

# NEHRU'S CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY

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Certificate

I have the pleasure to certify that Miss Savita Singh, an M.Phil. student of the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, has pursued her research work and prepared the present dissertation entitled "Nehru's Concept of Democracy" under my supervision and guidance. The present dissertation is the result of her own research and to the best of my knowledge no part of it has earlier comprised any other monograph, dissertation or book. This is being submitted to the University of Delhi for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Political Science in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the said degree.

  
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25 February 1985  
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## Contents

		<u>Pages</u>
	INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter I	NEHRU'S SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY	6
Chapter II	NEHRU'S CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY	32
Chapter III	TOWARDS MAKING OF DEMOCRATIC STATE: NEHRU'S PRACTICE OF DEMOCRACY	69
Chapter IV	CONCLUSION	126
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	135

## INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive overview of the project's objectives, scope, and key findings. This section will outline the background, the research methodology, and the main results of the study.

## INTRODUCTION

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru had a long <sup>ensuing</sup> in the office of Prime Minister of India. His colleagues knew him as a socialist and a liberal. There are so many good things that he did and bad things avoided. But he remains controversial, he became so more after his death. A very short and black period of De-Nehruvization seemed to have emerged with force but could not last. He remains a major model builder of development of Indian society, setting things in order. He spoke and wrote more than any other politician and thought equally abundantly to the extent of ignoring some basic contradiction creeping deep into his thought system affecting his practice of democracy.

*But not explained why.*

The best way to understand Nehru is to move further left word. Any other position ~~incapacitates~~ the interpreter to understand such an important period in the history of modern India as Nehru's period. By now world knows so much about Nehru, his life, his thoughts and

about his policies. After his glorious years in office, subsequent years have seen rather undoing of most of the things he stood for than improving upon him. In a comparative analysis, Nehru stands, no doubt, in better position than he was when alive, and this has made into an easy trap for people with average critical faculty and more, reluctancy to do that, to have all praise for him, find good in everything that he did and stood for. Its not that one is not disappointed with present situation but one can't ignore other situation, the ~~past~~ where some faults were nurtured and allowed to grow though with an obvious facial distortions. I have perceived my problem in this background of this thinking.

It is natural that I have been critical in my chapters where necessary and enjoyed reading S. Gopal and Frank Moracs more than Micheal Brecher. Though I have not quoted the earlier two writers extensively neither taken bulk of my material from them but they have constituted my basic biographical linking on Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Francine Frankel, <sup>and</sup> JRC Dutt provided with me all the relevant material I needed and without which I could <sup>not</sup> have really done much. However I relied for my data on primary sources but interpreted them as these authors have done in their various chapters. D.E. Smith and M.N. Das have helped <sup>me</sup> to think for some time in the way Nehru thought about democracy, but for my basic

theoretical knowledge of democracy I read authors like C.B. Macpherson, G. Sartori and Yugoslav author, Edvard Kardelj. Allen Hunt's edited book was enlightening and Rajni Kothari's various articles very sound.

The approach which I have adopted confirms one ~~me~~ more than ever to consider him less a socialist and more a developmentalist, very much aware of India's social and economic conditions and subsequent dilemmas arising out of that. Here lies Nehru's strength. I start with this position of his strength only to ~~reach~~ weaknesses of his position taken in the name of pragmatism which is only an euphemistic category of easy reasoning. I have <sup>made</sup> my best effort to write something which rarely I come across as the best works on Nehru are either biographical or narrative, always wavering to take a stand, they are less analytical and inadequately critical. Mine is exactly an attempt in this direction.

The first chapter of the dissertation deals with Nehru's theoretical stand on socialism. I have tried to bring a very obvious contradiction that prevailed in his thinking, a contradiction between socialism and liberal democracy. I have tried to explain why one can't have doubts about an overstatement that he had a firm theory of transition from capitalism to socialism.



The second chapter is dealing basically with Nehru's concept of democracy and I allowed this chapter to contain only his concepts. So there is very little analytical exercise. The only relevant thing I have done is to place ~~him~~ in a tradition of liberal democracy to which he belonged to and I found ~~him~~ nearer to J.S. Mill. After that I have tried to think about democracy his way for sometime to be able to say exactly he had to say. That should be the merit of this chapter if it fulfils my objective.

Third chapter again prevails on an elaborate explanation on Nehru's contribution in structuring this nation as the first Prime Minister of independent India. I am totally in line with Rajni Kothari's thinking here as far as he talks about considerable role. Nehru played in building institution. I might have differences on the nature of institution itself but that<sup>h</sup> not dealt here in the chapter. I have acknowledged the benefits of Nehru's progressive thinking that accrued to Indian society, So traditional and backward, and have all praise for his differences with Patel. But I have been critical about his overall thinking on mixed economy and planning.

By the end of this last chapter page of my dissertation, I have to come to the conclusion that if

Indian democracy has to operate within the existing framework of social structure, Nehru's model is still relevant and needs <sup>guts</sup> governments on the part of ruling elite to revive his thinking on institution building and economic development.

With this ends my comparatively little effort to think over such an important man as Nehru in Indian history after independence.

## Chapter I

### NEHRU'S SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

## Chapter I

### NEHRU'S SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

"Nehru was no convert to socialism, he never became a fulfilled socialist or a member of a socialist organisation. All his life he remained an active member of the Indian National Congress. He was a colonial patriot with bourgeois up-bringing and with humanist liberal scientific training. But it was, curiously enough, his ardent patriotism that made him advance towards acceptance of some principles of socialism. His ideological progress reflects that predicament of the colonial patriots of the period following the First World War."<sup>1</sup>

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1 Ganesh Prasad, *Nehru: A Study in Colonial Liberation* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1972), p. 72.

In West although some elements of socialist thought might be traced to fairly early times, socialism as an historically significant ideological movement developed in the nineteenth century in response to the strains and stresses of industrial revolution. Technology opened an exciting prospective to unprecedented economic growth, but it also brought the complex problem of alienation, social and economic polarization and enormous concentration of power. The material being of industrial society started getting determined by the surplus created by exploitation of worker's labour. Marxism, scientific socialism, as the most outstanding of all social philosophies in that phase of history talked about the equitable distribution of this surplus, participation of workers in the determination of the value of their labour. Thus socialism was (and is) sustained effort to solve the problem of inequality, exploitation, alienation while retaining the benefits of technology. It was largely a post-industrial phenomenon and its main aim was ensuring a more equitable distribution of the newly generated wealth and power.

In the underdeveloped economy of the Third World, socialism is embraced by its elite as an ideology of development and a means to industrial revolution. In these countries it adopted as a conscious measure to give a deliberate filip to its colonial and ransacked

economy. Socialism is not spontaneous, allowed to trace a zig-zag path in these countries. Its planned and controlled. That's why in the Third World countries socialism came in guise of state capitalism, more as a means to engineer development processes of their recent economies. The important question for these countries was not the equitable distribution of social surplus but creation of that surplus, production was more important in the given historical context. No wonder socialism did not create the same humanist and democratic ethos of equality nor could carry with it, that scientific theoretical revelation for the people. This revolutionary ethos was abandoned in favour of a suitable model of development supposed to boost the economy and improve the standard of living of the people. In the speeches and writings of Jawaharlal Nehru this latched up situation of historical reality is very much reflected. He explained that "without increasing national income it was not possible to have a welfare state. There must be wealth to divide, poverty can't be divided." This kind of explanation produced some kind of vagueness in the definition of socialism for Nehru. To him socialistic society is nothing than a broad category of entity, "a society in which there is equality of opportunity and

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2 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. III March 1953 - August 1957 (New Delhi: The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1958), 22 January 1955, p. 17.

the possibility for everyone to live a good life.<sup>3</sup>" The definition of liberalism is not much different from his definition of socialism.

A pragmatic ~~approach~~<sup>approach</sup> towards socialism was adopted in India. This approach was justified in the name of suitability of peculiar Indian conditions. This ~~approach~~<sup>approach</sup> turned the whole theory into loose disjointed body of thought. It became so flexible that any amount of conservative romanticism could mean socialism. This is the reason why inspite of being a liberal democratic state India has been able to incorporate socialistic method of development e.g. planning, public sector as a tool of development. If seen theoretically, this situation of co-existence of two dissimilar concepts has become part and parcel of dynamic nature of liberalism. In fact without accommodating these socialistic tendencies liberalism would have <sup>invited</sup> only its own death knell. Socialism with a liberal democracy is historically a forced formula of compromise. We Indians are living through this compromised phase of history.

The underdeveloped countries had a predominantly agricultural economies. Combination of circumstances had prevented them from throwing up a strong class of

3 Ibid.,<sup>23</sup> May 1956, p. 96.

entrepreneurs. But then leaders shared in common anxiety to improve the economies of their countries as quickly as possible. Russian experiment as a model best suited to their circumstances attracted almost all these countries. Socialism thus appeared to be the key to rapid industrialisation of these countries. In absence of an enterprising indigenous bourgeoisie, state became the main instrument of economic growth. But Third World countries instead of calling it state capitalism preferred the term 'socialism'. Their aim was taking their countries from capitalism to socialism. India is the prime example of this fallacious situation. The transition from capitalism to socialism has to be however, peaceful. After a lot of deliberation one ~~reaches~~ reaches a conclusion that this peaceful method is a big trap, for we know the failures of socialist forces in Western liberal democracy for no other reason than shrewd manipulation of bourgeoisie of various concepts and realities in such a way that no such method be ever successful yet it would continue to sound revolutionary. In all these Western liberal democracies the status quo situation is not threatened by local proletariat as it has been 'appeased' and safely promoted at least for the present to the rank of labour aristocracy. "The bourgeoisie to some extent have shared with workers a small part of the surplus accumulated not only for exploiting the Third World but also by underpayment of wages to the growing



labour force of minority races and women.<sup>4</sup> This reality has almost created an impass for any peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. This fact is indicative of defeatist situation not only for the advocates of violent revolution but also falsify any such probability of peaceful transition. Logically this peaceful method is an impossibility as there always be a class owning the means of production in class divided societies of liberal democracies which will keep on creating such situational impasses for these aspiring for peaceful transition.

'Socialism in India since the twenties has developed along three mainstreams. The first corresponds broadly to the tradition of anarchist communitarian socialism which in the nineteenth century found a number of outstanding exponents in Europe like Proudhon, Ruskin and Tolstoy. It never enjoyed a wide following in Europe, but in India, it became a popular movement under Gandhi's charismatic leadership. But Gandhi's idyllic social philosophy was no answer to India's pressing problems of poverty. The unsuitability of Gandhi's socialism to any feasible programme of rapid economic growth helped the emergence of second stream of socialism. This was communism. This movement instead of seeing Indian historical wages

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4 Manorama Savur, "Women's Liberation and Productive Activity", Social Scientist, vol. 4, November-December 1975, p. 10.

finished its chequered career by moving to the subservience to Moscow's strategic requirements.<sup>15a</sup> However the masses in India were already taught in the school of Gandhian conservative philosophy and so communism could not mobilise the peasants, landless and marginal landless or even the working class. This proved be a handicap even to Nehru. Regarding India adopting socialism he said: "We have to understand our problems, it is in India, no doubt, leaving from what has been done in America, England, China, Yugoslavia, Russia, but at the same time bearing in mind that the condition in India are special and particular. Further we have to also understand that our background in many ways peculiar, particularly the Gandhian background."<sup>5</sup>

However, the decisive and meaningful check to communism in India comes from third mainstream, namely democratic socialism. Nehru's socialism was receptive to Gandhi's emphasis on non-violence but could not accept his traditionalism, anarchism, asceticism or the notion of village self sufficiency. This difference in any case, was not adding to an overall ethos of socialism, but it was a clear difference of a modern developmentalist

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5 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. III, op.cit., speech in Avadi, 22 January 1955, pp. 16-17.

5a. Srinarayan Ray, Socialism in India, in Studies in Indian Democracy, (ed) S. P. Aiyar & R. Srinivasan, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1965, pp. 43-44.

mind conversant with India's past and its colonial character of socio-economic order, with communists ✓ Nehru's socialism recognised the vital need for rapid industrialisation and important role of state in bringing this about, but he rejected dictatorship and coercion as unnecessary. In a country powerfully threatened by many centrifugal forces and tendencies it sought ✓ Political unity and stability through a federal system of government thereby avoided the two extremes of Gandhian anarchism and communist dictatorship. In a society torn by religious and sectarian conflicts it proposed secularism as state policy which guarantees religious freedom and toleration to all communities but kept the government free of religion. Nehru understood dilemma of Indian society more than socialism of his time and that's why he could do with some fundamental theoretical confusions. He wanted liberal democracy and a powerful socialism too, for India.

Nehru's emphasis on recognising society on new economic lines pressed him for a socialist concept and planning as its method. In a way these make cornerstone of his economic philosophy. To him economic democracy was conditional for the full realisation of political democracy. Hunger and starvation were anathema to him. "The proper way to have real and full

democracy is to give an opportunity to large number of people to profit by the democratic method and to have more and equal chances of progress.<sup>6</sup> In his presidential address to the U.P. Congress at Jhansi in 1928 he declared, "our economic programme must aim at the removal of all economic inequalities and an equitable distribution of wealth."<sup>7</sup> He also realised that this inequality can't be eliminated as long as the principal instrument of production are privately owned. Moving towards an equal society means moving towards socialism aiming at social reconstruction based on elimination of profit motive.

A new society in India that Nehru visualized was to be reconstructed around socialist principles and planning, "to establish a social order based on social justice offering equal opportunity to every citizen."<sup>8</sup> Nehru rightly considered the acquisitiveness as the very basis of capitalist society. "Real democracy could be established only when human being cooperated with each other for their own and public good."<sup>9</sup> This moving from an

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- 6 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. IV, September 1957 - April 1963 (New Delhi: Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1964), speech in Bangalore, 6 February 1962, p. 150.
- 7 J.S. Bright (ed.), Before and After Independence 1922-50 - A Collection of Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches (New Delhi: The Indian Printing Works, n.d.), p. 124.
- 8 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. IV, op.cit., speech in Lok Sabha, 21 August 1961, p. 144.
- 9 The Hindu (Madras), 15 July 1951.

acquisitive to co-operative society constituted crux of Nehru's socialism. In the same vein Nehru asks how to create an environment and circumstances under which these deeper changes can take place. Perhaps Nehru realised the necessity of a rather deeper psychological change too. He believed that socialism was not only a system of economic organisation but something deeper which involves a way of thinking and living. Socialism is based on growth of material resources as well as social justice and co-operative method of working.<sup>10</sup> Yet one feels so astonished to realise that in practice Nehru used socialism mechanically devoid of its ethos.

One wonders what did Nehru mean by a classless society. In a radio broadcast, 31 December 1952, he spoke "We have to aim deliberately at a social philosophy which seeks a fundamental transformation of this structure, a society which is not dominated by the urge of private profit and individual greed. We must aim at a classless society based on co-operative effort with opportunities for all."<sup>11</sup>

Nehru learnt his first lesson of socialism from

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10 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. IV, op.cit., Convocation held in New Delhi, 6 December 1958, p. 170.

11 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. III, 1949-1953 (New Delhi: Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1954), p. 103.

the Sunken eyes of kisans of Oudh in 1920. He recorded his reactions: "There can be few sights that are sadder than the Sunken eyes of our kisans with hunted hopeless look on them. All of us foreigner and Indian have sought to exploit that long suffering kisan and mounted on his back." <sup>12</sup> To him true test of progress and freedom in India lay in the change in the status and conditions of the life of these millions. Slowly and gradually Nehru started picking up concepts valuable for his later socialistic inclinations. In early twenties Nehru was still contemplating as an enlightened bourgeoisie over matter, factory workers, labour conditions etc.

Frank Moracs talking of Nehru say that ever since his first visit to Soviet Union in 1927 the idea of national planning gripped his mind and he worked hard to spread the idea of socialism in India and tried to use Congress as his platform to execute socialist programme. In 1929 at Lahore All India Congress Committee passed an important resolution stressing the need for revolutionary changes in the economic and social structure of society. In 1931, at Karachi, the Congress adopted a resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Programme which stated in clear terms: "The state shall own and

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12 Jawaharlal Nehru, Glimpses of World History (Bombay: Asian Publishing House, 1962), p. 441.

central key industries and services, mineral resources  
 Railways ... and other means of transport."<sup>13</sup> In 1936 as  
 the President of the Congress and onwards he tried to  
 persuade Congress leadership to adopt socialistic policy.  
 In 1938 a National Planning Committee was formed with  
 Nehru as its chairman. In 1948 April, first industrial  
 policy resolution was passed containing the programme of  
 mixed economy in 1950 February, the National Planning  
 Commission was set up with Nehru as chairman and in July  
 1951 draft outline of First Five Year Plan was published.  
 In December 1954 he urged the party to adopt a resolution  
 declaring socialistic pattern of society as the objective  
 economic policy. The resolution stated "the objective  
 of our economic policy should be a socialist pattern of  
 society, towards this end the tempo of economic activity  
 in general and industrial in particular should be stepped  
 up to the maximum extent possible."<sup>14</sup> In January 1955  
 Indian National Congress adopted a similar resolution at  
 Avadi. The concept of social ownership of the principal  
 means of production, progressively speeded up production  
 and equitable distribution of national wealth was  
 emphasised.

