

BOSE-GANDHI CORRESPONDENCE

On 13 May 1939, Subhas Chandra Bose released to the Press, at Calcutta, the correspondence between him and Mahatma Gandhi on the question of formation of the Congress Working Committee in accordance with the resolution sponsored by Govind Ballabh Pant and passed by the Tripuri Congress.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi

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

In view of your suggestion to Sarat regarding Congress work and the impossibility of my meeting you in the immediate future, I consider it necessary to start consultations with you through post. I am writing.— Subhas.

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 25th March, 1939.

Rashtrapati Bose — Jealgora.

Your wire. I was yesterday at Allahabad to see Maulana Azad as he was anxious for a talk and I posted a letter from the train. Awaiting your communication. Hope your progress is steady. Love.—Bapu.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi

25th March, 1939.

Mahatma Gandhi — Birla House, New Delhi.



Your today's telegram. I am withholding posting my letter till I receive yours—Subhas.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora 25th March, 1939.

Mahatma Gandhi — New Delhi.

Your letter not received. I am, therefore, posting mine— Subhas.

Letter to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 25th March, 1939.

My dear Mahatmaji,

I hope you have seen the statement I issued today (Saturday, the 15th instant) in reply to those who were blaming me for causing a stalemate in the affairs of the Congress. The immediate and urgent problem before us is the formation of the new Working Committee. A satisfactory solution of this problem entails a prior consideration of some other problems of wider significance. Nevertheless, I shall take up the former problem first.

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

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



2. If you still adhere to the view that the Committee should be homogeneous in character, then obviously people like myself on the one side and Sardar Patel and others on the other, cannot be on the same Committee. (I must mention here that I have always combated the idea that the Working Committee should be homogeneous in character).
3. If you agree that different parties or groups should be represented on the Working Committee, what should be their numerical representation?

In my view there are two main parties or 'blocs' in the Congress. They are probably more or less equally balanced. At the Presidential Election we had a majority. At Tripuri it was the other way, but this was due to the attitude of the Congress Socialist Party. If the CSP had not remained neutral, then in spite of various handicaps (I shall refer to them in a subsequent letter or when we meet) we would have had a majority in the open session.

4. It appears to me as an equitable arrangement if I suggest the names of seven members and if you ask Sardar to suggest seven.
5. Further If I am to continue as President and function properly, it is necessary that the General Secretary must be a man of my choice.
6. The Treasurer's name may be suggested by Sardar Patel.

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



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

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

Before I close this letter I shall refer to one other point. If I am to continue as President, despite all the obstacles, handicaps and difficulties — how would you like me to function? I remember that during the last twelve months you occasionally (perhaps often) advised me to the effect that you did not want me to be a dummy President and that you would like to see me asserting myself. At Wardha on the 15th February, when I found that you did not agree with my programme, I told you that there were two alternatives before me — either to efface myself or to stand up for my honest convictions. If I remember aright, you told me in reply that unless I voluntarily accepted your



view-point, self-effacement would in reality amount to self-suppression and that you could not approve of self-suppression. If I am to continue as President, would you still advise me not to function as a dummy President as you advised me last year?

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

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

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

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

Yours affectionately,
Subhas

Letter from Mahatma Gandhi

On the train.
Address as at Birla House,
New Delhi—24-3-39.

My dear Subhas,

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

I enclose herewith a copy of Sarat's letter to me and my reply. If it represents also your sentiments then and then only my suggestions are applicable. Any way the anarchy at the centre should end. In accordance with your request, I



am keeping absolutely silent though pressure is being put upon me to give my opinion on the crisis.

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

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

Love—Bapu.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi

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

Awaiting your letter. As you say in your statement, it is desirable we meet—Subhas.

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhiji's Telegram to Subhas Bose, 26 March 1939:

Rajkot affair ties me down to Delhi or I would run to you despite weakness. I suggest your coming here and living with me. I undertake to nurse you to health while we are slowly conferring. Love—Bapu.

Letter to Mahatma Gandhi from Dr Sunil Bose

We are grateful for your solicitude for Subhas. Present condition is that resting pulse rate is 96° and respiration 24. They mount up to 112° and 32 respectively on bedside or lavatory business; lungs are not fully clear though



there is satisfactory improvement since Tripuri. Since his coming here, he is immobilised in bed and not even permitted to visit attached bathroom. From the experience of last five weeks, we feel that his movement, particularly a long journey at a time of steady improvement, will cause an unfortunate setback, possibly aggravation. If present rest and treatment continue, he should be up and about in three weeks' time. To help public matters, may I venture to suggest you both correspond on immediate and urgent problems, leaving other problems for future discussion—Sunil.

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi to Dr Sunil Bose

In view of your wire I unreservedly withdraw my suggestion. On no account will I endanger the progress towards recovery. I will accept your suggestion and shall deal by correspondence with questions raised in Subhas' letter. Tell him this with my love—Bapu.

Letter to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, March 29.

My dear Mahatmaji,

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

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



Subject to your approval, I am thinking that a date round about the 20th April would be suitable. But there is a difficulty. I am told that the Gandhi Seva Sangh Conference will be meeting in Bihar about the 20th April. So the two meetings will clash. The AICC, as also the Working Committee, will be meeting in Calcutta. Your presence there at the time is indispensably necessary.

May I suggest that the AICC do meet either before or after the Gandhi Seva Sangh Conference. In the former case, you could come to Calcutta first and then proceed to Bihar. In the latter case, you could go to Bihar first and then proceed to Calcutta. In the former case, the Sangh Conference will have to be postponed for a week. In the latter case the AICC meeting will have to be fixed for the end of April.

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

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

With Pranams,

Yours affectionately,
Subhas.

