REMINISCENCES DISCREET AND INDISCREET

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T.N. KAUL

LANCERS PUBLISHERS

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To

Pradeep, Preeti and

my grandchildren

Nikhil, Arjun, Radhika and Kavita

Also, by T.N. KAUL:

DIPLOMACY IN PEACE AND WAR
INDIA, CHINA AND INDOCHINA
THE KISSINGER YEARS (INDO-US RELATIONS)

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PREFACE

Many books have been written about the Raj—mostly by Englishmen. An Indian cannot look upon the Raj with the same feelings. The former look back with nostalgia on a period that most Englishmen consider a glorious part of their history. An Indian, however dispassionate, is more critical. He looks upon the Raj as an interregnum in the long history of India and relates it to what came after—Partition and *Swaraj* (Self-rule).

This book is based on my experiences in both the Raj and *Swaraj*—as a student in India and Britain in the early and mid-thirties, as a member of the 'heaven born' Indian Civil Service (ICS) before, and in India's Foreign Service (IFS), after Independence.

I have tried to recapture memories of the Raj, both as a student and as an administrator, and be as fair and objective as possible. I enjoyed my friendship with many British colleagues, but also came in conflict with some of them. I should, however, like to pay a tribute to their fairness to me, within the limitations of their overall responsibilities. Most of them considered it their mission to perpetuate the Raj in India; some saw the writing on the wall and made the best they could of a fast developing situation; a few could not reconcile themselves to the changes that were inevitable and resigned.

The inexorable sweep of the Independence Movement was bound to end the Raj, sooner or later. World War II accelerated the process and the British made a virtue of necessity by withdrawing from India, while the going was good. They left behind a divided sub-continent. This was partly the result of their imperial policy of 'divide and rule'. It was also partly due to the inability of the Congress Party to win the confidence of the Muslim League. The Congress represented the ethos of Indian civilization, its tradition of nationalism, tolerance and

secularism; the League was the creation of Muslim feudal and business classes, inspired and encouraged by the Raj.

The result was the partition of the sub-continent into Pakistan and India. Whether it was for better or for worse, only the future can tell. So far, it has led to three bloody conflicts between the two. Perhaps, in course of time, the younger generation in both countries will learn to live in peace and co-operation, for they need not suffer from hangovers of the past. It is with this faith in the future, and hope in the younger generation, that I have drawn on my reminiscences of the Raj, to remind them of a period that is over, but still haunts us. Recollection of the past is sometimes useful to understand the present and plan for the future.

India in the thirties was seething with discontent. The British Raj was trying to strengthen its hold. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi were striving to bring about a peaceful transfer of power from British to Indian hands. Others, like the 'young' Nehru, were impatient, but saw no alternative to Gandhi's leadership. Many young Indians were hovering between the call of Gandhi's peaceful revolution and the path of violence.

The Indian peasantry was living in poverty and misery, workers were barely earning a living wage, students were seething with the urge to do something, not knowing what. The Rajas and Maharajas in the 'princely' States were ruling as born autocrats, while feudal landlords were basking in the protection of the British rulers. Indian industrialists and businessmen were trying to run with the hare and hunt with the hound, taking advantage of the *Swadeshi* (buy Indian) Movement, financing the nationalists and supporting the Raj, at the same time.

There were also leaders like Rabindranath Tagore, his English friend, C.F. Andrews, and scores of other far-seeing Indians and Britons who saw the shape of things to come, but were unable to influence the course of immediate events.

Then came World War II. In spite of the British Government's obduracy, Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and Maulana Azad tried to mobilize India on the side of Democracy against Fascism and Nazism. But the then government in Britain refused to part with power and win the willing co-operation of

a free India, in the world-wide struggle against Hitler and Mussolini.

When Japan joined the Nazis and Britain suffered one defeat after another in South and South-East Asia, she became wiser and agreed to meet India half-way in its demand for Independence, after the war. The Simla Conference of 1945 and the formation of the Interim Government in September 1946 led ultimately to the vivisection of India. Two independent Dominions, India and Pakistan, emerged in August 1947.

How did all these events, foreseen and unforeseen, affect the ordinary Indian and Briton—the civil servant, the army officer, the *jawan*, the student and the intelligentsia? It is not my intention to sit in judgement upon these historic events, but only to describe my reactions to them as they unfolded. I am not judging from the hindsight of today the actions of the men at the top (both British and Indian) involved in this gigantic drama. I am only trying to describe the reactions and feelings of the men—Indian and British—engrossed in their day-to-day work in the districts of India, where I served in various capacities, concerned with almost every aspect of life in rural India.

Part I ends with an epitaph on the Raj. I do not mince my words; I do not write in anger or sorrow. I write frankly and simply, not in the veiled language of diplomacy, because I believe it is the best way to communicate with the younger generation, on whom rests the future responsibility of shaping India's internal affairs and external relations.

In Part II, I have attempted to describe how independent India made a beginning in its dealings with the rest of the world, uninhibited by British imperial policies. However, no country with the size, population, geopolitical situation, long history, traditions and culture of India can completely wipe out the traces of its recent or ancient past. We inherited legacies from the Raj, both good and bad, which we tried to adapt to our new environment and requirements. We did not always succeed, but we did play an important role, particularly in the Third World.

Independent India was able to give a lead in mobilising Asian and Afro-Asian opinion against the legacies of imperialism, colonialism and racism. India also adopted the policy of

non-alignment with the two military and ideological rival blocs. This policy attracted most of the newly-independent countries.

India tried to develop close relations with her great neighbour China. In April 1954, she entered into an agreement with China on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, which I had the honour to negotiate. There was a certain amount of euphoria in India about Sino-Indian friendship, at the time, but it was soon destroyed by the expansionist ambitions and activities of the new China. Relations between India and China declined almost as rapidly as they had developed. I have tried to analyse the reasons for this and the subsequent development of India's relations with the Soviet Union. The main reason seemed to be the absence of a mutuality of interests or commonality of approach between India and China and the convergence of these between India and the Soviet Union, particularly after Nehru's visit to the USSR, in 1955. Another factor which contributed to the development of Indo-Soviet relations was the hostility of the West and the USA, in particular, towards some of the vital interests of India such as Kashmir, Goa, and her policy of non-alignment, on which the Soviet Union supported us, 1952 onwards.

India's relations with her neighbours in south Asia, with South-East Asia and Indochina, with Iran and South-West Asia, with Britain and the Commonwealth have also been touched upon briefly. India's developing links with the Third World have been dealt with and a few suggestions made on how to safeguard the peace, security and development of South-East and South-West Asia.

Part II also analyses India's relations with the Super powers. The Sino-Soviet rift, the convergence of Sino-US policies, the increasing military aid to Pakistan from China and the USA are some of the factors that have an impact on India's security interests. India cannot remain indifferent to these developments; she has to safeguard her own interests and those of peace in the region. This will pose a challenge to India's diplomacy, in the eighties. I have mentioned a few problems and ventured to, offer some solutions.

In the Epilogue, I have tried to have a glimpse of the future, in the light of past and present developments. The picture I have painted and the conclusions I have drawn present a rather

grim prospect for the immediate future. However, I have ended on a note of optimism, because I believe that the future of the world depends on the younger people in every country. They will, I hope, be able to save the world from disaster in the future, because they do not suffer from the hangups of the older generation.

It is in this faith and hope that I have dedicated this book to my son and daughter and my four grandchildren who will, I hope, see and shape a better world than we did.

The present-day crisis in India and the world could be traced in part, to the problem of non-involvement of youth in national affairs. The fruits of modernisation have not trickled down to the lower middle class. While modern city life and the exposure to western culture provide temptation and glamour, the realities in terms of finding suitable jobs and opportunities for professional fulfilment or even utilising one's training and potential are scarce, especially in developing countries such as India. This results in widespread frustration amongst the younger generation. Those who are left out from the mainstream become easy prey to wily politicians or pseudo-religious self-styled saints. Talented young people, especially professionals, try to migrate abroad. Those who stay behind, remain isolated from the national mainstream and retire to their private worlds.

Despite the emotional and sometimes intellectual appeal of Indian culture, the glamour offered by the western materialistic life style is far stronger in its urge on the young mind. Moreover, elders who keep lamenting the waywardness of the young have no alternative models, to offer. When young people see that their leaders do not practise what they preach, that expediency is more important than ethics and morality, it creates cynicism and the urge to flout all authority. The only way to motivate the younger generation to be involved in the task of nation-building is to provide them an example they could emulate. The world needs the idealism of youth.

This book does not claim to be a scholarly work. Many erudite books have been written about India's relations with the rest of the world. My main purpose in writing is to present a general picture, based on personal knowledge and experience. Half a century of recollections and reminiscences could fill volumes. I have tried to be selective, but given as comprehensive

an account as possible, of the years 1930 to 1981. The book is not just autobiographical, but a record of events and experiences in the life of a nation, as seen and felt by one who took some part in them.

Many friends in India and abroad—especially my daughter Preeti Sahgal—helped me with their criticism and comments. But I alone am responsible for the views expressed in this book. I do not represent the government, any political party or organisation in India or abroad. I have not consulted any official records for this book. I have relied mainly on my own memory and such notes as I kept from time to time.

Acknowledgements are due to Alan W. Flack, P.N. Shasma, and Devdas for some of the the photographs published in this book. The rest are from my personal collection.

I should like to thank my publishers for their patience and encouragement. I would also like to express my appreciation of the help given to me by Theresa, Sheila, Baweja, Mukhi, Sood and Agnihotri in typing the manuscript in their spare time. Last, but not the least, I crave the indulgence of the reader who may find some useful grains in the personal chaff this book contains.

'LIDDER NOOK' T.N. KAUL
Village Nunwan,
Pahalgam (KASHMIR)

25 December, 1981.

THE RAJ
(1930-47)

CHAPTER 1

INDIA IN TRANSITION

India is a large country (1.2 million sq. miles), with the second largest population (684 million) in the world. It has almost all the races and religions of mankind and sixteen main languages, with hundreds of local dialects. It is divided into twenty-two States and nine Union Territories which are administered directly by the Central Government. U.P. (the old United Provinces, now called Uttar Pradesh) is the largest State, larger than France, with a population of 111 million.

I joind the Indian Civil Service (ICS) at a time (1937) when a degree of self-government had been introduced in the provinces of British India. Provincial governments had been elected on a restricted franchise, under the 1935 Act. This created a form of diarchy, with elected representatives ruling in the provinces under a British Governor who retained certain powers. The Centre was still governed by the British Viceroy, through a nominated Executive Council. The Indian National Congress, led by Gandhi and Nehru, had won the 1937 elections, in eight out of eleven provinces, including U.P.

I worked in the villages and districts of U.P., for ten years (1937-1947), in various administrative capacities. It was a complex State, representing the many-faceted problems of India. During those ten years, I was involved directly in the interaction of human, political, economic and social forces that led ultimately to India's independence.

Till 1939, when the Congress Government resigned, I was deeply inspired by my work. and enjoyed it Initiative was

encouraged and appreciated; young officers were given scope for developing their ideas and opportunities to implement them. It was a training period, both for the politicians as well as officers, to adjust themselves to each other and to the changing conditions. Most British officers of the ICS adjusted themselves in the hope that things would work out with cooperation between the new Indian political bosses and themselves and lead to a continuation of the British connection, albeit in a different form. But some still entertained illusions of British superiority.

I recall an instance when a British ICS officer did not see eye to eye with the Revenue Minister, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai. He tried to obstruct Kidwai's proposals for land reforms and wrote a rather cheeky note on the file. Rafi wrote back: "I do not know if this is an example of incompetence or impertinence. I can forgive incompetence, but not the latter." The file went up to the Governor. He had to uphold the Minister's orders and reprimand the officer who happened to be his own son.

Such cases were rare. By and large, the British officers adjusted themselves quite well, during this period (1937-1939). A few senior Indian officers also found it difficult to adjust themselves, but most of us, junior officers, felt proud to work under patriotic leaders who had been through the freedom struggle and discharged their duties efficiently and honestly. Those like me, who had not worked in the previous administration under the British, felt enthusiastic about their work and the opportunity to serve India.

Then came a period of repression and disillusionment. In 1939, Britain declared war on behalf of India, without even observing the formality of consulting the people's representatives. The Congress Governments resigned in protest, even though they sympathised with the Allied cause. They could not compromise India's national self-respect and honour which had been totally disregarded by the British. The British had no reason to fear a refusal on India's part to join the war effort, if only they had shown due regard for India's national aspirations and sentiment. With the resignation of the Congress Governments, the beginning of the War, Gandhi's individual Civil Disobedience and Quit India Movements, most British officers went back to their old ways. They tried to weaken the Congress and looked askance at Indian officers who showed any sense of independence

or nationalism. Such officers were not trusted or put in to key positions. Towards the Congress Party and the nationalist movement, they were ruthless and intolerant. The magistracy and the police were given extraordinary powers which were widely abused.

During 1939—1942, I was lucky to have escaped into 'Settlement' work which brought me in close touch with the land and the people at the grass-roots. I did not have to face the dilemmas and challenges that some of my Indian collegues did in the regular executive line. But I could not escape for long and had to come back to district work, from 1942 to 1945. It was a difficult period. There were occasions when the British rulers expected the Indian officers to do the dirty work of suppressing the national movement. Communal and caste riots were indirectly encouraged, to weaken the unity of the people. Funds were limited and attention was concentrated on pursuing the war effort, while other problems were ignored. The Congress Party was in the wilderness, with most of its leaders in jail. The Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, both communal parties, were trying to exploit the situation with the encouragement of the British rulers.

It was not easy for a nationalist Indian to reconcile his conscience with the unjust and arbitrary orders he was expected to implement. However, if one stood firm on principles and was honest and clear in one's mind, one had nothing to fear from one's British superior officers, except a frown now and then, or a posting to a god-forsaken place.

The British ICS officer was in a class by himself, trying to be fair-minded, yet firm in the pursuit of his imperial goals. It was not an easy job even for the best British brains to tackle at that time. Some kept a smiling face or a stiff upper lip, others broke down and resigned, but on the whole they persevered and worked hard to perpetuate the Raj.

However, there were other forces at work, beyond their or their country's control. World War II was going badly for the Allies. The Japanese had overrun South-East Asia. The people of India were in a ferment and the days of British rule in India were numbered. Gandhi's peaceful, non-violent struggle saved the situation from taking a violent and ugly turn. He, Nehru, Patel, Azad and others were in sympathy with the people of

Britain, but they could not tolerate British imperialism in India, while fighting against Nazism and Fascism in Europe. The British in Great Britain realised this better than the British rulers in India.

The Cripps Mission came in 1942, but failed and went back. Then came the Cabinet Mission, in 1945, when the Simla Conference was held. In early 1947, much against the wishes of some farsighted Britons and most Indian leaders, it was decided to divide India before the British quit. The upper middle class Muslim officials, traders and businessmen had vested interest in the creation of Pakistan. But the majority of Muslim peasants and workers in the villages and small towns of India had no desire or illusions to attract them to the new 'holy' land of Pakistan. They stayed on in the hearths and homes of their ancestors.

Plans for partition were set in full motion by Mountbatten, the last Viceroy who took over from Wavell, in March 1947. The army was divided, families were divided, assets and liabilities were divided. Partition was the price India had to pay for Independence. While all imperialists follow the policy of 'divide and rule', the British decided to divide and quit, when they could no longer divide and rule. For most Indians, in spite of partition, Independence was better than continued foreign rule in a united India. Gandhi had wanted an independent and united India. Having fulfilled part of his mission, he now let his colleagues in the Congress try the experiment of running the partitioned dominion of India.

The threats of mass killings, the migration of millions of innocent Hindus and Sikhs from what was to become Pakistan and of Muslims from North and East India were frightening. It was with these ominous dangers lurking in the present and looming on the horizon that I said good-bye to U.P. I welcomed my transfer to Delhi, at the beginning of the fateful year 1947, to be at the centre of things and get an over-view of the situation.

Ten years in U.P. had been a mixed experience of hopes and fears, exhilaration and disappointment. One felt inspired and heartened by the goals and ideals of Gandhi and Nehru, but the policies of the alien rulers roused one's hatred and anger. The poverty of the people and the magnitude of the problems

independent India would have to face seemed insurmountable. These problems could and would have to be solved ultimately by Indians themselves, in India, and not by anyone or anywhere else. This was the lesson of history.

But would the transition to Independence be peaceful or violent ? This was the big question. Would Gandhi's peaceful and non-violent methods succeed in a divided sub-continent, with two sovereign indepenent States, each governed by leaders and parties that looked at problems and people from almost diametrically opposite angles ? This was both a challenge and an opportunity. There were many pitfalls and dangers ahead that had to be crossed and overcome. The new resurgent India, even though divided, could not go back. It had to go forward, whatever the price, sacrifices and difficulties involved. It was this faith and determination that drove us in those fateful years of transition before Independence.

CHAPTER 2

EARLY THIRTIES

I had a happy childhood in Baramulla, a small town in the vale of Kashmir, 30 miles south of the capital, Srinagar. My grandfather had been a Superintendent of Police in the princely state of Jodhpur. My father did not like the desert heat of Rajasthan and came back to Kashmir. Both my parents came from middle class Kashmiri Pandit (Brahmin) families. I was the second of seven children (4 brothers and 3 sisters). My father was a gazetted officer—almost the highest a local Kashmiri could aspire to, under the Dogra Maharaja's rule. He helped to educate many poor students and did not believe in sending us to expensive public schools. I grew up with the local baker's and the barber's boys, rubbed shoulders with the sons of the more affluent people and was a sort of bridge between the two. It was a healthy, happy and democratic society, free from the snobbery of big towns.

When my father was transferred to Srinagar, in 1926, I joined the State High School there. I topped the list of successful matriculates and then joined the local S.P. College, in 1928. This was the period of the Civil Disobedience Movement launched by Gandhi (1926-30). I became a student leader and organised *hartals* (strikes and lock-outs), whenever a national leader was arrested. Even moderate leaders like Moti Lal Nehru and C.R. Das were denied entry into the valley and turned back from Baramulla. We also organised bonfires of foreign cloth, in pursuance of Gandhi's *Swadeshi* (buy Indian) Movement.

In my early boyhood, I was attracted by the music and the

rituals of *Sanatana Dharma* (orthodox Hinduism). After seeing some of the ugly aspects of the priesthood, I became a staunch *Arya Samaji* (a reformist Hindu sect). But when Gandhi launched the struggle for India's freedom, I, along with many students, became his follower along with. We used to spin cotton yarn on the wheel and wear the white Gandhi cap as a symbol of our faith and conviction. One day, at the annual regatta, of the Mission School in Srinagar, I heard its English principal, sitting just behind me laugh and shout "Gandhi cap ha, ha ha!" This left an indelible impression on my mind. But I got over it, when I joined college, in 1928. I was deeply moved by Jawaharlal Nehru's presidential address to the Indian National Congress session at Lahore in 1929. From then on, I developed a strong attachment to Nehru's ideas and ideals. I was one of the many thousands of Indian students who felt like that.

My father was somewhat perturbed by my political activities. I was threatened with expulsion, when I organised a strike in my college and the adjoining schools. The Irish principal, Macdermot, let me off lightly with forfeiture of my merit scholarship. My father said I could hold any views I liked but must not participate in unlawful or violent activities. I agreed but I wanted to become independent and not remain a financial burden on my parents.

I stood first again, in the intermediate examination, in 1930, and wanted to plunge myself into the Civil Disobedience Movement launched by Gandhi. This time my father did intervene and insisted that I continue my studies and finish my honours degree at the Prince of Wales College, Jammu, before I decide on joining politics. He argued that I could serve my country better after graduating. Again I agreed.

When I went to Jammu, I was warned by Sewa Ram Suri, the principal of my college, that the State police was keeping an eye on my activities. He was a very understanding and able man. I told him frankly that I was doing nothing secret or illegal and did not mind the police watching me. My political activities became even more pronounced and open. My father was warned to curb my political proclivities, but he refused to stop me as long as I was not involved in any violent or illegal activities. As a result he was prematurely retired just after I took my B.A (Hons.) degree, in 1932.

I threw myself headlong into the agitatian against the Maharaja's autocratic rule. My father wanted me to join my elder brother in business, but this time I refused. To keep me 'out of mischief' he sent me to do my law degree at Allahabad University. I readily agreed, for Allahabad was the home of the Nehrus and the centre of political activities at that time. However, I promised I would take my law degree and not join the Civil Disobedience Movement till I had finished my studies. My faith and belief in Nehru became even stronger, when I joined the University at Allahabad, in 1932.

An English poet has said : "We look before and after and pine for what is not/ Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought." This may or may not always be true. Sometimes the past looks better than the present and makes one feel nostalgic; sometimes it seems much worse and one tries to forget it. Usually it is a mixture of both. This was true of the thirties in India, when there was much that enthused us and yet so much that caused anger and despair. It is difficult for a young Indian, today, more so for a foreigner, to imagine how Indian students felt in the early thirties.

There was a ferment in the whole country, when the 'young' Nehru, as the elected President of the Indian National Congress, unfurled the Tricolour of Independence. This solemn ceremony took place on 26 January, 1930, on the banks of the river Ravi, just outside Lahore. He declared, in his presidential address, that India was in an "open conspiracy" against the British imperialism. Britain had failed to respond to Gandhi's demand for Dominion Status by the midnight of 31 December, 1929. India became a Dominion, on 15 August 1947. She declared herself a sovereign independent Republic, on 26 January, 1950, to commemorate the day of Nehru's first declaration of independence made twenty years earlier.

Gandhi was more like a father figure whom we revered from a respectful distance. Nehru was different. He was more like one of us and we saw our own ideal image in him. He fired our imagination and appealed to our mind and reason. He was impetuous, even rash at times, and a rebel in his own way.

Gandhi was older, simple in his speech, dress and mode of living. He wore half a loin cloth to cover his body, symbolising *Daridra Narayan* (the poor of India). He spun

cotton yarn on the wheel, to encourage village cottage industries. He did not smoke, drink or eat meat. He believed in self-control rather than birth-control. Above all, he advocated *Ahimsa* (non-violence) and *Satyagraha* (insistence on truth) in all matters. He believed that only right means should be used to achieve the right ends.

It was not easy to follow in the footsteps of Gandhi. But with all his principles, Gandhi was a practical man. He tried to apply his philosophy of truth and non-violence not only in his daily life, but also in solving India's social, economic and political problems. He was able to convert the bourgeois-dominated Indian National Congress into a mass organisation. He launched the *Swadeshi* (buy Indian) Movement, to help Indian industry, especially the small weaver. He also launched a nation-wide campaign against the pernicious practice of untouchability. 188412

The Movements launched by Gandhi touched the life of every Indian. As a young student in my teens, I participated, along with hundreds of others, in spinning the wheel, organising *hartals* (strikes) in schools, colleges and market-places and lighting bonfires of foreign goods. We were chased by the police, who sometimes used *lathis* (batons) to beat us with. Sometimes they even locked us up in jail for a few hours or days, but there was little ill-feeling between the Indian police and their victims. Much of the police force sympathised with the national movement, though at times, under the orders of their superiors, they had to fire into crowds causing physical injury and even death.

Some of us did become frustrated and turned toward Communism or even terrorism. A friend and classmate of mine absconded and was involved in the famous Lahore Conspiracy Case. I met him again only after Independence in Delhi. The Chittagong Armoury raid by young revolutionaries in Bengal moved us deeply. What aroused hatred in our minds against the British government was the deliberate massacre of hundreds of innocent and unarmed people in Jalianwala Bagh by General Dyer, in April 1919. The cruel, cold-blooded execution, in 1929, of Bhagat Singh and his colleagues, who had thrown a bomb in the hall of the Central Legislative Assembly, not to kill but to draw public attention to British oppression,

was also a severe shock. They were not only hanged by the neck, but their dead bodies were dismembered and desecrated. Even Gandhi, while commenting on this episode, said: "Violence is bad, but slavery is worse."

Sensing the unrest and feeling of frustration in the country and mindful of the callous indifferent attitude of the government, Gandhi launched the famous Dandi Salt March, in 1930. Thousands of Indians, young and old, rich and poor, broke the salt laws of the government by the simple method of making salt out of saline sea or lake water. This was Gandhi's strange, peculiar, but effective method of bringing home to people the inhuman attitude of the government; salt was a commodity needed by all and the tax on it hit everybody. Then came the Gandhi-Irwin Pact (Lord Irwin was the Viceroy of India) and the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement. The Round Table Conference was convened in London, in 1931 and 1932. Gandhi was the sole representative of nationalist India there, in 1932. High hopes were raised in the minds of many Indians, who believed that Gandhi would be able to secure freedom for the country and persuade the British to part with power. However, some of us were sceptical. The Second Round Table Conference, in 1932, failed to satisfy the minimum demands of nationalist India. Then started another bout of civil disobedience which was ruthlessly suppressed by Lord Willingdon (Viceroy of India from 1932 to 1934).

