Nehruism and the Second Phase

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Many factors prevented Nehruism from becoming a fully effective doctrine of action in Nehru's life-time. Policy-making teases so personalised that the meaning of policies was not easily radiated and not properly explained. Nehru knew where he wanted to go and how, but others did not fully understand his intentions and ways. And since many of his colleagues did not sincerely subscribe to his philosophy and ideals, his policies and utterances came to be interpreted according to the proclivities of the interpreter.

The other vital gap in Nehruism was that the institutional aspect of change was neglected. If adequate attention had been paid to institutional reform, conditions today would have been much more favourable for a take-off into self-sustained growth and structural change. The task of Nehru's successors would also have been much easier and deviation so much more difficult. The absence of well-developed institutions and traditions is further evidence of the fact that Nehru's visions needed strategies and tactics which the men around him were intellectually and otherwise incapable of providing.

The failure to complete agrarian reform and to bring about the institutional changes necessary for mobilising resources and for channeling them into desirable uses is without doubt a crucial factor holding back the process of development. Without the necessary institutional support, the growth of the public sector cannot possibly be dynamic. And without this dynamism the strategy of growth and modernisation envisaged by Nehru cannot become fully effective.

THE political transition from the Nehru regime to the Shastri administration has been accomplished so deftly, that many people have tended to overlook one important implication of the change, namely, that India is now in the full tide of a second revolution, the elements and nuances of which are still quite unpredictable.

The last 17 years of Congress rule represented in many ways a continuation of the political revolution which, under a succession of charismatic leadership, overthrew the British Raj. Pandit Nehru was the last of the old guard leaders, the sole survivor of the great men of the freedom struggle. He dominated the national scene by dint of his dynamic personality, exemplary character, heroism, mass appeal and eclecticism. He is gone, and his death marks the end of this phase of our nationalist revolution and the commencement of an altogether new experience in a new setting.

Under the spell of Nehru's magnetism and unchallenged authority, conflicting interests, petty rivalries, fundamental differences, all these and more had got submerged. The overpowering influence of Nehru's charismatic leadership evoked seemingly common response in all layers and interests, so that if was possible for the administration to complete three successful general elections, launch three Five-Year Plans, overcome tensions and, in a broad sense, project an image of a mature nation. Under Nehru, India at least gave the impression of having achieved a measure of stability, fairly effective leadership with a sense of direction, and a reasonably efficient administration seeking to hasten the process of social and economic change.


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Revolution of Rising Expectations

To what extent was this picture real? We are too near the event to make an objective assessment of Nehru's contribution. But it is clear that with the end of his regime, all the latent urges, political differences, petty loyalties, caste lobbies and conflicting interests will now come to the surface and pose a new challenge to the Establishment. Towards the end of Nehru's long career, the symptoms of the second revolution were already evident. The revolution of rising expectations had seeped down via the political propaganda machine of the Congress Party, the promises of the Five-Year Plans, the local political campaigns for rural redress, the new massive projects, and the message of the radio and the cinema. The spread of regional literacy and political consciousness had set off explosive forces of linguism, casteism, and local loyalties. New elites in the States and pressure groups had appeared and, by reason of their local affiliations, posed a threat to the High Command at the Centre. But Nehru's personal authority had the effect of preventing resurgent forces from becoming overtly destructive. It must be conceded that he had, at times, great difficulty in countering the pressures, and there have been instances in the recent past when the Centre has had willy-nilly to acquiesce in petty compromises or make concessions to parochialism in the name of "national integration".

In a broad sense, however, it was possible for the Nehru regime to ameliorate feelings of alienation and provide a sense of unity, and inculcate a sense of commitment to planned development and progressive ideas even in unlikely sections of the population.

Beneath all the current Tensions and problems lies the basic urge of an awakened people for material progress and social change. This urge was once latent; it is no longer so. Our people, who had been stirred by the message of nationalism, and who had been assiduously fed on the ideas of modernisation, patiently waited for years to see independence being made meaningful in economic and social terms. Now, under the burden of rising living costs and persistent postponement of social welfare, they are getting rather restive and frustrated. Bhubaneswar demonstrated that the revolution of rising expectations can no longer be contained. The recent agitation over rising prices shows that the crisis is deepening.

