

Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Volume 27

Reference on Pondicherry

Implications of China Visit¹

Q: What are the difficulties that stand in the way of peace in Asia?

JN: This depends largely on what is meant by the term 'peace'. If by 'peace' one means absence of war, then peace does prevail for the moment, but there are still a few problems which give rise to a state of tension in the world. The problems of Korea and Formosa, as well as the general situation in Indo-China have not been completely solved. I did not discuss Formosa with the Chinese leaders, but it is obvious that the Chinese Government and the Chinese people feel strongly about this problem. No proposal have been made by me but I feel that every difficult problem can be solved peacefully, provided the parties concerned are sincere in their desire for a settlement.

Q: Would the Government of India recognize the Indo-China States?

JN: Although India has not formally recognized them mainly because of her being on the International Supervisory Commission, for all practical purposes India recognises the Indo-China States and has dealings with them....

I wish to refer to the Agreement recently arrived at between the Governments of India and France about French Settlements in India.² This is very significant, because it shows that with the goodwill and cooperation of the countries concerned, every difficult problem can be solved. The actual handing over of the French settlements to Indian authorities is to take place on November 1,

¹ Note 14 November 1954. JN Collection. Also available in File No. 25(6)/54-PMS, and G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers 1947-I 96-1*. Vol. 4, pp. 76-89.

² The Agreement was arrived at on 21 October 1954. See post, p. 224.

1954. The result of the Agreement is not only the settlement of a very old and difficult problem, but the actual creation of greater goodwill and friendship between India and France. India has given assurances that it would help to maintain Pondicherry as a centre of French culture and the French language. Actually, this has brought India and France even closer to each other than ever before....

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Agreement on French Establishments³

... 3. So far as the French Settlements are concerned, an agreement has been arrived at and all that remains is to give effect to it.⁴ It is possible, of course, that minor difficulties might arise: Care should be taken to avoid them. If a major difficulty arises, reference might be made to me. It is now proposed to have the congress in the French Settlements on or about the 18th October.⁵ I am rather doubtful if the time allowed for it is adequate. If it is necessary, the date might be advanced by two or three days. It is also proposed that the actual hand-over of the administration should take place on the 1st November.⁶ As I shall be coming back soon after that date, I need say nothing about that now. I gather that arrangements to take charge have been made on our behalf already. It would be better, if the French authorities agreed to it, for some of the persons we are sending to take charge, to go to Pondicherry, a few days earlier to get in touch with affairs there, to meet the French authorities, and

³ Note to the Secretary General, Foreign Secretary and Commonwealth Secretary, 12 October 1954. JN Collection. Extracts. A copy of this note was sent to the Deputy Minister, MEA.

⁴ On 7 October 1954 an informal agreement was reached between the Indian and French negotiators in New Delhi to hold a convention of the elected representatives of the French Indian Municipalities and Assembly to decide on the issue of merger with India. This was a technical requirement according to the French Constitution. A decision on the merger plan was arrived at on 12 October 1954, which was announced through a joint declaration on 13 October. The Agreement was formally signed on 21 October 1954.

⁵ The elected representatives met at Kizhoor on 18 October and by an overwhelming majority, 170 in favour and 8 against, voted for merger with India.

⁶ For Nehru's message on this occasion see the following item.

thus be more prepared to take charge and carry on the administration from the 1 November onwards. This is not a matter for any formal agreement because if these people go there, they will not be functioning in any capacity, but will merely watch and see and confer. Nevertheless, this should only be done after informal agreement with the French authorities....

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Vindication of Peaceful Methods⁷

I am far from India on this day but my thoughts are at Pondicherry where an event of great significance is taking place. A part of India long separated from the motherland is coming back to us of its own free will and this change is taking place as a result of friendly Agreement with France. The French Settlements in India were small in area but they raised difficult problems. It is never easy to solve problems which involve the interests and prestige of different countries. It is thus a matter of peculiar satisfaction that both India and France have succeeded in solving this question with grace and goodwill. In doing so they have set an example of tolerance, good sense and wisdom which if applied to other problems in the world might lead to successful results.

I congratulate the people of what used to be the French enclaves in India and welcome them as nationals of the Republic of India. I offer felicitations also to the Government of France under the wise leadership of its Prime Minister and the people of France on this occasion. I am happy that Pondicherry will continue to be a centre of French language and culture and will be a cultural link between the Republic of India and the Republic of France.⁸ The settlement of this problem is a justification and vindication of the policy we have pursued in such matters. That policy is of peace and patient perseverance. Some people have thought that it was slow in achieving results. But the way of

⁷ Message to be read out by the Foreign Secretary at Pondicherry on the occasion of transfer of power on 1 November 1954. Beijing, 24 October 1954. JN Collection.

⁸ One of the salient features of the Agreement signed on 21 October was the commitment from India to protect the existing French institutions of scientific, cultural and educational value in India.

peace, though it might appear long, is always the shortest and most satisfactory. That way we shall continue to pursue, holding always to what we consider to be right and yet ever ready to be friends with even those who might oppose us.⁹ Jai Hind.

