

# SELECTED WORKS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

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*(July 1 to 31, 1959)*

## **China and Tibet**

### **155. To Diwan Chaman Lall: Chinese Impertinence<sup>1</sup>**

July 3, 1959

My dear Chaman Lall,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of today's date. I am glad you have written and given me some account of what transpired in Stockholm.<sup>3</sup> I have had some brief accounts from Sunder Lal<sup>4</sup> and Anup Singh<sup>5</sup> Your account is fuller and is helpful in making us understand events there.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Letter

<sup>2</sup> Congress, Rajya Sabha MP from Punjab

<sup>3</sup> Chaman Lall attended the tenth anniversary session of the World Council of Peace, 8-13 May 1959, as a guest.

<sup>4</sup> Sunderlal, President, All India Peace Council, presided at the first plenary session of the World Council meetings and participated in the sub-commission on national independence. See Romesh Chandra, "Peace Council Reviews Ten Years Work, Plans Ahead" in *New Age*, 31 May 1959, and Sunderlal to Nehru, 16 June 1959, WJN/SS/491 Appendix 24

<sup>5</sup> Anup Singh and Amolakh Chand, Congress, Rajya Sabha MPs from Punjab and Uttar Pradesh respectively, attended as guests; other Indians present were: S.S. Sokhey, Vivekanand Mukherji, Mulk Raj Anand, Chatur Narain Malviya and the poet Sri Sri. *New Age*, 31 May 1959

<sup>6</sup> The Stockholm meeting demanded, among other, 'the restoration of Goa to India', and formed a 24-member Presidential Committee, with J.D. Bernal as its Chairman, and included two Indians, Sunderlal and Saifuddin Kitchlew, a former General Secretary of the Congress. See *Bulletin of the World Council of Peace*, special number, issued after the tenth anniversary session of the World Council of Peace, Stockholm, 8-13 May 1959.

When Chinese criticisms and denunciations of India were at their height, we sent an informal aide memoire to them protesting against all this.<sup>7</sup> To this they replied some time later informally.<sup>8</sup> Their reply was, in my opinion, not only aggressive, but rather offensive. We replied to this also again at an informal level.<sup>9</sup> We were polite but firm. We said that we were surprised and distressed at the tone of their reply which was not in keeping with the great reputation of the Chinese people for courtesy and politeness and indeed was not even in accordance with diplomatic behaviour. We did not wish to enter into further controversy with them. We pointed out, however, that in India, under our law and Constitution, every individual was free to express his opinion, whether we liked it or not. Indeed our own Government was often very strongly criticised.

Since that last informal message of ours, we have not heard from the Chinese Government. There appears to have been some kind of a lull in the propagandist activities in China against India. The Chinese Ambassador in Delhi went back to China some time ago presumably to report.

I might add, however, that the Chinese officials in Tibet continue to behave arrogantly and sometimes offensively to our people there.

I will be glad to meet you, but soon I am going away to Kashmir for a week or ten days.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>7</sup> On 26 April 1959, Subimal Dutt to Pan Tzu-li, the Ambassador of China to India; see Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged and Agreements signed between the Governments of India and China, 1954-1959, White Paper (n.p., n.d.) [New Delhi, 1959], pp. 68-69. The White Paper was tabled in both Houses of Parliament by Nehru on 7 September 1959.

<sup>8</sup> On 16 May 1959, Pan Tzu-li to Subimal Dutt; White Paper, pp. 73-76

<sup>9</sup> On 23 May 1959, Subimal Dutt to Pan Tzu-li. The statement was drafted by Nehru; see Nehru note to Subimal Dutt, 22 May 1959, SWJN/SS/49/Item 303. See also White Paper, pp. 77-78

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**156. To Subimal Dutt: Hostility to India in Tibet<sup>10</sup>**

I see that you have sent a telegram No. 3548 of July 9 to our Embassy in Peking about the difficulties we are facing in Tibet.<sup>11</sup>

2. I have now seen a telegram from Lhasa No. 338 of July 7, which reproduces an article in a Lhasa Tibetan daily.<sup>12</sup> I think such articles are very objectionable apart from being untrue. I think we should protest about this both to the Chinese Ambassador in Delhi and to Peking.<sup>13</sup>

3. The treatment that our people have been getting in Tibet has been bad, and it continues to be so. We should take up every such matter whenever it occurs and not allow it to become a habit.

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**157. To Subimal Dutt: Behaviour of Chinese Officials in Tibet<sup>14</sup>**

There is a bunch of telegrams today about Kashmiri Muslims, the stoppage of our works being carried on at Gyantse and other difficulties and obstructions placed by the Chinese authorities in Tibet.

