

Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Series II Volume 30

To U Nu¹

New Delhi

6 September 1955

My dear U Nu,

Your Ambassador² has conveyed to me your message seeking information about the present talks in Geneva between the Ambassadors of the United States and China.³ The two sides, at one of their early meetings, came to an agreed decision that their proceedings were private and only joint communiques were to be released to the press, so that press reports must be speculation as well as piecing together of any information that might be leaking. We have heard from time to time from our Consulate General in Geneva about the state of the talks as from Chinese sources...

5. With regard to India's participation, this was a proposal originally put forward by the Chinese and indeed was discussed with us in the talks in Peking. While we had not been formally approached, it has always been known that this was the Chinese intention and we had acquiesced in it. Whatever might have been the previous position vis-a-vis United States on this question, we have now had a request from both sides to assist in this regard and we have agreed to do so. In the communique proposed to be issued as originally drafted, it had been mentioned that the Indian

¹ V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML. Extracts. Also available in JN Collection.

² Sithu U Aung Soe.

³ It was announced that beginning 1 August 1955, the Ambassadors of IIS and China would meet at Geneva to discuss the question of repatriation of nationals and "certain other practical matters now at issue between both sides." The US State Department acknowledged, that India and Myanmar (Burma) had arranged for the meeting in backstage discussions.

Ambassador in Washington would be authorised, etc. To conform to our constitutional procedures, we advised both sides that while our Ambassadors and Consuls-General would normally do such work, any responsibility or authorisation would only rest with the Government of India and therefore the wording of the communique should be suitably altered. Both sides agreed to do this and what in fact our duties would amount to will depend on the terms of reference or such other agreement that the parties come to. This we have not yet seen. However there is no hitch in respect of this matter. The latest position as we know it is that Ambassador Johnson⁴ asked a number of questions to which Chinese have given answers. The Chinese have not agreed to set dates, but have agreed to speedy procedures. There has been a long adjournment of the talks. This may or may not be a deadlock.

6. It does not appear to us that while Geneva negotiations are pending and in view of their character being that of direct talks for which all of us have in our own ways worked, we can do very much. Like you we are also watching the situation.

7. This is a personal message from me to you, conveying such information as we have been able to gather from various sources. Not being directly concerned with these conversations in Geneva, we cannot state exactly what has taken place there. I would request you therefore not to make any reference to this in any communication to either party.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

⁴ Alexis Johnson, US Representative at the Sino-American talks in Geneva.

Report of the Cultural Delegation⁵

I have read this interesting report.⁶

2. I am somewhat surprised to read, in paragraph 13 of this report, that our Consul-General⁷ in Shanghai does not know even today where our party stayed on their visit to Shanghai.⁸ Even Paranjpe⁹ does not know. It was actually suggested that we might decide that the headquarters of the party might be in Shanghai. All this is very remarkable. We stayed in Shanghai at a very fine palatial building completely fitted up in the European and rather English style. We were told that it was the house of one of the English merchant princes of Shanghai who had left the place. Our Ambassador¹⁰ stayed there with us; so did Paranjpe. Our Consul-General naturally came there repeatedly. If after all this neither Paranjpe nor our Consul-General knows where it is, it does not speak well for their awareness.

3. The Deputy Minister has referred to the theatre building there and has specially commended the Chungking Theatre. It might be worth while to ask our Embassy in Peking to get some particulars about this Theatre, such as blueprints and photographs.

4. The Deputy Minister refers to our own Consulate building at Kashgar. He suggests that it should be disposed of as it is no longer used and, in any event, we cannot use it in future. Why has it been kept on and who

⁵ Note to Secretary General, Foreign Secretary and Commonwealth Secretary, MEA, 19 September 1955, JN Collection. A copy of this note was sent to Anil K. Chanda, Deputy Minister for External Affairs.

⁶ This was a report from A.K. Chanda dated 22 August 1955 on his impressions of a visit with a cultural delegation to China in June-July 1955.

⁷ D. Murugesan.

