



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

15 November, 1982

Dear Sir

Mr 17
H.A.

India: Death of Acharya Vinoba Bhave

Bhave, a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, died in India during the weekend. He was venerated by Indian statesmen and politicians of all political persuasions as well as the Indian population as a whole.

The Prime Minister, who is entertaining Rajiv Gandhi and other prominent Indians to lunch, will wish to express her condolences.

/ I attach a speaking note.

Yours ever

J E Holmes

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Private Secretary

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SPEAKING NOTE

India: Death of Acharya Vinoba Bhave

Deep regret to learn of death. Please accept my deepest sympathy on your country's loss.

Background

Bhave, who died this weekend, was a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi and the Freedom Movement. He was later involved in a partially successful attempt to re-distribute land to the poor. In recent years he forsook political life and went into reclusion as a Hindu ascetic. His significance in India was spiritual rather than political.

Two weeks ago Bhave embarked on a complete fast which led to his death. Mrs Gandhi and the leaders of other political parties, including the Communists, visited him and attempted to dissuade him from his purpose but without success.