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13 Jawaharlal Nehru, Unity of India, Collected Writings  
 1937-1940 (London: Windsay Drummond, 1948), p. 408.

14 The Hindu, 23 December 1954.

Later also Nehru reasoned that democratisation of economic power is not possible in a society where those who control the means of production enjoy certain privileged. The most important characteristic of planned democracy would be the subordination of the system of free market to social ownership of means of production. A complete equalization will not result from all this, but certainly there will be far more equitable sharing and a progressive tendency towards equalization ... the vast difference that exist today will disappear completely and class distinction will begin to fade out.<sup>15</sup>

How, <sup>over</sup> the nagging question remains. "If Jawaharlal reasoned so well and thought so clearly and saw in socialism the means of solving the problem of misery of the multitude, why the tryst with destiny eludes us still?"<sup>16</sup>

After all socialism however defined must be the end product of a movement and not quixotic venture. Nehru came to power presiding over a predominantly bourgeois Congress Party with the twin objective of introducing <sup>some</sup> some type of socialism but by strictly democratic means within the framework of a liberal Western type of democracy.

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15 Jawaharlal Nehru, The Discovery of India (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1964), p. 535. 522.

16 Forward letter By P.N. Haskar in R.C. Dutt's, Nehru and Socialism (New Delhi: Abhinav Publication, 1981), p. x.



This idealism which still burned within Nehru with the same intensity as during the preindependence period posed a problem of the national bourgeois but their problem was sought to be solved by creating a contradiction between the socialism and democracy and slowing down the pace of the former in the name of the latter. No wonder distortions started appearing and thus results were not commensurate with his expressed intentions. The question arises - "was the weakness inherent in his thought or did it arise from the manner in which Nehru sought to implement them?"

"The question is important because it must be recognised that Nehru tried to achieve something which had not been achieved so far, nor since." He sought to develop a socialist pattern of society not only within the framework of a parliamentary democracy but with the help of parliamentary institution.<sup>16a</sup> For him there was no contradiction between socialism and parliamentary democracy.<sup>16a</sup> For we know from all these powerful debates between Kautsky, Beenstien and Lenin, this kind of thought of reconciliation of socialism with parliamentary democracy were only aberrations of as fertile minds as those of Kautsky and Beenstien.

Kautsky's The Class Struggle presents an analysis of this situation. To him socialism is the inevitable product of capitalist development because of the economic

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16a Ibid., p. xxiii.

effect of capitalist. The economic tendencies of capitalist involve an increasing polarization with the decline of peasantry and urban petty bourgeois, the concentration of capitalist production and the growth of the organised capitalist class, so that it finally encompasses a majority of the population. The political consequences *followed* from the irriconceliability of the interest of the proletariat and bourgeoisie, ~~The~~ parliament struggle itself forges the political cohesion of the classes. It means, on the one hand, that the state is an important instrument of the ruling class and on the other it is capable of transformation through parliament struggle. The state will never go further in relation to nationalisation of any other measure than the interest of the ruling class demand. It will not cease to be a capitalist institution until the proletariat has become the ruling class.<sup>17</sup> But while the state works in the interest of the bourgeois Parliament allows the working class to influence government activity. Parliament ceases to be a mere tool<sup>18</sup> in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

fact  
In/the struggle of the working class should be

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17 Karl Kautsky, The Class Struggle (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), p. 101.

18 Ibid., p. 188.

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directed both towards an increase in the power of Parliament in the state and towards the increase in their own influence within Parliament. The growing strength and political maturity of the working class means that sooner or later it will obtain a Parliament majority and ability to make Parliament the dominant element in the state socialist transformation is then just a matter of time. So the socialist transformation of society can be achieved through a Parliament majority backed by mass support.

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We all know these arguments are so misleading and in no Parliament system of democracy Parliament enjoys this kind of autonomy from the state as to allow the class interest of ruling class being dominated by the interest of working class in Parliament -- it means the same instrument which is used by the dominant class can be used as a <sup>stick</sup> state to <sup>beat</sup> treat it by working class. This is a naive belief at most; a contradiction in term. But it is true that social **democratic** parties of West Europe profess similar objectives and whatever their origin they seemed to have in the post-World War II period at any rate lost the will to <sup>bring about</sup> being without a change. Due to the same reason that you can't lead a particular logic into a direction other than the one which is natural to it. A parliamentary democracy is a bourgeois democracy, and it exhibits all the characteristics

of a class democracy and that's why you can't have a classless society of socialism fitted into a class divided society of liberal democracies. Rajni Kothari points out -- "by and large parliamentary government has failed to embody the idea of democracy and this failure principally stems from the fact that under it there is little scope for popular participation." <sup>19</sup> Parliamentary democracy thus becomes a rule of minority where the <sup>individual</sup> undevelopment is just a constitutional friction. <sup>20</sup>

Due to above reason, instead of achieving transformation of the societies in which they functioned the Western Socialist Parties appeared to have themselves been transformed into being reformist parties. Nehru was indeed made painfully aware of it by his experience of British Liberal Party before independence, yet he did not forsake either democratic ideals (of liberalism) or the democratic path <sup>as</sup> he called it. Instead he declared: "We have definitely accepted the democratic process. Why have we accepted it, well for a variety of reasons. Because we think that in the final analysis it promotes the growth of human beings and of society, because as we

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19 Rajni Kothari, "Direct Action -- A Pattern of Political Behaviour", Quest, January-March 1960, p. 25./

20 Ibid., p. 26.

∟ taken from A.R. Desai, "Public Protest and Parliament", in S.P. Aiyar and R. Srinivasan (eds.), Studies in Indian Democracy (Bombay: Allied, 1965), pp. 314-15.

have said in our constitution, we attach a great value to individual freedom, because we want the creative and adventurous spirit of man to grow. It is not enough for us merely to produce the material good of the world. Democracy is not merely a question of election. The question before us is how to combine democracy with socialism, through peaceful and legitimate methods.<sup>21</sup>"

This is the crux and a position of probable theoretical irconciliability. It was Nehru's attempt to produce a synthetic answer to the problems of this country out of reconciliation between capitalism and socialism. This theoretical position of Nehru, in his practice of socialism compelled him only to compromise with capitalist pulls and pressures arising from economy and social life of India. Then came his famous concept of mixed economy, officially declared in form of the industrial policy of India in 1948. It's not advisable to discuss here the lop-sided economic development of this country as a consequence of the hybrid concept of mixed economy. But one can't stop saying here, that a muddled up brain and a definite state of theoretical confusion at fundamental level takes its own toll and that India is made to pay <sup>in terms of</sup> economic and social distortions. ~~of~~

The post Nehru developments in the country were direct

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21 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. III, op.cit., p. 53.

consequences of his conceptual initiations. In fact occasionally Nehru also used to sense the validity of his basic quixotic thinking. In one of his interviews with Tiber Monde in 1958 he said: "I believe more and more in socialism, more and more in some parts of communism, not the action part but the theory part of it, a communist society somewhere in future. But I always condition it that the method should be peaceful. Whether the two can be synchronised or not, it is difficult to say."<sup>22</sup> Its a kind of dogma that the parliamentary political system of bourgeois society is universal and eternal and that its pluralism is the sole guarantee of individual democratic liberties. The social democrats who linked the fate of socialism with the empirical and pragmatism of parliamentary system believing that some kind of combination of parliament and socialism e.g. of the political system of bourgeois state and socialist socio-economic relations is the only possible way to build the political system of socialism. And there were theoreticians also who made non-convincing effort to prove that socialism will be evolved out of capitalism. To Nehru socialism and parliamentary democracy was a romantic blend and he never wanted the pleasantness he derived from this to be disrupted. He kept on treading a path of vague

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22 Tiber Monde, Conversation with Nehru (Bombay: Wilco Publishing House, 1958), pp. 31-32.

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theoretical ~~slive~~ land, till he found that his colleagues in the cabinet are rather hostile to his ideas. Nehru invited all sorts of constraints he faced in his life time as Prime Minister himself due to this vagueness and ambivalence. But he continued to be charismatic person, kept on winning elections essentially due to human approach he had to Indian problems and democracy. He remained a humanist all the same amidst all sorts of contradictions e.g. socialism and capitalism. If one looks into the above problem, the need arises to explain the situation. The synchronisation of liberal democracy of parliamentary type is theoretical misfit in a socialist society. Socialist societies have democracy but its a socialist democracy -- as Lenin would declare "a more democratic democracy."

Representative political democracy of bourgeois political state had its origin in the system of capitalist socio-economic and production relations. It was in fact created in response to the social and political needs of the ruling class in this system. If we do not go into the controversy voiced by Macpherson about the separate identities and existence of liberalism and capitalism and base our conclusion on the practices more than theory, all liberal democracies, had and have, a capitalist economy, they were and are class divided societies. Thus, Macpherson accepts: "The problems of the present and

future of liberal democracy arise from the fact that liberal democracy has typically been designed to fit a scheme of democratic government into a class divided society,<sup>23</sup> and he hints towards this approach by saying: "We must pay attention to the relation between democratic institutions and the underlying structure of society."<sup>24</sup> When India gained freedom it decided to have British model of parliamentary democracy. This democracy all over the world has its roots in capitalism. Parliamentary democracy is the product of the logic of a capitalist society and to deny it its ground would certainly amount to produce anomaly in the whole system. Socialism, logically, can't serve as fertile soil for it. Socialism means attaining (a) classless society by recognising the presence of class conflict as inevitable in a class divided society; (b) belief in social ownership of means of production - mixed will not work, yet its one thing to argue that socialism will not yield its results in bourgeois democracy and impossible in this democracy and another to argue that democracy is possible in socialist societies. The democratic socialist forces is not to make artificial constructions by combining two incompatible things but

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23 C.B. Macpherson, The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy (Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 9.

24 Ibid.



rather to seek out new forms and blaze new traits of democracy appropriate to the new production and socio-economic relations. Parliamentary elections are just not the method to achieve socialism. True enough parliament system did represent a great historical advance in regard to the promotion of democratic and human rights even though it did not foster these rights so much for the sake of individual citizen as for the sake of social and political requirements of the ruling class. Before such a parliamentary system of political pluralism can carry out its social function, it must concede certain democratic rights to its citizens. It is precisely this objective necessity of an organic link between parliamentarism and individual democratic rights that is important contribution made by parliamentary governments to the historical development of democratic thought. Marx referred to this organic link between parliamentarism and individual democratic rights in the following words: "A parliamentary regime lives on discussion, so how can it ban discussion." Edvard Kardely argues same line: "However the parliamentary system, as the political system of the capitalist mode of production was not created to guarantee freedom for those who are opposed to capitalist relation but rather to meet historical needs of these leading class forms." "And no matter how democratic a parliamentary system may be or what reforms i.e. social and democratic measures, it may institute, the fact remains that at best

only abstract and general political thought is free in it, the real class, existant and economic interests of workers are in a limb of disenfranchisement and subjugation of mode of production of capitalist society protected by parliamentary political system of bourgeois state. In this way political pluralism actually serves to suppress the true interest of the individual and above all the class interest of workers.<sup>25</sup>" In the past parliament has dared encroach on these prerogatives only to a limited extent and only by making the kind of reforms which have not threatened the system of extra-parliamentary class power in the sphere of capitalist production. How<sup>ever</sup>, if parliament starts giving a greater voice to the interest of the oppressed classes or the democratic ~~forces~~ then friendly relations go out of window. In other words as soon as the workers movement starts becoming so strong in the parliament that it looks like acquiring power to effect fundamental changes in the power structure - by limiting or eliminating the class ascendancy of owners and monopolistic managers of capital and their political protagonists a solution is immediately sought in some kind of dictatorship. Instance of ~~Chib~~ can be used as reference to the point.

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25 Edvard Kardley, Democracy and Socialism (Belgrade: Yugoslav Review, 1978, p. 39.

But this does not mean that parliament is procordained to play such a role. The possibility, even considered by Marx should be allowed at least in principle, that in countries with long tradition of democratic parliamentarism, the parliament may be one of the instruments by which the working class hand in hand with all democratic fences can promote its socialistic interest and goals by peaceful means. With reference to this possibility Marx said, "We know that account must be taken of the institutions, characters and traditions of various countries and we do not deny that there exists countries, such as America, England and if I knew a bit about your institution, perhaps I could add Netherlands -- in which the workers can achieve their ends by peaceful means. But even if this is so, we must still concede that violence must seem as the <sup>lever</sup> ~~lever~~ of ~~the~~ our revolution in the majority of the countries on the continent, the violence which we will have to resort to at a given moment precisely for this purpose, to establish the rule of labour once and for all."<sup>26</sup>

Marx's words obviously meant that such an outcome achieved by peaceful means under no circumstances depends on the parliamentary system per se, but rather on the

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26 La Liberte, 15 September 1972, quoted in ibid., p. 49.

social consciousness, traditions, balance of power of social class forces in a society and so forth. This power is expressed not only in the number of votes but in the ability of the working class to influence the governing of society and government which will enable it truly to change the character of production and socio-economic relations. Furthermore a democratic majority in parliament which might opt for socialist change must acquire the real governmental power that will enable it to carry out the social role which it has assumed by the will of the majority of the nation. It should not be forgotten that a minority backed by the reactionary parts of state's repressive and armed apparatus can topple any majority in parliament which might try to hamper with the 'sacred Law' of old society. It is pure illusion to think that a mere majority in parliament is enough to effect far reaching social reforms unless these are backed by real state power which no longer be subjected to the will of anti-democratic minority. Consequently, a peaceful road to socialism is only possible if the other side renounces the use of <sup>force</sup> ~~forces~~ which does not seem to be possible itself. And since in India the other side is not ready to renounce violence, and always putting deliberate and obstinate opposition to other democratic forces, its not possible to nurture Nehru's dreams in hostile violent political culture of India. Examples can be cited, in the

way Nehru toppled the communist government in Kerala, the way Telangana movement was suppressed tell enough authentic stories of the inner contradiction in the thought system of Nehru.

The net result is, that it was only possible for Nehru to make some allivating modifications in the concept of liberal democracy so that it may suit the native conditions of <sup>India's</sup> colonial past. Socialism apart, we adopted a developmental model of liberal democracy, strong <sup>with</sup> dozens of state capitalism capping it. But a mechanical grafting of socialism into parliamentary system caused deformations in the growth of the system itself and socialistic production relations, <sup>and</sup> <sup>as for</sup> "the historical task of socialist democratic force is to seek out and open up new paths and to find new forms of democracy which will correspond to the altered production and socio-economic relations without making artificial constructions by trying to combine two things that can't be combined."<sup>27</sup>

## Chapter II

### NEHRU'S CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY

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By 19th century, the bourgeoisie of Britain, America and France had established its hegemony in society and the state. The new socio-politico-economic structure became the synosure of the bourgeoisie of other Western countries and subsequently to Afro-Asian nations. Some basic beliefs and ideals were declared and accepted as universal e.g. respect for individual dignity, creativity and personality of the individual, supremacy of reason, supremacy of law, brotherhood of mankind, freedom of exercising civil liberties, security of property and democratic government.

For the realization of liberal ideals, it was thought necessary to have a liberal state. Such a state was one in which the government worked within limits yet by law in which the centre of political authority was the representative legislature and in which all branches of government were responsible to an electorate which tended to embrace the entire adult population. Thus the liberal state was a <sup>Synonym</sup> synonym for democracy or the democratic state. In fact in 19th century liberalism and democracy became twins. And so the life of liberal democracy is only about a hundred and fifty years, and it began in capitalist market societies and from the beginning it accepted their basic assumption which might be paraphrased 'Market Maketh Man'.

