NEHRU

VERA GÁTHY / J. NEHRU

Jawaharlal

NEHRU

A PORTRAIT

CHAPTER ONE

Towards a Mission

A respectful opponent called him the 'Gentle Colossus', the more malicious referred to him as a Great Moghul. But almost everybody agrees that he was the maker of modern India, the architect of parliamentary democracy and of the secular state.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was sworn in as the Prime Minister of the newly born Dominion of India on 15 August 1947, he was around 58 years of age, and remained at the helm for seventeen years, until his death on 27 May 1964. Nehru is as controversial as any major historical figure: he has been bitterly criticized by many, yet was the idol of

millions. His authority was repeatedly challenged at home and abroad, yet India somehow could not do without him. And the world gradually also grew accustomed to a voice which did not always come from the big and all too well known power centres, but from a region consistently demanding its rightful place in the comity of nations.

A thin, but well built man, he was capable of setting himself to the forbidding task of reshaping a subcontinent, and this at an age when others usually begin to think of retirement. For Jawaharlal Nehru the first fifty-eight years of his life were in a sense a formative period, education and training for a task of historic dimensions. Mahatma Gandhi, who had an incredible knowledge of people and of his fellow countrymen, appointed Nehru his political heir. The long decades of the

struggle for independence had produced many as able, experienced and dedicated comrades-in- arms yet he put the destiny of his country only into the hands of Jawaharlal, even though he had many disputes, and there were a number of issues on which they could never come to terms.

On the evening of 14 August 1947 Nehru went to the Constituent Assembly with the other leaders and at the stroke of midnight he declared freedom. His address was broadcast to the nation. 'Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age

ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity . . .'

There was also a personal tryst with destiny, and a personal dedication, gradually built up during the fifty-eight years of youth, education and political struggle.

A child of affluence, Nehru was born into a family of Kashmiri Brahmins, proud of their descent, intelligence and refinement. Jawaharlal's father, Motilal was a successful lawyer, a bit of an epicurean, enjoying the gifts of life, a large house, lavishly furnished choice food, good company, technical inventions. He was the first to import a car to Allahabad, where the new family mansion stood with a swimming pool in the garden. Moti-

lal was greatly involved in the current events of the society around him, and by about the turn of the century he was becoming increasingly absorbed by the political struggles. Aristocratic by descent, steeped in Persian culture, he had a stormy temperament and a domineering character, though he was a loving father and a faithful friend. Motilal knew all the outstanding figures of the nationalist movement to which he was increasingly attracted, and by the time M.K. Gandhi became the unquestioned leader of the Indian National Congress, and hence the main driving force of the movement, they were linked by a close though not unconditional comradeship. It was due to Gandhi's influence that he gradually gave up his lucrative legal practice and suffered repeated arrest and long periods in jail as part of the civil disobedience movement. He

also made a great contribution to Congress by handing over his old house at Allahabad, which was to be the headquarters of the All-India Congress Committee, the supreme policy-making body of the party for a number of years until about the end of World War II.

Motilal, once involved in the struggle for independence, soon gained eminence in the movement. In 1919 he was Congress President at the Amritsar session. He turned to parliamentarism, when the movement was at a low ebb, trying internal obstruction as a member of the Swaraj Party, only to become disillusioned by his comrades yielding to the temptation of high offices offered by the government. Despite failing health from 1925 onwards, he kept on working and travelling. In November 1927 he paid a short visit to Moscow with his son, as part of a European trip.

When the British announced a survey of the Indian political conditions with a view to drafting a new constitution, Motilal was again in the hub of events, heading a committee appointed by an all-party conference for the elaboration of a draft constitution. The temperamental Motilal was sufficiently patient and tactful enough, of a realist to find a solution for the most ominous problem of the parity of the religious communities, an issue to grow out of manageable proportions with the passage of time. He was ready to compromise and accepted dominion status as the immediate demand of the national movement. After successfully framing a constitution Motilal was presiding over the 43rd session of the Indian National Congress, when a year of grace was offered to Britain to consider and accept the nationalist constitution. Motilal was the chair-

man of the committee which had undertaken the defence of the 32 labour leaders accused of communist propaganda in the Meerut trial, though he was not their comrade, but stood for the freedom of opinion. By the end of 1929 Motilal was replaced by his son as President of the Congress. In late June, 1930 Motilal was again arrested, but the government took him and his son to Gandhi, jailed in Poona, by a special train to allow the nationalist leaders to find a way out of the impasse in which Congress and the Raj found themselves. Hardly six months later Motilal passed away, leaving behind a wife who had grown in stature to follow her husband's footsteps, who could go out to the streets to demonstrate and to defy the *lathi* charges of the police, who found pride in her son and fragile daughter-in-law courting arrest repeatedly for the cause to which the whole family had dedicated themselves.

The Nehrus' house had been very different in 1889, when Jawaharlal was born. The spacious building was the home of a number of relatives, there was a constant coming and going, festivities of religious and social nature, big friendly gatherings, discussions and feasts. Motilal, the irreligious man of modern outlook gathered all sorts of people around himself and gallantly tolerated all streams of thought. The women of his household were the repositories of Hindu mythology, conjuring a world of legends around the children reared in the family. Jawaharlal spent his childhood in this environment, and though pampered, he was somewhat lonely, as there were no boys of his age among the close relatives. His father gave him a good education, governesses and tutors surrounded him, a pleasant old Pandit taught him Sanskrit and Hindi, and

F.T. Brooks had been with him for years, introducing the young boy to English literature and poetry, and also to the secrets of natural sciences. It was Brooks who acquainted Jawaharlal with Theosophy so successfully that when Annie Besant visited them, the thirteen year-old boy joined the Theosophic Society. It was a passing attraction but had the lasting effect of teaching him to appreciate the great books of Hinduism, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita. By the time the Nehrus set out for Britain in May 1905, the young Jawaharlal had met most of the prominent figures of Indian political and social life, and was just as enthusiastic about the Japanese victory over the Russians as any other member of the politically articulate Asian classes. Jawaharlal spent two years at Harrow, where he kept up his interest in politics, then he was admit-

ted to Trinity College, Cambridge in October 1907. The three years devoted to geology, chemistry and botany were also the years of a broader kind of education. He not only learned the ways of the British upper strata, but tried to keep pace with events in India where there was a trend towards radicalization with the emergence of Tilak, whom Nehru admired. But he also sensed that the new Indian nationalism was taking on a religious character which was not to his liking. The young Jawaharlal like his father was attracted more by aesthetics, by a complete and full life, worthy of human beings. From 1909 onwards he studied at the Inner Temple and he was called to the bar in 1912. The four years of his legal studies also allowed for trips in Europe, to Ireland, a country of special interest for Indians with her Home Rule movement and Sinn Fein, echoed

in the *swadeshi* and *swaraj* movements unfolding in Bengal after its partition by Lord Curzon.

Jawaharlal spent seven years in Britain and was 23 by the time he returned to India, a country returning to calm after years of political storm until the reunification of the province of Bengal was successfully achieved, though the scars had remained, never to disappear completely.

The young Nehru was an accomplished gentleman, who had acquired a good knowledge of French, evolved a scientific outlook, had a predilection for poetry, was a voracious reader, had a broad mind and well trained intellect, who had assimilated the set of values evolved by European culture since the renaissance, the noble sentiments of nineteenth-century poetry, the high, though rarely observed moral norms shaped by Christianity and European

tradition. And most important of all, he could understand something very few of his compatriots at home could, namely the international context everybody was operating in, the existence of a very closely knit global system of markets, power relations and interests no one could escape. And during the course of the subsequent decades Nehru was never to forget this important recognition.

The message of the socialist movement and its various lines also had a great impact on him. His critics often say that his socialism did not go beyond that of the Fabians, and that he used only the phraseology of socialists in a rather incoherent manner, but this does not do him justice. He made frequent and quite penetrating excursions into socialist literature and devoted much attention to the movement, so much so that socialism had a lasting ef-

fect on his thinking and later political ideas, on his vision of a future India, even if he himself had never forgotten his class affiliation and saw very clearly that his political views were those of the bourgeoisie and his political activities were those of the middle classes, as he himself stated in his *Autobiography*.

It was the proper understanding of the class structure of society that led him to make a major realization a few years after his return to India, a realization that was to enjoy top priority in his policy as Prime Minister. In 1920 he was invited by the *kisans*, the peasants of a district of Allahabad to help them. The experience was an overwhelming one. Nehru could see the utter poverty of the peasants and also that the nationalist movement did not know and care about the rural conditions, that there had been an agrarian move-

ment totally independent of Congress which claimed to represent the entire nation. From then onwards Nehru regularly toured the countryside, becoming increasingly familiar with the agrarian issue, particularly in the so-called *zamindari* regions, where a complicated pyramid of tenancy had evolved crushing the peasant below. He had a mighty ally in his discovery of the peasantry through Mahatma Gandhi, who transformed the Congress into a vast mass movement embracing the mute millions of the Indian villages too. However, the cause of the peasantry had brought a delicate issue to the surface, an issue never to be very precisely articulated during the course of the independence movement, but never to be totally suppressed, at least not in Nehru's thinking. It was the issue of class conflict between landlords and peasants.

The Gandhian leadership of the nationalist movement from 1920 onwards had brought about a form of unprecedented unity of the nation for the single purpose of national liberation. Though this unity had its weaknesses and some groups remained outside it, yet Congress could justly claim that they stood for the whole of India. By about the turn of the century, but definitely by the end of World War I practically all the major sections of British-Indian society had come into conflict with the British Raj and had found foreign rule the main obstactle to their progress. The urban middle classes, the bourgeoisie, the landed classes the peasantry and labour, the intelligentsia all found a common denominator in their opposition to foreign rule. The means, however, were missing for a more effective struggle. And then came Gandhi with twenty years of ex-

perience in struggle against the whites in South Africa, with tested methods of fighting. Gandhi realized that no government could function without the cooperation of the governed, thus if such a cooperation is massively withdrawn any government can be forced to make concessions. He therefore evolved the method of civil disobedience on a large scale, calling it *satyagraha,* adherence to truth, the refusal to obey unjust laws. He used a language that could be understood by the illiterate masses, he introduced the high morallity into the Indian cause and raised the downtrodden to face a mighty adversary in a peaceful way. Nehru was relieved by the coming of Gandhi. Here was a leader with tactics that would get the national movement out of the impasse. And the mass movements of civil disobedience, at times including the non-payment of

taxes, courting arrest and peacefully submitting to the repressive measures of the government could unnerve and greatly upset the Raj. Nehru unimpressed by religion was often irritated by Gandhi's religious language but he had to recognise that it was a correct policy in those days, and he thought that giving a moral content to politics was a great idea.

Gandhi had given a method of struggle, an organization able to mobilize millions, and morals to develop a nation's dignity. But Nehru could discern that the Indian nationalist movement was essentially a political one without an elaborate ideology and clearly set objectives. And though Gandhi's constructive programme was meant to promote the reconstruction of Indian society, Nehru could not accept the Gandhian vision of self-sufficient village republics. He was im-

bued with scientific spirit in an age when the new tribe of nuclear physicists "Steadily, unflinchingly . . . strive to pierce the inmost heart of Nature"- as Sir William Crookes had put it sometime in 1898. Human science was marching ahead, creating an impression of constant, unilinear progress of man and society. What was needed for India was a penetrating analysis of her conditions and a programme of comprehensive reforms based on scientific principles. A new India had to be envisaged where all the benefits of science and technology would be harnessed for the common weal.

And the long spells of forced seclusion, the 3262 days spent in prison gave an opportunity for such an analysis and also for shaping a vision. Although Nehru's highly informative books, his *Glimpses of World History Autobiography*, and *The Discovery of India*, give

a deep insight into the period, and also into the author's erudition, yet they best reveal how his conviction evolved, how he was building up the concept of a free India to be created once independence was achieved. The books also reveal the sources of inspiration and the psychological constitution of the man. Historians may find factual mistakes in his writings as he was deprived of reliable sources, some of his interpretations may be dubious, as he was not a trained scholar, his writings may at times lack 'objectivity', but he was committed to a cause and did not consider himself a follower of Tacitus, yet the three books are a revelation for the reader. They are works of artistic value, written in beautiful language, reflecting, as Michael Brecher says, the classical nineteenth-century belief in perpetual progress and giving a 'sociological analysis of

groups or societies in motion, with a strong infusion of Marxist method', and there is also the main undercurrent of the 'primacy of international over national goals'. *The Glimpses of World History*, as well as *The Discovery of India* reveal something else too. In a sense they are a continuation of a strong current of Indian nationalism, which, while appreciating the scientific achievements and the liberal ideas of the West, had been advocating the spiritual superiority of the East. Nehru was not keen about spiritualism, so he went a step further, showing how brief and scattered Europe's dominance has been if history is taken as a whole. Perhaps his writings were among the first to have an Asian-centred orientation. The late twentieth-century reader may, at times, be surprised by the romanticism of these books, but the psychology of dedication to

a cause, the sense of a mission and the acceptance of a major historical role stand out from the attitude of common people in everyday life. And they particularly stood out at a time when history, as well as science were considered as adventures by the best minds of the age. "How fortunate we are to live in these stirring times, when each one of us can take part in the great adventure and see not only India but the whole world in process of change!"—exclaims Nehru in his 22nd letter addressed to his daughter, Indira. In letter 33, speaking about the disintegration of the Roman Empire he refers to 'mighty Asia', an emotional concept retained all along, whether he is writing about ancient China, or India, or the Far East. There is a brief, but important description of India as he saw her in the 44th letter in the *Glimpses of World History:* "Geographically, as

you know, India is more or less of a unit. Politically she has often been split up, though occasionally, as we have seen, she has almost been under one central authority. But right from the beginning, culturally she has been one, because she had the same background, the same traditions, the same religions, the same heroes and heroines, the same old mythology, the same learned language (Sanskrit), the same places of worship spread out all over the country, the same village *panchayats* and the same ideology and polity... Thus there rose a common Indian consciousness which triumphed over, and partly ignored, the political divisons of the country." But this overall cultural unity had its negative components as well, and caste was one of the most serious. "It was based on perpetuating inequality and injustice, and any such attempt was bound to fail

in the end. No sound and stable society can be built up on the basis of inequality and injustice, or on the exploitation of one class or group by another."—he says in the 40th letter. And he gives the right perspective to the East-West dispute in the 95th letter: "There is no question of a practical and materialistic West and a spiritual and other-wordly East. The difference is between an industrial and highly mechanized West, with all its accompanying good and bad points, and an East which is still largely pre-industrial and agricultural." When he explains the development of the nation-state to his daughter, he points out that 'the eighteenth century saw this idea of nationality and patriotism take root'. The same century also saw 'a scramble for colonies in America and Asia'. The 96th letter, containing these ideas is followed by the description of the Industrial Re-

volution and the new quest for raw material generated by the machine age, which set out a new wave of colonization, and also a struggle among the great powers for these resources and for the new markets. Nehru summarizes the essence of British colonial rule in his 110th letter: "We have seen that India was a prosperous manufacturing country when the British gained power here. The next stage, in the ordinary course, should have been to make the country industrial and to introduce the big machine. But instead of going forward, India actually went back as a result of British policy. She ceased even to be a manufacturing country, and became, more than ever, an agricultural country.

So poor agriculture had to support all these vast numbers of unemployed artisans and others. The pressure on land became terrible, and yet it still

went on increasing. This is the foundation and the basis of the Indian problem of poverty. From this policy most of our ills have resulted. And till this basic problem is solved there can be no ending of the poverty and misery of the Indian peasant and village-dweller." He continues his analysis in the next letter: '... the real cause of the pressure on land in India is the want of occupations other than agriculture, and not the growth of population.' Yet Nehru does not think that the villages should be the centres of progress. 'They were rather primitive and backward.' As the 'Indian village system was dragged, by the force of events, into the circle of world prices', the old economic order collapsed, giving way to famines and poverty.' ... our country is full of these poor cultivators, and we should make some effort to understand what ails them, and how we can serve them and

better their lot.' And he goes on to describe how the peasant 'was exploited by everyone who came in contact with him, by the tax-gatherer, and landlord, and *bania,* and the planter and his agent, and by the biggest *bania* of all, the British Government...' And all this is due to imperialism. Nehru condemns it with strong words in his 112th letter: 'With the best will in the world, you cannot convert stones and earth into good food, however much you may cook them. So it is, I think, with imperialism and capitalism. They cannot be improved; the only real improvement is to do away with them altogether.'