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Policy towards Goa¹⁰

I enclose a letter dated 30 November 1954, from the Chief Minister of Bombay together with a note on the present crisis in the Goa National Congress. As you know, I had a talk with Peter Alvares¹¹ this morning, and subsequently I had a brief talk with you also.

2. I entirely agree with what the Chief Minister has written in his letter.¹² I think that Peter Alvares has not always followed a correct policy and some of his statements have certainly not represented the Government of India's policy, such as his declaration that Indian satyagrahis will be sent to Goa.¹³ I

⁹ Along with the message Nehru instructed the Foreign Secretary: "Every courtesy should be shown to the French and appreciative references made to French Government. Occasion should be marked by friendship and harmony." Further, he instructed that keeping in view the cultural multiplicity of the region, the messages of the Prime Minister and the President of India and the announcements in the taking over ceremony should be done in French and Tamil.

¹⁰ Note to the Foreign Secretary, 2 December 1954. JN Collection.

¹¹ Peter Alvares (1908.1975); freedom fighter; was imprisoned twice; associated with the Congress Socialist Party; member, Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1948-52; participated in Goa freedom movement from 1952 until liberation in 1961; President, National Congress, Goa, 1953-61; member, Lok Sabha, 1963-67; Secretary of Joint Council of Action of Central Government Employees in the strikes of 1960 and 1968; President. All India Railwaymen's Federation, 1974.

¹² Morarji Desai had written about the "confused state of Goan politics... marked by dissension and disunity", where it was not easy to suggest a line of action. He felt that a concerted effort should be directed towards increasing Goanese participation in the movement and maximum encouragement should be given to the Goan Liberation Council. which represented Goans from all walks of life.

¹³ Desai had averred that Peter Alvares had not played his hand well. His reliance on support from Praja Socialists, and Jana Sanghis had led a substantial group within the Goan National

think we should strictly adhere to the policy we have so far pursued in regard to Indian satyagrahis. It does not matter much if an odd Indian goes with a group of others, but any reliance on groups of Indian satyagrahis and any attempt to bring them in large numbers would change the whole nature of this movement and be disadvantageous to us. It would give a handle to the Portuguese authorities against us.

3. Also, there is the danger that if those Indian satyagrahis are associated with that element which proclaims that Goa should be an integral part of Maharashtra, this will frighten many of the Goanese and specially the Christians there.¹⁴ Any association with a communal body like the Jana Sangh will also be harmful. For the matter of that a close association of the Praja Socialist Party might also prove somewhat injurious. I do not wish to keep out the Praja Socialist Party. My point is that the Goan movement should not be tied up with any such party in India. That will narrow its scope and might frighten many elements among the Goanese. It must always be remembered that the popular movement must essentially be based on the Goanese.

4. Therefore, it is essential that every effort should be made to build up the Goa popular movement. I do not wish at all to discourage Peter Alvares or to ignore him. But I agree with Shri Morarji Desai that the emergence recently of the Goan Liberation Council¹⁵ is a welcome development and should be encouraged.

Congress to renounce his leadership. Further, his declaration that Indian satyagrahis would be sent to Goa, against the avowed policy of the Government of India had precipitated a split in his support base.

¹⁴ Desai alleged that Peter Alvares' claim to leadership had been weakened when his support for the Samyukta Maharashtra movement—a movement to carve out a united state of Maharashtra out of contiguous regions of the Bombay State—became known. The Goan Liberation Council and various other liberal groups, who wished to retain the Goan identity within the Indian Union, distanced themselves from Alvares on this issue.

¹⁵ The Goan Liberation Council, headed by A. Soares, was formed in Mumbai in July 1954. It scrupulously kept its distance from the Jana Sangh-backed Azad Goa Dal and the PSP-backed

5. My broad view of the Goan situation is that, on the whole, we have made progress and there is absolutely no reason for us to feel dissatisfied with it. To expect sudden changes and always to think in terms of bringing about a big crisis is wrong both from the general political point of view and that of satyagraha.

6. The Goan problem may be said to have three major aspects: (1) The international aspect; (2) the economic aspect; and (3) the popular movement aspect.

7. The international aspect: So far as this is concerned, we have made very considerable progress. This progress is due to our restrained but firm policy which people in other countries have gradually begun to appreciate. This is also due to the smooth change in Pondicherry which has had a considerable effect on public opinion abroad. Thirdly, it is due to our direct approaches to various Governments. The Vice President's recent tour,¹⁶ which included Rome, Washington and the South American countries, has had a very good effect in this respect. The Vice President discussed this matter everywhere he went and the response he got in all these places indicated a better understanding of the problem and a realization that Goa must ultimately come to India. All this is a great gain and we should allow these processes to continue. For this reason also we must avoid any precipitate action which might come in the way of this international appreciation of our position:

8. The economic situation: It is generally recognized that the economic measures we have taken¹⁷ are having a good deal of effect on the Portuguese

All Party Goa Liberation Aid Committee. A delegation of the Council had met Nehru on 28 September 1954.

¹⁶ Radhakrishnan undertook a six week tour of Europe. USA. Canada and Latin America during October-November 1954.

