

## SELECTED WORKS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

*Volume 44*

*(September 1- October 31, 1958)*

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### **To Chief Ministers<sup>1</sup>**

Gangtok, Sikkim

16th September 1958

My dear Chief Minister,

I came to Gangtok in Sikkim today from Delhi. Tomorrow I proceed on my way to Bhutan, crossing the Nathu La, the pass which leads to the Tibetan Plateau. It is over 14,000 ft above sea level and from it one descends to Tibet. There are various routes to Tibet from India, but, till now, the easiest route to Paro, the summer capital of Bhutan, goes from the Nathu La and crosses a small corner of Tibet. Thus, I shall have a brief glimpse of Tibet and I shall spend a night at Yatung, which is about sixteen miles across the border.

2. I shall be going to a country, Bhutan, which is more cut off from the world than perhaps any other country. No papers will reach me, no newspapers, though of course I shall have the inevitable wireless. As I shall be away for over two weeks, I feel like sending you a letter before I leave for these rather inaccessible regions. I leave behind many problems, internal and external. Perhaps it was not right for me to seek an escape from them, even for a while. But I felt that a promise long given should be kept and very elaborate arrangements have been made for my journey in Bhutan and, to some extent, in the little corner of Tibet which I shall pass.

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<sup>1</sup> File No. 25(30)/58-PMS. This letter has also been published in G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers 1947-1964*, Vol. 5 (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1989), pp. 133-139.

It would not have been fair on my part to call off my visit at the last moment. Also, I must confess that I had a powerful urge to go to Bhutan. That urge is always there when high mountains are concerned. But it was especially present in the case of Bhutan, which is one of the very few countries which still live in a past age, unaffected by what is called modern life. Aircraft do not go there nor railway trains nor automobiles. Indeed, there are no roads there and I do not think any four-wheeled or two wheeled vehicle has ever appeared in Bhutan. One travels on foot or on the back of a pony by difficult bridle paths. Apart from the Nathu La, the pass between India and Tibet, there are two higher passes in Bhutan itself which I shall have to cross. Bhutan is sparsely populated and is essentially an agricultural country with peasant farmers. The population probably does not exceed 600,000 or 700,000 in the whole country; this is an estimate for no census has been taken. The people of Bhutan are sturdy and attractive and rightly very jealous of their independence. In fact, the rulers have not welcomed any outsiders. It is a Buddhist country like Sikkim with many affiliations with Tibetan language and culture.

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**To Chief Ministers<sup>2</sup>**

Gangtok, Sikkim

October 15 1958

My dear Chief Minister,

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<sup>2</sup> File No. 25(30)/58-PMS. This letter has also been published in G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers 1947-1964*, Vol. 5 (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1989), pp. 133-139.

My last letter to you from Gangtok in Sikkim, on the eve of my journey to Bhutan via Tibet. After I left Gangtok, I was almost entirely cut off from communications till my return to Gangtok two and a half weeks later. I received an occasional message by wireless from Delhi. But this was rarely sent as I had requested that only something that was really important should be forwarded to me. Usually we could listen in to the AIR news broadcasts in the evening, as we had a radio with us. There were no newspapers at all and I had a sensation of being in another world.

2. The little corner of Tibet that I saw upset my idea of that country. I had always thought that on the other side of the Himalayan ranges, there was the high tableland of Tibet, more or less flat and treeless. As a matter of fact, on the other side of the Nathu La, there were the same precipitous mountains covered with thick forests. This was the Chumbi Valley where Yatung is situated and, broadly speaking, it was similar to Himalayan scenery. At the top of the Nathu La ended the road that our engineers had constructed, and on the other side we had to descend by precipitous bridle paths. This road on our side is a remarkable feat for which our engineers deserve great credit. If a road could be built on the other side of the Pass, connecting Yatung, then there would be through road communications between India and Tibet. On the Tibetan side this road will be a much simpler proposition than the one that we have built on our side. Through road traffic would make a great difference to trade as well as to travellers. There is still a considerable inflow of goods from India to Tibet although this has gone down during the last year or two. I was told that upto last year quite a number of automobiles had gone this way after having been taken to pieces and carried by porters.

3. The change from Sikkim to Tibet was noticeable, though not very great. Some little distance before we reached Yatung, we were received by

representatives of the Chinese General in Command at Lhasa<sup>3</sup> and of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama.<sup>4</sup> Tibetans peered at us from their houses or from the roadside, curious about us, and yet not quite sure whether they should come near us.

4. Yatung was a small spread out town. The main market road was full of Indian shops. There were, I believe, over ninety such shops, many of them having started business in the course of the last three years, when this trade was highly profitable. Conditions were more difficult now and so a number of these Indian shops were closing up. The Chinese authorities had put up a number of new buildings-schools, hospital, community centre and residential houses for themselves. Our own Trade Agent's house had its own little hospital and buildings for the staff. In Gyantse and Lhasa our representatives were very badly housed. In Gyantse, a great flood two years ago had destroyed our house and over ninety of our personnel had been drowned. It struck me how difficult were the living conditions of the members of our staff in various parts of Tibet. There was the harsh climate and the high altitude; the lack of social life or amenities and a sense of seclusion from the outside world. Only physically tough people could stand these conditions for long.<sup>5</sup>

5. On crossing the Tibet-Bhutan border, we were met by the Prime Minister of Bhutan<sup>6</sup> and a numerous cortege. We journeyed on horseback or mule-back, a long caravan, going ever higher and higher. The Bhutan Government had taken great pains to improve the bridle paths and erect log huts en route for our night rest. The mountain scenery was more attractive and impressive. Some of us had felt a little uncomfortable on the

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<sup>3</sup> General Chang Ching Wu.

<sup>4</sup> The highest ranking Lama after the Dalai Lama in Tibet

<sup>5</sup> For Nehru's note written at Para, in Bhutan, on 22 September 1958 regarding Indian Missions in Tibet, see item 331

<sup>6</sup> Jigme Dorji.

first day of our journey because of the height, but soon we grew accustomed to that altitude and nothing untoward happened. We had a doctor with us, who carried all kinds of drugs and medicines and numerous oxygen cylinders. I am glad to say that those oxygen cylinders were never used and ultimately, on our return journey, we left most of these oxygen cylinders at our hospital at Yatung.

6. The next day's journey brought us to two high passes,<sup>7</sup> both above 14,500 feet. We left the tree-line and ascended to these heights where only flowers and grass persisted. There were lovely Alpine flowers throughout. It was surprising that in spite of long hours on horseback or sometimes on foot, we felt refreshed after every rest. The air was exhilarating and altogether this visit proved to be quite an exciting event in our lives.