Letter to Mahatma Gandhi, 29 March 1939

My dear Mahatmaji,

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



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

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

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

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

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

Fourthly I am prepared to do all that is humanly possible for me to expedite the formation of the new Working Committee and the summoning of the Working Committee and AICC. But I am so sorry that it is not possible for me to come to Delhi now. (Dr Sunil has wired to you this morning on this point. I got your telegram only yesterday).

Fifthly, I was surprised to learn from your letter that the AICC office had not sent you a copy of Pant's resolution. (This has since been done). I was still



more surprised that the resolution had not been brought to your notice till you came to Allahabad. At Tripuri, the air was thick with the rumour that the resolution had your fullest support. A statement to that effect also appeared in the daily Press while we were at Tripuri.

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

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

I shall write to you again tomorrow or the day after.

I am progressing. I hope your blood pressure will soon go down again.

With Pranams,

Yours affectionately,
Subhas.

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

Letter from Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 30-3-39.

My dear Subhas,

I have delayed my reply to your letter of 26th instant for the sake of having your reply to my wire. I got Sunil's wire last night. I have now got up before morning prayer time to write this reply.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Love.—Bapu.

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

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 31st March 1939.

Your letter. Reply to first letter posted yesterday. All India Meeting must have precedence. Procedure rule 2 says emergency meeting requires seven days' notice which can be given through press. Love—Bapu.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 31st March, 1939.

Your today's telegram. From my health viewpoint any day after 20th preferable. Working Committee meets before All India. No objection to Gandhi Seva Sangh Conference meeting before All India. In fact would personally suit me better. However regarding date shall be guided by your wishes.

Pranams—Subhas.

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 1st April, 1939.

Your wire. Fix date that suits you best. I shall accommodate myself to your date. Love—Bapu.



Letter to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, March 31, 1939.

My Dear Mahatmaji,

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

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

I think I said in my second letter that though pressure was being brought to bear on me to resign, I was resisting. My resignation would mean the beginning of a new phase in Congress politics which I want to avoid till the last. If we come to the parting of the ways, a bitter civil war will commence and whatever be the upshot of it — the Congress will be weakened for some time to come and the benefit will be reaped by the British Government. It is in your hands to save the Congress and the country from this calamity. People who are bitterly opposed for various reasons to Sardar Patel and his group, still have confidence in you and believe that you can take a dispassionate and non-partisan view of things. To them you are a national



figure — above parties and groups — and you can therefore restore unity between the warring elements.

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

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

The letter of my brother Sarat to you shows that he is feeling very bitter. This, I presume, is due largely to his experiences at Tripuri, because he had no such feeling when he left Calcutta for Tripuri. Naturally, he knows more about the happenings at Tripuri than I do—because he could move about freely, meet people and obtain information. But though I was confined to bed, I got enough information from several independent sources regarding the attitude of responsible circles politically opposed to us — to make me feel thoroughly sick of the whole affair. I may say further that, when I left Tripuri, I felt such a loathing and disgust for Congress politics as I have not done for the last nineteen years. Thank God, I have got over that feeling now and have recovered my composure.

Jawahar in one of his letters (and possibly press statements) remarked that the AICC office had deteriorated under my presidentship. I resent that



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

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

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

Perhaps you are aware that at Tripuri it was given out by those who were canvassing in support of Pant's resolution that telephonic conversation had taken place with Rajkot and that resolution had your full support. A report to that effect appeared in the daily press also. It was further given out in the private conversation that nothing short of that resolution in its entirety would satisfy either you or your orthodox followers. Personally, I did not and do not believe in such reports, but they undoubtedly had their vote-catching



value. When Pant's resolution was shown me for the first time by Sardar Patel, I suggested to him (Rajen Babu and Maulana Azad were also there at the time) that if certain changes were made, the resolution in the amended form would be passed by the Congress unanimously. The amended form of the resolution was also sent to Sardar Patel, but there was no response from his side. Their attitude seemed to be — not a word, not a comma, should be changed. I suppose Rajkumari Amrit Kaur has handed over to you the amended form of the resolution. If the object of Pant's Resolution was to reiterate faith in your principles and your leadership and guidance, that was provided in the amended resolution — but if the object was to avenge the result of the Presidential Election, then, of course, the amended resolution did not suffice. Personally I do not see how Pant's Resolution has enhanced your prestige, influence and authority. 45 votes were cast against you in the Subjects Committee and in the Open Session. Whatever interested parties may say, my information from various independent sources is to the effect that in spite of the neutrality of the Congress Socialist Party at least 800 votes, if not more, out of about 2,200 were cast against you. And if the Congress Socialist Party had voted as they did in the Subjects Committee, then the resolution would have been defeated. In any case, the result of the voting would have been problematical. With slight changes in the resolution, not one vote would have been cast against the resolution and your leadership would have had the unanimous support of all Congressmen. Your prestige before the British Government and before the whole world would have gone up like a shot. Instead, your name and prestige were exploited by those who wanted to wreak vengeance on us. Consequently, instead of enhancing your prestige and influence they have dragged it down to an unimaginable depth — for the whole world now knows that though you or your followers managed to get a majority at Tripuri, there is an existence of a powerful opposition. If matters are allowed to drift, this opposition is bound to gain in strength and in volume. What is the future of a party that is deprived of radical, youthful and progressive elements? The future is similar to that of the Liberal Party of Great Britain.

I have said enough to acquaint you with my reaction to Pant's Resolution. I shall now be grateful if you kindly let me know what your reaction is. Do you



approve of Pant's Resolution or would you rather have seen it passed unanimously in an amended form on the lines that we had suggested?