2. I have also seen your telegram No. 3634 dated July 15 to Indembassy, Peking, on the question of nationality of Kashmiri Muslims and Lamas.

3. I have been wondering if we have done all we could in these matters. The impression created in my mind is that the Chinese authorities in Tibet are behaving very badly and are trying to squeeze out our people. Can we

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<sup>10</sup> Note, Mashobra, 11 July 1959

<sup>11</sup> See MEA to the Indian Embassy, Peking, 9 July 1959, Appendix 25.

<sup>12</sup> See Indian Consul-General, Lhasa, to MEA, 7 July 1959, Appendix 16.

<sup>13</sup> See White Paper, p. 79

<sup>14</sup> Note, Mashobra, 18 July 1959

not present a stronger aide memoire putting all these things together and put it straight to them if their behaviour is meant to make the working of our consulates and trade agencies more and more difficult<sup>15</sup> This, it might be said, raises the whole question of neutrality.

Yours affectionately,  
[Jawaharlal]

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**158. To B.C. Roy: Chinese Trade Agency in Kalimpong<sup>16</sup>**

22nd July, 1959

My dear Bidhan,

I understand that the Chinese governmental authorities are trying to purchase a big double storied house in Kalimpong. Normally speaking, we would have no objection to this. But our relations with the Chinese Government are not exactly normal and our own people in Tibet have been made to suffer a great deal of harassment by the authorities there. According to our Treaty with China, we are supposed to treat each other on the basis of mutuality. We have been given three Trade Agencies in Tibet and we have given them three such agencies in India, including Kalimpong and Calcutta.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See note, the Ambassador of India to China [G. Parthasarathi] to the Chinese Foreign Office, 25 July 1959; White Paper, pp. 92-95

<sup>16</sup> Letter, copied to Subimal Dutt

<sup>17</sup> The Agreement between India and China on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India, signed in Peking on 29 April 1954, provided for the establishment of Indian Trade Agencies at Yatung, Gyantse and Gartok and Chinese Trade Agencies at New Delhi, Calcutta and Kalimpong.

We are taking these matters up with them rather strongly. In view of their treatment of Indians in Tibet and the difficulties they put in our way in regard to movement etc., I do not think they should be encouraged to acquire house property in Kalimpong. I would like you, therefore, to inform the District Magistrate there to prevent any such transaction taking place. I have been told that there is no law authorising the District Magistrate to do this. I hardly think any law is necessary and normally a strong hint to the house owner should be adequate. If not, the house can be requisitioned by Government. Later, we may even think in terms of passing a legislation according to which no foreign government can acquire property in India without the permission of the Government of India.

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### **159. To Subimal Dutt: The Dalai Lama<sup>18</sup>**

1. So far as a visit of the Dalai Lama to Delhi is concerned, we should inform him that we shall welcome this visit and I would be happy to meet him again.<sup>19</sup> Many of my colleagues would also be glad to meet him. The question that we have to consider is the timing of such a visit. Early in August, the Lok Sabha will meet and a week later the Rajya Sabha also. That will be a terribly busy time for us. Parliament will be meeting after 2 ½ months and many problems have accumulated during this period. It would be better, therefore, if the Dalai Lama came to Delhi later after most of these problems have been dealt with and we have a little more leisure. I would suggest his coming to Delhi early in September. Parliament will still be meeting then and the Dalai Lama will have the opportunity to meet such people as he wishes to see.

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<sup>18</sup> Note, 22 July 1959

<sup>19</sup> Nehru had met the Dalai Lama in Mussoorie in April 1959.

Some kind of an informal enquiry might be made about the number of people who would accompany him to Delhi. That information will help us to make arrangements for his stay here as well as for the journey. If the number is small, the journey can take place by car; otherwise by train.

2. The question of the old treasure should surely be decided soon.<sup>20</sup> There is no complication about it and no further information is going to come to us from any source. If this is decided, then the other question of supplying funds to the Dalai Lama does not arise. If the treasure is to be handed over to him, it is for him to decide how and where to keep it. We might, however, advise him to keep it in a proper bank.

3. Sending religious emissaries to Buddhist countries. If a small number of such emissaries is to be sent and they have been invited by the other countries concerned, we need not raise any difficulties. We would have to give some kind of certificates of identity to serve as travel documents.

4. The question of maintaining contact with the Tibetan people stands on a different footing and we cannot in any sense be responsible for this, financially or otherwise.