7. When we were approaching within two or three miles of Paro, where the Maharaja was awaiting us, we had to form up into a procession which gradually descended along the mountain side to the valley below. I have seldom seen anything more spectacular than this long procession consisting of people 100 king like medieval knights, dignitaries of the Buddhist church in their special robes, troupes of dancers, etc. Thus we came down the winding road to the valley below where practically the entire population had assembled.

8. We spent five days at Paro. We had met the young Maharaja and his wife<sup>8</sup> in Delhi some years ago, and they proved to be charming hosts. In theory, the Maharaja is the all-powerful ruler of his little State. In practice, he is very much one of the people, mixing with them and not very different from them.

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<sup>7</sup> The Chu La and Ha La passes.

<sup>8</sup> Ashi Kesang Choden Wangchuk.

## **The Contemporary World<sup>9</sup>**

Jawaharlal Nehru: I came back from Bhutan yesterday.<sup>10</sup> I did not see much of Tibet; I spent nearly two weeks going in and out of Bhutan. It was a remarkable experience for me because it took me to a world which modern science and technology has not affected at all. There were no roads, no vehicles, no automobiles, and all communications were by mountain carts. It was a strange experience into a world perhaps of three or four or five hundred years ago or more. And yet it was not an unhappy world of peasant farmers, and fairly well off in regard to food and housing and clothing but with no modern gadgets, and there was no unemployment and no beggars. And I was powerfully influenced by it. I suppose it will change as every other part of the world has changed. Nevertheless it was an experience, I thought, worth having, to compare that with other countries where, while on the one side, we have many modern conveniences, we have many ill effects of the modern age also.

*Edward R. Murrow:<sup>11</sup> Mr Prime Minister, it must have been very agreeable to get away from the pressure of modern-day problems and go back to a*

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<sup>9</sup> Extracts from unedited recording of film, radio, and telephone discussions on 3 October 1958 between Jawaharlal Nehru from New Delhi, Thomas E. Dewey from Portland Maine, USA, Aldous Huxley from Turin, Italy, and Edward R. Murrow of Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) who moderated. Telecast in the CBS programme Small World on 12 October 1958.

<sup>10</sup> Nehru left for Bhutan on 16 September 1958. Using different forms of transport, including aircraft, car, pony and yak, while also trekking, he passed through Tibetan territory, spent the night of 18 September at Yatung, and entered Bhutan on 19 September; he left Bhutan from Paro on 27 September and reached Delhi on 2 October

<sup>11</sup> Edward R. Murrow, American broadcast journalist; was associated with CBS, 1935-61; moderated and produced Small World, a television series featuring discussions among world leaders.

*more remote civilisation. Prime Minister Nehru, I know you have met Governor Thomas Dewey,<sup>12</sup> have you not?*

Jawaharlal Nehru: Yes, I have had the pleasure.

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[New topic] Tibet

*Question: Are there any reports of recrudescence of large-scale trouble in Tibet again?*

Prime Minister: No, not that I know of. There were some minor reports of internal difficulties, but we have no knowledge of recent large-scale trouble.

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### **Talk with Pressmen<sup>13</sup>**

*Nehru Returns to Delhi; Conclusion of "Fascinating Trip" to Bhutan;  
Comments on Events in Burma (From Our Correspondent)*

New Delhi, Oct. 2. Prime Minister Nehru, who returned to the Capital this evening from Bhutan, was given a rousing reception at the airport. Mr Nehru, who was been cut off from world events in far away Bhutan, with no modern means of communication, faced a battery of questions from Press men on current developments, particularly in Burma and Tibet.

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas E. Dewey, US lawyer and politician; was Governor of New York State, 1943-55, and Republican Party Presidential candidate, 1944 and 1948.

<sup>13</sup> Palam Airport, Delhi, 2 October 1958. The Hindu, 3 October 1958

Mr Nehru commenting on the events in Burma said, "It is not the Army but U Nu, the Prime Minister of Burma, who decided, himself, what should be the proper arrangement for the interim period".

On Tibet, Mr Nehru said, "Obviously conditions in Tibet, from such reports as one gets here are not fully normal".<sup>14</sup> He could not say anything further on that subject or about Algeria or about the resumption of nuclear tests by the Soviet Union because, as he himself explained, he had not read any newspapers for the last two weeks and did not get much information about world events except occasional radio messages from Delhi. "It is extraordinary how one could get out of touch with the outside world for more than two weeks", said the Prime Minister. He went on to give a graphic account of what he called "the fascinating trip to the lovely country of Bhutan". The Prime Minister, a lover of mountains, went into raptures describing his journey and all that he had seen.

Mr Nehru looked tanned but was suffering from a severe cold. He told his friends that he had contracted it, not in Bhutan, but in Gangtok, yesterday.

#### Exhilarating Trek

The Prime Minister said: "The main thing is that I have had a fascinating time in this exhilarating trek to Bhutan and my stay in that lovely country, which is unlike any other country, being difficult and inaccessible". Paying a tribute to the people of Bhutan, Mr Nehru said, "They are a brave people, tough people, these Bhutanis, not having any modern amenities. Yet many of them are possibly better off than those who have modern amenities. They have good food to eat. They have fairly good housing, no

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<sup>14</sup> The National Herald of 3 October 1958 reported, "The Prime Minister was asked to comment on reports in the foreign press about disturbed and abnormal conditions in Tibet. (Pandit Nehru passed through some Tibetan territory on his way to Bhutan). The Prime Minister said, 'What can I say? I passed through Yatung late in the evening. But from such reports that I have had, obviously conditions in Tibet are not fully normal. But apart from that it is difficult for me to say anything.'"

unemployment, and mind you, there are no beggars at all in Bhutan, though, of course, they have not the knick-knacks of civilisation.

When asked whether the Bhutanis were happy about the offer of help from India, Mr Nehru replied, "There is no formal offer of help. This offer has always been there. You will be surprised to know that they are reluctant to have any help and are not happy to have any help from us, though, if they had asked for it they could have got it".

Asked what the reaction of the Bhutanis was to the possibility of civilisation overtaking them, Mr Nehru said, "I do not know what the reaction of the Bhutanis is, but if I was a Bhutani I would be anxious to avoid the flow of civilisation coming over, traders, money economy, poverty. But gradually they will have to adapt themselves, though not in a sudden rush".

The Prime Minister smilingly brushed away questions about reports of an attempt to kidnap him, saying that he only heard it while on his return.<sup>15</sup>

In spite of repeated questions on various topics, Mr Nehru was inclined only to point out that he had not had the opportunity to get any full information and went on to give his impressions of Bhutan.

"Bhutan is another world", he said. "It is not a world of roads or wheeled vehicles of any kind. I do not think I have seen a finer spectacle than the welcome they gave me when I arrived at Paro. A long procession of people in curious attire, dances, church dignitaries coming down the winding mountain steps, was an extraordinary spectacle, perhaps a thing that has been happening for thousands of years".

