

Jawaharlal Nehru As I Knew Him

Purshottam Trikamdas

IT is said that an obituary is always very flattering though far removed from truth. This is not an obituary but a brief account of some of my encounters with a great man and leader, who is no more. I have a vivid recollection of the first time I saw him, if I remember right, in 1917. He had come to a meeting of the Home Rule League held in Morarji Goculdas Hall, accompanied by Umer Sobani and Shankerlal Banker. He, as the other two, was dressed in immaculate English cut clothes. On enquiry, I was told he was the son of Motilal Nehru, whom I had heard earlier. Jawaharlal on being requested to speak, made a most unimpressive stuttering short contribution, of course in English, by saying that he also would do something for the country. The impression he gave me was of a playboy son of a brilliant speaker and lawyer. I am sure others felt the same way. I met him the same evening at the house of Shankerlal. I was just a student and of course he never condescended to say a word to me, and my previous impression was fortified by the discussion as to how they would paint Bombay red that night.

The next time I saw him in 1924 at the A.I.C.C. meeting, held in Bombay. The controversy between the No-changers and the Pro-changers was raging. It was a totally different Jawahar. The Gandhi magic had worked a miracle. He was then the General Secretary of the Congress. He made a speech in Hindustani. It was a characteristic speech not very unlike the address of a fair judge summing up to the jury. He and his group abstained. He gave the impression of a vacillating young man whom I could not imagine as the leader of free India.

Next I saw him at the Belgaum Congress in 1925, where Gandhiji presided. When Gandhiji praised him for his work as General Secretary, Jawahar was sobbing, with gratitude, like a child.

My next recollection is of a meeting in Jinnah Hall, maybe in 1927 or 1928, where Jawahar launched his independence faction in the Congress. Jannadas Mehta was presiding, enough to turn away many people, including myself, from the Independence

League. His choice of the Bombay President was again, characteristic, of his choice of men, usually dictated by likes and dislikes.

My next encounter was in 1930. I was the Secretary incharge of the Congress volunteers in Bombay and was summoned to Delhi by Jawahar along with others in my position, why exactly, I was left guessing. The only person he talked to was Dr. Hardikar, the energetic organiser of the Seva Dal. We were going somewhere from Delhi in a car. It took about an hour to reach our destination. On one occasion, when I ventured to say something, I was ignored and it did not endear him to me. He was at the time Congress President. In fact it created an impression which made me wonder why Gandhiji was pushing this favourite of his. I could not see this haughty imperious man as the leader of a mass, rebel organisation. Of course, he was an idol of the young, who saw from a distance, this handsome, debonair man, with his tantrums and mountebanking, at public meetings.

The first time I talked to him was in late 1934 or early 1935. This time he did talk to me, but with the same lofty aloofness.

My next encounter was in 1938, soon after he returned from Europe, sold on the idea of front populaire boosted by the Communist parties; and on Krishna Menon, who had by that time become a fellow traveller, a breed more deadly than a honest communist. I could see that his idealistic admiration for the Russian Revolution was in no way dimmed by the mass massacres and treason trials of innocent men. On my venturing to say what I thought about the whole business, he barely restrained himself from anger at such a heresy. This again was characteristic of him, for whatever he thought for the time being was right, beyond contradiction. I did not pursue the matter but said to myself, here is a starry-eyed "progressive".

In 1946, soon after the Naval Mutiny in which I was in some way involved—I got a call from Jawaharlal to take up the representation before the Fazl Ali Commission of the Naval ratings who were involved in the Mutiny. One day when it was expected that the Admiral would come and give evidence—Nehru did me the honour of coming and waiting for two hours for the Admiral to turn up and to listen to the cross-examination. Unfortunately, the Admiral did not turn up on that day at all.

Before the Socialist Party decided to leave the Congress some of us had two or three meetings with

Gandhiji where Vallabhbhai, Jawahar and Kripalani were also present. Gandhiji was very keen that we should not take that step while Vallabhbhai and Kripalani were all for us to accept the Congress discipline, particularly rigid for us, or to quit. Jawahar did not express his opinion one way or the other.

I have had many meetings with him since then, but only after the death of Gandhiji, he mellowed down to listen to something which may be contrary to his thinking and even argued the point. Anything about Krishna Menon, whom he considered to be genius of the century, was beyond argument for it raised the point of his own loyalty.

One of the meetings was in 1954 after I had accepted, with considerable hesitation, his suggestion to go to the U.N. as a delegate. I believe this was the only occasion when a non-Congressman or a non-official was selected to represent India. My hesitation was due to the fact that Krishna Menon was going to be the Chairman of the Delegation. At the briefing that he gave me he expounded his theory of influencing both U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. Briefly, it amounted to this that since we were apparently on friendly terms with both, we could be a common broker between the two. When I described it as 'double brokerage' where the broker would get kicks from both sides for his labours, he smiled and said "call it that, if you like", "but bear it in mind". He also told me that under no circumstances in any of my speeches I was to use the word "communist".

The next meeting that stands out in my mind was probably in 1957. After we had finished talking about what I had gone to see him, he asked me to sit down and showed his impatience and irritation at the SEATO conference which was being held at Manila. I told him that it was his fault that SEATO came into existence and explained to him why I said so. I pointed out to him that India with its doctrine of non-alignment had kept many of the South-East Asian countries at arm's length and they had to look for their own security. I said that if India on its attaining independence had built closer contacts, including regional pacts for defence, perhaps SEATO would not have come into existence. His reply was most unexpected. Instead of repudiating the idea of involvement, he said "India would have to carry the burden on its shoulders". On the same occasion he talked about the Chinese, Taiwan tangle and again most unexpectedly he said that of course, the most sensible solution would be two Chinas, but that nobody would listen to such a suggestion. This was suprisingly very refreshing thinking, because the India-China honeymoon was in full swing.