Liberalism came to Afro-Asian countries in the 20th century through their respective colonial masters. It was not an indigenous product but an imported stuff, liberalism was basically a Western concept. In India the West came through England. Hence the liberalism that influenced Indian thought and practice was mainly of the British variety. In India, colonial liberalism was best represented by Jawaharlal Nehru. One important thing can be noted here, when liberalism came to colonies of Western powers, it had lost its revolutionary fire, the variety that colonies inherited was basically non-revolutionary yet in the environment of Afro-Asian countries it acted as an



agent of revolutionary change. Jawaharlal's liberal humanist ideas have <sup>a</sup> tradition to be understood against this background. Without any commitment, Nehru unconsciously imbibed the values and ideals of the British humanist liberal tradition. "The fourteen years of his life were spent in Edwardian England, in the pleasant glow of the victorian Sunset. His resilient mind imbibed the very spirit of the British humanist tradition in the best centres of liberal education during the hey day of liberal civilization." <sup>1</sup> This tradition included gradualism, adaptability, adjustability, peaceful progress and collectivism. These qualities constituted Nehru's intellectual make up and his habit of mind -- the whole personality.

As a representative of colonial liberalism, Nehru represented basically J.S. Mill's tradition and not the old whiggism as most of other Indian liberals did at his time. Liberalism as an intellectual concept has changed from time to time and adopted itself to new realities. By the time Mill was writing on such topics as democracy and liberty, situation has changed a lot in Europe and so as early as mid-19th century Mill pressed the claim of equal individual rights to self development

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1 Ganesh Prasad, Nehru: A Study in Colonial Liberalism (New Delhi: Sterling Publications, 1972), p.44.

for he knew that liberalism so far has been the freedom of stronger to do down the weaker by following market rules. Mill and his humanist liberal followers in the 20th century attacked the Benthanist and James Mills model of protective democracy as it rested on the assumption of conflicting self interested <sup>2</sup> Maximising individuals." Mill found no enthusiasm for democracy in the protective model of democracy, it could not be a morally transformative force, it is nothing but a logical requirement for the governance of inherently self-interested conflicting individuals who are assumed to be infinite desirer of their own private benefits. Its advocacy is based on the assumption that a man is an infinite consumer<sup>3</sup>. Nehru following Mill rejected the founding model of liberal democracy which took man as he was man as he had been shaped by market society and assumed that he was unalterable. Bentham and James Mill had no vision of new kind of society or a new kind of man. Their model of society -- the hard driving competitive market society with all its class-division was justified by its high level of material productivity and that inequality was inevitable. The arrival of J.S. Mill on his model of democracy has more or less similar reasons which Nehru

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2 C.B. Macpherson, The Life and Time of Liberal Democracy (Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 43.

3 Ibid.

upheld reasonable. For Mill it was the growing military of the ~~work~~ing class, the chartist movement which convinced him for the necessity of a more egalitarian society and so a developmentalist democracy, to Nehru it was the militancy of the whole nation against imperialism - a symbol of oppression, so the meaning of egalitarianism was taken more seriously by him for in the movement of national independence it was not only the working class as in England, but also peasantry, which constituted 80 per cent of Indian population got mobilised. Mill wrote in Political Economy in 1848 -- "The poor have come out of leading strings and can't any longer be governed or treated like children. Whatever advice, exhortation or guidance is held out to the labouring classes, must henceforth be tendered to them as equals and accepted by them with their eyes open. The prospect of the future depends on the degree in which they can be made rational."<sup>4</sup>

Mill's model of democracy is a moral model. It has a moral vision of the possibility of the improvement of mankind and a free and equal society not yet achieved. A democratic political system valued as a means to that improvement and a means to further improvement. The

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<sup>4</sup> Principles of Political Economy, Bk IV, ch. 7 in J.M. Robson (ed.), Collected Works (Toronto and London, 1965), pp. 761-63; quoted in C.B. Macpherson, op.cit., p. 45.

that is expected is an interest in the amount of personal self development of all the members of the society or in John Stuart Mills phrase "the adjustment of community -- in intellect, in virtue and in practical activity and efficiency."<sup>5</sup> The worth of the individual is judged by the extent to which he develops in human capacities, "the end of man ... is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole."<sup>6</sup> This argument takes us to the root of Nehru's concept of democracy. Jawaharlal was a bourgeois humanist liberal. "My roots" Nehru confessed "are still perhaps partly in the 19th century and I have been too much influenced by the humanist liberal tradition to get out of it completely. This bourgeois background follows me about."<sup>7</sup>

While probing the sources of Nehru's democratic thought, one can't rely on just one ~~strate~~ stream of intellectual tradition. His ideas would probably be combination of Locke, Rousseau, Montesquie, Bentham and J.S. Mill etc. and not without traces of Marx. But J.S. Mill unconsciously

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5 Ibid., p. 47.

6 J.S. Mill, On Liberty, ch. 3 in Collected Works, vol. XVIII, 261, quoted in Macpherson, op.cit., p. 49.

7 Jawaharlal Nehru, An Autobiography (London: John lane, 1945 -- First published 1936), p. 591.

appealed to his humanistic and moralistic bend of mind more than others. Nehru's father steeped in the principle of British constitutional law presupposed parliamentary democracy as the natural structure of government. As a law student in England, Nehru's thinking developed within the same framework of generally accepted ideas. D.E. Smith says authoritatively, "In his books Nehru quotes Montesquien's *Espirit des' Cois'* Rousseau's *Deu Contract Social* (man is born free but he is everywhere in chains) and J.S. Mill *On Liberty* all of which apparently made a considerable impression on his mind.... Yet Nehru's democratic thought is more the produce of his broad traditions, the humanist liberal tradition than of specific sources."

Thus Nehru's concept of democracy is that of a liberal democracy of early 20th century lauding ideals of humanism and respect for individuality. Dignity of man occupies a bigger place in his democratic thinking. And this dignity is attained by an individual not due to political equality that a system provides but also from his economic well-being which takes him to the real world of freedom.

The content of word democracy has varied at different stages of his life. In his early years in the struggle

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8 D.E. Smith, *Nehru and Democracy: The Political Thought of an Asian Democrat* (Orient Longmans, 1958), p. 43.

for independence, the ideal of democracy was very closely related to the goal of self rule for India. Democracy meant freedom from foreign rule and truly representative government. Nehru later socialist ideas strongly altered his understanding of democracy. He agrees entirely with the concept of democracy as nothing less than the rule of people, expressing their sovereign will by their votes, but there is something more than this too. Democracy is a state of society, a state of mind as well. While working with democracy as a practicener, Nehru took into account the moral values associated with it -- it denotes a higher principles of life and society. M.N. Das says: "If Gandhian metaphysics had any influence on Nehru with regard to his work as a democrat, it was to combine both the democrat and the moralist in him."<sup>9</sup>

## 1. Bases of Nehru's Democratic Thought

### a) Humanism

In Nehru's democratic thought a current of deep humanism seems flowing which is obvious from his writings and speeches. The real problem for him were the problems of individual and social life of harmonious living. He believed in human approach to human problems and this

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9 M.N. Das, The Philosophy of Nehru, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961), p. 101.

approach, he considered essential for promoting human happiness.

Nehru was an agnostic, he remained sceptical about superhumans, but he was too deeply convinced about the capacities of human beings. Things of this world seemed nearer to reality and so he did not really relished the ramification of metaphysical world. He could deny God but not man, neither man's indomitable spirit to conquer the mystery of nature. Proximity of man provided him with the certainty in the future of mankind. He was taken in by courageous spirit of man which filled him with an acute optimism towards future of mankind. From behind the walls of Ahmadnagar fort, he wrote, "How amazing is the spirit of man. In spite of innumerable feelings, man throughout the ages has sacrificed his life and all he held dear for an ideal, for truth, for faith, for country and for honour. The ideal may change but the capacity for self sacrifice continues ... and it is impossible to loose faith in him."<sup>10</sup>

Man became centre of his contemplative moments, human well-being occupied a fixed position in his compassionate world. This led him to see the relevance

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10 Jawaharlal Nehru, The Discovery of India (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1964), p. 33.

of any action, policy and principle of any government in terms of serving the people. High level of pragmatism thus entered into Nehru's thought system. Relevance of any philosophy depends, thus, on its workability. "The modern mind that is to say the better type of modern mind is practical and pragmatic, ethical and social, altruistic and humanitarian."<sup>11</sup>

The influences that have their share in shaping up Nehru's humanism do not come from liberal tradition only, but also the best of Marxist tradition too. The humanism of Rabindranath Tagore influenced Nehru considerably. About Marxist humanist element Nehru wrote: "Much in Marxist philosophic outlook I could accept without difficulty, its monism and non-duality of mind and matter, the dynamics of matter and dialectics of continuous change by evaluation as well as leaps, through action and interaction cause and effect, thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis."<sup>12</sup> And this stream of humanitarian element made him land on concepts like socialism and made him sympathetic to the working class movement. That's why, both in theory and practice he was inclined toward amendments of democracy. As he saw earlier democrats had laid great emphasis on the notion of liberty and equality and equal right to

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11 Ibid., p. 557.

12 Ibid., p. 29.



everyone to happiness did not come by merely making it a fundamental right. The idea of physical well-being came as a necessary part of democracy. To a starving man democracy means nothing and so a more equitable distribution of wealth and material happiness is required.<sup>13</sup>"

Now its easier to understand Nehru's much talked about concept of economic democracy. It, less confusing if one reads those ideas into his rich tradition of humanist tradition. His brain<sup>d</sup> of socialism also sounds more meaningful and clear now, as Nehru's socialistic ideas become intimately connected with the idea of political democracy.

b) Individualism

As a scientific liberal humanist, Nehru was also an individualist. He looked at social problems from an individualistic standpoint. Respect for individual, his dignity creativity and responsibility was the karnel of his thought. As a thinker the real problem for him were those of individual and social life, of harmonious living, of a proper balancing of an individual's inner

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13 M.N. Das, op.cit., p. 101.

and outer life, of an adjustment of relations between individual and groups, a continuous becoming of something better and higher, of social development of the ceaseless adventure of man.<sup>14</sup> In June 1956, Nehru told his biographer Michael Brecher, "I do believe that ultimately it is the individual that counts ... no individual is trivial. Every individual has an importance and he should be given full opportunities to develop."<sup>15</sup> And this good of the individual could be realised only in a democratic society. To Nehru the good of the individuality of man was the very end to be aimed at and even state governments were instruments for the fullest possible realization of this. This motif provides a more responsible role to governments towards people, a positive interference of state in the lives of the people are thus granted on the basis of the good of the individual himself. The laissez faire, which the 19th century liberalism, especially the British brand had adopted as its ideal was found inadequate to the task. The failure of this liberalism and so of the capitalist order had become quite evident to Nehru and other progressive thinkers. These problems together with the passion of

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14 Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India, op.cit., p. 31.

15 Michael Brecher, Nehru -- A Political Biography (Oxford, 1961), p. 607.

seeing individual as developer and enjoyer of his labour and social wealth made him and many of the progressive men to accept a socialistic ethos in the general interest of the people. Laissez faire had only produced stark inequality in which neither the freedom nor the dignity of majority of dispossessed could be claimed as safe and working.

c) Opposition to Opponents of Democracy

Nehru's individualism made him conclude that authoritarian governments are in direct opposition to democratic ones and these authoritarian governments fail to give full opportunity to the individual for his development. He regarded both fascism and communism as totalitarian, but between fascism and communism he was prepared to accept the latter. His concept of democracy thus remained largely guided by liberal values. The revolutionary changes that took place in Soviet Union were accepted by Nehru in terms of economic expediency and he wanted to restrict their flow to his liberal democratic values. Soviet achievement mattered to him only as strategy of economic development. The mingling of these fantastic results of economic life of Soviet Union gained Nehru's praise but he did not like the abrasive method used to bring in this change. He called it aggressive and dictatorial. He said: "In spite

of its apparent success, it fails partly because of its rigidity, but even more so, because it ignores certain essential needs of human nature ... its contempt for what might be called the moral and spiritual side of life, not only ignore something that is basic in man, but also deprives human behaviour of standards and values. Its unfortunate association with violence encourages a certain evil tendency in human beings.<sup>16</sup>"

In the worldwide conflict of ideas and politics which Facism and Nazism caused, Nehru's faith in democracy became greatly strengthened. He was <sup>not</sup> roused against Fascism and totalitarian states <sup>only</sup> but ~~was~~ <sup>^</sup> (with) democrats also who tried to compromise with them at cost of democratic ideals, on Spanish murder of democracy he said: "It was not the rebels who killed Republican Spain or traitors hands did it. Nor was it ultimately done to death by Fascist powers, much as they tried to do so. Britain and France must be held responsible for this, as for the betrayal of Czechoslovakia, and the history long ages hence will remember this infamy and will not forgive them."<sup>17</sup>

Out of sheer distate and despise for dictators,

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16 Nehru and Yudin, "On Basic Approach", AICC Economic Review, 15 August 1958, p. 3.

17 Jawaharlal Nehru, The Unity of India (New York: John Day Company, 1942), p. 96,

Nehru turned down the invitations of their veterans like Mussolini and protagonists of Nazi regime in Germany.

Nehru wrote: "The creed of Fascism and Nazism were narrow and overhearing and were based on hatred and violence."

He later wrote: "They brought a certain prestige to their people for a while but they also killed the spirit and destroyed all values and standards of thought and behaviour. They ended by ruining the nations they sought to exalt."<sup>18</sup>

As a democrat, Nehru tried to translate the finer values of democracy in his actions, used them as matter of conviction and that's why his likes and dislikes of democratic and undemocratic values were spelled out in intense tone. In his struggle against the British what he perhaps disliked most bitterly was the undemocratic set up of the rule in India. About Viceroy he felt that Viceroy spoke in a manner such as no Prime Minister of England or President of US would adopt. "The only possible parallel,"<sup>19</sup> he said "would be that of Hitler."

In India besides the British administration, there was another class of people against whom Nehru felt hostile

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18 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, Independence and After, 1946-49 (New Delhi: Publication Division, Government of India, 1949), speech, 13 December 1947, pp. 116-17.

19 Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India, op.cit., p. 293.

on the principle of democracy; they were the princes. There were about six hundred princely states -- big, small and insignificant ones. He said that this system has vanished from the rest of the world and left to itself, it would have vanished, from India also long ago, he said in 1939. It was in reality a facet of imperialism. He opposed imperialism and feudalism like Facism and Nazism and thought them to be basically undemocratic and totalitarian.

## 2. Essence of Democracy

Where democracy is mentioned in his pre-1947 writings it is usually in connection with two dominant themes -- nationalism and socialism. In case of the first his ideas on fundamental rights and a constituent assembly were used as focal points for demanding national independence. In case of the latter, the unreality of political democracy apart from economic and social democracy was his usual emphasis. In his early years in the struggle for independence, the ideal of democracy was very closely related to the goal of self rule for India, says D.E. Smith. Democracy meant freedom from foreign rule and truly representative government. Later on his socialistic ideas influenced his concept of democracy still in nascent state of formation. These principles showed great bearing on economic and social aspects of democracy but

later on they were modified to suit the framework of 19th century liberal democracy. By now he attached a broad and all exclusive meaning to democracy. He defined it thus: "I would say that democracy is not only political not only economic, but something of the mind.... It involves equality of opportunity to all people, as far as possible, in the political and economic domain. It involves the freedom of individual to grow and to make the best of his capacities and ability. It involves a certain tolerance of others and even of others opinions when they differ from yours. It involves a certain inquisitive search for truth -- and for at least, let us say, the right thing. That it is dynamic not a static thing and as it changes it may be that its domain will become wider and wider. Ultimately its a mental approach applied to our economic problems."<sup>20</sup>

If one tries to find out the underlined emphasis on certain democratic values in the above broad definition, Some definitional projection could be noticed as underlined by D.E. Smith. 1) Nehru defines democracy in terms of freedom in which human values can be realised. 2) Democracy defined in terms of a structure of society in which economic and social equality will gradually be attained.

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20 Norman Cousins, Talks with Nehru, Talks with Nehru  
India's Prime Minister Speaks out on the Crisis of our  
Times (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1951), pp. 18-19.

3) Democracy defined in terms of a certain attitude and approach to problems on the part of the individual and society.<sup>21</sup>"

Nehru very strongly believed that democratic state will represent a structure of society in which freedom is cherished and in which human values can best be realised. In fact his firm conviction which continued till the last days of his life, was that democracy is a precondition for the realisation of man's creative faculties which is nearer to his spirituality. On 13 December 1946 Nehru moved the Objective Resolution in which Constituent Assembly declared its intention of drawing up a constitution guaranteeing and securing to all the people of India ... freedom of thought and expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action.<sup>22</sup> Theoretical proposition behind this strong exclamation of freedom for Nehru like Mill is that "~~my~~ <sup>any</sup> restriction and inhibition stops growth and development and produces apart from economic disorders, Complexes and perversions in the nation and individual. So freedom is necessary.<sup>23</sup>"

<sup>21</sup> D.E. Smith, op.cit., p. 44.

