

Copy of the letter from the Chairman and Managing
Director, Bombay Telephone Co., Ltd., to the
Adviser, Bombay Telephone Workers' Union

25th June 1942

DEAR MR. JHABVALA,

BOMBAY TELEPHONE WORKERS' UNION.

I have received a copy of the resolutions signed by you passed at a meeting of the Bombay Telephone Workers' Union reading as follows:—

- (1) "This Extraordinary General Meeting of the Bombay Telephone Workers' Union is encouraged to notice the heroic achievement of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republic for the last one year in actively repelling the aggressive forces of Nazism and greatly admires the determined resistance put up by the Soviet Socialists. Indian workers among whom are the Bombay Telephone Workers deeply regret that they are debarred from participating in their own dependent way with the Russian workers as India is not a free state like Russia and her will to resist the foreign aggressor is not allowed a freedom which is the birthright of every worker in the Soviet Socialist Russia. The Meeting therefore demands from British Government complete independence for India in consonance with the announcement of Four Freedoms made in Atlantic Charter, viz., Freedom of Thought, Freedom of Religion, Freedom from Want and Freedom from Fear so that Indian workers may freely assist Russian workers so as to **help them to victory.**
- (2) This Extraordinary General Meeting of the Bombay Telephone Workers' Union unanimously supports the demands of the Union made to the Chairman and Managing Director by its representatives at their last interview with him and earnestly requests him to grant them all, failing which the Union warns the Management that disaffection against the same will increase to the common harm of both the workers and the Management."

There is evidently some misapprehension as to the opportunities in Russia and in India to "resist the foreign aggressor". There is complete freedom in India to resist the foreign aggressor and, in the words of your resolution, to "assist Russian workers so as to help them to victory". There are three main ways in which this can be done. The first and most obvious way is by joining the Defence Forces. The second is by assisting in maintaining Essential Services such as communications. The third is by helping to provide the many articles required in modern warfare, for food, clothes and munitions are necessary to enable those who join the Defence Forces to do their part. There are a number of ancillary Services such as Doctors, Nurses, Canteen workers, who also are wanted to afford important services to assist the Defence Forces. All of these things Indians are free to do.

No one denies Indians Freedom of Thought—No one denies Indians Freedom of Religion. It seems doubtful if there is any country in the world where there is so much Freedom from Want and so much Freedom from Fear as in India at the present time. It is therefore up to Indian workers to work with all their might and main as the Russian workers are assuredly doing. It is also up to them to raise as few points relating to their own circumstances at the present time as they possibly can. **The Russian workers are thinking of winning the war and not of anything else until that has been done.**

I strongly deprecate the words in the resolutions above, which you have signed, warning the Management that disaffection against the Management will increase if all the demands of the Union made at the last interview are not granted. For my part, I deny the existence of any "disaffection" and I hope that the Union will remove this word from their resolution as I am convinced that it does not represent the real views of the staff of the Bombay Telephone Company.

I told Sir Stafford Cripps when he arrived in this country and again when he left that I thought it was very desirable to try to arrange to send as many as possible of the Heads of Departments in the Defence Services and in the Civil Services in India to Russia and to arrange for them to be shown as much as possible of what is happening there. I will add to that a recommendation that some of the Indian workers should be sent there too, and I will make a special recommendation that a few of the workers employed by the Bombay Telephone Company may be among them. I feel convinced that in this way there might be brought about a complete change in the whole tempo and attitude of those in India to the war effort. The result of such a visit would, I think, spread through India in all directions greatly to the benefit of the Russians whom you are so anxious to help, as well as to India. I hope that Sir Stafford Cripps will be able to do something of this kind.

Yours very truly,

R. H. PARKER.

P. S.—In your letter of the 25th June which I have just received since dictating the above, you ask that there shall be a minimum of delay in dealing with the points raised on behalf of the Union. I am doing and will continue to do all I can to accelerate replies but you will appreciate that some of these points could quite easily have been raised at any time in the past 17 years that I have been managing the undertaking, and that it is hardly fair to expect me after this period of delay to be able to answer them all quickly. Moreover, I think you will agree that it is in the interests of everyone concerned that there should be as much cohesion as possible in decisions of this kind and for that purpose as well as others, it is necessary for me to refer frequently to the Government of India.

S. H. JHABVALA, Esq., M. L. A.,
Adviser, Bombay Telephone Workers' Union,
49, Ripon Road,
Byculla, Bombay.

BOMBAY TELEPHONE COMPANY, LIMITED.

