

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Vallabhbhai Patel¹

New Delhi
5 October 1947

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a note on Patiala which Amrit Kaur has sent me.² She received it from Gyan Chand, who is a reliable worker living in Patiala territory near Simla.

I enclose also a brief statement by Dewan Shiv Saran Lal, who has been Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ismail Khan in the Frontier.³ He is on leave and is in Delhi at present. He is a very straight and reliable man and knows the Frontier thoroughly. What he says must be based on knowledge: I am going to see him tomorrow to discuss the matter with him.

Shiv Saran Lal's statement demonstrates the immediate danger to Kashmir State. What we can do about it, I do not know. Anyhow, we should think about it jointly and devise some plan. I think you should also inform the Maharaja of Kashmir. The Maharaja has some knowledge of it already: These further details might help him to get a true view of the situation.⁴

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

Source: Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Volume 4

¹ Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-50, Vol. I, p. 50.

² The note described the atrocities committed against Muslims and stray cases of looting, assault and murder of Hindus in the area. Conversions of Muslims to Sikhism alone was permitted. In matters of jobs and business contracts and facilities, Sikhs were said to be favoured, and the rehabilitation of only Sikh agriculturist refugees was announced.

³ The statement referred to a scheme to send armed tribals from Pakistan to the Pakistan-Kashmir border; some of them had already moved towards the area in transport provided by the Pakistan Government. Arms confiscated from non-Muslims had been supplied to these tribals. The Wali of Swat had been promised Kashmir, and the States of Dir, Swat and Chitral were preparing for attacking Kashmir from the northwest. Intense propaganda was being done in the northwest.

⁴ Replying on 11 October, Patel said that the information given by Shiv Saran Lal was already known to the Kashmir authorities. He had also held a discussion with Shiv Saran Lal and felt that the latter held "some queer views about retaliation on this side. If educated and responsible persons from amongst the people who have come here from the Frontier and West Punjab hold such views you can imagine what an average refugee must be feeling."