<sup>22</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, Independence and After, op.cit., p. 344.

<sup>23</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, Recent Essays and Writings (Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1934), quoted in D.E. Smith, op.cit., p. 44.



Nehru held "nothing can be worse for world, I think than deprivation of human freedom of the individual."<sup>24</sup> This notion of personal freedom was applied to the nations also. This apology found expression in the Constitution of free India. But very soon India faced the grim reality of the security of Indian state and Nehru had to make some fundamental qualification to his concept of individual freedom. As no simple formula could be given to where to draw the line between the freedom of the individual and security of the state. It all depended on the circumstances of particular case. However Nehru felt that in general "in times of war the demarcation should be in favour of state and in peace it should be to the advantage of the individual."<sup>25</sup>

The other problem confronting individual freedom is, all pervading trend towards centralisation. He said: "We want to preserve the freedom of individual as at the sametime can't escape centralization in modern society."<sup>26</sup> Nehru considered like Michaels (iron of law of oligarchy) increased centralization as not only inevitable in the

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24 Jawaharlal Nehru, Visit to America (New York: John Day Co., 1950), speech in San Francisco, November 1949, p. 136.

25 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. II, speech in Lok Sabha, 2 August 1952, p. 589.

26 Norman Cousins, op.cit., p. 23.

larger scheme of modern world conditions but desirable and necessary in order to bring economic development of India. Preferably Nehru had already contemplated over necessity of state capitalism suitable to the development of India's underdeveloped economy. It is only through "democratically planned collectivism" that the country can scientifically apply all its resources to solve the great economic problems confronting it. Yet Nehru claimed only a few persons are unable to control the society today and to find the equilibrium in society "one has to take the vast masses of the people into confidence. One has to produce a sensation in them that they are partners in the vast undertakings of running a nation, partners in government, partners in industry. That is the essence of democracy."<sup>27</sup> Participation of people remains the underlying idea of all other statements on democracy.

#### Democracy as Representative Government

Experiences show that democracy can't exist unless all its institutions are thoroughly oriented to democratic ends. In the long run no society can survive unless there is some co-ordination between the network of institutions,

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27 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. III, "Address in Calcutta, 14 December 1953, p. 60.

Nehru believed in a thoroughly representative government functioning through a well connected and developed network of institutions, only a representative government will be responsible to the people. The people of Rousseau do not delegate their power, should not give up the exercise of power. Rousseau saw where the danger lay for as soon as we permit the exercise of power to be transferred to representatives, the Parliament becomes sovereign.

But Rousseau's solution can hardly be applied as it was realizable only in small republics, while today we have to deal with large republics. So we can't follow his advise and elect leaders without considering their representatives. If we did then remedy will be worse than disease for if he who is elected is not regarded as the representative of those who elect him, the election simply creates perse en absolute ruler. Hence we need both election and representation. Some of the elements included in Nehru's concept of representative government are popular sovereignty, parliament, majority rule and responsible political parties, leadership, adult franchise, election etc. which we will deal with now.

#### Preference for Parliamentary Democracy

Nehru asks like a good teacher one important question and then answers himself. Why do we need parliamentary

democracy? "Because we think that in the long run it produces the best results. If it does not produce the best result, well, we change it, obviously because we want results ... the results are ... national well-being <sup>28</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>for</sup> the millions and millions of our people." Political liberty, equality and progress through peaceful methods from the basic democratic ideal of Nehru. Nehru saw in parliament, an ideal institution which can help in achieving these ideals. Nehru did not want a drastic change and he saw in parliament an ideal moderator of vast changes in society and an epitomic confirming continuity. One of the reasons for Nehru's faith in parliamentary democracy appears to be the possibility of change and progress under that system. But "while change is necessary, there is another quality that is also necessary -- a measure of continuity...." He explains: "If there is no change, only continuity, there is stagnation and decay. If there is change and no continuity that means uprooting and no people can survive for long if they are uprooted from the soil which has given them birth and nurtured them." <sup>29</sup> Thus the system of parliamentary democracy enables the principle of change and continuity. This confirms Nehru's not only concious ideological preference for parliament but ~~xxxxx~~

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28 Ibid., <sup>speech</sup> 21 December 1954, p. 8.

29 Ibid., speech in Lok Sabha, 28 March 1957, p. 157.

reflects a tacit affirmation for institutional convenience to the people of India who had become familiar to this type of representative institution during their political status of unfreedom and dependence.

### Popular Sovereignty

Nehru believed like other democrats that the ultimate authority lies with the people and the government must give expression to the wishes of the people. 'The only final authority and paramount power that we recognize is the will of the people and the only thing that counts ultimately is the good of the people!'. His faith in the ultimate authority of the people was asserted in his demand for a constituent assembly to frame a constitution for the Indian people; elected by means of adult franchise, men and women together, so as to secure true mass representation. He believed that this was the only proper and democratic way to deal with the problem because fundamentally the people of India should decide the Constitution of India. The Constituent Assembly, was moreover, to be sovereign to act in the name of the people being 'the expression of the will and strength of the Indian people'. The wishes of the people are to be expressed through some agency and so a government in a democratic society is a "reflection of the will of the people and it should continue to be a reflection of this

all the time."<sup>30</sup> To fulfil these aspirations, the Constituent Assembly drafted and formally adopted the Constitution of India on 26 November 1949. A parliament representing the sovereign will of the people was elected in accordance with its provisions."

### Elections

The electoral machinery was necessary to ascertain the general will of the people, it constitutes a part of the democratic procedure. Peoples participation in the government is ensured by election, he believed "Democracy is based on active and intelligent interest of the people in their national affairs and in the elections that result in the formation of governments."<sup>31</sup> Elections serve a very important purpose in democracy and that is "to ascertain the views of the electorate on major problems and to enable the electorate to select their representatives."<sup>32</sup>

### Adult Franchise

Nehru's experience of the general elections of 1937 in India confirmed his faith "in the widest possible franchise.

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30 N.B. Sen (ed.), Glorious Thoughts of Jawaharlal Nehru (New Delhi: New Book Society of India, 1968), p. 96.

31 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. II, speech - Broadcast from All India Radio, 22 November 1950, p. 11.

32 Ibid, 22 November 1951, p. 14.

I was prepared to trust that wide electorate far more than a restricted one, based on a property qualification or even an educational test."<sup>33</sup> Adult suffrage means government of the people. "The argument that political democracy was in favour of vested interests, while quite true when the franchise was small and restricted, does not apply with the same force when there is adult suffrage in a country."<sup>34</sup> Nehru pointed out in *Glimpses of World History* that the extension of political equality through the gradual widening of the right to vote was one of the principal trends in the development of 19th century and early 20th century democracy. This development rested on the revolutionary promise that despite obvious human inequalities, each person should be treated as having equal political and social values. But "political power, which the vote was supposed to give was seen to be a shadow with no substance, without economic power and brave dream of the early democracy, that equality would follow from the vote, came to nothing."<sup>35</sup>

This idea written in 1933 was modified in 1951 when Nehru admitted that "political equality was the very basis

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33 Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India, op.cit., p. 65.

34 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. III, speech in Lok Sabha, 25 February 1955, p. 287.

35 Jawaharlal Nehru, Glimpses of World History (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962), p. 546.

on which you build up other equalities.<sup>36</sup> If individual lacked political equality, he would be without the main tool by which other rights could be secured. Adult franchise is, thus, the basis of democracy and political liberty is granted to people by giving one vote to every person. But people who enjoy political liberty must also enjoy political power and should have a feeling that they have a share in government. Nehru more or less wants to co-ordinate political power and political liberty as Hobbes said "political liberty is political power" so the right to vote must mean a share in government. The government enjoying political power should necessarily feel that this power is after all the power of the people. It is in this process of co-ordination that the real self-government can work. "The people's representatives tend to function on the issues of a feeling of the general pulse of the people. The latter have got the power to kick a government or a member after a certain period of time as its important to keep the government or parliament in check. Again, there also exists a general feeling or awareness in the people that things are being done according to their wishes or in consultation with them, in fact, they have begun to feel that they are governing themselves."<sup>37</sup>

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36 Norman Cousins, op.cit., p. 19.

37 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. III, 6 April 1957, p. 160.



### Political Parties

The government in a democracy is a party government. Parties have been indispensable with democracy and Nehru finds in their rational working something more than mere political results. A democratic state has to give full expression to the variety of opinion that is existing in that society. He says: "It is good to have various political parties because when there are different approaches to a problem, more light is thrown upon it. I don't believe in all people being regimented to think in one way. I want free flow and free exchange of thought and out of that we sometime find a bit of the truth."<sup>38</sup> This is the reason why in his earlier writings Nehru was extremely critical of Victorian parties of England as the nature of social class conflict was not reflected through these parties. The voter had little choice. Whereas in his earlier meetings Nehru was critical of the way an individual loses his freedom and individuality for the sake of party solidarity,<sup>as he says</sup> "The solidarity is good in its own way but far off from democracy,"<sup>39</sup> by 1951 Nehru came to the conclusion that the only way to function in a democracy was through strictly disciplined parties. Not only disciplined political parties are necessary for efficient government, they alone

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38 Ibid., speech in Trechur, 26 December 1955, p. 36.

39 Jawaharlal Nehru, Glimpses of World History, op.cit., p. 572.

are in a position to represent the masses. But a stronger opposition party is also desirable. Nehru was not a believer in partyless democracy for he felt that ideological difference in a society could best be expressed through multiple political parties. "The formation of separate parties either with some ideological differences or placing greater emphasis on certain matters, is a natural development to which, I for my part, have no objection whatever. In a democratic set up it is desirable that every opportunity should be given for the development of idea and the education of the public in them."<sup>40</sup>

But a large measure of unity and national purpose is needed to meet the challenge of the disruptive forces which are at work. Nehru often showed this concern to an extent that Congress became sole representative of national unity carrying out the responsibility of nation building. D.E. Smith comments: "The building of national unity and solidarity through one political party is an approach which history has shown to be dangerous. Nehru's emphasis on national unity through one political party may be considered as weakness of his democratic theory."<sup>41</sup>

#### Problem of Leadership

"Leadership is essential but authoritarianism is bad,"

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40 The Hindu (Madras), 19 March 1953, p. 4.

41 D.E. Smith, op.cit., p. 56.

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said Nehru. He never supported the view that in the name of leadership leaders should exploit the opportunity and become dictators themselves. Representative government requires responsible political leaders as well as political parties. The problem of leadership in a democratic state is a complex one. A leader can't make decisions solely on the basis of his own understanding of the truth in any particular situation. The leader can't function purely on the personal plane due to the very nature of his task. Yet the leader must not surrender his understanding of reality and bring himself down to the level of the crowds understanding of it. The leaders perceptive truth is not enough,<sup>43</sup> he must somehow help others to perceive it too. A statesman of integrity can't function successfully in a democratic age unless he can make people believe in that truth. The success of a democratic leader depends upon "people's understanding of him and people's appreciation of what he says."<sup>44</sup>

A leader dealing with public affairs can ignore neither realities nor act in terms of abstract truth. That is why it is not always possible that there may be perfect understanding between the leader and his followers. Nehru accepted the possibility of some kind of compromise between the relative comprehension of truth in the minds of leaders

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42 Jawaharlal Nehru, Eighteen Months in India 1936-37 (Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1938), p. 62.

43 D.G. Tendulkar, Jawaharlal Nehru's Forward to Mahatma, 1869-1920 (New Delhi: Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1960).

44 Norman Cousins, op.cit., p. 32.

and that of the people, compromises are inevitable, nevertheless, there are good compromises and some bad compromises. Nehru concluded that there was no clear answer to the problem of leadership in democracy and "each individual and each generation will have to find its own answer."<sup>45</sup>

### Democracy as Economic and Social Equality

Nehru wrote, "Democracy means equality and democracy can flourish in an equal society."<sup>46</sup> But Indian society that Nehru inherited was unequal more than in one sense. Economically as well as socially the nature of Indian social structure was one of most pronounced inequality. The presence of functional reality of caste system had not only divided society on the lines of rich and poor but has also stratified it on the lines of congenital superiority and inferiority basically on defined position of inequality.

In the light of the above reality Nehru put forward his theoretical proposition that political, economic and

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45 D.G. Tendulkar, Jawaharlal Nehru's Forward to Mahatma, op.cit., p. xiii.

46 Jawaharlal Nehru, Glimpses of World History, op.cit., p. 854.

social freedom could not be separated. It was an integrated conception and there could be neither political nor economic democracy without social freedom. He visualized a structure of society in which economic and social equality will gradually be attained.

Writing in his prime period of intellectual fertility, he felt that most important challenge to democracy lay in the existing economic structure of society. He viewed this within the framework of his socialism. He said "equality in a democratic society does not mean equality of possessing a vote but economic and social equality."<sup>47</sup> Nehru believed that democracy is, on the whole a great leveller and yet people differ educationally, economically and otherwise also. All human-beings are not equal but there must be a society in which there is equality of opportunity to lead a good life. Nehru broadened the meaning of equality by saying "Every men and women must have the opportunity to develop to the best of her or his ability. Honour and merit must come from ability and hard work and because of caste or birth or riches."<sup>48</sup> He believed in the

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47 Ibid., p. 969.

48 J.S. Bright (ed.), Selected Writings of Jawaharlal Nehru, 1916-1950 (New Delhi: The Indian Printing Works, n.d.), p. 59.

removal of special privileges because democracy must mean removal of disparities if it has to be real democracy of masses. Political and social freedom and equality must lead to economic freedom and equality. Freedom and poverty are incompatible. "If you do not have even the capacity to live worthily, all other freedoms do not count."<sup>49</sup> This led Nehru to reach a very profound conclusion; that there is inherent contradiction between capitalism and democracy. Thus capitalist system itself constituted the most serious problem confronting democracy. "The conflict between capitalism and democracy is inherent and continuous. It is often hidden by misleading propaganda and by the outward forms of democracy, such as parliament."<sup>50</sup> Smith comments that Nehru's later speeches and writings indicate that he greatly modified his piecing views and made it look acceptable, in this process it became vague. Now the democracy in general terms came to be understood as equality: social and economic. This cleverly assured stand gets reflected very well in the nature of Directive Principles of State Policy in our Constitution.

As mentioned earlier, the caste system operates as the basic philosophy of legitimised inequality in Indian society

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49 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. IV, speech in New Delhi, 5 March 1962, p. 182.

50 Jawaharlal Nehru, Glimpses of World History, op.cit., p. 970.

and stands as one the greatest obstacles to the attainment of social equality. Nehru's emphasis on a secular state was not only seen as great pacifier of religious fanaticism but against caste division too. "Thus a caste ridden society is not properly secular. I have no desire to interfere with any person's belief but where these beliefs become petrified in caste divisions, undoubtedly they affect the social structure of the state."<sup>51</sup> Nehru made his basic stand clear on caste system by saying: "In context of society today, the caste system and much that goes with it are wholly incompatible, reactionary restrictive and barriers to progress. There can be no equality in status and opportunity within its framework nor can there be political democracy and much less economic democracy."<sup>52</sup> In social democracy caste and democracy are contradictory. That's why "We have to aim deliberately as a social philosophy which seeks a fundamental transformation of structure, a society which is not dominated by the urge of private profit and individual greed and where there is a distribution of political and economic power. We must aim at a classless society based on co-operative effort, where there is opportunity for all to develop."<sup>53</sup> So the ultimate aim of the democracy is to

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51 Jawaharlal Nehru, Circular to the Pradesh Congress Committee (New Delhi, 1955).

52 Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India, op.cit., p. 257.

53 Jawaharlal Nehru's speech 1952, "Building New India", All India Congress Committee, 1954, p. 136.

contribute to free development of an individual and end the difference between rich and the poor.

### Peaceful Method

To achieve all these Nehru prescribed a peaceful method which will constitute democratic behaviour of leader towards problems. Tolerance of criticisms and views of others have to be taken in ones stride but discipline in character of its leaders as well as citizens have to be fostered and respected. "Democracy means tolerance, toleration not merely of those who agree with us but of those who do not agree with us."<sup>54</sup> Democracy gives opportunity to people for discussion and persuasion for free expression of their opinions and free argumentation. But this mutual exchange of ideas can take place only if people are tolerant of each others opinions and views. "Democracy demands discipline, tolerance and mutual regard. Freedom demands respect for the freedom of others. In a democracy changes are made by mutual discussion and persuasion and not by violent means."<sup>55</sup>

Writing in 1940, Nehru gives a socialistic interpretation of democracy as way of peaceful methods. He knew well the class character of Indian society and so he speaks

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54 Jawaharlal Nehru, Independence and After, ~~op-cit.~~, p. 13.

