952 it was known that the Jan Sangh, a party newly formed by S. P. Mookerjee, the Akali Dal, the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. had joined hands with the Jammu Praja Parishad (the local Hindu communal party in Kashmir) to spread an agitation from Jammu into the Punjab and up to Delhi and beyond, on the three issues of Kashmir, refugees from East Bengal and the banning of cow-slaughters. The wide appeal of the issues was reinforced by a virulent personal attack on the Prime Minister, and the Sikh leader, Tara Singh, virtually called for the assassination of Nehru. It was likely that the agitation, even if it did not lead to war with Pakistan, might result in

killing on much the same scale as in 1947 and the destruction of whatever sense of security had been built in the Muslim mind in India. Such potential danger called for quick and firm action at many levels; but nowhere was Nehru fully successful, and in consequence the crisis mounted beyond control. His orders that every attempt at disturbance within India should be suppressed were carried out only half-heartedly. The Home Ministry was at this time in the hands of Kailas Nath Katju, a loyal follower of Nehru but long past his prime; and his doddering ineptitude was accentuated by the tardiness of many officials whose communal sympathies were barely concealed. Nor did the effort of Nehru to isolate the agitation, so as to reveal its personal and communal tones, make much headway. He appealed to Kripalani and Jayaprakash Narayan not to support this agitation merely because of their desire to oppose. The possible result was something above parties and politics and might well affect the whole future of India; and for socialists to associate themselves with this agitation was to submerge their hope of progress in communal passion. But Jayaprakash’s dusty answer was that anti-communalism did not necessarily mean an acceptance of Nehru’s method of handling this problem.

Above all, Nehru failed in his major thrust of seeking to isolate the communal nucleus of the agitation by establishing that Sheikh Abdullah’s administration was secular, broad-minded and national. Syama Prasad Mookerjee and his supporters were utilizing the discontent in Jammu to question the authority of Parliament in granting a special status to Kashmir, and to weaken the foreign policy of Nehru’s Government; and, by trying to dissociate Jammu from the rest of the State, they were loosening India’s hold on the Valley which, of course, was the real prize in the contest with Pakistan. Indeed, Mookerjee made it clear that to him the Jammu agitation was part of his continuous feud with the Prime Minister, whose leadership was to Mookerjee a national liability. So the real attack was not on Abdullah but on Nehru and all the public values for which he stood. ‘It is through your mistaken policy and your failure to understand the viewpoints of those who differ from you, that the country is being brought to the brink of disaster.’ On this there could obviously be no compromise. But the situation would become easier for Nehru to handle if in Jammu itself the hard core of opposition could be denuded of the support of the large number who were normally non-political but had joined the agitation because of the plausibility of its demands.

As it was, the initiative lay with the agitators and the Kashmir Government was on the defensive. Nehru himself was keen on touring

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37 Nehru to Kripalani, 19 November, and to Jayaprakash Narayan, 19 November 1952.
38 Jayaprakash Narayan to Nehru, 11 January 1953.
39 Balraj Madhok, Syama Prasad Mookerjee (Delhi, 1955?), pp. 80-84.
40 S. P. Mookerjee to Nehru, 3 February 1953.
Jammu, but the Kashmir Government showed no great enthusiasm. So all he could do was to appeal to Abdullah to combine a firm attitude, so far as law and order were concerned, with a friendly approach to the large mass of the people in Jammu. Nehru thought this could best be done by implementing all the terms of the Delhi agreement, setting up promptly the commission which Abdullah had offered to inquire into the grievances of Jammu, flying the Indian flag alongside that of the State in two or three prominent places, postponing confiscation of the Maharaja’s orchards and bearing in mind, while implementing land reforms, that the lands in Jammu were relatively poorer than those in other parts of the State. A positive, human approach and not mere logic or governmental action would provide a permanent solution by winning over people’s minds and not just suppressing their views.  