One more meeting was some time in 1958 when I went to invite him to inaugurate the Congress of the International Commission of Jurists to be held early in January 1959. He agreed to do this, but he said,

"Do you know that Pritt, the well known communist English Q. C. wrote to me a sort of a letter of protest. I asked him whether he was surprised and he replied "Of course, I am not".

The last meeting of any importance was when I, as Chairman of Tibet Enquiry Committee, went to request him to permit me and one or two of my fellow members to visit the camps where the Tibetans were lodged and to cross-examine them on the numerous statements that I had already received. His first reaction was to say "Yes, you can". But then he rang up and called Dutt, the Foreign Secretary. Dutt said that the Chinese have already been accusing India of fomenting the rebellion in Tibet and if the Government give such a permission they would find another excuse for saying that. On this, I am afraid, I lost my temper and told Dutt whether he was waiting to hand over part of India as India had handed over Tibet on a platter to China. Jawahar smiled on hearing this, but unfortunately he accepted the advice of Dutt.

On these last few occasions, I found Jawahar willing to listen and even to argue and think aloud about some problems on which the official policy was different. In his demise, we have lost a great intellectual leader, with all the limitations and hesitations concomitant to being an intellectual. With the end of his life, an era has ended.



"...And how does it feel being the number two leader of capitalist stooges?"

Courtesy: Hindustan Times

Nehru The Administrator

Y. N. Sukthankar

MEN are mortal but, for a chosen few, in the public mind there is no death, disease or old age. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was one of the favourite few. We, his countrymen, fondly believed that he would remain with us for ever and ever guiding us, leading us, and when necessary scolding us. Even when there were grave reports about his health, we felt confident that he would soon take the road to recovery. I called on him in the beginning of April. He looked frail but cheerful. Even then there were signs which were clear premonitions of the final call. I, however, reassured myself that he was regaining his health and would soon be his old self. The holy Dalai Lama who saw him before he left for Dehra Doon was, according to press reports, fully satisfied about his improved health. But within a day of his return from Dehra Doon, death struck him and even today we feel stunned and aggrieved. It was perhaps best that it happened that way as nothing would have been more tragic to see a person of his vitality and sensitivity lingering and travelling in pain and suffering to the journey's end.

Try as we may, even today we are unable to assess his worth fully and form a complete picture of him and his activities. He was a complex, many-faceted personality. Indeed he was several personalities combined harmoniously into one, full of grace and charm. It will be difficult, if not impossible, for his contemporaries or even future historians to sum him up in a few words. In his life time, both he and his Government were assailed by their political opponents and critics for some of their policies and conduct of affairs. This cannot, perhaps must not, be avoided in a political democracy like ours. Yet, in his death, all are united in expressing genuine and whole-hearted praise and admiration for his personality and his achievements. The public is avid for all information about him.

Fortunately, many close to him have responded to this demand by giving intimate pen portrayals of the great leader. It was my good fortune to serve him for many years and later at the Puri, Cuttack and Bhubaneswar Raj Bhavans my wife and I felt privileged and honoured to have him as our guest on several occasions. For Orissa and its people he had a warm corner in his heart and rarely denied himself the opportunity, when it was available to him in his busy life, of visiting that State. Memories crowd in on us today about his kindness, thoughtfulness and consideration for others. I shall, however, content myself with saying something about a part of his glorious career which is perhaps not so widely known—

his work as an administrator. He was best known in that capacity to all those who worked with him and saw his work at close quarters in the precincts of the Secretariat. This information may be of some interest to the general public and perhaps, a little profit to the members of administrative and technical services in India.

It was as an administrator that Panditji's dynamic personality was best seen. His capacity for unremitting hard work was something prodigious. He was prompt and punctual in replying to all letters that were addressed to him and disposing of all the references that came to him from the Ministries and Departments of which he was directly in charge and from other Ministries of the Government of India and the State Governments. These replies were hardly ever of the routine—"matter under consideration"—type. He had grasped the problem put to him and in his reply made his contribution to its solution. He hardly delayed matters by asking for p. p. (previous papers) unless there was some old reference in the letter under reply which he had to see. He was constantly exhorting the officers not to take months in digging up some old papers. The day before he passed away, he is reported to have said that he had disposed of all his files and there was nothing pending. There spoke the great administrator! It is the ambition and desire even of minor administrators to be able to say before they leave one post on transfer to another, or move on to that final transfer from which there is no return, that they have finished everything and nothing is left pending.

At all meetings and Conferences, he was invariably punctual unless something, beyond his control, delayed him. Before attending these meetings, he had read up all the papers and arrived at the conclusions he thought proper and yet he never imposed his will about anything at these Conferences. He had an open mind and patiently listened to those who had to say something on the problems and proposals before him. Where he thought that his point of view might not be readily acceptable, he would argue it out patiently and in great detail. The image of him in certain quarters that he was a dictator and did not allow other people to have their say was not the one prevailing in the Secretariat. He had a meticulous but at the same time a comprehensive mind which ranged freely over a wide field. He drew upon all he had seen and heard in the course of his travels in India and elsewhere. He, however, always insisted on modifying and adjusting what was found useful in other countries to the special needs and conditions of

India. He was completely averse to wholesale imitation. It need hardly be said that the Five-Year Plans owe a great deal to him and he was the chief inspiration behind some of the most important ideas incorporated in the plans such as application of social justice, need for implementation of the socialist policies, the importance of constructing plants for manufacturing machines to build machines, the urgency for reducing expenditure on house-building, and construction by careful planning and phasing of different stages. He had a compartmental mind which went with ease from one problem to another, from one interview to another and from one Conference to another. Although a towering personality, he never towered over others nor made anyone feel small by comparison with himself. That indeed is a sign of true greatness. The really great are those by contacting whom even a small man comes out feeling great himself. For, the great man, by some alchemy, draws the best out of everyone who comes to him. While there was a current belief that he often lost his temper, there was little justification for it. For years he made it a practice to control himself and curb his feelings. The wrong angered him, not the wrong doer. Any instance of injustice done to a poor or humble person, may be a peasant or industrial worker, or of financial or other dishonesty roused his wrath. But it will be incorrect to say that he harboured permanent resentment against any person.

