

SELECTED WORKS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

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China and Tibet

1. Advice to the Tibetans¹

The ex-Prime Minister of Tibet came to see me this evening. He read out a long story of the sufferings of the Tibetans and their wanting independence and India's help to obtain it. This itself took a long time and I had no more time to spare. I told him briefly that it was folly to think of defeating China by armed force, that India could not supply any arms, that Tibet had become so backward that change had become imperative. If the Tibetans did not change themselves, the change would come from outside. There was no possibility of putting the clock back and reverting to the previous State of Tibet remaining there. Briefly my advice was that the Tibetans should keep united and claim full autonomy. They should not challenge China's overall sovereignty. If they stood for autonomy and were united, they would be able to retain their way of life and at the same time they should try to introduce reforms.

I told him that he could speak at greater length to the Foreign Secretary. I understand he is seeing you tomorrow.

2. Cable to R.K. Nehru²

Please refer to your telegram 12 of January 13. Visit to Tibet.

¹ Note to S. Dutt, the Foreign Secretary, 13 January 1958. JN Collection.

² New Delhi, 21 January 1958. JN Collection. R.K. Nehru was India's Ambassador to China.

2. Please inform Premier Chou En-lai that I shall be happy to visit Tibet in response to the invitation of the Dalai Lama which he has kindly conveyed to me. I would particularly welcome meeting him there. It is difficult, however, to fix any date at present. I should like to know what possible dates would be considered suitable. Presumably sometime late in summer or early autumn will be suitable from the point of view of climate.
3. I suppose that I will have to make this journey by air.³

3. Problems between India and China⁴

I have read these papers.

2. So far as I can remember, there was no reference to Sino-British relations during my talks with Mr Macmillan.⁵ I think I did say something generally about trade with the communist countries being improved and possibly, I might have referred to the absurdity of keeping China out of the UN.

3. I think it would be desirable if Premier Chou En-lai's major points in regard to the UK were conveyed to the UK Government through the UK

³ In a note to Foreign Secretary on 27 January 1958, Nehru asked him to inform India's representatives at Gangtok and Lhasa that Chou En-lai had conveyed the Dalai Lama's invitation to Nehru through India's Ambassador in Peking. Chou En-lai had said that he would be happy if Nehru could go there and that Chou En-lai intended joining Nehru there as he had never been to Tibet previously.

⁴ Note to S. Dutt, the Foreign Secretary, 24 January 1958. JN Collection.

⁵ Harold Macmillan, the British Prime Minister, was in India from 8 to 12 January 1958. For details, see post, pp. 677-690.

High Commissioner.⁶ You may mention to him that probably it was Premier Chou En-lai's intention that these matters might be mentioned by me to Mr Macmillan when he was here. But I received the note after Mr Macmillan's departure.

4. As for outstanding problems between India and China, a note should certainly be prepared. Thereafter, the Chinese Ambassador⁷ might be informed about them and told that we are anxious to settle these outstanding problems as soon as possible. I do not quite remember what the question is about the wireless station in Tibet. I have a faint idea that we were asked to remove it and we pointed out that this would cause us grave inconvenience.

5. So far as the question of the Hoti area is concerned,⁸ we have been waiting for a long time to discuss this with the Chinese representative.

6. Kalimpong Tibetans. When Premier Chou En-lai spoke to me about this a year ago, I told him that we realized that there were many undesirable elements in Kalimpong.⁹ In fact there were all kinds of spies there from many countries and there were, no doubt, some people who wanted to carry on anti-Chinese activities. We have made it clear to them that we would not tolerate any such public activities. We could not take any action

⁶ Malcolm MacDonald.

⁷ Pan Tzu-li

⁸ In July 1954, India received a protest from China against the presence of Indian troops in Bara Hoti, called Wu Je by the Chinese, in Uttar Pradesh bordering Tibet. The Sino-Indian Agreement on Trade between India and Tibet Region of China of 1954 had specifically mentioned Bara Hoti as one of the Indian posts for trade with Tibet. The Chinese troops intruded into the Indian territory in June 1955 in violation of the 1954 agreement.

⁹ See Selected Works (Second Series), Vol. 36, pp. 596-599

against them unless they committed some offence under our law: If I could have any concrete evidence, we would consider the possibility of action (Premier Chou En-lai has mentioned this in his talk with our Ambassador).

7. I think you might enquire from our Intelligence and Bengal Intelligence what their latest information is about anti-Chinese activities in Kalimpong.

8. About the invitation for me to go to Tibet, I have already sent an answer thanking Premier Chou En-lai for this and asking him what date would be suitable.

4. Reconnaissance of the Sino-Indian Border¹⁰

I shall gladly discuss this matter¹¹ with you, JS and Gopalachari.¹²

Meanwhile, my reaction is that we should send a reconnoitering party there in spring with clear instructions that they should not come into conflict with the Chinese. I do not think it is desirable to have air reconnaissance. In fact, I do not see what good this can do us. Even a land reconnaissance will not perhaps be very helpful.' However, it may bring some further facts to our notice.