There is one other matter to which I shall refer in this letter — that is the question of your programme. I submitted my views to you on the 15th February at Wardha. What has happened since then has served to confirm my views to justify my prediction. For months I have been telling friends that there would be a crisis in Europe in spring which would continue till summer. The international situation, as well as our own position at home convinced me nearly 8 months ago that the time had come for us to force the issue of Purna Swaraj. Unfortunately for us and for the country, you do not share our optimism. You are obsessed with the idea of corruption within the Congress. Moreover, the bogey of violence alarms you. Though I am at one with you in your determination to root out corruption within the Congress, I do not think that taking India as a whole, there is more corruption today than before and so far as violence is concerned, I feel sure there is far less of it today than before. Previously, Bengal, Punjab and United Provinces could have been regarded as the home of organised revolutionary violence. Today there is much more of the spirit of non-violence there. And speaking for Bengal, I can say with full authority that the province was never more non-violent during the last 30 years than today. For these and other reasons we should lose no time in placing our National Demand before the British Government in the form of an ultimatum. The idea of an ultimatum does not appeal to you or to Pandit Jawaharlal. But in all your public life, you have given any number of ultimatums to the authorities and have advanced the public cause thereby. The other day at Rajkot you did the same thing. What objection can there be, therefore, to submitting our National Demand in the form of an ultimatum? If you do so and prepare for the coming struggle simultaneously, I am sure that we shall be able to win Purna Swaraj very soon. The British Government will either respond to our demand without a fight — or, if the struggle does take place, in our present circumstances, it cannot be a long-drawn one. I am so confident and so optimistic on this point that I feel that if we take courage in both hands and go ahead, we shall have Swaraj inside of 18 months at the most.



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

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

In conclusion, I may say that many people like myself cannot enthuse over the terms of the Rajkot settlement. We, as well as the Nationalist Press, have called it a great victory — but how much have we gained? Sir Maurice Gwyer is neither our man nor is he an independent agent. He is a Government man. What point is there in making him the umpire? We are hoping that his verdict will be in our favour. But supposing he declares against us, what will be our position?

Moreover, Sir Maurice Gwyer is a part and parcel of the Federal Scheme we have resolved to reject. In the case of a conflict with the British Government, if we decide to have a High Court Judge or a Sessions Judge as umpire, we can always have a settlement with the British Government. But what shall we gain from such a settlement? Further, there are many people who fail to understand why after the interview with the Viceroy, you should be waiting



in Delhi. Perhaps, in view of your weak health, a rest was necessary before undertaking another long journey. But to the British Government and its supporters it may appear as if you are attaching too much importance to the Federal Chief Justice and thereby enhancing his prestige.

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

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

With respectful Pranams.

Yours affectionately,
Subhas.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 1st April 1939.

Mahatma Gandhi, New Delhi,

May I announce Working Committee 28th and All-India Congress Committee 30th to avoid disturbing Gandhi Seva Sangh Conference dates already announced—Subhas.

Letter from Mahatma Gandhi

Birla House,
New Delhi, 2-4-1939.

My dear Subhas,



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

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

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

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

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

My prestige does not count. It has no independent value of its own. When my motive is suspected or my policy or programme rejected by the country, the prestige must go. India will rise and fall by the quality of the sum total of her many millions. Individuals, however high they may be, are of no account



except in so far as they represent the many millions. Therefore let us rule it out of consideration.

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

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

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

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

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



Sahib. By the way, Sir Maurice will examine the document not in his capacity as Chief Justice but as a trained jurist trusted by the Viceroy, By accepting the Viceroy's nominee as Judge, I fancy I have shown both wisdom and grace and what is more important, I have increased the Viceregal responsibility in the matter.

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

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 2nd April 1939.

Posted full reply to your letters. My advice therein is irrespective of Pandit Pant's Resolution and in view of diametrically opposite views held by two schools of thought, you should forthwith form your own Cabinet fully representing your policy. You should frame and publish your policy and programme and submit the same to AICC. If you secure majority, you should be enabled to carry out policy unhampered. If you do not secure majority, you should resign and invite AICC to elect new President. Given honesty and goodwill, I do not fear civil war. Love—Bapu.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora 3-4-39.

Your letter and telegram in reply to my letter. I am considering them. Meanwhile I feel that my position regarding the Pant Resolution is misunderstood by yourself and a section of public. Though the last clause is strictly unconstitutional, I allowed it and am bound by the verdict of the Congress. I consider a short press statement necessary to explain this position. Kindly wire if you have any objection. Pranams—Subhas.



Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 4th April 1939.

Newspaper correspondents asking all kinds of questions about our correspondence. I have referred them all to you. I have disclosed nothing to anyone except colleagues and co-workers. Love—Bapu.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 5th April, 1939.

Associated Press yesterday requested authoritative report, saying United Press issuing forecast. Have informed them impossible disclose anything now, have shown papers only one person and may show three more friends during this week, my view publicity should be arranged in fullness by our mutual agreement. Papers report from New Delhi, All India Congress Committee fixed 28, but no reply received from you—Subhas.

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi, 5 April 1939

Your wire. No date given out from here. Missed confirming your wire, forgive. I learn today that Gandhi Seva Sangh has been postponed owing to plague. Fix any date convenient to you, as to publication I leave it entirely to you. Love—Bapu.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi, 5 April 1939

Amrita Bazar Patrika publishes today a report of our correspondence from Delhi. Though not quite correct, it clearly shows news is leaking from there—Subhas.



Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi, 5 April 1939

Since my last telegram I have seen other papers including Leader. Clear indication news of our correspondence is leaking from Delhi. Kindly do the needful.

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, 5th April, 1939.

Newspapers have a knack of hiding truth. They manufacture names of places of origin also and imagine things. I don't know what his happened. I can only assure you that no one to my knowledge here is responsible for news. Tell me what you would have me to do. Love—Bapu.

Letter to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora—6th April, 1939.

My dear Mahatmaji,

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



light the country still regards you. You are not a partisan, and people, therefore, still look up to you to bring together all the warring elements.

