Mr Nehru in conversation with the author

THE MIND
OF
MR NEHRU

AN INTERVIEW BY

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Foreword by Radhakrishnan

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PREFATORY NOTE

These interviews bring out the views of one of the greatest minds of our time on the problems—national and international—which are facing us.

Our Prime Minister, though not religous and dogmatic in the sectarian sense of the term, has abiding faith in the spiritual values of truth and compassion.

RADHAKRISHNAN

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INTRODUCTION

The proper study of Nehru can only be Nehru himself. This led me, as his potential biographer, to seek the present series of interviews with him. After going through almost all the available Nehru literature, his own writings as well as the assessment of others, I still found a number of gaps; and it was with the object of setting them in their proper places in the mosaic of his philosophy that I sought answers to a long list of questions, doubts and criticisms. Mr Nehru obliged me with several talks, some just between ourselves, others in the presence of a 'third man'—the tape recorder. The resultant marathon interview bears probably the latest and most authentic imprint of his mind.

Originally these talks were meant to form the background of my project for a biography of Mr Nehru. But now that his entire philosophy and basic approach to national and international problems have come, in the evening of his life, under a crucial challenge as a result of the Sino-Indian crisis and the consequent mobilization of all the reactionary forces at home and abroad, it seems both useful and topical to put what is often called the Nehru doctrine before the world straight from his own mouth.

'In a long, brilliant, tumultuous career this may be his most dangerous hour,' Max Lerner wrote recently, 'and may prove his finest.' How true! And the most important single feature of these talks, in my opinion, is that the Prime Minister found time for them in the very crucial and agonizing interlude of the Chinese alarums and excursions on our frontiers. The latter

came as a signal to ugly forces within the land, all feudal and fascist elements, the communalists, obscurantists and reactionaries, to mobilize a formidable challenge to the leadership and philosophy of Mr Nehru.

This attempt to cheat the Prime Minister and the people of India of the harvest of their revolution could not have been better timed. During the brief but exciting period of her freedom, India has scored many victories in the national and international fields. After building a free and democratic Republic on the firm foundations of secularism, her people have already begun their march towards socialism. Maintaining unbroken continuity with her historically sanctified traditions, Mr Nehru has enriched the vision of the Indian people as well as the world comity of nations by placing before them the concept of *Panch Shila* backed by an uncompromizing devotion to the cause of peace. Thus, on the eve of her third General Election and third National Plan, India has been getting ready for the 'take off' from her static colonial economy of the past to a dynamic self-developing one, thereby presenting reaction with heavy vested interests in the past with a now-or-never alternative. It is in this context, at the most crucial moment of the nation's post-independence history, that Indian reaction is making of the Chinese incident an excuse for their well-timed plan of a *coup d'état* against the Nehru line.

What is Mr Nehru's answer to this challenge? Although this was not the original objective of our talks, it assumed an increasing importance and topicality as the interview proceeded during the crisis period from month to month. I feel that it makes a formidable and smashing rejoinder to the would-be saboteurs of the Indian approach. Carrying the reader with him

over a wide canvas of time and space, from Buddha and Ashoka through Marx, Gandhi and the Atomic age to the Space-ships and Sputniks of tomorrow, he presents the ancient Hindu doctrine of co-existence and Universal Synthesis in its modern dress of *Panch Shila* not only as the most precious historical legacy from the past, but also as a most useful historical imperative in the context of contemporary problems. He also demonstrates the fact that this fundamentally Indian approach is no private fad or public 'line' but the logic of Indian thought, religion, tradition, culture, history and geographic position.

Many times during our talks I could not help thinking of this very extraordinary leader in political action, a splendid humanist into whose making have gone the best of European no less than Oriental thought, as a kind of alchemist working in the laboratory of universal synthesis and peaceful co-existence. His philosophy, as these talks revealed, is based on the consideration that in these nuclear times wars big or small, hot or cold and ideological clashes including the Marxist concept of class struggle with its violent solutions, have become fatal and therefore obsolete. Violence of every kind has become obsolete, and the world faces the alternatives of peaceful co-existence or total co-destruction. All problems and difficulties, national or international, ideological or material call out for solution in a new spirit of understanding, tolerance and accommodation.

Mr Nehru's weakness lies in his failure to provide himself and his country with anything like an effective machinery to implement what might be one of the grandest experiments of our epoch. He admits this failure in his talks with me. The Indian Prime Minister has often been hailed as a deus ex machina. But in fact

he is a god without a machine gun. Those who accept the validity of his approach cannot help pointing to the ineffectual organization at his command: a heterogeneous Congress Party pulling in different directions, an administrative outfit inherited from and therefore committed to the past, and an institutional democracy that is holding back instead of pushing forward to the nation's goals.

The task can be successfully undertaken only by a body of radically-minded Congressmen who can be described in the Indian context as *Nehruites*. But where are the Nehruites? And what guarantee is there of the survival of Nehru's philosophy after Nehru has gone?

I believe it is the first time that these questions have been put so bluntly to Mr Nehru by a journalist and his answers are there for the reader to consider. He modestly repudiates the suggestion of anything like a 'Nehru doctrine' and credits his philosophy and approach to the evolution of Indian thought. If it has to be personalized, he says, let it be named after Gandhi and no one else. As to his failure to create anything like a party or a group of his followers he seeks to make amends for this by his almost epic endeavours to transform the whole nation and people into a land of intelligent, conscious and alert guardians of the historical Indian way. This, perhaps, is Mr Nehru's most significant contribution to our discussions. It is also his most effective safeguard against a counter-revolution after him. Given a foundation of parliamentary democracy and provided with the fuel of a self-accelerating economy, he believes the goal of a secular, socialist, democratic, co-operative society can be achieved in India by means of a legislative revolution. He believes an alert and educated people, conscious of

their rights and traditions, can be trusted to act as a powerful deterrent against any throw-back. This is Mr Nehru's democratic alternative to the new Chinese communes.

From this immediate controversy as to 'after Nehru—what?' the talks proceed to the reactions of one of the finest minds of our generation to the new worlds of space and science now opening before mankind. It is here that Mr Nehru reveals at its finest the calibre of his mind as a philosopher-statesman of the highest order.

The advent of the atomic age and nuclear energy has impressed upon him the necessity of advancing from the purely material to a spiritual and ethical approach to the problems of the world. This apparent *volte-face* on the part of a one-time Marxist and self-confessed atheist startled me to the extent of quizzing him with the question as to whether he was, in the evening of his life, in search of God. His analysis of this new dimension his mind was developing, however, left me more than half convinced of its *rationale*. Scientific and technical progress has many facets and implications. In highly developed societies, economic and material progress by itself appears to have failed to provide the people with a fully integrated life. There is a spiritual and moral vacuum. There is maladjustment and delinquency, alcoholism and crime—all children of the *mal du siècle*. With automation and shorter working hours coming, the employment of leisure becomes itself a major problem. As soon as man gets the material comforts he desires, something deeper inside him hungers for something spiritual and ethical. There is a spiritual emptiness and its result is the so-called angry young generation of today. Mr Nehru emphasizes the

importance of a new approach to these problems and reveals himself as a Marxist in search of God whose efforts are rewarded by the discovery of God in man, in the people, not only of his own land but of the whole world. His vision of *the fully integrated human being*, 'spiritually no less than materially equipped for humanity's new experiments with time and space, is perhaps an unconscious picture of Nehru himself'.

Indeed the most unforgettable impression I carried away with me was one of essential goodness, indeed almost beauty—a feminine expression, yet true of his fine masculine figure: and this is perhaps so because he is pure, good and truthful. As he would himself say, it is a matter of *ends* and *means!* A function dedicated to what is good and truthful and beautiful must also create the form of the good and the beautiful.

It is a frightening thought that one whom we continue to regard as the flaming spirit of humanity should be already past the allotted span of three score and ten. Gandhi at least died knowing he could trust Jawaharlal to speak his language after him. But whom can Jawaharlal trust to speak his language after him? 'The people, of course,' he would answer. If this modest attempt to put his thoughts and language into print can help the people, not only of India but of the world, to understand him and speak his language, its purpose shall have been aboundingly served.

R. K. KARANJIA

I

THE GANDHIAN HERITAGE

Q. Mr Prime Minister, as I was waiting outside your office for this interview, I heard someone mention that next year happens to be your father Motilalji's centenary. I wonder if this is correct?

A. Quite so. He was born in 1861.

Q. I had no idea that a whole century had passed. What a fabulous period it has been!

A. Yes indeed—and do you know that father was born on the same day as Rabindranath Tagore?

Q. The same day, sir?

A. Yes, the same day, the same month, the same year—a remarkable coincidence!

Q. They must constitute two of the most vital influences with Gandhiji and, of course, yourself, on this Indian century. In fact, one thinks of Motilalji, yourself and Gandhiji in terms of the Father, Son and the Holy Mahatma in a sort of an Indian National Trinity?

A. I would not put it that way, but it is true that the three of us exercised considerable influence upon one another. And most of all, Gandhiji on both of us. He was a powerful and revolutionary personality and a very effective one too. So was father in his own way, very strong and stubborn, and, of course, of a very different mould, but Gandhiji persuaded him out of his ways and beliefs to join the freedom struggle. The way

this change was brought about by persuasion, consent, and patient handling of human nature, without any coercion and at the same time, without any compromise on essentials, struck me as something very remarkable and also very effective. It was typical of Gandhiji's strategy of winning over opposition. It brought results, produced major changes, not only in relation to father but in relation to all people, the masses and, in fact, the whole country.

Q. And yourself most of all?

A. Yes, myself most of all. The transformation of father under Gandhiji's influence, as also the revolution he was producing in the minds and hearts of the people by truthful and honest means, non-violent means, peaceful and persuasive rather then coercive means, and yet effective means which brought about results, was something new and revolutionary. It gave me what I was searching for.

Q. A lever for your own solutions?

A. A lever certainly. My approach to problems was different, very different, from Gandhiji's at that time; but on the main issue of freedom and the strategy for the struggle we agreed completely, both in regard to the ends and the means. One doubted his way of going about the fight, but he bowled out all opposition by producing results, moving the masses in a big way and in the right direction, till we realized that he was a great revolutionary force in action.

Q. Would it be a correct analysis to say that this triangular relationship between Motilalji, Gandhiji and yourself produced the elements which have since fashioned what is known today as *the Indian approach* or *the Nehru line* in national and international affairs?

A. It is wrong to call it the Nehru line or anything of that sort. It was fundamentally *an Indian approach*, as you say, and Gandhiji, of course, represented it. That is why he was able to create such revolutionary changes.

Q. What I meant to suggest was that Motilalji was in some ways the great Victorian representing the best traditions of European liberalism, while Gandhiji was the pure and simple nationalist with some kind of an atavistic approach. The link between these two vitally diverse personalities could perhaps have been Jawaharlal Nehru, come back to India deeply imbued with Marxist Socialism and conscious of social, scientific and historical forces. Perhaps, it could be said that the inter-action of these three influences produced the Indian approach which we see functioning today in domestic as well as international affairs?

A. One cannot define personalities in such a sharp manner. Gandhiji, for example, was much more than the nationalist, pure and simple and atavistic, as you call him. He was a great man and a mighty leader. He had a deep social conscience, not in the socialist or class-struggle sense, but as reflected in the almost continuous struggle he waged against inequality for the under-dog, the Harijans and the peasantry, for example. Take the caste system and consider how he used the lever of his challenge to Untouchability to shake and overturn, as it were, the whole structure.

What I mean to say is that Gandhiji, too, had a social philosophy which emerged right from the beginning of his career in South Africa. This is one reason why our freedom struggle was never without its social content—in fact, the latter was its base and this is why the strategy produced such tremendous results.

Gandhiji believed in the complete identification of the leadership with the masses, even if that meant falling behind somewhat and slowing down the pace of progress so as to carry the whole people forward with him.

Q. To carry the whole national mass continuum forward?

A. Yes—that is, without dividing or splitting the movement and causing factional opposition by being unnecessarily aggressive or dogmatic. Gandhiji always sought to function within the social fabric in which the masses had been living for centuries and tried to bring about gradual but revolutionary changes, instead of destroying the fabric or uprooting the people from their soil. He insisted on continuity with the past and he accepted the existing social system as a base for his political and social strategy. Again, taking the Caste system as an example, you can see how he functioned. He sought the weakest point in the armoury of the Caste structure—that is, Untouchability—and by undermining and dynamiting it, he shook the whole fabric without the people realizing the earthquake he had unleashed. In this way, Gandhiji introduced new and revolutionary processes in the mass mind and brought about mighty social changes.

Q. That may be so, sir. Nobody doubts Gandhiji's enormous influence on the Indian revolution, even though people of my way of thinking consider his philosophy to be somewhat confused and unscientific. However that may be, the Gandhian era ended with the assumption of political power by the Congress. The year 1947 ushered in what is universally hailed as the Nehru epoch in our country. Should I be right in the inference that from Freedom onwards, you used the

Gandhian means to serve the Nehru ends—that is, Socialism within the fabric of Parliamentary Democracy, first of all; Secularism next; and, finally, and most importantly, your insistence on a foreign policy based on World Peace and Non-alignment?

A. You are wrong in using words like the Nehru epoch or the Nehru policy. I would call ours the authentic Gandhian era and the policies and philosophy which we seek to implement are the policies and philosophy taught to us by Gandhiji. There has been no break in the continuity of our thoughts before and after 1947, though, of course, new technological and scientific advances since have made us re-think in some ways and adapt our policies to the new times. But here also Gandhiji was in many ways prophetic. His thoughts and approaches and solutions helped us to cover the chasm between the Industrial Revolution and the Nuclear Era. After all, the only possible answer to the Atom Bomb is non-violence. Isn't it?

Q. If I may interrupt, sir, you have gone beyond non-violence to the discovery of a more positive solution to this threat of the Atom Bomb in *Panch Sheel* or the Doctrine of Peaceful Co-existence.

A. All that was inherent in Gandhism. In fact, this approach of *Panch Sheel*, co-existence, peace, tolerance, the attitude of live and let live, has been fundamental to Indian thought throughout the ages and you find it in all religions. Great emperors like Ashoka practised it and Gandhiji organized it into a practical philosophy of action which we have inherited. There was no place for the 'cold war' in Ashoka's mind, and Gandhiji gave the world the most practical substitute for war and violence

by bringing about a mighty revolution with the bloodless weapon of passive resistance. The most important thing about our foreign policy is that it is part of our great historical tradition. Do you know the story of Chanakya?