I was a student at the University of Allahabad, July 1932 to June 1934. I had an occasion to meet Jawaharlal Nehru, when a British Universities' Debating Team came to the University. As the leader of my university team, I took our guests to meet Nehru at his residence, Ananda Bhavan. He gave us tea, made us feel completely at home and talked to us as if he were one of us. Among the three young British representatives was Arthur Greenwood, who later became a Minister in the British Government.

I also recall the Unity Conference held in Allahabad. All-India leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Rajendra Prasad and others participated. The Maharaja of Alwar, who was in disfavour with the British Government used the occasion for airing his grievances. He later addressed a petition to his supposed ancestor, the legendary God Rama, and "endorsed a copy by

order of Sri Rama to his Vice-Regent on earth, King George VI, for favour of compliance!" I was deeply moved by a lecture which the poet Rabindranath Tagore delivered at the University Union. C.F. Andrews, dressed in a handspun, handwoven *dhoti* and *kurta* accompanied him; but for his fair skin and blue eyes, he could have passed for an Indian peasant.

We took out processions almost daily against the arrest of one leader or the other, held public meetings, which were declared unlawful and dispersed by baton charges. A young revolutionary, Chandra Shekhar Azad, had been hounded and shot to death in broad daylight by a British Police officer in Alfred Park, Allahabad. Even Nehru's old father and mother were manhandled by the police and taken into custody. Indira was a young girl in her early teens, at the time, organizing her own young Volunteer Corps of boys and girls marching up and down in her courtyard. Like most other cities in the country, Allahabad was seething with political unrest and indignation at the brutal repression of the peaceful struggle for freedom.

As young students we were keen to join the Civil Disobedience Movement. Many of us did; others heeded their elders' advice to continue their studies. I remember a conversation in Kashmir, in 1930, with SethJ amna Lal Bajaj, who was a friend and follower of Gandhi. When I asked for his advice, he said that everyone had to decide for himself; his advice would be not to jump into the fray but to keep on studying and helping the movement in other ways than by courting arrest, to train and prepare for the day when India would be independent.

I had a long conversation with J. Krishnamurthy, the famous theosophist, at Allahabad, in 1933. He was considered by his followers to be an incarnation of God, but he always repudiated this claim. We talked about ethics and religion, politics and morality, for over two hours. I was impressed by his complete absence of dogmatism or any pretensions to perfection. He said : "Do not take anything for granted; do not believe anything just because someone great has said so, or tells you so, unless you feel it deep down in your heart and mind. Try to find the truth for yourself." I have tried to adopt this approach throughout my life.

I needed some knowledge of Latin, for further law studies in England. I was taking private lessons from a Catholic padre of St. Joseph's College, Allahabad. He gave me a letter of introduction to his counterpart in Kashmir where I was going for the summer vacation. To my surprise, he sealed the letter. I was curious to know what he had written and opened the envelope carefully. The last sentence in the letter read: "May be, in course of time, God grants him the grace of conversion." I closed the envelope, handed it to the padre in Srinagar and asked him if he would be good enough to give me lessons in Latin. Unlike the padre in Allahabad who was a dark Indian, this one was white and European. Instead of talking about Latin, he engaged me in a heated argument about God, Christ and comparative merits of Hinduism and Christianity. I deliberately took up a militant attitude and questioned the very existence of God. After two hours' discussion, the padre told me bluntly that he had no time to spare for teaching me Latin. Perhaps he thought I was beyond redemption.

However, all padres were not bent upon saving the souls of heathens through conversion. Many of them were engaged in educational and medical activities, without bothering too much about converting their students and patients. I heard an interesting anecdote in Holland Hall, a Hostel of Allahabad University, where the Warden was a Christian Missionary. One day the sweeper (an untouchable) who had been converted, came to him with a request for leave. When asked the reason, he said: "Today is *Ganga Ashnan* day and I must go and have a dip in the holy Ganges." The Warden asked him, "But you are a Christian. Why do you want to have a dip in the Ganges?" The sweeper replied: "*Sahib ho gaye, magar dharm nahin gawanye dia*," i.e., "I have become a *Sahib* but I have not lost my religion!"

During 1932, Gandhi launched a mass campaign against untouchability. I was the Social Secretary of my hostel. In my enthusiasm, I organized a contributory community lunch, where food was to be served by our untouchable sweepers. Hardly fifty per cent of the students, most of whom were pursuing graduate and post-graduate studies, participated in the function. I was shocked to find the prejudices of caste and untouchability so deeply entrenched in their minds.

Gandhi had a many-sided personality. He represented the unity of India in its diversity; the traditional as well as the new India surging for feedom; the peasants and weavers, the poor Harijans (untouchables), the workers as well as the industrialists. He always made it a point to live with the poorest of the poor in the *Bhangi* (Sweepers) colony and travelled by third class. This was a symbolic gesture, but extra security measures had to be taken to protect Gandhi's life in the crowded third-class compartment. As Sarojini Naidu once said : "It costs India dear to keep Gandhi in poverty!"

I had a glimpse of Gandhi, for the first time, in 1934, at the time of the Bihar earthquake. I had gone to Patna with a students' delegation from my University, to help earthquake victims. Gandhi and other national leaders were there. Acharya Kripalani, at that time Gandhi's secretary, would not let us see him. But we managed to get into the Ashram, when Kripalani was out, and met Gandhi resting on the floor. He did not talk much, as he was resting, but greeted us with a disarming smile.

Such a man was Gandhi—simple, unique, practical; firm on principles, but willing to compromise on details. He had his roots deep in the ancient soil and traditions of India. He appealed to the masses of India who worshipped him as if he were a god. He also entered the souls and hearts of educated people because of his practical approach and effective campaigns.

CHAPTER 3

STUDENT IN BRITAIN

Indian students in the early thirties did not have the same prospects and opportunities as they have today. But there was less uncertainity and greater determination to plan one's future life. Since opportunities were few, one was compelled to make definite plans.

I was on the horns of a dilemma, after taking my law degree from Allahabad in 1934—whether to join the bar or to sit for the Indian Civil Service (ICS) examination. A third choice developed of going to England for higher studies in law and taking a shot at the ICS examination there, at the same time. The Jammu and Kashmir State authorities would not issue a passport to me because of the police reports that I had taken part in political activities. Through the intervention of friends, they agreed to recommend me, provided I gave a written assurance that I would not have any claim to service in the State. I had no intention of serving in the Maharaja's government anyway and gladly gave the undertaking.

I had known Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, one of the most eminent constitutional lawyers in India, at Allahabad, as also Dr. K.N. Katju, a leading advocate and Congress leader. I was keen to join them as a junior in their chambers, but both advised me to go abroad and sit for the ICS competitive examination, adding that if I did not succeed, they would gladly take me as a junior. My father also challenged me to sit for the ICS examination, on the plea that I was being a coward and was afraid of not passing the test. He argued that if I passed the examination, I would have vindicated my position and could

then resign as Subhas Bose had done. This argument appealed to my youthful idealism.

When I was 8 and my elder brother 13, our old family cook, Shankar Das, served him the two best pieces of mutton and gave me only a small one. I protested against this discrimination, hurled the plate away and declared I would not touch meat from then on—a vow I kept for 12 long years until I sailed across the seas. The two-week sea voyage from Bombay to Marseille, in September 1934, was uneventful. But I did make a gradual transition from a vegetarian to a meat-eater. I started with eggs, then with fish, chicken and went on to meat.

Life for an Indian student in London in the early thirties was by no means easy. We had to report first of all to India House which was headed by Sir Feroze Khan Noon as High Commissioner. There is a story that when he married for the second time, his second wife, a charming Austrian, was nicknamed "*Lady after*-noon." The India House people, instead of giving us help and guidance, were more concerned about our political proclivities and kept an eye on us. After meeting them once, I had no desire to meet them again.

King's College had a strong theological faculty, as opposed to University College, which was called the "godless college of Gower Street". I was an inter-collegiate student and attended more lectures and seminars at the London School of Economics, University College and the School of Oriental Studies than at King's, where I was registered.

There was a certain amount of racial prejudice, though not to the same extent as today. I found King's College students friendly, at the personal level, in spite of their middle class conservative background. I was encouraged to join the Students' Union, the International Society, the Youth Hostel Association and the College Debating Society. I was pleasantly surprised, when I was asked to stand for various offices in these societies and elected to them.

The Union Debating Society elected me its secretary. An American debating team visited London and circulated a number of subjects for debate. I picked on "England's dominion over India is indefensible". The Americans were to speak for the motion and our college was to oppose it. To my horror,

I was requested by the College Union to lead our side. I refused to do so and preferred to speak from the floor. I merely quoted facts and figures from the Encyclopaedia Britannica regarding the birth-rate, the death-rate, the per capita income in India after two centuries of British Raj. The motion was carried by an overwhelming majority, even in my conservative college. This heartened me about the open-mindedness of the British youth.

The next day, I found a headline in one of the British newspapers entitled "Indian Student's Disclosures", quoting from my intervention in the debate. A few days later, I had to appear for an interview before the British Public Service Commission for the ICS. I was asked by the Commissioners about this press report, which had probably been passed on to them by British Intelligence. I said I was against England's *dominion* over India, but was in favour of an equal *partnership* as independent countries. The Civil Service Commissioners were fair minded and seemed to take my reply in the spirit in which it was given. They asked my opinion about the standard of debating in various British Universities. I said I had been most impressed by the sense of humour in the Oxford Debating Society. I related a story of Lloyd George addressing the Oxford Union on "Liberalism". When Lloyd George had finished his speech, an under-graduate had got up and said : "We have heard funeral orations before, but never seen the corpse itself deliver one!" The Civil Service Commissioners burst into laughter, except for one member who happened to be a liberal. They also questioned me about the agrarian situation in U.P., the difference between the Canadian and Australian Constitutions, the Statute of Westminster etc. I must have answered these questions fairly correctly because I was awarded the full 300 marks for the interview. This placed me fairly high up on the list of successful candidates.

We had to face tough competition, in those days, from British candidates because we could not offer some of our own modern Indian languages or Indian economics as subjects for the examination. We had, therefore, to choose such subjects as British History, British Economic History, General and Social Anthropology, in order to make up the quota.

As luck would have it, I was successful both in the Master of Laws (LL.M) and the ICS examinations. Howevr, my success

in the former thrilled me much more. I still toyed with the idea of chucking the ICS and going in for teaching and practising law. The ICS offered security of service and an opportunity to serve the country at the grass-roots level. But, at the same time, it meant working under foreign rulers. The bitter pill was somewhat sweetened by the announcement of provincial autonomy and the formation of Congress governments, in 1937, in the U.P. and seven other provinces of the then British India. I had been assigned to U.P. and decided to stay on in the ICS.

My tutor, Veasey Fitzgerald, who had retired from the ICS, was a pleasant but tough Irishman. He would not agree to my working for the LL.D. and insisted that I should concentrate on learning things which would be more useful to me in my career in India—such as horse-riding, studying the socio-economic and cultural patterns of people. I had to accept his advice and devoted my time to studying Indian Economics, Indian Law, Social and General Anthropology of some of the tribes in India, at the School of Oriental Studies in London. I also joined a course in French and German, in order to continue my links with King's College.

I was not too keen to acquire the social graces attached to the ICS. Ball-room dancing did not appeal to me, though I learnt a few elementary steps. I recall a visit to Nottingham where I had to represent London University in an inter-varsity debate. The debate was to be followed by a commemoration ball. Not wishing to dance and feeling diffident about it, I put my left arm in a sling, on the pretext that I had taken an anti-cholera shot. This did not, however, dissuade some good-looking young ladies of Nottingham University from inviting me to dance. They were being polite and hospitable. I appreciated their gesture, but declined. They thought I was being shy and were perhaps right. I did not believe in aping western way without getting into the rhythm and spirit of western life.

I decided to try and understand Britain and the West a little better and cultivated the friendship of my fellow students. We went on week-end hikes through the beautiful English countryside in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Oxford, Cambridge and East Anglia. I also made friends with three of my English colleagues, who were undergoing probationary training along with me in the ICS. We decided to undertake an overland

journey by car all the way to India, instead of going by the usual sea route.

This presented quite a problem and the India Office at first frowned on the idea. The financial experts gave us only £42/-each, which was at that time the sea fare from London to Bombay. Each of us put by another £100/-. We bought a second-hand Ford V-8 30 h.p. car for £80/-. We fitted it with all kinds of gadgets including a reclining front seat, so that two of us could sleep inside the car. We bought a small folding tent used in mountain expeditions and some sleeping bags, so that two of us could sleep outside the car. We took a furlong-by furlong guide map from the Automobile Association, for the whole journey, but it was incomplete and inaccurate. The last such journey had been performed by a young Englishman, three years earlier. He wrote a book about it called "My Glorious Adventure".

Two of my three English friends (Philip Adams and Alan Flack) are alive and kicking; the third (Thomas Sharpe) was cruelly beheaded by the Japanese in Manipur State, during World War II. We spent most of the day at the School of Oriental Studies and the evenings drinking beer and working out details of the journey. On weekends, we would drive in our common car to sea-side resorts and come back refreshed for the following week. We took lessons in horse-riding, at the Cadogan Riding School in London-SW1, twice a week. In spite of this intensive training, we barely managed to pass the stiff riding test for the ICS. I recall the words of the sergeant major who used to instruct us: "Heels down, toes up, grip the saddle with your thighs. Damn you, Sir, I can see the sky from under your seat. Keep your back straight, do not rise while jogging or cantering" and so on. I was given a huge Australian stud horse for the riding test. My 120 lbs. hardly made any impression on the animal and it was with some difficulty that I managed to jump the 3′-6″ high fence without falling off.

Pople may now laugh at the importance that was attached to horse-riding in those days. I found it very useful during my District and Settlement days, when I had to tour most villages on horse-back and sometimes on elephants, camels,

bullock-carts, bicycles or on foot. There were very few motorable roads in the interior, before 1947.

The mid-thirties in Europe were a time of depression and despair. The Spanish Civil War was still raging and many people from various countries had gone to help the Republicans. However, the rise of Hitler and Mussolini and the help they gave Franco tilted the balance. Fascism bared its fangs. The Munich Pact was a blow to the concept of democracy and freedom. The student community in Britain was deeply moved by these events.

I was living in an International Guest House, in Tavistock Square, London. I paid only two guineas a week, for a room with attached bath plus breakfast, as against £50/- a week today. The other inmates were a young Indian student who had returned from the Spanish Civil War, two Jewish refugees from Germany, a young Nazi, who spied on them, and a young Jewish girl, who wanted to go to Israel. There was also a young Quaker woman (an Oxford graduate) and one belonging to the British Home Service. It was a mixed group. We often discussed political and economic questions over a cup of coffee, in my room after dinner. The discussion would often go on past midnight. I developed from a nationalist to an internationalist, during my student days in Britain.

The people of India were experimenting with a small dose of partial self-government in the Provinces. The British held the reins of power at the Centre and even in the Provinces through the British Governors. Krishna Menon and his India League were doing all they could, to convert public opinion in Britain in favour of India's independence. I heard Indira Gandhi make her maiden speech at a meeting near King's Cross on the Spanish Civil War. Her voice was high-pitched like that of Queen Elizabeth II. She was shy and seemed diffident but once she got on to the podium she spoke up. Pandit Nehru visited London, in 1936, and addressed the students at the London School of Economics. Among other things he said: "I am often called Bandit Nehru by the British Press (laughter). However, we in India are used to hearing such things; even an earthquake is a political event in India!" (He was referring to the devastating earthquake in Bihar and the reluctance of the British authorities to allow the Congress to arrange relief work there). Dr. K.N.

Katju also visited London. I escorted him on his sight-seeing tour. When he saw boys and girls, young men and women, lying side by side in a close embrace on the green lawns of Hyde Park, he remarked: "Are they not like brothers and sisters? In India they would think ill of such couples, but they appear so innocent to me!" I did not disillusion him.

I was leading a rather active life in the student community. We attended public lectures, demonstrations, debates and even addressed meetings in Hyde Park. We invited people like John Strachey and George Bernard Shaw to address us in the International Society. The former came gladly but Shaw sent me a post card saying "Too old at 80! Don't you think so?" A few days later I bumped into him in Regent Street, dressed in his plus fours and walking like a youngman of 40 with his back straight as a ram rod!

I toured the whole of Warwickshire, the Lake District and Shakespear's country, with my friend George Rowland Chetwynd, who later became a Labour M.P. I went by car to the highlands of Scotland, to Inverness and the Trossachs which reminded me of my native Kashmir. I also saw the squalor and slums of Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester and East London. To me the British were no longer a "superior race" or anything extraordinary. They were like us, but they worked harder, were more disciplined and on the whole, fair-minded and open to argument and persuasion.

I joined the National Union of Students and went on their concession group tours to Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Germany and Austria. I was impressed with the simplicity of the Norwegians and their closeness to nature, the sophistication and the clinical clealiness of Sweden. There was respect for India, among the Scandinavians, and they still remembered the visit of Rabindranath Tagore.

I had acquired a smattering of French and German, at King's College and inflicted it on others, during my visit to France and Germany. France was a world in itself, with great cultural traditions, the leader in elegance and fashion. I found less colour prejudice in France than anywhere else in Western Europe. Germany had not yet come completely under the heels of Hitler, though signs like "*Judes verbotten*" (Jews forbidden) were visible outside some restaurants. People were disciplined,

hardworking and interested in Oriental culture. Switzerland was a different world altogether, bustling with tourists and trade. The Swiss are even more *banya* (trade)-minded than the British. Life was more expensive in Switzerland than elsewhere in Western Europe. I deliberately avoided visiting Mussolini's Italy, although I was within 40 miles of it. The rape of Abyssinia was still fresh in our minds. German and Japanese Embassies and agents were actively seeking supporters among university students. Our group received several invitations to lunch and dinner with them. After meeting them once, we had no desire to meet them again. They were so openly propogandist and lacked finesse and subtlety. I tried to look at the better side of British life—the theatre, the music festivals, the beautiful countryside and the youth of Britain. It was a pleasant interlude. By the time I finished my ICS probation in August 1937, my heart and mind were already in India. Having imbibed something of European culture, habits and ideas, I wondered whether it would be possible to fit these into the Indian background. The ICS was a challenge as well as an opportunity. I sincerely believed it might still be possible to work in friendship and co-operation with the British, as equals and partners in the service of India and the betterment of relations between our two nations.

CHAPTER 4

AN OVERLAND ODYSSEY (EUROPE TO ASIA)

We planned the overland trip from London to India as carefully and meticulously as we could. One of us, Timmy Sharpe, was a trained mechanic. Alan, Philip and I knew a little about cars and could mend a puncture, repair the carburettor, clean the spark plugs and distributor and do odd jobs like that. We consulted the Automobile Association and bought extra sets of the necessary car accessories, petrol cans, wooden blocks, wire netting and spades to negotiate muddy patches. We decided to take only one small suitcase each and carry the bare minimum of clothing. We also packed a case of iron rations—just in case we were stranded *en route* away from any habitation—canned fruit juices, meats, vegetables and soups, some biscuits—enough to last four hungry young men for a couple of days. We did not take any alcohol with us.

Our friends and colleagues received the news of our proposed journey with mixed feelings; some envied us, some thought we were being foolhardy, while others felt we were being just plain stupid in undertaking an arduous journey, instead of travelling in comfort by sea. However, it did not worry us. What did create a complication was the request of four attractive British girls to join us on our trip. They were prepared to take another car, as long as we would agree to let them follow us. We had already decided we would not get mixed up with girls on this journey. We told them politely that they were free to undertake the journey on their own, but they

should not depend on us in any way. This did not deter them. They followed us up to Budapest, then gave up the chase on finding the going too hard and difficult.

After collecting our traveller cheques, passports, visas, letters of introduction and the international *carnet de passage*, we set out along the following itinerary: London, Dover, Ostende, Brussels, Aachen (the German frontier), Cologne, Munich, Salzburg, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Sophia, Istanbul. This was the European part of the journey and fairly straightforward. The journey through Asia presented some difficulties. After consulting various experts, we decided on the following route: from Istanbul across the Sea of Marmara by boat and on ward by car to Adana, Eregli, Alexandretta, Damascus. To cross the desert from Damascus to Baghdad was not an easy task. Some travellers had lost their bearings and starved to death on the way. We were advised to take a native driver to cross the desert. From Baghdad, we planned to go to Karman Shah, Hamadan, Tehran and Mashed in Iran.

Mashed onward, we could have gone via Afghanistan or Baluchistan. We were advised to follow the latter route—Zahidan, Nushki. Nakundi, Quetta, Multan, Lahore. We decided to leave the rest of the itinerary open, keeping the option to visit my home in Kashmir for a week, return to Lahore and then go to our respective stations.

It was easy enough to plan such a journey, on paper, but not so easy to carry it out in practice. Our funds were limited and we could not afford to stay in hotels. We did not wish to sponge on British Embassies and Consulates, unless we were down and out and it became absolutely necessary. We started in early September, 1937, from London. We decided to drive by day and night, in order to reduce both time and expense. It was agreed that each of us would take the wheel every fourth hour, during the day, and drive at a two-hour stretch during the night. One of us would have to sit, by turn, beside the driver, while two could go to sleep in the back seat. When we felt tired, we stopped the car, wherever we were, took a nap and then drove on, when we felt rested and refreshed.

It was not difficult to follow this routine, for the first week or so. It was, in fact, quite exhilarating. We drove straight from London to Brussels, the first day, parked our car outside

a restaurant in the Grand Square and went in to have a bite. After eating a modest meal, we were surprised to find that, in spite of our shabby dress, the Madame of the establishment wanted to invite us 'upstairs'. Not having the time or money, we declined, and started on our journey towards the German frontier.

Crossing the frontier at Aachen did not present much difficulty. All of us could speak a little German, and it helped. We were not carrying any costly or contraband goods and the Customs did not show much interest in our meagre belongings. We drove on and reached Cologne late, the next after noon. After seeing the beautiful Cathedral, we parked our car outside the 'Hamburg Wien' Beer Garten and went in to have a drink.

To our pleasant surprise, the young Germans in the restaurant were very inquisitive and curious to see a motley group like ours. They insisted on sharing their food and drink with us and on our dancing with their girl friends. Being tired and in a mood to relax, we responded warmly to their kind offer. We ate and drank and danced till the early hours of the morning.

In the morning, we saw a large number of cars and trucks travelling on the *autobahn* towards Munich. They were all going to witness the meeting between Hitler and Mussolini in that South German town. Not wishing to miss this spectacle, we hurried on and reached Munich late in the afternoon. The streets were crowded and overflowing with men and women, straining to catch a glimpse of their führer. The crowds were not as orderly as one would have expected and some of them were even cursing the police. However, the young Nazi guards wearing the red band with SS marked on it were able to discipline and control the crowds. We caught a glimpse of Hitler and Mussolini standing in an open car, waving to the crowds on both sides of the street. We were not amused or impressed. Not wishing to enter into an argument with any Germans, we decided to leave Munich at night and drive on to Salzburg.

We crossed into Austria, had a snack and a beer in a lovely little restaurant near the frontier and proceeded towards Salzburg. The scene in Austria was pleasanter than in Germany, although rumblings of *Anschluss* were heard all round. The

Austrians appeared nervous and afraid of the Germans, but they still retained their free, friendly, pleasant and hospitable ways. We stopped at Salzburg to see some of the sights and then drove on. We reached Vienna at night and went round the beautiful town and its suburbs. The food was excellent, the coffee delicious and the Grinzig wines exhilarating. The people were still enjoying the fruits of freedom and liberty, but seemed a little nervous about the rise of Nazism in Germany.

The next day, we drove on to Budapest and were enraptured by the sight of the 'blue' Danube running between Buda and its twin city, Pest. The Hungarians were warm-hearted, hospitable and gregarious. Wherever we went, we were greeted and entertained warmly. We ate and drank and danced to our heart's content, bade good-bye to our numerous hosts and started off, in the early hours of the morning, towards Belgrade.