I have been pondering deeply over the advice you have given me regarding the formation of the Working Committee. I feel that your advice is the counsel of despair. It destroys all hope of unity. It will not save the Congress from a split — on the contrary, it will make the path safe for such a contingency. To advise a homogenous cabinet in the present circumstances will mean advising the parties to part company now. Is that not a terrible responsibility? Do you feel quite sure that joint work is impossible? On our side we do not think so. We are prepared to do our best to “forgive and forget” and join hands for the sake of common cause and we can look up to you to bring about an honourable compromise. I have already written and spoken to you that the composition of the Congress being what it is — and there being no possibility in the immediate future of any remarkable change, the best course would be to have a composite cabinet, in which all the groups would be represented as far as possible.

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

You have referred in your letters to the two parties being so “diametrically opposed.” You have not amplified the point and it is not clear if the opposition you refer to is based on programme or on personal relations. Personal relations are in my view, a passing phenomenon. We may quarrel and fight, but we can shake hands and make up our differences. Take for



instance, Swarajist episode in recent Congress history. As far as I am aware, after a period of opposition, the relations between Deshbandhu and Pandit Motilalji with yourself became as sweet as humanly possible. In Great Britain, the three major parties can always join hands and work on the same cabinet when an emergency arises. In continental countries like France, every cabinet is normally a composite cabinet. Are we less patriotic than Britishers and Frenchmen? If we are not, then why cannot we have composite cabinets functioning effectively?

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

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

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

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



I shall now come to Pandit Pant's Resolution. The important part of it (last portion, I mean) contains two points. Firstly, the Working Committee must command your confidence implicitly. Secondly, it must be formed in accordance with your wishes. If you advise a homogeneous cabinet and such cabinet is formed, one could perhaps say that it has been formed "in accordance with your wishes." But could it be claimed that it commands your confidence? Will it be open to me to get up at the meeting of the AICC and tell the members that you have advised the formation of a homogeneous cabinet and that the new cabinet commands your confidence? On the other hand, if you advise the formation of a cabinet which does not command your confidence, will you be giving effect to the Pant Resolution; will you be doing the right thing, from your point of view? I would beg of you to consider this aspect of the question. If you take cognisance of the Pant Resolution, you will not only have to communicate your wishes regarding new Working Committee, but you will, at the same time, have to advise the formation of such a Committee as will command your confidence.

You have not yet said anything as to the merits of the Pant Resolution. Do you approve of it? Or would you rather have had a unanimously passed resolution, more or less on the lines suggested by us — which would reiterate faith in your principles and confidence in your guidance, without the controversial clauses? Then, what is the President's position regarding appointing the WC after this resolution was passed? I am again asking this question because the present Constitution is practically your handiwork and your opinion in this matter will carry great weight with me. There is another question in this connection which I have been asking you. Do you regard this resolution as one of no-confidence in me? If so, I shall resign at once and that too unconditionally. Some papers have criticised this question of mine in my press statement on the ground that I should decide for myself what the significance of the resolution is.

I have sense enough to give my own interpretation, but, there are occasions when personal interpretations should not be one's sole guide. Speaking quite frankly, I feel that my stand has been justified by the result of the Presidential



Election. I have now no desire whatsoever to stick to office for one day unless I can thereby advance the public cause as I understand it. The hesitation or the delay that has arisen on my side is because it is not so easy to decide. Among my supporters there are two schools of thought — one holding that I should break off negotiations at once as being a hopeless effort and tender my resignation. The latter have been bringing great pressure to bear on me, but I am resisting. I want to be clear before my own conscience that I have striven till the last to preserve unity within our ranks. Moreover, I know what my resignation will mean in the present circumstances and what its consequences will be. I should add here that the first school — viz., those who want me to exhaust all possibility of a compromise — believe that you will be able to take a thoroughly non-partisan view of things and thereby bring the two parties together.

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

Perhaps, as some papers suggest, you have an idea that the Old Guard should be put back into office. In that event I would beg of you to come back to active politics, become a four-anna Congress member and assume direct charge of the Working Committee. Pardon me for saying so and I say this without meaning offence to anybody — there is a world of difference between yourself and your lieutenants, even your chosen lieutenants. There are people who will do anything for you — but not for them. Will you believe me when I say that at the Presidential Election even some Gandhites in several provinces voted for me, against the direction of the Old Guard? If your personality is not dragged into the picture, I shall continue to have their



support — the Old Guard notwithstanding. At Tripuri the Old Guard cleverly dropped out of the picture and more cleverly pitted me against you. (But there was no quarrel between yourself and myself). Afterwards they said that Tripuri was a great victory for them and a defeat for me. The fact of the matter is that it was neither a victory for them nor a defeat for me. It was a victory for you (without any cause for a fight with you at all) but a Pyrrhic victory — a victory purchased by a certain loss of prestige.

But I am digressing. I wanted to appeal to you to come forward and directly and openly conduct the affairs of the Congress. This will simplify matters. Much of the opposition against the Old Guard — and opposition there certainly is — will automatically vanish.

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

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



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

Before I close this letter I shall refer to one or two personal things. You have remarked in one letter that you hope that whatever happens, "our private relations will not suffer." I cherish this hope with all my heart. May I say in this connection that if there is anything in life on which I pride myself, it is this that I am the son of a gentleman and as such am a gentleman. Deshbandhu Das often used to tell us, "Life is larger than Politics." That lesson I have learnt from him. I shall not remain in the political field one single day if by doing so I shall fall from the standards of gentlemanliness which are so deeply ingrained in my mind from infancy and which I feel are in my very blood. I have no means of knowing how you view me as a man — in a way, you have seen so little of me. And my political opponents have carried so many tales against me to you. In recent months I have come to know that for the last few months I have been the victim of subtle but sinister propaganda carried on against me from mouth to mouth. I would have brought this matter to your notice long ago but I could not get sufficient tangible evidence of what was being said and by whom. Laterly, I have come to know much as to what has been said, though I am still in the dark as to who exactly the propagandists are.