¹⁷ The economic measures taken by the Government against Goa included restrictions on money transfer; stricter control on import of essential goods, such as steel, textile etc.; ban on import of Indian labour and stricter border vigil to stop smuggling.

in Goa. Peter Alvares told me that they were seventy five per cent effective. That is saying a good deal. We should continue these measures and, at the same time, examine how to make them more effective. In particular, we have to see how we can weaken Portuguese economy in Goa. We should consider this matter again more fully. It would be desirable to have a paper prepared on the effects of economic action so far taken and what more can be done in this respect.

9. The popular movement: I have already referred to this earlier in this note. We should encourage the new Liberation Council which has a broad basis and is not allied to any party. At the same time, we should not discourage Peter Alvares or others.

10. In this and like matters we should keep in close touch with the Bombay Government and specially the Chief Minister. He is in close touch with developments and is taking an active interest in them. Any step taken by us should be referred to him previously for his advice.

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Fate of French Establishments¹⁸

Jawaharlal Nehru: I am rather glad that this cut motion¹⁹ has been brought forward because it enables me to remove a number of misunderstandings. I-
ion. Members who have spoken would probably have got an answer to many of their questions if they had read the Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of France.²⁰ There was the Agreement and in terms

¹⁸ Reply to cut motion on demand for supplementary grants, 16 December 1954. Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. IX, Part II, 1954, cols. 3119-3129. Extracts.

¹⁹ The motion read: "That a supplementary sum not exceeding Rs. 61,63,000 be granted to the President to defray the charges...in respect of 'French Establishments in India'.

²⁰ The Agreement signed on 21 October 1954 by R.K. Nehru and Stanislav Ostorog, the French Ambassador in India, stated that after taking over the administration of the Settlements the Government of India was to bring in necessary constitutional changes after ascertaining the popular wish; the existing Municipal Councils and the Representative

of that Agreement we have to do some things and we cannot do some things at this stage.

The House will remember that this *de facto* transfer took place last month²¹ -- exactly six weeks ago. It is not a long period. And it took place in terms of that Agreement. After the *de facto* transfer, other things have to take place -- certain enquiries. The next step would be the ratification, according to the laws of the two countries concerned of this *de facto* merger and then it will become *de jure*.²² Now, we cannot of course hurry the French Parliament although I am quite sure that they will proceed with this without delay. But it is open to us to take this step in time. At the present moment enquiries and other things are not complete and the matter will have to be brought up before this Parliament and it will more or less mean, if we take it up, some kind of amendment of the Constitution. That will of course come later.

The hon. Member who just spoke referred several times to what he called merger.²³ Another Member spoke about integration.²⁴ There is no question of merger or integration before us at this stage; I cannot talk about the future. First of all, we cannot do it at this stage. We cannot talk of merger and integration when the *de jure* transfer has not taken place. The question does not arise even. It cannot be done. In terms of the Agreement some things can be done afterwards. What we shall do afterwards it is for us to consider then. I cannot express myself on behalf of Government about that. Parliament will

Assembly were to continue; the Government of India would take over the financial and social obligations of the French Government; the question of citizenship was to be decided only after the *de jure* transfer; public servants were not to be dismissed on account of action taken in course of duty before transfer of *de facto* power; the existing French cultural and educational institutions were to be retained.

²¹ On 1 November 1954.

²² The Treaty for the *de jure* transfer of Pondicherry was signed on 28 May 1956 and was ratified in July 1962.

²³ K.A. Nambiar had said that the Government of India should give a guarantee regarding holding of a free and fair election in these former French Establishments within three months. He also demanded that the Government state categorically that efforts would be made to merge these areas with the adjoining districts of South Arcot and Tanjore soon.

²⁴ M.S. Gurupadaswamy wanted to know when the *de jure* transfer would take place, so that there could be "full fledged integration of these areas with the Indian territory."

decide. But, if I may say so, it will probably be desirable and more advantageous not to have that merger with surrounding districts- I am not for the moment referring to certain small areas, which may be considered perhaps distinctly and differently, for example Mahe, but the main block, the Pondicherry block by itself may or may not be merged now. But we have undertaken to make it a centre of certain cultural activities, and we will continue certain cultural activities concerned with French language, etc., and it may be desirable to keep it as a unit of culture. But it will be for the Parliament to decide. And what we have undertaken is that we will make no change there without the consent of the people.

I shall refer to the Agreement itself. Hon. Members said about our continuing, what they call, the French imperialist system and administration, etc.²⁵ Well, I do not think it is quite correct. But we have undertaken to continue the officers there, except the French officers who have as a matter of fact departed, all of them, so far as I know. I am not quite sure about some educationists, who might be there.

Under Article I of the Agreement- "With effect from November 1st 1954 the Government of India shall take over the administration of the territory of the French Establishments in India. These Establishments will keep the benefit of the special administrative status which was in force prior to the de facto transfer. Any constitutional changes in this status which may be made subsequently shall be made after ascertaining the wishes of the people."