Thus, while the problems of unity and social progress have become almost desperately urgent, Nehru is no more on the political scene. The new leadership now has to meet the challenge without Nehru and without any charisma. This means the Congress High Command can no longer rely on emotive response, or the impact of a single dynamic person or even a group of individuals. It will be the actual doings of the leadership which will now count more than ever before.

It is fashionable these days to seek comfort in the thought that the basic foundations of modernisation and so-
chial change have already been laid, and that, so long as the new leaders adhere to "Mr Nehru's policies", there need be no feeling of void. Those who argue on these lines—and there are quite a few who do—unwittingly deny creative possibilities in the higher echelons of the Congress Party today. That apart, in the first place, there can be no rigidity about any programme or policy. What really matters is the broad sense of direction, the social and political philosophy, the basic framework. Secondly, even the most well-conceived programme in the world cannot be effectively implemented without a deep sense of conviction, and abiding belief in the underlying goals and an intellectual attachment to the experiment itself. Given such a framework, even an opportunist leadership, without the driving force of inherent conviction, could succeed in making an impact. A shrewd pragmatic leadership may excel.

Social Philosophy of Congress

But what is really the social philosophy of the Congress today? What are the types of traditions and institutions inherited by the new rulers? These are some of the basic questions in the context of which one can perhaps attempt an objective assessment of the future prospects of India's experiment.

There should be no difficulty in recognising that the Congress under Nehru's leadership got deeply committed to the objective of socialism and economic self-reliance. By prodding, cajoling and coercing, Nehru had managed to drag the huge unwieldy organisation along the path of progressive modernisation. Between Avadi and Bhubaneswar, spanning a period of nine years, he had whipped up mass enthusiasm and released forces which culminated in the Congress Party's formal adoption of the now famous resolution on "democracy and socialism."

The Avadi resolution of 1955 declared the objective of the Congress as "the establishment of a socialist pattern of society, where the principal means of production are under social ownership or control, production is progressively speeded up and there is equitable distribution of the national wealth". At Bhubaneswar, in January, 1964, the Congress went a step further. The resolution on 'democracy and socialism' underlined the moves towards "a revolution in economic And social relationships in Indian society" and the quest for socialism "based on democracy, dignity of human individual and social justice". But more important than this resolution was the fact that the Congress Party completely altered its constitution to incorporate for the first time the establishment of "a socialist state" as a specific objective.

After Bhubaneswar

The Congress constitution, as revisited at Bhubaneswar, now includes the following clause: "The object of the Indian National Congress is the well-being and advancement of the people of India and the establishment in India, by peaceful and constitutional means, of a socialist State based on parliamentary democracy in which there is equality of opportunity and of political, economic and social rights and which aims at world peace and fellowship". This objects clause made the socialist commitment of the Congress irrevocable and demonstrated that Nehru had indeed managed to push the High Command to a point of no return. In the context of vested interests, this was an astute move.

Yet, there was little in any of the Congress resolutions or documents which could be identified as a distinct coherent ideology. The resolutions and statements freely dedicated the party to socialist semantics, but presented no intellectual doctrine, no programme of action, no articulate socialist philosophy, indeed no real ideology which could inspire the people and give a sense of purpose to social and economic activity.

The Bhubaneswar resolution, which created such a hue and cry, talked of revolutionising social and economic relationship, but did not indicate the nature of the change aimed at, nor did it set any time limit for achieving the broad goal. It emphasised the objective of eliminating disparities and privilege, but did not say how and when the objective was to be accomplished. It referred to the ideal of equality, but did not outline its practical scope or the ways and means of approaching it. And on such vital issues as nationalisation and institutional reform, the Congress took no clear stand at all.