5. If any of the Dalai Lama's officers wishes to travel within India, they can certainly do so. If the Dalai Lama gets his principal funds, then no difficulty about expenses arises. Otherwise some money may be advanced for this purpose.

6. Youth Festival in Vienna.<sup>21</sup> It is clear that we cannot send any of his representatives to this Youth Festival.

7. Tibetans to counter attack propaganda in Europe. A specific proposal might be considered, but it is not clear to me what kind of propaganda these people could do there.

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<sup>20</sup> For the previous reference to Dalai Lama's treasure lying in Sikkim, see Nehru's note to Subimal Dutt, 27 June 1959, and Dalai Lama to Nehru, 23 June 1959, SWJN/SS/49/item 312 and Appendix 26

<sup>21</sup> See item 120, fn 101

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## **160. To Dag Hammarskjold: The Care of Tibetan Refugees<sup>22</sup>**

23rd July, 1959

Dear Mr. Hammarskjold,<sup>23</sup>

Thank you for your letter of July 7.<sup>24</sup> We appreciate Mr. Lindt's<sup>25</sup> offer of cooperation with us in dealing with the Tibetan refugees. I am glad to say, however, that we have been able to deal with the problem principally with our own resources. We have also received substantial assistance from an unofficial Central Committee<sup>26</sup> which has been set up in India. At the moment the refugees are being dispersed from camps and provided with gainful employment, and to that extent the problem of immediate relief is becoming easier.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

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## **161. To Subimal Dutt: Dalai Lama's Treasure<sup>27</sup>**

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<sup>22</sup> Letter.

<sup>23</sup> The UN Secretary General

<sup>24</sup> Endorsing Lindt's (the UN High Commissioner for Refugees) offer of help for Tibetan refugees, Hammarskjold was careful to affirm his faith in GOI's ability to handle the problem on its own

<sup>25</sup> Auguste Rudolph Lindt (1905-2000); Swiss diplomatist; UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 1956-60; Swiss Ambassador to USA, 1960-63, to USSR and Mongolia, 1966-69, to India and Nepal, 1969-70. The International Who's Who 1973-74 (London: Europa, 1973) and Who Was Who 1996-2000 (London: Adam and Charles Black, 2(01).

<sup>26</sup> The Central Relief Committee for Tibetan refugees presided over by J.B. Kripalani; the Indian Red Cross Society had associated itself with this committee.

<sup>27</sup> Note, 24 July 19:~. 58.

This matter appears to me to be relatively simple in spite of various issues that have been raised and considered.<sup>28</sup> So far as the Government of India are concerned, they hardly come into the picture except in so far as their permission may be necessary to get the treasure into India.

2. From such facts as are available, it appears to be clear that this treasure belongs to the Dalai Lama and was sent by him for safe custody.

Arrangements were made for such safe custody in Sikkim. The Sikkim Government is not directly concerned except in so far as they provided room for storage without accepting any liability.

3. Presumably, therefore, the persons who stored this are entitled to take it back or they may authorise others to take it back. It appears that those who stored it have stated that the treasure belongs to the Dalai Lama. This point being cleared, preferably in writing, it is for the Dalai Lama to issue directions about the treasure. If he so wishes, it can be removed from where it is to any other place of his choice.

4. The Sikkim Government is concerned only because this treasure is in Sikkim. Otherwise, they have no concern with it. We may advise them as to what should be done with this on the lines suggested above.

5. If this matter is cleared with the Sikkim Durbar, then we should issue the necessary licence for the removal of the treasure to India and exempt it from the normal duty on bullion. That is all that we are called upon to do. But as the Dalai Lama and his associates are unacquainted with the way money is dealt with in India, we might well give him advice on the subject, so that the treasure might be kept in safe custody in some bank or an account opened, or whatever he likes to do with it. In future, it will not be right to keep this in godowns, etc.

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<sup>28</sup> See also item 159

## **16. Indian Consul-General, Lhasa to MEA<sup>29</sup>**

[Refer to item 156]

No. 338.

In Lhasa Tibetan Daily dated 23 June an article entitled "Gyantse in the History of Imperialists Design in Tibet" appeared. In this article the writer gives details of invasion of Gyantse by British troops in 1904 and tries to show how heroically Tibet tried to fight back the Britishers. However following portion which is of our interest is reproduced.