Q. I don't seem to remember it, sir.

A. It appears in a very interesting Sanskrit book translated by my brother-in-law, the late Mr Pandit, who was a Sanskrit scholar. You must get the English translation and read it if it is available. It tells a story of King Chandragupta and his Prime Minister Chanakya. Chanakya was typical of the Indian genius: peace-loving, shrewd, cunning, very scholarly, proud and selfless and reputed to be a very wise man. Now some kings and chieftains opposed Chandragupta and organized themselves into a confederation and declared war on the Kingdom. Chandragupta called Chanakya to lead the defence, and this person, who appears to have been a great statesman and a superb diplomat, succeeded in confusing and defeating the enemy front without resorting to anything like a war or even a battle. Somehow the enemy was won over. Then came the test. Chandragupta asked Chanakya's advice as to what to do next. Chanakya replied that his job was done. He had dispersed the foe and won a victory for his king. All he desired now was to be relieved of his responsibility so that he may retire to the forest and attend to his reading and writing. The King was shocked. For who would substitute Chanakya as the Chief Minister? Chanakya's reply was classic and very symptomatic of Indian thought. He told the King to get the defeated leader of the enemy confederation to serve him as his Chief Executive. That was the only way to restore peace and

goodwill to the Kingdom. Now that was co-existence some 2,000 years ago. Wasn't it?

Q. True enough, Mr Nehru. I stand corrected, but still the conviction remains amongst progressives that Gandhiji broke and emasculated your earlier faith in scientific Socialism with his sentimental and spiritual solutions.

A. Some of Gandhiji's approaches were old-fashioned, and I disputed them, even combated them, as you know well enough. But on the whole it is wrong to say that he broke or emasculated me or anybody else. Any such thing would be against his way of doing things. The most important thing he insisted upon was the importance of means: ends were shaped by the means that led to them, and therefore the means had to be good, pure and truthful. That is what we learnt from him and it is well we did so.

On the other hand, what you say about sentimental and spiritual solutions may be true. I take it that by sentiment you mean humanity—that is, the deep human approach which has always been as much part of my thinking as it was of Gandhiji's. The spiritual approach, too, is necessary and good, and I have always shared it with Gandhiji, probably more so today when we see the need of finding some answer to the spiritual emptiness facing our technological civilization than I did yesterday. Scientific Socialism, as you call it—I take it your reference is to Marxist Socialism —also has to be adapted to the new scientific era which has progressed beyond the Industrial Revolution which was responsible for Marxism. New changes pose new riddles which demand new answers.

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II

MARXISM IN THE MODERN WORLD

Q. Now here, I believe, we of India—I use the collective deliberately, since evidently mention of Jawaharlal Nehru embarrasses you!—have discovered the new answers, or, at least, some of them, to the new problems of the changing times. First and most important of them all, as I see it, is the adoption of the Marxist approach, which in our case has gone through the Gandhian influence, to the imperatives of the new scientific and technological era. In this context, India can boast of having evolved, first of all, *a new kind of Socialism* and, secondly, *a new way to Socialism*, both of which attempt to create a synthesis between Capitalist democracy, on the one hand, and Communist dictatorship, on the other.

Now, sir, without indulging in flattery, I would like to say that this constitutes a very remarkable experiment which affects one-seventh of humanity directly and the rest of the world indirectly, but very vitally. Besides, it provides some answers to the problems raised by the new epoch of nuclear discoveries and inter-planetary advances.

This is one side of the picture. On the other hand, your noble but somewhat abstract Manifestos on this New Socialism, or Socialist Humanism, have put your followers in an ideological dilemma. The reason is that

you have not defined the *goals and* objectives of Indian Socialism, nor fashioned the *means* or *instruments*. Nevertheless, I believe you now have sufficient experience of both to give us something like a definition. Could you?

A. You are constantly referring to Indian Socialism and to Manifestos on Socialism by me. Well, the truth is that I do not think of the problem particularly in terms of *Indian* Socialism, nor have I issued any *Manifestos*. . . .

Q. I am referring to your speeches, your writings, your books like *Whither India*. They have been our Manifestos. . . .

A. Yes, I understand. But as I said, one cannot think of it particularly or specifically in terms of *Indian* Socialism, though I agree that each country has a particular genius, particular roots, and its social and economic structure is partly conditioned and moulded by these factors. To illustrate this, let us take the example of religion. Buddhism, for instance, spread to many countries from India putting on the garb as it were of each separate country. Chinese Buddhism, though derived from India, took on a Chinese orientation. So did the Burmese, the Japanese, etc. That means it was engrafted in to the roots of the national soul or whatever you like to call it. In that sense, national characteristics have to be borne in mind in any study of political philosophies as you have to take into account the climate and other physical features of each country. The study of a tropical region in the context of economic production may well be different from that of a non-tropical country.

Q. That is so. I would like you to submit the Marxist analysis to the Indian situation as also other objective conditions to which you have made references before.

A. I was coming to that. In considering what may be called the economic or social philosophy, one learns, of course, a great deal from past experience; and I have always considered the Marxist analysis of the past very scientific and very illuminating. I do not agree with everything Marx says, but broadly I have found it useful and rational. Nevertheless, the fact must be remembered that Marxism was the outcome of the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution in England, the early beginnings when conditions were rather peculiar and very special, conditions which have not been repeated elsewhere in the world and quite naturally so. Marx was influenced by the abnormal and, I should say, abominable conditions which prevailed in the first flush of industrialization when there was nothing like a democratic structure of the State and changes had to be made violently for the simple reason that they could not be made constitutionally or democratically. Hence his doctrine of revolutionary violence.

Now when we face the problem of production, change etc., dealt with by Marx, today, we have to think of them in the context of our own times, our own country and our peculiar circumstances and objective conditions. We cannot go back to conditions in early nineteenth-century England in which Marx functioned. It is *our* conditions that prevail and fashion our thought. The Marxist solutions follow a brilliant line. They may have been right and proper for the times and the problems which brought them into being, but you cannot remove them from their historical context and apply them to a century where different conditions prevail. That is one argument against dogmatic insistence on the Marxist solutions.

Secondly, the Marxist analysis of many things,

historical forces and the like, was *in vacuo* a correct analysis. Let me explain what I mean. If you do not think of other forces coming into the picture, the direction of Marxist economy, which says that given such and such conditions, this or that will happen, or should happen, is logically correct. But the trouble is that Marx does not take into account *other* forces that might come into play in the future. That, of course, was not the fault of Marx. He saw the conditions as they were during his period and used them as the premises for his conclusions. Then other forces came in. The most important of them was political democracy which made possible peaceful change. Remember that in Marx's time there was no political democracy, even in the so-called democratic countries, where the land-owning class was in the government. Now the mere fact of the vote coming in, even though it does not solve all problems, does make and has made vital differences. When everybody has a vote it becomes a power exercising certain pulls, certain effective pressures, in the direction of social change to an extent that Marx could not have conceived simply because the picture was not before him.

Then other and further democratic factors came into the picture, like trade union organizations, workers' organizations, peasant organizations—all exercising powerful pressures upon the wealthy ruling classes in favour of what might be called the beginnings of economic democracy. The result was that the Marxist fear in the context of the Industrial Revolution that there would be greater and greater concentration of wealth and power in fewer and fewer hands, extending and widening poverty, did not really occur. These pressures —partly democratic, partly trade union and others that

followed—had a powerful impact in limiting both. I do not dispute the fact that the economic tendency which Marx foresaw happened, but it was limited and inhibited all the time by these objective conditions.

There were new types of organizations growing in the political background which was changing, continuously and radically, on one side, accelerating the urge for social justice and the will to social change. On the other, the world was being revolutionized by really big and tremendous technological developments, of which nobody in the nineteenth century, Marx or any other thinker, could have had any awareness.

These scientific and technological developments have in theory, you might say, solved the problems of wealth and production, bringing the goal of material prosperity within reach of all. That is, in theory at least, there is enough in the world to go round the entire human population, or enough can be produced in the world to satisfy every normal, primary want of humanity.

Marx was functioning at a time when the main economic question was one of the distribution of something that was not enough and this created all kinds of conflicts. The stronger and wealthier seized the most of what there was and the poor and the weak went to the wall. . . .

Q. Survival of the fittest and Devil take the hindmost?

A. Yes, survival of the fittest. The point is that when there are shortages, these conflicts become sharp, but when there is a tendency to produce enough for all, those conflicts lessen.

Now, at the present moment, the biggest apparatus of production is in the United States of America. I do not

deny there is a huge difference between the American billionaire and others; but the fact remains that conditions of living there, their standard of life, etc., are very high. There is no proletariat of the Marxist conception in America.

Q. Don't the Negroes fit into the Marxist definition?

A. They might. Yes, the Negroes might, a little more in the south than the north, but not quite in the Marxist conception. There, too, new conditions have not borne out exactly what Marx had prophesied would happen. Capitalism itself has changed, is changing all the time, though it sticks to its basic grab-instinct and tends towards monopolies and aggregation of economic power. But the urge for social justice is there even in the capitalist system.

What is important is that although the logical reasoning of Marx was correct, other factors have intervened. The sum of them—that is, these new factors and particularly the two features I have mentioned, of political democracy and technological advance—have produced a new set of conditions, and Marxism must be reviewed in this new context. They bring new problems and demand new solutions, completely new problems and solutions which Marx did not think of.

Q. You have mentioned political democracy and the technological revolution as the two main problems. Is there any other factor you have in mind, sir?

A. Probably one of the biggest of our problems, during the next decade or, maybe, after a decade, particularly in America and other economically advanced countries which are going in for automation in a big way, will be the problem of what to do with leisure. Now in an under-developed country like India this problem does

not exist to the extent it does in the United States, Europe and particularly the more advanced Scandinavian countries and, of course, the Soviet Union. Its worst incidence is in America and it is bound to spread and intensify. You read about it all over the world in cases of youth delinquency and the general decadence of the moral fibre and spiritual discipline of humanity that somehow catches up with prosperous countries and societies. What is one to do with this new problem of the cultivation of leisure? For if we don't tackle it, the result would be a sort of mental and moral exhaustion of civilization itself.

Q. I read that the Russians are already applying themselves to this problem in a scientific manner.

A. They are, they are, but in Russia too the same difficulties have arisen, though in a much lesser degree. I wonder if a problem like this can be tackled scientifically to the exclusion of other values. What appears to be wanting is—I do not know how to put it—except to say that it is an *ethical* aspect which might be wanting, some *spiritual* solution.

Q. Isn't that unlike the Jawaharlal of yesterday, Mr Nehru, to talk in terms of ethical and spiritual solutions? What you say raises visions of Mr Nehru in search of God in the evening of his life!

A. If you put it that way, my answer is: Yes, I have changed. The emphasis on ethical and spiritual solutions is not unconscious. It is deliberate, quite deliberate. There are good reasons for it. First of all, apart from material development that is imperative, I believe that the human mind is hungry for something deeper in terms of moral and spiritual development, without which all the material advance may not be worth while.

Now the question arises: *how to bring about the moral and spiritual standards?* There is, of course, the religious approach which has unfortunately narrowed down to dogmas and ceremonials. The form or shell remains, while the spirit is lost. Do you get my meaning?

Q. I do, sir. Would I be right in saying that, religiously speaking, you are somewhat inclined towards Buddhism and the Vedantic faith in divinity permeating our universe?

A. Buddhism certainly provides a fascinating philosophy, full of practical achievements not only in the matter of religion, but art and even politics, as you can see from the records of Ashoka. The old Hindu idea that there is a divine essence in the world and every individual possesses something of it and can develop it, appeals to me in terms of a life force. I do not happen to be a religious man, but I do believe in something—call it religion or anything you like, which raises man above his normal level and gives the human personality a new dimension of spiritual quality and moral depth. Now whatever helps to raise man above himself, be it some god or even a stone image, is good, obviously it is a good thing and must not be discouraged. Speaking for myself, my religion is tolerance of all religions, creeds and philosophies.

Q. Not only tolerance, but I would go further to suggest that you aim at something like a synthesis of them all?

A. I may not be aiming at anything like a synthesis—that is, consciously—but it happens to be part of my make-up. I am somewhat like the old pagans who used to worship all the good and beautiful things of life and nature like gods and, just in case some deity may be left out and thereby feel offended, they created a special

image dedicated to the Unknown God too! As you know four great religions have influenced India and continue to influence us, while we are fairly well advanced in the field of technology and industrialization without any visible conflict between science and religion. It might still be the high privilege of India to bring about such a synthesis.

Q. That is well put, sir—but I am afraid I have led you away from the main issue of our talk. We were on the problem of *cultivation of leisure* as one of the problems Marx could not have foreseen, and you were saying that it required more than a purely scientific or Marxist approach to tackle this problem?

A. Yes, it is really the problem of creating *a fully integrated human being*—that is, with what might be called the spiritual and ethical counterpart of the purely material machinery of planning and development being brought into the making of man. Planning and development have now become an almost scientific and mathematical formula. Given a sound basis, they are bound to produce desired results in what is known as a welfare state with a self-developing economy. But is that enough really? I don't think so. Even in states with highly developed economies material progress by itself appears to have failed to provide people with a fully integrated life. There is a vacuum. There is maladjustment. Once you solve the problem of employment, for example, the next and bigger problem becomes one of the employment of leisure itself. For as soon as man gets the material comfort he desires, something deeper inside him hungers for—well, something deeper, something spiritual and ethical.

And then, more than ever before, you come up to the

problem whether the human being is sufficiently developed—mentally, morally and ethically—to use his leisure to advantage. This problem is always there, of course, but when he is working, when he is doing a job, involved in the struggle for survival, it may be a fierce struggle as in our country or a milder one in some advanced countries, it keeps him busy. But when his social and economic problems are solved, as they have been in the more developed countries, and automation relieves him of work too, then you come up in a big way against newer problems like juvenile delinquency, sexual outrages and crimes, alcoholism, destructiveness, anarchy and a hundred other viruses of spiritual sickness and moral collapse. The problem is that once a person's physical wants are satisfied—that is, he's got enough money, employment, a home and other essentials—then he ceases to have a sure function in life.