The journey from Budapest to Belgrade was rather drab and dreary. The countryside was poor. The villagers' huts were shabby. Belgrade, in 1937, looked more like a poor Asian city than a prosperous European town, as it is today. It was more Oriental than Occidental, with its many bazars, food shops and eating booths. The people were poor and shabbily dressed. Yugoslavia has progressed tremendously, since then, and one cannot recognise the old Belgrade any more. I felt emotionally closer to the Yugoslavs and the Hungarians than to some West Europeans, because there was something of the East in them.

From Belgrade, we drove to Sophia, along a somewhat poorly metalled road. The glorious sight of the Cathedral in Sophia gladdened our hearts. We were able to make friends with the people through our smattering of German. The Bulgarians were even more Eastern than the Hungarians or the Yugoslavs. It was interesting to feel the transition and intermingling of East and West, as one moved from Western Europe towards Asia.

Leaving Sophia next morning, we drove to the Dragoman Pass. We managed to negotiate it with some difficulty, as there was deep mud on the pass. From there to Istanbul was an interesting though different kind of scenery. One felt one was getting closer to Asia. My friends and companions were a little puzzled and amused because I felt nostalgic and more at home than they did.

Istanbul, in those days, was definitely Asian and not European, as it now claims to be. All the historic sites like the Grand Mosque were on the Asian side of Istanbul. The western side, called Pera, was on a little hill studded with modern bungalows, hotels and restaurants. The sight of the Bosphorus from Pera was breath-taking. We watched the sunset and lingered to look at its shimmering reflection in the sea.

The Turks were going through the pangs of change and development. The young students we met were discontented and in ferment. The more prosperous middle-aged Turks were perhaps oblivious of the changes taking place in the world around them. The government seemed to be aware of the problems. We crossed the small sea of Marmara by ferry, taking the car along with us. After crossing the sea, we were in Asia proper and began our journey on the historic route which Alexander the Great had taken during his conquest of Asia. We felt as the poor foot-soldiers of Alexander must have felt—puzzled, bewildered, expecting the worst but hoping for the best. We had not quarreled or fallen out with each other. It had been fairly easy going, thus far. The roads had been good, we had not had a single puncture, gas had been easily available. But the tough journey was only beginning. We kept our fingers crossed, hoping to reach our destination in four weeks or so.

We had been warned that there were hardly any roads worth the name on the Asian side of Turkey. The Automobile Association guidelines were incomplete and even misleading, at times. They had asked us to check on the spot and send them corrected descriptions.

Misfortunes do not-usually come singly. Rain and mud made our passage difficult; we had two punctures, one after the other. We were also accosted by robbers, dressed as policemen, who asked for a free ride. Not finding anything valuable, they got down, after we reached the next village. We lost our way at many places, as there was no main road but only a number of tracks leading in different directions. We tried to judge the direction of our route, with the help of a small compass, but even that did not indicate the correct direction as there were magnetic mountains in the vicinity. We had to wait until it was dark to get a fair idea of our direction, by looking at the pole star.

The toughest ordeal came when we drove into a muddy patch and could not get out. It was raining hard and we decided to wait until the rain stopped. We had to wait all night, huddled together inside the car. Next morning, when the sun came out and the ground dried a little, we dug the wheels out of the mud, with our hands and with the help of the spades we carried. Even then the wheels would not move. We worked hard and patiently, by putting wire netting under the wheels and wooden blocks in front of and behind them. After struggling for about two hours, we ultimately managed to get the car on dry ground.

The next problem was where to go. We spotted some village urchins and with my smattering of Persian and knowledge of Urdu, I was able to get their help. Like boys everywhere, they were glad to get a free ride to the next village, where they guided us to a '*Chai Khana*' or Tea House. The proprietor was very hospitable. He gave us fresh baked bread, tea and hard-boiled eggs and guided us to the next town. This proved to be a boon, for we found Eregli a pleasant little place with a modern textile factory. The manager spoke English and offered to put us up at the guest house. He treated us most hospitably. After washing off the dust and mud accumulated over two days, we bathed, changed and had a good night's rest. We started next, morning, on the road to Adana, which Alexander the Great had followed more than two thousand years ago, during his Eastern expedition.

The villages in Turkey were very much like those in India. Kamal Ataturk's reforms had only reached the towns and barely touched the villages. Women still wore the veil and collected water from the village well, in beautiful *surahis* (earthen pitchers) held at an angle on one shoulder, not on the head as in India. Instead of following Alexander's route, we branched off towards the South, in the direction of Alexandretta. After a while, we came across a little rivulet with a small derelict wooden bridge over it. Not wishing to take undue risks, we got down, inspected the bridge—walked over it, one, two, three and then four at a time, to see if it could stand our weight. It started creaking. There was no habitation in sight. We spent four hours strengthening it—stone by stone,

stick by stick and invoking the name of Allah, asked Timmy Sharpe to drive over it.

Two of us tied a thick rope to the rear of the car, in case it needed to be pulled back, while one of us guided the driver from the front. Inch, by inch the car went over the broken wooden logs and at last reached the other side. What a relief! We celebrated the event with what little rations were left - some pineapple and tomato juice, some cheese and biscuits.

Though exhausted, we decided to go on to our next stop, Damascus. We arrived there late in the evening—sleepy and dead tired. I was at the wheel and still remember dozing off at times, while my watchdog companion, sitting by my side, nudged to keep me awake. We decided to take it easy for a few days and equip ourselves adequately for the tough journey across the desert to Baghdad. Timmy and I drove to Beirut, leaving Philip and Alan behind in Damascus. We had a dip in the blue waters of the Mediterranean, in Beirut. It was known in those days as the 'Paris of the Orient'. Having bought our spare equipment and iron rations, we drove back towards Damascus. As ill luck would have it, we bumped into a Chrysler ahead of us, when it suddenly stopped to avoid a camel caravan. No damage was done to the Chrysler, but our poor Ford suffered a broken radiator and front lights. From There, I drove on with Timmy sitting on the bonnet filling the leaking radiator with water from a tin can, every five minutes.

In a way perhaps this was a blessing in disguise for we got an extra day of forced rest in Damascus and had the car thoroughly checked up and repaired, before starting on our journey across the desert to Baghdad.

We spent the day roaming in the bazars, museum and mosques, took many photographs and felt like tourists, though we looked more like tramps in our khaki shirts and shorts. Damascus was a typical ancient Arab city, unlike Beirut, which was much more modern and westernised.

We engaged a reliable native driver, who turned out to be an Arab Christian and spoke a little English. But once even he lost his way in the desert and we had to ask the help of a Bedouin camping nearby, to guide us towards Baghdad. It took us a whole day and night, to cross the desert of over 500 miles. We did not meet any other vehicle, on the way, until we

reached the outskirts of Baghdad. There was no metalled road, across the desert, but only tracks leading in many directions. However, the ground was dry and firm and motorable.

Baghdad in those days looked as if it still belonged to the Middle Ages. Donkeys and human beings alike were used to carry loads in the city—there were hardly any trucks or cars on the roads. People looked poor but used to the ways of poverty.

At the Iraq-Iran frontier, the guards examined our documents. We were surprised to find them holding our passports upside down, pretending to read what was written inside. They were not literate, but managed to identify us by our passport photographs and allowed us to proceed, without much difficulty. The road from Baghdad to Karmanshah was rough, with corrugated ruts on the surface that acted as natural speed-breakers. We learnt the hard way that it was best to drive at a speed of about 35 to 40 miles per hour, to avoid jolts.

Our second-hand Ford had seen better days and was meant for better roads. In Karmanshah, we felt the car limping badly and suspected another puncture. On examination, it turned out to be something more serious—our rear springs had broken down. We had not anticipated this and did not carry any spare spring-leaves with us. There was no Ford shop in Karmanshah selling accessories.

With my smattering of Persian, I persuaded, a blacksmith to inspect our car. He agreed to make spring-leaves of the same size for us from some old springs he had with him. We readily agreed to the very reasonable price he demanded and kept our fingers crossed.

In an hour he was able to beat the old springs into shape to fit our car and it took him another hour to fix them up. We tried the car and found it could go without too many jolts and jerks. The same repairs would have cost us much more in the West and it might have taken much longer to persuade a garage to undertake the job after office hours. Orientals have their own ways of dealing with emergencies and are willing to adapt their meagre resources and materials through simple methods and techniques, to meet some of the demands of modern times.

if only they had modern tools and technology, they could do wonders.

We admired the skill and ingenuity of the blacksmith, thanked him sincerely and started towards Tehran.

It was night time and we had been warned that there might be robbers on the way. Since we had already had one such encounter without damage, we decided to take the risk of driving at night. But sure enough, we were stopped at an uninhabited place, on a hilly curve, by some people in *gendarmes'* uniform. They examined our passports—again upside down—and said in Persian that it was not safe to drive at night. They offered to accompany us to the next village. We took two of them with us. They were armed, but did not harm or threaten us. Perhaps they really were *gendarmes*. We took their advice, spent the night in the car, tired and exhausted, just outside the village.

The early sun woke us up. We had a wash and a sponge bath, at a wayside spring, much to the amusement of the village urchins who were full of fun and laughter. What we really needed was a break for a few days. We decided to take it easy, in Tehran. When there is something to look forward to, it is easier to overcome difficulties. We drove on over the corrugated Iranian roads which had pebbles, boulders and pot holes scattered all over. We had to drive carefully and managed to reach Tehran, the next afternoon.

The lovely chinars and poplars, luscious fruits in the shops, the domes and minarets of the mosques and the wide avenues leading to the suburb of Shimran were pleasing to the eye. We forgot, for the time being, the difficulties we had faced and lodged ourselves in a reasonably modern hotel.

The sight of the Demavand volcanic peak and the Elborz mountains beckoned us. We decided to call on the British Ambasador and ask him if we could go to the Caspian and hop across to Georgia in the Soviet Union for a week or so.

We washed, bathed and put on the only decent set of clothes we had, before driving to the British Embassy. They had probably been informed of our journey by India Office from London and were relieved to find us alive and well. They told us that another group of ICS officers, all British, had

followed us, a week after, but had been held up by floods in Turkey. We had been lucky.

We thought this a good moment to mention our idea of going to Georgia via the Caspian. To our dismay, we found the Ambassador very discouraging. He advised us not to pursue the idea, as we would be dubbed "Bolshis" throughout our career, if we started it with a visit to the Soviet Union. I was surprised to find such prejudice even in the minds of educated and experienced Englishmen. Their mental attitude seemed to change once they left Western Europe and entered Asia. We left the Embassy in a huff and returned to our hotel. Our enthusiasm to stay on in Tehran was dampened and we decided to drive as fast as we could towards our destination, India.

Tehran to Mashed is a long stretch of over 600 miles. In our anxiety to reach as quickly as possible, we covered this distance in less than 24 hours, driving day and night. The scenery en route was reminiscent of Kashmir, except for the barren hills which had been denuded of trees or covered by sand from the southern desert. We called on the British Consul-General at Mashed, Mr. Squire, and were glad to find a pleasant, warm and hospitable person in him. He belonged to the political wing of the ICS. He was much more polite, suave and refined than his Ambassador in Tehran.

We toyed with the idea of going to India via Afghanistan, from Mashed, but the Consul-General discouraged us—"not for political reasons, but because of unsettled conditions", as he put it. We were anxious to get to India as soon as possible and took his advice. We spent the next day listening to his lovely collection of music. This was our first real rest and relaxation, after six weeks of continuous hard driving.

Mashed was a sleepy town, like most in this part of the world. The women wore a black *chador*, covering their head, face and body right down to their knees or ankles. The men usually wore turbans, though some wore caps or even hats, as in Tehran. The food was very similar to North Indian cuisine, but less spicy. We tried it at some of the local shops, ignoring the advice of the Consul-General. We had taken all the necessary shots (TAB, cholera, smallpox, etc.) before leaving London and could not care less. We had to depend on local food through most of our journey.

Bidding good-bye to Mr. Squire and his staff, we started on the next long lap of over 500 miles to Zahidan. We drove day and night, over rough roads, and reached the frontier post past Zahidan at Qila Safed. I was thrilled to set foot on Indian soil after three years and took command of our party from then on. My British friends did not speak Urdu or Hindustani, Kashmiri or Punjabi and were glad to have me take charge of things.

We stopped the night at the Railway Rest House in Nokkundi and drove up to the Bolan Pass, early next day. Winding our way down the circuitous hilly road, we reached Quetta late in the evening.

Quetta was, in those days, an important cantonment with a large contingent of the Indian Army and their Staff College. We drove to the Army Officers' Mess and were greeted with open arms by a young Punjabi Major. We were treated as guests of the Officers' Mess, lodged comfortably and entertained lavishly. My friends and I were deeply impressed by the unity of the Indian sub-continent, represented by almost all the races, creeds and castes in the Army set-up in Quetta. The Staff College had a sprinkling of officers from all parts of India. They were indeed a bright lot.

We went round the town and found relics of the devastating earthquake which had struck Quetta in 1934. The people, mostly Baluchis, were tall, turbaned and bearded. They had big eyes, looked one straight in the eye and held themselves upright like the brave people they are. Quetta was an important outpost of British India. I wondered how long the British would be able to keep the whole sub-continent under their rule. The flame of freedom was burning in the hearts and minds of the vast majority of educated as well as illiterate Indians. Would the British see the writing on the wall and leave India gracefully; or would there be a bloody struggle before they quit? I kept these thoughts to myself, not wishing to hurt my friends' feelings. And so we drove on to our next halt, Lahore, via Multan.

The journey was uneventful and we covered a distance of about 700 miles in two days. We met some old friends at Lahore and decided to have a week's holiday in Kashmir before facing the challenge of our jobs in the provinces to which we had been assigned.

CHAPTER 5

KASHMIR, PUNJAB, DELHI

Before the Partition, one could go to Kashmir either via Rawalpindi (now in Pakistan) or via Jammu (India). We decided to take the former route and return by the latter.

From the outskirts of Rawalpindi to Murree, it was a delightful drive. Pines and *deodars* (firs) lined the road and covered the hill-side. It was the last week of October and there was a pleasant chill in the air. We put on our pull-overs, had lunch at the Dak Bungalow and drove on towards Srinagar via Kohala, Domel, Garhi, Uri, Baramula and Pattan. The pines gave place to poplars, willows and chinars, as we came down into the valley. Autumn leaves covered the ground and looked like a multi-coloured Persian carpet. Little boys and girls were collecting the dried leaves in wicker baskets, for use in their hearths. The *salwar kameez* and turban of the Punjabi-speaking people between Pindi and Garhi gave place to the *phiren* or coat and *pyjama* of the Kashmiri-speaking people in the valley. The people in the valley were fairer in complexion, with sharper features and gentler smiling faces.

We arrived at the outskirts of Srinagar, in the evening, and were greeted by my family and friends. My three British colleagues were lodged in a house-boat on the Dal Lake, while I was whisked away by my family.

The week in Srinagar was spent in feasting, meeting old teachers, class-mates and relatives. I had to address a meeting of students at my old *alma mater*, S.P. College. Kashmiri citizens gave a dinner for me at which both Hindu and Muslim

leaders, including Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, were present. My British colleagues were a little surprised at all this fuss, but soon realised that being a member of the ICS in those days was quite a feat. I was the first Kashmiri from Kashmir to qualify for the ICS.

I wanted my British friends to enjoy themselves. I took them to Gulmarg by road and to the Moghal Gardens by boat. Our respective Provincial Governments were getting worried about us and wired instructions for us to join immediately. We had to cut short our brief holiday and returned to Lahore in the first week of November. We left the car with a common Indian friend whom we knew from London and asked him to dispose it of for us at a good price. After a couple of months, he sent us a brief telegram that he had sold (or bought?) our car for exactly Rs. 400/-! We shared the proceeds and got Rs. 100/- (£6) each. It was considered a respectable sum, in those days in India.

Kashmir was ruled by the autocratic *Maharaja, Hari Singh.* He had become thoroughly unpopular because of his extravagant way of life and lack of consideration for his 'subjects'. He followed the British practice of dividing Hindus and Muslims. He went even further by trying to divide the Muslims between those following Sheikh Abdullah and the others following Mir Waiz. He also tried to divide the Dogras of Jammu province and the Kashmiris of the valley. The latter were not allowed to join the State armed forces. The Kashmiris did all the rough chores and clerical jobs, while the plums of office went to the Dogras and outsiders from the Punjab. The people of the valley under Abdullah's leadership had risen in revolt against the Maharaja, in 1931. They were ruthlessly suppressed. British troops from the adjoining Punjab had been brought in, to help the Maharaja.

The people carried on the struggle for their rights, under the banner of National Conference. The freedom struggle in British India under Gandhi's and Nehru's leadership was having its impact, in the princely States. Sheikh Abdullah was emerging as a national leader and fighting for the rights of all Kashmiris—Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and Buddhists. This was a healthy development that helped to strengthen the secular forces in Kashmir and the rest of India. The orthodox Muslims and

Hindus had their respective communal organizations, but the vast majority of Kashmiris followed Abdullah's leadership. The attempt by the Maharaja to divide the Hindus and Muslims, Kashmiris and Dogras failed. So did a similar attempt by the Muslim League. The National Conference under Abdullah's leadership forged close links with Gandhi's and Nehru's Indian National Congress. Kashmir thus became a strong symbol of secular India. This was to have significance for the whole subcontinent later.

We relaxed and rested in Kashmir and were mentally prepared for the problems we might have to face in our respective stations. We decided to leave Srinagar via the Banihal pass and Jammu. The poplars lining the road on both sides, the lush green paddy fields, the willows and chinars in every village on the way left an indelible imprint on my mind. It was with some sadness that I said good-bye to the valley from the Banihal pass (9000 feet). The scene from the top was beautiful beyond words. It brought back nostalgic memories of my childhood spent in Verinag, Kukarnag and Achhabal, which I could spot from the pass above.

My friends admired the scenic beauty and took more photographs. We sped on down the pass to Banihal through Ramban and Ramsu and reached Batote for tea. Driving up to Patni top and down to Kud and Udhampur, we reached Jammu, in the evening.

Next morning we left for Lahore by road. The journey was drab and dreary, with no undulating hills. Our speed was affected by the large number of bullock-carts on the way. My friends were at first annoyed at my constant tooting of the horn. They soon realised that it was necessary, even on the Grand Trunk Road which at that time was not asphalted, nor wide enough to take 3 vehicles abreast.

We reached Lahore in the evening, stayed at Stiffle's Hotel and had our last binge together. Lahore, in 1937, was like most provincial capitals, with four distinct areas: the Military Cantonment; the Civil Lines, housing the Governor, civilian officers and upper class Indians; then came the area inhabited by the lower middle class, and finally the slums where the workers and the poor lived. The statue of Sir John Lawrence (a former Governor) adorned the main park. He held a sword

in one hand and a pen in the other, symbolizing both the civilian and military dictatorship : "If you will not accept the rule of the pen, then you shall be ruled by the sword." This was symbolic of British rule in India.

Next day, we left by train for Delhi, the imperial Capital of India. Here were four ICS officers, dressed in khaki shorts and shirts travelling inter-class by Indian railways. No one would have believed it, in those days. We did not care, for we had not yet learnt the modes and manners of our tribe—the ICS.

We heard a story about one Mr. John Brown of the ICS, Punjab. When he was about to leave his mortal coil, he sent a cable to Almighty God in heaven, giving him his approximate date and time of arrival. Knocking at the gates of heaven, he did not find God there to receive him. He became furious, rushed to the Almighty's throne and shouted "Don't you know who I am ?" Good old God said, "No, pray who are you ?" Pat came the reply 'I am Mr. John Brown of the ICS Punjab". God Almighty got off his throne, apologised and said "Pray be seated on the throne. I have been waiting all these years for you, Mr. John Brown of the ICS Punjab."

In Delhi we went to see Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, Secretary to the Viceroy. We had a letter of introduction to him from one of his friends in the India Office, London.

The Viceroy's House—now called Rashtrapati Bhavan—was heavily guarded, each visitor being carefully screened at half a dozen points, before being ushered into the *sanctum sanctorum.* We were a little put off by the protocol formalities, but at last managed to enter Sir Gilbert's office. He greeted us cordially and introduced us to his colleagues. He asked each one of us if we would like to go into the political wing of the ICS. Timmy showed some interest, while Alan and Philip said they would think it over. I replied I was more interested in working in the villages and districts of rural India. Sir Gilbert seemed to appreciate our different answers.

We bade good-bye to the pomp and power of Viceroy's House and left for our respective Provinces by train. We had practically exhausted our funds and travelled again by intermediate classs. We were supposed to travel only by first class, to maintain prestige and distance from the common people.

I got down at Lucknow, the capital of U.P. Alan had been assigned to Bihar, while Timmy and Philip had to go to far off Assam. We promised to keep in touch and meet with each other, though it would not be easy in a vast country like India. Parting was a little sad, for each one of us, although we managed to keep our feelings to ourselves. We had spent almost a year together in pleasant and congenial surroundings, as friends and as fellow students. We had roughed it out together for two months in difficult and trying circumstances and our friendship had survived.

If Britons and Indians could get along with each other at the individual level, was it not possible for them to cooperate at the governmental and official levels? The *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, and the *Statesman*, Calcutta, had come out with editorials on this subject, in November 1937, citing our joint venture as an example of Indo-British cooperation !

It was with these thoughts that I called on Mr. C.W. Gwynne, ICS, Chief Secretary to U.P. Government, in his office at the Lucknow Civil Secretariat. Gwynne was short in size, compared to other British civilians in India. He was pleasant, communicative and had a sense of humour. He complimented me on the overland journey, but conveyed the mild displeasure of the Government of India for a press interview we had given in Quetta, saying that women in Turkey still observed *purdah* in the villages. He said the Turkish Government had objected and the Government of India did not look with favour on public statements by civil servants. I told Gwynne that what we had stated was true. He did not contest this but advocated the golden rule of silence on controversial or inter-State matters.

I learnt later that my three British friends had been told the same by their respective Chief Secretaries. We had planned to write a book jointly on the overland journey and had taken numerous photographs. But we gave up the plan and reconciled ourselves to the Government Servants' Conduct Rules, of which we had no knowledge till then.

During my 40 years in government service (1936-1976), I have never entertained much respect for these Rules, which are out-dated and unsuited to a modern, independent, demo-

cratic State. But we have continued most of these Rules, even after achieving independence.

Of all the democracies in the world, I think the British model, in spite of many good points, has the most outmoded, ultra-conservative practices and procedures euphemistically called 'checks and balances'. The rules, regulations and procedures made by the British in India were voluminous and aimed at exploiting a colony, curbing initiative and originality and perpetuating their rule and control. I was to discover this, during my 10 years' service in U.P. from 1937 to 1947, and in the Government of India, afterwards.

Gwyanne said he had posted me to a nearby district called Sitapur, 40 miles from Lucknow, and hoped I would like it. I took leave of him and proceeded by train to Sitapur. I did not have a car and could not afford one, at the very beginning of my service, when the starting salary was only Rs. 450/ (£30) per month.

I reached Sitapur in the evening and not knowing where to go, hired a *tonga* (horse-carriage) to take me to the Dak Bungalow. I was told that the Settlement Officer, Haig, ICS was waiting for me at his bungalow nearby. I called on him and he insisted that I shift to his house straightaway and stay with him. He was a bachelor. I told him that I did not have my dinner jacket and other suits with me. He was good enough to reply that he understood, as I had travelled overland and my luggage by sea had not yet arrived. He offered to forego the drill of wearing his dinner jacket in the evening. In those days *pucca Sahibs* put on their dinner jackets, even when they camped in jungles!

Living with Haig had its advantages and disadvantages. He left me more or less to myself, but insisted on my joining his favourite sport—football, every evening. I agreed to do so only during week-ends because I preferred tennis. He even suggested I join him for a 4 mile run, every morning, but this I politely declined. He was a thin wiry Englishman, crazy about physical exercise and would not mind going out bare-headed in the mid-day sun. He had few other pursuits or hobbies, apart from his work.

Haig was soon promoted as Deputy Commissioner in the

same District. I, as Joint Magistrate, inherited his house, when he shifted to his new official residence. The Deputy Commissioner's bungalow was quite an institution. An old-fashnioned house, with a thatched roof and a wide verandah going all round, it had an enormous compound of about 10 acres. A thatched shed served as a kind of waiting room for visitors. They were divided into various categories, according to their rank and social status. Some were made to wait outside the entrance. These were the poorest, the 'lowliest of the low'. Next came middle-class people like local lawyers, sub-inspectors of police who were made to sit on wooden benches under the thatched shed. Next in the hierarchy were the Indian officers and the local title-holders like *Rai Sahibs* and *Rai Bahadurs, Khan Sahibs* and *Khan Bahadurs,* who were offered chairs in the verandah. The drawing room was reserved for the seniormost officers, the richer gentry and big landlords (*Taluqdars*).