Mr Nehru expressed the wish that if he visited Bhutan again there would be some kind of road. He hoped that it will be taken on hand by the West

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<sup>15</sup> According to the National Herald, "Pandit Nehru said he was very much amazed when, on his way back from Bhutan, he had seen reports in the western press about the possibility of his being kidnapped by Tibetan guerillas and that the Chinese Army had been sent to protect him."

Bengal and Assam Governments on this side as well as from the other side. He was full of praise for the Indian engineers who had built a magnificent road to the difficult mountain terrain between Gangtok and the Nathula Pass. They had been building it for three years and had hurried it up a month before he made this trip.

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[Bhutan]

I now come to Bhutan. It has been a fascinating trip to Bhutan which, in spite of its physical exhaustion occasionally, was most exhilarating, a completely new type of country, by new type I mean from the point of view of modern amenities and modern developments—a country where there are no roads, no wheeled traffic, no wheels, practically speaking. It is an extraordinary country; not a primitive country at all. The people are not primitive; the people are good, stout, intelligent people. You put them in any of the schools and universities, they will do well. It is a country of peasant farmers and there are not very big differences between the rulers and the common peasants. No unemployment and no beggars, each person having a patch of land, five, six, seven, eight, or ten acres of land, sometimes a little more, having his wooden log hut, fairly good, and probably having some cattle, some pigs, some poultry and maybe some yaks.

*Question: Are there newspapers there?*

Prime Minister: There are no newspapers there. There is rather a primitive system of postal service, couriers taking it occasionally, not much. Of

course, they maintain this kind of seclusion for a very laudable reason, that is, because of their desire to maintain their freedom. They thought this might be imperiled if they were too anxious to invite people from outside.

*Question: Isolation from the outside world? Does it apply to the traffic with Tibet also?*

Prime Minister: Certainly, it applies fully now. But with Tibet, in the past I mean, there was the bond of religion and the Dalai Lama was looked up to by them and the pilgrims, etc., went there. They had some trade also with Tibet. There is a part of Bhutan adjoining Bengal and Assam where, of course, people come and go from India. There are regions in the interiors which are rather mountainous and it is difficult to go there.

*Question: What has been the influence of the large Nepalese population that has settled in Bhutan and in Sikkim also? Has that affected the development of the political structures?*

Prime Minister: Nepalese went into Bhutan, I forget exactly when, some forty, fifty or sixty years ago, and some previously too. They formed rather a different and alien element for some time.

Some years back their further entry was stopped, not because of any feeling against them as individuals, but chiefly because of a feeling that they might become more than the indigenous population in numbers alone. Now, I believe, the policy of the present Government is to incorporate them more and more into Bhutan. They have got some kind of Advisory Council in the State. This was going to hold a meeting soon after I went there and representatives had already started coming, and there were Nepalese representatives in that Council too. Remember, it takes so long for people

to travel from one end of Bhutan to the other. It may take three weeks to attend a meeting.

*Question: Are there a lot of Chinese there in Bhutan?*

Prime Minister: Hardly any. I did not come across a single person. There may be some, but I do not think so.

*Question: What kind of diplomatic relation has Bhutan with Tibet?*

Prime Minister: Bhutan has a trade agent in Tibet, but no diplomatic representation. You must remember that our treaty with Bhutan, made in 1948 I think,<sup>16</sup> was Bhutan recognising that it would be guided by India's advice in regard to foreign affairs.

*Question: Bhutanese merchants come every year to Bengal and Assam in hundreds, if not in thousands. Do they ever go to the interior part?*

Prime Minister: Some of them come, but I do not think there can be very many.

*Question: Does the willingness of Bhutan to have a road go from India to their border, to be linked with their main towns, indicate any recognition on their part of their desirability of closer political and economic contact with India?*

Prime Minister: Our relations with Bhutan are exceedingly friendly. It is not any reluctance or any apprehension on their part, but it is a general desire

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<sup>16</sup> . In fact, the Indo-Bhutan treaty was signed in Darjeeling on 8 August 1949.

not to get overwhelmed by an outside population coming in, a thing which I completely understand. In fact, if I may say so, I advised them to prevent outsiders coming. My definite advice to the rulers was: certainly get your experts and others, but do not encourage too many people to come, even from India. I tell you why. We do not encourage traders to go into the North-East Frontier Agency, which is India. We just do not like our traders going there, and if I may use the word, exploiting the people and spoiling all their tastes, selling cheap articles there which are normally neither tasteful nor good, and uprooting the tribal people from their habits without giving anything good enough in exchange. Therefore, I advised the Bhutanese Government, not that my advice was very necessary, not to encourage too much of this kind of thing but to take persons they wanted, and they do want experts, whether engineers or surveyors or maybe educationists, to take such persons for short periods. Or, better still, they can send their students to India to be trained, which they do not. There are quite a number of students in India and they can go back and work in their own country.

*Question: Is Hindi being taught in schools?*

Prime Minister: Yes, Hindi has been introduced, not at my saying, but even before it had been introduced. Quite a few people know Hindi, not the common people but quite a few people, Government officials, because they have to come to India quite often, Kalimpong, Darjeeling, those are nearby, and quite a few have even been to Calcutta.

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## **The Gangtok-Nathu La Road<sup>17</sup>**

The road built from Gangtok to Nathu-la, <sup>18</sup>leading to Tibet, is a very fine achievement of our engineers. It passes through difficult terrain and whoever sees it is much struck by it as we were.

I think that some of the principal engineers concerned in building this road should be included in our next honours list. I asked our Political Officer<sup>19</sup> in Sikkim for their names. He has not proved very helpful as he has sent me names of nearly all of them. We should pick out two or three names from this, if necessary after reference to him.

One name that should obviously be there is that of Shri O.P. Mathur<sup>20</sup>. I am sending you the note by Shri Apa Pant.

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## **Road Communications<sup>21</sup>**

I have gone through these papers<sup>22</sup>. There can be no doubt at all that it is important for us to develop our road communications. There are so many

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<sup>17</sup> Note to B.N. Jha, the Union Home Secretary, 4 October 1958. JN Collection

<sup>18</sup> This road was completed in 1958 after three years of effort. Formerly a 35-mile stretch of mule track, the road winds upward from Gangtok at 5,600 feet to 14,000 feet at Nathu La on the border between Sikkim and Tibet. It was inaugurated by Nehru on 17 September at the beginning of his drive from Gangtok to Sherathang, at the foot of the Nathu La Pass, where he spent the night on his way to Bhutan via Tibet

<sup>19</sup> Apa Pant

<sup>20</sup> Om Prakash Mathur, the executive engineer associated with the construction of the Gangtok-Nathu La Highway, was awarded the Padma Shri in 1959. In 1965, the Bhutan Government honoured him for his role as the chief engineer in charge of the Phuntsholing Paro-Thimpu Highway.