Q. He gets engulfed in a spiritual vacuum?

A. Yes, a spiritual vacuum, an emptiness of the spirit, the result of which is what you call the angry young men and women of our generation. It is not an unintelligent or delinquent generation. They are intelligent and basically sound, but there is something going wrong—maybe for want of the problem of economic struggle. Now coming back to the point, this aspect of the question could not be considered by Marx—that is, this type of development and the new problems and new conditions that would result.

Q. Still, sir, I maintain from personal knowledge of the Socialist countries that this particular problem is not so acute there as in the Capitalist democracies.

A. Broadly speaking, I imagine that such problems could be easier dealt with in a Socialist structure of

society. I don't say that the Socialist structure has all the answers for these new problems. I do not even know the answer, but I am sure it will gradually come. As problems rise, the answers come. Perhaps a new base of civilization will evolve adapted to the new age of science and technology and with it will develop new ideologies and a broader philosophy. But I should think it would be easier to deal with such a situation which calls for new forms of collective life in a Socialist structure than in any other. But the fact remains, whether one has to deal with the atom bomb or our social structure or any other problem, one aspect that is becoming more and more important is *the ethical aspect.* You see, if we have the atom bomb or nuclear energy or space rockets, the main problem is how to use them. All these new discoveries take you outside the normal economic domain. You can't argue about them in terms of Marxist economy or any other set pattern. There must be a new approach, a modern approach, a moral or ethical approach—I really do not know how to put it, but something of that nature. Otherwise there is no solution to this riddle. The whole thing degenerates into power rivalries which beset the development of our scientific and technological age. And this, in my opinion, brings us to the crux of the whole matter.

III

INDIAN ROAD TO SOCIALISM

Q. You rightly said, sir, that in conditions of our time we need a new approach and that is the crux of the whole matter. And that is why I want to get from you something like a definition of *the new Socialism* adapted to our times and providing the answer to its problems?

A. I am afraid I have no definition to give you. Definitions tend to become dogmas and slogans which prevent clear thinking in terms of a rapidly changing world. I am trying to search for the correct solutions, keeping before me certain objectives, *the broad objectives being human welfare and human development, providing opportunity to every human being to develop to the fullest measure possible.* This involves, in every group, more and more the co-operative element and less and less the competitive element. Although a measure of rivalry in friendly competition is a good stimulus, one must eliminate the cut-throat type of competition which is the essence of the capitalist approach.

Now when you ask for a definition of Socialism, what you mean presumably is a definition of an *economic policy* which would lead to the desired goal. This is a means to an end: *the end being, basically, as I have said, human betterment, everybody having the chance to concrete development.* Of course, everybody wants this, or claims so. The capitalists do not say that they do not want human development or social justice. They may have

doubts about mass development and the egalitarian side of progress. One cannot be too dogmatic about that too. You cannot make everybody equal for the simple reason that people are different, intellectually or physically different. There are clever people, there are stupid people, and there are all types of people. But what you can do is to equalize opportunities for all and apply the same standards for everyone.

This brings us to the economic policy to be pursued in order to reach the desired goal. Now such a policy, again, will necessarily develop from country to country in the context of the objective conditions prevalent in, or peculiar to, this or that country. The economic policy to be pursued in a highly developed country is bound to be different from that applicable to a country which is underdeveloped or a country which is emerging from a primitive social order. You simply cannot leap or skip over different stages, but you have to grow from one into another.

Q. Where would you place our country in this context?

A. Our country at the present moment is a very mixed country. Almost every century is represented in India: from the stone age in which some tribals live, you may say, to the middle of the twentieth century. We have atomic energy and we use also cow-dung. But broadly speaking, our country is on the verge of becoming relatively mature in the technological sense. Mind you, I am thinking in terms of technology right now and not in any other context. In some ways we may be less developed and in others more developed, but taking our technological civilization as the test, we have developed in recent years a sound base which, again, is growing—that is, *a growing base which will inevitably lead to more and more rapid industrialization.*

Q. *Inevitably,* sir?

A. Yes, I say inevitably because, once a growing base is established and the requisite forces released, they develop a certain momentum, a kind of propulsion of their own. Our approach, being Socialist, is primarily an economic approach which has made politics revolve around economic policies. There may be controversies, there may be troubles and setbacks, even governments may change, but all that cannot stop these inevitable forces advancing in a certain direction. Some may lessen their speed. Others may accelerate it. So, the country will go forward anyway. I have no doubt on that point. The only problem that disturbs me is whether we will go ahead fast enough to catch up with various other factors.

Q. Meaning, the rest of the world?—Or indigenous factors?

A. I mean factors like the growth of the population, on the one hand, and the growth of social problems, on the other. Now let us say that our population grows by two per cent every year. The necessary economic increase of two per cent to cover the population growth is not very much. But the important thing to remember is that this extra two per cent increase in economic terms is just sufficient to keep you where you were. And that is not good enough because there are crying evils, desperate wants and shortages among the people which have to be covered simultaneously with the growth of the population. These must be supplied, more so because the people who really struggle and suffer cannot call our attention to their tragedy by means of strikes or any sort of demonstration.

Incidentally, one hears a lot about strikes and *satyagraha* and all that today. But, really, if we examine the situation, those who strike belong to the more prosperous

class of the community, relatively speaking. By prosperous I do not mean rich or anything of that sort. What I want to convey is the fact that the really poor never strike. They haven't the means or the power to demonstrate. If the villages haven't got drinking water, what are they going to strike for? So all the time we have to keep thinking in terms of providing these elementary and primary wants, whether it is food or water or clothing or housing, to the people.

Now let us put anything you like—say two per cent more—by for these necessities besides the other two per cent on account of population increase. That brings you to four per cent. That, too, although helpful in creating better conditions, does not give you any money for investment for future progress. The main problem in the poor and under-developed countries is how surpluses could be created for investment and greater production. Therefore, you require more, and the more you can provide, the faster you can develop. Now you may put this to six per cent or seven per cent or eight per cent, but remember every one per cent means a tremendous deal of money. Why, every one per cent extra means roughly in rupees 1,000 crores! How are you to get this 1,000 crores? You either increase the production to fetch 1,000 crores or raise that money from taxation or loans or aid, as the case be.

In this context one might say *the absolute minimum for India today is five per cent extra.* We have somehow to cover this minimum and then only can the country be set on the road to definite progress.

Q. Would you say this five per cent is the minimum imperative for our 'take-off' from a static to a self-developing economy?

A. Not quite. Hardly so. Now you have mentioned the word 'take-off'. This has become a very popular word. It is being used in all senses. But its basic significance to a country like ours is that the industrial apparatus and the agricultural apparatus function side by side in a way to generate their own growth. *It means a self-feeding, self-propelling, self-developing economy.* That is the only way a country can grow. It does not mean isolation from the world, of course: we will continue to buy and sell, get help and even give help to others, but broadly speaking, a self-sufficient economy helps us to take off to our goal.

Q. The only snag appears to be that we are not developing fast enough, comparatively speaking, even in the context of our own anticipations?

A. True, true. You see, unfortunately, the law of life appears to be that unto those who have, more shall be given!

Q. If I might interrupt, sir—it does seem to be a contradiction of our Socialist pattern of Society that there should have been greater inequality and disparity between the rich and the poor in both urban and rural areas since 1947 than ever before. How do you justify this contradiction of our Socialism?

A. I do not justify it. Nor can I accept such a sweeping generalization. Inequality and disparity are there, plenty of them. Perhaps in some places, like cities where you live, you might see them growing; but on the whole there is widespread equalization. Some rich may have grown richer with rapid industrialization and all that. But conditions of the poor—that is, the working classes and the peasantry specially—have also improved.

When I mentioned the law of life giving more to those who already possess more, I was not thinking in terms of the rich and the poor in our country, but between the

richer countries and our country. Look at the problem this way. We in India have been working hard for the last ten years more or less. Yet the growth of our economy in the last ten years is slower than in the economies of other nations, which have reached a stage when they grow or develop themselves—thanks to their technological power. Even if they take things easy, they grow because the machines of economic development have developed their own propulsion. Russian economy, for example, has developed this power. It grows on its own steam-power because it 'took off' a long time ago. So does the British economy which took off in the nineteenth century. The German economy took off some seventy to eighty years ago, and so also the French and the American. The important thing is to reach that stage of a self-propelling economy, and when that is done, the rest becomes an automatic process, broadly speaking.

Now these disparities, whether between nations or within a nation, have to be lessened. As matters stand, these inequalities tend to increase with the result that social unrest and other conflicts and dangers increase in the under-developed world.

Q. To get over this increasing inequality and disparity between the under-developed and the over-developed countries, is it not possible to evolve some system of an international levy or income-tax to equalize or, at least level down, the widening economic chasm? Supposing, for example, the Bandung Powers got together within or outside the United Nations and arranged a joint pool of economic contribution to their development by the Western as well as the Soviet bloc of more advanced countries?

A. I am not convinced of the practicability of such

solutions. The Bandung Powers can meet, of course, and pass pious resolutions, but will that bring any result? As it happens today, some of the Bandung Powers are pulling in a dozen different directions.

In regard to the suggestion of an international levy or income-tax, there appears to be a large-scale realization in various countries, including more developed and richer countries, of the need, from their own point of view, of helping the development of the rest of the world. This feeling is strong everywhere, as I said, not from a humanitarian point of view necessarily, but a selfish one of what is being called enlightened self-interest. *But all the help in the wide world cannot make a country go ahead unless it helps itself.* It is not a question of money. Money comes in, of course, as capital, but there must be that urge to forge ahead. If that is not there, the country just falls behind. It simply goes to pieces; and mind you, this is not only a danger for the under-developed countries, but also the developed nations. Automation and other similar processes are making it so easy for people to create wealth without physical labour that the human being suffers from a sense of purposelessness and lack of function. When the human material in any country deteriorates, it is a matter of great danger.

Q. I was thinking of something like joint Soviet-American co-operation in countries like India by way of demonstration of the new spirit of economic co-existence. I feel this to be an important issue for the Summit Conferences. After all, sir, India and you particularly have played a very remarkable role in pulling both Russia and America, Krushchev and Eisenhower, out of their 'cold war' postures by providing them with a new and more positive philosophy of peaceful co-

existence. Since one good gesture deserves another, now that these powers see the necessity of coming together in the political field, would it not be a wonderful thing if they could make of India the laboratory of the next phase of Soviet-American economic co-existence on the basis of helping to reconstruct the under-developed world?

A. Well, leaving out what we have done for them and all that, both are co-operating with us in a big way. There is Bhilai and there are American projects, British projects, Canadian projects, German projects in our development plans. We have always recommended the pooling of economic aid in the United Nations which we could use together with other under-developed countries, and to some extent this is being done already. The important fact is that there is this realization of what you call *economic co-existence,* although at present it is developing more on a competitive than co-operative basis. But the latter is bound to follow.

Q. I should think that is a problem which claims priority on the agenda of the four gentlemen at the Summit and similar international conferences, particularly now that the principle of progressive disarmament, etc., are almost universally accepted, will save tremendous funds which could be utilized for the development of the under-developed world.

A. Let us hope so. It is generally understood now that it is as imperative for the richer countries to help raise the standards of the under-developed nations as it is for the latter to speed up this process. *The huge sums of money presently spent on armaments can suitably be utilized for the cause of advance in the world. The problem is one of social and economic balance on a global plane.* It is a problem of the right use of world production and its equitable distribution.

IV

ASSESSMENT OF A DECADE

Q. Since we are on the subject of economic development, may I know if you are satisfied with the progress made in India during the past decade or since your assumption of political power and executive authority?

A. I am satisfied with the industrial development. We have made mistakes, of course, and I would like to say that one of these and perhaps the most important of them all was the mistake we made of not launching our steel plants earlier in the First Plan.

Q. That was a very big blunder?

A. Well, you may call it a blunder or whatever you like. There were pressures and counter-pressures. One learns from them. But by and large, we have done remarkably well industrially. It is our agricultural progress that has been disappointing. Not that we have not made an effort, but partly nature has been against us—bad seasons, bad harvests, bad this and that—and partly maybe we didn't use our effort in a way that would produce best results. It has been a tremendous problem, you must remember. It is not only a question of Government decrees or laws: the issue is one of moving out of the traditional frame of society some 300 million of people, peasants wedded to orthodoxy and old customs.

Q. Each one individual a problem and 300 million problems in all?

A. Yes, it's been a terrific job, pulling them out of their traditional ways and inherited ideas and customs. Mind you, they can be pulled out and they will be. I do not agree with people who say that the peasant is too conservative for change, though he certainly is conservative and more conservative than, let us say, the factory worker. What he is doing—that is, his function—is inherited from past ages, and is now a new thing and therefore he sticks to the old forms. But he changes, once you make him see the benefits of changes not by any kind of theoretical argument, but by producing practical and physical results. If he sees that this way of doing things is better with his own eyes, then it sinks into his mind and heart. In this context, the Agricultural Exhibition here, the recent one here in Delhi, has done him very great good. Some 200,000 peasants came to see it and they have gone back to their farms and fields with new ideas and methods planted in their mind.

On the whole, and very regrettably, I do not think agriculture has kept pace with industrialization. If we had done a little better, if the seasons had been a little more favourable, it would have made a tremendous difference to our economy. I hope we shall do better now, anyway we are trying to do so.

Q. There is a very depressing contribution to this subject in '*The Defeat of Indian Agriculture*' by the French agro-expert, Prof. Dumont, which asserts that the obstacles in the way of Indian production are not *natural* but *human*, and concludes that India cannot achieve a real social revolution, abolishing castes and other inequalities, using non-Communist methods. Have you read the Dumont Report? If so, would you care to discuss it, sir?

A. Yes, the whole report is with me and only a portion of it has appeared in the *New Statesman.* Now I have studied this report together with other reports of equally noted agro-experts which disagree with it in part and *in toto*, and I happen to know a good deal myself on this subject. I can tell you that we have made mistakes and there are big obstacles and obstructions, natural as well as human—I have admitted all that already—*but* things are hardly so bad as Prof. Dumont makes them out to be. The trouble is that this problem of Indian agriculture has to be studied in the context of Indian conditions and the social fabric of our peasantry. Tradition and custom here condition and limit one's activity and slow down progress. We don't want to destroy their past or uproot them from their social fabric. We have to balance the forces of continuity with those of change. It all takes time.

