

Letter from Sardar Patel to Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai

NEW DELHI
4 November 1950

My Dear Sir Girja,

Thank you for your letter of the 3rd November 1950. I am sending herewith the note which you were good enough to send me. I need hardly say that I have read it with a great deal of interest and profit to myself and it has resulted in a much better understanding of the points at issue and general though serious nature of the problem.

The Chinese advance into Tibet upsets all our security calculations. Hitherto, the danger to India on its land frontiers has always come from the North-West. Throughout history we have concentrated our armed might in that region. For the first time, a serious danger is now developing on the North and North-East side; at the same time, our danger from the West or North-West is in no way lessened. This creates most embarrassing defense problems and I entirely agree with you that a reconsideration of our military position and a redistribution of our forces are inescapable.

Regarding Communists, again the position requires a great deal of thought. Hitherto, the smuggling of arms, literature, etc. across the difficult Burmese and Pakistan frontier on the East or along the sea was our only danger. We shall now have to guard our Northern and North-eastern approaches also. Unfortunately, all these approaches-Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and the tribal areas in Assam-are weak spots both from the point of view of communications and police protection and also established loyalty to India. Even Darjeeling and Kalimpong area is by no means free from pro-Mongolian prejudices. The Nagas and other hill tribes in Assam have hardly had any contact with Indians. European missionaries and other visitors have been in touch with them, but their influence was, by no means, friendly to India and Indians. In Sikkim, there was political ferment some time ago. It seems to me there is ample scope for trouble and discontent in that small State. Bhutan is comparatively quiet, but its affinity with Tibetans would be a handicap. Nepal (we all know too well, a weak oligarchic regime based almost entirely on force) is in conflict with an enlightened section of the people as well as enlightened ideas of the modern age. Added to this weak position, there is the irredentism of the Chinese. The political ambitions of the Chinese by themselves might not have mattered so much; but when they are combined with discontent in these areas, absence of close contact with Indians and Communist ideology the difficulty of the position increases manifold. We have also to bear in mind that boundary disputes, which have

many times in history been the cause of international conflicts, can be exploited by Communist China and its source of inspiration, Soviet Russia, for a prolonged war of nerves, culminating at the appropriate time, in armed conflict.

We have also so take note of a thoroughly unscrupulous, unreliable and determined power practically at our doors. In your very illuminating survey of what has passed between us and the Chinese Government through our Ambassador, you have made out an unanswerable case for treating the Chinese with the greatest suspicion. What I have said above, in my judgment, entitles us to treat them with a certain amount of hostility, let alone a great deal of circumspection. In these circumstances, one thing, to my mind, is quite clear; and, that is, that we cannot be friendly with China and must think in terms of defense against a determined, calculating, unscrupulous, ruthless, unprincipled and prejudiced combination of powers, of which the Chinese will be the spearhead. There might be from them outward offers or protestations of friendship, but in that will be concealed an ultimate hideous design of ideological and even political conquest into their bloc. It is equally obvious to me that any friendly or appeasing approaches from us would either be mistaken for weakness or would be exploited in furtherance of their ultimate aim. It is this general attitude which must determine the other specific questions which you have so admirably stated. I am giving serious consideration to those problems and it is possible I may discuss this matter with you once more.

Yours sincerely,

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, I.C.S.,
Secretary-General, External Affairs Ministry,
New Delhi.

Sardar Patel Exhorts people to stand unitedly to see conditions in Tibet and Nepal and defend their country

The Hindustan Times, 11 November 1950

Sardar Patel said in Delhi that the present or potential dangers arising from what was happening in Tibet and Nepal made it incumbent on the people to rise above party squabbles and unitedly defend their newly-won freedom. The path shown by Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Dayanand, he added, would help the people to tide over these none too easy times. Sardar Patel was addressing a meeting organized by the Central Aryan Association to commemorate the 67th death anniversary of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, social reformer and thinker.

Referring to the recent developments in Nepal, Sardar Patel said: "In this country, our near neighbour, the Raja has sought sanctuary in the Indian Embassy. How could we refuse to give him refuge? We had to give it. Those who are wielding real power today in Nepal do not accept the Raja as the head of the State. They have installed the Raja's three-year-old grandson on the gaddi. They want us to accept this position. How can we do so?"

Sardar Patel emphasized that the "internal feud" in Nepal had laid India's frontiers in the north wide open to outside dangers. It was imperative, therefore, for Indians to be well prepared to meet any challenge that might come from any quarter.

Sardar Patel criticized Chinese intervention in Tibet and said that to use the 'sword' against the traditionally peace-loving Tibetan people was unjustified. No other country in the world was as peace-loving as Tibet. India did not believe, therefore, that the Chinese Government would actually use force in settling the Tibetan question.

"The Chinese Government," he said, "did not follow India's advice to settle the Tibetan issue peacefully. They marched their armies into Tibet and explained this action by talking of foreign interests intriguing in Tibet against China. But this fear is unfounded: no outsider is interested in Tibet. India made this very plain to the Chinese Government. If the Chinese Government had taken India's advice, resort to arms would have been avoided."

Continuing, Sardar Patel said that nobody could say what the outcome of Chinese action would be. But the use of force ultimately created more fear and tension. It was possible that when a country got drunk with its own military strength and power, it did not think calmly over all issues. But use of arms was wrong. In the present state of the world, such events might easily touch off a new world war, which would mean disaster for mankind.

In these difficult times, Sardar Patel said, the duty of the Indian people lay not in fleeing from trouble but facing it boldly. That was the real

message of both Swami Dayanand and Mahatma Gandhi. "Do not let cowardice cripple you. Do not run away from danger. The three-year-old freedom of the country has to be fully protected. India today is surrounded by all sorts of dangers and it is for the people today to remember the teachings of the two great saints and face fearlessly all dangers."

The Deputy Prime Minister continuing declared: "In this kalyug we shall return ahimsa for ahimsa. But if anybody resorted to force against us we shall meet it with force." Sardar Patel said that Swami Dayanand was one of the two great saints Gujarat gave to the world. Although Swami Dayanand and Mahatma Gandhi were born in Gujarat, they had dedicated their lives to the service of mankind. Ultimately they belonged to not only the whole of India but the world. It was for the people now to understand the teachings of these two saints and follow them in their actual lives.

The greatest contribution of Swami Dayanand, he said, was that he saved the country from falling deeper into the morass of helplessness. He actually laid the foundations of India's freedom. A movement against untouchability, later to be supported by Gandhiji, was launched, and reconversion to Hinduism of the already forcibly converted persons was started. Swami Dayanand put a complete stop to the tendency in those days of preaching adharma in the name of dharma, which had made the Hindu Dharma the laughing stock of the world. ,

"Swami Dayanand wiped off," he said, "the dirt and grime that had settled on the Hindu Dharma. He swept aside the cloud of superstition shrouding it and let in light."

In the Indian Constitution untouchability had been declared a crime and Hindi accepted as the national language. It was actually Swami Dayanand, Sardar Patel said, who first propagated that Hindi be made the national language.

People should also remember that Swamiji did not get foreign education. He was the product of the Indian culture. Although it was true that they in India had to borrow whatever was good and useful from other countries, it was right and proper that Indian culture was accorded its due place.