When Nehru explains British rule in India to his daughter, he makes a few salient points in the same letter: 'We find that the British, the most advanced people in Europe at the time, ally themselves in India with the most

backward and conservative classes. They bolster up a dying feudal class; they create landlords; they support the hundreds of dependent. Indian rulers in their semi-feudal states.' 'British rule also helped religious conservatism.' 'But one great benefit the English did confer on India. The very impact of their new and vigorous life shook up India and brought about a feeling of political unity and nationality... English education, intended to produce clerks, also put Indians in touch with current western thought. A new class began to rise, the English-educated class...' But the first awakening took place among the Hindus. 'Thus it is interesting to note that the early waves of nationalism in India in the nineteenth century were religious and Hindu.'

It is also interesting to see how Nehru was thinking about the larger and more abstract issues of war and re-

volution. In his 126th letter he writes that war as such is becoming more virulent 'But its causes now are obviously political and economic. The political causes are chiefly connected with nationalism: the suppression of one nation by another, or the conflict between two aggressive nationalisms. Even this conflict is largely due to economic causes, such as the demand by modern industrial countries for raw materials and markets.'

Nehru also takes up the issue of revolutions. When a nation is ruled by another and the subjected nation throws off its oppressor, it is a national revolution. 'A successful national revolution at least removes the foreign element, and the dominant elements in the country immediately take its place... Those lower in the scale may not profit much, unless the national revolution is accompanied by a social re-

volution also.' Whereas a social revolution 'changes the fabric of society.' But people have a curious attitude to social life. According to Nehru 'people imagine that there is an unchanging social system and it is nobody's fault if the majority suffer under it... Society is always conservative, and dislikes change.' Yet the social and economic conditions are in a constant flux which brings about revolution as 'the inevitable result of conservatism.'

The letters go on educating the beloved daughter in a style full of warmth and clarity, touching upon the giants of world literature and of natural sciences, on the history of democracy and the coming of socialism, of Robert Owen, of Fabianism, of the anarchists and letter 133 is devoted to Karl Marx, while the next one discusses Marxism. When trying to sum up what the vari-

ous trends of socialism stood for, Nehru writes that 'production and distribution and other important activities should be largely socialised or controlled by the state—that is, by the people as a whole. That is the basic idea of socialism.' And as far as Marxism is concerned, 'It is a way of interpreting history and politics and economics and human life and human desires. It is a theory as well as a call to action... It is an attempt at reducing human history, past, present and future, to a rigid logical system...'

While Nehru surveys the entire history of humanity he devotes a particularly large proportion of his attention to the countries and regions outside Europe, and naturally to India. As a contemporary he was enthusiastic about the Russian revolution, a detailed description of which he gives in his 150th, 151st and 152nd letters. In

1933 he wrote to Indira that 'There is no instance in recorded history of such rapid advance of a people... The most notable advances have been in education and in industry. By vast Five Years' Plans the industrialization of Russia has been pushed on at a feverish pace...' While elsewhere 'Not only is the rivalry between capitalist States growing to dangerous dimensions, but, at the same time, within each State the conflict between classes, between the workers and the capitalist owning class, which controls the government, is becoming acute. As these conditions worsen, a last desperate attempt is made by the owning classes to crush the rising workers. This takes the form of fascism.' 'So in Europe fascism faces democracy and the forces of socialism...'

Quite understandably his attention was focused most on India. It is en-

lightening to read his assessment of Gandhi's leadership. Gandhi's programme of non-co-operation 'Like Sinn Fein in Ireland, . . . taught us to rely on ourselves and build up our own strength, and it was obviously a very effective method of bringing pressure on the government . . . *Satyagraha* was a definite, though non-violent, form of resistance to what was considered wrong. It was, in effect, a peaceful rebellion, a most civilized form of warfare, and yet dangerous to the stability of the State. It was an effective way of getting the masses to function, and it seemed to fit in with the peculiar genius of the Indian people . . . It made us shed the fear that crushed us . . .'

Nehru also saw that one of the basic problems of Indian unity was the Hindu-Muslim question. 'Politically, the Hindu-Muslim question was essentially a middle-class affair, and a quar-

rel over jobs.' And he goes on giving a well-founded analysis of their economic relations. Yet, perhaps at this point he underestimated the dangers of the issue which were to escape control and lead to the partition of the country. When returning to the description of the Gandhian movement, he drew yet another important conclusion: 'Civil Disobedience in India has been a national struggle; it has certainly not been a class struggle.'

The way he was able see the major historical trends at work in Europe and elsewhere made him almost unique among his compatriots. And he was aware of this quality, enhanced by his frequent, and at times long sojourns in Europe, meetings with all the prominent people of his age. He could clearly see that the stabilization in Europe after the First World War was a superficial one and that a new outbreak of conflict

was almost inevitable. He also saw that in India political freedom was necessary but insufficient, and that Congress was a political and nationalist body not thinking in other categories. He felt that it was necessary to begin the process of thinking and started to prepare draft resolutions on a number of issues for Congress. He was eager to establish contacts with the other nations of the world struggling for their liberation, and he could see the case of India as part of the global processes. It was largely due to his activities that the Congress resolutions contained an increasing number of passages on foreign relations, on economic issues, on the objective of the distribution of land, on the abolition of big landed property.

Nehru was trying to educate the Indian politicians about socialism, about the short-term prospect of global

politics heading towards a new war. Some ideas from one of his famous speeches bring his way of thinking into bold relief. It was his presidential address delivered at the 44th session of the Indian National Congress held at Lahore in 1929. Referring to the world situation and to the prospects Nehru said: '. . . we may assert with some confidence that Asia and even India, will play a determining part in future world policy . . . The future lies with America and Asia . . . India today is a part of a world movement.' About the conflict of religious communities he refers to the European experience where religious liberty was followed by political and legal equality, but 'Having attained these also, she finds that they mean very little without economic liberty and equality.' As far as religion is concerned, he continues: 'I have no love for bigotry and dogmatism in re-

ligion and I am glad that they are weakening. Nor do I love communalism in any shape or form. I find it difficult to appreciate why political or economic rights should depend on the membership of a religious group or community.' Talking about the British Empire he finds that it 'is indeed gradually undergoing a process of political dissolution.' About the issue of war and peace: 'There is talk of world peace and pacts have been signed by the nations of the world. But despite pacts armaments grow and beautiful language is the only homage that is paid to the goddess of peace. Peace can only come when the causes of war are removed. So long as there is the domination of one country over another, or the exploitation of one class by another, there will always be attempts to subvert the existing order and no stable equilibrium can endure.

Out of imperialism and capitalism peace can never come.' When talking about the future of India, he first speaks about himself: 'I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican and am no believer in kings and princes, or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry . . .' Stating that 'the philosophy of socialism has gradually permeated the entire structure of society the world over' he remarks that 'India will have to go that way too if she seeks to end her poverty and inequality . . .' As far as the future tasks of India are concerned: 'We have three major problems, the minorities, the Indian States, and labour and peasantry.' The latter being the biggest. And in his subsequent speeches and writings, like *Wither India,* he left nobody in doubt about his being a convinced socialist.

During the almost twenty years

from 1920 till 1939 Jawaharlal had an active political life. He spent two years as Chairman of the Allahabad Municipality from 1923, trying his hand at public administration. He was Congress President or Secretary for numerous terms, a devoted disciple and lieutenant of Mahatma Gandhi, whom he loved and admired but whose views could never be fully accepted by him. When Motilal died, Jawaharlal found solace in Gandhi, turning to him for advice and consolation. Conflict was not uncommon between them as Nehru tended to be a Leftist, a Radical, the hope of the younger generation of socialist politicians like Subhas Chandra Bose, yet he retraced his steps repeatedly because he saw a single major objective only and it was the political revolution of India, the attainment of Independence. For that purpose political unity was the

most essential thing as represented by Congress. The next objective for Nehru was to prepare the country for freedom by moulding an overall policy including economic transformation, social justice, education and science, and foreign policy. In other words: social revolution. And to speed it up he envisaged planning as the most appropriate means. In 1939 there was an attempt at planning in which Nehru participated and of which he gave an interesting account in *The Discovery of India*. As the older generation of Indian politicians dominating the scene did not see eye to eye with Nehru on these issues and did not attribute much significance to his proposals of little relevance under the colonial conditions, they passed his draft resolutions, thus Nehru succeeded in building up Congress policy for the future, embodied in a series of resolutions adopted on

numerous occasions over a period of for two decades.

The radical Indian politicians grew disillusioned with him because of his repeated compromises. The diehard elements dismissed his radicalism as something Gandhi could always tame.

As World War II was drawing towards its end and Nehru was in jail, as were almost all the leaders of the national movement and of the outlawed Congress, the future architect of modern India was completing his third major opus, *The Discovery of India*. He was a man over fifty, a widower bereft of a loving wife, having already lost his parents and most of his property was confiscated by the Government, which had also taken more than nine years of his life. His only emotional attachment was to his daughter, to Gandhi and to a handful of friends. During the decades of the struggle he had

learnt the daily routine of political bargaining, the patient work of reaching a consensus in the Indian way, thus getting ever closer to understanding Gandhi. As far as the future was concerned he had evolved a comprehensive vision, almost an all round ideology, disclosed in his writings and speeches. He did not make a secret of it. And it was no fault of his if the Indian political leadership did not take his words at their face value. '. . . Gandhi realized that apart from himself Nehru was the only nationalist leader with genuine mass appeal.'—writes Brecher and he is right. Nehru had become a charismatic leader admired by millions until his death. Yet he was quite lonely, equally understanding the cultures of East and West, trying to merge the best of both to the benefit of his country and slowly evolving the conviction in himself that he alone

could realize his social, political and economic goals. He is often criticized for indecision. It is, however, highly unlikely that anybody else could always be resolute under the burden of such a deep insight into the functioning of society, of such an unerring sense of history, facing the challenge of the destiny of more than three hundred million people in one of the most backward countries of the world. Nehru was too intelligent and erudite to imagine that he was infallible. Though of healthy physique, enjoying physical exercise, and having a formidable capacity for work, he was very human, having spiritual ups and downs, weaknesses and strong points. He had made at least two major historical mistakes he was to regret, or at least suffer the consequences later on. One was his strong conviction that the religious and other parochial confrontations of

the Indian society were due partly to the abysmal poverty of the masses who could find no other way of expressing their dissatisfaction but in religion and could see no other cause of their plight but the other religious community meting out an unfair treatment, and that the whole confrontation was manipulated by the propertied strata of Hindus and Muslims struggling for power and position, and the whole problem would automatically disappear once the economic causes were eliminated. The other one was his belief that the need for the social reform he was advocating was obvious for the whole nation and everybody would eagerly work for it as soon as the opportunity arose. These were his two major assessments that proved to be wrong. And he had to face the consequences, which he bravely did.

As 1946 approached, here was a man

J.L. NEHRU AFTER THE
'MUNDAN CEREMONY'

J.L. NEHRU AT THE AGE OF ABOUT SIX YEARS WITH HIS PARENTS, 1895

J.L. NEHRU RIDING A HORSE IN THE LAWNS OF ANAND BHAVAN, 1904

J.L. NEHRU AS A CADET DURING HIS SCHOOLING AT HARROW (ENGLAND), 1907

J.L. NEHRU AS A STUDENT
AT CAMBRIDGE, 1910

J.L. NEHRU WITH WIFE KAMALA AND THEIR DAUGHTER INDIRA ON HER FIRST BIRTHDAY

J.L. NEHRU LEADING PROTEST MARCH

J.L. NEHRU AT BAMBROULI AIRPORT ON HIS RETURN TO INDIA AFTER KAMALA'S DEATH MARCH 1936

FAMILY—J.L. NEHRU, WIFE KAMALA AND DAUGHTER INDIRA

MAHATMA GANDHI AND J.L. NEHRU
1939

who had made his tryst with destiny, who had elaborated a political theory and acquired skills in the daily routine of political life, who had a global view, who had renounced himself as a private individual and dedicated himself to a major historical cause, who had high moral values, who had a mission in his country and in the world and the psychological traits necessary to endure the task. There was pathos in him, just as in the contemporary world. It was a heroic age, hoping to end war and oppression for ever. And historiography had not yet begun to divest the historical heroes from their heroism. Nehru was dedicated to a revolutionary cause, and no revolution has been fought with the sobriety of dwarfish little bureaucrats shuffling their files to and fro. Revolutions have their romanticism or missionary zeal. Nehru had both.

CHAPTER TWO

'The Noble Mansion of Free India'

Independence dawned on the national movement, and particularly on Congress and Nehru under very different conditions from those they envisaged. It was out of the question for them to set themselves to the task of building the 'Noble Mansion of Free India'. Ever since the Congress Ministries resigned in the provinces in 1939, and even more since the 'Quit India' resolution of Congress in 1942, the National Congress and its leadership had been cut off from the political life of the country. The Congress was banned, its leaders were in jail, for years obtaining only scattered news about the events. Though the Congress stand during the war years was

morally correct, its price was too high in terms of political leadership and administration. By the time the Congress leaders were released from jail in 1945, the entire body politic of India had undergone major changes. The most ominous change was the tremendous growth of the influence of the Muslim League, which had been able to function legally during the war years. Any national unity inclusive of the League had become impossible. During the war terrorism was rampant and it was further fuelled by deliberately worked communal tension.

The Bengal famine, lasting for more than a year, and claiming an unprecedented toll of about 2 million people from 1942 onwards, shocked the whole country. As the export of rice was stopped from Burma and Thailand, there was a constant shortage of food, black-marketeering and hoard-

ing were widely practised and prices were soaring. There had been a rapid growth of polulation and domestic agricultural production could not keep pace with it. The war years had brought about a boom in industry, the almost two million Indian soldiers learned modern trades and military discipline, a large number of Indians were admitted into the officer corps and into the higher echelons of the civil service. The political and social uncertainty prevalent during the war years continued, and the British-Indian government showed signs of growing weakness. It had become obvious that freedom was imminent. The only question, was how it would come. And at this juncture the national unity, gradually built up during the previous decades under the able guidance of Gandhi and his lieutenants, began to show major cracks. It was a single-

purpose, political unity aiming at the achievement of political independence, though the Congress leadership always wanted much more than that. They wanted also a social, economic and cultural unity, as a basis for rapid modernization. Gandhi and Nehru had wisely recognized that in a country of strong religious sentiments and divisions, in a society segregated into the formidable hierarchy of the caste system, the only possible framework for such a national unity was the secular State. Nehru, when moving the Objectives Resolution in the Constituent Assembly on 13 December 1946, broadly outlined this aim: 'to proclaim India as an Independent Sovereign Republic . . . Wherein the territories that now comprise British India, the territories that now form the Indian States, and such other parts of India as are outside British India and the States

as well as such othert territories as are willing to be constituted into the Independent Sovereign India, shall be a Union of them all...' 'Wherein all power and authority ... are derived from the people; and... Wherein shall be guaranteed and secured to all the people of India *justice,* social, economic and political: *equality* of status, of opportunity, and before the law; *freedom* of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action, subject to law and public morality; and ...Wherein adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, backward and tribal areas, and depressed and other backward classes ...' And added: 'We have undertaken a tremendous task and we seek the cooperation of all people in that task...'

This cooperation was not forthcoming at the most crucial moment of In-

dia's modern history. The greatest blow to national unity was the League's stand, advocating the 'two-nation' theory along religious lines. And the June 1945 proposals of the Viceroy indirectly accepted the League's view by offering equal representation for Hindus and Muslims in the government. The proposals were followed by a series of talks in India and Britain, with the participation of M. A. Jinnah leader of the Muslim League, and the nationalist leaders, including Nehru, but the partition of the country could not be averted. Meanwhile communal tension was growing, bloodshed became the order of the day, and though the government had wide powers to control the situation, no serious attempts were made to stop the general upheaval. It became quite apparent that Britain did not want to leave behind a strong and united India. The se-

quence of drafts and plans presented by the British, envisaged various groups of states within a federation with a weak centre. The balkanization of the subcontinent had become a real threat. And the Congress leadership was becoming increasingly aware of it.

On 20 February in 1947 Prime Minister Attlee announced in the House of Commons that Britain would withdraw from India by June 1948, and simultaneously Lord Mountbatten was appointed as the last British Viceroy of India. It was Mountbatten who prepared and negotiated the final plan for partition and the withdrawal of the British from the subcontinent. His Pakistan plan was eventually accepted by the All-India Congress Committee on 15 June 1947, and two new dominions were created by 15 August 1947. British paramountcy lapsed, India became independent.