⁸ Nehru visited Shanghai during his visit to China in October 1954. Chanda wrote, "As a matter of fact we felt that our Chinese friends do suffer from an excess of security mania. I heard stories of the arrangements they had made for PM's safety and security during his China tour."

⁹ V.V. Paranjpe (1923-); Chinese language interpreter..

¹⁰ N. Raghavan.

looks after it? Probably it is desirable to dispose of it. It is conceivable that we might need it in the future for a Consulate there. Even so it is suggested that this building is no good. We might look into this matter and take it up in Peking later.

5. I am a little surprised to read of the surprise of our Deputy Minister to find a Russian Consulate-General at Kashgar. In other words, I see nothing to be surprised at about it. I have been for long years under the impression that the Russians had a Consulate there. This was certainly so in the Czarist days and the presumption was that they would continue it. I do not remember seeing anything to the effect that they had closed it. It is quite natural for them to have such a Consulate there.

6. About the disappearance of the old Chinese dress,¹¹ I might mention that this process of change started long ago. When I went to Chungking in 1939, the official dress of the Kuomintang people and of the officials was in fact the same as it is today with one big difference. The women, so far as I remember, did not put on this dress. The average man or woman went about in something like a kurta and a pyjama. The upper classes of women had their own gowns.

Appointing a PRO in Beijing¹²

The various duties suggested by the Joint Secretary for the PRO are rather different from those normally performed by PROs. I understand that press work as such is very limited in Peking, as in Moscow and other Communist controlled countries. What is required, therefore, is a different type of man. Joint Secretary suggests that the person sent should go

¹¹ Anil Chanda noted that one of the recent developments was the patterning of everything in China on the Russian model. He opined that it was an unpleasant trend and predicted that if this trend continued, "very little of national cultural life would be discernible." It was in this context that he said the old Chinese dress had completely disappeared.

¹² Note. 8 October 1955. JN Collection.

round with delegations. He also suggests that somebody should gather information about developments and happenings in China. Apart from political happenings, with which the whole Embassy deals, the real development in which we are interested is on the economic, industrial and planning side. The average PRO, whether he is called a Counsellor or anything else, is hardly the right person for this. We would have to choose somebody specially qualified for this type of work. I am agreeable to having a special man for this who is qualified, but we would have to choose him very carefully, and I do not think it will be good enough to pick out a normal PRO for this type of work. I think it will be better if the new Ambassador¹³ studies the situation and then suggests what type of man should be sent. We should also consider this matter here from the point of view I have mentioned. It should not be difficult later to get the sanction of Finance. It is much more difficult to find the man.

2. The Joint Secretary says that the Chinese are rank conscious. That is so everywhere to some extent, but I imagine that the Chinese attach more importance to the special ability of a person in these specialised positions. The way they treated Dr Raghuvira and gave him quite extraordinary facilities, was very unexpected. They did so because they recognised Raghuvira's special ability.

3. I suggest, therefore, that our Ministry should try to find a suitable man and our Ambassador should write to us after he gets there, more on this subject.

Eisenhower's Illness¹⁴

I have read in two or three places-reports to us from China-that Premier Chou En-lai¹⁵ has expressed his great regret at President Eisenhower's¹⁶

¹³ The Government of India appointed R.K. Nehru as its Ambassador on 26 September 1955. Nehru took charge in early October.

¹⁴ Note to Secretary General, MEA, and Foreign Secretary, 27 October 1955. JN Collection.

illness. He has stated that President Eisenhower is a great force for peace and he hoped very much that the President would recover soon. He wanted this message to be conveyed to me.

2. I think the idea was that we should convey it to others and, perhaps, more especially, the Americans. It would be a good thing if we did so. We can casually mention this to the American Ambassador¹⁷ here. It might be worth while also sending a brief telegram to our Ambassador¹⁸ in Washington, informing him of this and suggesting that he might mention Chou En-lai's concern to people in Washington.

To Amrit Kaur¹⁹

New Delhi

28th October, 1955

My dear Amrit,

Your letter of the 28th October about the International Red Cross Conference in India.