The hon. Member referred to some Chairman or Members of the Municipalities, that is the Communes-why we put in this man and that man.²⁶ We have done nothing of our own accord. We have maintained, in accordance with the Agreement, those people w-ho were there.

Renu Chakravarty: Two nominations were made.

²⁵ This was raised by Namhiar and Renu Chakravarty.

²⁶ K.A. Nambiar had alleged that Muthu Pillai and M. Goubert, who had been thrown out of the Municipal Councils, were brought in by an appointment order of the Chief Commissioner, Kewal Singh. He had asked, "How can a Chief Commissioner till such posts by appointment?"

JN: Nominations were made for particular reasons. There was another case where a person died. Something had to be done. The man who presided over the Assembly, who was to have become the Chief Justice, died.

K.A. Nambiar: These two were not filling of vacancies.

JN: I know, they were not. But in accordance with the spirit of the Agreement it had to be done.

Under Article 5 of the Agreement- "With effect from the date of de facto transfer the Government of India shall take in their service all the civil servants and employees of the Establishments, other than those belonging to the metropolitan cadre or to the general cadre of the France d' Outer-Mer Ministry. These civil servants and employees including the members of the public forces shall be entitled to receive from the Government of India 'the same conditions of services, as respects remuneration, leave, and pension and the same right as respects disciplinary matter or the tenure of their posts, or similar rights as changed circumstances may permit, as they were entitled to immediately before the date of the de facto transfer. They shall not be dismissed or their prospects shall not be damaged on account of any action done in the course of duty prior to the date of the de facto transfer."

What has been done is, in regard to the services, first of all, we are not making any constitutional or institutional changes. We have retained, according to the Agreement, French Indian officials. The French officials, that is French by nationality, have practically all gone, I believe. That is, the French Governor,²⁷ his secretariat and others have gone. And the French Governor's place had to be taken by somebody by the Chief Commissioner and his secretariat. The Finance and Economic Affairs Department have been amalgamated into one department, and the Police Department is headed by an Inspector General of Police, because the police head has gone to France²⁸ and two deputy inspectors, constables, etc.

²⁷ Andre Menard. He left India in August 1954, giving his charge to Secretary General Escargueil.

²⁸ Commandant Goyard left India on 31 October 1954.

In the case of Administrators for Karaikal and Mahe, officers from the State Government and Centre have been appointed. In the case of Yanam, the officer of the former French administration has been appointed as Administrator.

For the purpose of import and export regulation at Pondicherry the posts of Collector of Central Excise and Chief Controller of Imports and Exports have been created. So far as the judicial system is concerned, we have agreed to carry on the French system, the French laws. It is not particularly easy, apart from carrying on with the old people, to find people having cognizance and experience of French laws. The French laws continue. All the officers of the Judicial' Department, not desiring to proceed to France after the transfer, have been retained.

Then some posts have been created, developmental posts, in regard to the Five Year Plan.

The administration of Pondicherry after the de facto transfer has been faced with a number of cases of officers who for political reasons had either been dismissed or had resigned during the nationalist movement or had been appointed by the Liberation Council. The policy followed has been as follows: The officials dismissed by the French for political reasons since March 1954 have all been reinstated. With regard to the officials dismissed in connection with the Mahe uprising of 1948²⁹ -- about ten junior officials were dismissed in 1948 who had then sought refuge in Indian territory-the individual cases are being examined and they are being reinstated if there is nothing else against them. In regard to resignations of officials during the last seven months of French rule, all these officials are being reinstated.

Difficulty has arisen about certain temporary staff employed by the Liberation Council, because it is difficult to absorb all these people. Such as could be absorbed have been absorbed. Some of them were found to be, well, not

²⁹ .On 18 October 1948, the Malabar Socialist Party held a rally demanding liberation of Mahe. On 21 October they marched to the French Administrator's Office and in the ensuing fracas with the French police, the building was burnt down. The civil administration surrendered to the Malabar Socialist Party, which set up a Liberation Government. On 29 October 1948 the French Army recaptured Mahe.

competent enough for the work. They had been suddenly taken, and some were really not competent to do the work they were supposed to do. Even in regard to these, efforts are being made to take them in some other local service.

So that, so far as integration or merger is concerned, the question does not arise at this stage. First of all the *de jure* transfer will take place. After that it is for Parliament to consider, in consultation with or with the approval of the people in Pondicherry, what their future should be.

The hon. Member who spoke last referred by name to certain persons who, he said, had misbehaved in the past and who had now been nominated or given positions of responsibility.³⁰ Well, it is rather difficult for me to consider individual cases. It is perfectly true, I would say that from the Indian nationalist point of view many people in these Establishments have often misbehaved in the past. The gentleman whose name he mentioned as an emblem of virtue³¹ has also misbehaved greatly in the past there. But the point is that in regard to these recent changes that were brought about in Pondicherry, there can be no doubt that some of these people whose names he mentioned with disapproval played a very important part in bringing about those changes. We are neither punishing them nor approving of them. We are merely taking things as they were and continuing them, unless there is a very special reason. All this is temporary, of course.