Many of the top gentry and title-holders were flatterers and sycophants. I heard a story of a title-holder (*Rai Bahadur*) who came to offer his condolences to the Deputy Commissioner when Queen Victoria died. Instead of coming straight to the subject, he started weeping and wailing. When the Deputy Commissioner asked the reason for his grief, he replied: "My mother has died." The Deputy Commissioner expressed his sympathy. but the *Rai Bahadur* went on to say: "Your mother has also died." The Deputy Commissioner was taken aback and said his mother was very much alive and well. The undaunted *Rai Bahadur* went on weeping and wailing and said: "Our mother has died; the whole world's mother has died; Queen Victoria has died!" It was only then that the Deputy Commissioner appreciated what the Rai Bahadur was saying. The Indian loyalists were even more loyal than the King. But this was only a facade to please their rulers who sometimes failed to see through it or deliberately accepted it as a sign of loyalty.

The Indian officers and their wives were mostly interested in social get-togethers, playing cards at the club, organising musical gatherings. It was a pleasant sort of life, but not very fulfilling. My heart was in the villages. I took charge of Rural Development and threw myself headlong into it. I had to rub

shoulders with villagers, village workers, and local Congress leaders, in order to get things done.

Returning late, one evening, from a tour of the villages, I found a message Haig had left for me to see him at the Club. When I went there, he asked why I was so late. I told him I had been to visit some villages with the District Congress Committee President. He did not like my hob-nobbing with Congress people, but since there was a Congress Government ruling the State, he did not say so openly.

On another occasion, when Dr. Katju, the Minister of Justice, was to visit Sitapur, Haig told me frankly he did not like the Congress Ministers and asked if I would look after Katju's visit. I did so with pleasure for I had known Katju when I was a student. I took him to a meeting in a village where every householder had joined the local Cooperative Society. When I said this to Katju, he was very pleased. He addressed a meeting of the villagers and said, inter alia, in Hindi: "I want you to stand on your own feet." A simple villager took him literally, stood up and asked in Hindi: "Here I am, what am I to do now?"

I liked to camp in villages, during the three winter months, November to February. This brought me in close touch with the rural people and their problems. I used to keepan open house" from early morning to late evening, while camping. I also used to wear *kurta pyjama*, in order to make the villagers feel at home with me. I would visit the village *chaupal* (platform), listen to their tales of joy and sorrow, join in musical evenings where the drum, the flute and the *shehnai* were played and have a pull at the community *hookah* (hubble-bubble). I soon picked up the local dialect and conversed with them in their own idiom. The Indian villager is a very simple, sincere, hard-working and pleasant fellow. In spite of poverty, illiteracy, disease and difficulties, he greets you with a gentle smile. If you are able to win his confidence, he will talk very freely and frankly.

There were caste differences, among the villagers. The Harijans (untouchables) lived in a separate quarter of the village and had a separate drinking-water well, which was not used by the higher castes. As a rule, the Harijans kept their mud huts neat and clean—much cleaner than the brick houses

of the higher castes. There was a well understood code of conduct and division of labour which had descended from the days of Manu, more than two thousand years before, and was still observed in rural India.

The most pressing needs of the rural folk were drinking water, irrigation, medical, educational and employment facilities. I used to carry a small medicine chest with me and was surrounded by village women, childern and old people seeking cures for cough, cold, diarrhoea, headaches etc. The poverty of the people moved me deeply, but there was little I could do. I tried my best to settle on the spot village quarrels and disputes about irrigation water, encroachments on land and minor cases of simple hurt and assault. Their problems were much deeper and could only be tackled at their roots by a government with the political will to do so. This was not possible under foreign rule. The opportunity would come when India achieved independence, I thought.

The life of a young Joint Magistrate was full of activity and interest. I used to keep a horse and rode miles every morning, visiting various villages from my camp. When I shifted camp (the tent and baggage were moved by bullock carts), I would go on horse-back visiting each village between the last camp and the new one. Sometimes if there was a forest or *jheel* (lake) nearby, I would go with my shot gun and invariably come back with half a dozen duck, sometimes even with a deer or a wild boar. There was, however, local sentiment against the shooting of peacock and blue-bull (*Neel Gai*) and this I scrupulously respected.

My special interest was Rural Development and the social and economic conditions of the village folk. I tried to enthuse the villagers to contribute their mite in free labour or cash (for those who were better off) to build village *Panchayat Ghars* (small buildings with a community hall). There the village people would meet in the evenings, discuss their problems and arrange social gatherings. I was able to get them free radio sets, provided they would look after them. I was depressed to see caste groupings in many villages leading to disputes among various factions. However, by getting *Ponchayats* (village councils) formed, *Panches* and *Surpanches* (leaders) elected, we were able in many cases to cut across caste and other divisive

prejudices. The villagers responded actively in tackling small common tasks such as keeping village lanes clean, setting up a cooperative seed store, keeping a medicine chest in the *panchayat Ghar* and organising social activities during the various festivals such as *Holi, Divali, Dussehara* and *Id.*

On the whole, it was a much more interesting life than living in cities or towns, playing bridge and drinking alcohol at the local club. One got to understand and respect the village folk who formed 80 per cent of India's population. I developed my conviction there that if India could succeed in solving the problems of the rural people, it would have brought about a revolution that could endure. As long as the vast majority of rural people remain poor and under-employed, India cannot claim to have given social and economic content to her political independence.

CHAPTER 6

EASTERN U.P.

It was the custom in those days for big landlords and title-holders to send *dalis* (gift baskets) to all district officials, 'to each according to his rank'. I was not aware of this. One day, a basket of mangoes was delivered at my house by the driver of the leading Taluqdar (Raja of Mahmoodabad). I returned it because I had some revenue cases of Mahmoodabad pending in my Court. I casually told Haig about it. He was upset and sent me a note saying that I should respect local custom, that my refusal to accept the fruit basket would be taken by the Raja as a deliberate insult. I ignored Haig's advice and told him politely that had I known the Raja personally I might have accepted the customary fruit basket and even invited him to tea, but I could not accept the custom blindly, especially when the Raja's revenue cases were pending in my court. It would have weakened people's faith in our impartiality and respect for law and justice. He kept quiet.

Another custom of British days was an invitation from the Governor to stay with him at Government House (now Raj Bhavan), Lucknow, for a few days. It was a good custom. What a pity it is no longer followed! It gave a young entrant into service a chance to know the seniormost member in the hierarchy at close quarters and *vice versa*. When I was at the dining table, sitting next to the Governor (Sir Harry Haig), he asked me "Were you at Oxford or Cambridge?" I replied without hesitation "Sir, there is a more modern, and I think in some ways better University than both, and that is London. I was

there." I meant it. Sir Harry blinked and then smiled. He was a grand old man with an equally gracious wife.

In those days, most of the Indian and British members of the ICS had either studied at Oxford or Cambridge or gone there for their probation. It was a sort of status symbol and perhaps still is. I had many friends in Oxford as well as Cambridge and often visited them, but compared to London, I found their life somewhat unreal and artificial. I preferred London where students lived closer to life and reality and were not isolated in an ivory tower. I had older connections with the city from my student days at King's and chose therefore to do my probation there. London was London and far more interesting, real and down to earth. One could pick and choose one's friends and activities. I simply loved London. I had loved Allahabad also, though for different reosons which were more political than social. 188412

Sir Harry asked what I would be interested in seeing. I told him I would like to attend a session of the Legislative Assembly and call on the Chief Minister. He was a little surprised, but smiled and said it was a good idea. Both were arranged.

I was not too impressed with the U.P. Legislative Assembly session, listening to long-winded speeches. But Govind Ballabh Pant, the Chief Minister, created a deep impression on my youthful, receptive mind. He talked about rural development and he showed not only interest, but a deep and sound knowledge of the subject. He was a giant of a man, physically and in political acumen. An excellent parliamentarian, he was highly respected by all, including Gandhi and Nehru.

I was soon called on special duty to Lucknow, during the Shia-Sunni riots. The Sunnis sang praises (*Madhe Sahaha*) of their Imams, while the Shias condemned (*Tabarra*) one of them. The two Muslim sects came to a clash when one shouted praise and the other showered abuse. Many leaders of the two sects had to be arrested. Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Cr. PC) was enforced and all processions and assemblies of more than four persons were prohibited in any public place.

I was on duty as a Special Magistrate and the police brought several people under arrest before me for remand. One

of them happened to be a buxom good-looking woman. I asked her her name, religion etc. and she replied as if she had already expected the question and rehearsed the answer "*Mera hai nam Munni—Shia ke sath Shia, Sunni ke sath Sunni*! (My name is Munni, I am Shia with Shia and Sunni with Sunni). She was a woman of easy virtue and I did not know why the police had arrested her. I liked her sense of humour and ready wit and discharged her on the spot.

I met Congress leaders as well as Taluqdars and Muslim League leaders, leading poets and writers and fellow civil servants. Lucknow still boasted of its chaste Urdu and Hindustani music, but it was not a robust culture that could endure the stresses and strains of partition. Its decline has been movingly described in "Sunlight On A Broken Column" by Atiya Hussain.

I could not endure Lucknow city for long and preferred life in the rural areas. I asked for a transfer and was posted to Fyzabad, on the banks of the Sarju (Gagra). Sunset on the Sarju at Guptar Ghat is as beautiful as sunrise at Banaras. I would spend hours watching the sunset and the shifting hues of the clouds from gold to scarlet to light and dark grey until it was time to go home.

I was again put in charge of rural development, besides my magisterial duties. It gave me a chance to know the district from one end to the other and I visited almost every one of the 500 odd villages.

We drew up a scheme to start a rural women's training camp, in order to improve the life of village mothers and their children. We selected about fifty married women who had had primary schooling—one each from a group of five to ten villages—and lodged them in a thatched camp at Fyzabad. A lady Warden had to be appointed and we were lucky to get the honorary services of Sushila Aga, Commissioner of the Bharat Girl Guides. The women were given training in the three R's, methods of teaching children and adults, hygiene, sanitation, maternity, child-care and physical drill etc. The training period was six months.

A problem arose over the babies of the trainees. We made a virtue of necessity by opening a creche and kindergarten in the camp; put two nurses in charge of it and used it to train the

village women in child-care. They were made to look after the two dozen children, in shifts of two teachers and a nurse at a time.

The Commissioner, A.G. Sheriff, was not very happy with the teaching and lectures. He thought it was 'too revolutionary'. As he put it, why could not we confine the teaching to only *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the two famous epics? I said we had included these, but must equip the village women with means to improve their mode and means of living. The trainees would go back to their villages and start schools for adult women and village girls. Sheriff did not appreciate my reply. But the project had been approved by the Chief Minister, G.B. Pant, who had visited the training camp and was very pleased with it.

World War II broke out in August, 1939. All Congress governments resigned, as Britain had committed India to war without consulting her or making any commitment about India's freedom and independence. How could India fight against the threat to freedom in Europe, when she was denied freedom at home? The British bureaucracy in India wanted to rule India for ever. Their leaders in the U.K. were a little more far-sighted but not enough to appreciate that a free and independent India could contribute much more to the fight against Nazism and Fascism, than an India under bondage.

We had a new Commissioner, Pedley. He was naturally worried about the way the war was going against Britain and its Allies. The Soviet Union became an ally of Great Britain, on June 21, 1941, after Hitler's attack. Pedley and the British army officers in Fyzabad confessed they were not happy at being 'on the same side as the Reds.' For the Communist Party of India, it made all the difference and the war became overnight a 'people's war', though India had not even been promised independence. The Congress Party sympathised with the Allies. While not impeding the war effort, they would not actively cooperate, unless Britain made a commitment about India's independence.

My sympathies were with the Congress stand. I tried to convince Pedley and the British army officers, but their prejudices were strongly entrenched. I became somewhat unpopular with them because of my frankness. I realised then that it would be

difficult, if not impossible, to work in partnership and equality with the British, as long as they ruled India. I did not believe in the repressive policy of the British and wanted to get out of the magisterial circuit. But I did not want to join the judicial side either, although I held a master's degree in law. The *judgee*, as we called it, was the dumping ground for the inefficient. I chose a third line that would keep me out of both the executive and the judiciary. It was called the 'Settlement Department' and only a selected few were chosen for it. I was lucky to be selected for settlement work in the adjoining district of Gonda.

Before I could leave Fyzabad, I had to deal with a serious situation in my sub-division, Akbarpur. Shias and Sunnis there had clashed and used swords, spears and sticks, seriously wounding more than a dozen on each side. I visited the locality. The atmosphere was surcharged with emotion and religious fanaticism. There was danger of breach of peace and I arrested the ring leaders on both sides under Section 107, Criminal Proceddure Code. They appealed to the Sessions Judge, who released them on bail. But I rearrested them, as soon as they came out of Court, because I genuinely felt the danger to peace still existed and their presence in the tense situation would lead to fresh outbursts of violence.

They not only went in appeal against my order but tried to embarrass me, saying that I had committed contempt of a superior court. The Sessions Judge called for my explanation and I wrote what I genuinely believed. Fortunately, Judge Raghubar Dayal, brother of the revolutionary Har Dayal, had been a Magistrate too and had faced similar situations in his younger days. He told me privately at the club that another judge might have held me guilty of contempt, but he appreciated my action. He rejected the appeal and upheld my order.

A few days later came the *Dussehra* festival. Hindus took out effigies of Ravana, the evil king, in procession through narrow lanes and streets and burnt them on the Ramlila grounds, outside the city. The procession marched to traditional music, but 'music before mosques', especially at prayer time, was forbidden. The police were in full force with the procession. I was on horseback going from rear to front and back, to keep an eye on the processionists. Suddenly I noticed a dozen *goondas*

(hooligans) armed with *lathis* coming out from a side lane, inciting the processionists to play music before the mosque. It was a tense moment. I argued with them, tried to pacify them, but they were in a defiant mood. I then talked to the processionists who were more reasonable. The procession passed by the mosque peacefully. It could have taken an ugly turn, if the police had used force without first trying persuasion.

Thus ended my three years as Joint Magistrate and Rural Development Officer. It was a worthwhile experience, but I looked forward to doing a stint of settlement as it would put me in direct touch with the socio-economic problems of the tillers of the soil and their oppressors—the landlords and middle men. Apart from that, the Congress Government had resigned and we had Governor's rule, which was a bit of disappointment to me. Unlike many senior members of the ICS, I had joined service when a Congress Government was in power. My sympathies with the Congress were well-known. I would have most probably clashed with the higher authorities. "Settlement" gave me the opening I welcomed.

Before joining "Settlement" at Gonda, I decided to take a trekking holiday on the western Himalayas. I could get only ten days' leave and wanted to go up to Pindari Glacier. I hired a pony and did two stages a day from Bageshwar onwards, reaching the dilapidated rest-hut at Phurkia, at the mouth of the glacier, on the third day. It was cold and windy. My guide lit a huge log fire inside the hut and went out to find some meat. He soon brought back a lamb, skinned it and roasted it on the fire. The two of us ate more than half the lamb with salt and red pepper.

We were tired and hungry. I have never enjoyed a meal as much as I did on that cold, windy night. I slept in my sleeping bag on the floor in the warmth and glow of the log fire. I can still picture the tongues of flame leaping up and trying to lick and kiss each other. It was a heart-warming sight, in spite of the loneliness. Early next morning, well before sunrise, we walked up to the 'snout' of the glacier, then across a number of snow bridges over wide-gaping crevasses and reached the top by mid-day. We had taken some of the meat left over from the night before and ate it with salt and chillies on the snow, with the sun shining on us. Soon clouds began to gather, first

light, then thick and dark. We managed to reach the hut, just before the rain came down in torrents, with thunder and lightning rending and lighting the sky. We lit a fire, warmed ourselves, dried our socks and shoes and sat down to a meal of roasted lamb again.

There was neither man nor beast in sight. I lit the little kerosene lamp in the hut and read through the 'log' book which contained the impressions of all kinds of visitors, from scientists and scholars to traders and tourists.

It was bright and sunny in the morning and we travelled two stages down to join my friend M.S. Randhawa in his camp. He first made me shave my three days' growth of beard and insisted I shave off my moustache also as an offering to Pindari ! He was a Sikh, but 'mechanised' with a vengeance, and did not believe in keeping a beard or moustache. I agreed and have never grown a moustache since.

I was tired, when I reached the Rest House at Someshwar. I lay down on the green grass with the sun shining above. A beautiful, tall, slim girl approached me with a lovely smile. I felt like kissing and embracing her but my official inhibitions came in the way. The girl said good-bye and still haunts me sometimes. I often wonder whether it was just a dream with a touch of the sun in my head.

I returned to join my new post in Gonda, but had left a bit of my heart behind on the Himalayas and kept thinking about it—the beautiful dense forests of pine, fir and silver birch; the lovely little streams rushing down across boulders, making a music all its own; the shepherds and shepherdesses grazing their cattle, playing the flute and singing love songs to each other; the temples made of wooden domes and stone-walls with bells hanging from the ceiling that every pilgrim rang to invoke his or her God. The mountains with their snow-covered peaks and the vast expanse of snow and ice on the glacier haunted me for weeks and months and still do sometimes

Gonda is a scenic district, with a mixture of plains and hills adjoining Nepal. The northern part which I had to 'settle' had thick forests of Sal and plenty of wild game, including tiger, panther, Sambar, deer, boar, jungle fowl, duck and geese.

I took my first lesson in "Settlement' from Jaikrit Singh. He showed me how to classify the soil and demarcate the fields

according to their fertility and productivity. The nearest to the habitation was the richest called Goind and marked 'G' on the village map. Then there would be chunks of D_1, D_2, D_3, and last of all, D_4—which were barren or consisted of ravines. One had to see practically each and every field, examine its soil and the produce, question the villagers and then approve or amend the tentative demarcation on the map already made by the *chak tarash* (soil classifier) who was supposed to have done it the previous day.

It was fascinating work, because one came in contact with the actual tiller of the soil, talked to him in his own language about his land, his family and his problems. We had to indicate the history of each village, its name, origin, population, castes, professions, number of brick and mud houses, bicycles, bullock carts, cattle etc.

We then prepared a sort of rough family budget for each class of people, assessing their income, expenditure and savings, if any. We fixed the rent each tenant or cultivator had to pay his landlord, at 20% of his gross income. The land revenue which the landlord paid to the government was assessed at 8 to 10% of the net rent he received from his tenants. It was customary, but unfair, to give a remission of 6 to 12% to the higher castes like Brahmins, Thakurs and Sayids, who because of their caste pride would not touch the plough and had to hire labour. The landlord, through his intermediaries and agents, extracted illegal 'dues' from poor tenants or sub-tenants by threatening to evict them at will. These 'dues' included a house tax, forced labour, a tax for the maintenance of the landlord's elephant, for the marriage of his dependents and so on. Some landlords even insisted on having the first night with new brides!

There was a saying that in eastern U.P. "the cultivators were born in debt, lived in debt and died in debt". It was true. Apart from the exactions of the landlords and their agents, there was the *patwari* (keeper of land records), the policeman and the village *bania* (money lender) who also fleeced the poor cultivator. The money lender charged anything from 24% to 48% interest on the money he lent to the poor, deducting the year's interests from the sum lent at the very start.

The Congress government tinkered with the idea of land

reforms, but failed to tackle the problem effectively. Tenants were given some security against undue eviction, rents were fixed at a reasonable level, but the exactions continued. The British rulers were not ignorant of what was happening but shut their eyes to it. The big landlords were their allies against the people and took shelter under their protective umbrella.

I did what little I could to reduce the level of rent but could do nothing to stop the forced labour (*Begar*) and other exactions. 'Settlement' gave me an insight into the deep poverty and abject misery of the village folk, the intolerable conditions in which they lived.

Given below is the income and expenditure of an average cultivator with a family of 8 (husband, wife and four children plus father and mother of the husband):

Land-holding . . . . 2 acres or *10 bighas*

At 1940 Price Level :	*Per annum*
Income from sale of produce	Rs. 500/-
Expenses : Rent to landlord	Rs. 100/-
Foodgrains	own produce
Cooking oil, vegetables, pulses,	Rs. 100/-
Clothing for 8	Rs. 150/-
Seeds	Rs. 25/-
Irrigation charges	Rs. 25/-
Hiring a pair of bullocks	Rs. 100/-
Travel, medicine, etc.	Rs. 150/-
Total	Rs. 650/-

Thus his income fell short by Rs. 150/- per annum, apart from the exactions demanded by various people. So his old father, mother and young children were forced to do labour to supplement their meagre income. It was a miserable existence, with no margin for a rainy day. And whenever there was drought or flood, the crop was destroyed and, in spite of part remission of rent, the poor tenant had to beg, mortgage or sell his wife's silver ornaments or his little mud hut.

It was a pitiable sight to see the thin lean figures of these poor hard-working people, eking out a bare marginal existence; yet they would smile and laugh, smoke their little *hookahs* and try to be friendly and hospitable.

The gap between the rich and the poor was unbelievable.

The Maharaja of Balrampur, the Raja of Mankapur and the Nawab of Utraula had palaces, fleets of cars, elephants and horses, scores of servants and were stinking rich. They squandered their wealth in vulgar waste. The Nawab of Utraula had bought an aeroplane as a symbol of status. He had no use for it and left it tied with strong ropes just outside his palace, because someone had told him it might take off on its own! I saw the idle machine lying on the ground rusted and rusting. The Maharaja of Balrampur was tall, fat, turbaned and bejewelled, could hardly carry on a conversation in any lgnguage, in spite of having had a number of private tutors. He was declared unfit to manage his vast lands and the estate had to be taken under the Court of Wards. Manakapur was cleverer. He managed to get into politics and have it both ways.

I lived most of the time in tents (a Swiss cottage as it was called), or when it grew hot in Forest or P.W.D. Rest Houses. I moved mostly on horseback, but sometimes had to use a camel on a sandy patch or an elephant to cross a stream. Sometimes I would use a bicycle or a bullock cart or walk on foot, depending on the terrain. I would do my *Chak-trashi* or soil classification and demarcation from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., have a picnic lunch by a stream or in a forest, rest for a while and then go with my shot gun in search of small game.

Occasionally, if friends came to my camp for a shoot, we would organise a beat of the forest, take our fixed places on *Machans* (platforms on trees), and if we were lucky, we might get a deer, Sambar, wild boar and sometimes even a tiger or panther. For the last two, a goat or small buffalo was tied up overnight. If there was a kill, you were sure to meet the killer the next day, when he would return to eat the meat of the animal he had killed. Sometimes we came upon them by sheer chance, as happened to me one evening, when I was returning to my camp in a bullock-cart. I always carried my .12 bore shot-gun with me. I heard a rustling of leaves and tangling of twigs in the thick jungle. The bullocks suddenly stopped; I could see their ears flip flap and their nostrils dilate. The cart driver whispered to me, "There is a panther around." Sure enough there was one, not 100 yards away from us, pouncing on a dog he had killed in the Forest Rest House at night and dragged into the jungle. The panther is a very cunning animal,

much more so than a tiger. As soon as he heard us, he leapt back into the thick jungle. I fired a shot at random, more to frighten than to hurt him. It was getting dark and I could not see him clearly. It is dangerous to wound a tiger or panther, for then it becomes a man-eater. You should shoot only to kill. Luckily, I missed the panther.

One day I spotted a beautiful *Barasingha* (12-horned deer) in the jungle, standing majestically on a rock in the shade of a tall tree. I could not resist the temptation and shot him dead with a bullet on its forehead. He tumbled over the rock and fell almost at my feet. I was deeply moved and decided then and there that I would not shoot deer any more.

After six months of *Chak-trashi* in the field, I came back to Gonda town to sit and write my Settlement Report of Utraula *Tehsil* (Sub-Division). It took me a couple of months. I discussed it with Jaikrit Singh. He seemed to like it and forwarded it to the Settlement Commissioner.

Life in Gonda was like life in any small district head-quarter town. We had a club, played tennis and golf, some also played bridge (I did not for I loathed card games). The Civil Surgeon, Dr. Sen Roy, was a very decent chap (one of his daughters, Sunalini, married Roselini, the Italian film director). The Income Tax Officer, and his Begum were both decorative figures; the P.W.D. engineer was a quiet but sound worker; the inspectress of girls' schools, who had spent some time abroad, always wore long white gloves up to her elbows when she came to dinner parties !