All this suggests that the ideological position of the Congress today remains vague and ambivalent. That was inevitable. Nehru himself was a convinced socialist, though his thought processes at times revealed astonishing elements of contradiction. All along he wanted the Congress to move left, but it took him years to get the Congress to accept the word "socialism" as a respectable one in party terminology. For one thing, he was surrounded by men who lacked capacity for the necessary intellectual effort to understand the meaning of socialism and propagate it. Secondly, the powerful men in the party were, by tradition or avarice, either conservative or non-radical liberals. After independence, as electioneering assumed critical significance, money-power entered the fray and built a veritable wall of unprincipled self-seekers to counter Nehruism. Electioneering and lobbies changed the outlook of the Congress and brought to the fore men with small town minds, cast in a mould of ossified religious or commercial orthodoxy. Such men were unwilling to endorse any ideology or programme which was even remotely connected with that man called Karl Marx.

Fear of Disruption

On the issue of ideology, Nehru never showed any inclination to force a showdown in the party. In the early '50's when he was trying to get the Working Committee to take a favourable stand on socialism, he showed a certain impatience and even contempt for those Rightists who denounced the concept without understanding it. (See his letter to Mahatma Gandhi in "A Bunch of Old Letters", 1960, p 118.) Yet, even in his capacity as Congress President, he scrupulously adhered to the formal party line in all these matters to an extent that he was sometimes misunderstood by his own supporters. His advocacy of socialism was strictly confined to personal airing of views in public and persuasion in the inner circles. It is clear that Nehru did not want to risk political disruption because, as he said, he was convinced that "the logic of events will lead to socialism".

Even after he gained absolute power in the Government and the party after independence, he relied heavily on gentle persuasion, struck unpalatable compromises and allowed pressures to build up so that the High Command was willy-nilly pushed into progressive postures. In the prevailing climate, he realised he had to move cautiously in order not to split the national movement at a time when emotional integration was still a live issue and when the world ideological clash was posing a serious dilemma. He got the Congress to accept the concept of a Wel-
fare State in a formal resolution at the Nasik session in 1950, and then by stages transformed the "welfare state" into a "socialistic pattern of society" at Avadi in 1955 and into a pure and simple "socialist state" at Bhubaneswar by 1964. This change came about through laborious compromises, reconciling seemingly contradictory modes of thought, and through Nehru's own eclecticism. The progress between the concept of welfare state and socialism took 14 years, which may be considered a very long period of time in the life of an awakened, impatient ex-colonial country. But that was one facet of Nehruism. He wanted a social "revolution", but wanted to make it as gentle, gradual and as painless as possible through the adoption of the British style and democratic method of talking discussing, winning and voting.

**Sense of Urgency**

As the social crisis deepened, and a creeping sense of discontent and frustration came, in the wake of Chinese invasion in 1962, Nehru began to realise that socialism by occasional instalments had not proved good enough to speed up industrialisation, modernisation and social change. He began to feel the need for a decisive plunge. At the AICC session in November, 1963, Nehru sadly gave expression to the fear that if a programme for socialism was not evolved and implemented immediately, it was possible that "ten or fifteen years hence our people may lose faith in peaceful means and the problem may get more complicated". There was a tinge of disillusionment in the Jaipur speech. Yet he made it clear that, while the march towards socialism must be faster and more determined, there was to be no abandonment of the democratic base. What he really wanted was a radical programme of action to push ahead with industrial expansion, institutional reform and social justice. From this point of view, the party resolution on 'democracy and socialism' fell far short of Nehru's expectations. He had frankly confessed to his colleagues that the resolution as formulated at Jaipur "was devoid of the necessary sense of urgency".

The Congress party's lack of a clearly defined ideology and a programme of action must not, however, detract from the personal perspectives, values and social philosophy of Nehru himself. In spite of all the deficiencies of the Nehru regime, from Malabar to the Himalayas, from Bombay to Assam, Nehruism had a meaning, a purpose; men and women believe in it, they have sacrificed for it, and will continue to do so, even if Nehru may no longer be with them. Nehru's social and political image was so firmly planted amongst the masses that it needed no support from a sophisticated party ideology, even if such an ideology could be expounded in popular terms and a programme of action. In fact, Nehru did not wait for the Congress to evolve a clear-cut ideology of its own. He had embarked on experiment of his own in a process full of contradictions.