<sup>21</sup> Note to N.R. Pillai, Secretary General, MEA, 7 October 1958. JN Collection

<sup>22</sup> S.K. Patil, the Union Minister of Transport and Communications, had been invited by the International Road Federation to a meeting from 26 to 31 October 1958 in Mexico City.

things which are all of the first importance for us that we have to make some kind of a list of priorities, in view of our limited resources. But roads certainly should be given a high priority both because they are needed and also because of their employment potential.

2. It is true that, compared to Western countries, India is backward in regard to road communications.<sup>23</sup> Compared to most Eastern countries, including China, we are much more advanced. The same problems have to be faced in these countries and the same priorities thought of.

3. In the United States of America, new roads and bridges are sometimes built by private agencies and tolls are charged. Because of the enormous traffic there, a very large sum of money is realised through this toll system. Obviously conditions are different in India.

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## **EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

### **China and Tibet**

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The Federation, a non-governmental organisation established in 1948 to promote road development and transportation in all countries, had also offered a tour of transport offices and facilities in the USA. The agenda for the meeting was (i) economic and social aspects of roads and road transport; (ii) modern methods of road financing; and (iii) technical training

<sup>23</sup> R.L. Gupta, the Transport Secretary, noted on 23 September that road mileage had expanded since Independence, but slowly. At the beginning of the Second Five Year Plan, that is, on 1 April 1956, India had 122,000 miles of surfaced roads and 198,000 miles of unsurfaced roads, or just 0.26 mile per square mile. By the end of the Second Plan period, this was to rise to 0.30 mile per square mile with 144,000 miles of surfaced roads and 235,000 miles of unsurfaced roads. Even this would be low, he added, compared with the UK, the USA and France, which had 2.00 miles, 1.0 mile, and 3.04 miles, respectively, per square mile.

## **Indian Territory Shown in Chinese Maps<sup>24</sup>**

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is difficult for me to answer that question<sup>25</sup> because the maps in China are not printed by us.

*Hem Barua: But we can bring it to their notice.*

Jawaharlal Nehru: Yes. When attention was drawn to this matter first we were told that these were reproductions of old maps, coming down from the previous regime, when Marshal Chiang Kai-shek<sup>26</sup> was in authority in China, and they had had no time to revise them. So they were carrying on. Evidently, the People's Government in China has revised many things since Chiang Kai-shek's regime, but this matter has been left over.

*N.G. Goray:<sup>27</sup> Does it mean that though they have thrown out Chiang Kaishek, they have kept his maps behind?*

Jawaharlal Nehru: We have been privately assured on some occasions that they attach no importance to these maps and they will revise them in time. That is where the matter stands. We have drawn their attention again to it.

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<sup>24</sup> Reply to questions in the Lok Sabha, 4 September 1958. Lok Sabha Debates, Second Series, Vol. XIX, cols 4629-4632

<sup>25</sup> Hem Barua, PSP Member from Gauhati, Assam, had asked whether large parts of Northern Assam and NEFA were shown as within China in the July issue of China Pictorial, an official organ of the Chinese People's Republic. Sadath Ali Khan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of External Affairs, accepted that this was so and that the Chinese Government had been requested to correct such errors. Hem Barua referred to a similar map in the October 1954 issue of People's China and asked what action had been taken.

<sup>26</sup> Head of the Nationalist Government of China, 1928-49.

<sup>27</sup> PSP Member from Poona, Bombay State.

*Hem Barua: May I draw the attention of the honourable Prime Minister to a speech which he delivered in Lok Sabha some six years ago to the effect that when the question about the boundaries between China and India came up, that was referred to the Chinese People's Government and then the Chinese People's Government gave an assurance to our Prime Minister as was revealed on the floor of this House that this matter would be amicably settled. I think it has not yet been settled. In that case was the attention of the Chinese People's Government drawn to the international boundary, i.e., the Macmahon Line<sup>28</sup> that was drawn up in 1903 at the Simla Conference?*

Jawaharlal Nehru: So far as the broad boundary, the international frontier is concerned between India and the Chinese State including the Tibetan region, it is not a matter of dispute so far as we are concerned. It is a fixed thing. There is nothing to talk about.

*Hem Barua: But that has been violated.*

Jawaharlal Nehru: May I proceed?

When this matter was previously referred to here in this House, I said that we had nothing to discuss because it is an obviously known established frontier of ours. We saw no reason to ask for a discussion on a thing which required no further discussion. But apart from this broad boundary there are two or perhaps three specific cases of what might be called boundary disputes. These are very small ones. Somewhere in the mountains, whether it is two miles this side or two miles that side, there has been an argument-

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<sup>28</sup> The correct spelling is McMahan; the line was drawn in 1914. See A.G. Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem 1846-1947: History and Diplomacy* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 168 and generally chapter 10.

dispute is rather a big word between the two countries and it has been decided that the matter should be settled by talking with each other. We have had talks and the talks no doubt will continue. There are one or two places in the UP frontier, Tibet and, I think Himachal Pradesh. There are two or three places like this. They are of no particular importance. The area concerned is very little and there is no other value. We came to a decision, rather we came to an informal agreement that these matters should be settled on the basis of long usage and to some extent natural boundaries, water sheds and the like. Honourable Members will remember that these places in high mountains are such that they are not easily accessible and in fact nobody can go there for six or seven months in the winter-only in summer months some people go for grazing purposes there.

Those minor matters are pending and we are discussing them some time. Our representative has met the Chinese People's representative and they have had talks. So far as major matters are concerned, there is nothing to discuss.

But when maps of this kind are issued we draw their attention to this and say that this is wrong. That we have done again in regard to this particular matter.

*Hem Barua: What is the total mileage of territory in NEFA and Assam that has been shown as included within the Chinese borders in this map published in China Pictorial, July 1958 issue?*

Jawaharlal Nehru: This map is on a very small scale, a tiny little map so that a line itself, just a line will cover 20 miles. I cannot say that. But, broadly speaking, it appears that fairly considerable parts of the North Eastern Frontier Agency, NEFA, are included, parts of Bhutan are included

and parts of Ladakh are included in this, as I said roughly. You can't say. It may make a difference of 50 miles or more if the line is thick or thin.

*Hem Barua: May I know if it is 1,700 miles in total?*

Jawaharlal Nehru: I can't say. I have no idea.

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### **Amount Outstanding against the Nationalist Government of China<sup>29</sup>**

M. Valiulla:<sup>30</sup> Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

- (a) the amount outstanding against the Nationalist Government of China (KMT Government);
- (b) whether there is any hope of recovery of that amount from the Nationalist Government of China; and
- (c) if so, what?

Jawaharlal Nehru: (a) the former Government of China owed to the Government of India a sum of Rupees one million four hundred and ninety-two thousand seven hundred and sixty-two and fort Y np. The amount is still outstanding.