I recall a visit by Percy Marsh, Senior Member of the Board of Revenue. He told us the story of his brother who remained a joint Magistrate for 12 long years and wrote "Verses of an Aged Joint". Percy Marsh himself was a delightful man. When ever a villager from his old district came to him for a letter of introduction to the new *Sahib* (Deputy Commissioner) he would gladly give it. When an adversary from the same village also came for a letter, Percy would oblige him too. And when the confused Deputy Commissioner asked Marsh which one he really recommended, he would reply "Both, i.e., neither. When I really want to favour some one I underline his name. Please remember this !"

Fordham, the Settlement Commissioner, called a conference

of Settlemet Officers in Nainital, the summer capital in the hills. When he reached there and saw a sign-board, 'Military Intelligence', he exclaimed : "Contradiction in terms !" They were the old-fashioned British, full of fun and humour, with peculiar traits and idiosyncrasies, pleasant to deal with, except when it came to politics. Most of them believed that Britain would rule India forever; some realised that Britain would have to part with power but they were very few and not influential in the corridors of power, and authority.

Fordham liked my work and asked if I would do another Settlement. I readily agreed and was posted to Fatehgarh (Farrukhabad) in Western U.P.

CHAPTER 7

WESTERN U.P.

Western U.P. was quite different from Eastern U.P. The people were not as poor, thin or lean; they were more cunning and clever. The fields were better cultivated, fertile with water from rivers, canals and tube-wells. Big landlords and *Taluqdars* were rare, the cultivators had greater security of tenure than in the East. There were fewer intermediaries between the landlord and the tenant and hence less extra exactions and demands. The West had the *Zamindari* system (medium landlords) as against the *Taluqdari* (big landlords) system in the East, or Oudh as it was called.

United Province (U.P.) was the name given by the British conquerors to the two distinct areas of Agra Province in the West, and the estates of Oudh (now Avadh) in the Centre and East. The northern hill districts were added later.

Independent India gave it the name of Uttar Pradesh, i.e., northern State (thus retaining the acronym U.P.). The total area of U.P. is about 100,000 square miles. It is the biggest State in India, larger than France, and has a population of over 110 million. It extends from the Himalayas in the north to the Vindhyas in the south, from wet and green Bihar in the east to the dry Rajasthan desert in the west. It was divided into 52 (now 54) districts, each in the charge of a Collector (Deputy Commissioner), and ten divisions, each headed by a Commissioner.

The head of the district in pre-Independence India had vast powers and coordinated the activities of all

government departments in the district. He was responsible for maintenence of law and order, collection of land revenue, supervision of jails, hospitals, roads and the trial of criminal and land records cases. Civil suits were tried by Civil Judges, while the Sessions Judge had appellate powers. With such vast authority, it was not difficult for an intelligent district Officer to keep things under control. There was little meddling from above, except when there were agrarian uprisings or political agitations.

It is surprising why independent India has kept U.P. as one State and not divided it into at least three—the northern hill districts, the eastern part (Avadh) and the western (old Agra Province). With a growing population, increased political awareness, democratic set-up and developmental activities, it is difficult for one Chief Minister to keep track of all that is happening in this vast State. On purely administrative grounds, U.P. should have been divided into at least 3 States, to keep an eye on the whole area, ensure effective implementation of government policies and fulfilment of people's urgent needs and requirments.

Punjab is an example. Better administration and development have followed its division into 3 States—new Punjab, Haryana and Himachal.

The Congress Party rulers did not subdivide U.P., perhaps because of political reasons. U.P. has the largest number of members (86 out of 543) in the Central Parliament (Lok Sabha) and is thus able to exercise a dominant and sometimes stabilising influence on the formation of the Central Government and the election of the Prime Minister. All three Congress Prime Ministers—Nehru, Shastri and Indira Gandhi—have come from U.P.

The States were reorganised in 1956, mainly on linguistic grounds, as had been promised by the Congress Party before indepedence. Since the whole of U.P. speaks Hindi, there was no pressing demand for its division, as in other States like Madras, Bombay, Punjab. Perhaps the Congress governments were afraid that if they sub-divided U.P. on administrative grounds, similar demands would be made in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and other States, leading to diffusion of central control. Congress leaders felt that large States like U.P. and

Bihar would ensure continuity of the influence of their party.

Sooner or later, the question of reducing the bigger States in size will have to be tackled, if they are to be governed effectively. Sardar Panikkar's words "India that is Bharat that is U.P." are still current in political circles. Now that the Congress Party does not rule in all the States of India, the Centre could exercise greater influence and better control over smaller States than over big ones which are already demanding greater autonomy. To keep India united and stable, a strong Centre is necessary.

The British rulers of India were primarily interested in maintaining law and order, collecting land revenue and perpetuating the Raj. They were not interested in solving the social or agrarian problems, industrialising the country or encouraging harmony among or between various castes and creeds. They tinkered with the basic problems, from time to time, but did not tackle such problems, at the roots. They developed the railways mainly to facilitate the export of raw meterials from India to U.K. They developed the canal system, to encourage the cultivation of cash crops like cotton, tobacco and jute, which could be exported to U.K., and manufactured there into finished products. They did not develop any basic industry, because they wanted India to remain a supplier of raw materials and a colonial market for British manufactured goods. They only developed such industries as tea, which could be sold through the British market, with Britain as the middleman taking a lion's share of the profits at auctions held in Britain and not in India.

The peasantry was groaning under heavy burdens of indebtedness, floods, droughts and the exactions of money lenders, landlords, their agents and official accomplices. A land settlement was carried out every forty years mainly to increase the rents paid by cultivators to landlords, and the land revenue which the latter paid to the government.

The British adopted an attitude of 'neutrality' towards social problems, but exploited religious, social and economic differences, to divide the people and strenghen their hold over them. They followed the classic imperialist doctrine of 'divide

and rule'. Separate electorates for Muslims and non-Muslims were introduced by the Morley-Minto Reforms. These provided for a degree of elected representation on local councils. But this was vitiated by the deliberate division of the electorate on a religious basis.

As if this was not bad enough, they tried, at the Round Table Conference in London, to divide the 'lower' Hindu Castes from the 'higher' by giving a 'Communal Award' under which the pernicious doctrine of separate electorates would have divided even the Hindus politically on a caste basis. It was Gandhi's fast unto death which compelled the British Government (after a national compaign had been launched and Gandhi was about to die) to modify the "Award" and only reserve a number of seats for the backward castes under the general electorate. Gandhi started a national campaign against untouchability and roused the conscience of all Hindus. This evil practice had no religious sanction, but had acquired the force of custom, encouraged by vested interests like the priesthood and the feudal hierarchy of medieval India.

In the early years, British rulers had not hesitated to ban the evil practice of *suttee* by which a Hindu widow burnt herself to death on her deceased husband's funeral pyre. Indeed, up to World War I, the Curzonian concept of empire-building inspired British Civil servants to study Indian society, arts and literature. But in later years, and especially after World War I, the fervour of empire-building became weaker. They were either afraid to interfere with or deliberately ignored the continuance of evil social customs and practices and confined themselves mainly to maintaining law and order and collecting revenues.

On the political plane, the British rulers tried ruthlessly to suppress the emergence of nationalist feeling. They tried to prevent Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs from joining hands to wrench political power from the alien government.

But for Gandhi's non-violence and leadership, the Independence Movement would have taken a violent turn. Instead of appreciating Gandhi's peaceful role, the British rulers in India and local British officials, in particular, mistook it as a sign of

weakness. They tried to suppress the national Civil Disobedience Movement ruthlessly.

Such, however, have been the ways of most imperialist rulers in history. Some are worse than others, but all of them are bad from the point of view of those whom they rule and exploit. The British were no exception to this rule, though they tried to 'idealise' their narrow self-interest by such fanciful doctrines as 'the white man's burden', '*noblesse oblige*' etc.

It was against this background that I welcomed the opportunity to be out of the executive magisterial line and go into 'Settlement' again, at the time when the suppression of the Independence Movement was increasing. I joined as Assistant Settlement Officer at Fatehgarh and went straight into camp. I toured the whole of Kaimganj Tehsil, village by village, field by field, and prepared my tentative report in six months.

The new Settlement Commissioner, A.A. Waugh, came to inspect my work. We had lunch together in my "Swiss Cottage". When we were having coffee, he picked up a book lying on my table. It was Gandhi's autobiography, *The Story of my Experiments with Truth.* I could see a frown knitting his forehead, but he managed a sardonic smile and said: 'I see you have plenty of time to read political books'. I said I did and showed him a few more by Harold Laski, Sydney and Beatrice Webb and Nehru's 'Autobiography'.

When Waugh went back to Lucknow, he must have reported to Francis Mudie, the Chief Secretary, and I got orders to complete my report within a month and proceed to Shahjahanpur. I was to try a local Raja on the charge of dacoity and murder. As I gathered later, the local Deputy Commissioner, H.E. Barlow, was reported to be a close friend of the Raja and favourably inclined to him. Whatever the reasons for my premature transfer, I was sad to leave Fatehgarh where I had made many friends among the Shias of Shamsabad, the Pathans of Kaimganj, the Sadhs of Farrukhabad and others. I was also sad to leave my friend Shyam Mohan Srivastava, who was the Settlement Officer. He told me I must have annoyed Waugh for some reason, because my report, he thought, was excellent.

I was told in strict confidence by one of my colleagues that a senior British officer had written about me: "He is a danger-

ous civilian, but he will be still more dangerous as a public man."

I had a Pathan friend from Kaimganj who was a keen *Shikari* and escorted me, when I happened to be in his area. One day, when we were returning to my camp, he spotted a herd of deer from a distance of 200 yards; he gave me his rifle and asked me to take a shot. I refused for I had given up shooting deer. He ran after the herd, but they ran faster. He fired with his rifle from a distance of about 250 yards. We found his bullet had killed a stag but gone out of its neck and hit its female mate also. The female was pregnant and the Pathan ripped her open and brought out a live infant deer which he presented to me. I took great care of it, fed it with a milk bottle and spoon every day. When it was two weeks' old, I took it out in the jungle and was happy to see it bounce back into freedom.

I am mentioning this little incident, because it made a deep impression on my mind. I can never forget the sight of a female crane flying over the dead body of her mate which had been shot by my Shikari friend. The female flew for a while and then died of grief. They say that flying cranes can never live without their mates and cannot survive if one dies. The same legend is current about many other birds like the *Chakva* and *Chakvi*, whose love and fidelity are extolled in many Hindi poems.

A lot of poaching still goes on, in spite of the ban on tiger shooting. In the old days, it was indeed much worse. The Rajas, Maharajas, *Taluqdars* and senior civil and military officers used to pride themselves on the number of their *shikar* trophies, which they exhibited. The late Maharaja of Vizianagram, known as 'Vizzy' in cricket circles, had shot over 500 tigers and was considered a great sportsman. Many of these, I learnt in Balrampur (Gonda), had been shot at night by putting on the headlights of a car along a forest road, thereby blinding the tiger who had come for a drink in the nearby stream. Some people fixed special spotlights on their cars, for this purpose.

There are many Shikar stories, some true and others invented by Shikaris themselves. There is one about a V.V.I.P. who had come for a tiger shoot. He went from place to place

but had no luck. At last, his Maharaja host put a live tiger in the baggage van of the special train carrying the V.V.I.P. and had it released near the guest's *machan*, at the next shoot. There is another story of a Governor visiting a district and shooting a hundred duck in one lake. These had been fed on grain by the host *Taluqdar* and let loose on the lake with their wings slightly clipped.

The most ghastly sight I ever witnessed was in 1946, at the Viceroy's annual duck shoot at Bharatpur. Over four thousand birds were massacred by about 200 guns in one morning, from specially constructed butts and moving boats. The lake has now been made into a bird sanctuary, to atone, perhaps, for the sins of past rulers, Indian and foreign. Such barbaric hospitality and sport ceased fortunately, with the stopping of privy purses to Indian Princes in the sixties. Bharatpur was ruled in the old days by a Maharaja.

What is even more shocking is the 'netting' of partridge, quail, duck and other small birds to sell in the market—a practice still prevalent (though forbidden by law) even in some areas around Delhi. Equally shocking is the dynamiting of fish in rivers by road workers and others. A more risky but cruel practice is the catching of live snakes to sell their skins in foreign markets. Even worse was the deafening noise by hundreds of rhesus monkeys in small cages for export by air at Palam airport, until a few years ago, when it was banned.

I gave up Shikar after my two years in Settlement. It was perhaps a sport where the odds were even in the beginning. It later became a sadistic lust for killing. It has now been commercialised and made into a tourist attraction.

From Settlement back to district administration in Shahjahanpur was not a happy change. I had got used to the quiet, peaceful, independent life of a settlement officer in the villages, away from the din and noise, the petty intrigues and social life of small towns called district headquarters. It took a little time to readjust.

Friends had warned me that I had been deliberately posted to work with (or against) H.E. Barlow (known as 'mad' Barlow). He had suffered from shell shock, in World War I. He was a confirmed bachelor and had strong likes and dislikes. His best friend was his Indian valet. All his non-official visitors and

even junior Indian officials had first to salam the valet and give him *bakshish* (a tip), before they were allowed to see "H.E."

It was a hot summer day when I went to call on Barlow at his house. There seemed to be something on his mind. I looked him straight in the eye. He did not look away and said: "I know why you have been sent here. They do not trust me and think I am a friend of the Raja of Kuthar; so they have sent you to try his case". I said I was not aware of the reason, but I had been told I would have to try this case. He softened a little and said: "You may not know, I believe you, but I know. Anyhow, I don't want to prejudice you for or against the Raja. He has only one arm but he never misses a shot. He is a bit hard on those who don't obey him. He is a good friend but a dangerous enemy. I want you to keep an open mind."

Perhaps he did not trust me and was trying to probe. I replied that I would act strictly in accordance with the facts and the law and had not received any 'instructions from above' as to how I should conduct the case. He seemed to belive me and offered some tea and biscuits.

He was not very popular with his British colleagues, including the Governor. At a party at Government House in Lucknow, he had deliberately asked his few friends to call him 'H.E.' (his initials) in the presence of the Governor. His Excellency the Governor had not liked the joke. Most of the other British and Indian members of the ICS did not like him because of his peculiar habits and idiosyncrasies. So he made friends with the local Rajas and big landlords who pandered to his tastes, flattered and entertained him, besides showing him 'due respect'. Toward the others , he showed either contempt or indifference.

He respected strength of character and conviction in others, even though he might not agree with them. He talked to me about various officers in the district and singled out T.P. Bhalla, the Superintendent of Police, as 'a tower of strength with bulldog tenacity'. He did not like Bhalla's superior, Robinson, Deputy Inspector General of Police and called him 'a sissy who puts on a blue shirt with a black dinner jacket!' I could not agree more with his assessment of Bhalla. As for Robinson, it was

Daughter Preeti, who inspired the memoirs.

Grand children, Radhika and Arjun, 1978

Kaul in his orchard, 1980.

Kaul demonstrating Yoga (Shees Asan) to fellow diplomats to enable them to see the world in its correct perspective! Zavidava, USSR, 1964.

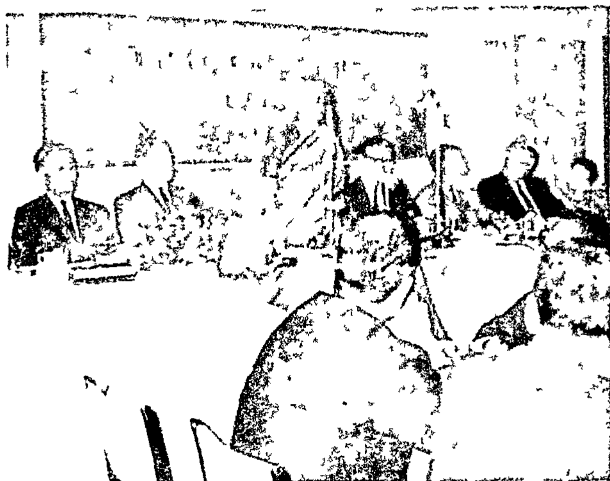
Grandson Nikhil holding sister Kavita, 1980.

With the
Vice-Counsul,
Zahidan
Iran, 1937.

With the
Counsul-General
Mashhed, Iran, 1937

The armed guard
that accompanied
Kaul in
Baluchistan. 1937

Indian Chancery, Washington DC. 1949. Prime Minister Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Mrs. Pandit, & B.R. Sen.



Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Kaul at the Foreign Correspondents' Club, Japan

Indian Delegation at the Tashkent Conference

With President Ford—the two pipe smokers, 1975.

Ava Gardner, M.G.M star welcomes the Indian Ambassador, Mrs. Pandit, 1950.

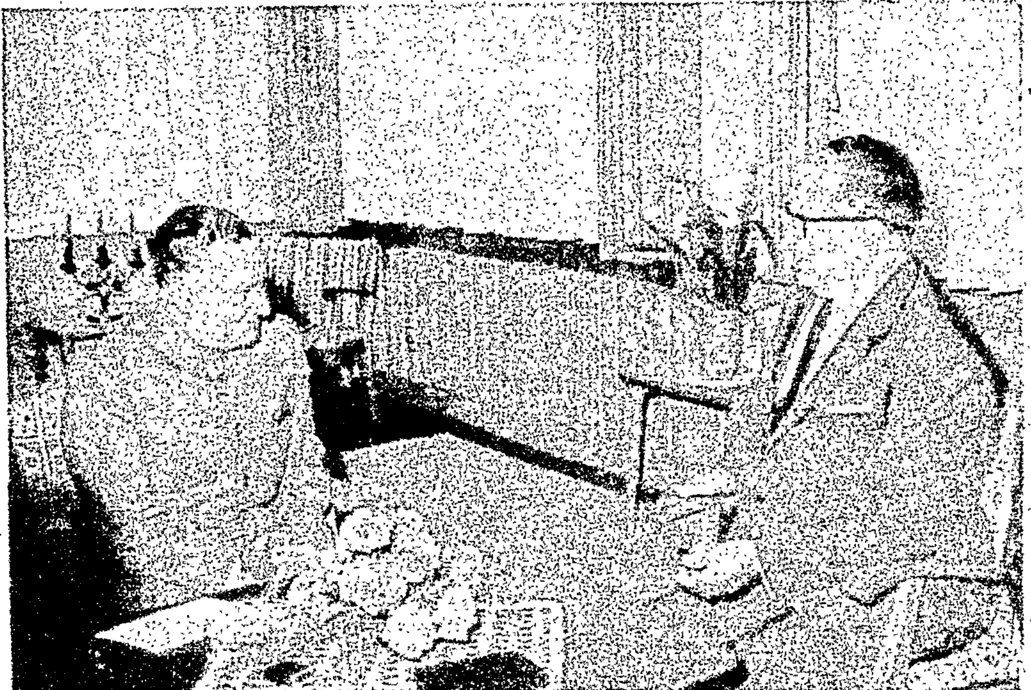
Chairman Mao receiving Ambassador N. Raghavan's credentials.
Chou En-Lai & Ch'en Yi to the left of Mao, 1952.

With the new King of Bhutan 1972.

With the Dalai and Panchan Lamas New Delhi 1956

Leading a Naga Procession, Kaul with the
Prime Ministers Nehru and U Nu of Burma 1953

With President Sambhu of Mongolia, 1970.



With President Tito. Non-aligned Meet Yugoslavia, 1969.

With Chou En-Lai, 1956.

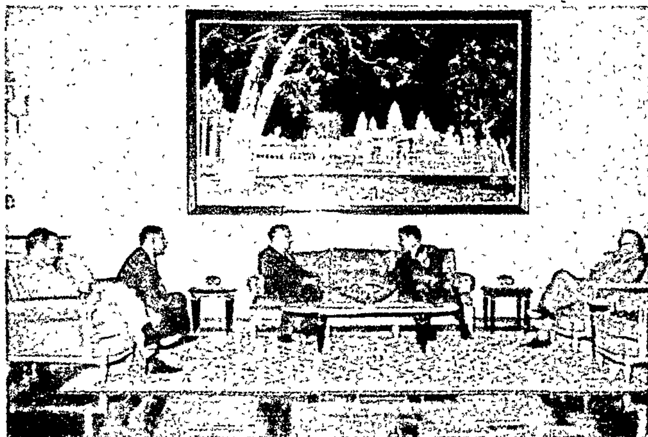
The newly weds, Nancy and Henry Kissenger at a party hosted by the author, 1974

Gina Lollobrigida publiscising her book 'MIA ITALIA', USA, 1974.

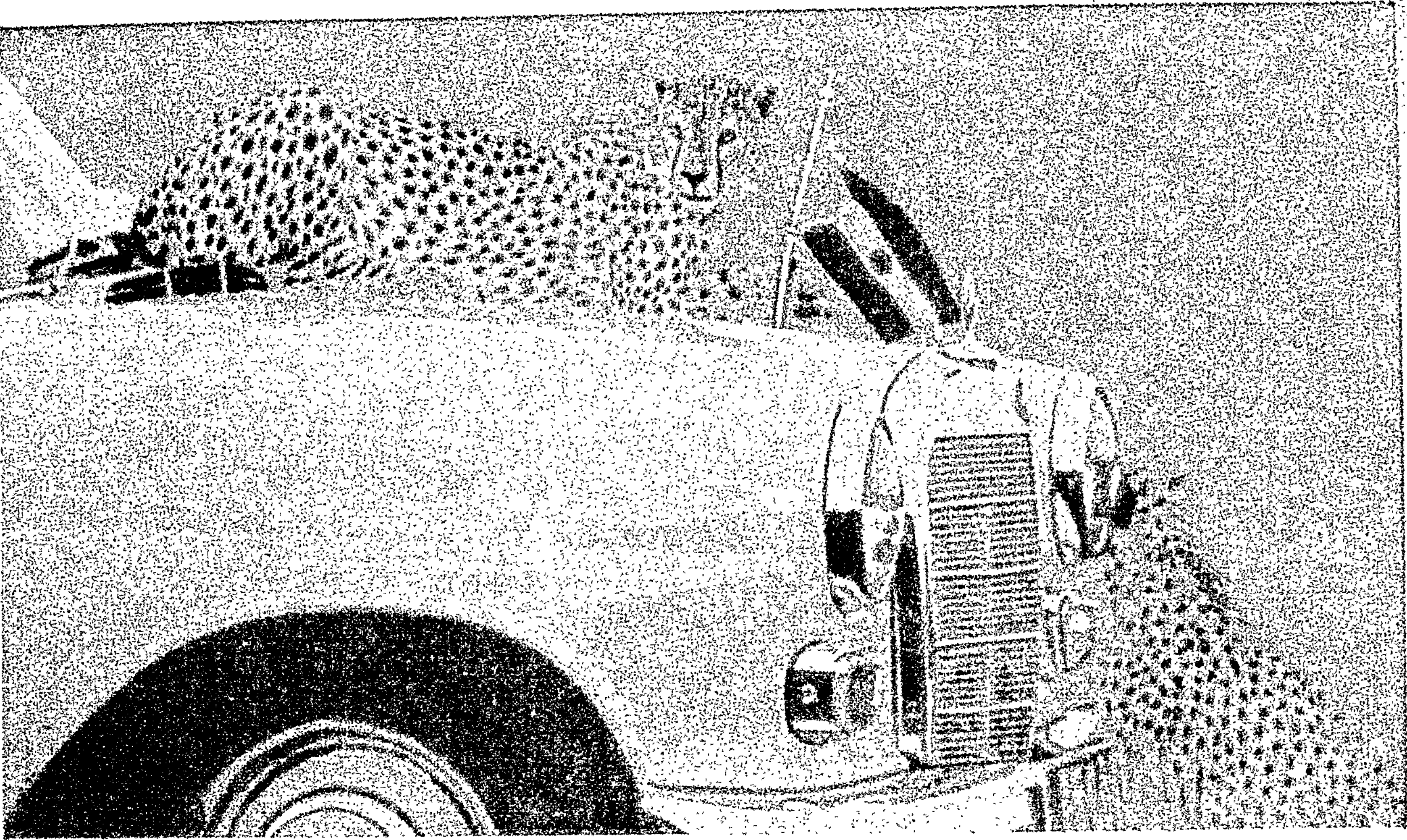
With Indira Gandhi, Mr. and Mrs Khruschev and family and Gromyko.
Indian Embassy, Moscow, 1963

With President Radhakrishnan, Khruschev and Mikoyan, Moscow 1964.

