

January 9, 1941

The Prime Minister  
Mr. Winston Churchill  
London, England

My dear Mr. Churchill:

I write you as an ordinary American citizen, and one, like many others, who is ab-together for the victory of England in this war against tyranny. But I have perhaps an advantage over many Americans in that I have extraordinary opportunities to find out what people are thinking and feeling. That the great majority of Americans are completely sympathetic with England is certainly true, and equally true is it that there is growing a strong deep determination to aid England to the utmost.

And yet there is a certain reservation in the minds of many. This can be briefly expressed in the questions, why does England at this strategic time put such a man as Jawaharlal Nehru in jail in India? Why is India not given colonial liberty?

Sir, I can think of nothing that would so hearten the cause of democracy in the United States and in all the world as a generous movement from England now towards India. If you in England would stand for liberty for India, and if the President in this country would stand for equality to the Negro here, the cause of democracy would flame into reality for millions who now doubt its worth and work for it with only half their hearts. Democracy needs this symbolic act from its leaders, if their followers are to be willing to live and to die for it. I beg you to consider this.

With deepest sympathy for England, I am

Sincerely yours,

PSE:0

(Mrs. Richard J. Walsh)



10, Downing Street,  
Whitehall.

6 March, 1941.

Dear Miss Buck,

The Prime Minister wishes me to thank you for your letter of the 9th January which has just reached him. He thinks that you have misunderstood the position in India and feels that, in view of your sympathetic interest in this great problem, you will like to see the enclosed copies of recent speeches by the Secretary of State for India and the Governor-General of India in which the present political situation is examined, necessarily in some detail. The Prime Minister hopes that these speeches may serve to demonstrate the reality and sincerity of the British Government's declared policy that India should attain "full and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth" and trusts that you may find it possible to explain the facts to other American citizens whose minds may be exercised by the questions you have raised.

explains the circumstances of the arrest and  
imprisonment of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Prime Minister deeply appreciates the  
expression of your sympathy for England's cause.

Yours very truly,

*Jawahar*

Miss Pearl S. Buck.

Note on the circumstances of the arrest and imprisonment of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

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Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested for a number of speeches made before Mr. Gandhi's Civil Disobedience campaign began and was found guilty on trial before the magistrate of prejudicing recruiting, exciting disaffection and influencing the conduct of the public in a manner prejudicial to the defence of India and the prosecution of the war. These constitute the offences under the wartime rules made under the Defence of India Act passed by the Indian Legislature at the beginning of the war. These speeches were delivered in a district where they were particularly likely to be dangerous.

The following are a few examples of points repeatedly urged in his speeches:- "Do not help the British Government with men or money"; "The British Government is a money-lender Government and it has to be destroyed"; "We have to remove the British Government".

In his statement to the Magistrate Pandit Nehru said it was his particular function and privilege to spread disaffection against the Government established by law in India. Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India, has stated in Parliament that the Viceroy and himself regret that the arrest should have been necessary but they have a duty to maintain law and order particularly at the present time and to see that the war effort is not prejudiced. India, like Britain, is fighting for her very existence, and for the Government to submit inertly at such a time to a deliberate attempt to weaken the war effort, kill recruitment or hinder production, would mean the abandonment of a cause which is India's as well as our own.

The essential point is that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru challenged the Government on the war issue and Government had no alternative but reluctantly to arrest

sentence but he has not done so. Conditions of imprisonment are greatly mitigated by concessions allowed to Class A as compared with ordinary prisoners, and extra facilities are granted by the Governor of the Province. Pandit Nehru is allowed company, books, newspapers and facilities for correspondence, special diet and furniture and his own clothes and bedding, and any tasks allotted to him must be determined with careful regard to his previous mode of life. Technically, rigorous imprisonment does not mean hard labour and in this case is accompanied by so many concessions as to deprive him of little but his liberty.

The following are a few examples of points repeatedly urged in his speeches: "Do not help the British Government with man or money"; "The British Government is a money-lender Government and it has to be destroyed"; "We have to remove the British Government".

In his statement to the Legislative Council he said that his particular function and privilege as speaker is directed against the Government established by law in India. Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India, said in Parliament that the Viceroy and himself regard that the arrest should have been necessary but they have a duty to maintain law and order particularly at the present time and to see that the law is not evaded. India, like Britain, is fighting for her very existence, and for the Government to submit herself at such a time to a halibute attempt to weaken the law effort, will result in or higher production, would mean the abandonment of a cause which is ours as well as our own.

The essential point is that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru challenged the Government on the law issue and Government had no alternative but reluctantly to accept