He was constantly improving his mind by reading a considerable amount of scientific and other literature and keeping abreast of all the improvements which were taking place in the scientific and technical world in India and abroad. He was frequently in the air, travelling from one place to another and used his air travels for such reading. The working day was mostly taken up by interviews and the Conferences. He had a habit of recording notes of something that came to his mind while doing some other work. But the bulk of his work was started after an early dinner and continued well after midnight. A relay of stenographers took down the dictation, fair copies being brought for his signature the next day. His notes and memos were always clear and left the readers in no doubt as to what was intended to be conveyed or done. His sense of justice was warm and effective and this made him alert to the claims of women, minorities and, in the present circumstances of India, ill-favoured sections of the public. His zeal for ensuring that such claims were satisfied never abated.

He was incapable of indulging in harsh or stinging remarks no matter how great the provocation. While he would not suffer anyone to take liberties with him, he dealt on such occasions with the offender with great dignity and charm and left no hurt behind. To all display of pomp, arrogance or aggression he

reacted strongly. He was always happy with children. He was in his element when he was in the midst of the masses, particularly the poor, humble, peasants, industrial workers, in short all those who did not enjoy the good things of life. At Rourkela on one occasion he left the crowd surrounding him and made for two Adivasi girls who were eating their food at a distance. He made them open their pots and show him what they were eating. He cheered them, patted them on the backs and there was a far away look in his eyes perhaps anticipating the time when the poor workers of India would be better fed and housed and find life a joy and a thrill instead of an endless drudgery.

It is to be hoped that at some distant date all his official communications except those of a purely routine nature will be published. Some of these, though strictly confidential or secret at the time, will cease to be so after lapse of years. Unless really and truly necessary, he was against marking papers confidential or secret and frowned on the somewhat easy official proclivity to do so. These writings will not only be a great addition to literature but provide a useful clue to the workings of his mind. His frequent letters to the Chief Ministers of States in which he shared his thoughts with them on all the current topics of importance would be of the greatest use to all sections of the general public in India and abroad and throw light on how the colossal problems pressing cruelly and urgently on the country in the years immediately following Independence were tackled.

What was the secret of his energy and drive? He never depended on others for such work as he could do himself. He had little patience with officers and others who shouted for their chaprasis and menials to do some odd work for them. He never left a room without switching off all the lights and fans. He was accompanied just by one servant in his journeys in India or abroad. As far as his personal chores were concerned, he was self-reliant. He did them himself. He took great care about maintenance of his physical strength although he was very often oblivious or unconscious of the great strain which he was putting on it but he was full of resilience. Just a short rest easily for a few minutes, and he was fully restored and tuned up again. More than the physical it was his spiritual strength, in the best sense of the term, that enabled him to carry on in spite of all the stress and strain of the post Independence years. As a fellow Harrovian, Churchill, said of him in a private gathering of Harrovians: "Jawaharlal Nehru has conquered the three great enemies of mankind—fear, hatred and jealousy". His strength was the strength with which he had conquered these great enemies. He drew upon it in whatever field he was labouring, whether it was

(Continued on page 5)

The Fog Of Peace

Robert Conquest

IN the last weeks we have had a series of announcements from American, British, and Soviet leaders. They all speak of a more peaceful future. "Peace in our time; goodwill towards men". But let us get our priorities right.

It is true that in the long run you cannot have much in the way of permanent peace unless genuine goodwill is created, unless there is an end of the siege economies, the barriers to the free exchange of ideas, the claims to world dominion, and so on. But in the meanwhile, as I see it, our overwhelming need is to keep the peace, goodwill or no goodwill. If we keep it long enough, the goodwill might develop too. One sure way of losing both is to start thinking that the goodwill has arrived before it really has, and to relax our vigilance.

Does this mean, you may ask, that at the very moment when good prospects of international détente seem to be arising, I am going to be openly critical and suspicious of the Russians? Certainly I am. What is more, I regard such an attitude as actually a contribution to peace. It is natural enough, when we are on good terms with the Soviet Union, for a vague amiability to start blurring the edges of reality here and there. In the late 1930s Stalin was widely regarded as a ruthless tyrant. During the war, he became pipe-smoking Uncle Joe. But he had not really changed: and it would have been greatly to our benefit if we had not lazily let ourselves think that he had. Yet if the détente comes, as we hope, we shall find that, as in previous periods of friendship with Russia, those who continue to watch the realities will be widely pointed out as trouble-makers, as George Orwell was in his time. The cries will go up—are already going up—of "cold war", "anti-Communist", "right-winger". Let us look at this sort of accusation.

"Cold war" is a vivid enough expression for the period of armed truce which has dangerously subsisted since 1945. But there is another, totally different and most peculiar, sense in which the term "cold

war" is used. It is employed, as a derogatory description, of the publication of a fact or opinion about Soviet matters which might be thought unwelcome to the Soviet authorities. The argument, as far as such may be said to exist, seems to be that if anyone studies the Soviet Union objectively—if, to take an example, anyone notes that writers there dislike bureaucracy—and international relationships will somehow be harmed. Obviously, the contrary is true. The more the Soviet authorities imagine that delusions about them flourish in the West, the more they are tempted to take advantage of them; and the clearer the view we have of Russian affairs, the more firmly we express our own opinions, the better chance we have of a realistic peace. Such, we may say, is the Kennedy heritage. For an international harmony based on the suppression of information and opinion about the USSR unwelcome to the ruling party would be a hollow harmony, an unrewarding harmony, and what is more a jerry-built and unreliable harmony.

