

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

West End Hotel
Bangalore
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Mr. Walter S. Rogers
Institute of Current World Affairs
522 Fifth Avenue
New York 18, New York

Dear Mr. Rogers:

One week ago today, on Thursday, August 28th, I climbed aboard the Constellation "Flying Eagle" at LaGuardia Field and at 9:30 A.M. took off en route to India. Today I am writing from the cool Mysore city of Bangalore in the heart of south-central India. The many fleeting impressions which I have gathered during the past week are vivid in my mind, but they are so varied and heterogeneous that any correct and coherent account of them is difficult. Snatches of conversations, bits of local color, and images of geography and scenery merge together. Nevertheless, I want to write you an account of this past week, even if it is little more than a log of my trip.

My flight from New York to Karachi was a quick one. Because we were two days behind our schedule in taking off, we flew non-stop from New York to Shannon, Ireland. After a brief delay there we proceeded, with short stops at London and Istanbul, directly to Karachi where we landed at 11:30 A.M. on Saturday. In some respects I was glad that we were off schedule because it meant that the portion of our journey over Europe was made, unexpectedly, in daylight. Our route went over Paris, the northern edge of Corsica, Rome, Naples, and Athens. From Istanbul we proceeded, in brilliant moonlight, by way of Anatolia and Cyprus and then straight across the Middle East, Arabia, and the Arabian Sea. It was tantalizing and frustrating to fly over so many places of both historic and contemporary significance without an opportunity to stop along the way, but a continuous flight of this sort does give one an impression of contrasts between national and regional patterns of geography and development. From the air, differences in terrain, in the size, number, and appearance of cities and towns, and in the organization and distribution of cultivated areas were striking as one flew from country to country.

Our plane was not crowded at any stage during the trip, due to a heavy load of gold bullion we were carrying, but the passengers were an interesting and varied group. Included among the passengers were three American engineers going to Afghanistan on a road-building contract, a Turkish student returning home after graduate study in the U.S., a British machinery dealer returning to the Punjab, two Bombay businessmen, the Maharajah and Maharani of Jaipur, and the Advocate-General of Bombay.

My first glimpse of India was of the desolate, arid desert of the Sind with the sprawling city of Karachi isolated between the desert and the sea. Our plane landed at the commercial airport outside the city, and after health, police, and customs clearance I went to work on a reservation for the flight to Bombay by Air India ("The Tata Line"). A somewhat chaotic evacuation of Hindus from this capital of the new state of Pakistan was in process, and I was told that no seats were available until September 22nd. With luck, however, I was able finally to obtain

a cancelled reservation for the next day.

In the meanwhile I had struck up an acquaintance with a sergeant in the airport customs police. He was an English-speaking, Portugese-educated, Roman Catholic Indian from Goa. The upshot was that I acquired a personal guide and companion for my short stay in Karachi. Together with two of his Goan friends we first toured the modern cantonment district of the city which has wide streets, modern homes, extensively military barracks, a few (although now completely inadequate) government buildings, and scattered apartment houses. This part of the city has something of a spacious frontier atmosphere, and conspicuous green and white Pakistan flags and shiny official cars were evidences of its new political status. The crowding caused by the influx of officials and workers of the new government was not particularly evident, but I was told that the streets were less crowded than usual because people were staying indoors in anticipation of communal disturbances. No riots have taken place as yet in Karachi itself, but clashes have been reported within forty or fifty miles. I wanted very much, incidentally, to attend a session of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, but it was in recess for the week-end.

In the evening, after visits in two Goan homes and an Indian supper of various curried dishes, we went into the native quarter of the city, called the sub-city. I was interested by the fact that my Goan companions attempted to dramatize the dangers of entering the area, and one of them admitted that he had never been there during his twelve years in Karachi. Actually our slow tour through the area was intensely interesting. It had an entirely different aspect from the rest of the city. The streets are narrow, dark, and crowded with milling people. We passed through separate Muslim, Hindu, and other districts including, interestingly enough, a district of Baghdadi. My police friend asserted that there was a strong Hindu-Muslim tension among the crowds, and I seemed to be able to sense a certain amount of it. Our tour of the city completed, we went to an industrial fair at which Kashmir products were conspicuously featured and finally to a dance given by the Karachi Goan Association and attended by Goans, Anglo-Indians, and a few Britishers still in the city police force.

Perhaps my first impression of India that evening was an awareness of the variety and complexity of its mixture of peoples, languages, and customs. These were immediately pointed out to me, an obvious foreigner and newcomer, by all whom I talked to. I was also impressed by the readiness of people with whom I talked to describe group characteristics and to classify people as members of a religious, linguistic, or provincial group. Pat generalizations were made about the "fierce" Pathans, the "brave" Punjabis, the "cowardly" Gujeratis, and so on, as if all I needed to know about a person was an adjective of this sort. I had been aware of the various groupings in India, but I had not expected to encounter thinking in terms of group stereotypes in quite such a clear-cut fashion.