I think that the best course for you is to allow matters now to take their course. It would not be desirable for you to write to the Formosa people. That will lead to a continuing argument between you and them and might entangle us further.

You have already spoken to Madame L'i and Poncet has written to her. I doubt personally if Poncet's reply will satisfy her. But we can do little else. The position is that, in so far as we are concerned, as the host country, we only recognise the People's Government of China. If the responsibility for inviting countries had been ours, we would certainly not have invited Formosa. But, since the International Red Cross invites according to their

¹⁵ (1898-1976): Prime Minister of China, 1949-76.

¹⁶ Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969); President of the USA, 1953-61.

¹⁷ John Sherman Cooper.

¹⁸ G.L. Mehta.

¹⁹ JN Collection.

own regulations, we cannot come in the way and prevent a country being invited which fulfils their rules and statutes.

Therefore, it is better for you not to do anything now and await developments.

I agree that October will be more suitable than January for the Conference.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Sino-American Talks²⁰

I am sorry for the delay in dealing with these papers.

2. I think that it would be desirable for us to talk to Malcolm MacDonald and Cooper²¹ on the general lines indicated in Krishna Menon's telegram No. 270 of October 31st.²² I am afraid I just cannot find the time for this at least for many days and then Mr Bulganin will descend upon us. I suggest, therefore, that either "G or FS might have this talk. I could, perhaps, follow it up a little later. In talking to them, you might mention that I would myself have discussed this matter but for my heavy engagements. I hope, however, to meet them later.

3. In discussing this matter with the UK and US representatives, what we have to stress is that the approach of the Chinese Government is an advance; and certainly indicates a desire for peace. It is not a question of our supporting the Chinese memorandum *in toto* but, rather, to point out

²⁰ Note to Secretary General, MEA, and Foreign Secretary, 9 November 1955. JN Collection.

²¹ John Sherman Cooper (1901-1991); US Ambassador to India and Nepal, 1955-56.

²² Krishna Menon suggested that Nehru as an 'elder statesman' speak to the Ambassadors of both the USA and UK, to point out that the Chinese position on the Sino-US talks in Geneva was in fact a 'peaceful one' even though it was not in the language the US approved. Menon concluded that the Chinese approach virtually acceded to Dulles' demand of ruling out the use of force against Taiwan.

that such an approach has to be considered with care and not rejected out of hand. As regards the proposal for the Foreign Ministers to meet, we have supported this in the past and we can certainly support it now.

4. You might inform our Ambassador²³ in Peking of the step we are taking. You might also tell him that, in your view and in Krishna Menon's, progress would be much more rapid if the remaining American prisoners in China were released. This is a ticklish matter and I do not think it would be safe to deal with it formally or abruptly with the Chinese Government, but if a suitable occasion arises, informal references might be made to the effect that our information is from the United Nations as well as from Washington and elsewhere that the release of more prisoners would be very helpful.

5. If you wish to discuss this matter with me, you can certainly do so.

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Bhakra-Nangal and New India²⁴

I have visited Bhakra-Nangal very often in the last few years and on each occasion have found changes in these mountains. In the beginning, they presented a picture of what they had been for thousands of years. Then man began to change them. I have seen every milestone in its development. I remember the time when the famous tunnel was being built. Then the waters of the Sutlej began to flow through it. Canals were built to channel the water about a year and a half ago. I have come here many times.

You have heard of the various steps in the construction of the dam, the amount of cement that has been used and the length of the canals that are being built. You can gauge from these statistics what a gigantic project this is. But I do not force myself to remember all these facts and

²³ R.K. Nehru.