Our troubles with Russia have been a long, hard, emotional strain. How comfortable it would be to relax! How irritating are these fact-seekers, these opinionated truth-flaunters, who try to stop us doping ourselves just a little! Yes, it must be very irritating. But still, dope is bad for the constitution. Let me take one minor example. Early this year the Soviet census Board published an estimate of the country's present population showing more than 20,000,000 fewer men than women. This, it has been said, was "the result of the war". And this is a commonly held view. The political implication is that the Russians have a special right to be anti-German.

But the figures do not admit of so simple an explanation. At the time of the last Soviet census proper, taken in January, 1959, the deficit was already in being. But as then published, it was broken down by age-groups. There was a negligible difference between male and female for those who had been under 16 in 1945. For those between 16 and 35 at the end of the war the total deficit comes to nine and a half million. Indeed, these are terrible figures. But—and this is the striking point—these age-groups account for less than half the total deficit of males, those who in 1945 had been 36 or over covering the rest. The highest proportion of all, in fact, is in the group of those who were between 40 and 45 in 1945, where there are now almost exactly two women to one man: in this age-group alone nearly three million men are missing.

Studies have shown, as one would anyhow expect, that by far the highest proportion of males killed in war comes from those in their physical prime, parti-

(Continued from page 4)

the freedom struggle, parliamentary activities, development work entailed by the Five-Year Plans or the noble mission of securing peace in the world by endeavouring to bring together the two great blocs to appreciate each other's aims, policies and problems. Tennyson's words could be truly applied to him: "My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure" although he would have been the last person to use or even think of those words about himself.

cularly in their late teens and twenties, who constitute the bulk of the most active fighting troops. How does it come that Soviet losses are even greater among the older men? We are, in fact, in the presence, fossilised in the census figures, of the Great Purge, in which the death rate fell far more heavily on men than on women. Of course, there is an overlap: many older men were killed in the war, and many younger men perished in the camps. But the general picture is clear: if the Russians have a special right to be anti-German, then by exactly the same token they have a special right to detest their own ruling party. Our opinions, anyhow, should not be based on non-facts, or dubious facts.

When one makes points like these one offends some who like to think of themselves as "progressive". I favour social and racial equality throughout the world. The utopia I would look forward to in the future would be, I suppose, some sort of anarchy. I resent the faceless institutions, religious or economical or political, which would tell me what to think and what to do. I do not like the faced ones much, either: in fact, although of course political opinion should not be founded on such emotion. I find Archbishop Fisher makes my blood boil a good deal more than Mr. Khrushchev does. Examining my views further, I think I strike the real snag. In the here and now, my strongest bias is not social or economic at all, but simply in favour of political liberty and political democracy.

For the one lesson of the last 20 years one might have thought would have sunk in, is that whatever the good cause in whose favour political liberty is suppressed, it turns into a bad cause. As Albert Camus said, none of the evils totalitarianism is supposed to cure is as bad as totalitarianism itself. And one should add that it does not even cure the evils for whose removal one's political liberties have been sacrificed: Russia hungers and China starves. Except when we are arguing for arguing's sake we almost all know that the essential division is between democrat and authoritarian, not between left and right.

Almost every supporter of Labour, whatever he may say in the excitement of a campaign, knows that it is infinitely preferable to have a Conservative government which does not share in his views about nationalisation than a communist one which does. It is better for a socialist to live under Sir Alec Douglas-Home, where he can continue to be a socialist than under Khrushchev, where he cannot. And vice versa a Conservative is better off under Labour than under any conceivable right-wing fascist-type régime. It was, of course, a group of German conservatives who made the only real attempt to bring down Hitler.

A Conservative Prime Minister, with Labour support, led the fight against the Nazis. A Labour Prime Minister, equally with the backing of both parties,

stood firm against the Stalinists. In fact, though I would vote for a democratic socialist against an authoritarian rightist, and might vote for a democratic socialist against a democratic conservative, to my mind the degree of "socialisation" is in itself no test whatever of political virtue. There is a good deal of injustice in the present world. It is admirable that it should be hotly opposed. It is less admirable that a selection of injustices to be opposed should be made on factional grounds. At present, to speak in rough terms, about 80 per cent of the injustice in the world, the denial of human rights, takes place in the Chinese and Soviet blocs. But it is the remaining 20 per cent about which most fuss is heard. What are we to make of such things as CND's private feud with Greece—a police state in which a few weeks ago I saw a packed Communist meeting in the main square of Athens? Try holding a social-democratic meeting in Sofia or Bucharest! There is a lack of sense of proportion, isn't there? Or, perhaps one should just say, of sense.

There are views about Russia which are not as loopy as that, but which are yet bedevilled by vague verbalisations. For example, we are told that the Khrushchev régime is "liberal", that "liberalisation" is taking place. What exactly does this mean? The impression given is that a good deal of political liberty has been introduced in Russia. Has it? No. The citizen is not as oppressed as he was. But he still has no positive political rights whatever. Power remains concentrated entirely in the hands of the ruling group of the ruling party, a self-perpetuating oligarchy. There is no way whatever in which the citizen can urge, for example, the formation of a party resembling the British Labour Party. And any attempt actually to form one would lead to instant arrest. When one draws attention to this, one is accused of being "right-wing". I cannot for the life of me see why.

