

I was mainly in staff employment, until January 1946, when I became G.O.C. Presidency and Assam District, with headquarters in Calcutta. Later in the year, I was officiating G.O.C. -in-Chief, Eastern Command. I had the responsibility for dealing with the terrible communal fighting which broke out in Calcutta in August 1946 and later in East Bengal, Bihar, Assam, the Central Provinces and in the United Provinces.

The exact record of events, as far as Calcutta, East Bengal and Bihar are concerned, is contained in my very full report to Army Headquarters, India. The troops under my command were congratulated on their magnificent conduct in aid of the civil power by His Excellency the Viceroy, Field Marshal Lord Wavell, by the Government of India and by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, who also thanked me for the very detailed and clear report prepared by Headquarters, Eastern Command.

In 1947 I was on leave in England until I was recalled to India to take up the appointment of Chief of Staff to General Sir Rob Lockhart, who had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army of India on the partition of the country. My wife and I arrived in New Delhi - to the best of my recollection - a few days after the 15th August, 1947.

I cannot pretend that my memories of 1946 and 1947 were happy ones. It saddened me much to see the old India I knew and loved become the scene of large scale communal rioting. Action in aid of the civil power is anything but a congenial task for

Various biographies of Vallabhbhai are, I know, being written, and I shall be more than glad to help the authors in any way I can.

Kashmir

You have my file of the correspondence between your Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and myself on Kashmir. When I get home I will see if I have any other relevant papers, and if so, they will be sent to the Nehru Memorial Museum.

The copies of documents in the file already with you should be studied so far as Panditji is concerned, they portray his great grasp of the military situation in Kashmir and especially how this was influenced by the presence of the U.N. Commission for Jammu and Kashmir (or was it India and Pakistan? I forget the correct title I am afraid.) In my opinion, for what it is worth, India would have accepted the accession of Kashmir to Pakistan had that occurred in the first instance. After the accession of the State to India the "introduction" of the raiders into the Jhelum Valley organised as this was by the Govt. of the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan and by the provision of vehicles, ammunition and food made the despatch of Indian troops inescapable. Had this not been done Srinagar would undoubtedly have been burnt out and large scale massacres with attendant horrors would have been widespread amongst Hindus and Christians.

a lot of talk about a cease-fire, that was in Karachi. Anyway, when I returned to New Delhi I reported as I always did - that was my custom - to the Minister of Defence on all that I had learnt whilst in Pakistan. What went on within the Indian Cabinet I do not know, but I have two letters at home (no I think they may even be in the file here; anyway I have copies of them at home if they are not in the file) from Pandit Nehru; he had become very perturbed about the shelling of Akhnur and the Beripattan Bridge by Pakistan heavy artillery from just within Pakistan; he enjoined me to do all I could to counteract this. There was nothing which one could do except counter-shell. In one of his letters Panditji wrote: "I do not know what the United Nations" - I am quoting - "are going to propose. They may propose a cease-fire and what the conditions are going to be I do not know. If there isn't going to be a cease-fire, then it seems to me that we may be faced with an advance into Pakistan and for that we must be prepared." I assured my Prime Minister that all steps would be taken to meet any eventuality; the next happening, so far as I was concerned, was when Sardar Baldev Singh rang me up on the telephone and said: "Go ahead." I asked: "Go ahead with what?" He replied: "Go ahead with the cease-fire." My reply was: "Well it is a jolly difficult job for me as a Commander-in-Chief to tackle and you have the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan in the country." The answer was that I had to go ahead. So I drafted out a signal to General Gracey, the

Commander-in-Chief in Pakistan; a copy of this is, I know, in the file in the Museum now. The signal was kept purposely short and merely stated that my Government was of the opinion that senseless moves and counter-moves with loss of life and everything else were achieving nothing in Kashmir; that I had my Government's authority to order Indian troops to cease firing as from a minute or so before midnight of the 31st December 1948. The signal was very carefully drafted and was addressed 'Personal to General Gracey'. As I have already said I took it along to Pandit Nehru in the Lok Sabha before despatch and showed it to him. He read it two or three times, counter-signed it and told me to get it sent off; he took a copy for his own file. The signal was despatched; I knew if General Gracey understood that Pandit Nehru had approved the message that he would immediately inform his own Prime Minister, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan. By permission of the Government of India I could telephone to Army Headquarters Pakistan; I used this permission to inform General Gracey that my signal had Pandit Nehru's agreement.

The cease-fire came in. Indian troops stopped firing, and, as I have already narrated, the United Nations Commission was ^b apprised of this a day or two later; they were told that what they come out for had been achieved two days or so ago. I do not think the Commission knew anything about the cease-fire signal before that.

There have been many arguments against the cease-fire; whether these arguments are right or