My first opportunity to converse at length with an Indian was with a member of a small Indian minority, the Christian Goans. My next long conversation was with a member of another minority group, the Parsees who migrated from Persia to India centuries ago. On the plane from Karachi to Bombay I sat next to a wealthy Bombay Parsee businessman, very literate and extremely westernized. He conversed freely about his own sect

and community and described with pride their wealth and prominence. He talked also of their close relations with the British and relative isolation from the currents of mass Indian nationalism and expressed fears of discrimination against them on the part of the new government of India. He invited me to his home, but unfortunately I was not going to be in Bombay long enough to accept his invitation.

I was given a warm welcome at Bombay by Phil Talbot and Dick Morse at the airport and by Mildred and little Susan later. They have been wonderful to me, and already I feel that I have known them for a long time. I immediately placed myself in Phil's capable hands, and since then I have followed his schedule, observing, asking questions, and learning a great deal from him. As you suggested I plan to be with him for several weeks and to profit from his experience and his wide knowledge of India.

I was in Bombay hardly long enough to receive any impression of the city, except of its westernized and often baroque buildings and of its atmosphere of commercial and industrial activity. Phil has told me something of the serious economic problems with which the authorities there are grappling, but I did not have the opportunity to investigate or observe conditions myself. On Monday Phil and I left by train for Bangalore, followed later by Mildred who flew. The train trip was intensely interesting, and I wish I could describe it in detail, but I must restrict this letter to a reasonable length.

After the lush green, monsoon-soaked, coastal land around Bombay and the spectacular climb up the Western Ghats, the dryer Deccan plateau impressed me with its relatively poor soil and its very poor crops. I am told that crop failures in this area are not uncommon and often occur in successive years. Lack of water has effected this year's crops which appear to be very poor indeed, and the resulting food shortages and tightened food rationing have not helped in a situation politically confused, disorganized, and tense. I have been surprised, in fact, to see how much of the land in the regions I have seen so far is not cultivated at all, and this in a country with a large population and a relative scarcity of land. The quality of the soils and the availability of water are obviously among the causes for this, but I would like to know more than I do about the possibilities of land reclamation.

Since arriving in Bangalore Phil and I have already had a number of useful visits and interviews. Three stand out as highlights. The first was with Shri Gurjali, General Secretary of the Seva Ashram which carries on social and educational work among the outcaste and lower caste workers and their children. He is a Brahman Hindu who has married out of caste, has broken with tradition in many ways, and shows great intelligence as well as friendliness. He showed us through the Ashram and through nearby workers' houses, described their program and its financial support by both public grants and private philanthropy, and later invited us for a meal in his home. It was interesting to hear him admit that the emotional virus of communal feeling had recently had its effect on him, despite his education and work. Another extremely interesting interview was with Sir Mirza Ismael, a distinguished Muslim who has served as Prime Minister in three Indian states: Mysore, Jaipur, and Hyderabad. Both he and Gurjali expressed what might be called pessimism tempered with hope

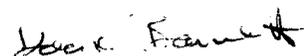
concerning the present situation in India. Gurjali said that he believes that communal outbreaks would not have been serious if India had achieved independence with unity rather than the present division, but that since bifurcation has taken place the only solution can be reciprocal deportatio of Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims from Hindustan and that some violence is inevitable and to be expected. Sir Mirza, while giving Britain credit for sincerity in her withdrawal, believes that a more gradual withdrawal would have facilitated the shift in administration and prevented much of the present disorder. Although a Muslim, he believes in ultimate unification and feels that unity should be the constant goal. He does not feel that exchanges of population are the solution, but that problems must be solved within their existing frame of reference.

This morning Phil and I had an hour's conversation with the Prime Minister of Mysore, A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, at his office. Yesterday satyagraha, or non-violent resistance, was started against his government here in Mysore by the State Congress Party which calls him a reactionary and ostensibly is pressing for an immediate achievement of fully responsible government. In addition to the satyagraha, a railway strike is threatening, and the food situation is serious, and he shows the strain of worry and responsibility. He talked at length about the issues at stake in the present trouble in Mysore. He does not think that the constitutional issue is fundamental because both he and the Maharaja have promised responsible government in one form or another. The issue behind the satyagraha, according to his interpretation, is the struggle between Brahmans and non-Brahmans. He described how Brahmans have been able to monopolize education and government service and of the efforts, including his own, to give a better opportunity to members of other castes. He claims that the Congress Party here is dominated by the Brahmans and that they are using it in their struggle to maintain the dominant position of their caste. More evidence would have to be obtained before one could accept his contention, but it is an interesting indication of the complexities and subtleties underlying Indian politics. Although he is called a reactionary, he impressed me as being rather a sincere conservative, and Phil seems to share this impression.

The rumblings of political and social changes of all sorts are loud in India today. I am not going to offer a neophyte's comments about current developments about which I know very little, particularly when Phil will undoubtedly describe them to you in detail, but the press is full of reports of the terrible Punjab riots, Gandhi's twelfth fast at Calcutta and its widespread repercussions, and other important events and developments throughout the country. This is a fascinating time to be in India, and I am fortunate to be with such a competent observer and interpreter as Phil Talbot.

I am still in the process of formulating future plans, but I will write you concerning them later. In the meanwhile I will continue to accompany Phil in his work here.

Sincerely yours,



Doak Barnett