History books of the period go into great detail on the negotiations leading to freedom, and as time passes and the adult generation of the partition slowly disappears, together with the living memory of the events, it is only factual information that survives about the prevailing conditions and not their awful reality. The vision of a new India, strong, secular and united, was relegated almost beyond reach by the events.

For the time being there was the enormous and disheartening task of partitioning the country, carving out an Eastern and a Western part from India, dividing the provinces of Bengal and Punjab, dividing the armed forces, public administration, the assets of the State in an atmosphere of hatred and suspicion, so that the two parts of Pakistan could be created. And there was a continuous flood of refugees.

Non-Muslims fleeing for their life from the newly created Pakistan, Muslims fleeing from India in fear of the Sikhs and Hindus. Millions were uprooted and thousands massacred in communal strife. People strove to escape, leaving behind relatives, land, home and wealth. The conditions verged on civil war. The untold misery and suffering of the refugees, the tragedy of individuals presented the government with a formidable task of providing supplies and settlement for years to come, when there was a shortage of practically everything.

In addition to the issue of partition there were about 560 princely States, mostly without any representative government, where feudal conditions prevailed and administration was lacking, or weak. These States had to be merged into one or other of the dominions, while law and order had to be re-

stored all over the country, communal strife stopped, and the refugees cared for.

Only dedicated men of outstanding endurance could set themselves to the task of building a new India after the bitter experience of shattered hopes, ruined unity and scarce resources. And above all, the spirit of the struggle for independence was also on the wane, pressure groups of all kinds, religious, regional, economic, and political, were trying to assert themselves even against the long cherished, and seemingly accepted national goals.

The great triumvirate of the national movement Gandhi, Patel and Nehru were strong enough to overcome the mental strain and disillusionment, and started to work for restoring order and peace, and also for the major objective of creating a new India. There was an almost natural division of labour

among them. Gandhi, with his charismatic personality went out to distant parts of the country to calm down the communal struggles, often walking over difficult terrain at the age of seventy-eight to restore peace and tolerance. Once again he was able to bring moral pressure on Hindus and Muslims by fasting to force an agreement between the two major religious communities. Vallabhbhai Patel, Deputy Prime Minister, the able administrator and eminent lawyar, a dedicated follower of Gandhi, who had the capacity to carry out any task ruthlessly, if he was convinced if its justness, set himself to the political unification of the country by merging the princely States with tactfulness and circumspection. He was able to carry out the territorial integration within record time with a minimum amount of friction thus becoming one of the major architects of

the India of our days. Only two States posed problems. One was Hyderabad and the other Kashmir, the latter a cause of repeated wars between India and Pakistan. Nehru associated himself with the overall political consolidation of the country. He made efforts to restore the normal functioning of government, and to start the comprehensive modernization of the country.

Mahatma Gandhi, however, was assassinated on 30 January 1948, and Patel died on 15 December 1950, leaving Nehru alone. It is often said that the three of them had differences of opinion, that Nehru and Patel were not always able to cooperate and Gandhi had to make peace between them. Yet it was the three of them, and after the death of Mahatma, Nehru and Patel, who managed to steer the country out of the ruts during the crucial years bet-

ween 1946 and 1950, and then Nehru alone who brought the nation to the polls in 1952 on the basis of universal adult franchise for the first time in the history of India. Nehru is often criticized for talking too much and doing too little. As a democrat by conviction he felt it was impossible to do very much without popular support, without the active cooperation of the people concerned. And initially not many people wanted to cooperate.

The political integration of the country was the prime and paramount task, but in addition the entire structure of free India had to be shaped, and simultaneously at that. The territorial integration had to be completed, public administration extended over the erstwhile princely States, political roles had to be clarified all along the hierarchy from the President, Parliament, the judiciary, the Governors,

the central and the provincial Governments down to the local officials. And there was the major task of transforming Congress, hitherto the vanguard of a national movement and a broad front, into a governing party. The Constitution had to be framed, the international position of India outlined, the foreign service developed. In short, all the agencies and functions of an independent State had to be evolved. As there is no such thing as a clean slate for any nation, the architects of modern India had to work with whatever material they could find. The goals were set during the struggle for independence; now they had to be adjusted to the prevailing conditions. It was a formidable task, demanding constant compromise even on the most cherished objectives, and allowing for all sorts of criticism.

As this is not a history of modern In-

dia, nor a biography of Jawaharlal Nehru, the author does not wish to follow the events in chronological order. When the centenary of the Indian National Congress was celebrated in 1985 Rajiv Gandhi could proudly state that 'Today India is the tenth largest industrial power in the world; the fourth largest military establishment and the world's largest democracy. It is a regional power to reckon with and its voice is being increasingly heard and respected in international forums.' This is the Union, a single India, which has not fallen apart, despite all separatist tendencies of the past four decades. The country has shown a remarkable political stability, something sorely lacking in many parts of the Third World. And it has made major progress in the economy, science and technology as well. However, the foundations had to be laid first and the road

leading to success built, even if India was in a better position at the end of the colonial period than many other dependent countries. The economy was quite complex, there was a fairly good network of communications, an extensive administration and government, and also political organizations. Yet it was grossly inadequate as a basis for all that is the India of today.

Nehru's speeches and writings, particularly during the first four critical years of political independence and consolidation give an insight into the state of affairs existing as a basis to the 'Noble Mansion of Free India'. And his letters to Chief Ministers also reveal how earnest he was as he tirelessly repeated certain ideas, and how firm he was regarding the vital minimum when constantly making compromises. These letters and speeches produce a kind of newsreel on the day-to-

day events of the country and the world, and on the work of a unique *political educator*. Rajiv Gandhi aptly remarked that 'These fortnightly letters have long been regarded as a basic text in nation-building and in open statecraft.' They make the reader realize what a long distance has been covered since, and how clear an understanding the architect of modern India had of his own country and of the international community. And perhaps they also give a better appreciation of how much vision and conviction, tempered with tolerance and understanding of human nature, are needed in people who undertake major historical roles.

Consolidation

Though having a clear vision of the tasks ahead, Nehru was fully aware of the bleak realities of the days when India became free. On 15 August 1947 he addressed the nation for the 'first time officially as the First Servant of the Indian people'. In his broadcast he called attention to the most immediate tasks, but also pointed towards the future. 'Our first immediate objective must be to put an end to all internal strife and violence, which disfigure and degrade us and injure the cause of freedom.' 'We have to change rapidly our antiquated land tenure system, and we have also to promote industrialization on a large and balanced scale . . .' 'Pro-

duction today is the first priority' ... and '... fair and equitable distribution in essential...' 'The Government of India have in hand at present several vast schemes for developing river valleys by controlling the flow of rivers, building dams and reservoirs and irrigation works and developing hydro-electric power. These will lead to all-round development. These schemes are thus basic to all planning and we intend to complete them as rapidly as possible so that the masses may profit.'

The flood of refugees was still continuing, communal strife was not yet under control, there was a difficult situation in Hyderabad, when in October 1947 there was a massive tribal invasion of Kashmir from the North-West Frontier Province, belonging to Pakistan. The raiders were supported by the Pakistan Government, the Maharaja of Kashmir asked the Gov-

ernment of India for military aid. Kashmir acceded to India on 26 October 1947 and the following day Indian troops were despatched to the State. On 2 November 1947 Nehru wrote his fortnightly letter to the Chief Ministers, or Prime Ministers, as they were then called. He referred to the Kashmir incidents in the first place, noting that the developments 'remind one of the technique adopted by Hitler', 'Another feature of Pakistan's attack on Kashmir, which also reminds one of Nazi Germany, is the fierce, blatant and false propaganda that has been carried on by their radio and press.' From then onwards the Kashmir issue figured in great detail in almost all of his letters at least during the first five years.

The case of Kashmir had revealed how weak these princely States were. 'The army itself, which was supposed

to be strong, somehow faded away.' 'The example of Kashmir shows how feeble the administrative apparatus is in the states and how rapidly it may collapse in a real emergency.' It indicated that 'Trouble may come from the states and we have to stop it immediately.'

As far as law and order in general was concerned, Nehru warned the provinces that they should strengthen their police service. 'We must not demand the military to keep law and order'—an apt remark, aimed at keeping the military from any political role and at dispelling any mistaken notion of their significance. He also pointed out that it was very important to develop the intelligence services, particularly because 'There are at present many dangerous tendencies and trends in the country which may broadly be called fascist.'

Though the merger of the princely States was not yet complete, there were already demands for the territorial reorganization of the country on a linguistic basis. 'Looking at the states problem as a whole ... two historical processes are taking place simultaneously—the growing triumph of popular will in enclaves of sheer autocracy and the political consolidation of India...' '... I have no doubt eventually some readjustment will be necessary. But at this stage of our national life any dispersion of our energies in internal schisms ... is likely to be dangerous.'—Nehru explained in his letter of November 15, only return to the topic repeatedly in the following years.

From his letter of 22 November 1947, we learn that the various communal organizations were building up armies. Referring to the Congress re-

solutions Nehru pointed out that 'They emphasize the non-communal, democratic and secular character of our approach to the nation's problems.' And 'the basic problems still continue to be economic'. The last section of the letter is a piece of political instruction, an element in the great work of establishing the new political structure of the country. It is about the relation of the Governor and the Ministers in the provinces. 'The Governor is a constitutional head now and the burden of responsibility falls on the Ministry.' 'In strict constitutional practice, the Governor should be kept informed of all important happenings and should be consulted by the Prime Minister or other Ministers in regard to every important step taken . . .'. The letter ends with a personal note: "I regret that some of the Prime Ministers do not write to me regular letters. I am

thankful to others who have done so.' —Here is the institutionalization of a practice aiming at unity and concerted effort, the Prime Minister of the Centre and the Heads of the State Governments should continuously keep in touch. The revolution in communications was yet to come, so correspondence seemed to be a good method. And Nehru kept on writing his fortnightly letters until his death, discussing the current international and national events, explaining happenings, plans and goals, asking for cooperation. The method was accepted by Patel too, when Nehru was abroad, he wrote the fortnightly letters.

No improvement was visible during the latter part of 1947 in any field, so when Nehru spoke at the Industries Conference on 18 December 1847, he referred to 'a progressively deteriorating situation', where it is not the prob-

lems of distribution that are the most important, but 'Production becomes the first essential.' 'I have no doubt that production through big industry is essential. But in the present context of events today . . . it is necessary for us to encourage small-scale production . . .' '. . . because we lack commodities of all kinds.' In the international context of the cold war, 'in this dissolving world which is heading again for a big-scale conflict', India needed a strong defence. 'But far more than the army and navy and air force, defence means industry and production.' '. . .the real problem is not to make people war-minded but to give them the means of fighting.' 'Many things contributed to the winning of the last war, but I think the chief reasons were two, the amazing capacity of American industry and scientific research.' '. . . we must . . . stop the slowing down of produc-

tion . . .' It was a fact of life, as capital hesitated in its concern about what the Government of free India would do with all the ideas of nationalization, planned economy and socialism. So production was held back, and no improvement could be observed until about 1950–51. The Government of India, and its Prime Minister had no choice left. Production was of paramount importance. Encouragement had to be given to capital, even at the cost of bitter criticism from all leftist corners at home and abroad. Nehru made it clear in his speech that no nationalization of the existing industries was envisaged for the time being. '. . . it seems to me a far better approach to the problem for the State to concentrate more and more on new industries of the latest type and to control them in a large measure, because then the resources of the State go towards further

progress.' This would allow for controlled progress. And he justified his stand from yet another angle: '... you can see that we are at one of the major ages of transition when completely new sources of power are being tapped ... we are on the verge of a new industrial age...' And if this speech is taken together with the one made in the Constituent Assembly on 7 April 1948 on a mixed economy, then it is not farfetched to see the outlines of state monopoly capitalism. Necessity and shortage of all kinds had made him say that 'it is wrong to destroy something that is productive', and to point out that the State, burdened with social problems, has to find the wherewithal to face these problems. Therefore 'inevitably the trend of events is to make the State more and more the organizer of constructive society, and not the private capitalist or anybody else.'

'...it is the State which will survive, not that group which represents the profit motive in industry in its pure essence. That is an inevitable development.' Until then the economy would be in a transitional stage. 'Call it what you like—mixed economy or something else.' And here Nehru makes a salient point, so characteristic of himself and of his tremendous knowledge of human nature. 'Most of our friends —Socialists or Communists—continually think in terms of the technique of production remaining as it is. Of course, they will not admit it. . . . But, in fact, they base their programmes more or less on a static world and not on a continually changing world with new methods of production, new techniques of production.' 'I attach the greatest importance today to, let us say, the great river valley projects and schemes that have been framed, the

first one of which, the Damodar Valley scheme, has passed through this Legislature, and others are coming soon.' '. . . I want that to be completely State-controlled. . . .' 'It means that the State is undertaking vast enterprises all over the country which will govern the industry of this country.' The entire industry, including the private sector, by supplying energy, raw materials, capital goods under conditions set by the State.

It was the food situation which revealed that practically no statistical data were available in the entire country. This was therefore yet another issue the Prime Minister repeatedly urged the provincial governments to look after, as data would be indispensable to any further planning, until finally the setting up of the Central Statistical Institute was proposed in December 1949.

When under Gandhi's moral pressure the Government of India decided to release the Rs 550 million to Pakistan as assets of partition, withheld because of Kashmir, it was sharply criticized by many sections of the society. Nehru explained the case in his letter of 17 January 1948, with dignity and a high ethical stand: 'It shows to the world on what high plane India functions. A little more or less money does not make much difference in national conflicts, but it does make a great deal of difference how a nation behaves even in the midst of crisis.'

The internal political situation was showing signs of further deterioration in a dangerous direction. On 5 February, 1948 Nehru wrote the following to the provincial Heads of State: 'It would appear that a deliberate *coup d'état* was planned involving the killing of several persons and the promotion of

general disorder to enable the particular group concerned to seize power. The conspiracy appears to have been a fairly widespread one... I am and have been a believer in civil liberty and the democratic processes, but it is absurd to talk of democracy when the very basis of it is challenged by terroristic activities...' And all this at a time when 'We have the mounting economic difficulty—falling production, rising prices and a general disequilibrium ... strikes and lock-outs ... communalism ... the Indian states ... Hyderabad... It is an extraordinary combination of mediaeval autocracy and rabid communalism...'

Despite such a discouraging situation the Prime Minister had the breadth of vision to grasp the positive essentials, when two weeks later he assessed the first six months of independence: 'I think we may say we have suc-

cessfully weathered the storm. The army has stood by us like a rock; the police have functioned well; and the civil services have carried out their tasks with loyalty.' Some necessary steps were taken to suppress the communal organizations in the interest of the 'creation of what we have been ceaselessly trying to achieve, viz., a democratic State in India.'

On 3 March 1948 he referred to the report of the Congress Economic Programme Committee setting the social aims, but his letter concentrated on the fundamental economic problem, namely, inflation, a global phenomenon of the day. He also called attention to the food situation which was very bad, especially in Madras, rapidly deteriorating and not showing much improvement at least in certain parts of the country until the early 50s. It was found that even if food was av-

ailable in some parts of India, there were no transport facilities to carry it long distances. Later on, when grain was purchased at practically any cost by the meagre currency resources of the country from China, the Soviet Union and the United States, there were no ships to bring it to the ports. When some ships were lent without charge by Britain and Norway, grain could not be sent to the famine affected areas because there were no railway waggons.

In his letter of 17 March he again had to take up 'The question of redistribution of provinces on a linguistic or other basis'—and referring to agitation for the creation of the provinces of Karnataka, Andhra and Maharashtra, he acknowledged the principle as agreed to by Congress in 1920: 'Nobody challenges that but sometimes we have to take first things first and any

reversal of that order may even delay the thing we press most.' 'We have to concentrate all our energy to meet immediate crises.' Meanwhile the domestic scene produced yet another threat to political stabilization, this time from the left. First members of the Socialist Party resigned from Congress, creating another rift in national unity. Nehru warned against any step to further widen it: 'The times are too critical for us to add to our differences and our difficulties.' The second one was the new policy of the Communist Party of India aiming at the immediate creation of a people's democracy. '. . . many of their members have openly declared that they are out to fight the government in every way.'—reported Nehru and promptly rejected any suggestions of banning the Party. He also wrote about the Government's statement of 7 April 1948 on industrial poli-

cy, which demarcated the spheres of the public and the private sectors, contained the policy of the nationalization of key industries not to be carried out until ten years later, and a number of issues of overall development. He announced the inauguration of the Hirakud Dam in Orissa. Incidentally, while in Orissa, Nehru also laid the foundation stone of the new capital at Bhubaneswar, which has become a big city by now.