Now I confess I am not satisfied with the rate of progress made. I told you so at the beginning. But so far as castes and other inequalities are concerned, we have made substantial progress. We have also abolished the big landlord system and we are distributing the land more equitably. We try to do all this democratically and peacefully by eliminating rather than aggravating the conflicts of caste and class. It is basically a problem of moving the masses fast enough and changing the accumulated inertia of centuries into action and, in our case, doing all this within the democratic framework. Nevertheless I am optimistic enough to claim that within that framework we can go far, very far, maybe slowly but steadily. And once we start moving, as we are doing through the village community projects and now co-operative farming and village panchayats—that is, giving more and more power to the co-operatives

and the panchayats, the pace will become quicker and the steps more confident.

I am, therefore, not prepared to give up this democratic framework simply because somebody does not see it work. It is said that progress, rapid progress, cannot be achieved by democratic and peaceful methods and that, therefore, authoritarian and violent methods should be adopted. I wholly disagree with this argument. Basically I am against anything that is authoritarian or violent. In India today, any reversal of democratic methods might lead to disruption and violence.

Q. There is *silent* violence and disruption going on all the time. Peasants die by the thousands as a result of hoarding and famine, disease and want of medicine. . . .

A. Yes, yes. I understand all that. Freedom and democracy have to be limited, of course, lest they injure others. Nobody denies that central fact. Hence the importance of giving power to the village co-operatives and panchayats. The conflict and the controversies are there, the violence is also there: only we are trying to resolve them peacefully and co-operatively. It takes time and patience and perseverance to do big things and here we are tackling a mighty problem affecting 300 million peasants.

Q. I understand the problem and the difficulties, sir—but going back to the issue of the progress made by India since independence in the context of our generally accepted Socialist approach, are you satisfied that a good beginning has been made and a sound base for advance properly laid?

A. Yes, I am satisfied that a good beginning has been made and a base for development laid. As you say, we have accepted the socialist and co-operative app-

roach. Politics in India have begun to revolve more or less round economic policies. We have adopted also the planned and scientific approach to economic development in preference to individual enterprise of the old *laissez faire* school. We are, therefore, proceeding scientifically and methodically without leaving things to chance or fate. Once all this is done, the room for what might be called ideological debate on matters like planning and development becomes less and less. The whole thing becomes a mathematical formula.

Q. A mathematical formula?

A. Almost, almost, it becomes a mathematical formula, with one or two uncertain and variable factors. The biggest of these factors, of course, is the human factor, the quality of the human being. By this quality I mean the intellectual potentialities of the human being and his capacity for hard work. Now I have no doubt about the quality of the human being in India—intellectual quality, technological quality. I mean, given the chance, he is a good and intelligent technical man. I have no doubt about that at all. But I have a little doubt about our capacity for hard work.

Q. The capacity is there, but it has not been stimulated, organized and mobilized.

A. Maybe, whatever the reason. . . .

Q. And that is your default, sir. A call from you and the whole country can be mobilized!

A. Maybe so, maybe so, but there are other factors also besides my own default. Climate and other conditions count. So all that is there, and other uncertain and variable factors too, which can be got over. Only it takes time. *But subject to these factors, planning and develop-*

ment have become a sort of mathmatical problem which may be worked out scientifically —that is, it is now laid down that if you do this, this is bound to follow and this is going to be the next step and that the third step. There will always be that '*if you do this*', but a great deal depends on one's capacity to do that, of course, intellectually and otherwise.

After all, a nation and a people have a relatively limited quantity of energy. You can push it up, rightly or by some other means, but you can exhaust your reservoir of energy. Now energy is an extraordinary thing. By using it, you increase it. By exercising yourself, you increase your physical capacity. That is true. But there is a certain nervous energy of a nation which grows when you grow and wastes when you waste. Now suppose we exhaust that energy fighting over the redistribution of States and similar diversions. You spend something which you could have spent on something more positive and constructive. Now this again is an uncertain factor which obstructs planning and development.

Q. Coming from Bombay, where every other activity has been held up by all this business of linguistic distribution and redistribution, I can well appreciate your argument, sir.

A. These factors come in the way. They are unavoidable. But broadly speaking, planning for industrial development is generally accepted as a matter of mathematical formula. It is extraordinary how both Soviet and American experts agree on this. If a Russian planner comes here, studies our projects and advises us, it is really extraordinary how his conclusions are in agreement with those of—say, an American expert. It has been quite astonishing for me to come across this type of

agreement from planners belonging to two different and contradictory political and economic systems. You see, they happen to be men of science, planners, experts, who approach our problems from purely a scientific point of view. Once they do so, they forget about ideologies and all that, and they agree, broadly, that given certain pre-conditions of development, industrialization and all that, certain exact conclusions follow almost as a matter of course. Of course, I am not talking of non-scientific people, like the American businessman, for example, who will talk about private enterprise and all that, or the Soviet politicians who will press Communist or Marxist solutions. They always do so. But the moment the scientist or technologist comes on the scene, be he Russian or American, the conclusions are the same for the simple reason that planning and development today are almost a matter of mathematics.

Of course, always behind the mathematics or planning there are social problems and other problems. Taking agriculture, one gets into controversies about co-operatives and what kind of co-operatives, et cetera. Those problems are there, more in agriculture than in industry. Then there are other problems like population.

The problem of population was never before the Americans or the Russians. The Soviet Union is eight times as big as India with half our population. So the difference of ratio between land and population is 16 to 1 as compared to India. So all these factors either add to our difficulty or lessen them.

In effect, therefore, when we talk about Socialism, the first approach is rather a non-scientific approach. It is a certain human approach, of humanity growing and developing. When you talk of the scientific part of

Socialism, you come to something which is not very much open to argument. Experience has shown that industrialization, for example, has become a scientific thing, subject always to the capacity of the people to work hard and forge ahead.

Q. You appear to make a distinction between the industrial and the agricultural sectors. Does not the same formula—mathematical formula, as you call it—apply to industrialized farming in the same degree as industry? To take an example, we have the big mechanized multi-purpose farm at Suratgarh which has added considerably to agricultural production within its limited field. Now supposing we are going in for a hundred Suratgarhs, would not that multiply the Suratgarh production a hundred times and help considerably to wipe out our agricultural deficit?

A. Yes and no. A hundred Suratgarhs would naturally multiply the production of one Suratgarh a hundred times, but what you forget is the vast human element involved in any consideration of rural India. We don't lack people. They constitute our biggest machine or lever or whatever you like to call it. As Gandhiji used to stress to us all the time: you talk about the machine, well I am not against the machine, he would say, but we happen to have thirty crores of machines in India. Why should we not use them? They are the human beings who work. Peasants with tremendous capacity for work. Now you may get a better machine per man or hundred men or even a thousand men, but you are wasting thirty crores, or twenty crores or ten crores of machines and they are not merely machines, they are human beings who have to be fed and looked after. So there is no device to solve the main problem of the human being

happening to be creative and productive. So coming to the point, if we put up Suratgarhs all over the place, what is one to do with our labour potential?

Q. The farms may not be completely mechanized. They could be State farms large enough to absorb our excess labour, particularly landless labour. The human machines, as you call them, are there already, but we have not been able to mobilize them and absorb them.

A. But there is excess labour on the land already.

Q. Maybe so. But the conditions are absolutely horrible. You may not agree with some of Dumont's conclusions, but in this particular instance they are borne out by my own press-team which visited the whole country and studied this problem. There are landless workers on farms who are paid 4 or 5 rupees per month. Now, sir, couldn't these be mobilized on a number of larger State farms?

A. They can be mobilized, of course; but don't you see that the condition today is that on any farm in India—I mean, any peasant farm—there are probably more people working than the land requires. It is this excess population on the land that has been reducing India to poverty during the last 150 years or more. It is the problem of the agricultural population growing at the rate of manufacturing industry. That is our problem. It is the reverse process which happened in Europe. Countries like Czechoslovakia and Hungary after the revolution wanted to industrialize rapidly and they went about this business so rapidly that agriculture went to pieces. They didn't have the manpower to attend to the agricultural sector. Now they are trying to balance the two sectors. But here, you see, we have too many people. Our problem is a large and growing population

—that is, on the field and in the farm. We have to draw the surplus away from agriculture to industry.

Now the mechanization of agriculture can be divided into two parts. One using better tools, better ploughs, better implements which reduce labour and produce more. But the moment you go in for very big machines, you displace human labour. And when human labour has nothing to do, it creates social problems without increasing production. I mean, better tools do, but not the very big machines. The big machine is an essential thing in the vast lands of the Soviet Union and the United States which are under-populated. Here in our land the problem becomes different. The big machines will come, of course. You mentioned Suratgarh. We would like to have a few more Suratgarhs, and we have plans to organize them soon. Conditions are suitable for the Suratgarh type of mechanized farming in some places, like Rajasthan, which are not over-populated. But the essential thing is that water should get there. The present supply of water from Bhakra and other places will probably increase in the next few years sufficiently to enable us to complete these big farms. But we look upon these farms, really, partly by way of experimental technique, and partly as reserves of food which we can supply to others in case of need. But broadly, our agricultural policy is one of small farmers co-operatively engaged. As for production, one of the highest productions in the world today is in Japan, where there are small farms and workers. We intend to follow that model as far as possible, of course not excluding the Suratgarh type of mechanized process.

Q. So our basic approach to farming is. . . .

A. Broadly of peasant proprietors co-operating with

other farmers in service co-operatives. We, of course, approve of the ideal of joint cultivation, but that depends on so many conditions like the willingness of the people, without any compulsory or rigid approach to the problem.

V

WHITHER INDIA?

Q. Mr Prime Minister, we have now covered almost the entire field of agriculture and industry in the context of our successes and failures during more than a decade of Independence. Could I now ask you to give me a resume of the *ends* and the *means* of our approach? First of all, sir, what are our objectives or the overall results we are aiming at?

A. Well, the main objective is to increase production and thereby find progressively fuller employment for our people. We want to become an industrialized nation with greater production, greater income, more national and per capita income and independent and self-developing economy. The overall result we desire, as you call it, is to break through the barrier of poverty and bring about better life, more happiness and prosperity for the millions of our people and, at the same time, try to organize a more egalitarian basis for society in India. Basically we have adopted a Socialist ideal built upon a planned co-operative economy, not Socialist in any rigid or dogmatic meaning of the word, but in a sense that is flexible and pragmatic. Also basic to our approach is what might be described as providing the human being, the individual as well as community, with the quality and character of a fully integrated person.

Q. That is a very good portrait of the national objective,

Mr Nehru. But now coming to yourself, is the description of a Socialist at all embarrassing to you?

A. Certainly not. I have believed in Socialism for the past fifty years and, until somebody convinces me to the contrary, I shall continue to believe in and work for Socialism. I am not at all embarrassed about being a Socialist or our objectives being Socialist. That should be the ideal of every sensible nation or society or individual. Modern thinking all over the world is increasingly becoming Socialist and only people who have lost touch completely with contemporary trends can think otherwise. At the same time, I refuse to accept any particular dogma of Socialism as indeed any particular dogma of religion or metaphysics is foreign to my nature. That is why I refuse to be rigid about the form or pattern that Socialism, our approach to Socialism or anybody else's, takes. The important thing is that every individual should be given equal opportunity in a more or less egalitarian society with no great inequalities or disparities, at any rate none so far as opportunity is concerned. Both the extravagance of the rich or the poverty of the poor are vulgar and degrading and I want to eliminate them.

Q. Excellent, sir. But what is our approach to the *means* now that you have more or less defined the *ends*? Would you call it a legislative revolution?

A. We have chosen parliamentary democracy and we have done so because it produces the best results in the long run. It is the result that counts in the end, though we consider it necessary that the means should be good.

Q. Would it then be correct to say that our objective is to achieve a secular, socialist, co-operative society by planning through a legislative revolution, using parlia-

mentary democracy as a suitable means to the achievement of this end?

A. That is broadly correct.

Q. Now, sir, we have got over this business of ends and means and few will question the validity of your approach—that is, the national approach, to both. But doubts exist in regard to the *apparatus* or *machinery* through which you propose to implement one of the greatest ideological experiments of our time. I would like to know what organization you propose to leave behind to ensure the application of this enlightened philosophy?

A. That is a very difficult question for me to answer. The apparatus or organization, as you call it, is there in the Congress Party, in the people or the country itself. The whole history of the Congress movement shows that its mainstream has always moved towards more and more progressive and democratic trends. There have been attempts to change this direction, even to reverse it, but every time it is the progressive forces that have won the battle against the reactionary or conservative elements. If on the other hand, you are suggesting that I organize something like a group, then I am against any such proposition. Such groups tend to become rather sectarian in outlook and with the tendency in India today—well, it is an old tendency amongst us of sectorizing in religion, politics or everything—the emergence of any such group immediately creates a counter-group and so on and so forth. You know, first comes Kabir the Reformer and after Kabir comes Kabir Panth! I mean the whole thing becomes a matter of conflicts and counter-conflicts and serves only to dissipate the nation's vitality.

Q. I think you have misunderstood my question, sir. What I want to stress is that the biggest default of your career appears to be the fact that you have never thought it necessary to build anything like a political party wedded to your ideals or creed, the ideological cadres of what we call the Nehru approach or the Indian way. In so far as you have entrusted the execution and continuity of your great experiment to people who do not share your faith, have you not condemned your philosophy to sterility and thereby been irresponsible to a historical imperative?

A. It is quite possible that is a failing of mine. After all, one has to function according to one's own capacity. But I have always hesitated to build up any such group or faction. That does not mean that I don't want a political party which is wedded to my ideals. I should like a political party to be infused by my ideals and, by and large, I should think the Congress is such a political party. There might be differences here and there, as there are bound to be in any democratically-organized party. But on the whole I should think that Congress is infused not with anything like a Nehru ideal or any other individual approach, but what is basically and fundamentally the Indian approach, the modern approach, the scientific approach, that is, the Socialistic approach—the only possible approach in the modern world. It can't help being so infused by what is the national ideology. After all, it is part of it. How can it go away from it?

Q. Granted all that and more, sir. But where are the ideological cadres of the Nehru doctrine? Why is the youth of the nation not harnessed to the national ideology? How is it that students and middle-classes, not

to mention the peasantry, are being weaned away from Mr Nehru and his Congress by groups who exploit their frustrations like the Swatantra Party? Something is wanting somewhere!