55 Ibid., speech in Allahabad, 12 February 1948, p. 26.

/ A talk broadcast from New Delhi, 15 August ~~1938~~ 1948,



"until a classless society is achieved, the only known method of resolving these conflicts, other than that of force and coercion is the democratic method."<sup>56</sup> The peaceful method for Nehru is not only favourable method to solve problems but also a democratic one in his opinion. "The very essence of democratic state is its functioning in an atmosphere of peace: problems, however difficult are solved by peaceful methods -- by discussions, negotiations, conciliation and persuasion."<sup>57</sup> In his opinion people have any right to change laws and even governments in democratic way but those who accept the path of violence "have no faith in democracy."<sup>58</sup>

In all, Nehru's democracy is a liberal democracy, carefully conceptualised, taking into considerations various Indian (peculiar) conditions and adapting to its realities. On the whole, he exhibits conformities with Mill's model of developmental democracy and talks about liberty and individual and social freedom exactly in Mill's language. During a debate in the Parliament, Nehru asserted: "In a democratic society, the concept of individual freedom

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56 Jawaharlal Nehru, The Unity of India, op.cit., p. 383.

57 Jawaharlal Nehru, Circular to the Presidents of the Pradesh Congress Committee, 25 August 1954.

58 Jawaharlal Nehru, Speech at Trivendrum, 28 December 1953, "Building New India", op.cit., p. 41.

has to be balanced with social freedom and social group. The individual must not infringe on the freedom of individual.<sup>59</sup> Further he says: "It seemed to me obvious that in a complex social structure individual freedom had to be limited and perhaps the only way to real personal freedom was through some such limitation in the social sphere."<sup>60</sup> The motive behind these modification in the prevalent 19th century thinking and the early twenties was to make democracy development oriented, a society in which state does not breed inequality to such an extent that growth of its members gets restricted. Every action and function of state is to promote possibilities in which man can develop to the best of his ability. This is a rather ethncial stand taken by Mill and later on by various outstanding and concientious bourgeois thinkers. Yet about Nehru, the comments of D.E. Smith remains valid "When Nehru defined democracy in terms of individual freedom or popular government or social self discipline he was speaking of actual realities which are at present functioning although imperfectly,

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59 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. II, speech in Parliament, 18 May 1951, p. 506.

60 Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India, op.cit., p. 29.

when he defined democracy in terms of economic and social equality, he was speaking of an ideal, a goal to be striven for.<sup>61</sup>"

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61 D.E. Smith, op.cit., p. 61.

### Chapter III

TOWARDS MAKING OF DEMOCRACY STATE:  
NEHRU'S PRACTICE OF DEMOCRACY

## Chapter III

### TOWARDS MAKING OF A DEMOCRATIC STATE: NEHRU'S PRACTICE OF DEMOCRACY

Independence came to India with most unfortunate bang of communal violence and partition of the country. These led to the rise of new problems that the leadership had to face immediately after independence. In its beginning itself the national movement was plagued by a basic conflict between Hindus and Muslims, manipulated both by British and Muslim League. In this kind of situation the new priorities that pre-occupied the minds of the country were national unity against all threats and building centripital forces around a federal constitution.

"The task before the country was to construct a stable political framework and to integrate the enormous diversity of a segmented society into this framework,"<sup>1</sup> the framework being the Congress and bureaucratic structure left behind by the British. The structuring of nation had to be done democratically. The effort of making of a nation had to be institutionalized into an integrated framework of the state.

The second thing that was clear on the eve of independence, was an independent India stamped with sharp disparity of most stratified society. Its peasant economy and clear signs of backwardness in every sphere of economic life compelled the whole nation to think on the model of development. India had a ransacked economy left behind by the colonial masters. The question was - how the transformation to a modern industrial economy within the framework of socialist norms to be worked out.

Nehru's democracy operated on these lines of speculation of objective reality and of social dilemmas. Government's democratic policies had to be formulated in tune with existing social realities. India had to choose a model of development translating the aspiration

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1 (ed.),  
 Rajni Kothari, *State and Nation Building; The Pivots of India's Model of Nation Building* (New Delhi: <sup>Chapt.</sup> Allied Publishers, 1976), p. 204.

of all the people; a model not to disturb the existing social structure yet readjust them to some extent to yield an overall fair result. It did not go for sweeping changes but it would substantiate agricultural betterment.

In the presence of such distinct problems immediately after independence, Nehru's mind went for pragmatism and two things became urgent as a matter of and the basis of policy formulation to keep the nation growing from strength to strength. They were necessary to enable Nehru to carry out development of India democratically. The first priority was towards the unity of the nation. This could be assured by an overall process of nation building leading to greater efforts and skill employed towards institution building. Nehru and the leadership had to think in terms of making of a whole nation altogether with renewed consciousness and commitment to a social goal.

The second priority, was in the field of economy. The immediate need to restructure the economy and restore a minimum level of functioning. For this, production needed to be boosted first before talks on distribution start. The emphasis was not so much on the distribution part of socialism as much on the production part of capitalism. This seemed logical, as all Third World countries were forced <sup>to</sup> adopt a capitalist path of development under heavy

state supervision. In this chapter we will elaborate these two points to show their impact on the policies and practice of democracy that Jawaharlal undertook after independence. This chapter will deal firstly with Nehru's role in institution building and his contribution towards making of federal and parliamentary system of democracy a reality. Secondly the discussion and analysis will turn towards his economic policies and programmes drawing attention to the implication of these policies for democracy in the country.

To start with institution building, Rajni Kothari makes some valid points regarding Nehru, "In giving to the country and its institutions strength and character a critical role was played by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India."<sup>2</sup> Further according to Rajni Kothari, Nehru's role has been two-fold -- (1) by the sheer force of his personality, he managed to hold the country together to avert disruptive forces and to take the road of modernization. (2) Nehru's other concrete role has been of having given roots and legitimacy to the institutions adopted by the country as well as the modern purposes to which they are put. The contribution of Nehru is not to have started a revolution but to have given<sup>3</sup> rise to a consensus.

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2 Rajni Kothari, "The Congress System", Asian Survey, vol. IV, no. 12, December 1964, p. 1170.

3 Ibid.



Democracy could not have functioned without proper institutions, Nehru was clear even in pre-independence days about the kind of democratic structure and base that India would have required to function considering the kind of vertical and horizontal diversity it had and the nature of disparity it has promoted. As against the protagonists of traditional structure for India, Nehru was for a modern India in every sense of the word - socially, politically and economically. India was visualised by him as a secular state having parliamentary form of government moving towards a socialistic goal. He made his views clear to Mahatma Gandhi in reply to his letter against Gandhi's insistence on an idyllic village society that India should have. Questioning Gandhi's visionary dimensions, Nehru wrote: "I do not understand why a village should necessarily embody truth and non-violence. A village normally speaking is backward intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made for a backward environment. Narrow minded people are much more likely to be untruthful and violent" he referred to a certain minimum requirements like food, clothing, housing, education, sanitation etc. and wondered "how these could be attained without a measure of heavy industry." He came to the crux of his view, "I do not think it is possible for India to be really independent unless she is technically advanced country.... In present

context of the world we cannot even advance culturally without a strong background of scientific research in every department. There is today in the world a tremendous acquisitive tendency both in individuals, groups and nations which leads to conflicts and wars. That basis must go and be transformed into one of the co-operation, not isolation which is impossible. From the economic or political point of view an isolated India may well be a kind of vacuum which increases the acquisitive tendencies of others and thus creates conflict."<sup>4</sup>

Written less than a year before his assumption of power, the content of the letter constituted his basic approach towards policy formulations after independence. Building of institution has to be done in such way as to be geared to the above mentioned goals. To carry out the aims, emerging from such understanding as brought out in the letter, India had to emerge as a modern nation state, not a village society. It had to integrate various forces of social diversity rooted in village life. But this integration designed through a framework would not be brought by a monolithic structure, based on force, rather a consensus model will be brought into eliminate undesirable disruptive elements and pressure plurality,

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<sup>4</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Gandhi, 9 October 1945, A Bunch of Old Letters (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1960), pp. 507-11.

healthy for any society to evolve and develop further to full capacity. So a democratic framework based on adult franchise and periodic elections and open competition between a number of parties was to be preferred as a model of ordering diversity. The constitutional democracy that loomed large on the visionary horizon of Nehru would be federal in form vesting considerable authority in centre to carry on developmental processes. Though free enterprise in the economic life would be permitted, it would have to operate within the framework laid down by a Central Planning Commission.

Nehru worked on the lines of this framework when he drafted and laid down various resolutions deemed to be passed after Constituent Assembly was formed when India was granted independence on 3 June 1947. What was of supreme significance, is that the four leaders of Assembly were Nehru, Patel, Prasad and Azad. And two revolution - the national and social had been running parallel in India since the end of the First World War. With independence the national revolution would be completed but the social revolution must go on. Nehru told the members of Constituent Assembly: "The first task

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5 G. Austin, The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 26.

of this assembly is to free India through a new constitution to feed the starving people and to clothe the naked masses and give every Indian the fullest opportunity to develop himself according to his capacities.<sup>6</sup>

The goals were spelled out, now the method to achieve it was left to be debated and finalised. To this end Gandhi submitted two plans -- one in January 1946 and other in 1948. The village constituted true India for Gandhi, representing even in modern time of her ancient modes of life unfree~~ched~~<sup>ched</sup> by foreign cultural influence. The second plan was to disband Congress as a political party and defused its role in terms of social service organization based on nationwide network of panchayats, each village panchayat would form a unit, two such panchayats would constitute a working party with the elected leader. Fifty leaders would elect a second grade leader who would co-ordinate their efforts and who would also be available for national service, second grade leaders could elect a national chief to regulate and command all groups.<sup>7</sup>

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6 Constituent Assembly, Debates, II, p. 316.

7 G. Austin, op.cit., p. 27.

Party's constituent committee under the influence of the working committee did not accept Gandhi's suggestion, it believed that Congress could neither forgo its political role nor become so utterly decentralised.

Nehru had various questions with regard to Gandhi's plan. (1) Was the nature of man different in rural from in urban society, would man become a moral being in one and not in the other? (2) Was it possible to change India back to a primarily agricultural, village nation? (3) Did the villages have as they must have with a decentralised constitution and indirect government - the initiative to remake their way of life?

The Assembly's alternative to Gandhian constitution was one in the European and American tradition. It provided for directly elected governments, a tendency towards centralisation. Nehru decided in favour of non-traditional institution for India as would best bring about a social revolution so profound as to alter fundamentally the structure of Indian society. The constitution that will bring unity, stability and economic gains pre-requisite for such a change.

The Assembly's decision to give India a parliamentary federal constitution took two and half arduous years from the first meeting of the Congress Experts Committee on the

Constituent Assembly held in July 1946 to the debate on the draft constitution in November 1948 to materialise. By then panchayats were relegated to the Directive Principles and the idea of indirect election simply died.

It was the Congress Experts Committee that set India on the road to her present constitution, this committee had Nehru as its chairman and was set up by Congress Working Committee to prepare material for the Assembly.

It was not only the broad framework of constitution about which Nehru had definite views forming alternative to many other dominant thought systems prevalent, but his contributions inter-turned with his vision towards the intricacies of the constitution, has also to be demonstrated as he filled in the spatial margin of the structures of the constitution by working on the drafts and resolutions <sup>pertaining</sup> ~~relating~~ to fundamental rights and directive principles. Nehru drafted a resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Programmes which was adopted by the Karachi Congress 1931. The first session with Fundamental Rights and Duties and later influenced the drafting of Part III in the constitution. In the introduction of the resolution it was stated: "This Congress is of the opinion that to enable the masses to appreciate what 'Swaraj' as conceived by the Congress will mean to them, it is desirable to state the position of the

Congress in a manner easily understood by them. In order to end exploitation of masses political freedom of starving millions. The Congress therefore declares that any constitution which may be agreed to on its behalf should provide or enable the swaraj government to provide the following:<sup>8</sup>

1. Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms for a purpose not opposed to law or morality.
- ii. Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of ~~concern~~<sup>conscience</sup> and right freely to profess and practice his religion, subject to public order and morality.
- iv. All citizens are equal before the law irrespective of the religion, caste, creed or sex.
- xiv. Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof to acquire property and to follow any trade or calling and to be treated equally with regard to legal presentation or protection in all parts of India."<sup>9</sup>

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8 Jawaharlal Nehru, The Unity of India (New York: John Day Co., 1942), p. 406.

9 Ibid., pp. 406-07.

The resolution focussed the right to personal liberty also -

viii No person shall be deprived of his liberty, nor shall be his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered or confiscated, save in accordance with law.

xiv Every person is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof.<sup>10</sup>

But as he assumed the office of Prime Minister he realised various things and came to the conclusion: "In a democratic society, the concept of individual freedom has to be balanced with social freedom and the relations of individual with social group."<sup>11</sup> This sentence was the realisational product of the violence that state faced after independence against the interest of the society. Thus measures like preventive detentions were formulated. The original Preventive Detention Act was very severe as it was realised by Nehru himself later on when two amendments were made to lessen this severity; first in 1951 and again in 1952.

The Preventive Detention Bill envisaged detention

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10 Ibid.

11 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. II, speech in Lok Sabha, New Delhi, 18 May 1953, p. 506.



in prison of individual without any crime having been committed. They were to be detained in order to prevent them carrying out the acts mentioned in Article 3 -- to prevent a person from acting in a very prejudicial to the defence and security of India or her relation with foreign states and the security of the state or the maintenance of public order and also the maintenance of civil supplies and services essential to the public.<sup>12</sup>

Regarding rights to freedom of expression also the amendment was brought in the first instance itself. The Constitution (First Amendment) Bill of 1951 contained a number of proposed amendments, among them a revision of Article 19(2) -- the final form of the amendment clause (2) granted state power to legislate reasonable restriction on the freedom of speech and expression in the interest of friendly relation with foreign states, public order or in relation to incitement to an offence.<sup>13</sup> These were three new sub-clauses in addition to the original clause (2).

By 1947 it was commonly accepted belief that the state bore a major responsibility for the welfare of its citizens. The very mind of social and economic thought had brought to India the idea of Marx, Laski and Webbs and the members of the Assembly accepted without hesitation

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12 The Preventive Detention Act, No. IV of 1950, Article 3.

the views of other humanitarian and socialists that "political equality is never real unless it is accompanied by virtual economic equality."<sup>13</sup> The question was that state must establish state's obligation beyond doubt. This was the purpose of the Directive Principles of State Policy. And roots of the Directive Principles may be traced back to the 1931 Karachi resolution drafted to large extent by Nehru.

Nehru's one of the greatest achievement is the creation of a secular state. But his secularism is not one that carries dictionary meaning. It evolved out of Indian realities. Though Nehru started from dictionary meaning only. One clause of Karachi resolution on Fundamental Rights, which was drafted by Nehru in 1931 stated that "state shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions."<sup>14</sup> But the definition changed over the years. It did not mean a state in which religion as such was discouraged but became a concept very akin to this interpretation, 'State respects all the religions equally'.

Nehru drafted the Congress Election Manifesto in July

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13 H. Laski, Grammar of Politics (London, 1949), p. 162.

14 Jawaharlal Nehru, The Unity of India, op.cit., Resolution of Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy, clause (ix), p. 406.

1951 in preparation for the general elections. The Manifesto stated in Parliament that "As India is a secular state every citizen has the same duties, rights, privileges and obligations as any other. He has full freedom to profess and practice his religion."<sup>15</sup> It sounded democratic in nature because it talked against inequality. It implied that no person should have any special right just because he adhered to a particular religion, likewise no person shall be deprived of his rights because of his religious affiliations.

Thus according to Nehru a secular state is a state which is not associated with any particular religion but protects all religion and in which all individual enjoy equal political and social rights, status and opportunities irrespective of religion or caste background.

Conceptually, it contributed towards a theory of equality in the sense that he brought <sup>this issues</sup> in the purview of discussion on equality. Such concepts as religion and caste <sup>are</sup> breeding grounds of inequality. Nehru wrote: "Thus a caste ridden society is not properly secular. I have no desire to interfere with any person's belief, but where these beliefs come petrified in caste

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15 The Hindu (Madras), 14 July 1951, p. 6.

division, undoubtedly they affect the social structure of the state.<sup>16</sup> Secularism is thus an extension of his democratic thinking.