On 2 May 1948 Nehru wrote to the Chief Ministers about the new problem between Pakistan and India, the question of the supply of irrigation water in Punjab, which was cut off by East Punjab, because West Punjab, now in Pakistan, refused to abide by a technical agreement. This issue was taken up by the Inter-Dominion Conference, repeatedly held as a number of problems required settlement. In fact the

political partition of the subcontinent simply overlooked organic economic units when drawing the new state borders. Raw jute was grown in East Bengal and processed by the jute industry of West Bengal, the cotton grown in Sind was processed by the mills of Gujarat and Maharashtra. Thus the two governments agreed upon trade on May 26, while military action was still going on in Kashmir. Pakistan promised to supply India with raw jute, raw cotton and foodgrains, and India agreed to supply Pakistan with coal, cotton, cloth, yarn, steel, paper and mustard oil. Nehru also reported in his letter of 5 June on extensive smuggling between the two countries.

The Government was constantly accused of indecision and a policy of appeasement towards Hyderabad, but Nehru had a strong argument in his letter of 2 May: 'The real risk which has to

be guarded against, is the possibility of communal trouble in various parts of India as a result of developments in Hyderabad.' The Central Government was aware of the fact that the Hyderabad Government was trying to obtain arms from Pakistan, but Nehru still did not want military intervention. In the same letter he put forward another remarkable argument: 'From a military point of view, we have to think of our commitments in Kashmir, the necessity of maintaining sufficient strength in the East Punjab, and the needs of internal security in other parts of India.' And the letter also pointed out a number of other difficulties. 'One of the great dangers to Indian states . . . is the administrative vacuum that has been created since the 15th August. Few states have an appropriate administrative machinery or departments dealing with nation-building

activities.' 'There is a great deal of lack of cooperation and red tape elsewhere too, and growing corruption at all levels.' 'We live in India in a strange and abnormal atmosphere... Any relaxation of vigilance may lead to disastrous consequences.' 'Nevertheless, the fact remains, that once large powers are given to executive and police officers, they are likely to be misused.'

To add to the difficulties, rumours about trouble on a big scale were spread in June 1948. 'It is interesting to find out who starts these rumours and with what purpose. Obviously, they do not rise out of nothing and there is some deliberate design about them.' —wrote Nehru in his fortnightly letter of July 1. In addition, certain Rajput elements organized themselves against the new democratic order. The demand for the reorganization of the provinces was stubbornly sustained.

'Even legitimate demands, . . . may become rather dangerous in the sense that they encourage disruption. . . . First priority must necessarily be to preserve the unity, strength and stability of India.' 'The preservation of this unity and stability of India largely depends upon the functioning of the Congress organisation which has brought a sense of unity. If that organisation weakens or is split up, the one major cementing factor is removed, . . .'—wrote Nehru. And in fact Congress was beginning to show dissent, the role of the party as such and as a governing political power required further clarification which took many more years and bitter struggles. Party factions flourished and continued to weaken the government.

On 15 July 1948 Nehru informed the Chief Ministers that 'The economic situation continues to cause us grave

J.L. NEHRU AND INDIRA NEHRU WITH SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE AT THE ALLAHABAD RAILWAY STATION, 1939

J.L. NEHRU WITH R.N.TAGORE AND
OTHERS AT SHANTI NIKETAN

J.L. NEHRU BEING GREETED BY CHILDREN ON HIS BIRTHDAY

J.L. NEHRU, SARDAR PATEL AND DR.RAJENDRA PRASAD WITH LORD WAVELL DURING TALKS BETWEEN THE GOVT. AND CONGRESS, 1946

anxiety more specially in relation to the rise in prices and the cost of living index', that 'In fact there is undeclared war in Kashmir between the Indian Army and the Pakistan Army', that 'Demands continue to be made in public for immediate military intervention' in Hyderabad. But he also informed them about the Bihar Zamindari Abolition Bill. 'We are committed to the abolition of the zamindari system', the system of big landholdings, for which compensation was envisaged, a lengthy process raising the issue of the supremacy of law courts or legislation. Nehru also wrote about the opening of a bridge over the Ravi river and a new road from Pathankot to Jammu, jointly built by civilian agencies and the army. '... we are thinking in terms of putting up soon a housing factory', which was actually opened in 1949 with a view to alleviating the chronic shortage of housing.

On 16 August he reported on the setting up of the Atomic Energy Commission. And straight away rejected the idea of reorganizing the army along provincial lines. 'The Army should be a homogeneous Indian Army.' In his next letter he again spoke about the very serious economic situation of 'grave national emergency which required a war-time outlook'. On 9 September he wrote about the military action against Hyderabad. He requested the provincial governments to consult the Centre on the highly important question of the Zamindari Abolition Bills. On 4 October, referring to Hyderabad, he wrote that 'The first gain is that it is established that the Central Government in India is supreme.' The merger of Hyderabad 'has produced a very remarkable change in the communal atmosphere of India.' '. . . there is a sense of security . . .' But with the

outstanding issue of Kashmir, and the French and Portuguese territories, to be incorporated into India much later, and under different conditions, the political and territorial unification of India was completed. A major achievement in the process of consolidation, but not yet the culmination of this process.

As an independent State, India had to deal with issues of foreign policy right from the outset. And it had to evolve a consistent foreign policy of its own. During the days of the struggle for freedom Congress passed some resolutions on foreign policy which were mainly worded by Nehru, but the party as a whole was not very aware of the importance of external relations. Many people, including some leaders, resented the fact that Nehru, during a period of bloody rioting, devoted his time to the organization of the first

Asian Relations Conference in March 1947. Later on, however, these contacts helped build up India's foreign policy and a position soon to become a prominent one. Nehru was very clear about India's future foreign policy. And he also had a full grasp of the fact that no country could live in isolation in the world. While India wanted friendly relations with every country, it did not want to join any blocs. In his speech of 8 March 1949 in the Constituent Assembly Nehru said the following: 'What does joining a bloc mean? After all it can only mean one thing: give up your view on that question in order to please it and gain its favour.' On 17 March 1948 he explained the international situation to the Chief Ministers again in his letter. 'Progressively, the world becomes divided into sharply defined and armed camps and the expectation of war in the

future increases.' 'The Middle East is supposed to be a possible theatre of war in the future ... I do not personally think that there is going to be a war on a big scale in the near future, chiefly because of the fear of war, and yet everything points towards conflict ...' On 1 April 1948 his letter reflected continued thinking about India's international position: 'I am convinced that India's role should be as far as possible to continue to remain apart from any particular bloc. This is safest for India and it may in the future give some chance to India to play a pacific role ... we are not strong enough at present to exercise much influence.' A very sober, realistic assessment and cautious too.

In the autumn of 1948 Nehru went to Europe and England to attend the Dominion Premiers' Conference. Reporting on his impressions in his letter

of 16 November, he wrote the following: 'I was struck forcibly by the high position that India had already attained in the eyes of other nations. . . . The world looks to us, but even more so the Asian countries look to us.'. . . 'India cannot make much difference in the game of power politics today. But I began to feel that India can make some difference . . . we cannot afford to isolate ourselves . . .'

In his speech delivered at the Indian Council of World Affairs on 22 March 1949 he pointed out that the neighbouring countries were the most important in India's foreign policy, to be followed by the other Asian countries. He also stated that 'India is bound to play an important part in Asia', but rejected any claim to leadership. He also explained that India's foreign policy was gradually developing.'. . . the first duty of every country is to protect it-

self... But in protecting ourselves, we should do so in such a way as not to antagonize others... That is important.' India should strive earnestly for peace, should stand for racial equality, and 'the only way to proceed in the world today as far as I can see is for each country to realize that it must not interfere with another country's economic policy.' '... if we recognize that this world is a diverse place and there are diverse ways of living and functioning and thinking in it, then let us try to get rid of the evil in the world and allow the variety of the world to continue.' Ideas that were to crystallize a few years later in Panch sheel and in the non-aligned movement.

Sixteen months of independence had to pass before some promising signs could be seen. On 1 January 1949 Nehru was at last able to inform the Chief Ministers of good news. It was the ceasefire in Kashmir. And the economic situation was more or less static, but there was a shortage of dollars due to food imports. Though there was no spectacular improvement in the domestic situation, perhaps Nehru's greatest fear, the balkanization of India had been averted for the time being. Political integration had been more or less completed, but the unity of the country was rather precarious. There was the demand of the

Sikhs for a separate state, inflation continued, the food situation was bad, the rehabilitation of the refugees was still an enormous task with the continuing new arrivals, communalism showed no signs of abatement, there were strikes and acts of sabotage, yet Nehru was fully justified in writing the following to the Chief Ministers on 9 March 1949: '... India, with all her problems and difficulties, is the only State in all these vast regions of Eastern, South-Eastern, and Western Asia which can be looked upon not only as a firmly established State but also one that is advancing towards greater strength, both political and economic.' And a little later there was a good dose of encouragement: 'There has been a tendency, even among Congressmen and our friends, to talk a great deal about the corruption and incompetence of governments ...

I think we can compare favourably with most countries. Continuous condemnation actually leads to a feeling of lethargy . . . in fact we are progressing pretty well.'

From 1949 onwards there are an increasing number of references in Nehru's letters to new establishments of all kinds. He informed the Chief Ministers whenever a new reserach institute was established, until gradually the entire network of the national research establishment, the laboratories of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, dedicated mainly to applied scientific research, were set up. On 2 March 1951 he was able to inform the provincial governments that the railway system was rebuilt and though 'the amenities we provide our passengers are the barest minimum . . . Transport now is swift and sure.' In the spring of 1952 the Sindri fertilizer fac-

tory was opened, Chandigarh was under construction, the Bhakra-Nangal dam was being built, the railway network extended. Consolidation was gradually giving way to construction on an ever larger scale.

Yet Nehru was aware that the government had to 'face a multitude of problems from day-to-day...' 'We hardly have time to think of basic issues. ... Thus, separatist tendencies and provincialism, linguistic provinces, even the question of language, or petty reforms to make people more moral by law or compulsion, absorb our minds ... In any real sense of the word, this fight for freedom is not over, though we may be politically free. It is not over in the economic sense, and even politically, we have to be continually vigilant.' 'I have supreme faith in India... Nevertheless, India will only go ahead by our earnest

and concentrated efforts and our acting as men and women of vision, who are not pushed hither and thither by petty conflicts or passions of the moment.' Another moving piece of persuasion to work for the national objectives, written on 4 June 1949 to the Chief Ministers.

The daily routine of government and the prevailing conditions forced the Prime Minister to deal with each and every issue, irrespective of its significance or merit. It was only due to his enormous capacity for work that he was not swamped and always managed to keep the major tasks in sight. During the second part of 1949 he had to deal repeatedly with the 'cult of violence', with indiscipline within the Congress, with the economic situation forcing the government to postpone some of the development schemes, with the abolition of zamindari, the

question of small holdings and the necessity of large-scale cooperative farming, with India's relations with Pakistan and other neighbouring countries, with the continued lack of statistical data, with legislation, such as the Hindu Code Bill aimed at the reform of Hindu personal law and strongly opposed for years, with unemployment, with the Constitution, with the preparation of the electoral rolls and the elections. But he was also engaged in the major issues of planning, development and national integration. The Planning Commission was set up on 28 February 1950, with Nehru as Chairman; the major objective—following the example of the industrially advanced nations, and the advice of American experts—was to achieve self-sufficiency in food and industry. Priorities were gradually identified, such as the development of ag-

riculture, steel and electrical industries. Planning was to be developed in the provinces as well. The new and complex task of planned economic and social development required a new type of administration. Since the turbulent period of the first two years of independence did not allow any major overhaul of the administration, the new situation had to be dealt with by the structure inherited from the British. On 15 December 1949 Nehru remarked: 'The structure of our governments and their past work did not have much to do with the running of industry. Now, however, we are faced with the problem of encouraging, and control of industry in many ways...' In the subsequent years the public administration of India was greatly extended to perform the tasks of a modernizing state, and it has undergone a number of reforms as well, but its

basic structure has remained more or less the same as it was earlier. An entirely new organization was, however, initiated by Nehru himself for the Community Development Projects, a vast scheme of rural social and economic reform with American support. It was launched in late 1952, and when signs of decline had become visible, Nehru transformed it into Panchayati Raj, a system of village self-government by elected councils, handling the development and administration of the villages themselves with the help of Community Development officers and advisers.

At times there was reason to be disheartened. On 26 January, 1950 India inaugurated the Republic with great celebrations. Yet a week later, Nehru wrote the following to the Chief Ministers: 'It is possible to make a fairly lengthy list of our achievements, it is

also possible to make an equally lengthy list of our lack of achievements. Perhaps the biggest lack is a psychological one. . . . there is an inertness and passivity and a complete lack of enthusiasm... We face big problems, economic and political, and yet, I am convinced that the biggest problem of all is this psychological problem of raising the morale of the people and of turning it to enthusiastic effort... I feel troubled ... by ... the lack of social consciousness and homogeneity...'

Then there was the problem of Bengal. The continuous stream of Hindus coming from the partitioned East, which could not be stopped despite repeated diplomatic efforts at the Inter-Dominion Conferences and which kept communal tension at a high pitch, resulting in bloodshed and various acts of violence, like the driving out of

some forty thousand Muslims from Assam. The Bengali issue was a serious one, with no prospect of solution whatsoever. On 19 March 1950 Nehru expressed his deep concern in his letter. Outlining the actual situation he told the Chief Ministers: 'When we remember that the Hindus in East Bengal still number over 12 millions, the extent of the problem may be realized. It seems to me clear that it is impossible for us to go on receiving month after month, year after year, this enormous population, uprooted from their homes. On the other hand, it is equally clear that we cannot refuse entry to a person who looks to us for succour in his or her distress. If these great migrations continue, they will upset the whole social fabric of India, apart from putting an intolerable burden on us.' A burden his daughter had to face two decades later in its full might (about 10

million East Bengalis) and which Nehru had to deal with when he faced 1.5 million refugees at a time. The Bengal problem and the general atmosphere of the country induced him to write the following: '... I am filled with deep distress and a sense of failure. All the ideas we have stood for in the past seem gradually to fade away... Circumstances drive us onward from one position to another, each further away from what we used to consider our anchor. We cannot run away from the task that history has set for us. But a cruel destiny seems to pursue us and nullify all our efforts.' The communal problem, and the criticisms directed against him resulted in another letter on April 1, in which Nehru once again clarified his stand: 'The first thing for us to be clear about is our objective. Are we holding to our old objectives or do we wish to change

them? . . . For my part, I hold to our old ideals and our old objectives . . . I am convinced that in the last analysis, it is the Gandhian approach to the communal problem that can solve it . . . A great deal of excited criticism has been thrown at me, chiefly from the press in India or part of it. That criticism has led me to an even stronger belief that we must hold fast to our anchor. If that anchor drifts away, then I have no particular objective to work or live for. Therefore, I propose to hold to that anchor, whatever my critics may feel or say. I can function in no other way! A firm reiteration of values, to be repeated a number of times. However, it was not only irresponsible articles attacking Nehru that caused him distresse when he wrote about the old values. There was a real danger of India becoming a Hindu State, just as Pakistan 'declared them-

selves openly to be an Islamic State believing in the two-nation theory.'—as Nehru informed the Chief Ministers on 2 October 1949. And a little later he reported about the Hindu Mahasabha, a powerful communal organization talking about a Hindu State and also war against Pakistan. Congress was full of communal-minded members, the Sikhs were speaking about a separate province along communal lines. The rightist forces attacked Nehru in the field of economy and foreign policy too, and even within the governing party. This power struggle had been going on for years together with the fight against anti-social elements, and the Government had to resort to unpopular measures, such as passing the Preventive Detention Act in February 1950, banning various communal organizations, arresting the Sikh leader Master Tara Singh, taking police ac-

tion against hoarders and black marketeers and turning against strikes and cartels. All this in order to restore and consolidate law and order, the security of the minorities and conditions necessary to sustained productive work. And the party unity had to be restored, the factions disciplined. The first round of struggle for power was only ended when on 9 September 1951 Nehru became the President of Congress, and his position was greatly stengthened by the first general elections of 1952.