Again, colonial or minority rule now exists almost entirely in two areas—the bottom end of Africa, and the Chinese and Soviet periphery—central Asia from the Black Sea to the eastern edge of Tibet, and certain European territories like the Baltic States and East Germany. We chance to know, through the Russians, of the recent Ili-Kazakh massacre—a Chinese Sharpeville. But does anyone here bother about it? Why not? Because the suppression of nations and news is there more complete? Excellent reasons! Even in his New Year letter Mr. Khrushchev distinguishes sharply between the right of the Chinese to take Formosa, and the non-right of the Germans to take over their East zone. He also supports publicly the struggle of colonial peoples against their rulers; but he means, of course, in the colonies of the West. If we in the same way were to urge freedom for Lithuania or Georgia, it would be thought an intolerable provocation. And not only by the Russians. Mr.

Khrushchev's bias is understandable; but many people over here too think no ill of his incitements, yet would be horrified if we answered in the same coin. But neither can there be a truly stable peace till the last empires—his and Mao's—are somehow dissolved.

To suggest that some attention be paid to the 132,000,000 foreign peoples under Russian and Chinese rule—a population as large as South America's—is not to urge any cessation of pressure against Verwoerd and Salazar. But your thoughtless doctrinaire usually behaves as if it is. Again, why?

Among the vocabulary of bad words, following "cold war" and "right-wing", we come to "anti-Communist"—or even "professional anti-Communist". It does sound nasty, doesn't it? There are scholars and students trained in Soviet affairs who from time to time publish, and even get paid for, papers and articles on their special subject. Sometimes they are not even dispassionate, but openly flaunt their preference for democratic ways. "Anti-Communism" has always seemed to me to be a delusive expression. I suppose most of us have no very serious objection to the social and economic structures of the Soviet *bloc* countries: we may feel them to be ill-conceived or inept but these are not adjectives we would withhold from our own system. No, our real objection is purely and simply a political one: the absence of civil, national, and intellectual liberty, and an essential imperialism—the claim to universal rule.

If a libertarian, non-expansionist Communism arose, legitimate complaint by foreigners would fade away. Perhaps such an evolution is possible. The seeds of it certainly exist. Perhaps we shall see régimes like Nagy's, in free Latvias, free Russias, free Tibets, and so on. Any change in this direction we welcome, whatever Soviet successes they may accompany. In so far as such a Communism is possible we are not anti-Communist. We are merely against its current totalitarian form.

As has been pointed out, "totalitarianism" is a word not easy to define in abstract terms. An operational definition is not so difficult. It might be what Hitlerism and Stalinism have in common. There are things which they do not have in common. What they do have is in many ways, in practice, more important than what divides them. I do not mean the ease with which they co-operated, the bad days of 1940 when the Gestapo was negotiating with the Communists of occupied Europe to allow their anti-British Press to be published, only to be prevented by the German military, when the Russians were allowing the Germans to set up an operational submarine base—Basis Nord—on Soviet territory, and convoying the Nazi commerce raider "Komet" through their Northern Sea route to attack our shipping in the Pacific. That was long ago, and we might forget it. The point is that the whole Nazi-Soviet pact policy is even now far

from being disavowed or regretted. They reproach us—we reproach ourselves—for Munich, and it is true that Munich was, as Napoleon's critic said of the murder of the Duc d'Enghien, "worse than a crime, it was a mistake". The Nazi-Soviet pact was a mistake and a crime, to say nothing of its terrible accompanying meannesses like the NKVD's handing over of German-Jewish communists to the Gestapo. And the current Party History in its newest, highly revised 1962 edition impudently justifies the pact, by saying that in 1939 Britain was having secret talks with Germany with a view to dividing up the world between them, including what the History refers to as a "truly monstrous proposal"—the partitioning of Russia and China.

While such lies are being put out—officially and uncontradictably—about ourselves, we are told by some people we should avoid controversy with the Russians about fact or opinion for fear of offending them.

Does any of this mean that we shouldn't welcome a détente? Of course it does not. Our interest in reducing to the absolute minimum the danger of war between ourselves and the Soviet Union is total. And—a hopeful addition—dogmas and attitudes do erode under the long pressure of fact, and the longer we can maintain a truce the more chance there is that a Russia which would be a genuinely acceptable member of a world community may arise. Our contribution to the process must be to keep our minds clear, not to be taken in by professions unsupported by actions, nor to urge a policy of retreat and softness, encouraging the worst elements in the Russian leadership. And if Mr. X and Professor Y want to keep their eyes shut, will they at least have the decency not to object to others of us keeping ours open, and reporting what we see?

(Based on a talk broadcast by the BBC on January 4, 1964 in the third programme).

To the Editor,
FREEDOM FIRST,
C/o Democratic Research Service,
127, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay 1.

Please enrol me as a subscriber to FREEDOM FIRST.

I remit the annual subscription of Rs. 3.00

Name:

Address:

Signature

Consensus Or Conformity?

Surendra Mohan

SHRI V. B. Karnik in his article "Consensus or Conflict?" in your issue of March 1964 has pleaded for a unity of democratic parties on the basis of a consensus of opinion.

Broadly, in terms of foreign policy aims of our country, there has been general consensus in the country, though there have been disputes on details. On the ends of national efforts as secularism, democracy, economic prosperity and social welfare, general agreement has more or less always been available. Before the emergence of the Swatantra Party and after the Congress Party had adopted as its objective the establishment of a socialist pattern of society, various commentators used to remark that all political parties raised almost identical slogans; and those friends who have no particular love for the party system—several Royists and Sarvodayaists amongst them—drew particular comfort in denouncing the party system by advancing this argument.