Abdullah, however, was unwilling to oblige. The growing Hindu communal opposition to him seemed to justify all his fears. He did nothing to follow up his tentative suggestion of a commission for Jammu and, instead of taking immediate action on the Delhi agreement, referred its clauses to various sub-committees of the Kashmir assembly, thus ensuring long delays. On the other hand, he expressed concern at the reaction of the Muslims in Kashmir to the communal agitation in other parts of India. This attitude in turn helped to whip up the flagging energies of the agitators in Jammu and elsewhere, and plans were made for concerted demonstrations throughout northern India. There was little that Nehru could do on his own to break this spiral, apart from pointing out to Syama Prasad Mookerjee the international repercussions of his demands and the advantage that Pakistan was taking of them, and urging Sheikh Abdullah to reclaim the initiative. But neither Mookerjee nor Abdullah was in a mood to listen, the one seemingly concerned merely to embarrass Nehru and the other obsessed with Hindu communalism and the fantasy of independence.

I fear that Sheikh Sahib’s mind is so utterly confused that he does not know what to do. All kinds of pressures are being brought to bear upon him and he is getting more and more into a tangle. There is nobody with him who can really help him much, because he does not trust anyone fully, and yet everyone influences him ... My fear is that Sheikh Sahib, in his present state of mind, is likely to do something or take some step, which might make things worse ... The fact is that he has so many pulls in different directions, that he just cannot make up his mind.  

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41 To Abdullah, 1 January, 5 January and 30 January 1953; to Bakshi Ghulam Mahomed, Deputy Prime Minister of Kashmir, 9 February 1953.
42 Sheikh Abdullah to Nehru, 27 February 1953.
43 Nehru to Azad, 1 March 1953.
There is a tone of near-despair in Nehru's letter to Abdullah pressing him to act and not merely wait on events.

We all agree that the uncertainty about the state should end as soon as possible. But you say in your letter that you do not know how this is going to happen. It is not enough for us to feel that something should be done. We all want the Korean war to stop. Perhaps everyone wants that. And yet it continues. We want the very serious problems in Europe and Africa to be solved, lest they lead to world war. But thus far no progress has been made and in fact things are a little worse than they were.

It is thus not merely enough to desire that something should happen, but to know how to get that done. The result is never entirely in any one individual's or group's or country's hands, but one works for certain ends and looks at the whole problem with some vision and perspective, not allowing any immediate difficulty to obscure that vision.44

But Abdullah did not respond, and even declined Nehru's invitation to come to Delhi to discuss matters. 'He does not quite know what to do and is, at the same time, not prepared to accept our advice. So he is in a complete jam and is very disheartened about everything.'45 The parallel to this immobility in Kashmir was an intensification of the agitation outside the State. Tara Singh had to be arrested, and thereafter Mookerjee courted imprisonment. 'What is really painful is the extraordinary folly of all this.'46 Trapped between Abdullah and Mookerjee, for the first time since 1947 Nehru began to feel despondent about the future of Kashmir. He could face Pakistan and the United Nations and even the prospect of war; but with Abdullah and Mookerjee working in tacit concert to divide the State on Hindu-Muslim lines, the problem became almost insuperably complex. The best approach in these circumstances seemed to be to suppress firmly the activities of the Hindu communalists which were little short of treason, thereby giving Abdullah time to recover his nerve. Nehru therefore ordered the prompt arrest of all those who participated in the agitation in Delhi and the Punjab, directed Pant to prevent the movement of volunteers from the U.P. into these areas, and asked Katju to consider the banning of the Jan Sangh.47

Nehru's hand, however, was weakened by the persistent inefficiency of the Home Ministry. Katju was unwilling to act on his Prime Minister's