Kosygin's press conference at New Delhi, 1969.



With Prince Sihanouk, Pnom Penh, 1969.



Hungry cheetah tasting India, National Park, Nairobi, 1970.

With Nehru and Mme. Sun Yat Sen (Soong Ching Ling), New Delhi, 1956.

With Prime Minster Lal Bahadur Shastri, flanked by Kosygin and Gromyko, Tashkent, 1966.

With President Ho Chin Minh, Hanoi, 1958.

With Harold Wilson, Lord Hailsham and other MP's at House of Commons, London, 1981.

As President I C C R at Indo French Conference, 1976.

Simla Conference, July 1972.

Indian Delegation at UNESCO General Conference Belgrade 1980.

With President Nyerere of Tanzania, 1980.

At the International Commission Vietnam, 1957.
with Polish and Canadian delegates

With Sen and Mrs Percy, Mrs. Sheila Kaul &
Sen and Mrs Gaylord Nelson, Washington. D.C 1976

Ambassador Kaul speaking at a Gurudwara, Yubacity, California 1975.

With Mother Theresa, Indian Embassy Washington DC, 1976.

With Ravi Shanker at a reception in Washington, 1976.

With playback singer Mukesh in Washington, 1976.

not his blue shirt but his 'police' methods that I did not care for.

I settled down to the routine life of a joint and Special Magistrate. I recorded the prosecution and defence evidence in the Kuthar case. The Raja was a tall, well-built man of about 40, wore a turban, maintained a waxed moustache and looked impressive. He had lost one arm in a shooting accident but was still an excellent shot and had bagged many tigers. He had an impressive palace at Kuthar and was the terror of the whole area. The government's writ did not run in his estate where only *his* word, was law. He kept the District Magistrate on his side and the junior officers were afraid of him. He did what he liked, kidnapping married women and young girls, beating poor villagers, if they did not obey him and even looting and killing those who dared oppose him.

When things became intolerable for the people, they sent petitions to the highest authorities who ordered a special investigation. This resulted in a number of charges of dacoity and murder against him. An independent officer from outside the district was sent to try the case. Why the choice fell on me, I did not know, but I took it in the normal course.

The hearings lasted about two months, every day from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. A special prosecutor had been brought in from outside the district and the Raja had also engaged eminent counsel from Lucknow. When the Raja came in for the first hearing, there was silence in the courtroom and all eyes were fixed on him. I could see the awe on the faces and terror in the eyes of the witnesses. The Raja's Counsel demanded a seat for the accused, in view of his status. I refused the request and made him stand in the dock, like any other accused. I could see anger flash in his eyes, but he obeyed and stood six feet tall, in a defiant mood.

One witness after another, victims of his lust and cruelty, or their surviving relatives, appeared and deposed against him. One poor villager said, "I was dragged to the Raja's palace one evening and asked to murder another villager. When I said I had no quarrel with him and that he was a relative of mine, I was beaten with *Samjhawan*." I did not quite follow what *Samjhawan* was. In Hindi it means "to persuade". How could he be beaten with persuasion, I asked? The poor villager

explained that *Samjhawan* was the nickname given to a long hob-nailed jack boot, like an Americen 'persuader'. When this *Samjhawan* did not produce the desired effect, the witness said he was tackled by *Bujhawan*. Again I asked him to explain, for *Bujhawan* in Hindi means 'to cool down or extinguish'. With a look at the Raja and fear in his eyes, the witness replied *Bujhawan* was a bigger boot with longer nails. He was told he would be beaten to death with it. The witness went on to say that out of fear of his own death he agreed to kill his relative. He was given 24 hours to do this. On reaching home, he decided to run away rather than kill and warned his relative to do the same. The latter did not listen to him and was killed by the Raja's hirelings two days later. The witness had taken shelter with the people in another district and thus escaped a similar fate.

Many gruesome and cruel incidents were related one after another by several witnesses. They did not break down under cross examination, for they were telling the truth and felt assured that the Raja and his hirelings could not now do them any harm. When the Raja found that he could not intimidate the witnesses by his physical presence in the dock, his counsel requested that his presence be excused as he was a diabetic. This was confirmed by a medical certificate and I allowed the request. I had already ordered the sealing and locking up of his huge arsenal in Kuthar, so that he could not use it to intimidate or bump off witnesses. There was incontrovertible and convincing evidence against him. After about two months, I committed him to the Sessions Court on charges of murder and dacoity. A few days, later I heard that he had died of diabetes.

Barlow was transferred from the district and sent as Commissioner to Bareilly, to replace Nethersole. In the normal course, I should have replaced Barlow as District Magistrate, but Nethersole wanted me to go as District Officer to Ballia, in Eastern U.P. where the Congress Movement was at its height. It was the usual British practice in those days, to use Indian officers to crush the Independence Movement. I went to see Nethersole at Bareilly and told him that they were choosing the wrong man for Ballia, if they wanted to suppress the Congress Movement.

Nethersole was a tall Irishman with gray hair and blue eyes. He asked me point blank why I would not go to Ballia. I said I did not mind going, but I would not do anything extra-legal to suppress the Congress Movement. I was an Indian and my sympathy was naturally for India's independence. The Irish in Nethersole perhaps appreciated my frankness. He said he would write to Chief Secretary Mudie and advised me to do the same. And then he asked me to join him for drinks and dinner at the club.

The Bareilly Club was an impressive place with a long bar, frequented by British and Indian military and civil officers. I joined Nethersole and we had three or four drinks. He was drinking Scotch and I Brandy. Feeling sufficiently inebriated and wanting to have some dinner, I ventured to ask Nethersole if he would like another drink. He replied: "What do you mean another? I shall have lots more." That was Mickey Nethersole—frank, honest and blunt. We had a couple more drinks, before we went into the dining room.

Nethersole told many stories at the table—most of them unprintable. One was about his predecessor, Stubbs. Stubbs', *travelling allowance bill was sent back by the Accountant-*General on the ground that the distance from Bareilly to Lucknow, as given in the Gazetteer, was only 148 miles, while he had claimed 150 miles in his bill. Stubbs had the huge milestone weighing over two hundred pounds removed from the highway, packed and sent at government expense to the Accountant-General at Allahabad, to substantiate his claim!

Another anecdote was about a British Superintendent of Police at Bareilly, who had been asked to make special arrangements for the safe arrival and departure of the Viceregal train passing through on a certain date. When the train reached and passed Bareilly, there were no special police arrangements. His explanation was called for. He wired back, "The arrangements were perfect. I only got the date wrong." He got away with it. If it had been an Indian Police Officer, he would have been demoted or dismissed.

I sent a brief letter to the Chief Secretary mentioning my talk with Nethersole. Nethersole himself was going as Commissioner to Ballia and probably wanted a more pliable man as his District Magistrate there. He must have spoken to

the Chief Secretary. I got my orders of promotion as District Magistrate, Shahjahanpur, three days later. Who knows the report that I was 'a dangerous civilian, but would be still more dangerous as a public man', may have weighed in the minds of the higher authorities?

A District Magistrate's life, in those days, especially for a nationalist Indian, was not easy. Many of us were living on the horns of the dilemma, whether to quit and join the national movement or to stay on under difficult conditions.

A few weeks after I had taken over as head of the district of Shahjahanpur, Gandhi began his 'Quit India' Movement, asking the British rulers to leave India and let a free and Independent India fight the war against Fascism and Nazism. Gandhi did not wish to create too much difficulty in the British pursuit of the war effort in India. But he did want to lodge an emphatic moral protest against the British refusal to consult India, before declaring war on her behalf. How could India, herself under foreign domination, fight with conviction against the threat of Hitler's domination in Europe? Gandhi gave notic that the 'Quit India' Movment would start on 9 August, 1942.

The British rulers in India got panicky. The Allies were losing in the West and Japan had overrun South-East Asia. They launched a wholesale suppression of the Quit India Movement. They were afraid of losing their foot-hold in India and their overseas empire, apart from their own personal careers. Subhas Bose had escaped from a British jail, taken refuge in Hitler's Germany, had then moved on to South-East Asia and formed the Indian National Army (INA). Gandhi and Nehru wielded more influence and could make all the difference to India's war effort, but the British did not appreciate the value of their support.

Orders were sent from Lucknow, on 8 August 1942, to arrest all Congress leaders before the dawn of 9th. Bhalla, the Superintendent of Police, and I got together. He was a fine policeman and had the list of the staunch nationalist local Congress leaders and managed to take them all in custody peacefully, before sunrise, on August 9. Bhalla was an experienced policeman. He was feared and respected by his subordinates. Once he had suspended a whole *Thana* (police station)

staff for concealing a case of dacoity. They used to say "*Upar Allah neechey Bhalla*" i.e., 'Allah above and Bhalla below."

Bhalla and I agreed we would not use force, such as *lathi* charges or firing, since the "Quit India" Movement was a peaceful one. Force would only exacerbate the feelings of the people and provoke them unnecessarily. He arranged things so efficiently that we did not have to use force at any time in the district during the Movement.

There were, of course, *hartals* (closure of shops and schools), demontrations by students and the Congress rank and file, but we decided to leave them alone. The Jail Superintedent complained, however, that the political prisoners were creating trouble. I decided to visit the district jail myself and not rely on the garbled version of the jailor. He had been awarded a '*Bahadur*' title for services rendered in the past Civil Disobedience Movements.

As soon as I entered the jail gate, the Congress leaders (some of whom I knew personally), shouted "*Naukarshahi Murdabad*" (Down with the bureaucracy). I took it in my stride as a sentiment I myself shared, smiled, greeted the leaders and sat down to chat with them.

I asked the leaders among the political prisoness if they had any comlaints. They mentioned things they lacked, such as newspapers, books, writing material which I ordered on the spot to be supplied, as permissible under the rules. They were pleasantly surprised, but had more 'demands' regarding supply of food, clothing, milk, fruit, vegetables. These also I conceded on the spot, in accordance with the rules. After that, we talked about the state of affairs in the district. I informed them that the movement had been peaceful and there had been no violence from either side—their's or the government's. They felt relieved and we parted without any more slogans.

This was only the beginning. There was trouble ahead. Violence had erupted in Ballia, where the local treasury had been looted and officesb urnt. The authorities had used *lathis* and fire-arms, which had infuriated the people. Similar reports came from many other parts of the State and the country.

The higher police authorities in particular were becoming unpleasant and vindictive. The Inspector-General of Police,

Hugh Ingles ended a circular to various District Superintendents of Police with: "I wish you good hunting." Bhalla showed it to me and we both felt angry and hurt. Were the police supposed to 'hunt' the peaceful agitators like wild animals? No wonder, when Hugh Ingles was knighted, one of his friends telegraphed him "Congratulations. Very surprised!"

Then came an order to Bhalla from Robinson, the D.I.G. Police, to burn down the *Khadi Ashram* (a Gandhian institution to encourage village and cottage industries). Robinson had done this in a neighbouring district and sprinkled salt over the grounds to curse the earth. He mentioned this boastfully to Bhalla.

T.P. Bhalla was a wise and experienced policeman, but even he felt rattled and came to consult with me. We got along very well, felt alike on most things and worked as a team. I asked Bhalla to tell Robinson that I had objected to his proposal on legal grounds and he could take it up, if he so desired, with my immediate boss, the Commissioner, who was none other than Barlow. Barlow hated the guts of Robinson. I told Barlow that Robinson's proposal was illegal, a violation of civil and criminal law and would involve us all, including him, in civil and criminal suits. Barlow could not agree more. He thanked me for bringing the matter to his notice and rescinded Robinson's orders. Barlow was moved perhaps more by his dislike of Robinson than my argument. But once he took a decision, he would not give in. Robinson had to eat the humble pie.

There was one delightful young *Rais* (leading citizen) named Kanwar Jyoti Prasada. He maintained a good table and his wife, Pamela, was a gracious hostess. One of his sons is now a Member of Parliament while another manages the ancestral estate. Jyoti was friendly to all—Barlow and Robinson, the Congress and the Muslim League, officials as well as non-officials. One day I found him dressed in the rough home-spun Khadi with a white Gandhi cap on his head. He had joined the Congress Party. I teased him "How can you, with your luxurious habits, wear these rough clothes?" He replied smilingly, "*Kapre to Khadar Ke Hain magar Dil to Reshmi Hai*". (My clothes are of rough home-spun cloth, but my heart is still silken).

The war effort was going on, so was civil disobedience. The poor peasants continued to suffer under the heavy burden of their poverty, aggravated by the shortage and rising prices of essential commodities. Government had little time to attend to the basic needs of the people. Man-made shortages were allowed to be created which caused such tragedies as the Bengal famine in 1943. A few rich middle-man and many black-marketeers and hoarders lined their pockets, at the expense of the common man.

Some sort of rough rationing and price control of essential commodities was introduced in the towns and cities, but the rural areas were completely neglected and suffered badly. The movement of refugees from rural to urban areas created many problems and led to social tension and increased crime. The Defence of India Act and Rules were promulgated by the Government, but could not improve the situation because of wide-spread economic distress and political discontent. Things became worse and more difficult, as time passed.

It was in these circumstances that I was transferred to replace A.N. Jha as Additional District Magistrate (A.D.M.) Cawnpore. It was considered a key-post at that time, because of the industrial importance of the city and its large labour force. I had been in Shahjahanpur over one year and took the transfer in my stride. I had got used to being moved from one district to another quite frequently. I had faced the challenge of my first post as District Magistrate with faith and fortitude, in spite of difficulties, and was mentally prepared for many more. I have come to the conclusion after having worked in government for four decades, that if you are honest and straightforward, firm and clear in your own mind, even a foreign ruler will respect you.

CHAPTER 8

QUIT INDIA AND WORLD WAR II

From small villages to a medium-sized town like Shahjahanpur had been a big change, but the contrast between that and a big city like Cawnpore was even greater. The city had about two million people, a quarter of whom were industrial workers. There was food shortage and the prices of food grains fluctuated from day to day, depending on fresh arrivals from other districts. The crime rate was high. Gambling flourished because the local police had a share in it. The city *Kotwal* (Deputy Superintendent of Police) earned more through his 'percentage' in gambling dens than any other official, including the Governor.

There were three ICS officers in the district. The Senior District Magistrate was C.M. Ker, a very civilised and affable Englishman. He had appeared as a prosecution witness in my court at Shahjahanpur when I was trying the Kuthar case. He had stood in the witness box and I was impressed by his straightforward, precise and truthful answers. Now he was my immediate boss and I wondered how we would get along. I found him efficient in his work, non-interfering in mine and businesslike in dealing with others.

Soon after I joined as A.D.M. Cawnpore, in early 1943, I got a telephone message from the Chief Secretary asking me to move as District Magistrate to Unnao, 11 miles from Cawnpore, in place of R.N. Dey. It would mean an independent charge, even if in a small district like Unnao, and I preferred to being number two in a big one. I was asked to proceed

immediately to Unnao and report to the Commissioner, Harper, who was camping there.

Somewhat intrigued by these sudden orders, I called on Dey at the Collector's House, before reporting to Harper. I told Dey about my orders and asked if he knew the reason. He was a senior colleague, a Bengalee Christian, and had the reputation of being an emotional and patriotic officer. Dey was silent for a while and then confided to me that he was resigning from the ICS, in protest against the oppressive policy of the government. I asked if he was going to join the national movement for independence. He said he would wait and see. I tried to plead with him that unless he was joining the movement, he might be able to serve the cause better from within the service. He replied he had considered all aspects of the matter and his mind was made up. He did not join the Movement and rejoined the Service when the Congress Party came back to power in 1947.

Harper told me I would have to take charge immediately. I agreed to do so as soon as Dey was ready to move. To be fair to Harper, he did not speak ill of Dey and agreed that I could take over as soon as he moved.

I went to see Dey again and told him I was in no hurry to take over, so he need not rush because of me. He said it would be embarrassing for him to stay on and that he would move out the next day, if I would take care of his personal belongings until he sent for them. I readily agreed and took his leave.

Unnao was a small town of about 25,000 inhabitants, but the district was average sized, with about 400 villages divided into 4 *tehsils* or sub-divisions, each in the charge of a Provincial Civil Service (P.C.S.) Officer. There was a Civil Surgeon in charge of the hospital and jail, a District and Sessions Judge, two Executive Engineers, and of course the Superintendent of Police with his deputies, inspectors and sub-inspectors. There were four *Tehsildars*, one in each *tehsil* and their deputies (*Naib-Tehsildars*), *Kanungos* (*Supervisors*) and *Patwaris* (Keepers of land records).

The Deputy Commissioner's house was old-fashioned, but cool in summer and pleasant in winter because of the mud plastered brick walls, high ceilings and thatched roofs. There was no electricity. We kept ourselves cool by *Pankhas* (stiff cloth hanging from a wooden beam, which was tied to a strong

rope). This was pulled to and fro by a man squatting on the floor with the rope tied to his big toe. It was indeed a strange spectacle. In summer we managed to cool the hot wind by screening the doors and windows with *Khas Khas Taties* (screens made of fragrant weeds on which water dripped continuously from a pipe). Air-conditioning had not been heard of till then, in India, though electric ceiling and table fans were available. At night we would sleep in the open, with or without mosquito nets, depending on the season. Sometimes, a shower would come down at night and we would rush with our beds to the covered verandah. We managed to live comfortably and well, suffered less colds and heat strokes than we do today. It was a simple, down-to-earth life, close to nature and the people. The gulf between the rich and poor was not as striking, stinking or ostentatious as it is today.

There were the *Taluqdars* of Maurawan with their elephants, cars and hordes of servants and retainers. But they were not as cruel as the Raja of Kuthar. They listened to advice and marched with the time. One or two of them even joined political parties and contributed to Congress Party funds as well as to the Viceroy's War Fund.

I heard the story of a rich, illiterate *Taluqdar* who had to attend the Governor's *Darbar* at Lucknow on a certain date at 11 a.m. sharp. Not to be late for this ceremony, he kept an alarm clock (which was then a novelty) in his pocket with the bell fixed to go at 11 a.m. He went a little earlier and as soon as the Governor took his seat the *Taluqdar's* time-piece started ringing. Everyone looked round and he proudly showed off his new toy saying *Mor bajat* (It is mine that is ringing !)"

At the other end of the spectrum were the poor peasants and landless labourers who worked twelve hours a day to eke out a marginal existence. In between were the lawyers and doctors, businessmen and traders, weavers and artisans, who somehow managed to make both ends meet. There were no big industrialists or merchants as the district was one of the poorest and most backward in the State.

No wonder it was one of the strong-holds of the Congress Party. The Muslim League had begun to show its face, but only in the towns. The Communist Party of India had some following, in a few pockets, but the R.S.S. (The Hindu

militant organisation—Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh) was at that time nowhere. Hindus and Muslims both had faith in the Congress and there were few Hindu-Muslim or Shia-Sunni riots, unlike in the big towns like Cawnpore and Lucknow. Unnao was located hetween these two cities, 11 miles from the former and 37 from the latter, but it had remained almost stationary for the last fifty to hundred years.

Keen to do something for the people, we introduced strict rationing of essential commodities like foodgrains, sugar, edible oils, kerosene and coarse cloth. We caught and summarily punished the biggest hoarders and black-marketeers, This had a healthy effect on others and these goods became available to all ration card holders. Random and spot checking in various places kept the staff and the shopkeepers on their toes.

Our strictness affected the flow of foodgrains from Unnao district into the black market in neighbouring Cawnpore. The prices of food grains rose in the so-called 'open' black market there. Industrial workers threatened to go on strike because the rationed food grains were not adequate to meet the requirements of their families and they had to supplement them from the 'open' market. C.M. Ker, the senior District Magistrate of Cawnpore came rushing to me, one morning, and pleaded I relax my strict orders. I refused because it would shoot up the prices in my own district. He telephoned the Chief Secretary who diverted grains from other districts to Cawnpore city. The real problem was that the big black marketeers and hoarders were contributing large sums of money from their ill-gotten gains to the Viceroy's War Fund and therefore they were left untouched by the authorities. This was one of the causes of the Bengal famine of 1943. I had to stop one of my over-enthusiastic Tehsildars from levying a tax of ten rupees on every bullock cart load of grains for the War Fund. This had an immediate downward effect on the prices of foodgrains. But the bigger merchants in towns like Calcutta were left untouched, by and large.

A lot of illicit distillation of liquor, was going on, along the banks and ravines of the Ganges. The excise staff were in league with the bigger unlawful distillers. The poorer ones suffered the most. One night, the excise officer came to my

house and sought permission to search the servants' quarters, where he understood my cook and bearer distilled spirits from Mahua flowers, of which there were many trees in my large compound. I did not at first believe him, but when he persisted, I went along with him. Lo and behold, there were my cook and bearer in a dark smoky room poking fire under an improvised earthenware still. As soon as they heard us, they smashed the utensils and ran away.

Next morning they were brought before me. When I asked why they had done something illegal and why they had not asked me for some liquor, they replied "Sir, we dared not. And the *Hakim* (indigenous doctor) advised us to make it out of Mahua flower which has medicinal qualities. We did not know it was against the law and swear not to do it again." I let them off with a warning.

Sometimes one wonders whether it is not a stupid law that forbids people to make cheap, clean liquor out of local herbs and flowers for their own use, not for sale. Prohibition leads to crime and corruption, clandestine and excessive drinking, not to temperance. The State makes millions of rupees by auctioning liquor shops to the highest bidders who adulterate the spirit to earn extra profits. Why cannot the State run such shops itself? Under strict supervision and control, this would ensure both good quality and reasonable prices suited to the pocket of the average poor man. It would not deprive him of one of the few pleasures of his life or drive him to drink poisonous hooch which leads to death and disease.

It was the year 1943—the year of the Bengal famine and a turn in the tide of war against Hitler. My younger brother had joined the army and was a Major somewhere in the East. My three younger sisters and youngest brother (now a Lt. General) were students at Lucknow. All four had joined daily processions in protest against the government's repressive measures. One day I learnt that they had been arrested. I was proud and happy but also concerned, for in those days the P.A.C. (Police Armed Constabulary) were a law unto themselves and shot people on mere suspicion.

I motored down to Lucknow and was relieved to find my sisters safe at home with my parents, after having endured a *lathi* charge and jail for a few hours. But my youngest brother

was detained without any warrant. I complained to the local head of police. He got my brother released on bail and told me he was one of the six students whom some police hot heads suspected of committing sabotage. They had put them on the list to be shot summarily. He also told me that all the six had escaped being shot dead inside the jail on the very first day of their arrest by a few seconds, on the intervention of the Jail Superintendent. Had the Superintendent arrived at the jail a few seconds later, the six young students would have been dead. I did not believe him until I met my brother, who confirmed he had been told the same by the Principal of his College (a foreigner) who had been asked to depose against him, but refused to do so. I felt both relieved and angry. Was this how the British rulers in India thought they would be able to perpetuate the Raj? Instead of breaking the will and determination of the people, it would only steel and strengthen them. I hated the alien ruler and his methods and resolved to resist him in my own way, even from within the service. There were many Indians who felt similarly. But we still hoped that Gandhi's peaceful methods would bear fruit in the near future.

The world outside was changing rapidly. The British Government in London was feeling a little more confident after the tough resistance put up by the Soviets at Stalingrad. But their counterparts in India were seriously perturbed at the reverses inflicted by the Japanese in South-East Asia. The myth of the superiority of the white over the brown or yellow races had been shattered. The delay in promising independence to India, even after the war, created disappointment and anger in the minds of the people. Indian soldiers who had been taken prisoner by the Japanese, rallied round Subhas Bose and formed the Indian National Army (INA) under his command. The people of Indian origin in Singapore, Malaya, Burma and Thailand gave large sums of money to finance them. Subhas Bose wanted to use the Japanese to throw the British out of India. This suited the Japanese who, however, had their own ambitions in Asia.

The Japanese came up to Manipur and Nagaland in North-east India. They left behind many caches of arms when they could not advance further. These arms were later used by the Nagas and other dissident tribes. The people of India sympa-

thised with the INA, but were against Hitler and the Japanese. Under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru, they carried on a peaceful, non-violent Civil Disobedience Movement, but they did not give any help to the enemy. The British Government and people appreciated this, but not so the British rulers in India. They launched a reign of terror, employing special police to arrest, beat or shoot anyone found prowling near a railway line or a government building. This led to an underground movement headed by Jaya Prakash Narayan, Aruna Asaf Ali and others. Some people cut electricity cables or railway tracks, but this was more symbolic than sabotage on a large scale. Students took out peaceful protest processions and the people joined them. Fortunately, as in Shahjahanpur so in Unnao, we did not have to order firing or *lathi* charges. I had to personally intervene to prevent the over-loyal Superintendent of Police from using force unnecessarily. I missed T.P. Bhalla very much. We had to impose a collective fine on one village where the electric copper wire was stolen and a government rest house burnt. Such cases were rare and this was the only one in my district.