Nehru's whole approach towards secularism got reflected in the ~~heavy~~<sup>the</sup> constitution was drafted. The most important article relating to the conception of the secular state is article 15. The spirit of the article is to promote right of the individual to equal treatment by the state. It says: "The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. This specific guarantee follows the general provision contained in Article 14 for equality before law and equal protection of laws. Article 16(1) says about equality of opportunity in matters of employment, against religion and caste are specifically mentioned among the grounds on which there may be no discrimination Article 16(2). Similarly no citizen shall be denied admission to any educational instutiton wholly or partly maintained by state funds on these grounds - Article 29(2).

Article 25 guarantees individual freedom of religion. Though individual is given right to promote his own

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16 Jawaharlal Nehru, Circular to the Pradesh Committee, All India Congress Committee, August 1954.

religion he may not be compelled to pay taxes for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religious domination (Article 27). Article 26 says: subject to public order, morality and health every religious domination or any section thereof shall have the right - (a) to establish and maintain institutions for religion, charitable purposes; (b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion; (c) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and (d) to administer such property in accordance with law.

Article 28 establishes the principle that state funds may not be used to promote religion. No religious institutions shall be offered in any educational institution wholly maintained by the state. In any educational institution recognised by the state or receiving aid out of the state funds, there may be no compulsory attendance at religious institutions or worship - Article 18(3).

This conception of secularism enabled leadership to abolish separate communal electorate which had prevailed since 1909 and recognised adult suffrage as the basis of holding election in the country. The second important achievement on these lines of secularism has been codification of Hindu Law. Hindu Code Bill was modified after

independence amidst large opposition. The Hindu Law was not treated by Nehru<sup>as having</sup> of some sacred value apart from ordinary value it had in providing a code of conduct to the adherents of Hindu faith. Amidst lot of opposition from orthodox Hindus and conservative politicians, the Hindu Code Bill was passed by Indian Parliament. Nehru thus declared "This was a spirit of liberation and of our people and more especially our womenfolk from outworn customs and shackles that bound them."<sup>17</sup>

Inspite of all this, the Indian version of secularism did not serve the purpose instead backfired in most sensitive moments. The increased consciousness for communalism than for secularism is prevailed everywhere. More riots and killings are done in this country largely in the name of religion. Apart from economic basis these communal riots have the concept needs to be reformulated. Respect for all the religion has its implications for Indian state which means, all religions have equal pressure on state and state has to function often as a balancer in most <sup>vulgar</sup> ~~vulgar~~ sense than it would have to if it had declared its neutrality towards religion as a broad category within Hindu, Islam or Christianity.

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17 Jawaharlal Nehru, speech, 18 October 1951, Presidential Address to the Indian National Congress (New Delhi: All India Congress Committee), p. 101.

Implications apart, Nehru engaged himself patiently and doggedly in the institution building. "His contribution in giving Indian a firm institution basis, evolving a framework of consensus and trying down the operational ground rules of the system,"<sup>18</sup> can't be denied. What emerged out of continued insistence of Nehru and his like minded colleagues after Constituent Assembly gave the finality to its work on 26 November 1946 was the Democratic Republic of India as a union of the states and union territories, a parliamentary form of government at the centre and in the states. The central law making body including the two Houses of Parliament and the President was constituted as a combination of American and British pattern of representative government. The doctrine of popular sovereignty on which the constitutional framework rested was reflected in the relatively simple amending procedures of the constitution vested in the Parliament and State Legislatures. The most egalitarian portion of the constitution remained confined to non-forceable, Directive Principles of State Policy, Fundamental Rights, Part III, included not only the basic political rights such as equality before the law and freedom of religious speech, expression, assembly association and movement but also the freedom of property.

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18 Rajni Kothari, State and Nation Building, op.cit., p. 207.

"All this plus a sustained drive at establishing the necessary infrastructure for economic development on the one hand and involvement of people through democratic elections on the other produced climate in which Indian people began to feel a stake in the system. In its simultaneous attempt at national integration, democratic consensus making and economic development, the Indian leadership adopted the approach of aggregative performance. It sought to build national state at various levels spread institutional framework (through Panchayati Raj) to which it has given rise and develop over various regions a physical and economic infrastructure to initiate planning processes for generating overall growth rate.<sup>19</sup>"

Nehru's efforts in this direction at village level was reflected in his enthusiasm for Panchayati Raj. He did not romanticise this concept like Gandhi but thought about its implications for modern concept of institution building. Panchayati Raj not only guarantees, he thought, self-government to villages but also makes them an integral part of the political reality in the country. Though community development programme was more of a part of the category of his economic programme but it contributed quite a bit in the direction of institution building.

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19 Ibid., p. 215.



Division of the country in various blocs, employment of staffs and specific policies to be implemented through these blocs encouraged enthusiasm in the early days of independence.

### Economic Policies

Progress was Jawaharlal Nehru's creed. His concept of it was two dimensional. Material welfare or economic development provided one dimension, development of human personality provided the other. These have to be achieved by devising a development model of economic and a democratic method of planning and utilising resources. Practice part of Nehru's democracy was basically economic. The performance of government in economic field basically provides legitimacy to the government, socialism was thus used by Nehru as a means to produce results of liberal democracy.

The process of economic development in India was seen by Nehru to involve planning and socialism in an integrated manner. Planning was meant to serve maximum output and employment opportunities. Socialism on the other hand comes in which "we plan to distribute production evenly."<sup>20</sup>

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20 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. IV, p. 151.

But what about production itself? After independence with country being partitioned and law and order problem becoming acute the economic needed to be restored to a minimum level of functioning to provide for these material needs. The economic climate by no means was encouraging at that time and the "unfortunate decision after independence to decontrol process taken mainly on insistence of Gandhiji, led to an inflationary spiral. Besides having Nehru as declared socialist, the industrialists were uncertain about the future of the investment prospects. They thought it to be safer to invest their funds in short term speculative activities than in long term productive assets. Production tended to decline and this gave a further impetus to rise in prices.<sup>21</sup>"

No wonder Nehru emphasised the production aspect in his immediate post independence utterances. Thus in his broadcast to the nation on 15 August 1947, he said "Production today is the first priority and every attempt to hamper or lessen production in enforcing the nation and more specially harmful to our labouring masses."<sup>22</sup>

While the emphasis on production specially in the

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21 R.C. Dutt, Nehru and Socialism (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1981), p. 186.

22 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. I, p. 30.

circumstances which existed in the immediate post-independence period was understandable, it induced in Jawaharlal a reluctance to nationalise, even the key industries though such nationalisation had been declared as the policy of the Congress as early as 1931 at Karachi. Nehru thought that the interest of the production would be served not by the state taking over existing units in the private sector which were abroadly producing, but by utilising all the resources the state had at its command in setting up new units of production. Gradually again this led to his grand concept of 'Mixed Economy'. Two parallel sectors or mixed economy, thus became the logical outcome of his concept of socialisation of vacuum.<sup>23</sup> One can be sure of the observation<sup>24</sup> that in later years Nehru's thinking underwent a gradual but profound change. He philosophised the concept of mixed economy in these words: "It is very important to have as the logical basis of our thought, it is not reasonable to apply it by force to all conditions. We can use a theory for the purpose of argument and for testing its validity."<sup>24</sup> But in practice one must take the facts of the situation and adapt this theory accordingly. Theories

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23 R.C. Dutt, op.cit., quotation used by him from Michael Breeher; inturn used here, p. 187.

24 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. II, speech in New Delhi, 26 December 1950, p. 15.

in themselves do not indicate solutions to a specific problem but merely means "a certain approach in understanding and trying to find a solution to that problem.<sup>25</sup> Theories therefore will justify themselves only if they are successfully used to produce results. In a speech on 18 December 1947 Nehru admitted that "production becomes the first essential and no step should be taken in the name of ideology to impede production. Even nationalisation will be carried out where there are chances to boost production and if it does not fulfil this objective one has to see how not to nationalise certain aspect of economy."<sup>26</sup>

Nehru found all sorts of possible justifications in favour of mixed economy. He reasoned that there is no reason to believe that nationalization would necessarily mean great production. The industrial structure of country would remain the same except that ownership would be transferred from private hands to state's hands. But industrial output would be no greater. In fact the state would expand its limited financial resources paying compensation without increasing national productivity. So its better to leave existing industries as they are and use all the available

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25 India, Parliamentary Debates, vol. IX, 1951, col. 4541.

26 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. I, p. 103.

financial resources of the state for starting new industries state owned, which would definitely increase production. The less vital industries would then remain in private sector as non-payment of compensation in return of nationalisation will leave government with enough resources for new and vital industries to be invested in. The private sector is thus indispensable.

Likewise the public sector is indispensable in meeting the present day requirements of India. The most important reason is that Indian private capital and industry are clearly not sufficiently developed to undertake the huge projects which must be carried out. The state alone has financial resources for such projects. Then, certain industries such as defence and atomic energy are so vital to the state's security that they also must be exclusive monopoly of the state.

The Resolution on Industrial Policy presented to Parliament on 6 April 1948 envisaged the basic framework of mixed economy. The basic consensus on mixed economy prevailed in the Congress because ultimately it had to benefit bourgeoisie and the landlord class; as after independence class structures were retained as before and production relations were modified just a bit to maximise the production. The policy of mixed economy thus suited Congress just fine. The concept of mixed economy was the

product of Jawaharlal's accommodative politics about which we will say later. But a definite change had taken place in Nehru's thinking as he started facing the problems directly after independence. Referring to Karachi Congress resolution and various other and while disowning them, he said:<sup>27</sup> "But when you come down to giving effect to this, you have to think of which to choose first and how to do without upsetting the present structure and without actually interfering with production." The same accommodative approach is seen everywhere, whether it is in matter of agriculture, land, industry or rural development. In regard to agriculture, while not denying the basic objective, he obviously regarded gradualism as inevitable. He admitted that the pace had been slow in abolishing the zamindari system, "but this was not due to any lack of effort but because all manner of difficulties have cropped up."

One must know the nature of these difficulties which political economists like to call constraints of a particular policies. The basic <sup>truth</sup> ~~birth~~ is that Jawaharlal worked with these constraints throughout his life which constituted the basic paradox of Indian social life. This paradox remained intact due to inherent contradiction between the

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27 Ibid., p. 111.

goal of Congress epitomised in the image of Nehru and the social structure unchanged and untouched by the national movement. Not only that, the character and structure of Congress party as such reflected it more ~~correctly~~ concretely. Francine Frankel describes it in most lucid fashion. "The Congress party which had dominated politics since the turn of the century mastered the art of political accommodation to its highest degree. They succeeded by adopting local power structures using the natural building blocs closet at hand within each region, they recruited from among those who were typically members of the dominant land-owning castes and who were the leading members of the large land-owning caste. Such local notables put together the basic unit of the Congress party organisation."<sup>28</sup>

That's why the goals of social transformation were pursued outside the arena of party politics. But one knows the fallacy of this argument and discrepancies visible in practice when policies of social reform pursued without total support of the party as an organisation to back the implementation of the policies towards these goals. In later years Nehru had begun to experience reservations about the wisdom of class struggle

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28 Francine R. Frankel, India's Political Economy, 1947-77 (Princeton: 1978), p. 23.

techniques in Indian conditions. Although he was the most influential advocate of socialism inside the Congress, he had never formally joined Socialist party. When in 1936 he was elected Congress President, the Working Committee appointed by him carefully reflected the conservative majority in the AICC. When the Working Committee constituted a National Planning Committee in 1938 Nehru as chairman deliberately avoided discussion of basic social policy or principle of social organisation that could split the Committee and contend himself with a consensus on the need for central economic planning. Perhaps the greatest incentive to Nehru of a conciliatory approach, however was the prospect of achieving social reform and economic progress with a minimum of disruptive violence.<sup>29</sup> This thinking is reflected very vividly in the Congress Manifesto which he approved in 1946, finally calling outright abolition of zamindari, but at the same time promised payment of equitable compensation to the zamindars. "After Gandhi's death Nehru became unshakable in his commitment to non-violence as the only valid policy or approaching problems of social reforms in India."<sup>30</sup> This makes all the difference and considers predominantly kind of economic policies we were

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29 Frankel's ideas continued.

30 F.R. Frankel, op.cit., p. 67.



to have through its demeritorious results were not visualised then.

However, Nehru never used to hesitate to differ from Gandhi on the question of economic policy rather formulation of these policies, but gave in always to Gandhi's method at the level of implementation of these policies. For example, in staking departure from Gandhi's strategy Nehru permitted a radical formulation of Congress party's ultimate game. The first attempt to outline a concrete programme of action was made by the Economic Programme Committee appointed by the Delhi session of the All India Congress Committee on 1 November 1947,<sup>31</sup> under the leadership of Jawaharlal. The outline of the basic principle recommended by the Committee, while emphasising the need "to distribute equitably the existing income and wealth and prevent the growth of disparities in this respect made the concrete recommendation for fixing a ceiling of income at level bearing a fair proportion to the national minimum." The Committee concluded: "To end exploitation of the peasant and to reconstitute the antiquated agrarian economy all intermediaries between the tiller and the state should be removed, all middlemen replaced by non-profit making agencies such as co-operatives, land equitably

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31 Congress Bulletin (New Delhi: All India Congress Committee, 1947), vol. 6, 31 December 1947.

distributed among bonafide cultivators, land revenue replaced by progressive agricultural income-tax and a fair price for agricultural products and fair wages for agriculture workers assured."

Equally concrete were the recommendation of the Economic Programme Committee for the ownerships and control of industry. New undertakings in defence key and public utility industries and such undertakings as are in the nature of monopolies or serve the country as a whole or more than one province should be publicly owned subject to the limits of the state resources and capacity and need for the nation. Report also recommended nationalisation of existing industries when it stated that "the process of transfer from private to public ownership on payment of equitable compensation, should commence after a reasonable period, so as to enable adequate arrangements being made for taking over the running of the undertakings efficiently and to avoid dislocation of the economic life of the country or uneconomic acquisition of inflated assets." It recommended that "Banking and Insurance should be nationalised, finance co-operatives set up and resources available for investing controlled by the state." Apart from recommending the establishment of a permanent Planning Commission to plan an integrated development of the country's economy on the

lines indicated above" expressed the view that as establishment of a just social order demands elimination of exploitation in production as well as in distribution, co-operative distribution of consumer's goods in rural and urban area should be organised with adequate state aid.<sup>32</sup>"

The Industrial Policy Resolution adopted by Parliament in April 1948 which was a concrete translation of Nehru's concept of mixed economy, echoed only faintly these recommendations of the Economic Programme Committee, which were approved by the Jaipur session of the Congress in December 1947. Government decided that only three industries, namely, manufacture of arms and ammunitions, production and control of atomic energy and the ownership and management of railway transport will be the exclusive monopoly of the state -- that of the central government. Six other industries were earmarked for development by government in the sense that new ventures in these industries would be under state ownership. Government even decided to let existing undertaking in the field develop for a period of ten years during which they would be allowed all facilities for efficient working and reasonable

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32 AICC Papers, NMML (Nehru Library, New Delhi).

expansion before they are taken over by the state in case the need arises. These industries were: (1) coal, (2) ~~wa~~ iron and steel, (3) aircraft manufacture, (4) ship-building, (5) manufacture of telephones, telegraphs and wireless apparatus, (6) mineral oil. The rest of the industrial field the Resolution stated will normally be open to private enterprises, individuals as well as co-operatives. The state will also participate in the field and it will intervene whenever the programme of industry under private enterprise is unsatisfactory.<sup>33(a)</sup>

Whatever may be the reason, the urgency and logical relevance of 'production syndrone' or the Patel factor, as Frankel goes in detail in her book to show the powerful individual opposition came from Patel to Nehru towards his socialistic beliefs and readiness to implement policies related to this kind of thinking, "Nehru wished to placate private industry rather than adopt drastic solution, to chronic problems meriting such step."<sup>33(b)</sup> The basic point is that he couldn't have done that due to constraints mentioned earlier. Due to their, doubts and even conflict of ideas arising from a paradoxical structure of society assailed him. He could be only hopeful and optimistic about everything around and so he envisaged

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33(b) F.R. Frankel ideas taken.

33(c) Hindustan Times, 7 April 1948.

that though there is conflict between the concepts of private and public sector, the position of private sector in the overall framework of economic programme is only transitional in nature. This stand was repeated in 1956 resolution also and in various amendments that followed. The result was that the private sector continued to grow and the centre of gravity shifted from public sector to private sector and not vice versa. This was no accident, it followed the logic of mixed economy which we will elaborate later on.

