

Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru
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Page 6

Unity in Diversity¹

19 October, 1952

Behind India's unity, there is an enormous and magnificent variety. If you had travelled with me, you would have gone, say to Kashmir, right on the northern tip of India and would have crossed the high Himalayas, the glaciers, and the snows. Now, all that is India. You would have gone to Ladakh right between Kashmir and Tibet, the vast stretch of land with no trees, nothing but magnificent high mountains, terribly cold. Some people imagine that India is a hot country, but it is frightfully cold too. You go to the southern tip of India, say Travancore. You will find a tropical climate, so completely different from Ladakh's. Naturally if the climate is different, the people living there are also different in many ways. I have just come from Madras, a very big city, a very gracious city, a fine city, very different from the cities in the north. Should I, because I happen to live now in Delhi want to make Madras or Bombay like Delhi or like Allahabad, where I was born, or like Kashmir, where my family came from? I cannot do it and I do not want to do it, I like the variety of India.

Page 27

Five Years of Freedom²

¹ Speech at a public meeting, Shillong, 19 October 1952, AAIR tapes, NMML. Extracts.

² Speech on the inauguration of the Bharat Sevak Samaj at Thiruvananthapuram, 28 December 1952, AIR tapes, NMML, Extracts.

28 December 1952

I want to realize this enormous world canvas on which you and I and all of us function, where your smallest problems have to be related to the larger problems. I am, perhaps, in a better position than you, to understand and appreciate all-India problems, because that is my job, that is my function. And I see India from a thousand view points. I travel to the northernmost tip in Kashmir and to the Tibetan border of Ladakh. I travel to the north-eastern border, where there is China on the other side, or Burma, or again Tibet, and I see this enormous variety of our people, and their different problems, and then try to piece them together to think about them as the problems of India as a whole. It is a fascinating prospect and because of its, if I may say so, intricacy and complexity, poses a challenge to all of us , a challenge which we have accepted, and I have no doubt , we shall answer that challenge adequately.

Page 153

To U Nu³

New Delhi

October 25,1952

My dear U Nu,

I returned this evening from a tour of the north-eastern border regions of India. On my return I received your letter of the 17th October. In this letter you suggest that I might postpone my visit to the Naga areas of India. As a matter of fact, I have already gone there, or at least some of them. It is not an easy matter to visit to many of these areas because it takes too much time. I can only go to places where

³ File No. 8/248/53-PMS.

there are airstrips. I spent one week in all these border regions, more specially the borders of Tibet where we have recently added to our administrative apparatus. Our officers and others have normally to go there by road and it takes them sometimes some weeks to reach there. We send supplies by air droppings.

When you suggested that I might join you in visiting some of the Naga areas in Burma, I welcomed the idea. I welcomed it specially as that would give me another chance of being with you and discussing matters with you. If it is possible to arrange such a visit some time in March or so, I shall certainly try to come. But before this can be fixed, the airstrips have naturally to be put in proper condition. Our Air Force people, more specially when they are carrying me or any important guest, are very particular and I have to bow to their decision. Flying over these hills and landing there requires great care. In fact I myself during my last week's flights over the mountains. Only two days ago, one of our Air Force aircraft, which was engaged in dropping operations near the border of Tibet, came to grief.

Page 159

Visit to the North-East Frontier Areas⁴

26 October 1952

...One rather odd thing is this. The North-East Frontier Agency covers the entire border from Tibet to Burma except a little bit why that bit has been left out, I do not know. It would be better if they controlled the whole border...

⁴ Impressions given at a meeting with the officials of the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, 26 October 1952, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, NMML. Extracts.

The political consideration is there. If these tribal people are not treated well, they will become the opposition and join the Muslim Leaguers. The Khasis are separate and the Assamese are separate and they do not mix. We can think it terms of a common judicial authority or a common Governor. As much of local autonomy as possible should be given to these tribes. In Tripura I found that it has a most ancient history running to thousands of years. Everywhere, in these places, the desire is for schools and communication is rather a pressing thing.

page 164

Character and Culture of the Tribal People

27 October 1952

14- The people near the Tibetan frontier were till recently under some kind of a Tibetan administration. On the whole, some of them appeared to be pleased with the change-over, as the system of forced labour, etc, had now disappeared and some attempts had been made to improve their lot. Their representatives asked me repeatedly for schools, roads and dispensaries. On the other hand, in some other areas bordering on Tibet, I was told that comparison was being made with conditions on the Chinese side and that this was not always to our advantage. Many of our people go across the border to work on the other side and get good wages. They say that the Chinese are building roads and schools, etc. In fact, it appeared that the Chinese treated our people somewhat better than they treated the Tibetans.

Page 488

Trade with China⁵

10 December 1952

I think it would be desirable for you to draw the attention of our Ministry of Commerce and Industry to this matter⁶ from another point of view. That Ministry and perhaps one or two others are a little afraid of dealings with China in case this might incur the displeasure of the US Government. I believe that we put a ban even on the sale of old rubber tyres to Hong Kong lest they might be exported to China. Here is the Ceylon Government selling good rubber directly and the Ceylon Government has not even recognized China. I think that we should act at least as freely in the matter of our trade with China and not live in a state of apprehension lest somebody is displeased.

Page 488

Cable to N. Raghavan⁷

10 December 1952

I have sent you full appraisal of situation regarding Korean Resolution and suggestions as to how to explain situation to Chinese Government.⁸ I want to make it clear that while we intend maintaining our friendly approach there should be no element of apology on our part as to what we had done. Our attitude towards Chinese Government should always be a combination of friendliness and

⁵ Note to the Cabinet Secretary, New Delhi, 27 October 1952. JN Collection, Extracts.

⁶ Apprehensions were expressed in some Sri Lankan papers that the Government of India viewed with disfavour their transactions with the Chinese Government.

⁷ New Delhi, 10 December 1952, JM Collections.

⁸ See ante, pp. 453-54.

firmness. If we show weakness, advantage will be taken of this immediately.

This applies to any development that might take place or in reference to our frontier problems between Tibet and Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh and rest of India. In regard to this entire frontier we have to maintain an attitude of firmness. Indeed there is nothing to discuss there and we have made that previously clear to the Chinese Government. Bhutan is independent in a way but is protected by us and its foreign affairs are our responsibility.⁹ Hence even in regard to Bhutan we do not propose to tolerate any interference.

The old McMahon line is considered to be our frontier and we shall adhere to it.

This is only for you information and guidance. Nothing need be done about it at present.

⁹ Article 2 of the Indo-Bhutan Treaty 1949 stated that the Government of India will not interfere in the internal administration of Bhutan and "Government of Bhutan agrees to be guided by the advice of the Government of India in its external relations."