

## Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Volume 42

*Reference on Pondicherry*

*Page 648*

**To Shriman Narayan<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi April 30, 1958

My dear Shriman,<sup>2</sup>

I am writing to you about Pondicherry.<sup>3</sup> I suppose you are in touch with this. Dhebarbhai has recently met some of the Pondicherry people. I do not know what decision he has arrived at.

One of our senior officers went to Pondicherry recently and has just come back. He reports that the situation there is pretty bad and the Congress Party is absolutely split into two parts. Indeed, one part voted against certain Government proposals and sided with the Opposition, and so new committees could not be formed.

There are complaints of corruption, etc., and I gather that Dhebarbhai has asked for particulars. This may certainly be done. But our procedure is so slow that all kinds of events will happen there before we arrive at any result after our enquiries. The present Council cannot go on.

What is suggested by our officer is that some urgent action should be taken and perhaps you could go there and in consultation with the Chief

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<sup>1</sup> JN Collection

<sup>2</sup> General Secretary, AICC

<sup>3</sup> In the elections to the Pondicherry Assembly held between 18 and 23 July 1955, the Congress won 20 seats out of 39 and formed the Government Council. Factional fight among the Congress members led to the resignation of six members from the Assembly on 6 May 1958

Commissioner,<sup>4</sup> arrive at some settlement or new arrangement. As far as I can see, the only course open is to have a new Council. Perhaps, Goubert<sup>5</sup> may still be the leader; some others might change. Or, perhaps, someone else becomes the leader. I am not fully acquainted with the position there to be definite about this matter. The present Council is not a good one, though probably Goubert is in some ways superior to the others with all his faults.

Whether you can go there soon or not, I do not know. I think Goubert has written to you a rather long letter. My difficulty is that I have not been able to meet Dhebarbhai and do not know what his views are as to what should be done.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

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*Page 674*

**To K.M. Panikkar<sup>6</sup>**

Forest Rest House  
Manali  
23 May 1958

My dear Panikkar,<sup>7</sup>

Your letter of May 19 with the note attached on the present state of discontent in France reached me here this evening.<sup>8</sup> This is fairly quick

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<sup>4</sup> The Chief Commissioner M.K. Kirpalani dissolved the Assembly on 23 May 1958.

<sup>5</sup> Edouard Goubert was the Chief Councillor and leader of the Congress Party in the Pondicherry Assembly

<sup>6</sup> JN Collection

<sup>7</sup> Indian Ambassador in France

work, considering that I am staying at a rather remote place in the Kulu Valley.

I have read your note carefully and with interest. It helps us to understand a little the complicated situation in France, even though that understanding does not help much.

Some months ago, the French Ambassador in Delhi<sup>9</sup> came to see me about some matter. In the course of his talk, he referred with great feeling to the state of affairs in France.<sup>10</sup> He said that there were often governmental crises in France and change of governments. They were used to them. But now something much more serious and distressing had become a possibility and that was a crisis of the regime itself. You, of course, have been telling about this for a long time past. That crisis has now come.<sup>11</sup>

It would appear that whatever the outcome of this crisis, the Western alliance will suffer. Also that France herself will suffer considerably in the long run. As you say, all this is bound to have far-reaching consequences in the international sphere.

I suppose we had better give up thinking about the French Parliament dealing with Pondicherry, etc., and agreeing to the de jure transfer. I do not see any government strong enough to deal with this matter in the foreseeable future.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The Fourth Republic in France was overthrown in May 1958 after a series of political and military crises over the issue of Algerian independence and Gen. Charles de Gaulle was recalled from retirement to head a government of national unity and to supervise the drafting of a new Fifth Republic Constitution in six months. De Gaulle, who was elected President on 21 December 1958 and remained in power for ten years, restored political stability.

<sup>9</sup> Stanislas Ostrorog

<sup>10</sup> See Selected Works (Second Series), Vol. 39, pp. 720-721

<sup>11</sup> See also Selected Works (Second Series), Vol. 40, pp. 301-303

<sup>12</sup> A treaty ceding full sovereignty to India over French territories in India was signed in New Delhi on 28 May 1956. But the treaty was ratified by the French Parliament only in

In one of your telegrams you mentioned that a certain body of Muslim Arab opinion in Algeria was agreeable to de Gaulle coming into power. This surprised me.

Your reference to the part that the army has played and is playing in France is certainly significant. You mention some countries in Asia where the army plays an important role. You might have added to that list. But in a way even in the United States of America, the influence of the opinion of the defence forces is far greater today than ever before. It is true that in India there is not the slightest indication of this kind of thing. But when a country goes to pieces politically, it is always possible for the army to try to play apart.

Manali is one of the quietest places I know of. It is not normally easy to reach as one has to go to Pathankot by plane or train and then come by road, covering about 220 miles. I came by plane to the Kulu Valley and did about a 30-mile car journey. But this is very unusual and the airstrip nearby is a temporary affair. We had to fly through several mountain valleys, flanking on each side by fairly high mountains. Manali is, however, now getting known among the foreign missions in Delhi and more and more people come here.