44 Nehru to Abdullah, 1 March 1953.
45 Nehru to Vijayalakshmi, 3 March 1953.
46 Nehru to Vijayalakshmi, 9 March 1953.
47 Nehru to Pant, 15 March, to B. Sachar, Chief Minister of the Punjab, 20 March, and to Katju, 26 March 1953.
suggestion,48 and Mookerjee, whose release was ordered by the Supreme Court on technical grounds, was able again to intensify the agitation and muster support throughout northern India. He then decided to cross over into Jammu without a permit. The obvious step for the Government of India to take was to prevent such action under their own authority rather than place the onus on Abdullah’s Government. Incredibly, the local officials in the Punjab travelled with Mookerjee and facilitated his crossing of the State frontier. Incompetence and evasion of responsibility and not, as Mookerjee’s supporters suspected, a desire to push their leader into an area where the Supreme Court’s writ did not as yet run,49 seem to have been the reasons for such unpardonable folly. All that Nehru could do, as long as he left the Home Ministry in such shaky hands, was to protest vehemently.50 Why he did not take immediate action to replace Katju with someone more vigorous is a failure that can be explained only by Nehru’s reluctance, even in extreme situations, to hurt an old friend. ‘You have surrounded yourself with all sorts of men whom others have rejected.’51 The security of the state itself took second place in Nehru’s scheme of values to personal loyalty. It is a tribute to the man, but not to the Prime Minister.

Abdullah’s Government were at least prompt in arresting Mookerjee and placing him under detention; but Nehru could secure little cooperation from them in the positive matter of taking speedy action to defuse the agitation in Jammu.

I need not tell you how very much concerned I am about this great delay. I cannot understand it. The biggest international matters are decided this way or that way. I do not mind dealing with any matter, but I feel quite helpless about this Kashmir issue because I do not know where I stand.52

Abdullah did not seek to explain the delay but invited Nehru and Katju to Srinagar. Overcoming his initial reluctance, Nehru went to Kashmir. Abdullah argued that there was no middle course between full integration and ‘full autonomy’ (which was his euphemism for independence), and, as the majority in Kashmir would not accept the first alternative, there was no choice but to accept the second, which now seemed to Abdullah, in contrast to his attitude even two months before,53 to be practicable. He was not convinced by Nehru’s reply that there were many intermediate

48 Katju to Nehru, 16 April 1953.
49 Madhok, op. cit., p. 261.
50 To Katju, 8 and 16 May, and to Sachar, 26 May 1953.
51 Rafi Kidwai to Nehru, 13 March 1953.
52 To Bakshi Ghulam Mahomed, 27 April 1953.
53 ‘To say that those in whose hands lie the destinies of Kashmir state think in terms of independence is nothing but trash. It is not in the interests of the people of Kashmir to be left alone unprotected.’ Speech at Madras, 21 January 1953.
possibilities. But it was also obvious that Abdullah no longer commanded maximum support in the National Conference, and at a meeting of its Working Committee his proposal to negotiate a new status with India was opposed by a majority of the members. Nehru urged all of them not to take any step which might make the situation even more difficult and to stay their hand at least until he returned from the Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ Conference.

The tragedy was that the internal situation in Kashmir had deteriorated just when, for the first time since 1947, there was a real chance of a settlement with Pakistan. There the Governor-General, Ghulam Mahomed, had dismissed the Prime Minister, Nazimuddin, and appointed in his place Mahomed Ali—‘all’, as Nehru summed it up, ‘palace politics and palace intrigues — without a palace.’ The coup was generally believed to have been promoted by the United States; and the Eisenhower administration was willing to consider a bilateral settlement on Kashmir between India and Pakistan. Dulles, on a visit to Delhi in May, added that talk of a plebiscite had little point; such plebiscites had failed elsewhere and only created bad blood, and it would be much better to settle the problem on the basis of partition or some other ad hoc arrangement. Apart from the influence of the United States, there was also for the first time a widespread feeling in Pakistan that mere hostility could not serve for ever as a policy. Conditions in Pakistan, both political and economic, had deteriorated greatly and India could not be blamed for it all. Nehru’s assessment was that a vague regret [had] spread among many people at the fact of partition and its consequences. This must not be taken to mean that anyone really thought of reversing the partition. History cannot be reversed in this way. But all this did mean a reversal of the old habit of mind of blaming India for everything and a toning down of the ill-feeling against India. Probably, at no time during the last five or six years, has the public of Pakistan been more friendly, or to put it better in a negative way, less unfriendly to India than now. There is a genuine desire both in the public and among the leadership for some way to be found to settle the issues between India and Pakistan, which have created so much trouble and ill-will.  