Nehru's philosophy is usually described as a typically Indian amalgam of Marx, Fabian and Gandhi. Such generalisations are largely based on Nehru's early utterances when he was in a desperate search for a strategy of change which would square up with the country's nationalist: pride and the ideological suspicions of his colleagues. He struck an uneasy compromise in the earlier phase of his experiment between the big business wing of the Congress, which wanted capitalist industrialisation away from the shadow of Marx, and the Nehru camp which wanted priority for social justice and centralised planning. But over the years, as the crisis deepened, Nehru began to think in more radical terms.

**Return to Radicalism**

In the last few years of his life, Nehru had drifted back almost, though not quite, to the same position from where he had started off as an unconventional, dynamic leader beaming younger members of the intelligentsia to new horizons. The radical phase of Nehruism, if it had had full play, would have resulted in a decisive shift towards socialism in Government policy and planning and progressive change in Congress outlook. Nehru's utterances all through 1963 and his attempts to formulate a more purposeful programme of action (at the party and Plan level), which earned him the ire of certain pressure groups in the Congress Parliamentary Party and party High Command, indicated that he was really dissatisfied with the semi-stagnant state of affairs and quite worried about the future. He wanted a precise mandate to push through change more rapidly with perfected instruments while he was still alive. But Bhubaneswar came ten years too late, and Nehru died ten years too early.

Nehru wanted India to develop a modernised socialist state resting on the pillars of a large-scale industrial system and a parliamentary form of government. The process was to be planned, but gradual; the transition was to be reasonably long, it was to avoid too much tension; and precedence was to be given to economic growth over redistribution of income. These ideas marked the early beginnings of Nehruism and were broadly embodied in the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948. But as the party conservatives got accustomed to the idea of change and State intervention, Nehru progressively sharpened his tools and came out with bolder ideas. He called in renowned Marxist advisers from abroad and socially conscious men from within the country to give shape to his progressive ideas. Similarly, there was a rethinking on the concept of mixed economy, and a marked shift towards state enterprise and control. All this was to be done without whittling down individual liberties or the democratic framework. He freely used Marxist advisers, but clung to his belief in a mixed economy with a flourishing private sector co-existing with an expanding public sector. He rejected ideas of totalitarianism and authoritarianism, but wanted the State to have a commanding position in the economy. There was an obvious element of contradiction and ambivalence in the thinking and approach. But as the "Nehru pattern" took shape, corrections were under way. There might have been a radical change in the picture at Bhubaneswar and thereafter if Nehru's illness and death had not interrupted the process.

**Socialism without Communism**

Nehru honestly believed that an under-developed country like India could accomplish radical social and economic transformation without going through all the convulsions of the Communist system, provided the private sector changed its outlook and fully co-operated in the social revolution. Ten years ago (before Avadi), this is how he outlined his idea before the National Development Council: "The picture I have in mind is definitely and absolutely a socialistic picture of society. I am not using the word in a dogmatic sense at all. I mean large that the means of production should be socially owned and controlled for the benefit of society as a whole. There is plenty of room for private enterprise provided the main aim is kept clear". (Jawaharlal Nehru, "Planning and Development, 1952-56", speeches, p 17).
Way back in 1950, we got off to a flying start on the business of producing aluminium wires and cables. We foresaw the future ahead of the light metal. And we, also, cleared people's minds of the copper cant!

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But the reinforcing core comes from elsewhere—from those who have put their savings into the company ... from those who work for it ... from those who buy from it. But 'what is past is prologue'. To a long and, we humbly hope, a more useful future.
The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 set out some of the principles of Nehru’s philosophy, though it retained sufficient ambivalence to placate the uncommitted elements and conservatives. The Resolution declared that “the State will progressively assume predominant and direct responsibility for setting up new industrial undertakings and for developing transport facilities. It will also undertake state trading on an increasing scale”. An important sector of industries was exclusively reserved for the State and the intentions of the State to enter other fields indicated. As the Resolution explained, “the adoption of the socialistic pattern of society as the national objective, as well as the need for planned and rapid development, require that all industries of basic and strategic importance, or in the nature of public utilities, should be in the public sector. Other industries which are essential and require investment on a scale which only the State, in present circumstances, could provide, have also to be in the public sector”. But to underline the concept of mixed economy, all industries other than those included in the specified schedules, were left open to the private sector, with or without state participation.