Then in regard to this talk about elections, I would again remind hon. Members that this transfer took place last month. It is a temporary phase. We have to wait for the next phase before we have these elections or whatever they may be.

The customs barriers ultimately will have to go. I hope it will go before very long. The difficulty is that during the French rule, as hon. Members know, large quantities of goods were imported without payment and they were smuggled into India also. Many merchants wanted to profit by this change. They knew

³⁰ Nambiar had referred to Muthu Pillai and Muthukumarappa Reddiar, who he alleged, had indulged in "looting, arson and gangsterism in French India."

³¹ Nambiar had referred to one V.K. Subbiah, a communist, who was honoured and respected in Pondicherry as the leader of the freedom movement there.

that the change-over was coming up and they imported many things like this. So, we wanted a certain period to deal with these properties that had accumulated or were coming in under the previous licenses issued by the French Government. I suppose this will be a short period and it will be over. Then, there will be no customs barrier or anything.

I was not here at the time when the hon. Member Shrimati Renu Chakravarty spoke. I have read the notes of what she said. She referred to apart from referring to undemocratic methods and no elections being held meetings being banned and legitimate democratic work being suppressed. I had occasion to answer a question, or may be, I made a statement in regard to this matter. At no time has there been any order banning meetings. What the Chief Commissioner did was, he said, for a short time, for a few weeks, I hope there will be no public meetings, let us settle down; you can hold meetings in your compounds and houses, wherever you like, roughly, till the middle of December, that is till about now. If I may say so, a small reason for this was, the Chief Commissioner himself was going away for a short period because he was ill. I may say that the present Chief Commissioner, who was our Consul there previously, has acquitted himself with very-great credit-I am not talking of the last few weeks, but previously too-and I think he deserves praise for the manner he has conducted himself and has worked in very difficult circumstances before the transfer of power. So that, all that he said was, for a few weeks, because of possible party conflicts and the rest of it-do not take out processions or hold meetings. That was a request which was agreed to by everybody here except one leader, to which I shall come later. Even so, that small period is practically over. I must tell the House that meetings have been held in the last few weeks, quite a number of them without any stoppage or prohibition. In fact, even Shri Subbiah,³² the Communist Party leader held a meeting with the approval of the administration as recently as 5 December. So

³² V. Kailasa Subbiah (b. 1911); joined national liberation movement 1930; Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh, 1933-36; joined Pondicherry liberation movement and courted arrest, 1938; suffered imprisonments several times; launched Communist Party of French India, 1942; represented Pondicherry in French Parliament, 1946-49; member, Pondicherry Assembly 1946-74; Secretary, Tamil Nadu Communist Party, 1952-54; Minister for Health, Agriculture and Social Affairs, Pondicherry Government 1969-74; author of Freedom Struggle in French India.

that, the information available to hon. Members Opposite is neither up to date nor accurate.

... Let us consider. Is it a sin for the Chief Commissioner to have said so soon after the merger, with all kinds of forces at play, all kinds of feelings between local parties and different people? Hon. Member also referred to some people in very strong terms adverse to them. When they hear these abuses' at each other, there is likelihood of friction and possibly more trouble. All that the Chief Commissioner said was, for three or four weeks, please do not hold public meetings which may bring about any party conflicts; hold them in your private compounds which are big enough and it is easy to hold them in private compounds. In fact, they have been held later. The whole thing is over now. One rather remarkable charge was apparently made by Shrimati Renu Chakravarty. My note says that she said that hundreds of people were being thrown into jails.

Renu Chakravarty: What I said was, during the time of the French, hundreds of people were thrown into the jails and even now there were specific numbers-I do not have the papers before me-who are still there. They have been charged under the French law; they are political people, who have been charged for criminal acts. They are still there. Hundreds of people had been thrown into jails.

JN: If the hon. Member is referring to people who were sent during the French period-I think I mentioned about it-I am not aware of a single case. What happened was-I think it was in Yanam - some people who had been previously charged had appealed and in fact, I believe, the appeals had gone to some Court of Appeal in France and were pending. When our administrator came in, a Judge or whoever it was, he summoned them. The purpose of his summoning them was to quash the proceedings. They thought they were being summoned for being sentenced. I think I made it clear. They wanted to quash the proceedings. In order to proceed judicially, they asked them to come. That was all. In fact, the Administrator did not know anything about it and when asked, he said, I will look into the matter. Our policy is that they should be released; the only thing is to do it judicially according to the French law. If the

hon. Members refer to the French law, the French law is still existing there. It was in accordance with the French law that they were summoned so that the proceedings may be quashed.

Renu Chakravarty: I had mentioned that there were twenty volunteers in Pondicherry jail for leading a demonstration on the 9 August. There are also liberation volunteers. They are not in thousands. They are there for specific acts in connection with the liberation struggle.