The road to success at the polls however, led through achievements. On 2 July 1950 Nehru wrote to the Chief Ministers about the definite improvement of the food situation, when in that year already at least 95 per cent of the target of food production was likely to be achieved. 'Progress has also been maintained in regard to wells,

minor irrigation, tanks, land reclamation, and the use of manure and fertilizers.' There was an improvement in the petrol supply position too. The Nasik session of Congress, held on September 21–22, passed a resolution on economic policy among others. It underlined the need for planned development and for securing self-sufficiency in food production, for creating employment opportunities in agriculture as well as in industry. It was at this session that Congress also approved the policy of non-alignment. On 14 July 1951, the leading Committees of Congress adopted the election manifesto of the party, stressing the need for toning up the moral and ethical basis of national life. It also contained the broad policies regarding labour, transport, public health, education, foreign policy, mixed economy and national unity. A little earlier the Plan-

ning Commission presented its preliminary report, based on the careful analysis of resources, and giving priority to the raising of food production. The Planning Commission continued its work, its Report was approved by Parliament, and the first Five-Year Plan, originally meant for the period 1951 to 1956 entered into operation. On 15 December 1952 Nehru spoke about the Plan in Parliament. He explained that it was a preparatory venture, 'The method of trial and error is the only one open to us.' According to the plan 'a very large sum is to be spent on irrigation ... If our agricultural foundation is not strong then the industry we seek to build will not have a strong basis either.' 'It is obvious that India must be industrialized as rapidly as possible. ... However rapid our industrialization may be, it cannot possibly absorb more than a small part of

the population of this country in the next ten, twenty or even thirty years. Hundreds of millions will remain who have to be employed chiefly in agriculture. . . . Hence, the importance of village and cottage industries.' In fact the Community Projects also served the purpose of uplifting the villages and making the villagers active and involved in this work.

While planning was launched and measures were taken to restore and maintain law and order, the constantly recurring food shortages had to be compensated for. The Government continued to make big purchases, such as four million tons in the spring of 1951, when finally, after much delay, pressurizing India by withholding food, the United States legislation passed the Food for India Bill, extending a loan of $ 190 million for purchase of 2 million tons of American wheat.

The regular purchases and the slowly growing domestic production gradually eliminated famines, and though India could not become self-sufficient by 1951, as Nehru initially hoped, the scientific researches, the continuous extension of irrigation, land reclamation, the diverse development programmes and the gradual introduction of high-yielding varieties ultimately brought success during Indira Gandhi's government, allowing India to build up buffer stocks and even to export.

The first five years were also decisive in evolving India's military policy, a major issue inseparable from foreign affairs and the economic strength of any country. It was a problem which later on, in 1962 and afterwards contributed to the decline of Nehru's popularity. Whereas if Nehru's logic is carefully studied in his letters, speeches and

writings, his dilemma can be seen very clearly and must be regarded as an insoluble problem not only for India, but for any other country in a similar position.

Whenever he wrote or spoke about foreign affairs, the security of the state, of the borders had first priority. He had constantly been dealing with India's neighbours and was quite firm when he saw danger mounting in a nearby region. He also had to keep in mind the large number of Indians living abroad, a liability for any country anywhere in the world. Kashmir represented a constant cause of concern for the Government of India, requiring great vigilance, and a heavy military burden extending over Punjab as well. Later on the same problem occurred along the border of West Bengal and East Pakistan. He constantly made efforts by way of negotiation and persuasion to

avoid a major armed conflict with Pakistan. Burma constituted an important issue for India, partly because of the long colonial association of the two countries, and partly because 800,000 Indians were living there. It was therefore in the interest of free India to see stabilization and peace in the neighbourhood. But he paid perhaps the greatest attention to China, where the civil war was going on between the Communists and the Nationalist Government. On 16 November 1948 Nehru wrote to the Chief Ministers that 'The victory of communism in China is of great moment to Asia and the world.' At the same time there was the German crisis, the assessment of which was a very sober one, made in the same letter, again from the point of view of India. 'The situation in Europe continues to be tense and critical... But I formed the opinion that no war is

in prospect . . . The real reason is that no one is prepared for war. This gives us some time to work for peace.' On 6 December of the same year he wrote the following: . . . 'it appears almost inevitable that a great part of China will come under the control of the Communists. They will immediately introduce far-reaching agrarian reforms and try to build up industry.' On 17 January 1948 he wrote the following: 'As China is in a state of acute disintegration, there is no danger of any aggression on the part of Communist China on any adjoining country for a considerable time to come.' On 1 April 1949 he forecast the 'consolidation of the Communist regime', which may 'affect the situation in Tibet, Indo-China and Siam.' He also noted that India's relations with Afghanistan were good, a particularly important feature as the relations between Af-

ghanistan and Pakistan were rapidly deteriorating. On 14 May 1949 he wrote: 'Our desire has always been and is to retain the friendship of the Chinese people and to cooperate with them as far as possible. That will be our guiding principle.' The Government of India was very keen on maintaining diplomatic relations with China, with the new China, and India recognized the new regime on 30 December 1949. But the first hitch in the relations of the two countries occurred in August 1949, when an Indian newspaper published a false report on the revolt in Tibet. On 16 September, Nehru described the case in the following terms: 'There has been a great deal of bitter criticism in the Chinese Communist press about India's interest in Tibet. Of course, we are interested as Tibet is our neighbour. But we have no intention of interfering in any way.' On 2 Oc-

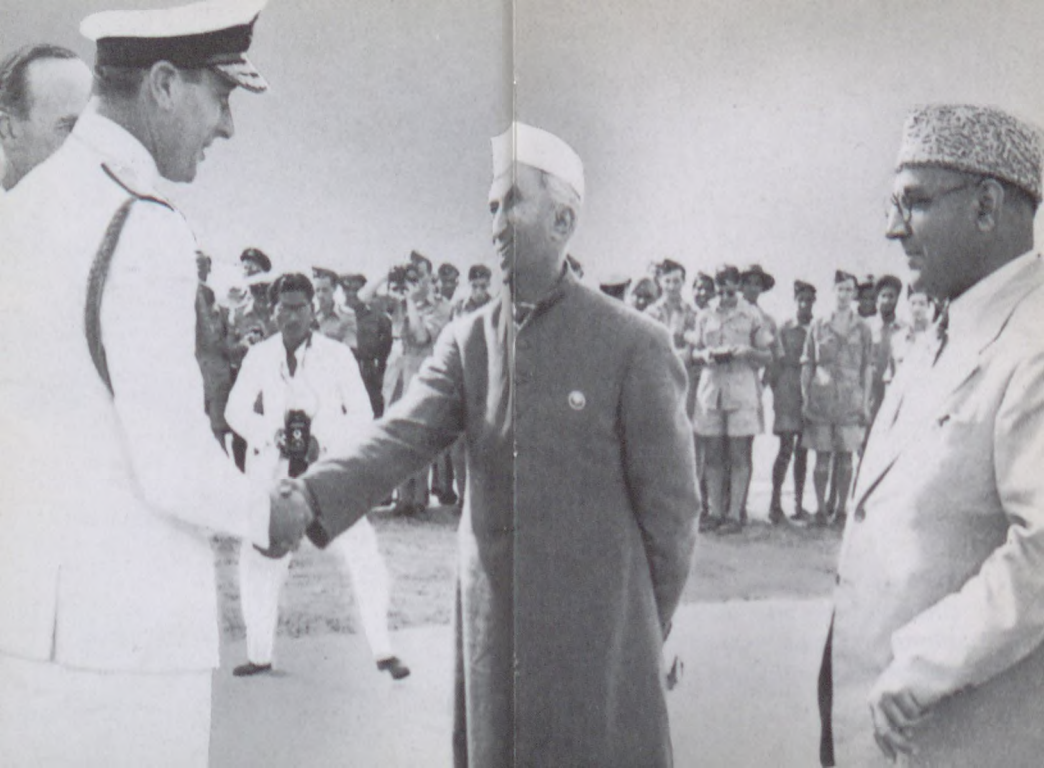
tober 1949 he informed the Chief Ministers that 'In China, the Communist armies have established a Central Government.' On 1 December he wrote: 'All the border countries of China are affected by these developments. India is not directly affected in the sense of any military danger. It is possible that the Chinese Communist regime may spread to Tibet, though that is unlikely before the summer of next year. Even if it so spreads, there is no military danger from that quarter to India. The best guarantee of India's safety from that frontier is the inhospitable terrain and climate of Tibet as well as the mountains that separate Tibet from India. Our policy has been rather vague about Tibet. It has been an inheritance from British days. We have recognized the autonomy of Tibet under some kind of vague suzerainty of China. Strictly speaking, in

law, we cannot deny that suzerainty. We would like Tibet to be autonomous... But it is clear that we cannot bring any effective pressure to change the course of events in Tibet. ... One thing is dead clear. We will not permit the slightest intervention, aggression or invasion of any Indian territory wherever it might be.' Nehru's wording continues to be cautious whenever he refers to China. He reiterates India's peaceful intentions, but also stresses the idea of self-defence. On 18 January 1950 he wrote that 'So far as India is concerned, there is not fear or question of any direct danger. India has no desire to interfere in any way with the decision of the Chinese people. She wants friendly relations with them. At the same time, she cannot permit any interference with herself.' On 2 February 2: 'What happens to China is the biggest question.' In 1950 India was

working on trying to bring the People's Republic of China into the United Nations. On 18 August 1950, Nehru wrote in his fortnightly letter that 'Tibet also is no longer secure and there are rumours of a Chinese invasion of it.' And trouble was brewing in Tibet. India frantically tried to mediate between China and Tibet, and Nehru very realistically wrote on 7 September 1950, that 'the situation is still a difficult one and we must not imagine that the danger is over.' One month later, having met the Chinese Ambassador, he assessed the situation in the following words: 'In spite of many differences, these two great countries look to each other and I believe have grown a little nearer to each other during these past critical months.' ... 'There is no question of unconditional confidence and friendship, but rather an undercurrent of fear. When in Oc-

J.L. NEHRU MAKING THE 'TRYST WITH DESTINY' SPEECH, 15.8.1947


AIR



J.L. NEHRU RECEIVING
LORD MOUNTBATTEN ON HIS ARRIVAL
AT NEW DELHI AS VICEROY OF INDIA,
MARCH 1947

A REFUGEE GIRL FROM WEST PAKISTAN
TELLING HER TALE TO NEHRU AND INDIRA
GANDHI IN JALANDHAR CAMP, 1948

J.L. NEHRU WITH INDIRA GANDHI,
RAJIV & SANJAY AT TEEN MURTI HOUSE,
NEW DELHI

tober 1950 the Chinese Government formally announced military operations against Tibet, India tried to protest, but was bluntly rejected. Though Nehru could clearly see the motivation of the Chinese, he knew that India could not do much, except to protect her own frontiers. In his letter of 17 November 1950 he dwelt on the Chinese question at length. 'The developments in Tibet rather suddenly made people realize that China might have a long common frontier with India, and this new China was probably very different from the old. Also the Himalayan barrier was not quite so effective as it used to be . . . Would there be peace between the two or tension or conflict?' 'It seemed to us that in this new shape of things, it was important for India and China to have friendly relations, if that was possible. . . . But the attempt had to be made in the interests

not only of the present but of the future. . . . If there was conflict or fear of conflict, then this vast area would become a prey to constant fear and apprehension and our efforts at progress would be impeded.' He wrote about China's previous hostility towards India, then confessed: 'We wondered what China's real attitude towards India was.' India resented the invasion of Tibet, yet Nehru did not think that there was any immediate danger to India's frontiers. 'About our frontier, the MacMahon Line, we are adamant and we are not going to tolerate any breach of it.' On 18 December 1950 Nehru explained India's defence position in general in his letter. 'We are not thinking in terms of aggression anywhere. Our defence consists in guarding our widespread frontiers. It includes the defence of Bhutan and Sikkim, which are our protected States. In a wider sense it also

includes the defence of Nepal, which is an independent country. . . . we cannot afford to allow an enemy to cross over even into Nepal, for that would endanger the security of India.' It is not difficult to guess who he had in mind as a possible enemy coming from that particular direction. From the above quotations it is quite clear that the Sino-Indian relations were far from happy and that Nehru was fully aware of it, particularly if the international situation, including the Korean war, was also considered. Yet he had hardly any other choice left but to try and establish some peace and security along the northern frontier of India, having the difficult job of political consolidation inside in a domestic scene full of tension and trouble. The northern frontier has continued to remain a major preoccupation for the Indian Government, no matter who the Prime Minis-

ter has been. And Nehru tried his best. Making friends, if possible, waging war, if necessary. The Congress pledged themselves for the modernization of the country, for its social and economic transformation for which the first and foremost requirement was peace. And resources. On 1 March 1950 Nehru wrote to the Chief Ministers: 'You will remember that in the President's speech on the opening day of Parliament, reference was made to a reduction of military expenditure. . . . It is, in the long run, impossible for us to spend 50% of our Central budget on Defence. All progress is stopped by this top-heavy expenditure.' No country can afford to spend 50 per cent of its budget on defence without serious damage to its own society. And it could be afforded even less by a backward country, where there was a shortage of essential commodities, breed-

ing large-scale corruption and constant dissatisfaction. And the army too, consuming such a large part of a relatively small budget, was rather old-fashioned, swollen during the war years but technically backward. It was only natural that by December of the same year the Government had decided to demobilize 50,000 men from the army. Nehru himself was very conscious of the need for modernization of the armed forces, laying great emphasis on developing modern industries, an indispensable preliminary to modern defence. He also wanted to develop the navy and other services, as sheer manpower had less and less significance in modern warfare and in the unfolding arms race. But the key issue was the stability of the State and rapid economic development, constituting an obvious priority above everything else. Its risks had to be accepted. There

was no other way out of the vicious circle of large but outdated defence and economic backwardness not allowing for the build-up of modern armed forces, if India wanted to keep away from military blocs, which she did, even if later on massive military aid was sought and accepted in the case of emergency.

These turbulent years for India gradually led to the first general elections. The preparations had been going on for years, hampered by the shortage of paper, when the electoral rolls were being compiled and published. And while this major act of democracy was under preparation, the Government, in addition to all the trouble hitherto hinted at, had to face repeated major natural calamities, such as the earthquake of 15 August 1950 in Assam, and floods in Punjab, Kashmir and Assam in the autumn of the same year. So

Nehru had every reason to write on 7 September 1950 that India had set up a new record, 'a record of disaster and calamity . . . Lack of rain in South India and elsewhere spoiled our crops, . . . heavy floods descended . . . in Orissa, in Bihar and in Uttar Pradesh and thousands of villages have been almost washed away.' The calamities continued in the next year too, making the realization of any plan more difficult.

After repeated postponements, the preparations for the first general elections were slowly coming to a close. As Nehru informed the nation on 22 November 1951 in his broadcast: 'There are altogether 2293 constituencies in India. These include constituencies for Parliament, that is, for the House of the People and the Council of States and for the Legislative Assemblies and Councils in the States. Altogether 4412 representatives will

be chosen for these various Legislatures. The number of voters on our electoral rolls is about 176,600,000. The number of polling booths will approximately be 224,000.' About 560,000 various officials were required to conduct the elections. 'Unfortunantely, many of our voters are not literate and we have, therefore, to provide coloured boxes with emblems for different parties and candidates.' 'The whole object of democratic elections is to ascertain the views of the electorate on major problems and to enable the electorate to select their representatives.' The elections are going to be 'a test for all of us.' And he added: 'The standard we set up now will act as a precedent and govern future elections.'

Nehru himself had set out canvassing in earnest. In his letter to Chief Ministers on 30 November 1951 he re-

counted how within four days in Bombay, Madras and Travancore-Cochin he must have addressed about four million people. On 7 January 1952 he wrote that within five or six weeks he addressed possibly nearly twenty million people. In his next letter he assessed the general elections saying that by and large they were 'a leap in the dark.' The Congress achieved success in general, but it largely failed in the south. 'Adult franchise has been a success . . . The electorate has also shown a very great deal of discipline and has exercised its judgement.' And later on he remarked that 'the so-called illiterate voter showed greater civic sense than most people of the towns.' The elections were a success, 61.7 per cent of the electorate went to the polls, a figure surpassed only once, in 1957, and out of the 489 seats in the Lok Sabha 357 were won by Congress. But the

governing party had to count with strong oppositions in the provinces. Nehru had every right to say, in writing about the formation of the new Government and Parliament, that 'a new phase in India's history will begin.' The electorate gave him a strong mandate, he was their charismatic leader beyond doubt, who had been able to steer the country through the terrible incredible turbulence of the first five years, amidst fearful international conditions, against heavy domestic odds, towards consolidation, and who had been able to launch a nation on the path of economic and social progress. With the establishment and first test of the democratic system, with the first Five-Year Plan set into operation, and with a foreign policy aiming at peace the sound foundations of the 'Noble Mansion of Free India' were laid.