Nehru was eager to respond to this new feeling of friendliness in Pakistan. He had already, even before the change of government, ordered his officials to adopt a less rigid attitude on the release of the Indus waters

84 To Mountbatten, 19 April 1953.
85 Nehru’s note on interviews with Dulles, 22 May 1953.
86 Nehru’s note on relations with Pakistan, 26 April 1953.
12 Nehru and Truman, Washington, October 1949

13 With daughter and grandson Rajiv, October 1950, in the grounds of Nehru's home
and threatened to punish those who avoided execution of his orders and even concealed information from him. This was far too serious and important a matter for the Government of India to behave 'like a petty attorney' and act in a narrow legalistic way. But the main problem was Kashmir. In London Mahomed Ali, while expressing his anxiety for a settlement on Kashmir and other issues, left it to Nehru to make precise suggestions on the ground that his position in his own country was still weak. A determined effort might well have ended in a formal partition of Kashmir; public opinion in Pakistan, the Pakistan Government and the United States would all probably have accepted it. But sadly, in what was perhaps the only hiatus in his long period of ascendancy, Nehru was not in a position to achieve this. The agitation in Jammu, with the support it could claim in the rest of the country, had tarnished India's secular image; nor could the Prime Minister commit the divided Kashmir Government in any way. 'I have not', as he bitterly told Abdullah before leaving for London, 'the ghost of a notion of what I am going to say to him about this because, apart from larger issues, I do not even know for certain what the present position is vis-à-vis India. So Nehru could do no more than utter platitudes and stress the need for care and caution and goodwill. There should be no external interference; the Government and people of Kashmir would have to be consulted at every step; existing conditions should be upset as little as possible; and rather than follow the detailed lines proposed by United Nations mediators and representatives, the Governments of India and Pakistan should explore fresh avenues. All these admirable sentiments added up to little progress.

At this stage, fate took a hand and gave the crisis a further twist. At Cairo, on his way back to India, Nehru heard that Mookerjee had died in detention on 23 June. The authorities in Kashmir do not seem to have realized that Mookerjee was not a fit man and was uncomfortable in high altitudes; even when he fell ill the doctors did not realize how sick he was, and the end came suddenly. Such was the incompetence of the local administration that Sheikh Abdullah was not informed of Mookerjee's death until the next morning and Karan Singh, the Yuvaraj (crown prince) who was the elected head of state, was told only after the body had been dispatched from Srinagar.

Mookerjee's sudden death led to charges of negligence and even murder, and demands for an impartial inquiry. An emotional storm, particularly in Bengal, drove many who were not political supporters of Mookerjee into a mood sharply critical of Nehru and Abdullah. Nehru kept his balance; but in Kashmir the rift, which had already disrupted the government, became wider. Mookerjee himself, for all his fierce speeches, had no strong

87 Nehru's two notes, 4 March 1953, and note, 10 April 1953.
88 Nehru to Abdullah, 27 April 1953.
89 Nehru to B. C. Roy, 30 June 1953.
commitment to extra-constitutional action, and it was believed that he had, during his last days, been contemplating ways of terminating the agitation. But his death ruled out the thought of any compromise among Mookerjee’s supporters just as the reactions to his death in some other parts of India strengthened the support for Abdullah in the Kashmir Valley.

For the first time public cries are raised in Kashmir that the Indian Army should get out. If I feel strongly on this subject, you will understand me. Nothing more harmful to our cause in the State could have been done even by our enemies. It is for me almost a personal tragedy.

To determine and, if necessary, even to revise policy in the new context Nehru invited Abdullah and some of his colleagues to Delhi.