No Time Limit

For the period and conditions, the formulation of the Resolution was an admirable attempt to surge forward without too much pain. Yet, there was no time limit stipulated for the fulfilment of the Resolution, which seemed rather odd. It is significant to note that eight years after its adoption, the Resolution had not even been partially implemented. Planning and administration tended to be too slow and inefficient, and as a result the development of State enterprise fell far short of the expansion visualised by Nehru and outlined in the Industrial Policy Resolution. That was not all. The policy and goals had not been strictly adhered to by the planners and the administration. Both tended to depart from the directives in actual practice. The truth was that the convictions with which Nehru approached matters of policy or goals was not fully shared by all his ministerial colleagues. Also, much distance separated Nehru’s scientific rationalism from administrative expediency. Consequently, execution and implementation suffered. All through the Nehru regime, there was a glaring gulf between ideals propounded by the leader and Government action.

In the case of the Industrial Policy Resolution, for example, the basic concept of socialism and the underlying goals were glossed over and licences issued to private sector units in fields which were exclusively reserved for State ownership and control or where further expansion was intended to be in the public sector. These included coal, oil, fertilisers, chemicals, engineering etc. Proposals for setting up state-owned steel mills were held back or even abandoned (in the earlier phase) in preference to the expansion of private units. Schemes for setting up public sector units in new fields were either watered down or under pressure for private sector participation, association or continuance.

Signboards Only

Similarly, Nehru’s warnings about foreign private capital were ignored. (See Nehru’s address to NDC’s standing committee in January 1956, ibid, p 40). The limitation of foreign investment to a minority of the equity in new projects, which was the declared policy, was actually broken in an increasing number of cases since 1956. Two wholly foreign-owned and two foreign majority-owned ventures were licensed in 1956-57. In 1957-58, three foreign majorities were sanctioned, one with 83 per cent holding. Over the two years, 1938-60, no less than 18 ventures with foreign majorities were sanctioned, in some cases ranging up to 90 per cent and, at least in one case, 100 per cent. Some of our Ministers have been bending over backwards abroad and apologising for Nehruism in their quest for foreign capital. In justification, the so-called flexibility of the Industrial Policy Resolution has been abused. The clause which refers to the possibility of the State securing “the co-operation of private enterprise in the establishment of new units when the national interests so require” has been twisted to cloak violations of policy. This particular clause never visualised foreign capital participation in state ventures as has been made out. What it did provide for was the possibility of associating India’s own domestic private enterprise in public projects if necessary.

Apart from these violations, there was a distinct lack of drive in the pursuit of stipulated goals, and not merely in the case of public sector expansion. There was no proper follow-up of ideas at the level of economic ministries, no show of initiatives for giving shape and content to the broad patterns of development propounded by the leader. In this sense, Nehru would seem to have been let down by his colleagues and by the Establishment. Looked at from another angle, one sees a certain weakness in Nehru’s own approach which resulted in the creation of signboards, leaving the main structure to men unworthy or unconvinced of their tasks.

Policy-Making Too Personalised

Nehru did not like to be bothered about details. He was concerned with the mainstream of thought, the basic ideals and goals. All this gave him a breadth of vision which was unmatched in our age. In a more congenial setting, this method of high policy-making might have worked wonders. But not so in India, where one encounters a wide variety of conflicts at every stage, and certainly not when important ministries were manned by men without vision or qualification. The projection of democracy in regional representation in the Cabinet and the technique of reconciliation prevented ideological homogeneity and lowered the competence of the Government.

Besides, policy-making was so personalised that the underlying meaning was not easily radiated, and not properly explained. Nehru knew where he wanted to go and how, but others did not fully understand or appreciate his intentions and ways. And since many of his colleagues did not sincerely subscribe to his philosophy or ideals, his policies and utterances came to be interpreted according to the proclivities of the interpreter. Nehru knew all this, but he was a highly cultivated democrat and far too forgiving. He could not, on his own, contemplate moves to weed out elements working at cross-purposes.