On major issues that the country has faced—China's invasion, Goa's freedom from Portugal, Kashmir's accession and national integration, there has been a general consensus and even unity among major political tendencies. Even if one party or more has struck a discordant note, it has taken care to couch its difference in terms which indicate its general agreement with the consensus. Take our planning for example. Is there anyone that disagree with its general aims?

That being the case, it is surprising that in his article, Shri V. B. Karnik has to argue his case for a consensus almost afresh. Is it then unanimity that is advocated in the name of consensus?

In a democratic polity, consensus and conflict are not mutually exclusive; they are delicately intertwined and finely balanced and, mutually, create a dynamic equilibrium. Neither conflict nor consensus, simply and exclusively understood, can sustain democratic process; democracy is neither division nor conformity. It is the understanding of democratic process as argued by Shri V. B. Karnik that I find difficult to agree with. For, debate and discussion of various alternatives; balancing of various contending interests; interplay of multifarious social forces; without all these you can have consensus and avoid all conflict, but then that is not democracy.

In a society such as ours, rigidities with hoary traditions are melting and the social groups rising from the slumber of ages are claiming articulation; the introduction of democracy has brought the struggle for power to the door steps of millions who have not the background of the citizens of Western

democracies; and rapid economic changes are affecting various groups in various ways. There are conflicts and they have to be allowed expression and have to be composed. If you attempt to artificially manufacture a consensus in democratic politics, you will build it on sands which barely hide the surging waters below. Unless there are such social institutions which will channelise, express and mobilise these social conflicts as pressures of democratic change, rigidities will not be mellowed, and sooner or later the social fabric will be disrupted beyond repair.

Forces are there which seek to exploit these rigidities and tensions to disrupt the society. These forces are themselves expressions of ideological or social rigidities. Were the major democratic parties to arrive at a consensus which would prevent them from playing their role in harnessing the social pressures, tensions and urges, the vacuum thus created would certainly be filled by the forces of disruption and they will mount a grave threat to democratic polity. But this would be nothing surprising.

As for the questions posed by Shri Asoka Mehta, here again Shri Karnik appears to me to misunderstand the whole controversy within the PSP. Shri Asoka Mehta's case rests on the argument of ineffectiveness of PSP as an opposition party and the futility of a Socialist opposition when major opposition to the Congress comes from anti-socialist quarters. It also rests on his analysis of the forces within the Congress Party. Shri Karnik labours in vain when he seeks to link the present controversy with Shri Asoka Mehta's plea for finding areas of agreement; for in 1963, he has pleaded for consolidation of socialist forces in the Congress party and those outside it. If the PSP rejected this approach, it did so not because it opted for conflict as against consensus, but because it believed that it would be abandoning its duty to express social urges and seek their assertion and adjustment in the national Polity in a democratic manner and would thus leave these powerful supports for democracy to be used by the hangmen of democracy to subvert and destroy it.

Tibet Fights For Freedom

An Orient Longmans Publication

Price Rs. 15

The Budget Concessions

Rohit Dave

THE number of concessions announced by the Finance Minister has failed to impress the stock markets which continue to rule weak in the absence of any buying pressure. This should call for a thorough analysis of the real ills of our economy and to shape fiscal monetary and economic policies in the light of this analysis. The Finance Minister has remarked that stock markets are not the dependable instruments to measure the health of the economy. This may be true; but as the response to capital issues is mainly conditioned by the sentiments prevailing in the stock markets unless other measures are found to stimulate capital formation in the private sector the behaviour of the stock exchanges cannot be completely ignored. Internal resources of the companies may help upto a point and any measure designed to stimulate corporate savings may be of service. But no company is in a position to finance its expansion solely relying on internal resources and borrowing. More and more people have to be interested in saving and investment and this calls for a strategy to attract investors to the capital market. If measures designed to stimulate internal resources act as dampers to the investors to enter the capital market in a big way, the very purpose of such measures would be defeated. Of course, recourse to expansion of the public sector at a rapid rate may obviate the necessity of persuading the individuals to invest in the private sector; but this would call for compulsory savings through taxation or otherwise on a scale for which neither the Government is well equipped nor are people in a mood to tolerate without protest. Hence the dilemma of inducing internal savings without jeopardising the investment climate has to be solved somehow.

One solution of the problem suggested is to free the corporate sector from the imposts of heavy taxation through surtax, dividend tax, etc., and to allow the profitability of the corporate sector to grow at a rate sufficient to attract the investors in a big way. It is argued that even if some dissipation of accumulated resources takes place in attempts to make investments attractive this would more than be compensated by attracting more capital to the corporate sector. The result would be overall longer increase in savings and investment which would stimulate the economic growth. This school also pleads for freeing the corporate sector from the shackles that prevent companies from diversifying their activities so that the capital attracted to efficient management could be put to the best use. There is something in this line of reasoning provided measures could be devised

to ensure dispersal of share holding and to check economic power getting concentrated. Unfortunately the spokesmen of the private sector refuse to pay adequate attention to the need of making the corporate sector so broadbased as to enlarge considerably the sector of the population having a stake in the economic development. The statistics periodically published by the spokesmen of the private sector to support the claim that the base of shareholding is ever widening leave many questions unanswered and are not a safe index to determine how many more people are really drawn into the corporate sector as investors.

Even if, this hurdle is overcome, however, the basic question still remains as to what would be considered a return on capital adequate to stimulate investment on a big scale. The present rate of return is by no means inadequate when compared with the official rates of interest, if factors like risks of losing, growth potential etc. be taken into consideration. If inspite of this the investment climate is considered not very encouraging there must be some reason for this which must be located and dealt with.