A. Let us forget about the Nehru doctrine and call it the national ideology. It is there, standing upon a solid base, not merely of this or that party, but the broad mass of the people and their hopes and desires, as I see it. Of course, certain elements are trying to shake or destroy that base. You mentioned the Swatantra Party. Now the Swatantra Party has put forward a philosophy, if you can call it such, which is directly opposite to our approach.

Q. The philosophy of counter-revolution?

A. You may call it counter-revolution. And as you see, as usual, it covers both our domestic and foreign policy. It is, if I may say so, *a complete throw-back to the past.* They may take advantage of various problems, difficulties and frustrations and try to shake the base of the nation. It is a kind of mentality, out of which a fascist state can arise. I dislike to use the word, but the elements are there in a huge country like India which would tend that way. On the one hand they try to cloud positive economic policies or political issues with talk about *dharma, dharma* and all that, and on the other, they shout *corruption, corruption* and *corruption!* Why? Because it requires no argument to sponsor *dharma. Dharma* is good so long as it does not get into conflict with a rational or scientific outlook—but don't you see that is exactly what these Swatantra gentlemen want to do! Then again, take corruption. It requires no argument to attack corruption for the simple reason that everybody agrees that there should be no corruption and we should stop it. So what

the Swatantra Party wants to do is to seek amends for the poverty of their political outlook or economic approach in wolf-cries about corruption and all that.

After all, the average audience in India is an intelligent, sensible, rational audience. You go to them and they want you to talk politics, economics, something worthwhile. It seems that people who have no such approach or philosophy find themselves isolated. They might appeal to some big peasants, they might exploit the frustrations, as you call them, of the students and middle-classes, but what else can they do? So to cover up their own weaknesses they shout corruption! I must say this is a very astonishing approach for people who call themselves a party but have no ideology as such. If there is corruption, pursue it by all means, punish it, stop it, but when people indulge in vague and negative cries of corruption, corruption, corruption, what can you get hold of or punish or stop?

Q. Swatantra propaganda apart, I think it is necessary to bring some crying instances of curruption among high people to book. Make an example of just a couple of such cases. Show the people that you mean business and they will be satisfied. Public opinion demands exemplary punishment and exposure of corruption.

A. When examples come to us, we deal with them. Certainly let there be exemplary punishment when concrete cases come up. If you give us a case, we propose to take it up; and I expect people to fight for justice and see it is done. I can understand all that. But merely shouting from the house-tops that everybody is corrupt creates an atmosphere of corruption. People feel they live in a climate of corruption and they get corrupted themselves. The man in the street says to him-

self: *'well, if everybody seems corrupt, why shouldn't I be corrupt?'* That is the climate sought to be created which must be discouraged.

And also there is this danger that the man who shouts the loudest against corruption is often the corrupt man. Just like a thief, he shouts *'Ho, Ho! Thief, Thief!'* for protection. So it is very difficult to say who is good and bad when everybody is shouting this slogan of corruption. It is an unhealthy sign in India and indicates only the immaturity of our political life.

Q. It is perhaps a weakness of democracy, sir—both this incidence of corruption and the loose talk about it.

A. The weaknesses of democracy are the weaknesses of human nature. Humanity with all that is good, bad or indifferent about it, finds its reflection in democracy. You might call it a weakness, but really in the long run it gives it immense strength, permanent and durable strength. *It is the only insurance of the continuity of our national policies against reaction.* Therefore, it is not right nor safe to change the basis of our stand on democracy simply because we are going through a crisis or something or other. The right thing to do is to gear up the democratic institutions and streamline them to meet any new challenge. We are attending to this problem in earnest.

Q. To return to the Swatantra challenge to the Congress, sir, would you agree with the view that the emergence of such a party of Reaction would help to unconfuse and polarize the Leftist and Rightist forces in the country and force the Congress to move more in the direction of Socialism?

A. Well, I don't like to think in terms of expressions like Right and Left. In any case, I don't think this new

grouping as such can force any process of the type you have in mind. The movement towards Socialism is inherent in Congress itself. There have always been two forces or movements within the Congress. One is the basic current moving the Party inextricably towards Socialism. That is the fundamental force. The other is formed of superficial currents—sometimes going forward and at others retreating backwards. These are not of any consequence. It is the basic current that provides the party with its dynamic, moving both the other forces —the fundamental as well as the superficial ones—forward in the progressive direction. That is what has been happening since 1947. There might have been setbacks. The progress might have slowed down here and there, now and then, but on the whole it is the basic socialistic current that has carried the Party forward.

Q. Thank you for a very encouraging guarantee of the survival of Nehruism after Nehru, sir—still, if you will please forgive me for persisting in my line of argument, I want to know whether it is not possible for you to devote an hour or so a day to bring up the ideological cadres of your philosophy, young Congressmen who understand you? They complain that you have no time for them!

A. What is it that they actually mean by that?

Q. That you don't cultivate them, encourage them, draw the best out of them as Ghandhiji used to.

A. Yes, Gandhiji had a remarkable capacity for drawing the best out of people. Maybe, I haven't. One can't control what people think. That is contrary to my principles. My approach has always been the mass approach or the public meeting approach or the small group approach. I think it is more effective to change

the thinking of the masses and to produce the correct mass reaction to any event; and this approach has, I think, been instrumental in making the people at large social-minded. I am on this job most of the time. There is hardly a morning when I am not talking to a few hundred people at my house.

Q. Particularly peasants, I believe, sir?

A. There were farmers because of the Agriculture Exhibition which is now over. But they all come—farmers, workers, students, plenty of students. They come daily. I must have had 300 or 400 people in my house this morning. Some come from Rohtak in the Punjab, some from Mysore, some from the Satara district of Maharashtra and there was a large crowd of Scheduled Castes people. They come and I give them as much time as possible.

Q. Do you try to teach them or convert them?

A. I don't teach them or convert them. I talk to them about their own problems as simply as I can. They don't come to me for political or economic lectures, but if I can help them to find modern, scientific solutions to their difficulties, I have contributed something and maybe made them think differently in a broader national and even socio-economic context. Now if I meet a group of farmers, we talk about agriculture, how to better themselves, how to use better methods, the advantages of service co-operatives and co-operative farming, and so on and so forth. I try to get them to see the necessity of our approaches and theories from the point of view of their vocations and problems. All this educates people and makes them think and act in a broadly progressive direction.

Q. An excellent strategy, Mr Nehru. If I understand you

right, you prefer to organize for our social, economic and political philosophy a broad national mass base rather than building groups or cadres. But do you think the Indian people *en masse* are mature, conscious and strong enough to resist any attempt at a counter-revolution? As you have yourself stated, there are fascist elements in the country who want to put the engines of progress in the reverse gear?

A. There are such elements—fascist elements, counter-revolutionary elements, all types of tendencies. They can't be helped in a huge country like ours. Recently in Bihar there was a big fair and somebody started a rumour that cows had been slaughtered by Muslims. This was absolutely untrue, but it roused communal passions and there were ugly incidents. So this sort of thing happens, though by and large our people are loyal to our national stand on secularism. Consequently, it is difficult to say whether our people or any people are strong or mature enough to resist fascist or communal trends and pressures.

At the same time, I will say that Indians as a whole are gentler people than any other people in the world. They are peaceful by nature and will try to avoid violence not only in relation to human beings but animals also.

Q. But the same person who will not kill a mosquito will think nothing of throwing his accountant down from the fifth floor for reporting his Income-Tax rackets to the Authorities! I know of such cases. . . .

A. That is quite true and I was coming to this paradox. I was simply astounded and terribly shocked by what I saw after partition and independence: the killing and the cruelty and the bestiality of it all in Delhi, the

Punjab and other places—to think that these are the very same people who are normally so gentle and good!

Q. This seems to be the paradox of our national character.

A. Not our national character only. It happens to be a widespread characteristic. During the war and after, I was deeply shocked by the atrocities the Japanese were reported to have committed. Then when I went to Japan two or three years ago—well, I had all the background, but I was astonished to find what a fine people they were. They are intensely polite, cultured, hospitable, hard working and artistic. Now the same people have these two aspects, the good and the bad; I suppose one has to overcome the other, and that is how humanity progresses.

So it is difficult really to say whether India or any other nation is proof or can be proof against evil forces, reactionary forces, fascist forces and all that. And here is perhaps where one has to pay due attention to the moral character and spiritual quality of a people simultaneously with their material advancement. That is the importance of great men like Buddha or Gandhi to mankind. They lift them up, give them a sense of purpose and destiny and provide them with the spiritual discipline without which the world could become an uncontrollable jungle of human passions. After all, civilization is among many other things the quality of its strength and discipline.

Q. Is it your view, sir, that armed with both material progress and moral strength, the Indian people can stand up to any attempt to reverse the engine while the socio-economic basis of the revolution is still weak and incomplete?

A. Once the people are given a proper democratic base or moorings, it should be difficult for the mass of the people to be diverted or reversed. The pace of progress could be slowed down or accelerated, of course, but I don't think it would be possible to take a whole people backwards. I cannot think that possible at all. The revolution, as you call it, may be weak and incomplete, but our plans, the idea of planning itself, have set in motion certain forces which cannot be stopped or reversed. At the moment the best insurance against any throw-back is the 'hope level' of our people. It might be possible to frustrate this by making the people lose hope and faith. But once the Second and the Third Plans go into action, we shall be breaking through the static barrier of inertia, poverty and under-development and taking off—that is, our economy will begin to work on its own steam power. With this development backed by the will of the people, the effectiveness of which is secured through parliamentary democracy, it should not be difficult to maintain the continuity of our experiment.

Q. Thank you for a very illuminating argument which puts the entire controversy around the Succession in the proper context and correct perspective. If you will allow me to put it in my own way, this is how the mind of Mr Nehru works sub-consciously if not consciously: his failure or refusal to build anything like an ideologically homogeneous party, group or even cadres is made up for by his almost epic endeavour to transform the whole nation into a land of Nehrus which would act, ultimately, as a powerful national deterrent against any reactionary leader or group reversing the basic engine of our policy. Now would you agree to this as India's

democratic alternative to—say, the Chinese system of communes and compulsion?

A. We don't think in terms of alternatives to Chinese or any other institutions. We try to develop our approach according to our own traditions and necessities. This idea of building a mass basis for policies and creating powerful popular pressures for their continuity is as much a Gandhian approach or strategy as it is—well, Marxist or Communist or anybody else's. Today no nation, be it democratic or Communist, can function without the organized support of the broad mass of its people, though of course there are different ways and means of mobilizing popular co-operation. In our country, Gandhiji evolved a brilliant and effective technique of moving the masses, changing their inertia into action and carrying them forward in the right direction. I think we have discussed this earlier. We have inherited this technique from Gandhiji. This type of mass consciousness can certainly act as a deterrent against anybody who desires to throw the nation back into the past.

Q. This provides a faint portrait of India after Nehru, sir. I hope to return to this subject at the end of these talks.

VI

DEMOCRATIC PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT

Q. Mr Nehru, you mentioned the fact that today development by planning such as we have adopted has become a sort of a mathematical formula, barring certain variable factors. Now I suppose the most important of these variable factors is the human factor—that is, *the necessity of mobilizing the masses to support and underwrite the Plan.* This again makes imperative the preconditions of certain institutional and other changes to suit the changing times, much more so in the agricultural than the industrial sector, changes like a new political leadership, maybe in the case of India, a new political alignment; next, a new administrative machinery based on essentials like service co-ops.; and finally, the mobilization of at least a million cadres for a vast country like India to get the masses to co-operate in the development projects.

A. Obviously, the human factor is the basic and most important factor in any work to be done. That human factor involves certain characteristics of the people, certain amount of training, certain ability to do things, intellectually and otherwise, as well as certain urges to do them. The need differs from country to country. I suppose this is not a matter of economics. Once you plan to put up a steel plant and build it, after that you have to have people around the steel plant and all that.

The country may be rather backward in its intellectual make-up.

So any answer to that question depends on the state of the country, the climate and so many other features. Secondly, it depends upon the objective aimed at. That's important. If you are considering this matter of planning, from the point of view of just an economic plan of putting up industrial plants and better agriculture, better tools, better and more modern methods of doing things—these are the things which I said can be mapped out, subject always again to the human factor.

Q. Suppose we restrict the discussion to India. . . .

A. Dealing with India, the basic ability is there in abundance, the intellectual ability and the manual ability—I mean, skilled labour. Given the chance, Indian workers are very good at highly skilled or precision work. Also in India, we have, by and large, many of the raw materials required. So, in that sense, we have certain necessary preconditions for industrial progress. Probably India would have gone ahead faster if in the past century or more it had not been—well, almost prevented from doing that!

Q. Even today we are not going ahead fast enough because we continue to function under the old administrative machinery. The issue, therefore, is whether we are giving the necessary thought to the institutional changes required by the new time and approaches?

A. We are, we certainly are. But all that you referred to as institutional changes, are not at all *institutional* changes really. You talk about leadership and new political alignments—that is not an institutional change at all. There are only two basic ways for approaching this question, though there may be, of course, halfway

stages in between. One is what might be called *the authoritarian way*—that is, the government or a group of persons having power in the country and representing the government, imposing their wishes on the people generally, making them work hard and do the things they want. Naturally, even then, the imposition is accompanied by widespread propaganda and persuasion. It is not merely done by means of a decree, but an attempt to change people's minds and so they may accept that because no amount of imposition can be done without some impact on the people's minds. But broadly, this may be called the authoritarian way of making the people work much harder than they normally would and working in ways which are not agreeable to them, but under pressure they do it.

The other way may be called *the democratic way*, which means arousing by appeal, by reason, by argument and persuasion, by certain propaganda and all that, by inducing people to do things because, in the ultimate analysis, they realize that it is for their own benefit, if not today or the day after, in the future. The second way starts at the top, certainly, but really it functions at the bottom. The first way starts more at the top, though it also affects the bottom scale.

Now, if so far as building of plants is concerned, it is a relatively simple matter—that is, the planning is simple. If you have the resources, you go ahead with it. But when you come to agriculture, which is basic in any country, more so in India than any other place, you cannot go very far by impositions from above. In a democratic pattern, you have to get them to realize their function and become self-reliant and anxious to do something. That is why I attach a very considerable importance to the present institutional changes we are

bringing about: Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis, Samiti Panchayats, Jillah Parishads and the rest, which mean decentralizing and handing over all development activities to those *panchayats*, the village organizations, with advice naturally, but leaving the responsibility to them.