Nothing is more depressing than confused thinking in any vital matter. One can face any problem, however difficult, but there is no hope when there is confusion in one’s mind. I have, thus far, kept my mind fairly clear on the Kashmir issue in spite of its difficulties. That did not mean that I had an easy solution up my sleeve, but that did mean that I was clear about the line of activity we should pursue. But lately I have not at all been clear as to what you have been thinking, and naturally that has a powerful effect on my own thinking... I know that during the past three or four years doubts have risen in your mind and we have discussed them. We did not agree about some things and, on one or two occasions, I even told you that I did not wish to come in your way if you differed from me in any vital matter... We have argued enough and must accept each other’s present conclusions and then discuss the future on that basis. If that future unhappily leads to divergence with all its consequences we fashion our respective courses accordingly... Thus far, I have proceeded on a basis of friendship and confidence in you and have been vain enough to expect the same approach from you. Whether that is justified now or not, it is for you to say. Individual relations should not count in national affairs and yet they do count and make a difference.

To me it has been a major surprise that a settlement arrived at between us should be by-passed or repudiated, regardless of the merits. That strikes at the root of all confidence, personal or international... My honour is bound up with my word... It is always painful to part company after long years of comradeship, but if

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61 Nehru to B. C. Roy, 29 June 1953.
our conscience so tells us, or in our view, an overriding national interest so requires then there is no help for it. Even so we must do it with full understanding and full explanation to each other and not casually.63

Yet once again Abdullah declined to come to Delhi. Protesting that he was fully prepared to abide by the Delhi agreement, he blamed not only the agitators and the Indian press of communal vilification, but even the Government of India of failing to state clearly that the status of Kashmir would not be further altered.63 Nehru merely replied that the criticism was unfair and pressed Abdullah to discuss present issues and not merely repeat past complaints; but Azad offered an explicit assurance that the recognition of Kashmir’s special position was not of a temporary nature and India would adhere to this permanently without any reservations.

What I am telling you now is as a personal friend. There is only one way of safeguarding the future well-being of the people of Kashmir and that is the way which we laid down in 1949 and which you had then accepted. Hold steadfastly to this way and be assured that you will never have to regret it.64

It was, however, too late by now to shift Abdullah from his course of working for full independence for Kashmir. Believing perhaps that he had in this the support of the United States,65 and convinced that even Nehru could not subdue communal forces in India, he publicly proclaimed that Kashmir should become independent. Justice had not been done by India to the Muslim majority in Kashmir and he himself was not trusted. ‘A time will, therefore, come when I will bid them good-bye.’66 There was clearly nothing more to be gained by striving for discussions with Abdullah. The Government of India would have either to accept that he spoke for Kashmir and pull out of the State — it was believed that his next specific demand would be for the withdrawal of Indian troops — or to ascertain whether he represented only a minority opinion.

63 Nehru to Abdullah, 28 June 1953.
64 Abdullah to Nehru, 4 July 1953.
65 Nehru to Abdullah, 8 July, and Azad to Abdullah, 9 July 1953.
66 Nehru thought that Dulles and Adlai Stevenson might have privately put forward the idea of an independent Kashmir; see Foreign Secretary’s telegram (dictated by Nehru) to Indian mission at United Nations, 10 July 1953. Stevenson later denied this: ‘My talks with Abdullah were the first I had in India regarding Kashmir, and I neither had nor expressed any views... his casual suggestion that independent status might be an alternative solution... I could not have given Abdullah even unconscious encouragement regarding independence, which did not seem to me realistic; it made little impression on me. I was listening, not talking, and at that time was most interested in why the United Nations plebiscite idea did not proceed’. Stevenson’s cable to United States Ambassador, passed on to the Ministry of External Affairs, 13 August 1953. Abdullah may, of course, have taken silence to denote approval; but Nehru accepted Stevenson’s explanation. ‘As for Adlai Stevenson, I do not think that he is to blame in any way.’ Nehru to Vijayalakshmi, 3 October 1953.
67 Speech at Mujahid Manzil, 10 July 1953.
This was obviously a matter which would have to be sorted out in Kashmir, and all the documents so far available indicate that Nehru did not interfere or even hint at his own preferences. He did not write to Abdullah and, when Karan Singh came to Delhi, had a long talk with him but gave no advice. Maulana Azad was also told not to suggest to Karan Singh or to anyone else any precise line of action.67 A visit to Karachi, arranged in London, could not be postponed and Nehru received a popular welcome as warm as that in any city in India. 'I can truly say that I felt among friends and completely at home. The tragedy of the past few years seemed to fade away.'68 The Pakistan authorities, declaring that to them Kashmir was the only really difficult problem, made 'quite plaintive and almost pathetic' appeals for a settlement; but because of the internal situation Nehru was in no position to offer terms. He could only assert that the status quo should be accepted with minor modifications. Mahomed Ali ruled out independence and seemed to favour a regional or zonal plebiscite on the basis of Graham's proposals. But Nehru did not regard this as easy. India's basic position was not so much concerned with the number of troops as with the fact that all civil and military authority of Pakistan should leave Kashmir.69