The real source of mischief is obviously in the prevalence of the black market. There are reasons to believe that rates of interest in this market are very high: between 18 to 24 per cent it is said. The borrowers can afford to pay such high rates of interest presumably because they have not to pay taxes on the incomes from the transactions for which this borrowed money is used. These transactions seem to include both industrial as well as commercial transactions. Money accumulated abroad, misuse of incentives for export, quotas of scarce materials to actual users and similar controls and regulations act as source of attraction for black market transactions involving as they do huge rates of profit which in turn govern the rates of interest in this market. Till therefore blackmarket transactions are checked expectations about the rates of return are likely to be so high that no amount of inducement which the corporate sector may be allowed to offer would act as stimulants to large scale investment in the corporate sector. The Finance Minister is aware of this source of distortions in the economy and has declared more than once to do something about it. But so far he seems to have confined himself to giving a series of warnings that have fallen on deaf ears. The Government would be just kidding itself if it imagines that the black market transactions have in any way been discouraged through these warnings and through endless expressions of determination to

root out corruption. Stringent measures to cope with this end are long overdue. Is it that these measures so wellknown to all are not resorted to because of the fears of large scale dislocations that might result if effective steps are taken to constrain and eliminate the black market in the country? If so the Government seems to be oblivious of the mischief this market creates in the economy as a whole, where rates of increase in production have appreciably slowed down endangering the whole experiment of planned development of the economy in the public as well as the private sector.

Another major source of distortion in the economy is the credit policy of the banking institutions. The Reserve Bank today has powers to regulate these policies through the manipulation of bank rate, raising or lowering of the amounts of compulsory deposits with the Reserve Bank and general and selective credit controls exercised over the duration and amount of the advances to be given by the scheduled banks. The sum total of the policy so far followed by the Reserve Bank is the starving of legitimate commercial activities of the funds needed. This is the result of the anxiety of the Reserve Bank to ensure that credit facilities are not utilised for hoarding of essential commodities and holding the markets at ransom. But this objective is not always achieved in spite of the stringent control sought to be exercised by the Reserve Bank. The interested parties have found it possible to get advances on approved commodities to finance hoarding of commodities in short supply. Deposits from the public are also being utilised for this purpose. And lastly, there is enough black money in circulation to help in hoarding. As long as considerable amount of black money remains in circulation no measure of control even the wholesale nationalisation of credit institutions would result in counteracting this evil. A beginning in holding these distortions in control could however be made by enforcing differential rates of interests for advances in respect of various economic activities — commercial as well as industrial — and by providing that the advances could be drawn against only to finance the activities for which they were made. The end of various business houses obliging one another through mutual accommodations at the banks under their control could be held in check by providing for floor rates of interest as well as the ceiling rates. If prices of commodities like cotton and seeds could be at least theoretically kept within bounds there is no reason why the organised money market could not be brought under similar disciplines. The unorganised money market could create some distortions; but the legitimate transactions in this sector are limited in comparison to the

transactions in the banking sector and need not create distortions of appreciable dimensions.

But the most important factor responsible for the Government and the private sector working at cross purposes is the difference in the scales of values adopted by each. The Government's declared policy is to counteract tendencies which in a rapidly developing economy lean towards concentration of incomes, wealth and economic power in fewer hands. The industrialists and businessmen on the other hand argue that in the difficult circumstances in which they have to operate they are entitled not only to a fair return for their efforts but also for an effective control on the fruits of labour and the right to enjoy these fruits for their family as well as for themselves. When infra-structure is so weak, there are scarcities allround widening those of factors of production, of skilled labour, of raw materials, of organised markets for products the risks involved are great, casualties among the businessmen are high and the fortunes change with alarming rapidity. They and their families must therefore be assured of their future through accumulation of wealth. They contend that the high rates of return contain a considerable amount of risk insurance which should be allowed in fairness to the entrepreneurs. This arguing at cross purposes results in rise of tempers and heated controversies on every budget for a number of years. Till now the controversy was in the realm of arguments and counter-arguments. But now they are translated in the fields of action to the great detriment of the even development of economy. Something needs to be done to determine at least for some time the scale of values to which economic activities have to conform and to enforce the policy decisions arrived after mutual considerations and deliberations among all the interests concerned. The Government has so far taken for granted that their policies are *ipso facto* the policies of the community as a whole and of every section of the community. The difficulties faced in enforcing these policies are an index of the chasm that exists between the Government and the governed. This chasm has to be bridged and policies have to be made effective largely through building up a consensus in the community and marginally through enforcements.

The stalemate reached in the stock markets and in the economic activities generally can thus be broken only through a number of measures in various fields necessary to forge a clear cut, enforceable plan of action. Mere tinkling with budget proposals here and there through marginal concessions would fail to bring the desired results in the absence of an all-round strategy.

The Case Of Joseph Brodsky

Victor Frank

ON March 13 last, Joseph, Brodsky, 24, a Russian poet and translator of unusual promise, was sentenced by a Leningrad court to five years' deportation with hard labour on the somewhat odd charge "of earning too little money". The verdict said literally: "Isolated instances of earnings made by Brodsky do not indicate that he fulfilled one of the most important duties laid down in the constitution, the duty to toil honestly for the benefit of the country and for one's own well-being".

Joseph Brodsky's trial may yet become a cause célèbre in modern Russia — not because of the nature of the charge brought against him, but because he has been courageously defended by some of the most famous personalities in Russian arts and letters. The text of their petition has become known abroad. It is a remarkable document on two counts: first, it reveals what can and still does happen in Mr. Khrushchev's Russia, eight years after the denunciation of Stalin's crimes; secondly, it shows that people (*some* people, at least) are no longer afraid of speaking out on behalf of innocent victims of the State.