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

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



With respectful Pranams,

Yours affectionately,
Subhas.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, April 7, 1939

In continuation to Rajen Babu's telephonic talk with you today, I earnestly beseech you to make possible our meeting before leaving Delhi for Rajkot. This means for you maximum three days' delay. Our correspondence is not leading to settlement and I feel personal talk would greatly facilitate matters. Regarding place of meeting if not possible for you to come here owing to reasons of health, I am prepared to defy doctors and to come to Delhi as I did for Tripuri. I feel I must do my utmost for settling the Working Committee problem and preserving Congress unity even at the cost of health. If matter is left unsettled till next AICC, the situation will worsen and suspense and delay will cause further confusion in public mind—Subhas.

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, April 7.

Your telephone message. Rajkot work takes me to Rajkot tonight. Could not postpone without sacrificing immediate duty, but the moment I can disengage myself from Rajkot I shall be at your disposal. Meanwhile I urge you to accept my advice and form your Cabinet and publish your programme. Reaching Rajkot on Sunday morning. Love—Bapu.



Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi, 7 April 1939

Your wire. I am helpless. I must proceed to Rajkot. I suggest your sending Sarat or other representative to Rajkot. He can fly. Do not expect release from Rajkot for ten days. Love—Bapu.

Letter to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, April 10.

My dear Mahatmaji,

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

1. Re. Corruption and Violence: If I have understood you correctly, you are opposed to the idea of an ultimatum and early resumption of the national struggle because you feel that there is too much of corruption and the spirit of violence among us. We have been discussing that question of corruption in the Working Committee for several months and I think we are in general agreement on this question — with this difference that I do not think that there is so



much of it that we are incapacitated for an early struggle for Purna Swaraj. On the contrary, the longer we shall drift along the path of constitutionalism and the longer our people have a taste of the loaves and fishes of office, the greater will be the possibility of corruption increasing. Further, I may say that I have some personal knowledge of political parties in Europe today and I may claim without any fear of contradiction that judged from the ethical point of view, we are in no way inferior to them and perhaps we are superior in some respects. The spectre of corruption does not, therefore, appeal to me. Moreover, a call for further sacrifice and suffering in the cause of the country's freedom will be the best antidote to corruption and will incidentally expose to the public eye any corrupt persons who may have crept into — or gained ascendancy within — our own ranks. To put an analogy, history furnishes instances of astute statesmen launching on a fight with external enemies in order to ward off enemies at home.

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

2. Re. Pandit Pant's Resolution, I wanted to know whether you approve of the form in which the resolution was moved by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and finally passed or whether you would have preferred an amended form, more or less on the lines suggested by us, which



would have been unanimously passed. I should also like to know whether you regard the resolution as a vote of no-confidence in me. For ready reference I am giving below the original form of the resolution and one of the amended forms.

ORIGINAL FORM

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

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

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

AMENDED FORM

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

This Congress declares its firm adherence to the fundamental policies which have governed its programme in the past years under the



guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and is definitely of opinion that there should be no break in these policies and that they should continue to govern the Congress programme in future. The Committee expresses its confidence in the work of the Working Committee which functioned during the last year.

In view of the critical situation that may develop during the coming year, the Congress considers Mahatma Gandhi's guidance and cooperation to be as essential in the future as it was in the past."

3. Re. Congress Socialist Party: The remarks in my letter of the 31st March about the Congress Socialist Party were made under the impression I gathered from reports and speculations in the press at the time. The impression I gathered was that the official leaders of the CSP would continue in their policy of vacillation which might lead to their launching on a new policy in future, viz., supporting the Old Guard. I thought that that might mislead you into thinking that the entire CSP would "cross the floor" and be at the disposal of the Old Guard. Consequently, I wanted to tell you that a large section of the CSP would move with us, in spite of what the top leadership might do. I could say this, because I had heard of the effect of the leaders' neutrality policy at Tripuri on their followers. Some provinces had revolted — as also the rank and file — many of whom had obeyed the leaders' whip, only under moral coercion or out of a sense of discipline. Subsequent to my writing to you, the information that has reached does not warrant the impression that I gathered from the press about the future policy of the official leaders of the CSP and in that event, the question of a split within the Party need not arise at all.
4. Re. Homogenous vs. Composite Cabinet: I have carefully perused and considered your arguments in this connection, but I remain unconvinced so far. Perhaps you have other arguments also which might help to convince me. Your main point is that we differ so much on fundamentals that joint action is impossible. At the Haripura Congress you were of the same views as ourselves and till the eve of



the Presidential election, joint action was possible. What has happened since then to render it impossible? And what, in your view, are our differences on fundamentals?

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

5. Advice to Shri Sarat Bose: You wrote in your letter to my brother on the 24th March as follows:—"I therefore suggest either a meeting of all of you so that you can pour out your hearts to one another and come to an understanding or if the poison has gone too deep to be eradicated, etc. etc." You have not pursued this line in your subsequent letters. I have written to you more than once that on our side we are fully prepared to make a supreme effort to restore unity within the ranks of the Congress. I have said, further, that on our side there are plenty of people, including myself, who do not regard you as a partisan and who look up to you to bring together the warring elements. I may go further and say that there is no reason why you should regard only the Old Guard and their followers as Gandhiites. You may regard the whole Congress as Gandhiite, if only you accommodated some of our ideas and plans.
6. Re. My alternative suggestions:
 - (a) My first suggestion is that steps be taken to resume our fight for independence. In that event, you can demand from us any sacrifice that you consider necessary, including the surrender of all official positions that we may now have. We pledge our



unconditional support in the event of the fight bring resumed.