BOMBAY.
KARACHI.
AHMEDABAD.

AMAR BUILDING,
SIR PHIROZSHAH MEHTA ROAD,

TELEGRAMS : OAKEN
CODES : BENTLE
& NEW STAND
POST BOX

PLEASE QUOTE REF.

BOMBAY, 22nd June, 1942
24

Krishna Sakharam,
Temp. Elec. Cooly No. 2440, "E" Divn.

I have pleasure in informing you that conditionally upon your joining the Company's Employees' Provident Fund, I confirm your appointment as from the ~~1st January 1941~~ ^{1st June, 1942} as an Elec. Cooly in the service of the Company on a monthly salary of Rs. 25/- terminable by one month's notice on either side, expiring on any date.

It will be necessary for you to complete and return the enclosed forms relating to your membership of the Provident Fund before the next payment of wages.

A further condition of service, in the event of the Government of India acquiring the Company's undertaking, is that you will be employed under Government from the date of such acquisition until the 31st March 1943 but on the terms and conditions of employment as now exist between you and the Company, and subject to considerations as to efficiency, with the same prospects of service until that date.

The Provident Fund benefits to which you are entitled, will be continued by Government and consequential amendments in the Rules of the Provident Fund will be made as soon as the transfer of the undertaking is decided on.

Your staff number will be 785.
A brass badge bearing the number is sent herewith.

[Handwritten initials]

Enc. -
SR

[Handwritten signature]

SECRETARY & CHIEF ENGINEER.

No.785 Krishna Sakharam,
Elec.Cooly,

NOTICE TO STAFF

By order of the Board of Directors of the Company and the Managers of the BOMBAY TELEPHONE COMPANY, LIMITED, EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND and with the authority of the Government of India,

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to all employees of the Company as follows :—

1. The Board of Directors of the Company, pursuant to the powers in them vested, have resolved that the Bombay Telephone Company, Limited, Employees' Provident Fund (hereinafter called 'the existing Fund') shall be closed as on the close of business on the 31st March 1943 and will be wound up as soon as possible thereafter.

2. The Company hereby gives notice to each of its employees (to whom notice has already not been given) terminating his or her employment with the Company on the 31st March 1943. The employment of every employee to whom notice is hereby given (save such persons as may be separately notified before the 15th March 1943 that their services will not be required by Government) will be continued by the Government of India on the same terms as existing on the 31st March 1943 except with regard to the Provident Fund.

3. A new Provident Fund will be started by the Government of India with effect on and from the 1st April 1943 for the benefit of the persons referred to in paragraph 4 of this Notice (other than any persons covered by paragraph 7 hereof). The Rules of the new Fund will (subject to the terms of this Notice) be similar to the Rules of the existing Fund except with respect to investment of and the income arising from the investment of moneys of the Fund. In substitution for the present provisions regarding such income it will be provided that interest from the 1st April 1943 at the rate from time to time appointed for Government Provident Funds will be paid by the Government of India on all amounts at credit of members' accounts in the new Fund and will be credited to such accounts yearly as on the 31st March.

4. The members of the existing Fund who, before the 31st March 1943, elect to do so will be permitted to transfer to the new Fund the amounts to which they are entitled on the winding up of the existing Fund.

5. In the case of any member of the existing Fund who is notified before the 15th March 1943 that his employment will not be continued by Government after the 31st March 1943 he will be paid the amount due to him on the winding up of the existing Fund.

6. If the employment of any member of the existing Fund who elects to transfer to the new Fund as provided in paragraph 4 hereof is terminated for any reason at any time after the 1st April 1943 he will be entitled to receive from Government in respect of his credit in the new Fund a sum not less than the sum which he would have received on liquidation of the old Fund if he had not transferred to the new Fund plus all further sums to which he shall be entitled under the Rules of the new Fund.

7. Members of the existing Fund who do not elect to transfer to the new Fund the amounts standing to their credit in the existing Fund will, on liquidation of the existing Fund, be paid the amounts payable to them ascertained according to the Rules and practice of the existing Fund but they will not be eligible for membership of the new Fund.

8. It is a condition that the services of any employee to whom the terms of this Notice apply and whose employment is continued by Government on and after 1st April 1943 may be lent to the Company temporarily.

By order of the Board
And the Managers of the Provident Fund
W. A. C. BROMHAM
Secretary and Chief Engineer.

BOMBAY.
26th February 1943.