The broad outline of the Brodsky case is as follows. In 1962, two men, Shakhmatov and Umansky, were arrested and sentenced in Leningrad on charges "of exerting harmful influence on young people and of preaching mysticism (Yoga philosophy), anarcho-individualism etc." The young people implicated in this affair included Joseph Brodsky, at that time a young man of 22, who after leaving school at 14, had earned his living as a stoker, a metal worker and a labourer with a geological expedition. The case against Brodsky was dropped, however, when the investigating magistrate learned that Brodsky had broken with Shakhmatov of his own accord a year earlier. The police merely confiscated Brodsky's papers, among them diaries dating back to 1956 and 1957 when Brodsky was a youth of 16-17. The diaries contained some anti-Soviet remarks but the investigating magistrate came to the conclusion that Brodsky had discarded this "unhealthy adolescent mood", and that there was no case against him.

There was one man in Leningrad who, for reasons of his own, was evidently bent on Brodsky's destruction. This was a certain Lerner who until 1956 served as an officer with the K. G. B. (political police) and who, after dismissal from the K. G. B., became a leading light in the so-called "people's squads", officially sponsored vigilante groups with the task of assisting police in combating crime, hooliganism, etc.

It was this frustrated ex-police bully who finally succeeded in running down Brodsky. Brodsky's

friends say that, within the last few years, the young man had become an outstandingly able translator and poet in his own right, and that he had been leading a frugal and morally impeccable life, devoting all his energies to his literary activities. The first round shot by Lerner was a scurrilous attack on Brodsky in a local newspaper, *Vecherny Leningrad*, which, late in November 1963, described Brodsky as a cynical, loose-living good-for-nothing, ascribed somebody else's poems to him, maliciously distorted lines from his own poems and generally defamed his character. Letters to the editor in Brodsky's defence were ignored, but Lerner visited the employers of the writers of the letters and described them as "protectors of political criminal". Lerner also succeeded in enlisting the support of some local party officials and of the secretary of the Leningrad branch of the Union of Soviet Writers, the Stalinist poet Alexander Prokofyev. A closed meeting of the branch secretariat, from which Brodsky's friends were excluded, passed a resolution demanding that Brodsky be brought to trial as "a parasite".

As a result of this witch-hunt, Brodsky's health broke down, and in January 1964 he entered a Moscow hospital. On his return to Leningrad, he was arrested in the street on February 13 as "a parasite trying to evade the course of justice", although (as the authors of the petition say) he had never been served with a summons. Despite protests by the local prosecutor, Brodsky was kept in prison as a common criminal. On February 18 he made his first appearance in court. On March 13 the court passed a sentence on Brodsky — characteristically not for any political offences, but merely for alleged moral misdemeanour. It was after the verdict was pronounced that Brodsky's friends took an unprecedented step: they made public the text of their petition on his behalf. In this document they point out to the blatant perversion of justice and to a disturbing revival of old police methods. What shocked the signatories even more was that the press was allowed to heap gross abuse on counsel of defence — "an unprecedented fact in the history of our press (they say): even in 1937-1938, counsel defending 'the enemies of the people' were not abused in the press". It remains to be seen whether this courageous step by a group of Russian intellectuals will achieve its purpose: the clearing of the name and the alleviation of the fate of a young and gifted poet whose only offence appears to have consisted in having aroused the wrath of a frustrated ex-policeman.

With Many Voices

"The deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world."
—Tennyson.

Eleven years younger than me, eleven times more important for the nation, and eleven hundred times more beloved of the nation, Shri Nehru has suddenly departed from our midst and I remain alive to hear the sad news from Delhi.

—C. Rajagopalachari, *Swarajya*, June 6.

Let not our Swaraj legislators give the impression to the world that they are not only keen on their salaries and allowances, amenities and privileges, but that they are also keen on the performance of their duties.

—Sri Prakasa, *Indian Express*, June 12.

Inflation is an illusion of grandeur and a guarantee of catastrophe.

—Paulo Quartim Barbosa, *Time*, June 5.

To create socialist consciousness among the people was not an easy task. There was stiff opposition to joint farming, state trading and the expansion of the public sector.

—Nanda, at the *Socialist Convention*, June 12

You cannot adorn a lady's neck with an LIC policy.

—Rajaram, M.P., *Times of India*, June 6.

In 1937 Mao tse tung asked a question, "Why can an egg change into a chicken and why cannot a stone do that?"

—*Swarajya*, June 13.

Communists keep moving in Laos. Thai say stop. stop. Americans say okay, okay, okay. Don't understand.

—A Bangkok taxi driver quoted in *U.S. News and World Report*, June 8.

In a true democracy, love is not enough. Every dictator claims to "love" his people; only he does not respect them.

— *Indian Express*, June 13.

Heavy industry and agriculture are the two wheels of the chariot of economic development, if either of them fails, the chariot will be bogged down.

—Asoka Mehta, *Times of India*, June 11.

The cynicism of the voters counterbalances the demagoguery of the politicians.

—James Burnham, *National Review*, (USA).

Sounder economic priorities are likely to gain favour and agriculture would receive the attention due to it in place of an obsession with heavy industry.

—M. R. Masani, *Times of India*, June 11.

Mr. Nehru's policy of non-alignment was a source of guidance for the Cuban revolutionaries.

—Martin Mora, Charge d'Affaires, *Times of India*, June 23.

The evidence was that the husband was submissive, shied away from arguments, and did not assert himself sufficiently. No doubt this exasperated the wife, but to say that it amounted to cruelty was stretching the English language too far.

—Lord Justice Harman, Court of Appeal, U.K. giving judgement in a divorce case, June 11.

In many ways, until the end, Mr. Nehru remained an unsolved enigma.

—N. J. N., *Times of India*, June 22.

Why should I react to it? I believe in collective wisdom.

—Lal Bahadur Shastri, *Times of India*, June 24.