(b) and (c). The matter is still under negotiation with the Government of the People's Republic of China who are the successor Government. It is not possible to anticipate the final outcome of the correspondence.

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<sup>29</sup> Written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, 24 September 1958. Rajya Sabha Debates, Vol. XXII, cols 4491-4492.

<sup>30</sup> Mohamed Valiullah (1899-1960); Congressman from Mysore; Member, Mysore Constituent Assembly, 1948-50, Mysore Legislative Assembly, 1950-52, Rajya Sabha, 1952-58 and 1958-60.

**Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>31</sup>**

I have seen *New York Times* report of what I said at Palam on conditions in Tibet.<sup>32</sup> This report is mixture of what I said and certain other facts and inferences.

2. When asked about conditions in Tibet, I replied that I could not say anything after spending just a day or so there, but from various reports it would appear that conditions were not fully normal yet in some parts.<sup>33</sup>

3. For your personal information, conditions are rather difficult in some parts of Tibet and only recently, while I was in Bhutan, a big convoy of Chinese going from Yangtse to Lhasa was destroyed completely by Khampa rebels.

4. In Yatung general appearance of foreign military occupation.

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**Entry of Khampa Rebels into India<sup>34</sup>**

I agree that no further precautionary steps are at present necessary or need be taken. Obviously it is not practicable to keep a large concentration of force in a remote area on our NEFA border.

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<sup>31</sup> 5 October 1958. JN Collection.

<sup>32</sup> The *New York Times* of 3 October 1958 reported Nehru saying on 2 October, "Obviously conditions in Tibet, from such reports one gets, are not fully normal." The newspaper added: "Mr Nehru was to have visited Lhasa, capital of Tibet, at the invitation of the Dalai Lama, spiritual ruler of Tibet. But he postponed journey there because of reported uprisings in eastern Tibet. Instead, he decided to go to the hermit kingdom of Bhutan." It went on: "It was considered possible by observers here (New Delhi) that Mr Nehru might have gained his impression of Tibet in the course of his brief stopover at Yatung.

<sup>33</sup> For Nehru's talk with pressmen at Palam Airport, Delhi, on 2 October 1958, see item 10.

<sup>34</sup> Note to Subimal Dutt, Foreign Secretary, 8 October 1958. JN Collection

I see that reference is made to what I wrote in June 1954 in regard to Tibetan refugees coming to India. I said then that such persons have every right to live in India or to seek asylum in India, provided that they do not use our territory as a base of operations against the Chinese.<sup>35</sup>

This general proposition holds in regard to odd individuals seeking asylum, but the question of Khampa rebels<sup>36</sup> or any other large group of rebels stands on a different footing altogether. What I had written in June 1954 was intended to apply to odd individuals seeking asylum. If, however, an armed group of active rebels, such as the Khampas, try to enter India, I think that we should endeavour to stop them from entering. Their presence in India is bound to be very embarrassing for us not only from the point of view of the Chinese Government, but also for internal reasons.

It may, of course, be a little difficult to stop such persons from entering India because we cannot have adequate forces on all the points of entry. That may be so. But the policy, nevertheless, should be to stop armed groups from entering India. Should, however, they enter, the next step to be taken should be to disarm them and they should be asked to go back to Tibet. Such cases should really be reported to us in case any difficulties arise.

I have given similar advice to the Bhutan Government, that is to say, that if Khampa rebels try to cross into Bhutan, they should be checked.

It should be remembered that Khampas, though Tibetans, do not belong to Tibet proper in the literal sense of the word. The Khampa region was included in China long before the People's Government of China came to power. These Khampas have never taken kindly to any overlord. Previously the old Tibetan Governments could not control them. Now the present

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<sup>35</sup> See Nehru's note of 18 June 1954, SWJN/SS/26/pp. 476-480.

<sup>36</sup> According to The Times of India of 13 October 1958, China had suspended commercial traffic on the India-Lhasa highway owing to mounting Khampa rebel activity.

China's Government has come up against the same difficulty in a much more severe form. Being considered part of China (and not Tibet), various changes in regard to land, etc., have been sought to be introduced in the Khampa region even though in Tibet proper these changes have not been introduced. The Khampas have resisted these with vigour.

Whether the Khampas form part of Tibet proper or not, there is no doubt that they are of Tibetan stock and there is a good deal of sympathy for them in Tibet. At the same time, there is a good deal of apprehension in Tibet as to what they might do and lest they might get others into trouble.

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### **Indian Missions in Tibet<sup>37</sup>**

During my brief stay at Yatung<sup>38</sup>, I met our representatives in Tibet that is, our Consul-General at Lhasa<sup>39</sup> and our Trade Agents at Gyantse<sup>40</sup> and Yatung.<sup>41</sup>

At Yatung, I saw the land and buildings attached to our Trade Agency. In regard to the other two places, I was given some account of the position there.

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<sup>37</sup> Note, written at Paro, Bhutan, 22 September 1958, for N.R. Pillai, Secretary General, Subimal Dutt, Foreign Secretary, M.J. Desai, Commonwealth Secretary, and B.N. Chakravarty, Special Secretary, MEA. File No. 32/20-XPP/58, MEA. Also available in JN Collection. Copies of the note were sent to Apa B. Pant, Political Officer in Sikkim and Bhutan, and J.S. Mehta, Deputy Secretary, MEA

<sup>38</sup> Nehru stayed at Yatung overnight on 18 September on his way to Bhutan

<sup>39</sup> S.L. Chibber.

<sup>40</sup> R.S. Kapoor.

<sup>41</sup> K.C. Johorey.

2. We divide up our missions abroad on some basis of importance and according to the standard give amenities, etc. While this may be good enough as a general rule, it is obvious that some places require special attention. Thus, our mission in Tibet have to be considered quite apart from any other place in the world. I can hardly imagine a more dreary life, both climatically and to some extent politically, than has to be faced in Tibet. People have to live at an altitude of 10,000 to 12,500 ft or perhaps more. The winter is terribly severe and the long nights must be enough to try anyone's nerves. There is hardly any social intercourse or cultural activities.

3. The first thing to be sure about is that, in so far as possible, our representatives who are sent there are physically capable of supporting that altitude. (I might mention that the present representatives did not complain to me about the altitude and apparently did not fare badly because of it). Twice at least in the past we have had trouble about our Ambassadors who were sent to Addis Ababa in Ethiopia because they had to live at an altitude of 9,000 ft. Tibet is generally much higher and the climate much more rigorous. Every person who is sent to these places must have his heart and blood-pressure examined carefully and only when he passes the test should he be sent there. On the whole, the term of a person's tenure there should not be too prolonged. I realise the difficulty of having short tenures because work in Tibet is of a very specialised kind and it may not be easy to find suitable men for it. If a person is healthy and does not suffer from the altitude or the climate, he may continue to remain there for a relatively longer period. But we should have reports about his health periodically. It should be remembered that this is not merely a question of health of the officer concerned but of his family also.