JN: I am sorry I cannot give any answer to that. This is the first time I have heard of it. I will enquire certainly. As a matter of fact, since Shrimati Renu Chakravarty spoke, I got in touch with the Chief Commissioner over the telephone to enquire if there is any person in jail. This is the answer I got. I did not know that some of these persons were in jail because he said clearly that all the previous persons were being discharged. He said, whether some have been left, I cannot say, I must enquire. He said that except in one instance, to which I shall come later, no arrests had been made of any kind. The fact is that arrests have been made in connection with criminal acts. He said -I am reading out-hon. Members will forgive me if the word "communists" comes in there- "About fifteen days ago, a number of communists went to the Pondicherry municipal commune and tried to force a man called Santiago, who is a socialist municipal commissioner, to join the Communist Party."

I am reading the message as it received. There is something more exciting coming up. "He refused to do so. They stabbed his brother and assaulted his mother-in-law. Then, they went to another house and assaulted a man called Balasundaram. In this connection nine people were arrested and prosecuted. This is the only incident in which any arrests have taken place since the de facto transfer on the 1 of November."

K.A. Nambiar: Poor mother-in-law.

JN: I am glad the hon. Member sympathises with the mother-in-law.

So, I beg the House to consider in this perspective. A change took place last month under a certain Agreement which lays down that we should maintain the French law, the French services, the French conditions and that we should not make constitutional or institutional changes till later, not without the consent of the people there. That is the position. Inevitably, when these changes occurred, many people who were formerly there expected to profit by the change in terms of office, etc. It is quite impossible to provide offices for everybody. I cannot from personal knowledge say that this person is better than that. On the whole, the Chief Commissioner has proceeded according to the Agreement and kept those people there. In some cases he had to appoint people. He has got them from India. In some cases he has appointed the persons who were there in the place. And we have obviously to abide, in such matters, by his judgment who is on the spot, more specially when, during the last six months or more-he has been there for about a year I believe-he has functioned with exceedingly good judgment and produced results.

Undoubtedly, later this matter will come up before this House in the form of an amendment to the Constitution, I suppose. After that the question would have to be considered about the merger or integration, whatever it may be.

Renu Chakravarty: ...We take it that within a very short period elections will take place.

JN: I cannot say. It will have to be, normally speaking, a period of months, not years. I cannot say exactly when. Even a constitutional amendment takes time, but before we can do that, certain preliminaries have to be settled with the French.

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To K. Kamaraj Nadar³³

New Delhi
11 January 1955

³³ JN Collection.

My dear Kamaraj,

I am writing to you about Pondicherry etc. Some time ago, you wrote to me on this subject.³⁴

It seems to me that it is highly desirable for urgent steps to be taken in Pondicherry to form a Congress Party consisting of the various groups there which are at present at loggerheads, but all declare their allegiance to the Congress. You visited Pondicherry late in November and it was hoped that your visit would lead to the formation of such a Party. But, apparently, nothing much has been done since then. I should like you to take particular interest in this matter and expedite the formation of a Congress organization there including all the groups except, of course, the communists.

Strictly speaking, such a Congress Party at present cannot be member of the Congress organization in India.³⁵ But this is a minor difficulty which we can get over. In fact, I would suggest that this matter might be considered at the Avadi Congress.

It has been suggested, and probably this is your view, that Pondicherry etc., should be merged in the Madras State.³⁶ This, of course, is not at all possible till the *de jure* transfer of these old French Settlements has taken place. But, even apart from this, I think it will be very undesirable to bring this matter up now. So far Mahe and Yanam are concerned, they will undoubtedly be merged, after the *de jure* transfer, with the neighbouring districts. But Pondicherry stands on a different footing and we have given numerous assurances to the people and to the French Government about it. It is possible that, under

³⁴ Kamaraj, the Chief Minister of Madras, had written to Nehru on 2 December 1954 that during his two day visit to Pondicherry and talks with political parties there. he found that except the communists, all others were eager to join the Congress.

³⁵ Earlier, on 17 October, the French Indian Liberation Congress, formerly the French Indian Socialist Party, led by B. Muthukumarappa Reddiar, resolved at Madukarai to wind up the party and become a unit of the Indian National Congress, pending the *de jure* transfer and formation of the French Settlements into a part 'C' State

³⁶ .Kamaraj had written that the desire of the local political leadership to join the Congress was due to the fact that Pondicherry might be constituted into a separate part 'C' State. He felt that "Persons at the top are anxious to have power for themselves. The general desire of the people here is that Pondicherry should be merged with the Madras State."

pressure from us, we may even get a vote there in favour of this kind of merger, but I would not encourage this at all. Even if a majority votes for it, a strong minority would feel unhappy and would say that we have broken our pledges. Apart from this, this will have a bad effect on the Goa situation. We must, therefore, keep Pondicherry separate for some time at least and not even raise the question of merger with the Madras State.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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Integration of Pondicherry³⁷

Mr Mayor,³⁸ Councilors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am sorry that I am not addressing you in the beautiful French language which you have just used. I have not enough practice in that language to speak fluently. My coming here today after a long gap of years has brought many memories to me and more particularly, has brought before me the significance of all that has happened in Pondicherry during the last few months. For what has happened here is of a much larger significance than perhaps the mere size of Pondicherry might indicate. What has happened here, from the point of view of India, is a certain step forward in her political revolution. The first step was taken when India became free, after an agreement with the British Government. This is another step forward, however small it may be. Not much remains to complete this political revolution and political integration of India.