- (b) Should you maintain that it is not possible to resume the struggle and should you like to install the Old Guard in office — I would suggest your becoming a four-anna Congress member again and assuming direct charge of the Working Committee. That would obviate several difficulties which are bound to continue if you merely put the Old Guard in office again, keeping yourself out of the picture.
 - (c) Should this suggestion be also unacceptable to you and you persist in advising me to form a homogeneous cabinet, then I would request you to give me your vote of confidence till the next Congress. Your vote of confidence will ensure the support of your "orthodox" followers in the AICC. Thereby a split will be avoided and smooth working will be rendered possible. In this connection, I have humbly reminded you in my last letter of the 6th April that under Pandit Pant's Resolution, the Working Committee has not only to be formed in accordance with your wishes, but it must be so formed as to enjoy your implicit confidence. Once you take cognisance of this resolution, it is not open to you to advise the formation of a Working Committee which does not enjoy your implicit confidence.
 - (d) Should you reject all the three suggestions, the only course left open will be for you to take the full responsibility of forming the Working Committee — leaving it to me to determine my future course of action when you have announced your decision.
7. Re. Your silence: You say in one of your letters that you were observing silence because I had requested you to do so. I must explain why I did so. At Tripuri the position was such and the gulf between Congressman and Congressman had so widened that felt that the only hope of maintaining unity rested in you. I felt then that it was necessary that you should take an impartial and dispassionate view of



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

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

In conclusion, I must say that I was greatly disappointed when I got your telegrams from Delhi just before you suddenly left for Rajkot on the 7th instant. Dr Rajendra Prasad had telephoned to Birla House on my behalf on the 7th morning to inform you how anxious I was to meet you, as I felt that our correspondence was not leading to a solution and a heart-to-heart talk was necessary. Later in the day, my Doctor also telephoned to Birla House and Shri Mahadev Desai, who spoke at the other end, informed him that you would make a desperate attempt to come here and that, in any case, you would not leave Delhi till the next day, i.e., the 8th instant. I am so sorry that Rajkot has taken you away. I can only hope that what will be a blessing for Rajkot may not prove to be a tragedy for the Congress. If Rajkot had not taken you away suddenly in February, the history of the Tripuri Congress would have been written differently. You had the power to save the situation, but you were not available, in spite of repeated requests from the Reception



Committee and myself. In fact though the whole country naturally and spontaneously rallied round you, when you sent the ultimatum to the Thakore Sahib, a large section of your countrymen thought and still think that you could have postponed the Rajkot struggle by a few weeks without doing any harm to the cause of the Rajkot State people.

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

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

With Pranams

Yours affectionately,
Subhas.

Letter from Mahatma Gandhi

Rajkot, April 10.

My Dear Subhas,

Your letter of 6th instant has been redirected here. I suggested a meeting of the foes to have it out among themselves without any reservation. But so much happened since that I do not know if it is worthwhile. They will only swear at one another and bitterness will become more bitter. The gulf is too wide, suspicions too deep. I see no way of closing the ranks. The only way seems to me to recognise the differences and each group work in its own manner.



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Love—Bapu.

Letter to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora P.O., Distt. Manbhum,
Bihar, the 13th April, 1939.

My dear Mahatmaji,

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

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



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

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

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



commence doing so by constituting our National Executive — the Working Committee — on a narrow party basis?

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

Rajen Babu very kindly paid me a visit on the 6th instant. We discussed labour questions of common interest and then turned to Congress affairs. When I first started correspondence with you I had hoped that we would be able to settle the problem of the Working Committee in this way and that the larger problems could be left over for our subsequent meeting. But as our correspondence proceeded, I realised that it was not leading to a solution. By the time Rajen Babu came, I was feeling like making a desperate attempt to meet you, regardless of medical advice, hoping that it might bring us to a settlement. So Rajen Babu, at my request, telephoned to Birla House suggesting a meeting. When Rajen Babu did not give me encouraging news, I thought I would try again. So my doctor telephoned to Birla House again in the afternoon and I sent an express telegram — to both of which you replied saying that Rajkot affairs were compelling you to leave Delhi at once. I felt then and I still feel that Rajkot has taken possession of your soul at the cost, and perhaps to the great misfortune, of the Indian National Congress. To people like myself, Congress affairs — particularly at this juncture — appear to be a thousand times more important than the call of Rajkot. One should have thought that after the award of Sir Maurice Gwyer, Sardar Patel would be able to handle the Rajkot situation, without requiring your personal presence there for such a long time. However, it is no use lamenting now, when you have made a decision and have acted in accordance with it.



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

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

Regarding the Pant Resolution, You have given me practically no advice.

If you feel so hopeless about non-violent mass action in the States also, how do you hope to win civil liberty and responsible government for the States' people? After all, our only sanction is non-violent mass action and deprived of it, we have to fall back on a purely moderate policy or your vicarious self-sacrifice. You say that you have stopped civil disobedience wherever you have influence. We know that you did so in Rajkot and there you took the whole burden upon yourself and staked your life for it. Is that fair either to your countrymen or to the Rajkot State people? Your life is not yours to risk whenever you chose to do so. Your countrymen may legitimately demand your guidance and help in a larger sphere than Rajkot. And so far as the Rajkot people are concerned, if they win their Swaraj not through their own efforts and sacrifices, but through your self-immolation, they will remain politically undeveloped and will not be able to retain the Swaraj which you may win for them. Lastly, when there are so many battles to be fought and on so many fronts, how often can you stake your precious life in this way?



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

With respectful Pranams

Yours affectionately,



Subhas.

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

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 14th April, 1939.

I am perturbed by persistent press reports that yourself not coming to Calcutta during AICC meeting and Gandhi Seva Sangh Conference being postponed till second week of May. Your presence during AICC meeting absolutely necessary. Will first week of May for AICC meeting suit you better? Kindly wire

—Subhas.

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi

Rajkot, 14th April, 1939.