CHAPTER THREE

A Full Mandate

During Nehru's lifetime India went to the polls three times, always confirming his policy. He had a full mandate, yet governance did not become any easier.

National unity, though of paramount importance, was rather shaky and almost every issue present in 1947 remained unsettled until the year of the first elections and much longer. Kashmir continued to be a problem, not only because of Pakistan, but also because of the internal policy of the State. The north-east frontier region also had its problem: the Naga tribes demanded independence in 1951. The region was handled separately during the British

times, and Nehru also promised special treatment, but he made it clear that any secessionist tendency was out of the question. He wrote to the Chief Ministers on 2 June 1951: 'It is obvious that the Nagas or any other tribes on our borders cannot have independence. But we are very anxious to give them a large measure of autonomy and to help them in every way, while respecting their traditions and ways of life.' The Naga question remained unsettled for a long time; there were armed revolts, Pakistan was sending arms to the Nagas, while the Central Government tried to modernize the very backward region. The new State of Nagaland was finally formed in 1961, yet problems of the region have remained a recurrent feature of internal policy.

A far broader issue threatening the normal functioning of the country and

its unity was the question of the linguistic provinces. On 7 July 1952 Nehru repeatedly explained his views in Parliament: 'In fact, I have never been very enthusiastic about linguistic provinces... I feel that provinces in this country should be much smaller than they are. It is not necessary to have the whole paraphernalia of a Governor, a High Court and so on for every province. But mine was a lone voice...' '... we must give the topmost priority to the development of a sense of unity in India because these are critical days.' Referring to the demand for a separate Andhra state: 'If there is general consent, well and good. We will form an Andhra province and are prepared to do so.' 'It is all very well for our friends from Andhra or Maharashtra or Kerala or Karnataka to put forward a definite proposal which could be considered and then accepted

or rejected. But a general proposition saying, 'Let us take a map of India and let us re-shape and cut it up anew on the basis of language,' is one which I submit no reasonable person can support. It means upsetting what you have and unsettling everything just when you are more or less settling down somehow or other. It would be dangerous at any time but it is more so at a time when the world is on the verge of a crisis... it is dangerous to have a parochial attitude to India as a whole.' 'One cannot envisage what will ultimately emerge from the boiling cauldron of redistribution all over India.' 'The idea of linguistic provinces will intensify provincial feelings and that, undoubtedly, will weaken the concept of a united India.' And he added: 'I am not going to play about with our frontiers in the north. But claims like those of Andhra or Karnataka or Kerala or

Maharasthra have my concurrence.' There were constant demonstrations and general unrest in the Andhra regions, until the Government of India announced the formation of the new State late in 1952. This was a sign for all the other regions, thinking if sufficient pressure was brought on the Government, they would ultimately yield. Nehru announced the appointment of the States Reorganization Commission expecting them to lay down the general political principles, but agitation was spreading, acts of violence occurred, with Punjab and Bombay the chief centres of unrest. Nehru was afraid of civil war, he was aware of the deteriorating international situation and much concerned about the northern frontiers. Two more years passed before the Report of the Commission was published in October 1955. The Report was a patchwork of recom-

mendations and lacked principle. It did not satisfy anybody. When the Lok Sabha discussed the Report, Nehru also contributed to the issue on 21 December 1955. He called attention to the fact that however much India was reorganized, invariably there would be bilingual areas. 'I repeat that I attach the greatest importance to language but I refuse to associate it necessarily with a State.' 'I am concerned with two things; first, our principles, and, secondly, the manner of approach to problems . . .' In another speech in the Lok Sabha on 30 July 1956, still related to the same issue, he very clearly expressed his opinion about the whole issue: 'So far as the Government and I are concerned, it is of no great significance to us what part of India goes into which State boundary.' At that time the idea was that the city of Bombay would be centrally administered, but it was not

yet decided. But Nehru was harshly attacked about it, In his speech he asserted his right: '. . . I was not, to my thinking, making any announcement of a great decision. I was merely stating what I had stated repeatedly—my view, and I am somebody, after all. A Prime Minister is a Prime Minister, and he can lay down the policy of the Government.' 'It is of the utmost importance that, in building the future, we should develop an all-India outlook. The provincial outlook is not going to pay the province, much less India.' Nehru was quite definite about the reorganization of provinces, yet he had been criticized for indecision. He wanted peace, cooperation, economic development, and the question of the linguistic provinces had been seething for eight years. He had to have an atmosphere suitable for constructive work and conditions that would not

endanger the security of the country. He accepted the emerging solutions and yielded to pressure; as a result the constitution was amended in 1956 and India was reorganized into 14 States and 6 union territories. The process, however, did not stop at that. In 1960 Gujarat was separated from Maharashtra. Further reorganizations ensued until the mid-seventies, but new demands still arise.

The political integration of India had two more outstanding issues: the French and Portuguese colonies were still separate. The French territories were returned to India through diplomatic negotiations, but India had to take military action against the Portuguese, much against Nehru's taste. Goa, Daman and Diu were thus acquired in 1961.

While these internal transformations and upheavals were going on, economic planning showed its first successes. On 22 January 1955 Nehru addressed the 60th session of the Indian National Congress at Avadi, where the party passed a resolution stating that the aim was the development of a socialistic pattern of society. Another resolution dealt with the corresponding economic policy. Nehru warned his audience that the country had to deal with hard realities and resolutions in themselves were not sufficient. '... the time has now come for substantially increasing production, for raising the standards of living and for having progressively fuller employment so as to achieve full employment within a period of ten years.' In relation to a prospective Second Five-Year Plan he noted that it 'must keep the national aims of a Welfare State and

a socialistic economy before it', and that it 'should be based on the physical needs of the people.' 'We want heavy industry because without it we can never really be an independent country. Light industry too has become essential for us. So has cottage industry.' It is revealing to read some of his thoughts expressed in December 1953 before the Associated Chambers of Commerce, Calcutta on the subject of technical development. 'The world moves very rapidly today ... I am all for the latest techniques; ... But it must be the latest technique applicable to the conditions of India ... when we consider what might be called the bullock cart economy versus the motor lorry or jet engine economy, sometimes I wonder whether our industrial and economic thinking does not require a great change. ... It is always a difficult matter to balance the needs of to-

day and the needs of tomorrow or the day after.... The work of laying this solid foundation does not generally attract private industry because it does not pay for years to come... In a country like India, the burden of development therefore falls on the Government. ... The public sector thus becomes very important.'

On 23 May 1956 Nehru moved the Resolution for the approval of the Second Five-Year Plan in Lok Sabha. He was aware of the historical responsibility. 'We are engaged in the shaping of the future of India. Surely, there could be few subjects more exciting than this. It is, therefore, with a sense of the burden of history upon me and upon this House, that I face this problem.' Taking up the question of regional development, he said: 'We are all agreed that there should be a uniform development all over India... disparities

... should be removed ...' 'If you looked at the picture of India ... ten years ago or twelve years ago, you would find a static, even a stagnant society ... In 1950, just before the First Five-Year Plan, the national income was Rs. 8850 crores (88,500 million—G. V.), and *per capita* income Rs. 246 ... At the end of the First Five-Year Plan, we have a national income of Rs. 10,800 crores (108,000 million—V. G.)—nothing very remarkable, but nevertheless significant. The *per capita* income has gone up from Rs. 246 to Rs. 281 at the end of the First Five-Year Plan period.' '...the First Five-Year Plan made a significant change in the nature of our static and stagnant economy. It broke the barrier of poverty which is the curse of a poor country ...' 'India is almost at the lowest rung of the income ladder.' '... in the next twenty years ... the population of

India will be round about five hundred million.' This should be kept in mind in planning. The public sector should be strengthened and should 'control the strategic points in our economy.' 'There should be every attempt to make every region and every part of India develop equally . . .' But 'We cannot help putting up a plant in a place where it will be most successful in terms of production and costs.' 'I have no doubt that the normal governmental procedure applied to a public enterprise of this kind will lead to the failure of that public enterprise. Therefore, we have to evolve a system for working public enterprises . . .'

Nehru was very much interested in the theory and practice of planning. He kept abreast of the latest trends in economic thinking. He was familiar with W. W. Rostow's stages of economic growth. He spoke about

these ideas on 3 February 1958 in Bombay, at the golden jubilee of the Indian Merchants' Chamber: 'We are struggling to get out of the morass of poverty, and to reach the stage of what is called "the take-off" into sustained economic growth. We want to cross the barrier of poverty and reach the stage where growth becomes relatively spontaneous. ... There are certain cumulative processes at work which, in a developed country, tend to encourage its growth further and further and which, in an under-developed country, pull it back all the time. The poor becomes poorer. Poverty becomes its own curse.' And in the same speech there is the dilemma of democracy and development, a problem of great concern for the developing countries, where democracy was not even attempted and all political considerations were subordinated to concen-

trated economic growth, or there was neither democracy, nor development. India attempted the third way, to have both democracy and development. 'The development of modern nations of the Western world took place at a time when democracy as we know it today, did not exist. The pressures from the people did not come to the surface. When people are politically conscious they make demands.' 'In India we have full-blooded democracy and side by side we have all the unhappy brood of poverty.' 'Obviously our resources at present are limited... Planning therefore should be for primary articles. If we want to industrialize, we will have to produce the machines that will industrialize the country ... That is how iron and steel and power become basic... We are building three major steel plants and doubling a fourth one.'

A year later, following the Nagpur session of the Congress, Nehru spoke at Madurai on 15 April 1959, about the party resolutions on planning and about land, panchayats and co-operatives. He stated that 'the basic problem of India is to remove the poverty from the Indian villages. Some years ago we abolished the *zamindari* and the *jagirdari* systems in various parts of India,' ... 'each village should have a semi-autonomous panchayat. It should have a co-operative. It should have a school.'

On 22 August 1960, Nehru spoke about the Draft Outline of the Third Five-Year Plan in the Lok Sabha. He mentioned that 'The Second Plan was roughly double the First Plan. And the Third, again, is much larger.' The objectives are: 'a rise in the national income of over 5 per cent per annum, achievement of self-sufficiency in food grains, and increased agricultural pro-

duction for industry and export, expansion of basic industries like steel, fuel, power and machine-building, utilization of the manpower resources of the country and expansion of employment opportunities; reduction of inequalities in income and wealth and a more even distribution of economic power.' 'Advance in technology means a general advance in such training and education as are necessary for the purpose in a widespread way. . . . It becomes a problem of mass education.' And he reported on certain achievements. 'As you know, our population in 1961 would presumably have gone up by about 70 millions compared to 1951. Why has it gone up? Because we are a much healthier nation. The expectation of life ten years ago was 32. Today it is 42.' 'At the present moment there are, I believe, 45 million boys and girls in the schools

and colleges in India.' One day earlier he also spoke in the Lok Sabha about the Third Plan, and he was able to note that 'The per capita income in 1960–61 was Rs. 330.' In 1950–51 the total quantity of the principal foodgranis was little over 42 million tons, by 1960–61 it had been raised to more than 69 million tons, and the trend continued until it surpassed 100 million tons by 1976–77, which resulted in the sharp decline of imports. India has made impressive progress in all spheres of the economy despite the fact that in 1957 there was a major economic crisis resulting in a strict budget, in anti-inflationary measures and increased taxes. Nehru was cautious about nationalization too, but he did not entirely abandon the idea. The Imperial Bank of India was converted to the State Bank of India and the managing agency system, concentrating

large economic power, was also dispersed, or greatly reduced.

Though planning had its pitfalls and failures after the post-Nehruvian era, by and large, it was able to change the economic thinking of the whole country. This was the consequence of Nehru spreading the gospel that planning was the key to welfare. During Nehru's time economic processes were set into motion that have resulted in broad incursions of the market economy into practically every region isolated from the national market. Commodity production has been spreading all over the country, gradually replacing the earlier forms of production. Poverty has not been eliminated, as a considerable part of the population still lives below the poverty line, defined by a certain amount of calorie consumption, but a vast infrastructure of the economy, controlled by

the State, has been built, allowing for the growth of a diversified economy.

The economic reconstruction of the country required stable external relations and peace first and foremost. On 21 March 1956 Nehru repeated in his speech in Lok Sabha that the defence of India depended on its economic and technological progress. '... the Five-Year Plan is the defence plan of the country.' 'In nothing, I think, has there been such a great technological improvement as in war equipment. Of course, the latest example of that, the final example, is the nuclear weapon, atomic bomb or hydrogen bomb... It meant that no country in the world, excepting the two great Powers, is adequately defended, ...' 'The right approach to defence is to avoid having unfriendly relations with other countries.' India, and particularly Nehru, designed foreign policy so as to have an

extensive network of relations. India has been active in the UN and other international organizations, has shown moderation and maturity in foreign affairs. India initiated the co-operation of the newly independent states of Africa and Asia as a consistently anti-colonial power, as a host of several Afro-Asian Conferences, by frequent bilateral negotiations and as one of the organizers of the Bandung conference held in April 1955. It was at Bandung that thirty states accepted the essence of the Five Principles, or Panchsheel, first formulated by India and China and acknowledged by both to govern their bilateral relations. The five principles were respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful co-existence. At Bandung the Declaration on World

Peace and Co-operation expressed the unanimous stand of the participants against the production and use of weapons of mass destruction. The conference also decided upon cooperation in economy, culture, and in the field of human rights and self-determination.

Nehru rightly stated in the Lok Sabha that 'Bandung proclaimed the political emergence in world affairs of over half the world's population.' The movement has since become known as the non-aligned movement, of changing vigour, but a movement bringing together the vast majority of Third World countries and calling the attention of the rest of the world to their specific problems and separate political identity.

Soon after Bandung Nehru went to Moscow and the earlier, rather cool relations were vastly improved, resulting in broad economic cooperation.

Nehru kept India within the Commonwealth, thus exposing himself to criticism from various quarters. He realized that the almost two hundred years of close association and economic linkages with Britain and with other members of the Commonwealth could not be broken off without causing much damage to India.

In 1961 Nehru went to the United States for the second time, as the two countries, despite the close and expanding economic relations, and considerable aid rendered to India, could not elude recurrent suspicion. The United States had difficulty in accepting India's leading role in the non-aligned movement and her insistence upon keeping out of blocs. It took some time to see that India could ably mediate in complicated international affairs and dangerous crises frequently occurring in various parts of the world.

While in the United States, Nehru addressed the U.N. General Assembly on 1 November 1961. His words reflect an experienced politician and a brilliant mind, having a deep understanding of human history. Speaking about the problem of disarmament he remarked: 'It is perhaps true ultimately that the material advance which has taken place in the world and which is magnificent has gone far ahead of the development of the human mind. A mind which lags behind, and thinks in terms of how nations functioned and wars occurred a hundred or two hundred years ago, does not fit in with the modern age. Emotionally we do not fully understand the possibility of a nuclear war. Otherwise it seems to me impossible that there should be these continuing deadlocks and impasses, for under modern conditions war must be ruled out or human civiliza-

tion has to submit to the ending of all that it has laboured for thousands of years top build.' 'Apart from theory or idealism, the practical choice offered to the world is to co-operate or perish. The choice is of peaceful co-existence or no existence at all.' An idea he expressed towards the end of World War II, before the atom bomb was dropped on Japan, in *The Discovery of India:* 'There really seems no alternative between world conquest and world association; there is no choice of a middle course.' The realization of the alternative of co-existence or no existence has taken another twenty years for the major powers of the world. Nehru was branded an idealist. Now everybody knows that the choice of a nuclear war is equivalent to the extinction of the human race.

