

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
(LOK SABHA)



Parliament House,
New Delhi.

July 30, 1969.

The Hon'ble the Acting President,
Rashtrapati Bhawan,
New Delhi.

Sir,

We have watched with concern the growing deterioration in the law and order situation in West Bengal under a Communist-dominated "United Front" Ministry. Such break-down would be dangerous anywhere but is doubly so in a border State which adjoins China and Pakistan. The declaration by the leaders of the dominant party in the UF Ministry that it is their policy to use the powers of their Governments to subvert the Constitution adds still more to the growing gravity of the situation.

With West Bengal's geographical location and Communist China's flagrant support to all types of subversive movements, it is essential in the national interest that the Governor of the State should be free from any suspicion of ideological sympathy with any alien power. The rising in Telengana in the fifties and the abortive peasant risings in Naxalbari in 1967 are warnings that the Communist Parties will not hesitate to use any means whatsoever to further their ends. In the light of what has happened in the last six months, it is not fanciful to anticipate that there will be further acts of defiance of the Constitution and the authority of the Union Government by the United Front Ministry. The extreme sections of its supporters openly speak of declaring the State a "Peoples' Republic" independent of the Indian Union and threaten to convert it to another Vietnam. The State Government has done little to curb these elements and stop their propaganda to disrupt the Indian Union.

We have therefore been disturbed by newspaper reports that Shri S.S. Dhawan, now Indian High Commissioner in London, may be appointed the next Governor of West Bengal. We have nothing against Shri Dhawan as an individual but his political views are such that his appointment to this post at this juncture is bound to raise suspicion, doubt and uncertainty. It is difficult to overlook his unqualified support of all Soviet policies. In one of his articles published under the pseudonym "Sanjaya", he wrote:

"A few months ago, I was asked to give the definition of a progressive person. I replied: 'Today the test of a progressive person is his attitude towards the Soviet Union'.



Such unqualified support of a foreign power is disquieting. What has disturbed us even more is his attitude towards the Chinese Communist occupation of Tibet. In an article in the National Herald on 9th November 1959, he wrote:

"The interests of India are not directly involved, and the question of making a protest simply does not arise. The propaganda about Chinese 'aggression' in Tibet is completely baseless.....I have no doubt that the people of Tibet will benefit greatly as a result of closer contact between Tibet and China. Tibet is one of the most backward countries in the world.....All this will change under Chinese rule. Tibet will now share the benefits of civilisation like all the other countries in Central Asia which have passed under Communist rule.

With this background, we are constrained to observe that Shri Dhawan's appointment as Governor of West Bengal in the present juncture will be neither in the national interest nor fair to him. In the case of a crisis in West Bengal, the attitude of the Governor will be decisive. He has to act as the eyes and ears of the President and also be the instrument through which action in an Emergency may be taken. If he went along with the Communist-dominated Government, the last link of legality between Bengal and the rest of India would snap. If, on the other hand, the Governor could fulfil his obligations in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the Constitution, it would be possible for the authority of the Indian Union to be maintained and law and order maintained in a constitutional manner. However, Mr. Dhawan acted in such a situation, his past declarations and comments would make him suspect in the eyes of a large section of the Indian people and we reiterate this would be fair neither to him nor to the State.

We would therefore request ~~you~~ that you may be good enough to exercise your discretion in the matter of the appointment of the Governor of West Bengal. Article 155 of the Constitution, under which the Governor is to be appointed, gives you the right at your discretion to appoint a Governor of a State and we would submit that nothing in the Article indicates that you are bound by the advice the Prime Minister or the Cabinet may tender on this point.

Yours faithfully