The Congress Party had been banned by Government, but they could not arrest all Congressmen and women. One day Lady Wazir Hasan, wife of an ex-Chief Justice of Allahabad, came to see her daughter in Unnao. She flew the Congress tricolour on her car. The overzealous Superintendent of Police wanted to arrest her, but I ordered him not to. Lady Wazir Hasan was angry with him but I managed to pacify her. The jails were overcrowded. Unnao had the distinction of having a Central Jail for political prisoners, where Congress leaders from other districts were lodged.

The Civil Surgeon was also the Jail Superintendent so that he looked after the inmates' health. Under him was the Jailor, who followed his own rules and whims. Below him were many warders, each in charge of a ward or barrack of prisoners. Then there were the toughs—mostly dacoits or murderers who had served part of their sentence and by their 'good behaviour' been given charge of 10 to 20 prisoners each. They were the agents of the Jailor and were directed to put down by force any disturbance or indiscipline among the inmates.

This system somehow worked, as far as the criminals were

concerned. 'Set a thief to catch a thief' seemed to be the principle behind this practice. But it led to malpractices and corruption. A prisoner could get tobacco, sugar or his favourite sweet, by bribing these toughs and warders, or some relief in the hard labour he had to do, if he had been awarded 'rigorous' imprisonment.

The system could not work for political prisoners. The Government therefore introduced 'A', 'B' and 'C' classes for them, depending on their social status in life. This device was intended to divide and create jealousy among them. But most of those in Unnao refused to be led into this trap and preferred to stay together in one class, eat the same food and suffer the same deprivations. To lighten their burden and divert attention from the dull drudgery of jail life, they took to gardening, teaching the illiterate prisoners and so on.

This did not seem to please the jail authorities. They were bent upon breaking the morale of the 'politicals'. The Inspector General of Prisons (I.G.P), an Indian, came one day to Unnao and without consulting me ordered all the 120 political prisoners to be huddled into one barrack, made to hold only 40. The Civil Surgeon, Dr. P.C. Kacker, came to me with tears in his eyes and said there was danger of diarrhoea and cholera breaking out. He had mentioned this to the I.G.P. who had overruled him.

I was the man on the spot, responsible for the overall supervision of the jail. I went to the jail along with the Civil Surgeon and was met by a volley of protests from the political prisoners. They were decent, educated, respectable people who had sacrificed their daily comforts and family life in the struggle for India's independence. They threatened to go on hunger strike if the I.G.P.'s orders were not countermanded. I promised to do what I could.

I had a problem. The I.G.P. was a senior colonel of the Indian Medical Service. He was the head of an independent department and not subordinate to me. But I was not subordinate to him either. I was the man on the spot, while his headquarters were in Lucknow. I was responsible for anything untoward that might happen. I could not agree with the inhuman, cruel and vindictive character of the I.G.P.'s arbitrary order.

I countermanded his order in writing and had the political prisoners moved back into the 3 barracks. The Civil Surgeon was pleased, but the Jailor was not. He sent a special message to his I.G.P., with a copy of my order. Marshmith, a fat, ugly Deputy Inspector General of police was sent by the Governor to make a confidential enquiry. He did not see me and I do not know what he reported to the Governor. But I received a letter from the Commissioner (Harper), who was my immediate boss, asking my reasons for countermanding the I.G.P.'s order.

I wrote back that I was the man on the spot, responsible for everything that happened and it was my considered opinion, on the basis of the Civil Surgeon's advice, that there could be an epidemic inside the jail, if the I.G.P.'s orders were carried out. I also said there were three barracks available in the jail and I saw no reason why they should not be used as provided in the Jail Manual to accommodate only 40 each, and not 120.

It was a factual report which could not be controverted. The I.G.P., though an Indian, had allowed his 'loyalty' to run away with his common-sense and override his medical ethics. Harper was a decent, fair-minded Irishman. He upheld my point of view and reported accordingly to the Governor. I heard no more of it until Harper told me the whole story after a game of tennis a few weeks later.

I have mentioned this incident to indicate that there were fair-minded and honest men both among the British and Indian officials, as there were also dishonest and sadistic ones among both. If you stood firm on your ground, you were respected by the British; if you were weak, they exploited you.

People were deeply moved by the famine in Bengal where even the officially recorded deaths due to starvation numbered three million. The bureaucracy seemed more concerned about continuing the war effort and collecting war funds than doing anything about the famine.

I thought of killing two birds with one stone—collecting money for the war fund, but earmarking it for Bengal Famine Relief in accordance with the wishes of the donors. I organised an All India Music Conference in Unnao, to raise funds. It was attended by leading musicians, singers and dancers like Ustad Faiyaz Ali Khan, Narayan Rao Vyas, Birju and Shambhu Maharaj, Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan and others. The function was

a roaring success. We collected over two hundred thousand rupees from ordinary folk. An All India *Kavi Sammelan* (poets' gathering) was also held. It was presided over by Amara Natha Jha, Vice Chancellor of Allahabad University and attended by famous Hindi poets like Bachhan, Nirala and others. This fetched another hundred thousand rupees. Both gatherings lasted the whole night, under a *Shamiana* (canopy) and we saw the sun rise in the morning, before dispersing.

When the Governor came to inspect the district soon after, I presented to him a purse of 3 hundred thousand rupees, earmarked for the Bengal Famine Relief Fund. He was pleased, but expressed surprise that I had not left any money at his disposal. I replied that donations were supposed to be voluntary and earmarked for the cause indicated by the donors. He somehow swallowed my explanation and gave me a sarcastic smile. I also presented to him a cheque for five lakh (half a million) rupees, to be invested in Defence Saving Bonds. After the war the money with interest was to be used for setting up a college in Unnao, where there was only a High School. (The Subhas Degree College was set up with these funds, when the Congress Party again came to power).

These were some of the modest ways in which we tried to serve the national cause from within the Service. Some British bosses did not like it, but they were decent enough not to interfere. As long as it did not impede the war effort, they did not seem to mind.

I took an active part in the nationwide recruiting drive, to raise a voluntary army of two million. There was widespread unemployment and poverty; young men of all creeds and castes came forward in large numbers. We selected only those who were physically fit. These rejections were about half, for they came mainly from poor villages and were undernourished. Once these boys got military training and saw more of the country and the world outside, they would be an asset to their own areas and to the future Independent India.

My efforts in this direction were appreciated. I was told by Harper that I narrowly missed getting an O.B.E. for it on account of my nationalist sympathies. I thanked my stars for that, because British titles would only brand an Indian 'loyalist' in those days. My friend, B.K. Nehru, was awarded

an M.B.E. for something or the other and it took him quite some time to get over the shock. Perhaps they deliberately did it to embarrass him because he was related to Jawaharlal Nehru. But he took it in his stride.

The life of British Governors in those days was one of luxury, pomp and show. They lived in palaces with a huge staff including liveried servants and uniformed gunmen. They held *darbars*, occasionally, signed on the many files put up by the Chief Secretary or Adviser, ate, drank and danced and had a good time. When they felt bored with the pomp and glory of their life in provincial capitals, they would go out to the districts, to shoot birds or hunt wild animals and receive purses for various causes dear to their hearts.

However, all of them were not cast in the same mould. There was Sir Malcolm Hailey, a noted scholar, able administrator and shrewd politician. He took keen interest in rural development, besides maintenance of law and order. So did Sir Malcolm Darling in the Punjab. But people like them were more the exception than the rule in my days. The abler British officers went to the Centre as Secretaries to the Government or Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

Things had improved for a short while, between 1937 and 1939, when the Congress ruled in the provinces, but reverted to the old style after the Congress governments resigned in 1939. Would the Congress come back to power or remain in the wilderness fighting for India's independence? We Indians felt confident that India would achieve independence at the end of the war and were looking forward to it. But most British officers, barring a few honorable exceptions, still hoped that British rule would continue after the war. Even the retiring Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, told George Merrel, the American Charge, "the Raj would remain for another fifty years because it would take that long for Indians to learn to govern themselves."* The British did everything in their power to weaken the nationalist Congress and strengthen communal organizations like the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha as well as feudal landlords, in the hope that they would replace the Congress whenever the next elections were held.

* America Encounters India by Hess, p. 138.

I received my orders of transfer as District Magistrate, Farrukhabad, in Western U.P. where I had spent a year in Settlement in 1941. It was the beginning of 1945. Things were bound to get better or worse. They could not stand still. The war-tide was turning in favour of the Allies and the enemy was on the run. The government in London seemed more aware of the need to conciliate India than were the British rulers in India. The latter still had a lingering hope that they would be able somehow to postpone India's independence and perpetuate the Raj.

Fatehgarh, the district headquarters of Farrukhabad, was not far from Unnao. Yezdi Gundevia, whom I was to replace, was a delightful Parsi. He was a jovial, light-hearted man, with a sense of humour that helped him overcome many difficulties. He was a very informal person, quick-witted and practical. We used to call him 'boy scout'. He was an excellent mimic and kept everyone laughing with his jokes and anecdotes.

He told me a true story of a village schoolmaster who came to see him with a written complaint that his wife had deserted him. Gundevia asked the schoolmaster to talk to Mrs. Gundevia, while he finished some other business. The teacher felt shy and hesitated, whereupon Gundevia told him : "You cannot keep your own wife and you are not bold enough to even talk to mine. You don't deserve to have one." This was enough for the poor teacher who beat a hasty retreat.

Gundevia related another incident about a dispute between Hindus and Muslims in Gorakhpur (Eastern U.P.). It was the Moharrum Festival, when Shia Muslims take out huge *Alams* (banners on long poles) and *Tazias* (decorated replicas of holy places) in praise of their martyred Imam. They will not bend the *Alam* or tilt the *Tazia* and sometimes telegraph and telephone wires and branches of trees have to be cut to let them pass. In this case, however, the obstacle was a *Peepal* tree which is considered holy by Hindus. The Muslims would not bend their Tazia and the Hindus would not allow the Peepal branches to be lopped off. Gundevia was the Magistrate on duty. He had a small patch of the earthen road near the *peepal* dug 3 feet deeper, thus allowing the Tazia to pass erect without any damage to the tree. Not many magistrates would have shown the presence of mind and imagination that Gundevia did.

He gave me the low-down on the district over a cup of tea and made it sound interesting and easy. The only thing he warned me about was the local army brass. The Seventh Rajput Regimental Training Centre was at Fatehgarh. The Centre was headed by a British Colonel, but had a number of Indian majors and captains who were nationalists to the core. I found them very intelligent, patriotic and sociable.

There was only one occasion when I had a minor difference with the British Colonel. Some of his troops had dynamited the *Ramganga* (a tributory of the Ganges) to catch fish. In the process, one soldier and one villager were killed and some children wounded. Col. Culley wanted the matter hushed up, while I insisted that the guilty be punished to uphold justice and to deter others. A compromise was arrived at: Col. Culley agreeing to punish his men himself and the police taking action against the civilians involved.

I have often found it quite easy to deal with the military, wherever I have been posted—in fact I have got on better with them than with fellow civilians. They are very particular about rank and protocol, but are cooperative, when given their due respect and honour. I have never had any trouble with them in India or abroad.

The war in Europe was slowly drawing to an end. The British rulers in India made frantic efforts to postpone the elections, but failed. The British Government in London sent a Cabinet Mission headed by Lord Pethwick Lawrence to India, in early 1946, and ordered the release of the Congress leaders who had been detained without trial since August 9, 1942. The Simla Conference was held between the British Mission and the Indian leaders, to discuss the transfer of power. I was fascinated by these developments and took a fortnight's leave to go to Simla. I watched Gandhi, Nehru, Azad, Patel and other leaders walk along the Mall. Unlike the British and Indian bureaucrats, they did not ride rickshaws pulled by human beings. It was a thrilling sight for an Indian to see his leaders meeting the British on a footing of equality. Hopes rose high in every Indian's heart.

I went on a trek from Simla to Kufri, Narkanda and Bagi on the Hindustan-Tibet Road. It was not jeepable at that time as it is now. I preferred to walk rather than go on a pony.

The scenery was beautiful, the vista long and wide, stretching to many hundreds of miles. The wooded hills gave place to open spaces that revealed breathtaking views. I met the Maharaja of Faridkot at Narkanda Rest House. We had a drink and meal together and then started a political discussion. It ended with a bet of rupees one thousand on the results of the Simla Conference. I won the bet, but Faridkot failed to pay his debt.

After this brief Himalayan holiday, I went back to the mill at Fatehgarh. The air was thick with all kinds of rumours. Would all the 'politicals' be released? There was a special jail in Fatehgarh meant for dangerous political prisoners and revolutionaries. I went on an inspection of the jail, one hot summer day, and met Jogesh Chatterjee, a well-known revolutionary, and others. They were a pleasant lot and I admired their revolutionary zeal and conviction. They complained that they were forced into their barracks and not allowed to sleep in the jail courtyard at night. I asked the Jailor and he mentioned 'reasons of security'. I ordered him to double his security guards in this barrack and allowed the prisoners to sleep in the enclosed yard at night. No one escaped or tried to escape as long as I was there. There were the usual complaints of grit in *dal*, weevils in rice and wheat, lack of fresh vegetables and fruit. I asked them to form a kitchen committee of their own and run their jail mess. The Jailor was not happy for he would not be able to have his usual 'cut', but he had to obey my orders.

I learnt later that the Jailor had complained to his I.G.P., who had in turn complained to the Governor about my order. I was not asked for any explanation this time but kicked upstairs as a member of the War Services Selection Board at Dehra Dun with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

I was glad to get out, but wondered why I had been moved so soon. I learnt that a secret letter had been sent by the Viceroy to all British Governors asking them to transfer Indian officers with nationalist leanings from districts, before the forthcoming elections. Frantic efforts were made to defeat the Congress at the polls. But when the election results were

announced, the Congress swept the polls not only in U.P. but in seven other provinces.

Farrukhabad had been the sad symbol of a dying empire trying its damndest to remain in power. The elections in Britain had brought the Labour Government to power. They were anxious to make a deal with India, to part as friends. Unfortunately, they divided India before they quit, but this seemed inevitable in the circumstances. The Muslim League under Jinnah had raised the slogan of Pakistan. The Congress had the option of continued British rule in a United India or independence at the cost of partition of the sub-continent. Gandhi opposed partition, but Nehru and Patel accepted it as the price to be paid for independence.

An Interim Government of India was formed with Nehru as Vice-President and *de facto* head of the Cabinet, in September 1946. The Viceroy was the *de jure* President. It was a house divided. The Muslim League boycotted the Interim Government, at first. When they later joined it, they tried to weaken it from within, thus making effective government impossible. The dream of an independent and united India was shattered. Two independent dominions emerged—India which continued to be known by its old name, and the new dominion called Pakistan.

Buffeted by these winds of change, I went to Dehra Dun as a member of the Selection Board to recruit War Service candidates for Indian Civil Services.

CHAPTER 9

WAR SERVICES SELECTION BOARD

Dehra Dun in 1946 was a clean little town at the foot of the Himalayas. With an altitude of 2,500 feet, it is only 20 miles by car and 12 miles on foot, from the popular hill resort, Mussoorie, which stands majestic at a height of 7,000 feet. As my little daughter once remarked, Mussoorie with its myriad lights looked like a pin-cushion from Dehra Dun at night.

The flood of refugees from Pakistan had not yet started and Dehra Dun was not overcrowded as it is today. The Indian Military Academy (IMA), the Forest Research Institute (FRI) and Doon School were landmarks. It was a pleasant sight to see groups of gentlemen cadets from the IMA and Doon School boys in their uniform roving around the town on foot or bicycles. The town had electricity, piped water, wide clean roads, lined with eucalyptus trees. There were beautiful orchards of mango, guava and lychees for which Dehra Dun is famous.

The town was inhabited mostly by retired civil and military officers, who assembled in the evenings at the famous Doon Club. The serving military officers had their own Mess where they invited their civilian friends, on special occassions. There was a beautiful Circuit House with a lovely garden. (Nehru often sought refuge there from his busy schedule, after Independence).

Recruitment to the ICS and other All India Services had been suspended from 1942, in order to attract educated young men to the armed forces. The War Services Selection Board

had been set up to interview, test and select civilian officers from among the thousands of Emergency Commissioned Officers (ECO's) who were going to be demobilised, now that the war was over.

A similar board was, however, not set up for the demobilised junior and other ranks, to rehabilitate them in civil life. They had to go back to their villages and eke out a living from the already overburdened land. This created problems later.

The Board had a British President, two retired senior Indians as Vice-Presidents, four Group Testing Officers (GTO's) a psychologist and a psychiatrist. We were lodged in an old P.O.W. camp with compact accommodation and a high barbed wire fence. It was from this camp that the two famous mountaineers, Henrich Harrier and Auschneiter, taken prisoner during war, had escaped into Tibet. They later wrote interesting books on Tibet and their flight there. We worked four hours a day, four, sometimes five days a week, and went up to Mussoorie for long week-ends. It was a pleasant, comfortable life, but not very interesting or exciting.

The system of testing and selecting war service candidates for Civil Services was based on the war-time Army Selection Boards in Britain. It had its good points, but was not adapted to Indian conditions. Those with a good knowledge of English had an edge over the others. The psychological tests were in English and determined the I.Q. of a candidate on his instant reactions to words, images, figures etc. These were not a fair test for Indians, whose sub-conscious and instant conscious reactions were in their own language and milieu.

The psychologist was a fine Englishman named Lightfoot, who had been with the British army, but knew little about India. We tried to 'educate' him and persuaded him to modify some of his preconceived notions, but at times we had to outvote him when his grading was entirely different from ours.

The main tests were carried out by the G.T.O.'s. The candidates were put through physical and mental tests, as a group. These would show who was cooperative, who did only the talking, who had leadership qualities. Then they would have a group discussion on a subject or theme that was thrown into the group without previous notice. This gave an inkling of their mental make-up and was complementary to the physical

tests. More often than not it confirmed the qualities that had emerged in the field.

However, sometimes the two group tests contradicted each other. A young man who had emerged as a natural leader in a physical test might prove to be a back number in the group discussion and *vice versa*. In such cases we took help of the pen-portrait drawn by the psychologist. We would then meet together among ourselves and give an agreed tentative grading to each candidate. The President and the Vice-Presidents interviewed them separately and gave their own independent gradings. The psychiatrist, an opinionated Englishman, unfamiliar with Indian conditions, gave his own rating, based on a half-hour grilling interview with each candidate.

After this, the whole Board would meet to decide on a final grading for each candidate and his suitability for various branches of the Civil Service. In most cases our findings and gradings were the same or very close. But sometimes, the British psychiatrist's evaluation was diametrically opposed to that given by the rest of us. There were a dozen cases in which the rest of us had given the highest grading, 'A', to a candidate and the psychiatrist the lowest, 'U', (or unfit). His explanation was that there was a thin border line between a genius and an unstable character and it was only under stress and strain that one's stability and sanity could be tested. This was all right in theory, but we would not allow the 'shrink' to have a veto over us all. In such cases we sent for the head psychiatrist from Delhi. He upheld our gradings in all the controversial cases, much to the chagrin of our psychiatrist.

Some of those whom we graded 'A' and the psychiatrist 'U' proved able ambassadors, chiefs of various departments and secretaries to governments. It was just as well that a majority in the Board was of experienced administrators who had worked in India.

There is a story about a British Chairman of a Military Selection Board in India. Once the combined views of the other members of the Board went against a candidate whom he liked. He harrangued the members: "Look, this candidate belongs to a good, respectable and loyal family. They rendered meritorious service to the Raj during the Mutiny (1857). He deserves to be selected because pedigree cannot go wrong!"

No system of selection is 100 per cent fool-proof, but some are better than others. If we could combine the written examination system with a group test, it would perhaps be more reliable than either by itself. The difficulty in India is the large number of candidates for a particular post. There has to be a preliminary test to weed out the unsuitable ones. A written test is usually held for this purpose.

One way to reduce the large number of applicants would be to lower the minimum qualifications for lower posts. Why must a clerk have a college degree as minimum qualification? A matriculate would do. One reason why there is such a mad rush to join universities is to get a degree so as to have a minimum qualification for a white collar job. Another step could be to reduce admission to universities to the top ten per cent on merit, of whom one quarter may be reserved for the most meritorious among the scheduled (backward) tribes and castes. However, after a period, all such reservations on the basis of caste or heredity should be removed and only a merit-cum-means test adopted with scholarships for the poor.

It would be desirable to give a rural bias to rural education, by introducing teaching of agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry in rural schools. This would encourage students in rural areas to settle on the land and not rush to towns and cities for white collor jobs. More vocational and technical training institutes are needed, instead of more universities, to attract young matriculates, to learn a trade or craft that can make them self-employed. At present, there is great shortage of skilled masons, carpenters and blacksmiths in the villages and towns.

These are only some of the many measures that have been talked about for decades, but little has been done to implement them on a national scale.

We often discussed these ideas among ourselves, after seeing the quality of candidates who appeared before us. They were fine young men, most of whom had joined the armed forces, because there were no other avenues open to them. They had certainly benefited from their short service with the military, but they could not all make the grade in the armed forces or the top civil services. A few of them were given permanent commissions in the armed forces; some were absorbed in the senior and junior All-India Civil Services, but more than half had to fend

for themselves. Some took to agriculture, industry, trade or commerce, while many remained unemployed.

There is a debate going on in India as to whether we should have a large professional army or a small professionally trained corps with a large territorial and conscript army. We seem to prefer the British model and not the American or continental conscript model. In the lower ranks we have to demobilise soldiers, after 15 or 20 years' service, because their chances of promotion are limited by the pyramidical structure. We have to devise methods by which we can not only absorb this large manpower but also train them for suitable jobs. This is a problem that must be tackled soon, as it is assuming serious proportions.

The war was over, but the problems created by it remained. There were heated discussions about partition and the creation of Pakistan. Vested interests like the higher Civil Servants and some army officers among the Muslims opted for Pakistan, hoping that they would have better prospects and chances of quicker promotion there. Even some Indian Officers thought they would be better off in a divided India. Few bothered about the masses who lived in the villages and could not leave their hearth and home to settle in strange, unknown places far from where they were born, had lived and where their forefathers had lived and died.

Such debates and discussions also entered our little camp. It was shocking to see the sectarian and selfish angle from which some of us—Muslims and non-Muslims—looked at the problem. I got fed up with the futility of working in a job that provided little satisfaction, though ample leisure. I was tired of gallivanting in Mussoorie every weekend. My heart was in the districts. Instead of going to the Home Ministry in Delhi, I asked to be sent back to U.P.

The Congress Party had won a resounding victory in the elections. I was asked if I would go to the Secretariat in Lucknow or take a district. I preferred the latter and was posted as District Magistrate and Collector, Mathura, in Western U.P. I wanted to go back to my rural roots and deal with the challenging problems that faced us just before Partition.

There were communal riots in East Bengal; their repercus-

sions in Bihar and U.P. There was danger of the country being engulfed in civil and religious strife. Gandhi was marching alone, as an apostle of peace in Noakhali, in East Bengal, trying to instil confidence in the Hindu minority and bring about harmony between them and the Muslim majority there. His coleagues in the Congress—Nehru, Patel, Azad and others—were trying to sort things out in the Interim Government, at the Centre. The future looked grim. The present was difficult enough. Every Indian had to give of his best to meet the deteriorating situation. It was a challenge to the Indians' ability to govern themselves. Lord Linlithgow's gloomy prediction had to be proved wrong. We had to telescope his prediction of 'fifty years' into one year. It was not an easy task, but we were determined to complete it, whatever the obstacles and risks involved.

CHAPTER 10

GOOD-BYE TO U.P.

I reached Mathura, in the late summer of 1946. Mathura was a district in Western U.P., bordering on the Rajasthan desert in the west and Delhi in the north. The Yamuna flowed by it. On the other side of the river was Brindaban—the holy city of Hindus, with beautiful temples in white marble and red sandstone, built to the glory of Krishna. He is my favourite in the Hindu pantheon, for he is both human and divine. Unlike Rama, he is not a traditionlist. He is childlike in his innocent pranks, teasing milkmaids, hiding their clothes, while naughtily watching them bathe in a stream. The birds and beasts are charmed by his flute. He is called protector of *Kamadhenu* (the sacred cow) and at the same time a philosopher who sees beyond life and death. He is also a man of action, the *Karmayogi*, who can distinguish the greater good and the lesser evil. He persuades Arjuna in the *Bhagwad Gita* to go into action and fight for what is right.