Nehru's China policy seemingly was a failure. Despite the repeated

meetings with the Chinese leaders and agreements on Tibet and on the principles of co-operation, and the discussions of various Asian problems, it was the common frontier and rivalry that created trouble. Both countries interpreted the frontier differently, regarding identical patches of land as their own. Nehru did not think it could be the cause of military action. There were border conflicts as early as 1950, to be followed by a major Chinese incursion in 1959, and the rights over Aksai Chin caused long disputes between the two countries. As India was adamant and demanded the return of that territory, China decided upon military action in October 1962. This was personally a great shock to Nehru, but not necessarily entirely his fault. In his broadcast to the nation on 22 October 1962 he spoke about the 'continuing and unabashed aggression by

the Chinese forces.' He acknowledged the military set-backs suffered by the Indian forces. 'We have to meet a powerful and unscrupulous opponent. . . . The Conflict may continue for long. . . . We must build up our military strength by all means at our disposal.' Four days later he spoke to the Students' Union in Delhi. He said the following: 'The nation's interest was paramount with us, and we worked in its service with a lover's zeal, not caring for what happened to us.' 'The Chinese action is nothing short of an invasion of India. In some ways it may be a blessing in disguise. It has shaken our people out of their slumber and awakened them to realities.' 'The first thing which we have to learn from this challenge is to put an end to all those tendencies which divide us. . . . I lay the greatest emphasis on the essential unity of India.' And India had shown

an unprecedented unity, the separatist tendencies abated for quite some time. Massive military aid was obtained from various sources, and though there was some fear of a possible military coup, democracy stood the test of time, and India was able to weather the storm. Nehru, however, also realized that the internal political conditions and the political leadership of the country required an overhaul just as the military did.

Nehru had always paid much attention to the body politic of India. He himself had greatly contributed to shaping it and building up its system. He was a parliamentarian as well as a patient political educator.

Nehru devoted much of his time to the sessions of Parliament. Either he was sitting in the Lok Sabha, listening to the debate, or, he was in his office in Parliament, where he had a loud-

speaker transmitting the proceedings. He always used polite language and respected the rules. He encouraged newcomers in Parliament, and asserted the practice of democracy whenever he saw it endangered. He encouraged institutional opposition, but was very much against irresponsible criticism. This is why he devoted considerable time to disciplining the Indian press.

When India became independent, a large number of politicians already had a broad experience of statecraft, but many more had none, having participated only in the struggle for freedom, in the national movement, but not in government. It was Nehru, who saw that certain norms had to be introduced and made operative, if the complex government of free India was to be run with any degree of efficiency. Certain ethical standards had to be observed, and certain manners required.

In April 1949 he informed the Chief Ministers 'that we are giving up the use of titles in our official work, in so far as Indians are concerned. I think this practice of not using titles should be extended as far as possible.' In May he warned the Chief Ministers that if ministers visited another province and the visit was a private one 'then no fuss need be made about it. But if it is at all a public visit or for any kind of a public function, then official intimation should be sent to the government of the visiting province. It must be remembered that it is improper and undignified for a minister to criticise the activities of another provincial government in public.' In June he informed the Chief Ministers about a matter 'which has sometimes caused us embarrassment. Ministers or other prominent men or women who go abroad often demand interviews with

Prime Ministers, Presidents and the like. Sometimes they approach them direct. This is against all convention. If an interview has to be sought, it must be done through our Embassies and not directly.' When the new governments were being formed after the first general elections in 1952, Nehru wrote to the Chief Ministers about the recommended general attitudes: 'We must, of course, function with integrity and efficiency, thinking always of the masses of our people... We have to be cautious certainly, but we have to be adventurous also all the time and exhibit qualities of leadership... We are not, I hope, just politicians, playing a game of political chess. There have been some instances of this latter in recent weeks... I have noticed them with deep regret! In May, he wrote about manners in the Assemblies and the role of Governors as symbols of the

State. 'There are certain symbols and emblems of the State or country which have to be honoured ... There is the national flag, the national anthem, the President and the Governor. We have to learn some discipline in our national life...'

By the time Nehru died, parliamentary elections had become a regular feature, and parliamentary debate a way of shaping government policy.

Nehru had to devote much time and energy to making Congress a responsible political party capable of governance. And this was a major task as Congress has always been a broad front. This is why it never had a fully-fledged ideology, but only a few broad principles, aceptable by all the factions and hues of opinion. Whenever general consensus was broken it was accompanied by the separation of a group either at the extreme left, or right.

During the struggle for independence Congress represented the nation, but it did not mean that there were no other parties. After independence the ruling party found itself in a multi-party system, where some parties opposed Congress from the left, and others from the right, Within Congress itself the parochial interests, regional differences, political ideals of diverse origin had come to the surface, each struggling for dominance. Nehru had to take vigorous steps to force Congress into a more or less dominant position, presenting a homogeneous image. It even happened that Congress turned against a provincial government formed by Congress! It took years until the party learned the rules of the parliamentary game, and the parliamentary group found its place in broader poilitics. Nehru saw that after the attainment of independence the party

was more interested in acquiring political power than in the work of modernization. It began to lose its contact with the masses and to give up the principles of secularism, democracy and equality. Nehru realized that the party had to be strengthened, its mass base reestablished, otherwise Congress would not function even as a machinery winning the necessary votes at elections and thus retaining, or acquiring power. In the shadow of the Sino-Indian war, he accepted the proposal of the party leader Kamaraj for separating the functions of government and party, and dismissed a number of politicians from state functions. This was an opportunity to strengthen his own position, but also a major effort to reconstruct the party. He did not live to see the splits of Congress, the repeated efforts of his successors at party building, and even the defeat of Congress at

the polls, only to return to power two years later, but it was Nehru who had accomplished the major transformation of a movement into a governing party.

India was one of the first among the colonial countries to become independent and as such, all she had done had a model value in one way or another. But India was also unique, because of the huge dimensions, various natural resources, a fairly well developed communications network, a diversified agriculture and a considerable industry, because India had an ancient culture and social structure, capable of absorbing Western influence and adjusting to the foreign rule. By the time of independence India had considerable middle strata of Western education, political ideas and aspirations. The long decades of struggle for independence had resulted in a political

consciousness all over the country which was practically unparalleled elsewhere in the Third World, if China is not taken under this heading. Thus India could embark upon a unique experiment in modernization under Nehru's leadership. Rasheeduddin Khan recently pointed out that Nehru was attached to six principles of national reconstruction, namely, to the inculcation of rationalism and scientific temper in all aspects of life, to secular outlook in politics, to cosmopolitanism in culture, to concern for the use of modern technology and scientific skills for the development of the economy, to the adaptation of socialist principles to Indian conditions for pursuing the objectives of social justice, cohesive economic growth and progressive politics, to stabilization of the foundations of a participatory, federal democracy. He was not only attached

to these principles, or even to others as well, but embarked upon the creation of a new India with missionary zeal and a rare quality of wisdom. He knew something very few politicians realize: in a backward country, where organic development had been arrested, everything has to be developed simultaneously. One cannot build heavy industries only, because they would not work without power, and one should not build hydro-electric power stations only, when people are starving. And it is impossible to develop agriculture if the feudal system of land ownership is not broken up, if no high-yielding varieties irrigation, fertilizers, pesticides, machinery and a domestic market are available. It is equally impossible to create a parliamentary democracy based on universal adult suffrage if the age-old hierarchy of the caste system is not attacked, its

economic foundations are not removed. And no advanced technology can be introduced either in agriculture or in industry if the rate of literacy is 16.67 per cent as it was in 1951. Foreign affairs have to be looked after, in keeping with the best interests of the country, and a political culture has to be developed so as to promote the coexistence and cooperation of the various groups of the highly complex society, and steer it towards social and economic advancement, while safeguarding continuity. As no progress can be made without some degree of political stability. A Herculean task and Nehru was aware of it. He remarked in Lok Sabha in 1957 that 'During these five years we have not only functioned on the edge of history but sometimes plunged into the processes of making history. . . . we have had our own drama also. It would be

interesting for someone to take a rather distant view of the drama of these five years and more, not being lost in the innumerable confusing details, but seeing this broad current of history in motion in this country: how far has it laid the stable foundations for this Republic of India...?' Almost forty years have passed since India became a Republic. There has been a remarkable stability of her political system, of her internal policy as well as foreign affairs. India has continued the transformation of the economy with a success surpassed only by the small Dragons of the Pacific, under very different conditions, and she has been able to retain her parliamentary democracy as a framework of competitive politics. The society has largely been politicized. Primordial identifications are filled with a new meaning. Religious conflicts are manifestations of ma-

jor economic and cultural disparities, castes function as pressure groups, while the old contents gradually fade away. There is tension everywhere, violence too, the inequalities of the regions have not been eliminated, so that there are even separatist tendencies, but a tremendous network of economic interrelationships has grown up, making India a huge, but viable economic unit. And in the face of external or internal calamity India has proved to be a stable Republic.

Jawaharlal Nehru had set himself to redeem his tryst with destiny under incredibly difficult conditions most people would not venture to risk. Independence had also meant taking over all the responsibility of governing a huge country almost the size and complexity of Europe. And responsibility meant day-to-day work under the given conditions, settling the constantly occurring crises of varying degrees of gravity. Meanwhile the great objective of transforming India into a secular democracy, had to be carried out making an equitable society caring for the welfare of every individual, which had to be operational and not re-

legated to the distant future. Nehru realized that the current troubles of the Indian society would not disappear until this major transformation was accomplished, but the great work of building the new society was greatly hampered at times, made even impossible by the very same troubles. Thus the political leadership had no other choice but to maintain that much of law and order as would allow for activities in the service of future improvement. Nehru was fully aware of the dialectics of the phenomenon. In March 1957 he said in Lok Sabha: 'Only the dead have no problems; the living have problems and they grow by fighting with problems, overcoming them. It is a sign of the growth of this nation that not only do we solve problems, but we create new problems to solve.' Twenty years later, in 1967 when Nehru was no longer at the

helm, Myron Weiner assessed the Indian situation in very similar terms: 'Ironically, the more successful government is in accelerating economic growth and social change, the more tension it creates within the Indian social and political system.'

Nehru knew that somewhere there was a critical point beyond which tension would become intolerable and a hindrance to any constructive work. Whenever he felt that the situation dangerously approached that point, he made the compromises deemed necessary. Hence his postponement of nationalizations in the early years of independence, or the acceptance of the reorganization of some provinces in the more southern regions of the country.

Nehru was frequently criticized in his life and much more after his death. Chester Bowles and some others

thought that he had no idea of economics. Walt Rostow, while appreciating Nehru's intentions, said that his manner of doing things was not successful. Some people felt that India was in a worse shape after Nehru than at the time of independence. Even those who respected him and were close associates thought he was not practical, that he had little contact with the people, that he was a poor judge of men, that he was impatient, aristocratic at heart, that he could not build national unity. Even some of his sympathizers felt he failed because he could not harmonize his idealism with pragmatism. The eminent novelist, Mulk Raj Anand spoke about Nehru's Hamletian attitude 'in his frequent indecisions amounting to bewilderment.'

Nehru was very much aware of the condition of the masses in India. For

him India meant the peasantry and labour, and not in the abstract, but in the tangible reality of the more than 500,000 villages, of peasants deprived of land and deeply in debt, illiterate, sick and under-nourished, and the workers of the cities living in appalling slums, lacking even potable water. He was adored by the masses and none of his contemporaries could match his popularity after the death of Gandhi. Nehru went to the masses, talked to them, he was understood, and he could understand simple people and was never afraid of the crowds.

After the militant and unifying spirit of the struggle for independence waned, Nehru was often left alone as his earlier comrades-in-arms, mostly men of integrity, but of less vision, were unable to follow his lead. Perhaps he was a poor judge of men, but he had to work with, and rely on those who were at hand.

It is also possible that he was impatient at times, because he did not suffer fools gladly. But he had an unlimited patience in historical dimensions. He stood for equality but knew very well that a society of castes and classes would not become equal overnight. By education he had a scientific mind and by conviction he was an agnostic, but he knew that in a country of high rates of illiteracy and deeply-rooted religious traditions it was impossible to step directly into the jet age, as the age of the bullock cart first had to be followed by that of the bicycle. And he also knew that schools, universities and teachers did not spring from nowhere, but the objective of general, compulsory and free education had to be set, and a programme for its realization elaborated.

His refinement and broad culture, the repudiation of dogmatism, nar-

rowness and intolerance, were often mistaken for an aristocratic attitude. His erudition may indeed have been embarrassing for some, though India has been very fortunate to have eminent men of learning in the early phase of sovereign statehood. The prominent lawyers of the period of national struggle were followed by such people as Maulana Azad, or the philosopher Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the second President of the Republic. The deep intellectual refinement of these people helped enhance the prestige of free India abroad, and promoted circumspect consideration of the domestic issues.

Nehru was not an economist, but his early readings of Marx helped him understand the fundamental role of production in society. His interest in the theory of socialism and also his scientific mind urged him to keep abreast of the related literature and the experi-

ence of the first four or five decades of the century convinced him of the need for planning, for heavy industry and autarky as the means of economic advancement. Vested interests resented his drive for economic transformation and hindered land reform in particular. Nehru could not accomplish the complete abolition of *zamindari*, but his successors were in an easier position to pursue it, because he had already done the spade work. The idea of the 'mixed economy' allowed for the growth of private enterprise and provided it with an industrial infrastructure established by the state. Public enterprise had a major advance when Indira Gandhi nationalized the banks and insurance, but this could be done only after the constant extension of the public sector during the first three Five-Year Plans.

Nehru's great dilemma was how to make India catch up with the advanced

part of the world. He realized that no country could live in isolation, either political, or economic, but he knew that no real independence could be attained without economic independence. P.N. Haksar, Nehru's one-time Secretary aptly remarked in 1979 that 'The centrepiece of Nehru's foreign policy was to ensure in varying circumstances, independence of thought and action.' An objective which could only be accomplished if the country were not exposed to the mercy of others in the fundamentals of supply. He had no models to turn to regarding how to make his country economically sound and politically strong. The path had to be found and worked out. The bargaining position of India had to be improved in order to make the country accepted in more or less equal partnership in the global context. He had no other alternative but to follow the ma-

jor trends of the period and to adjust them to the specific Indian conditions. M. Chalapathi Rau's assessment of Nehru, on the 90th anniversary of his birth, ably summarizes his logic: 'Nehru, whatever his limitations, did one correct thing. He measured himself against the spirit of the time in which he lived and made himself a part of the historical process. In this constancy of effort, aided by the vitality of his mind and body, he pushed forward processes which are irreversible.'