There were two other aspects of strategy which prevented Nehruism from becoming a fully effective doctrine of action during Nehru’s own lifetime. First, the institutional side of change was rather neglected. Secondly, a good deal of valuable time was lost in battling with linguism and regional conflicts, problems which were themselves an outward manifestation of economic and social backwardness and pent-up feelings.

If adequate attention had been paid to institutional reform, conditions today would have been much more favourable for a take-off into self-sustained growth and structural change. The task of Nehru’s successors would also have been so much easier, and deviation so much more difficult. The absence of well developed institutions
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and traditions is one more evidence of the fact that Nehru's visions needed strategies and tactics which the men around him were intellectually and otherwise incapable of providing.

**Institutional Vacuum**

The Planning Commission was probably the only major institution available to implement Nehru's ideas. And that was Nehru's own creation. Like the Government, the Planning Commission, however, degenerated into an unwieldy mass of men without any conviction, idealism, zeal or imagination. The Commission miserably failed to provide Nehru with any strategies or methods of advancing to the accepted goals. It even failed to evolve proper methods of planning development projects in the physical sense. In fact, this particular institution, in its present form, is, in my view, incapable of producing any results, apart from providing opportunities to some people for slothful enjoyment of salaries, power and privileges.

The failure to complete agrarian reform and to bring about necessary institutional changes for mobilising resources and for channelising them into productive purposes is, without doubt, a crucial factor holding back the process of development and change. Without the necessary institutional backing the growth of the public sector could not possibly be dynamic. And without this dynamism, the type of strategy of growth and modernisation envisaged by Nehru could not become fully effective.

Land reform and ceilings, and agricultural co-operatives have for years been part of the Congress platform. But 17 years after independence, the institutional changes in the agrarian sector, which provides the bulk of the national income and harbours an overwhelming part of the population, have not been even superficially completed. Elementary land reform legislation has not been implemented in many parts of the country. Nehru got the Congress to endorse his idea of joint co-operative farming at the Nagpur session in 1958, but the Government remained equivocal (though well-known democracies like the Scandinavian countries are known to have made a success of the experiment). The Second Five-Year Plan included certain reform measures, but we are now on the verge of the Fourth Plan without having gone through what was intended to be done during the Second.

While institutions for supporting companies have been multiplied and are being assiduously strengthened, the need for institutional changes to promote other vital or strategic developments does not seem to have been fully realised yet. Precautions and checks against the adverse consequences of industrialism have also been neglected. The administrative apparatus too has not been overhauled to bring it in line with the needs of a planned economy. Officials in key positions lack drive, vigour and a certain belief in the cause. But the system itself is not conducive to quick decisions and efficient implementation.

**Part of Indian Thinking**

Nevertheless, with all the ambivalence and functional deficiencies, Nehruism has become an integral part of modern Indian thinking. Very soon it may be taken for granted. Large-scale industrialisation and social justice have already found a permanent place in the electoral manifestoes of nearly every political party in this country. Even those who have been hostile to Nehru personally have come to accept his basic philosophy of growth and democratic socialism. Those who suspected the presence of certain totalitarian or Marxist streaks in his approach have been suitably impressed by the phenomenal growth and prosperity of the private sector under his regime. Nehru himself was getting a little worried about these trends, which partly reflected the inner contradictions in the chosen strategy of growth and partly the gap between aims and implementation. But Nehru's faith in the fundamentals of his pattern of development was confirmed by his mass support it evoked at the elections, in the press and in all political circles (with the notable exception of the Swatantra Party).

The big question today is whether the new rulers who have inherited power from Nehru will continue the Nehru experiment or alter the course completely. Will they build on the legacy, or seek new foundations? Some people think that the new Government will be less socialistic than the Nehru regime was planning to be. There are even those who predict a swing to extreme right-wing communal revivalism. This prognostication is popular among foreigners and their Indian friends.