This is a basic institutional change and I think that is more important than any changes we might bring about at the top. Top changes may be necessary from the agricultural point of view; from the industrial viewpoint that may not be so. And my own information is that this decentralization has already brought rather remarkable changes where it has been applied, like in Rajasthan. Rajasthan, mind you, if I may say so, is a relatively backward state of India. It is waking up, and if you meet these people, these panchas and others, they are normal people and not extraordinary, but the way they talk to you is quite different. There is certain confidence, there is no inhibition in talking to a big official or a minister or anybody for that matter, and a sense of feeling that they have got to do the job, a sense of function and faith in it. It was most encouraging for me to see this reaction. And we are going to go ahead with this all over India. I think that is going to bring about a new atmosphere in the agricultural field. That, of course, includes the building of new cadres in village industries, small industries, etc.

You have a lot to say about cadres and our failures to create them. I am not for a moment thinking about a party like the Congress or any other party sending people to push them on or organize them. *But the real cadres are being built at the village level all the time.* They are not party cadres in that sense: they are village level workers, agriculturists, peasants—that type, whom we

give proper training. We first gave the village level worker six months training, then we gave him a year, then we gave him a year and half, and now we give him two years' training—getting more and more of them trained, and helping them to do, I think, better work than they used to do. Inevitably, we have to face this difficulty of a vast area to be covered. We have to spread them out rather thinly as more people come. We need thousands of them, and they will come. But the main point is that we are making these village organizations responsible for practically all the development work, except some very big scheme which needs outside assistance. We give them competent people to help and to advise, competent engineers, animal husbandrymen, health men, education men, all at the block level. That type of institutional change coming about is basic.

Other institutional changes at the top are also coming about, though rather slowly, because there is always a certain risk in bringing about a major institutional change of stopping the wheels working for the time being till they settle down to normalcy again. The officers we have, all told, are not so passive or immune to change. It may be that we could have tackled this job better and faster, but one has to function, inevitably, within certain limitations.

Q. That is very true, sir. One can assume that the last twelve years of our history have been considerably influenced by the pattern of the transfer of power. If we compare the Indian and the Chinese revolution in this context, the main difference appears to have been that the Chinese broke completely with the past, while we sort of took over the past lock, stock and barrel by way of an inheritance. Now apparently the peaceful nature of

the transfer of power in India has limited the capacity of the successor government to recast the governmental structure. Is it your experience that you started with too many commitments to the past and had to accept too many obstructions, particularly in the administrative machinery?

A. There are both sides to it—the good and the bad. I think the Services, by and large, are very good. I am not talking about all the lower grades because they have been swelled in the last few years by large numbers of new recruits coming in who require a good deal of training. But broadly speaking, the Services are good and competent. What is really wrong is not the human material, but the procedures inherited by us from the past—that is, a certain way of doing things. Now you and I necessarily have a different outlook, a modern outlook, a better and broader outlook, I think. But many of the older men have worked well and they are changing with the times. The real difficulty is presented by these *extraordinarily complicated procedures*. These did not come in the way of a simple system of government as the British had because they were not interested in too much social or economic work. These do come in our way today and we are constantly engaged with the necessity of simplifying them. I think we have succeeded and we will succeed in simplifying these procedures. It's got to be a continuous process—not like bang and something dramatic happening!

The pattern of the transfer of power has certainly influenced these years for good and bad alike. We had to take both along with us, but I feel on the whole it was better that it happened so. Gandhiji, of course, conceived and brought about this revolution of ours in

terms of continuity and not in terms of a break with the past. This again was unique and significant because most revolutions are conceived in terms of break and violence. The peaceful transfer of power has been a great stabilizing factor and naturally it has influenced subsequent history.

VII

PHILOSOPHY OF SYNTHESIS

Q. All that you have said about our heritage and development suggests an overall philosophy of *synthesis* as against the doctrine of *antithesis*. Am I correct, sir?

A. Yes, synthesis. Gandhiji always sought to build bridges and forge links between conflicting elements.

Q. Synthesis is all right as a practical philosophy, but it becomes somewhat odd in its application to fundamental contradictions of the class nature. For example, Gandhiji sought to bridge the class difference between the *Haves* and the *Have-nots* with the astounding theory of trusteeship and trust. Why, he almost handed over the trusting lamb to the trusteeship of the tiger! The question is: have you come round to accept the Gandhian solution of *class synthesis* in preference to Marxist approach of *class struggle*?

A. Class struggle is there always. One cannot deny it or put it aside. But the solution need no longer be one of violence or struggle or hatred: and that's where Gandhiji's peaceful approach, friendly and constructive approach, comes in. As I have already explained to you, Marx was conditioned by his times where there was no democracy or franchise, no working class movement and—well, simply no means of resolving inequalities and equalizing society other than struggle, don't you see? *So while not denying or repudiating class contradictions, we want to deal with the problem in a peaceful and co-operative way*

by lessening rather than increasing these conflicts and trying to win over people instead of threatening to fight them or destroy them. Gandhiji perhaps wasn't conscious of this class struggle aspect in the way you or I are. But his solutions are more applicable to our time and, particularly, our land. Our history and traditions show this way—that is, the advantage of the peaceful, friendly and co-operative solutions.

There is one more factor which comes into this picture of class struggles and wars and all that. It is the atom bomb and, of course, its positive aspect in nuclear energy. Now while nuclear energy holds out tremendous hopes for human advancement, the atom bomb threatens to blow up civilization with one or two or three bangs—thus this emergence of such a destructive weapon makes conflict or war, be it in the form of class struggle or capitalist-socialist conflict, simply so disastrous that it is impossible to think of solutions in terms of violence at all. Hence, from any point of view, the concept of class struggles or wars has been out-dated as too dangerous at a time when not only nations but groups or even individuals can be put in possession of weapons of enormous destructive potentiality. So we have to appreciate and follow the Gandhian solution of synthesis, co-operation, co-existence and progressive equalization.

Q. I believe, Mr Nehru, there you have stated the genesis of the doctrine of *Panch Sheel*, or the Five Foundations of Peaceful Co-existence, whereby you have sought to resolve international conflicts and reorganize world relations in the spirit of Gandhism. Now what I would like to know from you is, *how you came to be such a faithful convert to the Gandhian outlook?* There appears to have

been some change in your attitude from one of a critical follower to that of a passionate convert in the Forties. Since you have mentioned the atom bomb, is it possible that the emergence of this appalling weapon of destruction brought about a radical change in your pre-1940 thinking? Or was it perhaps the crucifixion of Gandhiji that transformed you into his most loyal disciple?

A. I don't know. It is difficult to analyse oneself. The atom bomb, of course, affected my mental outlook a great deal, but not in the particular aspect you mentioned. The transformation has been a gradual one. This atom bomb necessarily represents a very powerful influence not only in its painful consequences but by way of the advent of a new power, enormous energy which could be used or misused, and which does affect one's thinking and outlook. It changes anyone's thinking about the future and what can happen in the future.

Take this issue of class struggle we were discussing. Now there are classes, and obviously those classes are in conflict. Their interests are in conflict. Therefore, a struggle comes about. That cannot be denied. The point is, whether in order to put an end to class struggle, you should intensify it and resolve it, or liquidate it, through conflict and violence. Well, that comes in the way, first of all, of my basic approach that as far as possible conflict should be resolved and violence avoided. This is not a *denial* of class struggle, but the *removal* of class struggle through *other* means than conflict and violence. And that has always been part of our approach: not due to the atom bomb or Gandhiji's murder, but something basic and fundamental.

I think that to some extent we have succeeded in

using this solution effectively, whether it be in the cases of princes or landlords. I don't imagine we have converted all the princes, but they are bound down to certain conditions and pressures which are rising all the time, pressures from the people, pressures from the Government, so that it becomes relatively easy to come to terms with them. In that sense, we have abolished Zamindari, the big landlord system. We gave them compensation, but that was no compensation for the standards they had been used to. They did not like it and there was conflict, but it was resolved without anything like a big struggle.

Now there is conflict between the Private Sector and the growing Public Sector, but I'm sure that too will be resolved peacefully and co-operatively.

So it can all be done in the Gandhian way. Sometimes conflict may come. That is a different matter. But that is not a big-scale conflict, but rather a local conflict. So while recognizing the fact that there is a class, a privileged class, a class dominating other classes, like the working people and the peasantry and the middle-classes, and having a genuine desire to put an end to all such inequalities and disparities, I do not think the right way to do it is by accentuating the differences and solving them by struggle. Even if apparently we succeed in doing so, you leave a bad train behind. It really comes back to the *means* and *ends* business.

Q. So this conversion of yours to the Gandhian solution was there before the atom bomb destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki and changed the course of History?

A. My outlook has always been against conflict, particularly conflict with violence. But I do think of the atom bomb—or rather atomic energy, which represents such

vast power coming to the world, has changed the whole context of life—the prospect of future life and so all our theories of the past, whether economic or any other, have to be reviewed in this new context. First of all, of course, one has to think in the context of the possibility of war which can now put an end to almost everything.

Q. Hence comes your insistence on Co-existence?

A. Well, Co-existence was there all the time?

Q. Even before the Forties.

A. Naturally, it was there all the time and, in fact, it dates back to the days of Ashoka and Buddha. Gandhiji made it a part of the ends and means business. *It is a part, if I may say so, of the basic process of Indian thought the basis of which is to live and let live.* I don't say Indians are angels, but anyhow Indian thought is good. So this philosophy of Co-existence flows from our history, though it receives powerful support from present day developments when war might mean the total destruction of humankind.

VIII

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CO-EXISTENCE

Q. I think this brings us to the most glorious chapter of Indian history since Independence—that is, our Foreign Policy based upon Non-alignment and Peaceful Co-existence. Our brilliant record of uncompromising devotion to peace fits into the very revealing analysis you have given me of the historical continuity of our basic approach and philosophy. What is unfortunate, however, is that at a time when History itself has confirmed the Indian Foreign Policy, doubts are being cast on its very basis because of the new Sino-Indian crisis added to the old Indo-Pakistan dispute.

A. Well, a good policy doesn't become bad because it runs into trouble with a restless or aggressive neighbour. It merely puts it to a test, and we are sure it will overcome the challenge.

Q. Your robust optimism is most encouraging, sir. Nevertheless the critics of your policy aver that these disputes with our neighbours have left permanent scars on what is called the Bandung spirit of Asian-African co-existence and co-operation. In this context, I would like to know whether you consider this condition of enmity or unfriendliness between Asian neighbours as a passing episode or something that has come to stay

permanently. The reference is particularly to our relations with China and Pakistan.

A. Obviously we of India or any other country cannot live in a climate of permanent hostility or unfriendliness in terms of history. If one looks at these disputes with Pakistan or China with any kind of perspective, it is but natural that we have to be, and want to be, friends with all neighbouring countries. It has always been our policy—and, mind you, a policy inspired by no momentary whim but dictated by our history and geography and culture—to be friendly with Pakistan and China and develop closer and more co-operative relations with all neighbouring countries and, indeed, with the whole world for that matter. It is unfortunate that certain conflicts and difficulties have arisen, but it would be very foolish to look forward to a state of permanent hostility with any country. We certainly don't do so.

Q. You sounded rather defeatist during a speech at Khatmandu when you asked: *WHERE IS PANCH SHILA?* Have you lost or mislaid the *Panch Shila*, Mr Nehru?

A. Oh no! Certainly not! *Panch Shila* is a good and sound principle and must remain as the only sensible guide to international conduct. What I meant was that such an excellent principle was being talked about but not acted upon universally.

Q. True, sir. What is our answer to the Chinese accusation that the source of all this Sino-Indian trouble is Delhi's breach of its *Panch Shila* agreement with China on the issue of Tibet—which means, that after having recognized Tibet as a province of China, we continued to interfere in her domestic affairs so far as Tibet was concerned?

A. We have not interfered in Tibet or given any encouragement to the uprising nor have we any intention of doing so. All that we have done is to use our influence in a friendly way to persuade the Chinese to go slow in the matter of reforms and avoid repression. We tried to convince them that it is impossible to make good Communists of the Tibetans, that even reforms, necessary as they be, work better when they come from persuasion and education rather than coercion or imposition. Can this be called intervention? We agree with them that the rebellion as such must be crushed, but repression is another matter. It creates a crisis which boils over and flows into our country with the Dalai Lama and all the refugees.

Tibet, of course, is part of China, but Mr Chou himself told me that it was not a province of China, and would not be treated as such, that Tibetans were not Chinese but Han people different from the Chinese people and that, therefore, the Peking Government would consider Tibet as an autonomous region of China and treat it as such.

We have, of course, no authority or interest in Tibet, nor do we claim any. At the same time, the fact remains that Tibet is a holy land for Hindus and Buddhists and, as such, it has become part of the consciousness of India. It is a spiritual and sentimental rather than political attachment to Mansarovar and the holy shrines, Buddhism and the institution of the Dalai Lama; and when these come under repression or violence, powerful reactions follow among our people, to which the Government cannot remain unresponsive.

The Tibetans are certainly backward, feudal, maybe difficult and unbending—all that granted, but can you really impose reforms upon such a difficult community

without persuasion and consent? It only creates emotional resistance and physical clashes.

Q. I think that's where the different ideas of reform by coercion and reform by persuasion come to a test. Purely from academic interest, may I know what Mr Nehru would have done in the circumstances if he were the Prime Minister of China?

A. The real trouble, as I see it, is that there is no bridge of understanding between the Tibetans and the Chinese. Such a bridge—I mean, of mental and emotional links—must somehow be built. In the meantime, I would forget Communism, slow down the pace of reform and, first of all, try to create mutual understanding. I would help the Tibetans to set the pace for their own reforms and make all possible concessions to their social and nationalist sentiments with due consideration of the fact that for centuries Tibet has been an island isolated from the world and its progress.

After all, the Tibetans are racially distinct from the Chinese. Historically, also, Tibet and China have been involved in some sort of eternal conflict. Do you know there have been times when Tibet has occupied China and even when the Chinese dominated Tibet, the Lamas exercised a great deal of spiritual influence on the Chinese themselves?