But this eluded Jawaharlal Nehru, and many others because mixed economy was not an autonomous concept, it had to yield democratic results, social justice with growth and not only growth. Mixed economy once initiated however not only developed its own momentum but led to increasing concentration of economic power defeating the goals of socialistic society. As for justification for allowing the private sector to continue over a large sector of the economy without even a programme for its gradual take over. Nehru was acting on three assumptions "none of them unfortunately proved to be valid."<sup>34</sup> He regarded mixed economy as a transitional stage in the nature of compromise, thinking that private sector will

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34 R.D. Dutt, op.cit., p. 195.

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just fade away. 2) He believed that the public sector would occupy the commanding heights of the economy and thus take over the control of the economy from the private sector, 3) that private sector would be limited and controlled by the plan. But private sector could not be controlled, planning processes proved incapable of capturing this dream to turn into a reality.

The gulf between the recommendations of the Economic Programme Committee of the Congress and the Industrial Policy Resolution 1948 was wide enough but it became wider after 1956 Industrial Resolution. The Resolution stated that "as an agency for planned national development in the context of country's expanding economy, the private sector will have the opportunity to develop and expand."<sup>36</sup> While the 1948 Resolution provided for state monopoly in three areas, namely, arms and ammunition, atomic energy and railway transport, the 1956 Resolution added a fourth, namely, "air transport." This Resolution listed 13 other heavy industries in the first category in which all new units "Save where their establishment in the private sector has already been approved, will be set up

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35 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, vol. III, p. 102, quoted in R.C. Dutt, op.cit., p. 196.

36 Amrit Bazar Patrika, 1 May 1956. (Paper contains the full text of the Resolution.)

by the state. But this does not preclude the expansion of the existing privately owned units or the possibility of the state securing the co-operation of private enterprise in the establishment of new units when national interests so required." In earlier resolution a true limit was set for private industries in 1948 for ten years. There was no such indication this time, in 1956 Resolution.

In the second category of 1956 Resolution twelve industries were listed. With a view to accelerate their development state would establish new enterprises in these industries. But the private sector will keeps on developing. Remaining industries outside these two categories would be in third category. Private sector will bear major responsibility in developing these industries though state will be intervening from time to time to facilitate the development of these industries. This Resolution, thus legitimised the existence of private sector in our economy for a longer period of time. It was not something to be pushed out now.

#### Agriculture and Land

Agriculture backwardness constituted the obvious first constraint of the new regime. But agriculture got high salience in the politics of post-independence years. In agriculture, Nehru had two options: (i) it lay between a technocratic strategy of selecting strong

sectors of agriculture and assist larger farmers to invest in modern output and increasing both agriculture productivity and rural inequality, (ii) an institutional strategy (reflecting Nehru's awareness of land problem and required reforms).

Nehru knew that agricultural revolution proceeds industrial revolution and unless India developed her agriculture concurrently it would not be able to go ahead with its programme of industrialisation. He perceived that crucial factor in the case of land was not the land man ratio but the management of land. The problem naturally had long run and short run aspects. The long run problem consists of optimising production, the short run of securing the most efficient distribution of agricultural output.

From the long run point of view Nehru thought that in a feuded economic agricultural production could be expanded in two ways: through increased and improved inputs and through organisational and institutional changes which make these inputs effective. The two approaches were complementary. This thinking was fully represented in First Draft of National Planning, First Five Year Plan. Before crystallisation of this basic thinking. Report of the Congress Agrarian Reform Committee published in July 1949 had dealt extensively



with agricultural problem. The Committee appointed with Nehru's approval set-down four standards that should ~~standards~~ determine government's agricultural policy. It said that the agrarian economy should provide an opportunity for the development of the farmers personality, there should be no scope for exploitation of one class by another, there should be maximum efficiency of production, the scheme of reform should be within the realm of practicability. Committee did not favour a capitalist agrarian structure inspite of this fact that it would increase productivity. The Committee favoured an agrarian pattern of intermediate size, village based co-operative association as the best safeguard to the legitimate interest of both individual and community.<sup>37</sup>

Report recommended two types of farming depending on size of holding. 1) Holding below basic size were to be amalgamated as it leads uneconomic farming unable to feed a family of five. This <sup>would</sup> individual involve pooling of land and implements -- its called family farming. 2) Joint co-operative management as family farming is transitional in nature, they would ultimately disappear after an indefinite period and all land will come under joint cooperative management.

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37 F.R. Frankel's argument, op.cit., p. 69.

In the same line, the draft outline of the First Five Year Plan assigned highest priority to agriculture, rural development, irrigation and power. The planners pointing out that the greatest majority of India's farmers cultivated uneconomic holding and could not invest in improved practices defined the solution to improve production this way "the character of Indian agriculture from subsistence <sup>farming</sup> ~~farming~~ to economy farming ... and changes in its organisation as will introduce a substantial measure of efficiency in farming operation and enable the low income farmer to increase his return."<sup>38</sup> Secondly, they believed that this would require the organisation of agriculture into "relatively larger units of management and production than the existing holdings."<sup>39</sup> The ultimate objective remains to be co-operative village management under which "all the land in the village is to be relegated as a single farm, in the meantime the smaller holders would be encouraged and assisted to group themselves voluntarily into co-operative farming societies."<sup>40</sup>

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38 First Five Year Plan, A Draft Outline (New Delhi, 1951), p. 94.

39 Ibid., p. 98.

40 Ibid., p. 104.

All producers would belong to a village production council which would form village production plans; channel government assistance from co-operative multi-purpose societies to individual cultivators. At this stage institutional reform was assigned a secondary importance. The Draft First Plan clearly suggested a technocratic state on the ground that productivity was greater and short term need than equity. That's why they rejected the proposal to place ceiling on existing holdings in order to redistribute land to subsistence farmers as the production will fall on large and other farms and decline in production will effect village community as a whole. Apart from zamindari abolition, in progress, the only concrete proposal for land reform contained in the Draft Outline centred around recommendations for legislation to protect tenants at-hill to determine a ceiling on future acquisition of land by individual<sup>41</sup>. The emphasis was more on production and improved practices, i.e. irrigation and application of chemical fertilizers. The Draft Outline due to its sheer logic of argument favoured large land-owners. But by the time ~~the~~ plan document was finalised the planners had moved over to the strategy of institutional kind. For they realised, as Nehru the first one to do so, that efforts to raise

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41 F.R. Frankel, op.cit., p. 87.

agricultural productivity within the existing agrarian framework, were almost certain to run into direct obstacles in the pattern of land distribution and land tenure. Frankel notes that the system of land ownership based on individual property rights, inherited from the British, zamindari system, imposed severe limitations on the efficient allocation of land labour and capital. Nehru noted in his speeches that landlord system was a historical enormity and its abolition would not only promote farm productivity but would also break up the old class structure of a society that is stagnant. Thus, the agrarian pattern in early years of planning were reviewed producing these results.<sup>42</sup>

- 1) The first and overriding constraint was the unfavourable land man ratio in the rural areas of about 92 acre/capita.
- 2) This overall scarcity of land was accompanied by extreme inequalities in the distribution of ownership. More than one-fifth of all rural household (22 per cent) owned no land at all. The upper 13 per cent of all household more than 10 acre, owned about 64 per cent of the entire area and the smaller elite of 5 per cent have 20 acres or more owned 41 per cent of the area.
- 3) Large land-owners yet tended to operate small holding as their land were fragmented and subdued into separate parcels scattered within and between villages.
- 4) This pattern of

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<sup>42</sup> Indian National Survey, Eight Round, July 1954 - March 1955, No. 10, First Report on Land Holding, Rural Sector, Delhi, 1958.

land distribution was associated with a complex system of tenurial relationship.<sup>43</sup> Thus at this stage, it appeared logical to assume that main obstacle in the pattern of land distribution and tenurial relations were sufficient to cause problem of agricultural stagnation and pauperization in rural India, this cause accounted for vast number of the landless and those engaged in subsistence agriculture remained unempolyed or underemployed for long periods throughout the year. Hence it was reasonable that solution should first be sought in changing the agrarian pattern. But in absence of any policy for redistribution of ownership rights in land would only aggrevate the prob<sup>lem</sup> "technological dualism and income disparities within the agricultural economy,"<sup>44</sup> as the big farmers after mechanising their method of production would only add to surplus labour to already swelled rank of landless.

The final version of First Five Year Plan took a position in favour of the principle that there should be upper limit to the amount of land that an individual may hold. This method of ceiling was advocated in order to suggest that "individual property in excess of any norm that may be proposed has to be justified in terms of public interest and not merely on grounds of individual

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43 F.R. Frankel, op.cit. Her formulations.

44 Ibid., p. 99.

rights and claims.<sup>45</sup>"

The planners set down that ceiling should apply both to land under the direct cultivation of owners and to the amount of land that could be resumed from tenants at will for the purpose of personal cultivation. Even in case of small and middle owners the landlord would be permitted to resume only the amount of land that could be cultivated by the adult members belonging to his own family.<sup>46</sup> Planners provided that all tenants of non-resumable land should be permitted to acquire full ownership rights in return for compensation to the landlord at rates established by legislation.

The recommendation of land reform and co-operative village management, nevertheless stopped far short of the generalized attack on private ownership rights in land that characterized the 1949 Report of the Congress Agrarian Reform Committee.<sup>47</sup> The reason was clear as Sudipta Kaviraj notes in his paper, "The Congress Party could not mobilize the peasantry and the landlord at the same time."<sup>48</sup> The leadership knew the implementation

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45 The First Five Year Plan (New Delhi, 1952), p. 188.

46 Explained in F.R. Frankel, op.cit., p. 101.

47 Ibid.

48 Sudipta Kaviraj, "Economic and Political System", consulted in unpublished form, paper presented in Vienna Colloquium on Contemporary India, Vienna, October 1982.

is another indispensable part of any legislation or law made in the land. India's agrarian problem was taken very earnestly by Nehru, more than his modified view on industry, yet the leadership ran into an impasse from where there could be no restart. The land reform got stuck at the lowest level of bureaucracy. Supdita Kaviraj notes, "the business of implementing land reform got into the hands of low level bureaucracy. This was unlikely to succeed for separate sets of reasons -- 1) this ignored fundamental fact that land reforms mean a political question and not an administrative one. It was less a question of effectiveness of enacted legislation than altering the structure of power and production relation. 2) The lower bureaucracy was either more organically connected to local interests or came from subaltern groups who had a spontaneous perceptual sympathy for semi-feudal groups."<sup>49</sup>

Introduction of co-operative farming proved a non-starter, its introduction was frustrated by the opposition of vested interests. Jawaharlal Nehru was himself aware of this, while speaking to R.K. Karanjia in 1961 he said, "The whole campaign was organised by a lobby of farmers, princelings, zamindars, taluklards, jagirdars and other

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49 Ibid., p. 11.

feudal enlists.... Anyway, the resolution (Nagpur, 1959 Congress) was forgotten."<sup>50</sup>

### Planning

In achieving objectives of democracy, Jawaharlal accorded primary position to planning. To Nehru, our fight against poverty and unemployment and our attempt at the economic betterment of the people thus become major objectives. This is the next vital stage of our journey after political independence. This can only be achieved by democratic planning so that our resources can be used to the best advantage and increased as rapidly as possible.

And so at the end of 1949, Nehru revived the question of establishing Planning Commission (first one in 1938) On 25 January 1950, the Working Committee after a trimonious debate, finally agreed to a resolution calling for creation of a Planning Commission. As against perpetual opposition from Patel, all that Nehru could manage to get it passed was Commission committed to function in line with ideals envisaged in the Directive Principles of State Policy. These principles were accepted as the guide to the economic and social pattern to be attained through planning.

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50 R.K. Karanjia, The Philosophy of Mr. Nehru, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), chap. X.



The First Five Year Plan was launched in April 1951 with a total outlay of Rs. 2068.78 crores. It was a modest plan which gave due recognition to agriculture. The private sector had nothing to complain. The First Plan depended on three inter-connected decisions, or a policy of land reform laws which would 1) try to raise agricultural productivity letting most of the industrial drive to come, 2) from private industry; the state content to provide them with merely infrastructural help. An allocation of Rs. 497.10 crore on transport and communication helped the existing industries largely in private sector. 3) Plan guaranteed freedom of foreign capital to enter Indian economy by guarantees of national treatment.

The First Plan was a great success. National income increased from Rs. 9,110 crore to Rs. 10,800 crore in five years and per capita national income rose from 100 as the base in 1950-51 to 111 in 1955-56.<sup>51</sup> However it was obvious that if an impact was to be made on the problem of poverty a much more massive effort would be needed. While agriculture would continue to hold central position in the Indian economy it was clear that the country could neither be self-reliant nor even retain its independence and integrity without a strong industrial base. Agriculture would need to be recognised and necessary land reforms implimented for

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51 Figures taken from First Five Year Plan, ~~the Ministry of Planning~~  
p. 3.

the purpose. The decision already taken to abolish various types of landlordism by zamindaris and jagirdari had yet to be fully implimented.

The effect made towards Community Development Programme in terms of providing basic amenities e.g. roads, schools, community halls, advising farmers to use better method of cultivation etc.; completely failed due to non-egalitarian nature of rural society, its benefits were appropriated by the richer section and denied them who needed it.

The Second Five Year Plan was launched on 1 April 1956, and turned its attention to industries in an attempt to reorientate the predominantly rural economy of the country from the position of a supplier of raw materials to the developed countries of the world to a modern industrial economy, with an agricultural base. As compared to First Plan the funds allotted rose from Rs. 785 crore to 950 crore in Plan from to Rs. 1054 crore in the final draft of the Second Plan. Industry and Mining got the top priority, constituting 25.6 per cent of the total Plan outlay. In this Plan state resolved to set up large scale industries in the field of steel, minerals, heavy electrical equipments for irrigation projects, alloys minerals processing fertilizers, some drugs and pharmaceuticals. Government resolved to take control of industries of two kinds, capital goods industries and other

like, power generation and fertilizers required for agricultural expansion. But the change in shift had taken place from agriculture to industry. In agriculture planners decided to continue with earlier institution of policies of change. But planner did worry about agriculture as their priority for heavy industry needed long gestation period and so agricultural growth was must to contain inflationary cycle beginning with food crisis which could be fatal for the Plan. But planners still did not regard land reform as primarily a political one.

Land reform legislations were left according to the constitution to state legislature under the generally unexplanationable argument that legislation required immediate knowledge of varieties in the fertility of the soil cropping patterns and tenurial condition.

"The Second Plan created strains of another kind. The Plan imposed additional taxation of Rs. 450 crore much of which given the structure of taxation had to be from indirect taxes. It estimated a foreign aid component of Rs. 800 crore. Still it depended on deficit financing to the extent of Rs. 1200 crore and still left Rs. 400 crore to be raised from additional measures to raise domestic resources which once more could be inflationary. Eventually the policies regarding land reform redistribution of land and creation of large stocks of foodgrains to keep

down prices failed badly because of the opposition of the interest constituting the Congress leadership, particularly at the state level.<sup>51</sup>"

No wonder increase in food production during the first year of the Plan was only half the target increase for the year and in the following year it actually fell by two million. Foreign exchange resources were heavily strained and it fell to a dangerously low level. As a consequence, great efforts were made and with some success, to obtain foreign aid from which-ever source such aid was available. Thus Second Five Year Plan became dependent more on external help. Even the core of the Plan was in danger. There were deep rooted reasons which threatened the Plan and to the extent these reasons remained untackled, distortions crept in which *vitiating* the Plan objectives. The failure of food production was due largely to the failure of land reforms to transfer land to the actual tiller or at least to give them sufficient interest in the land they tilled so as to provide the required incentive to the tiller to invest in the land. The principle enunciated by the National Planning Committee before independence and by the Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee after transfer of power were diluted in several respects. The broad principles set out in the First Plan left too

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<sup>51</sup> Sudipta Kaviraj, op.cit., p. 18.

many loopholes for land to be transferred effectively to the tiller, which made it easier for the owner of the land to use it for personal cultivation. The First Plan principle did not insist, as the Agrarian Reform Committee did, on personal cultivation involving actual labour in agricultural operations. On the other hand, allowance was made for the use of hired labour by the owners, although only "to the extent customary among those who cultivated their own lands." The Plan also recommended exemption of the efficiently managed holdings even though they might be cultivated by hired labour, if their break up was likely to lead to a fall in production. In these circumstances, large masses of actual tillers, still precariously holding on to land in which they had no continued interest, lacked the incentive which alone could ensure a substantial increase in production.