Mine crossed your letter. Can add nothing helpful. I am convinced best course in national interest for you is to form cabinet of your unfettered choice and formulate programme. Love.

—Bapu.



Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi, 14 April 1939

Your wire. Gandhi Seva Sangh, 3rd May to 10th. Better if Working Committee 28th instant, AICC 29th. I shall make desperate effort to attend. Ba's fever abated. No danger. Love

—Bapu.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, April 15.

Received yesterday's both telegrams. Sorry don't feel reassured about your coming to Calcutta. Your presence during AICC meeting absolutely essential. To suit your convenience meeting should be postponed if necessary. Regret I cannot give effect to your advice regarding homogeneous cabinet, consequently only alternative is for you to nominate cabinet. I wrote to you on 13th. I am writing today again. If for any reason you don't nominate, then matter will go before AICC. I am undecided. Before that, we should make last attempt at settlement through personal talk. This may entail postponement of AICC to suit your convenience. Kindly wire after considering my letters of 13th and 15th.—Pranams—Subhas.

Letter to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora, 15th April, 1939.

My dear Mahatmaji,

I have wired to you today to say that your presence in Calcutta at the time of the AICC meeting is absolutely necessary. It is so essential that to suit your convenience, the AICC meeting should be postponed if necessary. Kindly let me have definite news that you will be able to come by a particular date. I am



told by several friends holding different political views that the Working Committee should be formed before the AICC meets. They feel so strongly on this point that they say that it is no use for the AICC to meet if the WC has not already been formed. They hold, further, if correspondence does not lead to a settlement, then we should make a last desperate attempt through personal talk. In order to enable us to meet, the AICC meeting should be postponed if necessary.

Personally I am afraid of postponement (for I may be accused of dilatoriness) — unless you approve of it. But I do feel very strongly that if correspondence does not yield satisfactory results, then we must meet and this meeting should take place before the AICC meeting is held. If even personal discussion fails to bring about a settlement, one will at least have the satisfaction of having done his very best.

Let me now summarise the latest position. I am sorry I cannot implement your advice regarding forming a homogenous cabinet (I shall not repeat the reasons which I have detailed in my previous letters). Consequently you will have to accept the responsibility which has devolved on you as a result of the Pant Resolution. In other words, you will have to announce the personnel of the Working Committee. If you do that, then the stalemate will end — the WC will meet and following the WC the AICC. One can hope that all will then be well and that no other contingency will arise.

If for any reason you decline to form the WC then we shall be in a quandary. The matter will have to go before the AICC in an undecided state. I think it will be universally held that the WC problem should be solved before the AICC meets, so that the AICC may not become a battle-ground like Tripuri.

I do not know how exactly your mind is working at present — but I do hope that you will now proceed to announce the personnel of the WC and thereby end the deadlock. Should you think otherwise, I would beg of you to visualise the disastrous consequences that will follow in the event of the AICC assembling in Calcutta without the problem of the WC having been solved. If



such a situation arises, we should meet — if necessary, and postpone the AICC meeting so that our meeting may take place.

One thing has struck me presently. We have been discussing a lot about homogeneous cabinet — but are we sure as to what exactly we mean by homogeneous cabinet? For instance, the Working Committees formed after Lucknow, Faizpur and Haripura Congress — would you call them homogeneous — then there is no reason to quarrel over the problem of homogeneous vs. composite cabinet. If you call them composite — then why cannot a composite cabinet function this year, after successfully working for three years? It strikes me that if we put aside the theoretical discussion of homogeneous and composite cabinets, we may be able to agree upon names which will in their totality command the general confidence of the AICC and of the general body of Congress delegates. Kindly consider this aspect of the problem.

Then again you are deeply concerned over such problems as corruption, violence, etc. Perhaps you regard these questions as fundamental. Now, we may differ as to the extent of corruption or degree of the spirit of violence which prevails today. But are we not all agreed that corruption, violence, etc., should cease and necessary steps should be taken in that behalf? If so, why should you think that at the time of action we shall not act together or that in important matters, we shall not agree?

I shall not prolong this letter. I have already unburdened myself to you. I shall only repeat that in all probability, we shall find after personal discussion that whatever our theoretical views on the nature of the cabinet may be, we shall be able to agree on the actual names — and whatever our theoretical differences on important problems may be, we shall be able to agree where action is called for.

I hope Ba is rapidly improving and that your health is satisfactory, despite the heavy strain. I am progressing steadily.

With respectful Pranams,



Yours affectionately, Subhas.

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi

Rajkot, 17th April, 1939.

Your letter and wire. Please retain date of meeting of AICC 28th. Shall attend. Impossible for me to impose committee on you. If you will not form one, let AICC decide. Composite cabinet seems to me impracticable. As you have lifted the ban, I shall try to issue public statement if I get time.

Love—Bapu.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi, 18 April 1939

If you issue statement, kindly permit me to release correspondence. My last letter posted on 15th—Subhas.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi, 18 April 1939

Certainly publish correspondence which would render statement unnecessary. Love—Bapu.

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi, 19 April 1939

Leaving definitely on 24th. Reaching Calcutta on 27th morning. Might stay at Sodhpur. Hemprobha Devi has always insisted. Doctor Roy had another suggestion from medical standpoint. Since yesterday am laid with fever which is increasing. Hope it will be under control before departure. Despite many suggestions contained in your letters. I feel helpless, carry out terms of Pant's resolution in this atmosphere of mutual distrust, suspicions and in face of marked differences of opinion between groups. I still maintain you



should boldly form Committee. It would be unfair to you with the views you hold. Love—Bapu.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi, 20 April 1939

Extremely happy you are coming to Calcutta on 27th. No objection to your staying where you like. For your personal comfort and public convenience, I would suggest your staying riverside garden-house on outskirts of city. However shall wire you again from Calcutta after consulting Satis Babu. Jawaharlalji was here yesterday. We think it desirable you break journey for one day at some place near Calcutta where both can meet you for personal talk. If you approve idea and wire me your route, I shall arrange your halt at convenient intermediate station. Proceeding to Calcutta on 21st--Subhas.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi, 20 April 1939

Extremely anxious about your fever. Pray for your speedy recovery. Jawaharlalji and myself earnestly hope our meeting will yield fruitful results and make possible cooperation of all Congressmen in common cause. In view of our early meeting in Calcutta we both consider it unnecessary and undesirable to release correspondence before meeting. Pranams.—Subhas.