We in India desire no dominion outside our country. We have no ambition to dominate over any people or over any country. But we have to complete this political revolution by bringing about the integration of these pockets in India, for reasons which I need not repeat here. So it is important that this step came about. But even more important than this is the manner of its coming about. It

³⁷ Speech at a reception held in his honour, Mairie, Pondicherry. 16 January 1955. from AIR tapes, NMML.

³⁸ Muthu Pillai was the Mayor of Pondicherry.

came about by a friendly negotiated settlement with the French Government. And if I may say so, that settlement does honour both to the Government of India and the Government of the French Republic, as all true settlements always do.

Some years ago-seven and a half or so-we came to a settlement with the British Government in regard to this great country of India. We had opposed each other for a long number of years and yet those in charge of the destinies of both countries were wise enough to seek the path of friendly settlement. And as a result, the conflicts and the bitterness that had existed previously almost vanished and we deal with each other, that is England and India, as friends and we cooperate. It very seldom happens in history that a problem is solved without leaving other problems behind. Wars are fought and won and lost, but even the winning of a war does not end the problems that the war creates. Every conflict leads to other conflicts even if that conflict ceases. How then did this happen that in India this solution of a tremendous problem between the great country like India and a great empire like the British empire took place in a manner so as to leave practically no problem behind and no bitterness behind? There are few examples of that in history. So also, in dealing with this question of Pondicherry, we have achieved the settlement in friendship and cooperation with the French Government, leaving no problem behind, not even bitterness behind. All that is of the past. That, if I may say so, with all respect, is the civilized way of dealing with problems. The uncivilized way is that of war, even though big countries may fight them. So, while Pondicherry may be a small, very small part of India, it is a symbol of many things. It has now become a symbol of this friendly solution by negotiated settlement between nations of problems that troubled them. Therefore, this settlement truly brought joy and happiness to me. Anyhow, I would have been glad because I have laboured throughout my life for a certain objective in India. I have seen that objective fulfilled in a large measure and as more fulfilment comes to it, naturally, I rejoice. But my joy has been much greater because of the manner of doing it. You may remember that our great leader Mahatmaji always laid stress on the manner of doing things, on the means employed. It is good to have a right objective, to have right ends in

view, but he always said that it is more important to adopt right methods and right means because if you adopt wrong means, the objective itself changes and it lands you into great difficulties.

I thank you very much for your welcome here, Mr Mayor, and the other organizations who have extended it. It would seem both from the welcome here and from the welcome I have received in the streets of Pondicherry that almost all the people of Pondicherry, to whatever group or way of thought they might belong, have joined in this welcome. Naturally, that makes me glad, but it also casts a burden of responsibility on me, which I cannot fulfil without your cooperation. That welcome-what did it mean, what does it mean, more specially the welcome of the common people in the streets, who do not know how to spin fine phrases, but whose affection looks out of their eyes. What does it mean, that welcome? It means an expectation, a hope, a faith in the future. Now, how are we going to fulfil that hope and expectation, how are we going to lighten their burdens and bring some relief and some joy in their harassed lives? That is a question which you and I and all of us have to think about and try to find an answer. And that is the only answer that is worth giving, not some words of thanks that I might give. Well, of course, this problem is a problem for the whole of India. How to answer this question that these millions and millions of Indian eyes put to us, friendly eyes, pleading eyes, sometimes sad eyes-that is our problem.

We have to think of the future of Pondicherry in terms of the common people of Pondicherry more than in terms of a certain elite, just as in the rest of India. We have arrived at a stage in India, and in the world when nobody dare ignore the common man.

You referred, Mr Mayor, to the individuality of Pondicherry. That is true, in the course of the last two or three hundred years, these Settlements, Pondicherry, Karaikal, etc., acquired a certain individuality, a certain impress of French culture and the French language. You know that we have stated in our Agreement with the French Republic that we shall respect that French culture and the impress of the French language here and other customs here. That involves our treating Pondicherry and Karaikal in a somewhat different way from the way we may treat other parts of India, because we recognize that

individuality and what is more we wish to preserve it and even encourage it: And we wish to do so, not merely because we have come to an Agreement on that score with the Government of France. That, of course, is important, and we have to honour our Agreement. But even more so because apart from our Agreement, we feel that that should be done. That is the right course, that is something which is good not only for you in Pondicherry but for India.

India is a strange country, a very big country in size, with very great variety. I have traveled about in India, from the northern mountains which run into Central Asia, or the North East Frontier close to Tibet and Burma, right down to the south. I have seen the infinite varieties of India. Behind those infinite varieties is the unity that binds it. I am not afraid of the variety. It enriches our culture, it enriches India, but only when there is that strong bond of unity also. So I look upon Pondicherry with its background of French culture and language as something that enriches Indian culture and something that I should like to preserve. French, of course, is a great language of the world, a very beautiful language, and anyhow we should welcome it. Therefore, I should like Pondicherry to continue to be a seat in many ways of the French language and thereby, help to serve India in that respect also.

