

Letter from Ven. Kushok Bakula to Jawaharlal Nehru

Sep. 15, 1962

(Strictly Confidential)

My Dear Panditji,

I am fully conscious of the fact that recent developments on the Sino-Indian border and the growing threat from the Chinese forces to the country's territorial integrity have engaged your attention. '

Equally conscious I am of the reality that the Sino-Indian border question has, of later, assumed a tremendous importance in view of India's legal and constitutional hold on the entire region of Ladakh.

But as certain internal developments in this State have been allowed to drift, I deem it necessary to bring a few lines for your kind attention.

Firstly, I have been insulted by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed in presence of a group of National Conference workers and leaders a few days ago when, for no fault of mine, he was. unreasonable and indiscreet in his remarks against my functioning as the party leader in the Ladakh region. Although I told him that he had been misinformed and that I have not been quoted properly, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed remarked: "I know that you are not doing any useful service to me. You go and tell Panditji all about your troubles."

Secondly, the party-National Conference-in Ladakh is being permitted to function freely and in democratic manner. Both Bakshi and his cousin Bakshi Abdul Rashid, have been instigating some party workers against me. The result is that a division in the Ladakh unit of the National Conference has been created with the main purpose of embarrassing me.

Thirdly, I have not been able to find the State Premier in a mood to appreciate genuine difficulties being faced by the people of Ladakh, especially, Buddhists, in the absence of a planned economic programme for the region. I had an opportunity to discuss with Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, not long ago, certain facets of Ladakh's economic backwardness in the light of the Ladakhis' demand for greater aid and

attention from the government. But it was unfortunate that Bakshi flared up during the discussion and remarked: "I am not here to serve you and your community alone. I have to think of other communities also." At no stage during my meeting with him I had referred to the Ladakhis' demand on communal lines. I was shocked to find him interested only in the welfare of the Muslim community.

Fourthly, you had, not long ago, advised me to take Mr. G.M. Sadiq and Mr. D.P. Dhar into confidence so far as the question of finding a solution to the reasonable demands of Ladakhis was concerned. Recently, on more than one occasion, I contacted Mr. Sadiq and Mr. Dhar. Intriguing as it was, both of them wanted me to forget Ladakh for the time being and instead cooperate with them in the task of demolishing the Bakshi regime. They did drop a hint that you were also interested in what they were endeavouring to seek. I want your guidance on the subject. I also want you to direct Bakshi to be careful and cautious in his statements and pronouncements on political matters. '

Fifthly, I feel-and my supporters also hold the same opinion -- that it is high time when Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed should be taken to task for the manner in which he had detailed some of his lieutenants to politicize the atmosphere in Ladakh in order to draw a line between Buddhists and non-Buddhists of the region. Bakshi's supporters have been found indulging in anti-social activities by conveying to a section of the Muslim population of Ladakh that abrogation of Article 370 of ° the Indian Constitution could endanger their "stability and future".

'My fault, as pointed out by Bakshi and his cousin Bakshi Rashid, is that I should not have told some of my associates and supporters that Article 370, being a temporary and transition measure, has to be replaced by a permanent and more satisfactory arrangement. I have been convinced by the argument of some accessionists that the present imperium in imperio status claimed by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed for Kashmir is a point of irritation; and the Centre's lack of control and supervision over the administration of the State, while fulfilling financial, defense and every

other kind of obligation towards it, irks Indian public opinion.

I strongly feel that your government should exercise the same rights and powers over Kashmir that it does in regard to the retaining States of the Indian Union.

I have some more important points to communicate to you. But anxious as I am for an early meeting with you; I feel at this stage that I should not lengthen this letter; I would apprise you of the entire situation in the region I belong to when I get an opportunity to meet you.

With deep regards,

Sd/ (Kushok Bakula)

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Prime Minister of India, New Delhi

Yours sincerely,