4. A certain minimum standard of comfort and conveniences should be provided. Comfort obviously includes proper residence, adequate heating and water supply and lighting. This is the barest minimum anywhere, but in these cold regions its importance is all the greater. The long cold nights require warm rooms and proper lighting for reading or other work or amusement. The water supply should include running hot water wherever possible.

5. I am suggesting the barest minimum for residential purposes. Without this life tends to become intolerable in these regions for any normal family with children. Another aspect of this is the provision of cultural facilities for all our staff and their families. These facilities include (1) radios; (2) films; (3) books and periodicals; (4) games.

6. I believe some kind of radios have been supplied through Shri Apa Pant to these places in Tibet. It is essential that properly functioning radios should be given to these missions. I should imagine that one radio is not enough. There should be one in our representative's house and one in some common room for the rest of the staff.

7. Films. These again are important, not only our documentaries which are much appreciated, but also feature films. Both these types of films are also very popular with the general population and are good publicity. Arrangements should be made for a regular and frequent supply of our documentaries. As for feature films also, more might be sent. The normal price charged by the film companies is based on some kind of competitive charges. This does not apply to Tibet at all and we ought to try to get some of these feature films at cheaper rates for Tibet especially. It would be good propaganda for them.

8. Books and periodicals. This again is very important for the long winter evenings for our people cut off from their homeland and living in an alien and sometimes even hostile atmosphere. We must build up good libraries there, principally in English and Hindi, and definitely set aside an adequate sum for this purpose. These libraries should also be available to the local residents should they require to use them. That is an important aspect, but I am thinking principally now of the members of our own missions and their families who should have not only a good basic library but new books sent to them from time to time.

9. I suggest that immediately a set of books worth about Rs 500/- each set should be sent to Lhasa, Gyantse and Yatung through our Gangtok Agency. This may form the base and should be added on annually. I am suggesting the figure of Rs 500/- as a minimum figure. I do not quite know how far that will help.

10. This Rs 500/- may be split up into Rs 300/- for English books and Rs 200/- for Hindi books. There are some very good cheap editions of English books appearing in Bombay and perhaps elsewhere too. Old Indian classics or their translations have been brought out and they cost from Re 1/- to Rs 2/ 8/- each. I suggest that full sets of these popular editions might be obtained. Once before I suggested that we should get these books to be sent to all our missions abroad. I do not know what was done about that. In any event, a full set should be obtained for these three missions in Tibet.

11. Another type of books which will of course be more expensive should be those relating to Tibet or problems of that area, travel books and others.

12. Among our books, children's books should always be included for the children of our people in the missions, both in English and in Hindi.

13. Dr Bachchan<sup>42</sup> should be asked to make a selection of the Hindi books to be sent to these three missions in Tibet.

I have suggested Rs 500/- as a beginning. It should by no means be thought that this is the ceiling.

14. Games. It is desirable to send some equipment for games, both indoor and outdoor. These are useful for the members of our missions and their families.

They are also very useful for other residents of the towns who I am told welcome them and take part in them.

15. At present, I am told, there are practically no suitable buildings for us in Lhasa and Gyantse. In Gyantse the terrible flood of two-three years ago destroyed our building and killed 60 or 70 of our people. Since then our Agent there has lived in a very unsuitable and uncomfortable hired place. I understand that there have been proposals for putting up some buildings and possibly also a dam to protect them in future from floods. As usual with such proposals, they take a mighty long time to materialise. We have to face two almost insuperable difficulties. One is on our side, the CPWD, etc. The other is on the Chinese side who even excel us in delaying matters.

16. In both Gyantse and Lhasa I understand that the land in our possession at present is both spacious and well-suited. In fact it is probably the best land in those towns. If we do not utilise it quickly, we might well find part of

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<sup>42</sup> Harivansh Rai Bachchan was Officer on Special Duty in the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, 1955-65. He was a well-known Hindi poet

it slipping away from us. Therefore, early steps should be taken to finalise the buildings, etc., which have to be put up there. The plans for these buildings should be adequate and spacious, even though the entire plan should not be given effect to immediately. We may build quickly the central part of it, leaving the rest for a future period as convenient. There is some importance in having good and solid buildings put up there. I do not attach much importance as a rule to prestige in such matters. Nevertheless, this aspect cannot be ignored in Tibet as things are.

17. This will require a competent engineer to be sent by us to these places, more especially for the proposed dam. Any such dam at Gyantse really should have been the business for the Chinese to put up. I have no idea of its extent or cost. I think that we should start at the house first and take a risk if necessary about the dam. After all the terrible accident that occurred at Gyantse was not the kind of thing which repeats itself perhaps in less than a century. It was due to a big lake in the mountains breaking its barriers and the water rushing down suddenly. So the dam may well be postponed for some time, though it must be kept in mind. The engineer could report on it.

18. So far as the dam is concerned, we must necessarily act according to the advice of the Chinese. Our first attempt should be to ask them to make it. If this does not succeed, even so we should take their advice and our engineer should work in close cooperation with the Chinese engineers.

19. I have mentioned books above. Current periodicals are essential. Our Publications Division sends some of its published literature to Gangtok from where it is distributed to our Tibetan missions. It seemed to me that a very

poor supply was sent even of this output of the Publications Division which should be increased.

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**To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>43</sup>**

October 14, 1958

My dear Krishna,

I have not written to you since you went to New York and, as far as I can remember, you have not sent any letter either. I have, of course, received your telegrams. For a considerable time, I was away on my journey to Bhutan, where I was completely cut off from newspapers.

I kept very well in Bhutan in spite of the strenuous journey. On my return, however, I caught a chill, or something like it, in Sikkim. For some days, I did not feel well at all and was partly confined to bed. Just about that time, the World Bank people descended upon us in large numbers, and I had to meet many of them and entertain them. For many days, I had some people to breakfast, lunch and dinner. Many of them were interesting. I have not quite recovered from that cold yet, so far as my throat is concerned.

I read your speech in the UN about the consideration of the Chinese item.<sup>44</sup> It was a very good speech, and I liked it. You have sent me two personal

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<sup>43</sup> JN Collection

<sup>44</sup> Speaking in the UN General Assembly on 7 October, Krishna Menon appealed to the US and China to take advantage of the ceasefire in the Formosa Straits to work out a long-term solution to their international problems. He rejected the idea of a "two Chinas" solution arguing that Taiwan had always been a part of China. He also appealed to the US to pull its forces from the Taiwan area, and said: "the whole world is convinced that the US has no imperialistic ambitions in the area."

telegrams. One was on October 4th, No. 270, and the other on October 13th, number 290. These indicate that you are worried about reports in the American Press or elsewhere about happenings in India which appear to you to be some kind of a shift in our general policy.<sup>45</sup> I am not aware of any such shift, though sometimes some aspect of our policy may be emphasised, while at another time some other aspect may be emphasised. Naturally, advantage is taken of this by the American Press or others. I do not see why we should worry ourselves about this. The only thing that I am concerned with, is that, as far as possible, we should do the right thing. It is hardly possible to control other people's thinking or their misrepresentations.