¹⁰ Note to S. Dutt, the Foreign Secretary, 4 February 1958. JN Collection

¹¹ On 3 February 1958, S. Dutt had written that there seemed little doubt that the newly constructed "1,200 kilometre road connecting Gartok in Western Tibet with Yeh in Sinkiang passes through Aksai Chin," which was now being used by the Chinese. Dutt favoured Joint Secretary B.K Acharya's suggestion of sending a reconnoitering party in the coming spring to find out if the road passed through Aksai Chin. However, if the Chinese opposed, the party could come back and the matter could be taken diplomatically. Dutt wanted Nehru to take a final decision after discussing the matter with him, Acharya and Gopalachari.

¹² K. Gopalachari, Deputy Director, Historical Division, MEA

2. I do not see how we can possibly protest about the alignment of the road without being much surer than we are. What we might perhaps do is that in some communication with the Chinese Government in regard to the points of dispute which have to be decided, we should mention the Aksai Chin area.

3. It is suggested that our maps should be sent to the Chinese. Certainly they can be sent through our Embassy. But I think it would be better to do this rather informally.

5. Indians Going to Chinese Sanatoria¹³

I agree. The question of selection of persons to be sent to China for T.B. treatment should be taken out of the hands of any non-official organization. Personally, as I said before, I do not understand this business of a number of people going from here for long-term treatment in China, which is by no means better than India for treatment. In fact, I think facilities in India are probably greater.

2. I can understand odd individuals going for special treatment. Anyhow, we should take this matter in our own hands. I see no harm in our telling the Chinese Ambassador informally that we had reports of some measure of conflict about the Communist and non-Communist students in these sanatoria and attempts made by the Communist Indian students to harass the non-Communists. Some hint might be given to him of this.

3. As Shri R.K. Nehru is coming here soon, this matter might be discussed with him.

¹³ Note to S. Dutt, the Foreign Secretary, New Delhi, 4 February 1958. IN Collection.

6. Air Services to Lhasa and Peking¹⁴

When Shri Patnaik¹⁵ saw me regarding an air transport service to Lhasa and to Peking.¹⁶ I told him that we had no objection to it if the Chinese Government agreed. Naturally, this would be entirely a matter for him to settle with the Chinese Government. I have an idea that a message to this effect was also sent to our Embassy in Peking.

Later, I was informed that the Chinese Government was not agreeable to this service to Lhasa. As regards the other one, there was no clear reply either way. Later still, I heard that he was invited to go to Peking to discuss this question with the Chinese Government. I think I told him that he was free to go there for this purpose.

There is no question of our sponsoring his visit to Peking, but we should raise no objection to it. Indeed, I shall be glad if he manages to get permission from the Chinese Government, provided our Government is not brought into the picture at all. It is quite true that Shri Patnaik is apt to indulge in general talks and sometimes drag in the Government's name into it. I told him not to do so and you might also tell him this. Apart from this, we have no objection whatever to his coming to any agreement with the Chinese Government about the air services.

7. A Gift from Tibet¹⁷

¹⁴ Note to S. Dutt, the Foreign Secretary, 24 February 1958. JN Collection

¹⁵ Biju (Bijoyanand) Patnaik, pilot and industrialist, became Chief Minister of Orissa in 1961.

¹⁶ See also Selected Works (Second Series), Vol. 39, pp. 697-698

¹⁷ Note to B.N. Chakravarty, Special Secretary, MEA, 13 March 1958. JN Collection.

In view of the behaviour of Shri P. Tsewang, nothing more can be done about him. It does not appear from your note or the other papers as to what the advances to him have been and what his explanation was in regard to them. If we had known this, we might have been in a better position to decide as to whether we should give him a month's pay or not.

2. As for the present and the letter accompanying it, I think we should enquire further into this matter. Therefore, a letter should be sent to our Consul-General in Lhasa,¹⁸ with which should be sent a copy of the letters received by me and a description of the gift. The Consul-General should ask Shri Chengi Rinpoche for the facts. He might also contact the alleged writer of the letter, Shri Gyatzo Ling, and find out from him what the facts are.

3. In the event of the letter and the gift being genuine, he should express my thanks for them and say that I appreciate their good wishes very much. I am quite safe and they need not worry about me. It is very good of them to send this image, but normally I do not keep such gifts with me and they become government property or are placed in a museum.

4. As for the construction of a residential house for the Dalai Lama at Varanasi, this would involve some complicated and difficult considerations, both national and international. At any time the Dalai Lama chooses to pay a short visit to India, we would of course gladly make arrangements for his stay.

¹⁸ S.L. Chibber.