I have been here four days now and they have been very quiet and restful. On the last day of this month, I shall go back to Delhi. It is my intention to return here a week later for a 12-day trek in Lahaul, but I am by no means sure whether I shall be able to do this because of developments in the international situation.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## Press Conference

*Page 745*

Q: Sir, there is one more interesting question, and that is with regard to the de jure transfer of Pondicherry and other territories. Does the delay in this de jure transfer of Pondicherry, etc., affect our relations with the French Government?

JN: Well, I hope that that particular matter does not basically affect our relations with that country, although this long wait for two years is rather trying, constantly expecting it to happen and then it not happening. But I do not think that has any basic effect on our relations. Other matters are much more important in regard to those relations from the public point of view. For instance, as you all know, people in India feel very deeply about the Algerian question.

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Page 788

### **LETTERS TO CHIEF MINISTERS**

9. In Europe, France is not only having its periodical Governmental crises,<sup>13</sup> but is facing a deeper trouble which might lead to a change in the regime itself or a civil war. The army in Algeria has rebelled against the Government's authority and constituted itself as an independent authority

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<sup>13</sup> A change of Government on 13 May 1958 led to serious protests and opposition by the French civilians and army officers in Algeria who demanded return to power of General Charles de Gaulle. De Gaulle, having announced his willingness on 15 May to accept office, was given support by all the right-wing parties in France.

for Algeria. The Algerian problem continues as difficult and as insoluble as ever.

10. Any major development in France must inevitably have far-reaching consequences in Europe and on the Western alliance. A minor result of these continuing crises in France is the delay in formalising the de jure transfer of the French settlements in India. This should have been done years ago, soon after the de facto transfer took place. But the succession of weak governments in France, overwhelmed by the Algerian crisis, dare not take up even a simple question like Pondicherry. And so, the position in Pondicherry, etc., continues to be an odd one. We are certainly in full possession and function there, but we cannot function in law as if Pondicherry was a part of the Union of India. Hence, difficulties arise.

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*Page 683*

### **Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs<sup>14</sup>**

Jawaharlal Nehru: Mr Speaker,<sup>15</sup> I beg to present the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs. In doing so, I should like particularly to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Ministry of External Affairs not only deals with external affairs but also with many important activities which might be called domestic in India. In fact, from the expenditure point of view, if we take the last year's figures-may I say here that all this is given in the booklet that the Ministry has prepared for the Members of Parliament-the expenditure was Rs 1,772 lakhs in round

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<sup>14</sup> Extracts from the discussion in the Lok Sabha, 9 April 1958. Lok Sabha Debates (Second Series), Vol. XV, cols. 9047-9063, 9069-9070 and 9162-9171

<sup>15</sup> M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar

figures. Out of this Rs 1,772 lakhs, Rs 1,167 lakhs were for activities unconnected with the External Affairs proper. For instance, there were the Tribal Areas, the NEFA, the Naga Hills and Tuensang area, and there was a fairly considerable expenditure on the Assam Rifles, which readily is an extension of the army, which deals directly with the External Affairs. This, naturally, is rather an expensive item. Then there is Pondicherry. Then there are contributions to numerous international organisations and International Armistice and Supervisory Commissions in Indo-China, expenditure on demarcation of boundaries, etc., etc. The point I wish to make is that in effect the expenditure on External Affairs proper last year, according to the revised estimates, came to Rs 605 lakhs, a trifle over Rs 6 crores.

Now, I do not wish to say much about the quality and the extent of our work abroad and our missions abroad. It is rather difficult to judge these things. But we may make comparisons to some extent with missions of other countries, from the point of view of expenditure. That is easier to compare; quality is rather difficult. If we compare it with any important country, the rate of our expenditure is far less. I do not mean to say that whatever we spend, every rupee, is well utilised. I do not mean to say that there is no wastage on our side and there is no need for economy. Of course, there is need for economy; there always is. There is always a tendency for wastage, if one is not vigilant. What I wish to submit is that, compared to any country, our foreign affairs are conducted in a much, well, less expensive way.

...In this connection may I also say, although it is not part of external affairs, that in the NEFA two or three years ago we constituted a special cadre of political officers, who were specially recruited for that purpose.<sup>3</sup> It is very difficult to deal with that situation and a very special type of officer was needed for it. It is a hard life. It is an isolated life-a life with practically

no amenities of civilised existence, no people sometimes to talk to even, and hard work. Therefore, we require a very special type of person who likes that kind of jungle life and who is physically and mentally tough, who could get on and be friends with the tribal people he was meant to serve. So, we chose a number of people---our selection boards selected them-and I am happy to inform the House that most of these people, who were chosen, have done remarkably well.

I should like to mention here in this House that not only in our foreign missions but also in a case like the NEFA it is not merely the officer who counts but his wife also counts very much. People do not often realise that in 3. A new cadre, called the Indian Frontier Administrative Service (IFAS), was established in the NEFA in 1956, which was a direct descendant in many respects of the old British Indian Frontier Service. Later, it was extended to other frontier areas.