You refer to an article I wrote.<sup>46</sup> You will remember that I wrote this when you were here, and it was not originally meant for publication. Ultimately, I decided to have it published in the Congress fortnightly here, and this was reproduced by the New York Times. How am I to help it if parts of it are

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<sup>45</sup> Krishna Menon telegraphed on 4 October that according to *The New York Times*, "as result of your 'visit' to Tibet you have found that there is internal trouble and discontent in Tibet and have so stated... Also India has expressed apprehension of unfair Chinese competition in our 'traditional' markets, is highly critical of Chinese developments and that one of the aims of our policy is to prove that our economic and political systems are superior to the Chinese and has thus (by implication) taken up a position in cold war." He also wrote that a statement allegedly made by Nehru at a meeting of the World Assembly of Youth favouring the Western camp organisation as against the other group had also been described as indicative of a change in India's stand. Krishna Menon further said, "Our alleged shifts whether in any sense real or merely presented as actual but with some semblance of evidence or arising from alleged powerful trends in that direction inside Government itself at the present juncture only add to tensions and the dangers of the world conflict and militates against our overall objectives..."

<sup>46</sup> The reference is to a note written by Nehru on 13 July 1958 which was later published as 'The Basic Approach' in AICC Economic Review in August 1958. [See SWJN/SS/43/ pp. 3-11.] Krishna Menon wrote that selected parts of this article had been tendentiously used "as another proof of our having shifted positions and 'declared' ourselves."

used tendentiously? I expressed my opinions in the course of that article which was by way of loud thinking. Am I to suppress my opinions because somebody might take unfair advantage of them?

You refer to our reticences on the Middle East issue.<sup>47</sup> I really do not know to what exactly you refer. I am generally reticent about all issues outside India, except when at a Press Conference or in Parliament, one has to say something. So far as the Middle East is concerned, there has not been the slightest deviation from the policy we have consistently pursued.

As for China and Tibet, the only remark I made, as I have reported to you, was in answer to a question. I said that I could not say anything after spending a day or two in a corner of Tibet, but reports came that conditions were not fully normal.<sup>48</sup> This was a very moderate way of stating what is happening there. Tibet is very much a country under military occupation, and in certain parts of Tibet, there is active rebellion going on. We have, in fact, done everything to discourage these rebels insofar as they have come in contact with us. The general Chinese attitude to us in many small matters has not been at all friendly or even sometimes courteous. I realise that this is probably due to the petty officers, but there can be little doubt that the new turn in internal policy in China has had some effect on their external contacts. This does not make any difference to our basic policy.

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<sup>47</sup> Krishna Menon referred to India's "reticences" on the Middle East issue, and stated that "the view increasingly mentioned that we are more tolerant to pacts and even to military assistance to Pakistan despite supply and use of sidewinders by military allies of the West even though this latter concerns and menaces our own safety has created a somewhat general adverse impression in UN circles."

<sup>48</sup> Nehru said this while talking to pressmen at Palam Airport in Delhi on 2 October 1958. See item 10

We are, of course, not free from responsibility and we should try our best to discharge that responsibility to the best of our ability.<sup>49</sup>

I hinted to you in a previous telegram that conditions in Pakistan were rapidly deteriorating.<sup>50</sup> The establishment of martial law, etc., there was, though surprising, a natural result of this all-round deterioration. Obviously, we have to be alert and vigilant, but I think that Pakistan is going to pieces with extraordinary rapidity. What is more, the allies of Pakistan realise this, even though they may not say it.

The exhibition here<sup>51</sup> is remarkably good, considering that it has been put up in 2 ½ months' time. The Defence Industries' pavilion is particularly good; so also our Science and Technology one. The large number of people who came here for the Bank conferences (I am not referring to the representatives of the big Powers) have been powerfully influenced by what they had seen in India, including the exhibition.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

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### **To Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit<sup>52</sup>**

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<sup>49</sup> Krishna Menon wrote in his telegram of 13 October: "The cold war approach which in the last two years had somewhat slowed down has regained ground and pressures on this basis are powerfully sought to be exercised all round not excluding us With regret I must mention to you that we are not free from responsibility and in more than a small measure. The worst effect is the adverse trend in regard to uncommittedness which was gaining ground. We continue to work against this constructively but our position has changed. One is oppressed by the way we are now looked upon and the inevitable sense of the loss of prestige."

<sup>50</sup> See item 340

<sup>51</sup> The India 1958 exhibition

<sup>52</sup> JN Collection

September 1, 1958

[Nan dear,]<sup>53</sup>

I have your letter of August 28th.

A few days ago, I had a letter from Raja<sup>54</sup> about Betti,<sup>55</sup> saying that she was rather ill and going to Geneva and would be back here in a few days. He suggested my writing to her as she was apparently mentally distressed. She sent me a postcard. I think this came when you were here from Israel or some such place, or was it Athens.<sup>56</sup> Naturally I did not reply. I do not think she has written again to me. But, some weeks ago, I got a strange letter from Ajit<sup>57</sup> enclosing all kinds of papers, including a copy of a letter which apparently had been written by Avtar Dar<sup>58</sup> to you. I could not do anything about these matters, and did not reply to anyone. Raja mentioned these and hinted that, as no reply had gone from me to Betti, she was distressed. I wrote to him briefly that there was nothing to reply to, and I do not like discussing family squabbles. I also wrote a brief letter to Betti to Geneva, saying that I was sorry that she was unwell and I hoped she would recover soon.

I really do not know what I can do about Betti. I do not think she is mentally quite stable or, at any rate, at times, she gets these delusions and exaggerates everything she hears and then suffers for it.

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<sup>53</sup> The elder of the two sisters of Nehru, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit was the High Commissioner of India to the UK at this time.

<sup>54</sup> G.P. Hutheesing, husband of Krishna Hutheesing, the younger of Nehru's two sisters.

<sup>55</sup> Krishna was affectionately called Betti or Betty.

<sup>56</sup> Nehru had referred to the postcard received from Krishna in his letter of 25 May 1958 to Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit. See SWIN/SS/42/p. 821.

<sup>57</sup> The younger of the two sons of Krishna Hutheesing.

<sup>58</sup> Husband of Rita, Mrs Pandit's daughter.