In spite of mounting cyclic problem of growth of short-fall in food production government kept on finding easier way to lighten its present problems. It kept on importing foodgrains to supplement its own production and thus the whole scheme of PL-480 has to be understood in this context, it created inflationary situations at home and diverted the attention of people from overcoming the deficiencies of our economy, solving the problem by posing the right question -- of implimentation of land reform and dealing with vested interests.

The money spent in importing foodgrains created new problems of foreign exchange. Thus fall in foreign exchange reserves and the inflationary pressures endangered the Second Plan even in the beginning itself. The government still decided to stick the basic framework of the Plan. This led to several results in the economy which could have high political costs. It led to much larger backlog of unemployment which later plans were left to contend with.

The Second Five Year Plan ended on 31 March 1961. The concrete achievements of the two Plans were by no means negligible but the benefits of these achievements did not percolate sufficiently to the poorest section of the society. By the end of these Plans, the average income of a household at the upper level was nearly thirty times as high as some of the agricultural labour families.<sup>53</sup> If one does not take increase of top 4 per cent but the average income of top one per cent, it was probably not thirty times the average income of agricultural labour household, but possibly 80 to 100 times as high.<sup>54</sup> By the end of the Plan cities had profited against agricultural region. In agriculture region it was only the upper strata that made improvement. Artisans and factory labour did not benefit from the Plan. It was only business community that grew in strength and progressed and the big business profited even more.

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53 Figures taken from Third Five Year Plan (New Delhi, 1961), p. 35.

54 Data taken from R.C. Dutt, op.cit.

This proves elitist character of Nehruveal model of development. Chapter XIV of Third Five Year Plan indicated correctly failures of earlier plans. It says: "in number of states ejection of tenants have taken place on a considerable scale under the plea of voluntary surrender."<sup>55</sup> Regarding ceiling laws it says that state legislation had provided for levels of ceiling varying from 20 acres to more than 30 acres as in some cases in Madhya Pradesh. But the Plan observes "on the whole it would be correct to say that, in recent years, transfers of land have tended to defeat the aims of legislation for ceiling and to reduce its impact on the rural economy."<sup>56</sup>

Side by side growth of monopoly capitalism had become more than a speculative tendency in Indian economy and public sector had become a private corporation. The last Congress that Jawaharlal attended in Bhubneshwar in January 1964 in which he dually recognised them as more than existent realities of Indian economy. Instead of planners evolving a concept of allocative efficiency which would steer production away from consideration of profit basing it firmly on the principle of social gain have allowed private sector to set norms to be emulated by the public

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55 Third Five Year Plan, op.cit., chapter XIV, para 5, p. 221.

56 Ibid., p. 229.

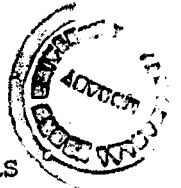
sector "one does not know what public sector has been maximising -- output or profit or some sort of social welfare function. In fact the working of mixed economy in India has resulted in deliberate underutilisation of resources on a scale that will not happen in a private enterprise economy and will be inexcusable in a socialist economy."<sup>57</sup> The fault has not so much in the implementation of the government policies and administration in co-ordination as much as in the basic concept of mixed economy. Jay Prakash Narayan had something brilliant to speak about it. He was right in criticising Jawaharlal's cautious move to allow the private sector to continue on the ground that a takeover would be premature and would dislocate production. "A great deal can be said for caution and fearing to create too many upsets, but in the balance, if one has a definite political philosophy, one must act and move rapidly towards one's goals. The move must be more rapid and drastic at the beginning when a new departure has to be made than at the middle or at the end of the process." Further "you were of the view that it would do no harm if some industries were left in private hands provided the mainspring of

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57 H.K. Manmohan Singh, "Jawaharlal Nehru and Economic Change", Economic and Political Weekly, Special Number, August 1975.



economic policy and power were in the hands of the state I agree, but at present the mainsprings are in the hands of private enterprise and it is the state that subserves the interest of the former."<sup>58</sup> Various authors have tried to explain tragic failure of Nehruvian model to yield democratic results. Whereas J.D. Sethi argues that "The Nehruvian model of political and economic development, which Nehru put into practice against Gandhian model, collapsed because of its internal contradiction, ... that Nehruvian system has failed and Nehruvian era has come to an end."<sup>59</sup> One does not agree with him totally for Nehru's model was not absolutely against Gandhi's concept of development. In fact a leftist argument would be that Nehru's model failed due to Nehru's willingness to incorporate Gandhi's method to make his model acceptable to conservative headlines. Nehru's contradictions have to be appreciated and explained this way than in any other way. However, Rajni Kothari uses his own yard stick of nation building to measure achievement and failures of Nehru's democracy. He argues that distributive justice was not built into the nation building design and into developmental model very little attention was paid to



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58 Jaya Prakash Narayan, The Hindu (Madras), 20 March 1953.

59 J.D. Sethi, Gandhi Today (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1979), p. 23.

ensure distributive performance. The presumption was that aggregate justice will give rise to distributive justice, "that all strata will get involved in the administrative and territorial framework, get down into electoral politics and get their share of nation economy cake ... but there were inbuilt constraints ... not so much into the model of democratic nation building as in the social structure and in the nature of elite through which the model was to be implimented.<sup>60</sup>" There could be yet another argument to be closer to the real problem. How did it happen that the model of development could deliver no goods and democracy will stop at the door steps of voters and speak to them only after stipulated period of five years during elections. How's that economy has lost the capacity of growth so badly required to feed 32 million people below poverty line? Its not that there are only confusions and dilemmas to be offered for the question raised. Prabhat Patnaik and S.K. Rao deal with some thing very near to exact answer to the problems that arose as a matter of pursuance of Nehru's model of development. The basic argument is that mixed economy leads inevitably to a crisis situation and beyond a point

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60 Rajni Kothari, State and Nation Building, op.cit., p. 217.

stops the growth of economy. In the article "Towards an Explanation of Crisis in a Mixed Underdeveloped Economy", they start with a fundamental assumption that in post war period, many underdeveloped countries after their liberation from colonial rule pursued the path of capitalist development through active state intervention. As a result state invested heavily in building up the basic infrastructure providing irrigation, power and a heavy industry base which private capital found difficult and risky to do. In these countries a large public sector came to exist side by side. Private sector dominated by monopoly industrial groups, landlords who in the new situation found it to their advantage to take to direct cultivation with hired labour and a stratum of rich peasantry which largely benefited from such land reforms as were undertaken. The continued expansion of public investment created the condition for continued expansion of private investment and became the mainspring of growth. But mixed economy in country after country has come to face a crisis. They claim "this is not a temporary or a cyclical crisis but one affecting the very viability of their tyre of a mixed economy."<sup>61</sup>

They further add: "A situation it seems, inevitably arises when economic growth can't proceed further within

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61 P. Patnaik and S.K. Rao, "Towards an Explanation of Crisis in a Mixed Underdeveloped Economy", Economic and Political Weekly, Annual Number, February 1977, p. 205.

the framework of such an economy without creating such enormous inflationary pressures as would threaten the political stability of the rule of bourgeoisie and landlord classes.<sup>62</sup> Apart from these developments that mixed economy gives rise to the question as to why this sort of economy inevitably leads to a crisis can be answered thus - in such an economy, the process of growth is accompanied by a rise in the share of output accruing to the capitalists and the landlords in other words the economic surplus accruing to these classes as share of total output tends inevitably to increase beyond a point. Such an increase is precisely coterminous with inflation, then the economy surplus available to the state for its expenditure and investment must shrink as a proportion of total output and this causes a retardation of growth.<sup>63</sup>

If there is no growth, stagnation set in and then things go wrong from top to bottom. Reactionary sources get upper hand as forces of progressiveness loose ground due to logic of stagnated economy. These forces make the realisation of modernisation ideals even more difficult. Gunnar Myrdal says: "The promised social and

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62 Ibid.

63 Ibid., p. 206.

economic revolution which has to follow India's political revolution, is thus in danger of becoming permanent.<sup>64</sup> R.C. Dutt adds from his side. "If this was so in Nehru's life time the promised social and economic revolution has become even more difficult to achieve with his passing away in May 1964."<sup>65</sup>

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64 Gunnar Myrdal, Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations, vol. I (Westminister: Panthion Books, 1968), p. 278.

65 R.C. Dutt, op.cit., p. 239.

Chapter IV

CONCLUSION

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### CONCLUSION

Thirty eight years of Indian experiment in socialist planning has ended without effecting the socialist transformation of our society, the epitome of Nehru's vision. In spite of economic development that we have achieved, somehow deficiencies, distortions and class alignments have obstructed pushing of our society into desired direction. Democracy has not given India a socialist society.

The fact is that Nehru did design a high pragmatic model of development and his democratic commitments accompanied the model to yield results. The results were however not very satisfactory during his own life time, the socialist forces, which for Nehru were akin to

democracy, have retreated further. In fact the contrary forces have emerged. In spite of considerable development and increase in national output we have failed to make any significant advance either in the rate of economic growth or in social justice or even in abolishing poverty. There is an explanation for this paradoxical situation which I have explained in earlier chapters. It is basically the structural problem of Indian society, this problem always remained behind non-implementation of Nehru's progressive policies, the semi-feudal psychology of bureaucracy and power position of local rich and rural feudal lords.

Nehru's failure to achieve economic growth in the direction of egalitarian society does not mean that his policy of mixed economy for the purpose, in a given situation was wrong. In fact under the prevailing social structure this model was the most pragmatic and consisted of progressive tendencies. Unless one goes for a sweeping change in daily life, philosophies, idioms and economies of people's world which would have been preferable then and any time for that matter, there could not be any other model of development of equal competence. The model itself sounds good. A mixed economy model depends for its success on the crucial factor of (1) how state intervention is used to regulate its functioning and (2) whether there



are equally healthy democratic institutions to obstruct the concentration of authority in the hands of one or a group of individual who are supposed to play the role of regulator as far as states' desirable intervention is required for development. During Nehru's time, institutions were allowed to develop and institution-building, in a way, started with the same vigour as other economic ideas were quickly getting shaped and concretised. The initial results during Nehru's time were more than satisfactory, only later on things started eluding him.

The most striking thing in the post-Nehru period has been deliberate by-passing of democratic institutions. Whenever institutions came in the way of survival of high elite, for self defence they defied the democratic norms, "legitimacy of institutional power was increasingly giving place to legitimacy of individuals."<sup>1</sup>

The new elite though wished for a continuity in their understanding for institutions the new leadership around Mrs. Gandhi had different relationship with the political universe.<sup>2</sup> Its worries over survival led into

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1 Sudipta Kaviraj, On the Crisis of Political Institution in India, Contribution to Indian Sociology (New Delhi; Sage Publications, 1984), p. 235.

2 Continuation of Sudipta Kaviraj's idea from the article on "The Crisis of Political Institutions in India", op.cit.

conflict with some "established institution within the Congress and later with constitutional system itself."<sup>3</sup> Congress largely dispensed with internal elections in the party and substituted this with nomination in state organisations. The local leadership naturally severed its relation with local politics which prevented the training of new leaders "and alternated the political effectiveness of the lower orders of Congress organisation leading to greater reliance on Mrs. Gandhi's charismatic authority."<sup>4</sup> If one sticks to the argument that Mrs. Gandhi's regime continued the policies of Nehru and gave extension to Nehruvian model, one must also note that continuance of Nehru's policies was brought at the cost of some institutions he had helped to fashion. As a result, unhealthy disregard of democratic institutions has given rise to dangerous situations for state. According to Sudipta Kaviraj, there are some developments in Indian society which seek non-state solution to political questions. But there is a marked tendency for social tension to break out into violence. Caste conflict in eastern and central India appear to be of this kind in which "combatents deliberately move threat

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3 Ibid., p. 238.

4 Ibid.

of violence outside the normal makings of legal authority."<sup>5</sup>  
Some of the most fundamental conflicts in rural India tend to happen neither against nor in favour but bypassing the state.

In Indian politics there are clear indications of growing alienation, a feeling of loss of direction and control, a feeling of familiar world growing strange. Is this the result of Nehruvian model or in the way of succeeding elite perpetuated themselves in power at any cost? Why is that the model stands devoid of its essence and pushed to a questionable position? As a result of this a brief phase of De-Nehruization zoomed in Indian politics. In 1977 election Janata Party was elected to form its government in the centre. A small group of them tried to reject Nehru totally. This was unrealistic. The phenomenon of Nehru was not individualistic, it had a social base. Their Home Minister attributed many of India economic difficulties to the economic policies of Nehru. He even published an alternative plan which he characterized as 'Gandhian Blue Print'. Such a situation arose because it became a general belief that Mrs. Gandhi is continuing Nehru's legacy and so when Congress headed by her lost the election as it had become symbol of

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5 Ibid., p. 239.

authoritarianism in the country, this was thought to be logical consequence of Nehruvian model itself.<sup>6(a)</sup> But "whatever else Nehru was, he was not a dictator."<sup>6</sup> Moreover no model which was a clear alternative to that of Nehru could emerged out of this mounted criticism, ultimately the criticisms gravitated around Mrs. Gandhi's own followers and nothing fundamentally wrong could be established against the model. When new leadership came to power after Nehru, the Shastri's period was so brief that nothing substantial was done about anything, but Mrs. Gandhi's period is taken as a major phase in which this model got sufficient time to be tested. Instead of correcting the faults that had crept into the model due to reason of Nehru's insistence on production as first priority, the succeeding elite perpetuated these to the extent of putting the model itself into a questionable position, though there is no doubt that Nehru himself picked up the weaker string to pull. There are some scholars who hint valuably in this direction. V.K.R.V. Rao, while explaining the nature of Nehru's model of development presents two alternatives of the same model of mixed economy. The first alternative he calls type A. In this type state agencies and public

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6 K.P. Karunakaran, Phenomenon of Nehru (New Delhi: Gitanjali Prakashan, 1979), p. 18.

(a) *Ibid*,

sector provide external economies, infrastructural facilities, generation of technical skills, loan, finances, tax concession and a host of other incentives to the private sector and enable it to grow at a fast rate. Logically here, ideological element do not ensure an equitable distribution of the dividends from such growth or take account of inequality of incomes and wealth or offer any effective opposition to the concentration of economic power in private hands. In effect the public sector instead of attaining commanding heights over the private capital, becomes adjunct to the private sector and ultimately becomes ineffective in controlling or regulating its activities. Under this type of mixed economy, the private sector thus acquires a dominant position in economic as well as political affairs. Driven by compulsive forces and some of his own inconsistency in thinking, Nehru picked up this model to produce results of type B of the same model.

In this type (B), the state uses the public sector including state power as commanding heights to determine the main direction of country's economic development. This model, logically remain in position to take effective steps to prevent concentration of economic power in private hands, it sees that economic power in the private hands are widely dispersed and decentralised so that it

cannot acquire any direct or indirect political influence of an inegalitarian character. Its activities are extended from infrastructure to the production of consumer goods, it participates directly in resource mobilization and capital formation. It acquires influence in key sectors of private sector as stock exchanges, markets in land etc. The Indian experience in mixed economy tended to conform to type A rather than type B. Hence its failure to bring about the desired socialist transformation.<sup>7</sup> One is not sure that a model of mixed economy can bring in socialist transformation in any society, but one seems to be optimistic about the other model's deliveries towards social justice.

In the light of above analysis one can argue that if Nehru's model could be made to function differently than its functioning at present, the model sounds still relevant. It has, in any case, not collapsed as J.D. Sethi claims. There is no doubt, it has become elitist and serves a particular section of Indian society and has also helped capitalism and monopoly capitalism to grow at faster speed,

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7 V.K.R.V. Rao, Indian Socialism: Prospect and Retrospect (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Co., 1982), p. 123.

the relevant point of our argument is that type B is not out of conceptual purview of mixed economy. And this needs to be incorporated and given a chance to become dominant force of our development.

The first model has given unhealthy growth to our economy, the second might correct the errors of the first type. It needs courage, perspective and commitment on the part of present ruling elite to revive the second type of Nehru's model to achieve economic growth with social justice. Under the prevailing system, there can't <sup>be</sup> further stretch, the possibility of any alternative so radical as to think for masses in direct terms of eliminating poverty.

The question, however remains, for how long one has to go along this precariously balancing process of development? Indian poverty has become a lasting phenomenon, a reality familiar than anything else to millions of our people, the question is, can this model even if revived handle the enormous problems of our society and economy?

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