Letter to Mahatma Gandhi

Jealgora P. O., Distt. Manbhum,
Bihar, April 20, 1939.

My dear Mahatmaji,

I have today sent you the following telegram:—" Mahatma Gandhi, Rajkot. Extremely anxious your fever, pray for your speedy recovery. Jawaharlalji



and myself earnestly hope our meeting will yield fruitful results and make possible cooperation of all Congressmen in common cause. In view of our early meeting at Calcutta we both consider it unnecessary and undesirable to release correspondence before meeting. Pranams.”

We have had a long correspondence during the last three weeks. This correspondence has not produced any tangible result so far as the formation of the Working Committee is concerned. Nevertheless it has perhaps been useful in a different way in helping the clarification of our ideas. But the immediate issue has to be clinched now, for we cannot do without a Working Committee any longer. The situation within the country and in the international sphere makes it imperative that Congressmen should close up their ranks at once and present a united front. You are fully aware how the international situation is deteriorating from day to day. The amending Bill now before the British Parliament shows that the British Government are preparing to rob the Provincial Governments of whatever power they now possess in the event of a war-emergency arising. From all accounts it should be clear beyond a shadow of doubt that we are approaching a crisis of unprecedented magnitude. We can hope to cope with it only if we sink our differences at once and do our very best to restore unity and discipline within our ranks. This task can be achieved only if you come forward and take the lead. In that event you will find that all of us will do our very best to cooperate with and follow you. You will also find that there is common ground between us so far as the need of rooting out corruption and checking any tendency towards violence are concerned, though we may differ as to the amount of corruption or the degree of spirit of violence that actually exists today. So far as the programme is concerned, it is for the Congress or the AICC to define it — though each individual has the undoubted right to place his ideas before these bodies. In the matter of programme, I have the feeling that the crisis that is soon going to overtake us will largely determine it and then there will be little room for any material differences on this score.

I am looking forward eagerly and most hopefully to our meeting in or near Calcutta before the AICC meeting. Opinion in Bengal as in other provinces is rapidly growing that the problem of the Working Committee should be



solved by mutual agreement in spite of any theoretical differences and in spite of past differences or misunderstandings. Under the Pant Resolution, the responsibility of forming the Working Committee is yours and when you undertake the responsibility, you will find that we shall cooperate to the best of our ability.

Jawahar was here yesterday. We had a long discussion on the present situation. I was glad to find that our views concurred.

We think that it would be desirable to break journey for a day at some station not far from Calcutta and have a quiet discussion. If you come via Nagpur, then Midnapore (Kharagpur) would be the best place. If you come via Cheoki, then we must think of a place near Burdwan. I have sent you a wire on this point and shall await your reply. Failing this, we shall meet in Calcutta. I have asked Jawahar to join in our talks and he has kindly agreed.

I am feeling anxious about your fever. I am praying that it may soon disappear.

With respectful Pranams,

Yours affectionately,
Subhas.

Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi

Calcutta, 22-4-1939.

Discussed with Satis Babu. Approved your staying there in quiet atmosphere. Consequently unnecessary to break journey en-route. Papers say you are coming via Delhi but your wire said via Nagpur. Kindly wire route.—Subhas Base.



Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi

Calcutta, 5-5-1939.

Desire to release our correspondence. Kindly wire opinion —Subhas.

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi

Brindaban (Champaran), 6-5-1939

Release correspondence. Love—Bapu.

Bose's request to release the correspondence was made after he resigned as Congress President. According to the *Indian Annual Register* (Volume I, 1939, pp 28-29), on 29 April,

Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose, the Congress President, tendered his resignation when the All India Congress Committee met at Wellington Square, Calcutta, for the first time since Tripuri. Mahatma Gandhi was not present at the meeting. Sj. Bose reported his failure to form a Working Committee, read out a letter which he had received from Mahatma Gandhi and made a statement giving reasons for his decision. The development, which caused a sensation, was a sequel to the differences between the Congress President and other members of the old Working Committee on matters of principle and programme and also to the Tripuri resolution which directed that the Working Committee would be formed in accordance with Mahatma Gandhi's wishes. Mahatma Gandhi's letter said: "knowing your own views and knowing how you and most of the members (of the old Working Committee) differ in fundamentals, it seems to me that if I gave you names it would be an imposition on you. Such being the case you are free to chose your own Committee."

Sj. Bose in his statement referred to the Tripuri mandate and said if, as suggested by Gandhiji, he were to form a working committee of his own choice, he would not be able to report to the AICC that such a Committee commanded the implicit confidence of Gandhiji. Sj. Bose felt that his presence as President at this juncture might possible be a sort on an obstacle or handicap to the AICC - "for instance the AICC may feel inclined to appoint a Working Committee in which I shall be a misfit."

Pandit Nehru made moving appeal to Sj. Bose to withdraw his resignation, - he suggested that the old Working Committee should be reappointed *en bloc* but that new blood might be infused by the inclusion of two members in place of Mr Jamnalal Bajaj (in prison) and Mr Jairamdas Daulatram (who had been ill) who were not in a position to discharged their duties as members of the Working Committee. During the debate Mr Jai Prokash Narain, General Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party, referred to a suggestion that Pandit Nehru should be appointed General Secretary of the Congress and expressed the hope that the Pandit would accept the office.