Processes which are irreversible. Had he not pushed them to the point of irreversibility, the India of today could not pride herself on ranking tenth among the industrial nations and second or third in respect of scientific establishments and their work. Some salient figures of the first 25 years of free India, out of which 17 years were spent under Nehru, themselves indicate the

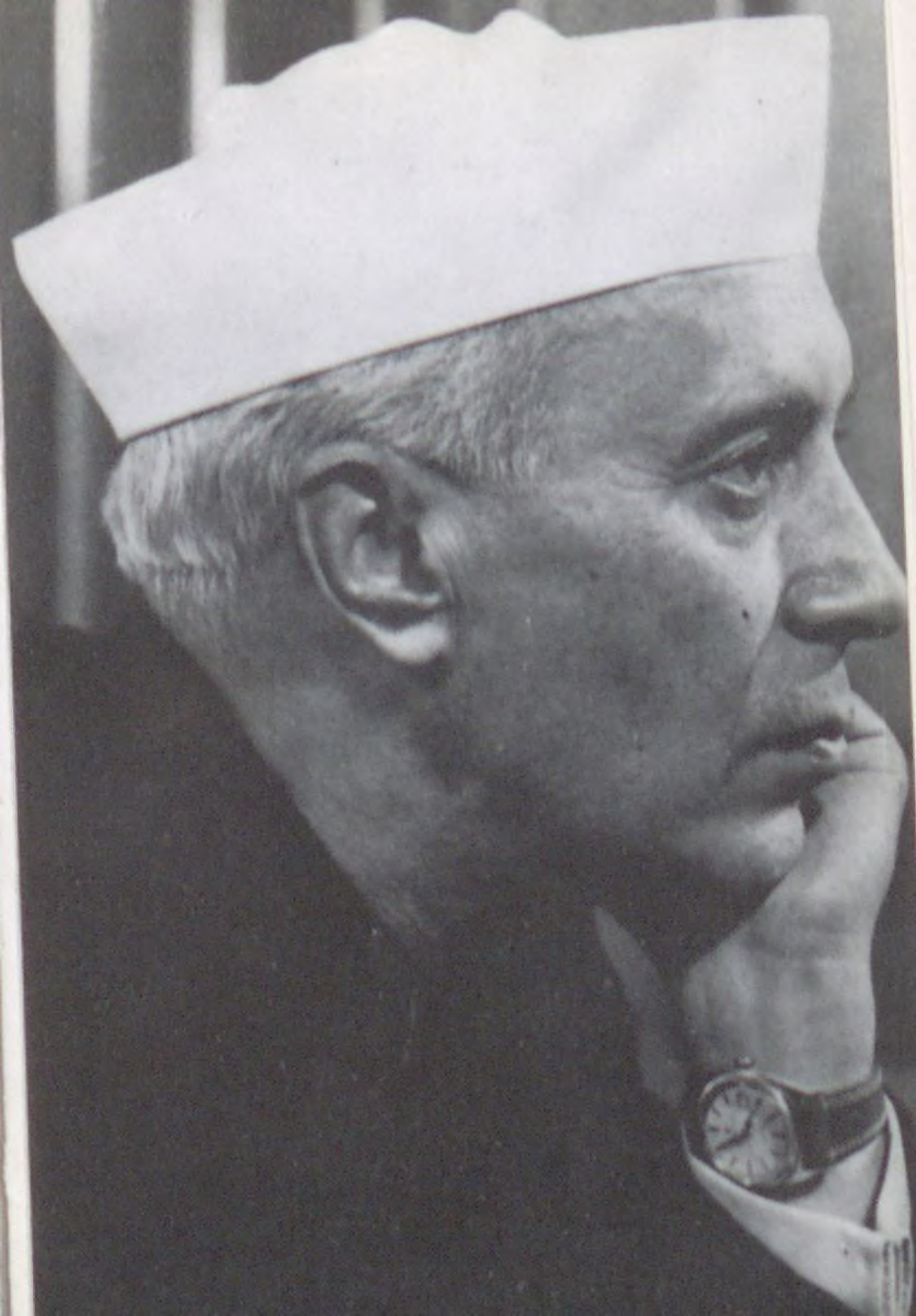
tremendous progress accomplished by the country. Besides the production of foodgrains, already referred to, the irrigation capacity was vastly expanded. Between 1951 and 1966, during the first three Five-Year Plans about 500 major and medium irrigation projects were implemented, increasing the total irrigated area from 9.7 million hectares to 16.1 million, while the next ten years saw an expansion to 21.8 million hectares. In 1948 India could indigenously produce 185,000 tons of petroleum products and there was a demand for 2,657,000 tons, in 1964 indigenous production went up to 8,428,000 tons against a total demand of 11,361,000 tons, while the domestic production of crude oil had increased almost ten times during the same period. In 1950 the total length of roads was 400,000 kms, it had been expanded to nearly one million kms

within 25 years. During the same period of time the number of motor vehicles had grown from 300,000 to 1,500,000 million. While in 1960 there was an installed capacity of electricity of 5.7 million kw, by 1980 it grew to 33.1 million kw. In 1950 there were only 5 public undertakings with an investment of Rs 290 million, and 25 years later there were about 200 units with an investment of Rs 60,000,000. In 1951 there was an installed capacity of 1.3 million tons of steel production, by 1965 it was increased to 6.8 million, and to 9 million tons by 1970–71. And it was on this industrial basis that defence production, which was worth Rs 422.7 million in 1965–66, could be increased to Rs 2957.8 million by 1974–75.

Nehru experimented with something very few nations have attempted so far. He introduced representative

democracy into a rigidly hierarchical society, and infused it with socialism. The experiment has not come to an end, but during its four decades it has turned out that no society with a development arrested or distorted at some stage, has been able fully to realize the dual objective. Entirely new branches of social sciences have grown up since, trying to understand and explain the complex processes of developing societies, trying to identify what should be done and how, to end poverty, to achieve self-sustained growth and the respect of human rights. And it is precisely these studies which show that India has not fared badly. Nehru had the courage to plunge into the unknown and followed a few principles and ideals long cherished by humanity. The task was enormous. No one without high ideals, strong convictions and unconditional dedication

could have embarked upon it. It is impossible to tell how the Indian experiment will progress in future, but it is a fact that India has been a politically stable representative democracy, a secular state with a respectable foreign policy and an economy showing remarkable achievements. Though it is true that most of the one-time alien political institutions have been Indianized to a large extent, a vote is cast much more for the person than the party, as the candidate makes the promises of a school, a road, a dispensary, some equipment or other item of development, in the hope of getting votes and becoming an MP or a member of a provincial legislature. But even the vote of the earlier untouchables has become a political weapon, an instrument of pressure, which has to be won by some fulfilled promises. There is corruption and nepotism, greed and cynicism, but



J.L. NEHRU WHO DIED ON 27.5.1964

social science has proved that these phenomena are not particularly Indian, they are much more characteristic of the economy of shortage.

During the past four decades there have been shorter or longer spells of relative internal peace, but the international press has always been quick to report on incidents, on conflicts between Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and the State, between the Centre and the States, on tragic events when tradition reasserts itself in a cruel way. Nehru is blamed for failing to accomplish national integration. National unity and integrated society are, however, not eternal phenomena, if they can be achieved at all. An integrated society may grow, but it cannot be created, perhaps assisted, at the most. The diversity of the world and of any society is a fact of life and history, and great movements and long struggles of cen-

turies have preceded such political achievements as the Declaration of Human Rights. The freedom of speech, of conviction, the preservation of any culture in minority, the cultivation of the language and traditions of all nationalities are more frequently desires than realities all over the world, and are subjects of struggle in the face of the complacent belief of dominant groups that their culture, language, religion and traditions constitute the best of all possible worlds. And Nehru was only too aware of it. He knew that the only solution to the problem of religious, ethnic, caste and other kinds of bias was to be found in tolerance, in the acceptance of diversity deeply ingrained in the best of Hindu tradition. The idea of unity in diversity was expressed in ancient Indian philosophy, in the Isa Upanishad, and its variant in the Bhagavad Gita. An existing but

much forgotten value of Indian society. Nehru advocated it, knowing too well that tolerance was in great need in international dimensions as well. He did not live to see the recrudescence of nationalism, expected to fade away after World War II, and of religious fundamentalism asserting itself as a political force in the Middle East and elsewhere. In his own days he could only see that ethnicity and religious affiliation were expressed in strong emotions and a community of interests and aspirations in the face of a larger, distant and dubious identity, represented by the nation state. By the seventies it had become obvious, that the ethnic groups and nationalities on the one hand, and the religious communities on the other, represent vigorous notions of identity and would continue to do so for a very long time to come. Tamils and Bengalis would re-

tain their language, culture and identity just as much as Georgians and Armenians, or Hungarians would do. Yet Tamils and Bengalis are Indians by virtue of their common cultural heritage, history, economy, defence and external affairs. But they would defend their own interests even against each other, if either of them tried to infringe upon the special value of the other. National unity is something that can break down over other factors as well, such as the undue economic polarization of the population, special handicaps of large sections of the society, stagnation, or political stalemates. Nation-building is the outcome of constant activity aiming at consensus, common will, objectives, and achievements. It can suffer a major setback if the accepted values of the whole society are eroded. And national unity cannot be very strong unless at least some

values are universally accepted and respected. Nehru wanted tolerance to be one such value in the whole of India. Tolerance was widely advocated by Gandhi. It is often said that Nehru was a Gandhian. But this needs some qualification. Nehru loved and respected Gandhiji, who was Bapu, Father to him too, who could always give solace to the despairing and offer hope to the downtrodden. There was complete agreement between the two of them regarding the creation of a secular state, the only possible framework for a society of so many religions and such a composite culture. Nehru accepted the principle of non-violence too, but only as long as the state was not threatened. As Prime Minister responsible for a huge country he could not possibly give up armed defence and the power-enforcement organizations. As far as the future of the Indian

society was concerned, the visions of the two were miles apart from each other. But there was yet another point of agreement between them. And it was their ethical attitude to life and politics. Neither of them could accept the European tradition of Machiavellian politics, covertly admired and openly pursued by most politicians. Both of them attributed great significance to the quality of means employed for ends. Both of them had a genuine respect for man and they served the cause of humanity, of the Indian people with great humility. They expected people to have a set of internal norms regulating their deeds and helping them clearly distinguish between right and wrong. They believed in human dignity embodied in mutual respect, decent living conditions and honest work, and rejected greed, cruelty and cynicism. But

Nehru had been acting in a world losing its ideals, building nuclear weapons, and measuring strength by the number of missiles. It has been a world where ideology of all sorts has been discredited, and it is only recently that there seems to be some hope that commonsense will yet prevail. Nehru was aware of the trend and grew gradually disillusioned. He had a different vision of the world and of his own country. He genuinely wanted peace. Nowadays an increasing number of people realize that this is the only alternative. And it is only people of some vision who have been able to bring about major changes in history. Nehru was a political leader, and leadership requires an image of the future to be achieved, certain principles to be followed, a comprehensive understanding of the tasks ahead. No leader can function without values and ideals.

And he was a leader whose significance and greatness has not yet been fully grasped. S. Venkataraman's assessment hints at his merits: 'His integrity and honesty, rectitude and wisdom, his instinctive realisation of people's needs, made him an immensely popular leader.' M. Chalapathi Rau's words extend this image: 'Among world leaders too, he stood tall for clarity and consistency of vision and for his unwearied voice.' And the same author gives the best summary of the Nehruvian oeuvre: 'Much of modern India is a monument to his memory. He was the maker of modern India.'

1889, 14 November: Jawaharlal Nehru born to Motilal Nehru and Swarup Rani ain Allahabad.
1905–7: Harrow School, Middlesex.
1907–10: Trinity College, Cambridge.
1910–12: Inner Temple, London.
1912, August: Return to India. Lawyer, Allahabad High Court.
1912, December: Started his political career by attending the Congress session at Bankipore as a delegate.
1916, 8 February: Married Kamala Kaul.
1916, 25–31 December: First met Gandhiji at the Lucknow session of the Congress.
1917: Joined Home Rule League.

1917, 19 November: Birth of Indira Priyadarshani Nehru.

1919: Started the newspaper, 'Independent', with Motilal Nehru.

1920: Joined the Non-cooperation Movement.

1920 February: Elected Vice President of the Allahabad District Congress Committee.

1921, 6 December: Arrested for participating in the volunteer movement and urging the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India. (Released 3 March 1922).

1922, 11 May: Arrested for picketing cloth shops. (Released on 26 January 1923).

1923, April: Elected Chairman, Allahabad Municipal Board. (Resigned January 1925).

1923, 19 September: Arrested for defying an order banning entry into Nabha State. (Released 6 October).

1923, December: Founded the Hindustani Seva Dal.

1920–1923: Acquainted himself with the poverty and misery of the country and became convinced that the first aim of a free India would be to tackle the problem of poverty.

1923–25: General Secretary, Indian National Congress.

1925, 1 March: Sailed with wife Kamala and daughter Indira to Europe.

1927, 16 February: Participated in the Congress of oppressed Nationalities, Brussels.

1927, November: Visited Moscow during the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Russian Revolution.

1927, December: Moved the 'Independence Revolution' at the Madras session of the Indian National Congress.

1927–1929: General Secretary, Indian National Congress.

1928, August: Founded the Independence for India League.
1928, September: Presided over the All Bengal Students Conference.
1928, November: Active in the boycott of the Simon Commission. Lathi charged in Lucknow.
1929, 30 November: Presided over the Nagpur session of the All India Trade Union Congress.
1929, 29 December: Presided over the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress.
1930, 14 April: 6 months imprisonment for breaking Salt Law. (Released 11 October).
1930, 10 October: Arrested for speech made in favour of no tax campaign at Allahabad. (Released 26 January 1931).
1931, 6 February: Death of father Motilal Nehru.
1931, 26 December: Arrested for

breach of internment order prohibiting him from entering the municipal limits of Allahabad during agrarian trouble (Released on 30 August 1933).

1934, 12 February: Arrested and sentenced to two years imprisonment for speeches made in Calcutta. (Released 4 September 1935).

1936, 28 February: Death of wife Kamala Nehru at Lausanne, Switzerland.

1936, April: Presided over the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress.

1936, April–December: Campaigned all over India for Congress candidates for the provincial Elections.

1936, December: Presided over the Faizpur session of the Indian National Congress.

1938, 10 January: Death of mother Swarup Rani Nehru.

1938, July: Visited Spain, France, Britain and other European countries.

1938: Chairman, National Planning Committee. Visited Sri Lanka and China.

Drafted the Congress resolution on war.

1940: Chosen to be the second Satyagrahi in the individual Satyagraha Movement.

1940, 31 October: Arrested for speeches made in Gorakhpur. (Released 4 December 1941).

1942, 26 March: Indira Nehru's wedding with Feroze Gandhi.

1942, March-April: Negotiations with Sir Strafford Cripps.

1942, 7 August: Moved the 'Quit India' resolution at the All India Congress Committee meeting, Gowalia Tank, Bombay.

1942, 9 August: Arrested in Bombay. (Released 15 June 1945).

1945, 25 June–14 July: Represented the Congress at the Simla Conference.

1945: Campaigned for Congress candidates in the elections.

1945, November: Appeared as a lawyer for the defence at the trial of the Indian National Army Officers.
Vice President, Indian Centre of the P.E.N.

1945, December: Elected President of the All India States People's Conference.

1946, March: Visited South-East Asia.

1946, April–June: Held talks with members of the British Cabinet Mission.

1946, May: Elected President of the Indian National Congress. (Resigned in September).

1946, 2 September: Interim Government formed with Nehru as Vice president of the Viceroy's Executive Council and Member for External

Affairs and Commonwealth Relations.

1946, 13 December: Moved the 'Objectives Resolution' in the Constituent Assembly.

1947, 23 March: Inaugurated the Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi.

1947, 15 August: Became first Prime Minister of Free India.

1948, 30 January: Mahatma Gandhi assassinated.

1948, 20 August: Addressed the first meeting of the Atomic Energy Commission.

1948, October: Attended the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, London.

1949, 20 January: Inaugurated the conference of 18 nations to condemn Dutch aggression on Indonesia

1949, October—November: First visit to the U.S.A. and Canada.

Addressed U.N. General Assembly on 22 October 1949.

1950, 26 January: India becomes a Republic.

1950, 28 February: Planning Commission set up with Nehru as its Chairman.

1950: Elected President, Indian National Congress. (continued till 1954)

1952, May: Sworn in as Prime Minister, and formed a new Government after the first general elections.

1952, 2 October: Initiated Community Development Programme.

1953, December: Appointed States Reorganization Commission.

1954, June: Issued joint statement by the Prime Ministers of India and China listing the five principles (Panchsheel) for the regulation of relations between nations.

1955, January: Moved the resolution on a 'Socialistic Pattern of Society' at the Avadi session of the Indian National Congress.

1955, 15—25 April: Afro-Asian Conference, Bandung.

1955, 15 July: Bharat Ratna conferred on Jawaharlal Nehru by the President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

1956, 17—18 July: Nonaligned Conference with President Nasser of Egypt and President Tito of Yugoslavia, Brioni.

1956, November: Conference of the Prime Ministers of Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon and India, New Delhi.

1957, 20 January: Inaugurated atomic reactor at Trombay.

1957, 28 March: Re-elected leader of the Indian National Congress Parliamentary Party.

1957, April: Formed new Govern-

ment after the second general elections.

1959, January: Sponsored resolution on co-operative farming and state trading of food grains at the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress.

1961, 2 September: Addressed the summit Conference of Nonaligned Nations, Belgrade.

1962, April: Formed new Government after the third general elections.

1962, June: Presided over meeting of the National Integration Council.

1962, 16 August: Signed the documents transferring former French settlements in India.

1962, October: War broke out with China.

1962, 21 November: Unilateral declaration of ceasefire by China.

1963: 'Kamaraj Plan'—Ministers re-

linquished office to reorganize the Congress Party.

1964, 27 May: Died in his official residence, Teen Murti House. Cremated at Shanti Vana on the banks of the river Yamuna, New Delhi.

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CONTENTS

 This little book in commemoration of the centenary of the birth of the great statesman J. Nehru, out of respect and admiration by the Hungarian People's Republic, has been published by Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest. Prepared by Bembo type on Zanders Ikonorex special matt paper, designed by Tibor Szántó, at Kner Nyomda (Managing Director: Pál Háromszéki) in March 1989. ISBN 963 05 5392 9

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