Meantime the crisis in Kashmir was coming to a head. In the Cabinet itself Abdullah and his supporters were now in a minority, and this was thought to reflect the position in the National Conference. Abdullah, though the head of the Government, was functioning in effect as leader of the opposition. Indeed, he was reported as having said that he would set fire to the State. 'I really cannot explain his new attitude except on the uncharitable assumption that he has lost grip of his mind.'70 This statement of pique covers a total failure of communication between Nehru and Abdullah. The question now was to determine the measure of support which Abdullah still commanded. The democratic procedure obviously would be for those opposed to Abdullah to resign from the ministry and, if they represented majority opinion, to be asked to form a new government. Nehru knew that such steps were being considered in Kashmir and that, if Abdullah refused to resign, he would be dismissed.71 His only intervention was, on hearing that the majority group in the Cabinet had requested the local military commander for movement of troops, to order that the Indian army should not be involved.72

So Nehru was prepared for the dismissal of Abdullah on 9 August. 'For the last three months, I have seen this coming, creeping up as some kind of inevitable disaster. I did not, of course, know the exact shape it would take.

67 Nehru to Azad, 19 July 1953.
68 To Ghulam Mahomed, Governor-General of Pakistan, 29 July 1953.
70 Nehru to G. S. Bajpai, 30 July 1953.
71 Statement prepared by Nehru, 31 July 1953; secret messages from Srinagar, 1 August 1953.
72 Nehru to Chief Ministers, 22 August 1953.
To the last moment, I was not clear what exactly would happen.\(^{78}\) He certainly does not seem to have anticipated the way in which Abdullah was dismissed, by stealth of night in his absence, and his prompt arrest thereafter. The arrest appears to have been made on the directive of the new Prime Minister, Bakshi Ghulam Mahomed, who felt he could not maintain the administration of the State as long as Abdullah was at large.\(^{74}\) ‘We learnt of these events’, Nehru reported later, ‘after they had taken place.’\(^{75}\) He confessed that it left a bad taste in his mouth, but, asserting that the men on the spot knew best, as head of the Central Government he accepted ultimate responsibility for what had happened, although part of it at least had been done without his knowledge.\(^{76}\)

The whole crisis in Kashmir bore to him the full dimensions of a tragedy. That a close friend and comrade, who had for twenty years played a notable part in the struggle for freedom, should now doubt the bona fides of Nehru and the Government which he headed, and have had to be dismissed and placed in detention was both a personal blow and a setback to national and international policy. ‘But we have to face life as it is and carry on to the best of our ability . . . Do not be disheartened by untoward events. We have undertaken big jobs and we must see them through.’\(^{77}\)

\(^{78}\) To G. S. Bajpai, 24 August 1953.

\(^{74}\) Karan Singh to the author, 9 April 1975.

\(^{75}\) Nehru to Chief Ministers, 22 August 1953. There have been conflicting accounts by those claiming to be participants as to Nehru’s role in this crisis; but all are agreed that his consent had been neither sought nor given for the arrest of Abdullah. See B. M. Kaul, The Untold Story (Delhi, 1967), p. 144, B. N. Mullik, My Years with Nehru: Kashmir (Delhi, 1971), p. 45, A. P. Jain, ‘Kashmir’, Imprint, June 1972, pp. 69-71.

\(^{76}\) Nehru to Bakshi Ghulam Mahomed, 15 August 1953, and to U. N. Dhebar, 24 January 1955.

\(^{77}\) To Nabakrushna Chaudhuri, 15 August 1953.