So far as I can see, for some time to come at least, Nehruism will continue under the sheer compulsion of politics. Memories are still fresh. Nehruism is still the gospel, and the new leadership is still to prove itself. The Shastri government will not only have to adhere to the philosophy and goals associated with the Nehru era, but also appear publicly to be doing so. Changes will not be countenanced if they appear to depart from the fundamentals of approach and policy with which politicians have by now become quite familiar. Besides, Shastri himself may want to counter the general impression that he is less socialistic than Nehru was.

But the longer-term outlook is uncertain. It is not easy to be dogmatic or to produce conclusive evidence as to the likely consequences of the change in leadership. Certain broad features may, however, be noted. There is, for example, no single person in the Cabinet who has anything like an intellectual conviction in Nehru's social philosophy, his sophisticated doctrines or scientific rationalism. Personal loyalty to a leader cannot be equated with intellectual conviction of ideology.

**What Is Centrism?**

In common parlance the Shastri regime is described as "centrist", to differentiate it from the Nehru government which was considered leftist. What exactly is a "centrist"? The term, as used in Indian politics, means someone who does not subscribe to the ideology or philosophy of the left or the right. This is a peculiar attitude of mind recently spurred in our politics by the illusion that, to gain a political following (in circumstances of ideological controversies), one should stay uncommitted in political ideas and philosophy. I wonder whether, in effect, this may not mean that such a person is neither here nor there. Reluctance or inability to take a definite position in party politics can never become an enduring virtue. In this age, in a developing country, where appetites have been whetted for a dynamic surge along a distinctive path of economic and social development, philosophic neutralism may not be inspiring or meaningful. A shrewd politician like Lal Bahadur Shastri cannot fail to realise this.
The rise of the new elites in the States is another factor which will influence the outlook of the new administration. The manner in which the so-called consensus on leadership was taken and the transition arranged resulted in producing an exceptional crop of leader-makers, prominent among whom were the Chief Ministers of States. They will be conscious of their role and exert pressure. All these men who bowed before Nehru may now be a little more assertive in their dealings with the Centre in any case.

The third important factor worth considering in an assessment of the future is the compulsion of economic conditions. The rising prices, the fall in the tempo of growth, the labour discontent, the rash of food disturbances, and the demoralisation in planning, all these cannot be brushed aside by any Government. Nehru had seen the writing on the wall and was seemingly perturbed. The grave warnings he uttered at the Jaipur session of the AICC towards the end of 1963 showed that he had correctly judged the temper of the people and the need to do something to hold their faith in the concept of democratic socialism. He had already initiated moves to inject dynamism in the public sector and speed up other institutional reforms for accelerating growth and social change. The tools of implementation were also in the process of being chiselled. All this is something which a clever tactician cannot possibly afford to ignore.

From the point of view of the country, what is urgently required is a dynamic approach to the problems of industrial expansion, agrarian reform and social justice. This calls for a definite sense of direction and strict implementation. It is here that the new leadership will face its greatest test.

The Shastri administration will have to get down to this task in right earnest if it is to prove that it can deliver the goods. Pragmatists may, in the process, resort to a heavier dose of Nehruism or even dilute it. Surreptitious adulteration of Nehruism is possible because of the dearth of modern minds in the Congress party. But that will be a risk. In the context of the objective conditions, and knowing that a restive rank and file is deeply committed to Nehruism, can any Congress leader of today afford the risk of asking the party to accept less?

Nehru, Bose and Gandhism

"I WAS against your standing for election for two major reasons: it meant under the circumstances a break with Gandhiji and I did not want this to take place. It would mean also, I thought, a setback for the real Left. The Left was not strong enough to shoulder the burden by itself and, when a real contest came in the Congress, it would lose and then there would be a reaction against it. I thought it probable that you would win the election against Pattabhi, but I doubted very much whether you could carry the Congress with you in a clear contest with what is called Gandhism. Even if by any chance you secured a majority in the Congress, this would not represent a strong enough backing in the country without Gandhiji, and effective work, and more so preparation for a struggle, would be very difficult. There were so many disruptive tendencies already existing in the country and, instead of controlling them, we would add to them. All this meant weakening our national movement just when strength was necessary."

Nehru, in letter to Subhas Chandra Bose, April 3, 1939.