Begins. The place immediately near to the British Imperial Cemetery is the cantonment of Indian Army stationed at Gyantse. The 1954 agreement between India and China on trade and (2 group corrupt) the withdrawal of the Indian troops from Gyantse. The people of Gyantse could clearly see that the legacy of British imperialism in Tibet was inherited by the Indian expansionist element. During the course of their stay at Gyantse, the Indian Army forcibly took food grains and foddors from the people of Gyantse. The people were forced to do corvee work for them e.g. they had to provide supply transport, firewood, servants etc. in return for nothing to the Indian Army. The Indian troops were fond of riding military horses, and they rough shod the green fields of the people and thus destroying the autumn harvest. Officers and men of the Indian troops intrigued visited the traitor Phala and held parties and games of Majong. These evil deeds of the Indian army are very much resented by the people of Gyantse. And though the fire of their anger was burning in the stomach, there was no opportunity for the smoke to come out of the mouth. Ends.

2. Similarly an article about Chumbi Valley appeared on 16th June. Portion which is of interest to us is reproduced below.

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<sup>29</sup> Telegram, 7 July 1959, copied to the Political Officer of India, Sikkim, at Gangtok

Begins. According to Tsewang, formerly when they suffered from ailment, they had not only to send a servant and a horse to fetch the doctor, but the fee charged by the doctor was exorbitantly high. The poor man was helpless to provide such luxury and so when a poor man fell ill, the inevitable was death. Ends.

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## **25. MEA to the Indian Embassy, Peking<sup>30</sup>**

[Refer to item 156]

No. 3548.

Ever since the present disturbances in Tibet we have received reports from our Consul General and Trade Agencies of various difficulties placed in the functioning of our posts and the legitimate activities of our traders, pilgrims and nationals. Some of these difficulties have been brought to the attention of the Chinese authorities either by posts concerned or by the Consulate General.

In some instances we have raised the matter with the Chinese Embassy here.

Record of conversations between Mehta and the Chinese Counsellor on 3rd June forwarded to you with D.O. No. I (45) BST/59 dated 5th June refers. Yesterday another informal Note listing difficulties and harassment suffered by our posts and our nationals has been presented, copy being forwarded to you by bag. Meanwhile there are one or two matters which we consider sufficiently serious for you to raise immediately with the Chinese Government.

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<sup>30</sup> Telegram, 9 July 1959, copied to the Political Officer of India, Sikkim, at Gangtok and the Consul General of India at Lhasa for information

(i) Indian nationals in Tibet. Large number of our nationals especially Ladakhi Lamas and Muslims have been resident in Tibet region mostly from period before conclusion of [19]54 Agreement. Since previously travel between Ladakh and Tibet was free, they possess no travel papers or identity certificates.

Although they have been earning their living locally or been attached to monasteries for years they have traditionally been treated as foreigners. Most of the Muslims were traders. According to Kushak Bakula between 4 and 6 hundred Lamas who travelled as pilgrims before and after the Agreement were studying in Tibetan Monasteries. Upto the time of recent disturbances no local regulations were prescribed requiring registration or any special identity certificates. There were indications that local authorities were refusing to treat these persons as Indians despite their origin. We urged through a Note presented by our Consulate General to Foreign Bureau in Lhasa in the middle of May that these persons must be treated as Indian nationals and permitted to leave if they so wish. Recent reports show that Chinese are again trying to persuade these persons to declare themselves as Chinese nationals on the ground that they did not register with the Consulate previously. They have hinted foreign nationals would be liable to severe consequences if they do not possess duly visaed passports. Since there has been no prescription for passports for Tibet region, we did not issue passports in the past. In view of the present Chinese attitude we would be prepared to do so but there is no assurance that Chinese will give visas and therefore regularise their present stay either to carry on their vocations or return to India.

Grateful if you would take up the matter with the Chinese urging either the status quo prior to 10th March should be maintained or if they require foreign nationals to possess passports to tell us definitely so that we can arrange issue of passports. In latter case we trust no impediments will be

placed in their obtaining visas or in their registering with our Consulate General.

(ii) Gyantse. As you know at last Chinese have given permission in principle to commence re-construction of our Trade Agency. Assistant Engineer has proceeded to Gyantse and Additional Chief Engineer will shortly follow. Meanwhile, Trade Agent reports that all manner of difficulties are being placed in proceeding with the construction. In the last fortnight on two occasions firing practice has been carried out on our site presumably to frighten the labour. No transport yet provided. In yesterday's Note to Chinese Embassy we have urged helpful cooperation from them. Grateful if you would reiterate this.

We have also stressed that Chinese Missions and posts and Chinese nationals in India enjoy complete freedom for functioning and movement etc.