²⁴ Speech at the Bhakra dam site, Nangal, 17 November 1955. AIR tapes, NMML. Original in Hindi.

figures, though they are no doubt important. I carry other pictures in my mind. One is of the flowing waters of the Sutlej and of the place in Tibet where the river originates. It has its origins in the Kailash mountain, and the famous Manasarovar lake. Four famous rivers originate from that area. One is the Indus or Sindhu, the Sutlej, the Brahmaputra and a fourth river which flows into China. The first three flow across the Himalayas into India. Now we have built a dam on the Sutlej and dared to change the direction which it has taken for thousands of years. In the last few years, thousands of human beings have worked together to give a new look to this ancient river in order to benefit the people of the Punjab, Himachal and Rajasthan, and in some measure the whole of India. So these are the pictures which arise in my mind's eye, of the thousands of years when this river flowed uninterrupted and the work that has been done during the last few years. We had to dam the flowing river waters and make friends with its turbulence. As you know, this is a great achievement. The Bhakra-Nangal has become famous throughout India and even outside. Undoubtedly greater tasks will be taken up in India because we are growing in self confidence and strength. But no matter what we do, Bhakra will always be remembered as a symbol of a new India because it has a special significance. Whom should I congratulate on this great achievement? Engineers and experts, overseers, mechanics and thousands of workers have participated in this great task and worked very hard. It would be proper to mention the great brains behind this project. But that would leave out the thousands of others who have shared the burden. We had invited some experts and advisers from outside and benefited from their advice and experience. I thank them for that. But ultimately such projects can be undertaken only with the help, cooperation, hard work and sacrifices of millions. The brains behind the scheme must no doubt be given their due share of credit. But what I am aware of is that a great task has been completed with the help and cooperation of thousands of people. We can build a new India not by the effort of a handful of people but the cooperation of the millions who live

here. 'Therefore if I congratulate anyone, it will be all of you who have been involved in this task, people at every level from top to bottom. Some people have even died in the course of their duty here and others have had to bear great hardships. Yet the work went on. Am I to congratulate them or the people who will benefit by this project, the people of the Punjab, Pepsu, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan, or the people of the whole of India? Perhaps I should congratulate not only the people who are living today but the future generations as well, for they too will benefit. When a great task like this is completed it gladdens the heart. But at the same time, one looks ahead at the work that remains to be done, not only here at Bhakra, where we have reached the last stages of the work which should be finished in another three or four years, but all over India. There are many, many destinations still to be reached on this long and arduous journey of ours. Well, there is no end because the life of a nation does not come to a standstill ever. We are now free to progress and have made some headway during the last eight years. We will undoubtedly go far. There is no way of gauging how far. But we can pause sometimes and look back at some other landmarks like the Bhakra which have become symbols of our progress. In three or four years' time, when the second phase is also complete and the people begin to reap the full benefit, I hope some sort of a memorial plaque will be put up. I should like to make a suggestion to the Bhakra Control Board or anyone else who is responsible. It should be dedicated not to any individual but to all those thousands of people, workers and engineers and others, who participated in the task of building Bhakra-Nangal. The inscription should read: "This is a gift of the people of India today and for generations to come".

EDUCATION

To C.D. Deshmukh²⁵

²⁵ JN Collection. Extracts. A copy of this letter was sent to Foreign Secretary.

New Delhi
September 8, 1955

My dear Deshmukh,

Thank you for your letter of the 8th September about the proposed Tibetan Research Institute at Gangtok.²⁶ Now that you have given me some indication of your mind, we shall examine this matter a little more carefully. Although it is an educational matter, it is the External Affairs Ministry that has to deal with it because of Sikkim. I informed the Maulana²⁷ about it.

I think that on the whole it is desirable to help this scheme. It is possible at present to get a large number of books and manuscripts from Tibet. These may be lost later or unobtainable. The Maharajkumar²⁸ has intimate contacts with Tibet...²⁹

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

To C.B. Gupta³⁰

New Delhi
September 18, 1955

My dear Chandra Bhanu,³¹

²⁶ Nehru had asked for Deshmukh's reaction to a proposal of the Maharajkumar of Sikkim to have such an institute at Gangtok. The Maharajkumar, who met Nehru on 7 September, felt that it would be worthwhile getting many of the relevant books from Tibet where, according to him, they were not being used. He also wanted financial assistance for the library building and for photocopying of manuscripts. Deshmukh replied to say that it would not be wrong to offer the assistance.

²⁷ Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958); Union Minister for Education, 1947-58.