As for Harsha<sup>59</sup> and Ajit too, I do not understand what is happening. I thought Ajit was at Cambridge. Has he passed his examinations there? What is the idea of his going to America now, especially to study economics? What exactly do you mean by saying that Betti has asked "that he should make his permanent home here"? What does "here" mean, is it England, is it with you, or what else?

Here the food situation has taken a bad turn. In spite of all our difficulties, there is enough food about and is being sent to all the needy States. But recent heavy rains and floods led to waterlogging and difficulty in transport in various areas. Prices jumped up, and there has been a good deal of profiteering, which is most annoying. It makes me angry to see some of these dealers making heavy profits out of a people's distress. Meanwhile, all the Opposition parties in the UP are joining together to upset everything. Some of them are advocating even the breaking open of grain godowns and taking away the grain. Lohia, of course, is in the forefront and talks about gherao that is, surrounding the houses of Ministers, district magistrates, etc.

The situation is pretty bad in many places, and yet I have a feeling that we shall get over this food crisis and that the new harvest will be a good one. It appears also that Morarji's mission is likely to be successful about loans and credits. The basic fact, of course, remains, and we shall have to live a half life for the next year or two at least till we turn the corner. I am sure we will turn the corner, but what happens in between, is anybody's guess. As I have told you I am thinking of going to Bhutan about the middle of September. In order to go to Bhutan, I have to pass through a little corner of Tibet adjoining Sikkim. We have not heard from the Chinese Government yet about visas, etc., which will be necessary.

[Love] [Jawahar]

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<sup>59</sup> The elder son of Krishna Hutheesing.

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### **Foreword to A Bunch of Old Letters<sup>60</sup>**

These letters are a mixed collection. It has not been an easy task to get them together and to make a selection for publication. How far this has been worthwhile, it is difficult for me to judge. Nearly all of them belong to a period which now seems remote and long ago. Except for a very few, they are letters written before the coming of independence to India and they deal mainly with our internal problems and how they affected us. Reading them again, they revive old controversies and forgotten memories come back to mind. They were mostly written in the twenties and thirties and the early forties, in the course of our struggle for freedom and during the intervals when I was not in person.

I did not have the leisure or the opportunity then to keep my letters and papers in proper order and they were lumped together. Periodically, the police descended upon us and took possession of such papers as they could find. On return from a long period in prison, I often found that termites and other insects had made a feast of many of my papers. Even so a large number survived. Years later, friends helped in arranging them in some order and recently when I went for a brief holiday in the Kulu Valley of the Himalayas,<sup>61</sup> I made a selection out of this bunch.

It was my intention at first to publish only Mahatma Gandhi's letters to me. Gradually others were added and even some letters written by me had to

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<sup>60</sup> Written at Gangtok, Sikkim, 16 September 1958. JN Collection. On 16 September, Nehru sent this foreword to M.O. Mathai, his Special Assistant, for inclusion in A Bunch of Old Letters, forthcoming from Asia Publishing House, Bombay. But he telegraphed Mathai the same day that it would have to be revised, which was done on 5 October 1958. The revised version is item 360.

<sup>61</sup> Nehru visited Manali from 20 to 31 May 1958 and again from 10 to 23 June 1958.

be given as otherwise it was difficult to understand many of the references. The arrangement followed in this volume is chronological, though occasionally this has been varied for the sake of clarity. I have added a few footnotes or other explanatory notes, but I fear that those who are not acquainted with the sequence of events in India during that period may not be able to understand some of the references in the letters.

I am writing this foreword from Gangtok, the mountain capital of the small and lovely Himalayan State of Sikkim where I came today from Delhi on my way to Bhutan. Already I am far from the turmoil of politics and the peace of the Himalayas surrounds me. In the Far East, the new and dangerous game of brinkmanship is being played and the island of Quemoy has become the scene of intense bombardment. Vast navies stride across the Straits of Formosa and we hear dally of threats and warnings which may lead to that little extra step over the brink. In Western Asia, even though the immediate danger has passed, the crisis continues. In New York, statesmen from the ends of the earth gather together to meet in the General Assembly of the United Nations.

But here in Sikkim, the drums of war are not heard and there is peace. Sikkim is a little mountain State, closely allied to India and surrounded by India, Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan. It lies across the main route from India to the Tibetan region of China. Buddhism flourishes here as it does in all the surrounding areas. Modern amenities such as good roads, electric power, small factories, schools, hospitals, etc., have crept in here gradually from India. The changes are marked and every time I come here, I find something new happening; but these changes have come gently without breaking with the past. In Tibet, on the other side, after a long period of almost absolute seclusion, changes are coming with a rush and upsetting the shape of things.

Bhutan yet remains unaffected by the modern world. Surrounded by high mountains, access to it is difficult and the rulers of that country have been shy of encouraging outsiders to go there. Perhaps they were right because outsiders, though they may bring some of the good things of life, also tend to bring much that is not good. They have also been in the habit of imposing themselves and their ways. So Bhutan remained and still remains one of the most inaccessible countries in the world. There are no air trips there and indeed the only way to move about is either walking or riding a mountain pony along a bridge path which is often difficult even for a pony. There are no roads there and vehicular traffic is unknown. The country is sparsely populated with a sturdy and attractive peasantry.

My journey to this neighbour country of ours with whom we have had close and friendly contacts for a long time is a much more difficult one than if I travelled to the other side of the world. Recently our engineers have made a road through difficult mountain terrain, almost up to the frontier with Tibet. This goes up to a pass over 14,000 ft in height, overlooking Tibet. It is possible now to go by jeep up to this pass, the Nathu La. On the other side, there is no road yet and travelling has to be done on mountain ponies. It will take me five days of trekking to reach Paro, the summer capital of Bhutan. The distance is not great from Gangtok. Probably it is about a hundred miles of which about forty miles will be done by jeep. We shall have to cross through passes of 14,000 to 15,000 ft above sea level and then descend to the valley on the other side where Paro is situated at 7,500ft.

I had long wanted to go to Bhutan and avail myself of the friendly invitation to visit this country. The mountains attract me and more especially the Himalayas which are so full of story and legend and high adventure. Bhutan so near and so remote and so different from the rest of the world had a special attraction, and now that I am at last going there, the cares and

worries that are our dally lot drop away from me and even the dreadful prospect of possible war and atomic radiation poisoning the world does not oppress me. Somehow, the Himalayas give one a sense not only of peace but of permanence, and of something above and away from the follies of human beings. No doubt this is a false impression because nuclear warfare and radiation will not spare the Himalayas. In Hindu mythology, the gods had their abodes in these mountains; they chose well. But the old gods fade away and new gods of a fiercer kind take their place. Even so the peace of the Buddha still prevails here and if we can have some inner peace within ourselves, perhaps we might even be able to face the threat of the bomb which has been described to be brighter than a thousand suns.

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