I need not say much more to you, except this, that the justification of what will happen in the future will depend on how we serve the common man in Pondicherry. I repeat that because we think of that all the time in India, and the future of Pondicherry will depend, may be to some extent on us sitting in Delhi, or our officers here. But it would depend far more on the people of Pondicherry, on you gentlemen, and others here. How far you can cooperate together for the common good, or how far you will pull in different directions and prevent each other from functioning.

We live in an age of democracy and India is committed to the democratic ideal. For the first time in history we were brave and courageous enough to give the vote to hundreds of millions of people of India. We gave the vote to the dwellers in the jungle as also to the dwellers in the cities. We did not keep away the vote from any person in India. We did not attach qualifications to it, either educational or property. We treated everyone as a human being who has a right to say as to what his government should be. So we put our faith in

democracy to the fullest extent, for it is an age of democracy. And democracy only flourishes, ultimately as freedom only flourishes, when the responsibilities of freedom are understood and carried out. If the responsibilities are not understood and carried out, then that freedom itself tends to slip away. There is no rights without a corresponding responsibility and obligation. We claim rights we are entitled to, but we forget the obligations that accompany those rights and hence those rights will not be a blessing to us and it might even turn into a curse.

Now that you have come into the larger freedom, you have to remember the obligations and the responsibilities of that freedom. You have to remember that democracy means cooperation, it means adjustment, it means often compromise between different viewpoints, and it means an avoidance of conflict. We are not going to build anything through conflict and violence. So, if you work together, it can assure you that you will have the fullest help and cooperation from our officers here. As I came to you, just before I came to you, I met our officers here and I spoke to them in the same terms as I am speaking to you. Being an officer is not merely drawing a salary. Every officer is a trustee to a certain extent, and he must discharge that trust as everyone of you, whether you are the Mayor of this Corporation, or councilors; you are trustees of this city.

I have ventured to speak to you frankly because this is the first occasion I am meeting you in this way. But we have come together and we shall have to do many things together in future, and I hope our cooperation will be fruitful. Thank you, Mr Mayor.

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To Indira Gandhi³⁹

Camp: Madras
16 January 1955

Indu darling,

³⁹ From Sonia Gandhi (ed.), *Two Alone, Two Together: Letters Between Indira Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru 1940-1964- 1964*, (London, 1992), pp. 605-606.

I have just come back from Pondicherry and received your letter of the 15th.⁴⁰ I am glad you were going to Simla with the children. Look after yourself there and don't exert yourself.

Pondicherry had a festive air. The town was decorated with numerous arches and buntings and large crowds from outside had come there. In the various functions French, of course, was dominant. It was interesting to see how people there took pride in their French as many of us have done with our English. At a college function French poetry was recited with great gusto. I visited the Aurobindo Ashram and met the 'Mother'.⁴¹ The lady has grown quite old and looks fragile. She produced no great impression of spirituality on me. I saw the boys and girls there, and indeed the grown-ups too, indulge in athletics. They were quite good at it. What was interesting was that the girls of all ages were clad in the most diminutive of attire.

You will remember showing me Bijji Kaul's⁴² letter about the Chinese delegation's visit to Madras. I have not discussed this matter with anyone here, but I have gathered the impression that the delegation was quite happy here. I am inclined to think that Bijji Kaul dramatises little events. There was some faint reference there to people from Delhi trying to boss everybody here.

Love,
Papu

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Foreign Establishments in India⁴³

The Congress had noted with pleasure the de facto transfer of the French Establishments in India to the Union of India.⁴⁴ It welcomes the inhabitants of

⁴⁰ Indira Gandhi had written about her departure from Delhi for Shimla with her children on 15 January 1955.

⁴¹ Mirra Alfassa (1878-1973); popularly known as the 'Mother', was the principal associate of Shri Aurobindo in the activities of the Ashram and the spiritual movement initiated by him in Pondicherry.

⁴² General B.M.Kaul (1912-1972).

⁴³ U.N. Dhebar moved this resolution in the open session on 21 January 1955.

⁴⁴ On 1 November 1954

these areas as citizens of the Indian Republic and as members of the large family of India, and looks forward to their progress and advancement. In particular, the Congress is gratified that this historic change has taken place by means of a friendly settlement with the French Republic. (t welcomes the assurance given that Pondicherry will continue to preserve French culture and thus add to the richness of India's life and culture.⁴⁵

2. The Congress is confident that the Portuguese settlements in India will also join the Indian Union before long and thus satisfy the aspirations of the people of those territories and complete the political integration of India.

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3. During my absence in China, an historic event took place in India. That was the de facto transfer of the old French Settlements to the Union of India. I am particularly happy that this took place as a result of a friendly Agreement with the French Government. Our policy was thus justified and we start this new chapter in Pondicherry, etc., in a spirit of goodwill to all. We hope that Pondicherry will continue to be a centre of the French language and French culture.

⁴⁵ In the Subjects Committee on 17 January. this sentence was changed to "It welcomes the assurance given that French culture will continue to be preserved in Pondicherry, thus adding to the richness of India's life and culture."