²⁸ Chogyal Palden Thondup Namgyal (1923-1982)

²⁹ Named as the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, the institute was set up at Gangtok in 1958 for the promotion of Tibetan studies in various branches of learning. The Institute was inaugurated under the joint auspices of the Dalai Lama of Tibet and Nehru.

³⁰ File No. 40(G)/56-70-PMS. Also available in JN Collection.

Some days ago I received your letter about the Aligarh University Medical College.³² What you say about the necessity in Kanpur and Allahabad is perfectly correct. My difficulty has been that this Aligarh matter has been before us now ever since I came into Government, and that is nearly nine years now. In fact, it was a pending matter before that and, as you know, money was collected for it.³³ This repeated postponement of this has seemed to me wrong from many points of view and this has, undoubtedly, created a sense of injustice and frustration among many people. It is always a bad thing to create that impression. There are also certain wider aspects of this question affecting other countries. You mentioned to me the appointment of someone else as Registrar there, although his services have been dispensed with by the UP Government. This again was certainly improper in the way it took place. I do not know anything about it, but this was what you told me. Either you yourself or Sampurnanandji³⁴ also said something about communism being strong among the students there. That is partly true. But there is an equally strong, and in fact stronger, group of students who have stood up against it and in fact have succeeded in many ways. This group which now controls the Union there seems to me to be a more disciplined and

³¹ (1902-1980); Minister, Government of Uttar Pradesh, 1947-57.

³² C.B. Gupta had sent a note on his conversation with Amrit Kaur, Union Minister of Health, in the course of which he stated that it might not be feasible to undertake the setting up of a medical college in Aligarh during the Second Plan, and that priority had to be given to the establishment of medical colleges in Kanpur and Allahabad. He added that the Health Minister was agreeable to his suggestion that in the event of the Central and the State Government contributing to the running of the proposed hospital and medical college in Aligarh, the State Government must have a say in their administration, and that appointments and admissions in them would be made on the basis of merit.

³³ The Aligarh Muslim University had at its disposal a sum of Rs 50 lakhs for the establishment of a medical college.

³⁴ (1891-1969); Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, 1955-56.

politically intelligent group than any organised group in our other Universities.

So far as the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Zakir Husain,³⁵ is concerned, he is undoubtedly one of our finest men in India both in ability and in integrity. I have great admiration for him. I think it is largely due to him that the Aligarh University has changed considerably during the past four years for better. I shall probably visit the Aligarh University in November next.

Yours Sincerely
Jawaharlal Nehru

PAKISTAN

Technical Cooperation for Flood Control³⁶

I have read this note for a brief for the Technical Delegation which is going to Karachi in regard to flood control. I would like to add that our approach should not appear to be unfriendly or uncooperative. We have nothing to hide about this matter. Naturally any proposals made will have to be considered later at Ministers' level.

We should definitely propose that the best course would be for Pakistan to have a River Commission for the Eastern Region just like we have and, secondly, that there should be arrangements for the two Commissions to cooperate fully. For this purpose each Commission can nominate its representatives who can meet from time to time.'

We should give them full information about flood control measures. If they wish to visit Dibrugarh or any other place, I see no reason why they should not be invited to do so.

The suggestion to survey the upper regions of the Ganga and the Brahmaputra is not a feasible one. The Ganga belongs to a different region. So far as the Brahmaputra is concerned, the upper reaches are in

³⁵ (1897-1969); Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, 1948-56.

³⁶ Note, 7 September 1955. JN Collection.

Tibet or in the NEFA, which is difficult of access. If, however, as I have said above, any of their engineers wish to see what work we have done in Assam proper, there should be no objection. This does not mean a survey but rather an inspection.³⁷

There can be no question of either India or Pakistan saying that they should be consulted before anything is done in the other country, but we should tell them that we shall keep them informed of important developments which may even be discussed when there is a joint meeting.

I do not like the idea of an impression being given that we are parrying questions or being evasive. We should be quite straight forward about this matter and if any complicated question or any question relating to political issues arises, our engineers should say frankly that the matter should be referred to their Government.

³⁷ For Nehru's views on this subject, also see .Selected Works (second series). Vol. 29, p. 326.