These factors—historical, racial and religious, as well as the existing mental and emotional barriers—have to be understood in order to bridge the gulf between Peking and Lhasa. We naturally tried to help both towards such an understanding and that does not constitute any interference.

Q. The validity of your approach certainly seems to be proven by the Tibetan mess. But what is the solution?

A. The solution, I suppose, is Tibetan autonomy in the Chinese State. Apart from the historical, religious and emotional factors, Tibetan terrain makes it impossible for anybody to dominate or colonize these people.

Q. Now, sir, I have spared you questions in relation to the Foreign Policy of India as for me that is really a subject that abides no question or criticism. I guess you are at your finest in the conduct of the country's international relations because this foreign policy you have formulated is a perfect reflection of our history, geography, religions, cultures and other traditions no less than the contemporary urges and imperatives. And its main principles are fairly well known—that is, independence of power blocs or non-alignment, positive support to all freedom movements, particularly in Asia and Africa; anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism and anti-racialism; the gradual expansion of the area of peace as an antidote to cold and hot wars; and of course the preservation of world peace and enlargement of human freedom. Only recently I was discussing this subject with a very eminent American commentator. He paid you tribute for your personal effort in bringing Eisenhower and Krushchev together to think if not act in terms of peaceful co-existence, and then he made a significant and revealing remark. He said: *Whether Mr Nehru goes to the Summit or not is not very important, for his philosophy will in any case dominate any such conference and he will remain its spiritual if invisible Chairman.* In this context, I would be grateful for any basic solution you might have to offer to the problems that bedevil the world?

A. You are putting me in an awkward position by bringing in this reference to the Summit and my being

the Chairman—invisible, spiritual and all that! I can assure you I have no intention of being anything of that sort. It is true, of course, that we in India have evolved a foreign policy in keeping with the traditional background and temper of the country, which also stands up to the needs of contemporary history. This provides it with strength and power beyond our economic or military potential. Also we are fortunate in holding a pivotal position between Western Asia, South Asia and the Far East. Therefore, we cannot escape certain responsibilities of an international nature and we try to discharge them to the best of our ability. All this is there and, also, I think, the approach and philosophy we have inherited from Ashoka, Gandhi and other great thinkers and rulers—the philosophy of live and let live, of non-violence, tolerance and co-existence—provides the only practical solution to the problem of these times.

Q. The *Panch Shila* approach?

A. The *Panch Shila* approach of peaceful co-existence and non-interference between states, religions or ideologies. We have the advantage of some historical experience of this strategy which is basically a peaceful, co-operative and constructive strategy and, I may add, particularly suited to times when nuclear weapons have more or less outlawed the other solution of war and the other military approach. So we have something like a solution to offer for the troubles, passions and conflicts some powers are involved in. It would be totally unrealistic to suggest that India possesses some magic or mantra to end these evils, but it is our responsibility as members of the human family to advocate a course of action which might lessen international tensions and ultimately remove the sources and causes of conflict.

Q. Exactly, sir—and what is this course of action you would recommend?

A. It is not so much a course of action as a new mental approach, not any kind of military or 'cold war' approach, but a peaceful approach, followed by political and economic policies in tune with it. In our opinion, the *Panch Sheel* or Five Foundations of Peaceful Co-existence, offers the correct approach. Now this application of *Panch Sheel* as a code of international conduct requires a change of mind and heart to be realistic and fruitful.

First of all, the fact must be realized that recent scientific and technological advances and the discovery of nuclear and super-nuclear weapons have simply ruled out wars as a means of solving international problems. For war today means total destruction of humanity, without victory or profit to any nation or bloc of nations. Once war is ruled out, its associates of 'cold war', etc., must be removed from the human mind and spirit. Next we might put an end to warlike threats and postures. Even though we may differ from others, it's no use indulging in all the madness of political slogans and ideological condemnations, angry criticisms and all that. We must accept ideas even if we dislike them, provided they do not come in our way. We must realize how absurd it is for half the world to call the other half all black or evil. This sort of thing used to happen in the old days of religious wars. Then the conflicts of naturally exclusive faiths ended and a new spirit of toleration and co-existence developed. Today there is no reason why rival ideological and economic and social theories should not grow up and learn to live and let live. My view is that all this ideological conflict

has been outmoded by the technological revolution our world is undergoing: only people locked in the 'cold war' crisis do not see this fact. So what is really necessary is a change of outlook.

Q. Do you see this change coming about, Mr Nehru?

A. It is. It is all the time. Take the United States and the Soviet Union. I have always maintained that there is so much in common between these two great powers that all this business of 'cold war' is altogether unrealistic and artificial. Once they begin talking as they have, despite occasional breakdowns and frustrations, the ground will be cleared of all the wreckage of ten years of suspicion and fear and what might be called areas of agreement will become visible. They might discover that the area of disagreement was really insignificant and all this tragedy and waste of 'cold war' need not have happened at all. When they realize this fact which, I think, is basic, their minds and hearts will be cleansed of fear and suspicion, which are the causes and sources of wars, and in their place might come, mutual trust, understanding and tolerance. This has still not come about: and that was the principle reason why the Summit broke down. Once this happens, disarmament, nuclear weapons ban and the rest will follow. I have no doubt of that. So the principle of Summit conferences must not be abandoned merely because of the initial setback.

Now take Germany. It seems to be the main issue of controversy at the Summit and elsewhere. The Germans are extraordinarily able people in the organization for peace, war or anything. And I happen to know that there is a great deal of fear among the allies of Germany herself—of history repeating itself, maybe with another

aggression. This is a very real fear. But when I express it to people, I find that the other side suffers from the reverse fear of an invasion from the Soviet Union! So all this is a psychosis of fear and suspicion which lead us to do things we are afraid of doing and, therefore, the main job should be to rid the world of this evil.

So all these problems and crises are there, piled up one on top of another, but they can be solved if the correct approach is made—that is, not by way of military threats and conflicts, positions of power and strength and so on and so forth, but in a peaceful and co-operative way, always keeping two ideas in mind: *first, that war must be outlawed and, secondly, all outstanding problems must be peacefully negotiated and settled. For this, of course, the necessary climate of co-existence has to be created.* As I say repeatedly, peace is not a physical abstention from war, it is an attempt to lessen tensions and create a climate of peace all over the world.

Q. May I know what India is doing to create this new climate?

A. It has always been our policy to build bridges and create links between the opposing groups of nations and at the same time expand the area of peace.

Q. Bridges and links of Co-existence?

A. Yes, we always preach co-existence: co-existence in the national field and of course co-existence in the international field. Now what is this co-existence? It is a mental or spiritual attitude which synthesizes differences and contradictions, tries to understand and accommodate different religions, ideologies, political, social and economic systems, and refuses to think in terms of conflict or military solutions. For us in India, a large country with so many different religions, linguistic

groups, thoughts, habits, etc., co-existence has become an imperative for our existence as a nation or survival itself. That is perhaps the reason, a historical reason born of our experiences, which compels us to recommend this approach based on tolerance to the international conflicts and tensions.

Q. That gives me an idea and probably an answer to the controversy as to why we had to forge the Commonwealth link after fighting the British out of power. Could the answer lie in our philosophy of co-existence and its first imperative of building bridges and forging links?

A. The Commonwealth is certainly a form of free, uncommitted and non-binding association with the spirit of peaceful co-existence, a link or bridge which helps in bringing together nations for the purpose of co-operation and consolidation. Such associations are preferable to the more binding kind of alliance or blocs. We, of course, consider the problem of our association with the Commonwealth in terms of independent nations coming together without any military or other commitments. There are no conditions attached except this desire to co-operate so far as it is consistent with the independence and sovereignty of each nation. One important factor about the Commonwealth association is that it reverses the other process of military or economic blocking together for what might be called the purposes of the 'cold war'. It has a certain warmth of approach about it, regardless of the problems that beset any such association. There may be differences. There are. Nevertheless the overall approach to such controversies is a friendly one which helps to tone down friction and difficulties. That, I think, is all to the good

and a development worthy to be followed in other spheres, larger spheres, also.

Q. Let us hope so, sir. Fears are expressed in many quarters that this attachment or link of ours with the Commonwealth might obstruct our leadership of newly liberated Asia and Africa and maybe also blunt our protest against certain racial and fascist developments in South, West and Central Africa.

A. We do not suffer from any such obstructions. As you probably know, I have myself denounced South African racialism from London itself as an evil development opposed to the whole concept of modern thinking. Our support to freedom and racial equality in Africa is a very natural urge that derives from our history. We desire no leadership or domination over any country, but we cannot remain unaffected by the highest single fact of contemporary history—that is, the resurgence of Asia and Africa. We are affected by this tremendous event because we are part of it, part of the movement and the revolution as well as part of the geography, at the very heart of these two continents, placed as we are in the centre of the Indian Ocean. And now that we are free and more and more countries are breaking out of colonialism, naturally we come together and re-establish old relationships with other countries in Western, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia and, of course, Africa also.

Our link with the Commonwealth does not restrict this historical development. On the contrary, I should say it helps it. After all, *this* is not a *British* Commonwealth or anything of that sort. The name itself repudiates any imperialist association. And if you consider the Commonwealth, population-wise or even nation-wise,

policy really is one of non-alignment in terms of military alliances. That we consider to be a sound policy which should be followed by all countries. It is also a policy most helpful to the cause of world peace. Once you admit the basic fact that today a major war such as would exterminate humanity is not desirable, then it follows that military alliances, which are the children of the 'cold war' approach, are also not desirable inasmuch as they do not promote that climate of accommodation and peaceful settlement of international problems which is the objective of all the great and small powers of the world today.

Q. In any case, sir, these military alliances themselves do not present any happy or healthy portrait of themselves today!

A. Non-alignment, like *Panch Sheel*, does not necessarily fall simply because this or that country fails to observe the right and proper code of international behaviour, just the same as truth is not sacrificed merely because somebody tells lies! The Five Principles are the obvious and righteous principles of international behaviour, and we do not propose to give them up because some countries do not practice them. So also non-alignment has nothing to do with the conduct of any particular country. For us it is a historical imperative and we propose to abide by it.

IX

AFTER NEHRU, WHAT?

Q. Finally, Mr Nehru, I would crave your indulgence in regard to a few personal questions. They might embarrass you, but they relate to controversies which are inescapable for a person of your eminence. Your critics are saying that Mr Nehru is now an old and tired man, who has been compelled by objective conditions to reconcile himself to a world of evil, his attitude nowadays is one of keeping things going as best as he can while he is alive, and when he is gone—well, to hell with everything! This, sir, is a very crude way of putting it, but still the issue of 'AFTER NEHRU, WHAT?' remains an increasingly live and burning question. Would you care to discuss it?

A. How can I discuss it, really, when I think that the way the issue is put, is wrong, all wrong?

Q. It may be so, but your biographer, Frank Moraes, is writing a new book with this precise title.

A. Maybe, maybe, but still it is all wrong, this kind of speculation. A journalist may try to look ahead and see what might happen. He is free like anybody else to make his guesses, but this business of 'AFTER NEHRU, WHO?' if it refers to individuals, is all completely wrong and very stupid. If on the other hand, it refers to the kind of conditions that exist now or that may exist then, in the future, then it is a legitimate exercise if you like.

Q. Exactly, sir. Would you care to indulge in that exercise?

A. Not in that sense, because I don't think it helps, because I am interested not in picking out individuals and giving them training. Naturally, I would like the right people to be trained and all that, but I cannot function in the sense of somebody going to be my heir or successor. I simply cannot understand the logic of this sort of thing. Even if I try to nominate somebody as my successor, what would be the use of it? My nomination as such would mean nothing to the people and circumstances might come in the way even if the people adopt my choice.

Q. But Gandhiji nominated you as his successor, didn't he?

A. It is true that Gandhiji on one or two or three occasions mentioned something about me. But if I may say so, it was not Gandhiji's recommendation that put me in a certain position. It was a whole group of circumstances going back twenty or thirty years to my connection with the national movement, the part I played in the country and the struggle, all that put me in this position, though of course Gandhiji's blessing influenced people's minds. Undoubtedly it did so.

So the point is not whether I nominate some person to succeed me or train this or that individual. The real issue is how far, in the changing circumstances of today, we have succeeded in building *a solid base for our development.* If there is such a solid base, a democratic base, a secular and socialistic base—that is, broadly a deep, sound and self-confident foundation for our ideals and approaches, I am not at all worried as to what happens at the top and who takes over. The

necessity of a base is all that matters: for without it, you simply have nothing to build upon. And nothing can happen.

Q. Very true, sir. Since we are on a very important point, may I interrupt to ask what exactly you consider to be a solid base for Indian development in the right direction and the continuity of our national policies?

A. Well, first of all, the establishment of a democratic apparatus with adult franchise—that is, parliamentary democracy. Secondly, I think the secular foundation of our democracy. Then a sound base for economic development with the Five-Year Plans, and heavy industries, particularly machine-making plants, a strong public sector commanding the strategic heights of our economy, and the foundation for an independent, self-developing economy. You may say also a Socialistic Pattern of Society based on the principles of gradual economic equalization and social justice.

Q. Thank you, sir. Are you confident that such a base has been established?

A. That is a matter for guesswork. It is being established, of course, all the time. At the same time, there are separationist and destructive tendencies also at play. After all, this country, India, represents over a century at this particular moment. You might even go further and say that it represents the Stone Age in relation to some tribal people in the middle of the twentieth century. In another sense, India represents social urges which also develop gradually, you may call them Right, Left, Middle or what not, progressive or static or simply reactionary, these words too are not completely helpful. *But what one has to be watchful about is the existence of certain elements in India—that is to say, fascist elements.*

Though they may not use the word fascist, but their outlook amounts to that. These elements would like to take advantage of anything like chaos or a breakdown to seize power. All that is there. We can't help it. We can only think in terms of some insurance or guarantee against any such development. Now what kind of guarantee or insurance can we have? The answer is: *a proper base.* If that is there, nobody can play about with the country.

Now in Pakistan—I am citing Pakistan by way of an illustration only and not criticizing Pakistan—there has been no such base all these years. They are good people like us, but the main difference between India and Pakistan was this: in India, the leaders of the national movement, who had struggled for independence and being conditioned by this struggle came to know the people; naturally they developed contact with the people and as a result emerged some kind of social policy in response to the socio-economic urges of the people. In Pakistan, on the other hand, the leaders who came to the front were not connected with the independence movement at all. They represented broadly the landlord class to begin with. Hence the Government was not in favour of change at all, but desired to preserve the vested interests of some people. They had no popular base, except—well, on the anti-India basis.

Therefore, while India and Pakistan in a sense started with the same base, maybe not quite the same base, but still the same people, differences at the base widened. The people are the same, but there has been no link between the leadership and the people in Pakistan. A leader may be popular or not. I am not talking about individuals being popular. I am stressing the basic link connecting the leadership with the people which, all

said and done, subsists in India and provides faith and strength to the nation, in spite of our numerous weaknesses, failings and drawbacks. Consequently, I am not anxious about individuals in the matter of continuity, succession and all that. I always want good individuals. I am always looking out for them. But this matter of a broad national, popular base is much more important from the point of view of my approach.

X

VISION OF TOMORROW

Q. I remember your saying somewhere that the greatest achievements of outstanding Indians—like Ashoka, Akbar and Gandhi—lay in the manner in which they brought about a synthesis between different religions and ideologies and that it might still be the privilege of India to bring about such a synthesis between the conflicts of our own times. Would you say how we propose to bring about such a consummation?

A. When I made this statement, I wasn't thinking in terms of myself or the present generation in India, but speculating on a prospect of the future. At the same time, I will say this, that we have done something to show the world that the two mutually exclusive ideologies of Capitalism or Capitalist Democracy on the one hand, and Communism, on the other, do not have any monopoly of approach to the main issues of production and distribution. There is *a third way* which takes the best from all existing systems—the Russian, the American and others—and seeks to create something suited to one's own history and philosophy.

For example, today there is almost universal understanding and appreciation of what we are trying to do on the economic plane—that is, *planning under a democratic pattern of socialism*. This has set a new pattern for Asian and African development and it is significant that economists and other experts from both the worlds,

particularly the West, to which economic planning is something foreign, are extremely interested in our development plans and progress. We are giving a lot of consideration to this issue and are tackling it in a big way with organized thought behind it. *This makes of India itself a kind of an area of agreement between the opposing ideological forces.* Without boasting about it, we can claim to be the only under-developed country doing this job in a big creative way.

Q. So one would be correct in concluding that looking back on the panorama of the progress made by the country during nearly a half century of active public performance, today in the evening of your life your faith in the nation, confidence in its people and optimism in regard to the future remain as robust as ever?

A. The answer to this question depends very considerably on the words you have used—that is, faith, confidence and optimism. And all three remain as strong today, in the evening of my life, as they were before. I have always had great faith, tremendous confidence, in the Indian people as a whole, in the mass of the masses. I may chide them or curse them. I do frequently. But I believe they have a certain quality and character, a basic cultural tradition which makes them function. I am talking about the masses, of course, and not the odd individuals. They may be conservative, they may be backward in industrial techniques. They can mend or learn all that. But something more important and remarkable they possess and that is *a certain quality of character* which, I think, is of great value to them and to us. Speaking for myself, I derive strength and sustenance from my contacts with them. Whatever love or

assistance one gives them one gets back from them in abundant measure.

Now you mention my optimism. I am basically an optimist and I have never found any reason to be anything else. You see, when a person works, the man might be working as a Prime Minister or whatever be his vocation, one can work as a machine doing jobs which one has been doing, sort of working in a rut. That is not much good. Although every person works, eighty to ninety per cent as a machine, one must have a sense of function—I mean to say, an urge, a function of doing something that is worthwhile, in spite of drawbacks and heartbreaks. One must have a sense of feeling of thrill about the work. The moment one loses this part of it, one becomes—well, just a machine. The machine may be good, but what's the use of something without heart, soul, faith or joy?

So far as I am concerned, I don't feel old or tired or dejected because I have a very considerable feeling of thrill, adventure and excitement about odd jobs I do. Mind you, I don't say this about everything I do. Sometimes, of course, it's very frustrating and disappointing, but by and large I have a sensation of thrill in working and watching the changes that are being brought about in India and the Indian people. This has always been a most exhilarating function for me to see the country changing and a whole people in movement.

Q. I am happy to record these very encouraging words from your mouth and I can now see why an old man of seventy, in the conventional jargon, keeps so young and fresh. It gives us tremendous hope for the future. Now, sir, one more and the final question about the future. I have had your reflections on the Industrial Revolution

and on our own Scientific and Technological Era, but even as we are talking Sputniks and Luniks are carrying us into a new epoch of inter-planetary adventures and conquests. I would like to know how your mind reacts to these fantastic new discoveries?

A. It is a wonderful and exciting prospect bringing an altogether new dimension to the human mind which, I am sorry in a way, I will not be there to see and share. The world today is going through mighty changes, revolutionary transformations. One cannot imagine what physical and biological upsets are coming, but an important thing to remember is that these extraordinary changes have made the necessity of social change more paramount than ever before. With science leaping into space and human society clutching on to conventional approaches, there is going to be very serious maladjustment. One hears of it already in the more advanced countries.

At the same time, I suppose, social and economic structures will change as science transforms the functions of humanity. It is usual for the form to adapt itself to the function. So let us hope that as civilization advances with science it will discover for itself a new base in new patterns of conduct, new forms of collective life and a broad and tolerant philosophy of synthesis. Let us hope at least that the existing inequalities and disparities between man and man and nation and nation will gradually disappear, removing the main cause of conflicts and wars. *What the world is groping for today seems to be a new dimension in human existence, a new balance. Only a fully integrated man with spiritual depth and moral strength will be able to meet the challenges of the new times.* Material advance without spiritual balance can be disastrous.

Man might lose his sense of function and turn a human robot instead of a human being.

Of one aspect of these new discoveries I am convinced. They have made absolutely imperative for the mind of man to switch over from thoughts of war, conflict and violence to a determined will for peace, co-existence and co-operation. More than ever before, the philosophy of toleration, compassion and wisdom that Buddha preached 2,000 years ago has become necessary today. In international relations, one has to repudiate the military approach or military solutions altogether. There should be an immediate and unanimous resolution to ban all nuclear tests and proceed with gradual disarmament.

Q. I hope the Big Powers will still read and heed this writing on the wall of our time. Since the wisdom of your advice flows from the fountain of Indian thought and philosophy, would you say how India is emerging in the context of this revolutionary change brought about by science and technology?

A. The outlook of peace, tolerance and co-existence is in tune with Indian thought and philosophy and, as I have explained, there is no other way for us either in domestic or world affairs. These advances in atomic energy, jet power, rocketry and space travel have progressed so rapidly in the past twenty or thirty years that they are changing the whole context of human life. While technology has leapt forward, it has left politics behind. The problem, therefore, is to get over the gap between thinking of the past and the realities of the present. We in India are in many ways behind the times. But the Industrial Revolution, which changed the pattern of life for Europe and America, will come to

India. It is already coming. But behind it is the faster revolution initiated by the new technology and new science. So we are sort of marching ahead at three different stages. Nobody knows where it will all lead to. Material development will come, of course; but is that enough? We require a certain amount of ethical and moral strength to meet the challenge of these powerful physical changes. Although energy and power are mighty forces, they have no morals. They are a-moral. The moral basis has to be supplied by the human being who uses this power and energy. What I mean to say is, this new force in the hands of man can be used for evil purposes as well as good, and the only insurance against its being used as a power for evil is the moral level of humanity which employs it. The issue is whether man is going to master and control these powerful forces or whether the latter get the better of him to destroy man and his civilization.

This is one reason why I want to stress the importance of our peaceful tradition which Gandhiji resurrected into a practical and effective philosophy of action. For if the dangers of maladjustment arising from the failure of human society to adapt itself to the needs of the new technological civilization exist elsewhere, they are more applicable to Indian society which is largely accustomed to orthodox ways and outmoded approaches. Yet we have this splendid tradition of tolerance and compassion which might tide us across the crisis of our civilization.

There is another aspect of this matter which has been causing me some anxiety since Hitler and Mussolini came into the picture. Leaving aside the new forces that science has put into the hands of man, I am surprized how a man like Hitler can carry the masses with him for evil ends with the help of this highly developed

modern propaganda machinery. That is why I have a revulsion against all that smacks of a dictatorship, regimentation and authoritarianism.

Now these propaganda devices are entering, in a small way but a dangerous way, into even normal commercial advertising. Not in India, but in America and elsewhere, it is so and it might come here too. Their exploitation of the sub-conscious mind of humanity, about which Aldous Huxley wrote in his books *Brave New World* and *Brave New World Revisited,* has very dangerous potentialities and no one really knows where it may lead mankind.

Q. The new strategy of hitting a man below the belt of his awareness?

A. Yes. And so all these are facts which are quite novel to human experience. They are really leading us into a new world about which we know little or nothing. All that we can do to meet this challenge is to shed the dogmas and theories we have inherited from the past, particularly those that recommend conflict and violence, and develop the spiritual character of humanity jointly with material prosperity so as to create a fully integrated human being. Only thus can we meet the tests and challenges of tomorrow.

END

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IMPORTANT DATES IN THE LIFE OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

1889	Born November 14.
1905–7	Harrow; 1907–10 Trinity College, Cambridge.
1910	M.A. Cambridge.
1912	Barrister-at-Law, Inner Temple. Advocate, Allahabad High Court.
1916	March, married Kamala Kaul. December, first meeting with Gandhi.
1917–18	Joined Home Rule League, All-India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C.).
1919	Jallianwala Bagh massacre.
1920	Joined Kisan (Peasant) Movement and non-violent non-co-operation movement under Gandhi. Nehru's father gives up bar practice and life of a wealthy man. Nehru's first visit to a village, shocked by depth of peasant poverty.
1921	First time in prison (to be repeated seven times in course of next twenty years).
1926–7	To Europe with family.
1927	February, attended Brussels Congress of Oppressed Nationalities, first meeting with George Lansbury. Joined League Against Imperialism. November, first visit to Soviet Union—Moscow for tenth anniversary of Russian Revolution.
1929	Elected General Secretary A.I.C.C. Elected President of Indian National Congress (re-elected 1936, 1937, 1946, 1951–54).
1931–3	Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi to London Round Table Conference. Nehru intermittently in gaol, opportunity for first time for serious reading of Marx. Attracted by

Communist philosophy. August, released.

1933–4 Rise of communalism. Nehru re-arrested January 1934, in February sentenced to two years gaol. Legalization of Congress movement. Nehru released for ten days in August because of wife's illness. Released again in October for eleven days.

1935 Released in October, left for Europe, where Kamala was under medical care.

1936 Death of Kamala in Switzerland in February. Return to India. First election under new Constitution, Congress sweeps country.

1938 Europe re-visited: England, Czechoslovakia (time of Munich crisis), Paris, Geneva, International Brigade in Spain.

1939 President All-India States Peoples' Conference. Chairman National Planning Committee. Visit to China in August, on eve of Second World War.

1942 Last stretch in gaol.

1946 Vice-President of Interim Government preliminary to independence, also Minister for External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations. Member Constituent Assembly, Provisional Parliament and first Lok Sabha (House of the People). December, Nehru in London for negotiation of India's status.

1947 AUGUST 15, Independence and partition of India. Nehru Prime Minister. November 15, Kashmir's accession to India, and beginning of hostility between India and Pakistan.

1948 Communal disorders and violence. January 30, assassination of Gandhi. October 11, Nehru's first attendance at Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference.

1949 November, adoption of new, independent Constitution. December, India formally recognizes

newly established People's Republic of China. Nehru visits U.S., Canada and Britain.

1950 JANUARY 26, India becomes Republic within the British Commonwealth. January to April, large-scale communal rioting and thousands of refugees from Pakistan. July, start of Korean War. Nehru's letter to Stalin asking his intercession to end it.

1951 India's rejection of U.N. branding of China as an aggressor. Announcement of India's First Five-Year Plan, 1951–56.

1952 February, results of independent India's first general election. June, Nehru's offer of mediation in Korean prisoner-of-war exchanges. December, United Nations accept India's cease-fire proposal for Korea.

1953 July 27, Korean Armistice signed. India participates in Neutral Nations Supervisory and Repatriation Commission.

1954 April, signing of Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibet, incorporating *Panch-shila*, the Five Principles of peaceful international relations. April–May, Colombo Conference. June 25–29, Chou En-lai in India, joint statement reiterating the Five Principles. July 21, Nehru's statement on settlement of Indo-China at Geneva Conference. October 18–28, Nehru's visit to China. December, visit with Burmese Premier U Nu to Bangkok (first foreign prime ministers ever to visit Thailand).

1955 April 18–24, Nehru attends Bandung Conference of 28 Afro-Asian countries, who incorporate in their joint final communiqué the Five Principles of *panch-shila*. June, Nehru visits Soviet Union, issues joint statement of Five Principles. November 18–30, Krushchev and Bulganin visit India.

1956 March 20, Nehru condemns SEATO and Baghdad Pacts. India's Second Five-Year Plan (1956–61) announced. August 8, Nehru's statement on Suez crisis. October 31, Nehru's condemnation of British-French invasion of Suez.

1955–6 Nehru visits Thailand, Egypt, Czechoslovakia, Soviet Union, Poland, Austria, Yugoslavia, Italy, U.K., West Germany, France, Eire, Saudi Arabia.

1957 April, Communist Government elected in Kerala State. Summer, public appeals made separately by Nehru, Professor Albert Schweitzer and the Pope for cessation of all nuclear tests. November, Nehru makes urgent appeal to United States and Soviet Union to end nuclear tests.

1958 January, Macmillan visits India. July 20, Nehru supports Soviet proposal for a summit meeting.

1957–8 Nehru visits U.S.A., Canada, U.K., West Germany, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Netherlands, Syria, Egypt, Sudan, Ceylon, Japan.

1959 February 2, Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, elected President of Congress Party. March, Tibet revolt, Dalai Lama seeks asylum in India. June, Nehru visits Kerala to discuss disorders there. August, Nehru supports central Government decision to dissolve Kerala Assembly and institute rule by India's President. August-October, Ladakh incidents and Sino–Indian border dispute. December, Eisenhower's visit to India.

1959–60 Nehru visits Britain, France, United Arab Republic, Turkey, Lebanon.

1960 February, Kruschev visits India. Publication of Draft Third Five-Year Plan 1961–66.