Of all the books on philosophy and religion, ethics and morality the *Gita* occupies the first place in my mind. I studied and recited it in *Sanskrit* from the age of sixteen and loved its musical verse as well as its practical philosophy. There are many translations of this great work in English and other languages, but nothing like the original.

I had looked forward to being posted at Mathura. I longed to visit and meditate on the rocks of Gobardhan and roam in the wild gardens of Gokul. I was not fond of going to temples and worshipping statues of Radha and her beloved Krishna

admidst crowds and the deafening noise of gongs and drums. I preferred the peace and quiet of nature. I am not religious by temperament, but like to contemplate the unity of creation and the harmony of the universe in solitude.

However, the crowds of people in a village *Mela* (fair) are very colourful. I used to watch the rich and poor, men, women and children, old and young, people of all classes and creeds mingle together in a panorama of play, pleasure and work. Some sang and danced, while others engaged in buying and selling. I liked the scene but was dismayed at the sight of greedy priests and their touts fleecing the simple villagers and pilgrims who came to worship Krishna at Brindaban.

The *Pandas* (priests) of Mathura are great gluttons, fat and pot-bellied, who never tire of eating as many free meals as they can get in a day. It may be a funeral or wedding ceremony, a birth or *Moondan* (ritual of shaving a child's head), a *Yajnya* or *Havan* (sacrificial fires when Sanskrit hymns are recited from the *Vedas*)—they make a meal of it. There is the story of a *Panda* and his son going to a feast. The father noticed his son gulping a tumbler of water in between morsels of food. After the feast, the father slapped his son and asked : "Why did you fill your stomach with water instead of food ?" The son replied, "I wanted each layer of food to settle down so I could eat more.'. The father gave him another slap and said, "Why did you not tell me also to do the same ?"

Mathura has a beautiful collection of Gandhara art in its museum, named after Lord Curzon. There is the famous red sandstone Buddha with flowing robes, each fold of which is beautifully sculptured. Many *Apsaras* (fairies), gods and goddesses adorn the decorative friezes in red sandstone and terra cotta.

I spent the first two weeks touring the district, to make myself familiar with its past glory and present poverty. I was able to do this in a war-surplus jeep, one of which had been allotted to each district officer.

One day, I received a frantic message from the village Raya, 10 miles from Mathura. Some Muslims had sacrificed a cow in their compound on the *Id* festival. They were surrounded by Hindu pilgrims returning from the fair at Garhmukteshwar who threatened to burn their houses and roast them alive. I

rushed in my jeep to the village with a few armed policemen and found the Hindus pilgrims in a threatening posture. I asked the policemen to go behind the Muslims' houses and started to pacify the pilgrims. I said I was a Brahmin but I respected all religions. They said, "What kind of a Brahmin are you, if you can tolerate cow-killing ?" I said killing a cow was bad, but killing a human being was worse. They retorted "What about all the Hindus who have been killed by Muslims in East Bengal ?" They were worked up by reports of communal riots pouring in from Bengal and Bihar. With the help of the local Hindu leaders who lived with the Muslims in the same village, I was able to persuade the 'devout' pilgrims to move on. I then held the local Hindu leaders responsible for the safety of their Muslim brethren in the village, made both the Hindu and Muslim leaders sign a pledge and went back.

It was a difficult and delicate situation. The sight of the armed policemen might have infuriated the mob. There could have been violence and the police might have had to use fire-arms. The situation was saved through timely intervention and persuasion Section 144 Cr.P.C. was promulgated, forbidding the assembly of more than 4 persons at any public place. A junior magistrate was posted to remain there until the situation calmed down.

This was one of many such situations we had to face. Muslims were incited by their hotheads and Hindus by theirs—mainly agents sent by communal organisations from outside. They made the situation worse and increased tension. I collected the leading Hindu and Muslim citizens of Mathura and persuaded them to address a public meeting for maintaining communal peace and harmony. I requested Raja Mahendra Pratap, an old revolutionary highly respected by all classes, to preside over the meeting. It produced a healthy effect and we formed Peace Committees in all towns of the district. We thus succeeded in saving the situation and maintaining peace and harmony between the various communities. Although Mathura was a very religious place and had an overwhelming majority of Hindus, not a single communal riot occurred during the eight months I was posted there, from the middle of 1946 till the beginning of February, 1947.

During my ten years in U.P., I found that one could get

much more done and achieve better results through persuasion, consultation, and cooperation than otherwise. Of course, one had to have a clear vision, firmness of mind and strong nerves to resist the pulls and pressures of political bigwigs in the district and from outside.

All district magistrates received a circular from Lucknow to set up a district committee for licensing ration shops of essential commodities. The instructions said that local members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA's) *should be on the Committee*. At the very first meeting, I found that each MLA was interested in recommending his own protege. They started quarrelling among themselves, even though all belonged to the same Congress Party. I wrote a personal letter to the Chief Minister, Govind Ballabh Pant, pointing out the *pros* and *cons* of having the MLA's on the Licensing Committee. On balance, I recommended that they should not be on it. They and the Party would get a bad name and the administration would lose credibility in the eyes of the public. Pandit Pant saw my point, withdrew the MLA's from the committees and sent me a letter of thanks for being frank, honest and constructive.

I wish there were more Chief Ministers like Pant today and more district officers with guts, courage and conviction to stand up to the interference of politicians and others. Nothing succeeds in district administration like firmness, honesty, efficiency, prompt action and concrete results.

With a view to achieving this, I used to note on most fresh receipts (I opened them all myself) "action to be taken within a week and compliance reported within two weeks". This kept the officers and other staff on their toes. I maintained a chart of 'compliance by due date', delays of one, two or three weeks and called for an explanation, if any matter was delayed by more than a month. Pandit Nehru once said, "I am not interested in excuses for delay. I am interested only in things done". I later had this printed with Nehru's photo on a placard, which was hung from every room in my office, wherever I was posted.

I was left more or less to my own devices, in running the district. The Commissioner, an Irishman named Johnston, came to visit me. He was nicknamed 'mad Johnston' to distinguish him from another Johnston (also ICS) for his blunt-

ness. I found him a delightful man with an earthy sense of humour. I took him to see an artificial insemination centre, the only one in the division. He had not seen one before and wanted a live demonstration.

I drove him to the farm, to enable him to see it straight from *the bull's eye, as it were. The poor cow was tied up. The* stud bull was allowed to lick and work her up, but in the process he got worked up himself and wanted to mount her. Six men had to pull him back and guide him to pour all his passion in full fury into the receptacle near the cow's behind. The bull was mad and charged full force into the receptacle putting his forelegs on to the back of the poor cow. After watching the operation, Johnston exclaimed "But damn it, Kaul, you are cheating the cow!" He had a point. That was fair comment. The vets collected the bull's healthy discharge in a clean test tube and had it preserved in a refrigerator for furture use to improve the breed of cattle. But alas, Johnston was right. The Indian cow refused to be cheated—unlike the proverbial "contented cows" of Britain. Artificial insemination did not catch on and we had to castrate stray bulls, allowing stud bulls to roam around herds of *Desi* (indigenous) cows to fertiltze them.

Dr. Katju, who was again a Mininister in the U.P. Government, had another idea to improve the bovine breed. He was against castration of stray bulls and advocated the so-called '*pinjrapoles*' to confine such bulls in a large enclosure in a forest and let them die a natural death. He tried to sell this idea to the many *Goshalas* (cow protection houses) in Mathura, but they would not bite. They could feed their stray bulls free of cost in the streets; why should they be so 'cruel' as to enclose them to die in the forests? So we had to go back to castrating stray bulls, letting them roam at will and eat off the green grocer, vegetable vendor or unattended gardens and fields.

India has the largest number of cows in the world and yet the yield of milk per cow is the lowest. The worshippers of the 'sacred cow' will not allow the breed to be improved either through castration of stray bulls or by other means. Protection of healthy cows and bulls is necessary, but why should the breed *be allowed to suffer because of our fads and false notions?* Politicians are using the slogan of 'cow protection' to rouse

religious feelings and win more votes. But the Indian voter is now mature and wise enough not to be taken in by such gimmicks. Recent elections in India have proved that the 'cow protectionists' have not been able to sway the vote.

It was the beginning of 1947. An Interim Government had been installed at Delhi, in September 1946. The Centre had asked State Governments to recocommend some experienced officers to go to Delhi. I was asked and gave my preference for agriculture and rural development, in which I was keenly interested. Rajendra Prasad, who was Minister of Food and Agriculture (and later President) sent for me. He seemed to like my settlement and rural development background and asked if I would join his ministry as a Deputy Secretary. I told him frankly that I was only interested in the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and if this could be tagged on to my post as Deputy Secretary, I would welcome it. He said that was exactly what he had in mind and sent me to see Khareghat, Secretary of his Ministry.

Khareghat was an able and experienced ICS Officer, but somewhat conservative in outlook and cautious in approach. *His notes usually started with "I am afraid" though his* concluding remarks were sound. He advised me to be cautious and careful, not to be carried away by my enthusiasm. He offered me the post of Secretary, ICAR and ex-officio Deputy Secretary.

Thus ended my ten-year tenure in U.P.—an educative period of District and Settlement experience. I had been in Mathura hardly eight months when I moved on to Delhi, to the Centre, where policies were supposed to be formulated for implementation by and in the provinces. It was a new experience. I came to Delhi with some hope but also apprehension because of the imminent Partition and its possible repercussions.

CHAPTER 11

DELHI - 1947

I settled down to my work as Secretary, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). The Council was an autonomous body with a charter of its own. The Minister of Agriculture was the Chairman. Sir Datar Sing was the Vic-Chairman and the executive head. I worked in close cooperation with him. Datar Sing was a very pleasant and practical man. He was not highly educated, but had vast practical experience in farming and animal husbandry, for which he had been knighted.

One of his friends composed a limerick in Punjabi on his knighthood. It ran like this ; "Sir *ho gaye Datar maiyan char char ke. Nakade likhiya,, te na kade parhiya, Akhan kitiyan kharab, Ranan Tar Tar ke.*" (Datar became a Sir by grazing buffaloes. He never read or wrote, but spoilt his eyes, gazing at women)! Datar Singh wore thick lenses and took this skit in good spirit. He was a real sport.

I enjoyed complete freedom to go to any part of India, inspect any schemes financed or helped by the Council and ran the office without any interference from the Ministry or Datar Singh. After my 'Settlement' experience, this was the most interesting job I held, with a much wider horizon and broader canvas covering the whole country. I tried to transplant some of the results of our research in the field, with the help of able colleagues, especially Dr. B.P. Pal, Dr. Mukherjee, the Agricultural Commissioner and, of course, Datar Singh. We tried the results of our research in dry and wet farming in two separate blocks of 12 villages each, not far from Delhi.

Our scientists used to go there, once a week. We liked to believe that this was the beginning of the Green Revolution !

We tried various breeds of rust resistent wheat, hybrid maize and Tanjore rice in research stations and demonstration farms which proved successful. We also reorganised the various commodity committees for cotton, tobacco, leather, jute, dairying etc. by bringing in young farmers and entrepreneurs, whose practical experience was married to the expertise of our scientists.

I had two offices, one in North Block, where the other Deputy and Joint Secretaries and the Secretary of the Ministry sat. One of my fellow Deputy Secretaries was Aziz Ahmad, who was already preparing to go to Pakistan. He later became Secretary-General there and negotiated the Simla Agreement with us, in 1972. My other office was at the Pusa Institute, which had a lovely compound and beautiful garden. I spent more time here, as I enjoyed the company of scientists and workers in the field more than that of bureaucrats.

Delhi was a different world from the villages of U.P. The twin cities of New and Old Delhi seemed to represent the ruins of the old and the rising expectations of the new India. But the real India had not changed much from its ancient moorings, in the last two thousand years, except on the surface. Rural India was almost the same as it had been for centuries—only worse in some respects. Two hundred years of foreign rule had sapped the enthusiam and energies of the people, especially the intelligentsia. It would take many years to revive and mould them to catch up with lost time. We had to telescope two centuries into two decades. Political independence was exhilarating but we had to give it social and economic content, to make it meaningful to the masses and millions of India.

Gandhi had tried to do this in his own simple way, but had not succeeded, except in rousing the conscience and awareness of the people. Nehru strove to bring India from the bullock-cart to the atomic age. He succeeded partly, but was faced with tremendous difficulties, internal and external. It was the proverbial battle between continuity and change. What of the ancient to keep and what to discard, how to make up for missing the industrial revolution and go on to the technological

revolution, how to weld the multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual India into one nation ? This was the problem facing independent India.

Foreign policy was fairly easy to define, but difficult to translate into action. Nehru had propounded it, in an excellent broadcast to the nation on 6 September, 1947 : "We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power polities of groups, aligned against one another, which led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to world disasters on an even vaster scale . . . "We are particularly interested in the emancipation of colonial and dependent countries and peoples, and in the recognition in theory and practice of equal opportunities for all races. We seek no dominion over others and we claim no privileged position over other peoples . . . "We are of Asia and the peoples of Asia are nearer and closer to us than others. India is so situated that she is the pivot of Western, Southern and South-East Asia . . . "The future is bound to see a closer union between India and South-East Asia on the one side, and Afghanistan, Iran and the Arab world, on the otheer."

He successfully convened the first Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi, in March, 1947. I watched it at close quarters. The sweet, poetic and sonorous speech of Sarojini Naidu, the simple but sincere and prophetic words of Gandhi and the inspiring and moving address by Nehru still ring in my ears. It raised the morale of the intellectuals, but the people were anxious and apprehensive about the consequences of partition. There were communal riots in Punjab and Bihar, Bengal and U.P. It was a sad beginning for Independence.

I was sometimes called a 'renegade' by my fellow servicemen, because I was one of the few Indian ICS officers not to join the ICS Association. I considered it a bore to attend the annual dinners and cocktail parties followed by ballroom dancing and pillow fights. But I enjoyed quiet chats and intimate discussions with some of my senior and junior colleagues such as Hifazat Hussain, Dharma Vira, Bhagwan Sahai, M.S. Randhawa, A.N. Jha, K.L. Mehta, M. Lal, H.C. Sarin, to mention only a few. Just as I was getting into my stride, the External Affairs Ministry asked me to appear for an iterview for permanent secondment to the newly formed

Indian Foreign Service (IFS). I thought it over for a couple of days. Was it not better to stay in India and work in the country rather than go wandering around the world ? But I always had the wander-lust in me and used to roam round the valleys and mountains in India, whenever I got the chance. I saw visions of many lands and peoples and was reminded of my unsuccessful attempt to visit the Soviet Union from Tehran, on my way back from London, in 1937. I had not been abroad since then. I had seen a bit of Western Europe, the U.K. and Scandinavia, in my student days, but the world was much bigger and wider. I wanted to see South and South-East Asia, China and the USSR, Africa, the Americas and Oceania. I yielded to the temptation and accepted the offer to go as First Secretary to our Embassy in Moscow. It was one of the first three countries where we opened embassies, the other two being U.S.A. and China. We already had a High Commission in London.

Nehru, as Foreign Minister, called me for a final interview, before I received formal orders to proceed to Moscow. He asked me what books, if any, I had read on Russia. I mentioned the names of a few, like Sydney and Beatrice Webb's two tomes, "The ABC of Communism", "Russia without Tears" and a few more. He smiled and warned me that I would have to keep my eyes and ears open and not go with any preconceived notions. He also cautioned me not to give the impression to Russians that we were still tied to the apron strings of Britain, although we were in the Commonwealth. Finally, he said the Russians were a warm-hearted people, but had suffered greatly during the war. They might adjust their communist doctrines to the new situation which demanded peace to repair the war damage. We should try to develop friendly relations with them without toeing their or anybody else's line. We had to follow our own line suited to our needs and requirements, in accordance with our genius and ideals.

These were reassuring and inspiring words. I felt elated at the opportunity to serve my country abroad. There was a feeling of pride in being a representative of a sovereign independent India in one of the most important capitals in the world. I had always wanted to visit the Soviet Union. Lenin and the October Socialist Revolution had attracted the attention of many students like me at college. I had never joined the Com-

munist Party, but there was much that I admired in Socialism and Marxism. The one thing that revolted me was the cruelty and suspicion that prevailed in Stalin's Russia, as reported in the Western and Indian Press. Now I would have an opportunity to study things at first hand and form my own independent judgement, to see what we could learn from the Russian experiment.

I was asked to take an advance party of half a dozen junior officials to open the Embassy until the Ambassador-designate, Mrs. Pandit, and other senior officers arrived. I proceeded on two weeks' leave to see my family in Kashmir. There was no plane service to Srinagar in those days so I travelled by train up to Jammu and then by road to Srinagar. What I saw on the way through Punjab perturbed me. It was the beginning of July, 1947. There was tension in the air. People looked upon each other with suspicion. No one was sure who was friend or foe. Communal passions had been roused to fever pitch. The sooner partition was effected the better, I thought.

However, when I reached Kashmir, I was happy to find comparative peace and calm and a feeling of harmony between Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims. The Muslim League's pro-Pakistan propagnda had not made a dent on the people's mind here. Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference were ideologically closer to the Indian National Congress led by Gandhi and Nehru than to Jinnah and his Muslim League. I hoped the atmosphere of amity and brotherhood in Kashmir would be able to resist the virus of communalism prevailing in the adjoining province of Punjab.

The partition of India was not accepted by India as a division of the country on the basis of religion. Indeed even Jinnah had said at first that non-Muslims in Pakistan would be equal citizens. In any case, so far as India was concerned, it was a secular State. Kashmir with its Muslim majority was a symbol of India's secularism. Tens of millions of Muslims were not prepared to leave India and go to Pakistan. India had always welcomed different religious faiths and made them her own.

I returned via Lahore, a week later. A friend in Delhi who had locked up his house in Lahore had asked me to collect some of his belongings. He had given me the keys. I got down at the

railway station dressed in Khaki shorts and shirt, with a small attache case in my hand and hailed a taxi. Two cab drivers came up and asked me if I was Hindu or Muslim. I said that was none of their business. All I wanted was a taxi on hire to go into the city and return within an hour, before my train departed for Delhi. One of them offered to take me, when I gave him the address, provided I would tell him if I were Hindu or Muslim. I said I had not asked if he was Hindu or Muslim. I pointed to the revolver I carried in my pocket and warned him that I could look after myself as well as him. This seemed to convince him that I meant what I said. To this day I do not know whether he was Hindu or Muslim. Punjabi Hindus and Muslims dress alike and speak the same language.

He took me to the address I gave and waited downstairs, while I collected the few odds and ends my friend had mentioned. I found the whole building deserted and all the apartments in it locked, like my friend's. I hurriedly collected a few things, tied them together in one bundle and rushed down. I was relieved to find the cab waiting. I shoved the bundle in the back seat and sat in front with the driver. Somehow, we had struck an equation and seemed to trust each other. He took me straight back to the railway station and did not ask again about my religion. I believe that the essentials of all religions are the same or similar and it is only the dogma and the ritual that vary. As Gandhi once said: "Religions are many but religion is one." I consider myself as much a Hindu as a Muslim, a sikh or a Christian, even though I do not follow the ritual ceremonies of any.

I tipped the cab driver, we shook hands and parted as friends. I managed to catch my train and was glad to be getting away from Lahore and closer to Delhi, which was not as tense at that time.

On the fourteenth of July, after getting briefings from the External Affairs Ministry, I left with six of my colleagues for Moscow via London in a British super-constellation. I was leaving behind my family with two young children—a boy aged three and a girl of less than a year, my parents, brothers and sisters. I did not know when I would return or how things would turn out between India and Pakistan. I had my fears but hoped for the best. It was like a leap in the dark, a flight to outer

space, unknown, uncharted, full of surprises, pleasant and unpleasant. One was not sure of the immediate present or future and yet one had faith in India's destiny. We had overcome many difficulties and survived through the vicissitudes of history in the past. We would do so again. Every country had to pay its price for achieving independence. We had paid ours in Partition. But there was more to pay for maintaining, preserving and strengthening our hard-won independence. However, we had to do our duty, in spite of the pain and anguish in our heart.

We were facing tremendous upheavals, internally and with Pakistan. If left to ourselves, we might have resolved mutual differences and joined efforts to solve our common problems peacefully. But there were outside forces and powers that were trying to fan the flames of hatred and war. May be setting up diplomatic relations with friendly countries would help India strengthen peace in the region. It was in this faith and hope that I proceeded on my voyage of discovery to Moscow, in July 1947. But, before I come to that, it may be worthwhile to recapitulate the failures and succeesses of the Raj and deal with the problems India faced at the time of independence and immediately thereafter.

CHAPTER 12

EPITAPH ON THE RAJ

How did the British, a small island people, conquer a big country like India and rule it for over 200 years? Why did they have to quit India, unlike the Mughals and their predecessors who made India their home, became Indians and stayed on? Many scholarly books have been written on this theme by Indians, Englishmen and others. I wish to express briefly my own reflections based on my experiences as a student, an administrator and a 'liberated' diplomat.

The British were a hard-working, adventure-loving people, a nation apart, living in their splendid isolation. They considered themselves superior to Europeans and, of course, Asians, Africans and others. They built up their maritime strength, to protect themselves and promote their trade and commerce, on which they mainly depended. They went to far off places, mostly by sea and established small trading posts. They soon found that their rivals in Europe—Spain, Portugal, France, the Netherlands and Germany—had either already set up trading posts, or were trying to do so in many of these countries overseas. The British succeeded in outwitting some of them by joining hands with local rulers. But they soon found that the natives could also play one trader against the other. So they tempted them with superior arms, offered to train their armed forces—such as they were—in return for trading concessions and permission to set up little fortresses of their own, such as Fort St. George in Madras.

This, in a nutshell, is the story of the beginning of British

penetration into the Indian sub-continent. They formed the East India Company, to advance their trading interests. Then came their Missionaries—some good, some bad—to 'save the souls of the heathens'. Sometimes they followed the trading posts, at others they went in advance, depending on the political terrain and the religious and social milieu. This seemed to add altruistic motives to the purely mercenary goals of the British adventurers.

Overseas trade and commerce in those days could not be promoted, without the help of arms and physical protection, especially in lands far off from the mother country. The East India Company was allowed by their home government to keep small garrisons overseas at their own risk, as long as the host country did not object. India at that time was divided within itself. The Mughal Empire was tottering, the Marathas were in revolt in the West, the Sikhs were showing signs of independence in the North; the South was comparatively calm (the British had already established a foothold there) while the East was in shambles. The East India Company found favourable ground for their intrigues, for dividing one ruler against another, for instigating some vassals against their Sovereign. Thus they succeeded in acquiring power and authority over large chunks of India.

However, trade cannot prosper by sword alone. It can prosper only if there is law and order and a stable government friendly to the trader. It is not possible to fool all the people all the time, by dividing them and exploiting their internal differences. The people of India had had enough of the *Firangi* (foreigner). Indian troops in the service of the British rose in revolt, helped by their leaders and with the support of the people in 1857. The British called it the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. It was really the first Indian war of independence in that century. The British suppressed it ruthlessly, as any foreign ruler would.

Then came a period of rethinking by the British. Queen Victoria's Government decided to shed the cover of the East India Company and take over the administration. There were too many complaints about the corruption, bribery, cruelty and nefarious methods of the Company. The trial of Clive and the impeachment of Warren Hastings are only two of the many examples. The Queen's proclamation in 1857 brought India

under British rule formally and claimed it was the brightest jewel in the British empire! Even today the Indian *Kohinoor* (mountain of light) diamond adorns the Queen's crown!

Then followed a period of empire-building. Able and educated administrators were sent out from Britain in the service of the Crown to govern India and bring it firmly under British control. Some of them tried to learn Indian languages and understand the social milieu. They introduced educational 'reforms', a new legal code, expanded communications by road, rail, post and telegraph, built canals, developed electricity and so on. All this was done, first and foremost, to strengthen their hold over the natives, benefit the 'mother' country and then the people of India. That is the way of all imperialist powers and nothing peculiar to Britain. These new laws and 'reforms' were aimed at producing Indian tools and instruments for the imperial ruler. The British introduced a system of education suited to their own needs and requirements. They needed Indians only as clerks and typists to help run their administration. Macaulay's educational system in India was, as he frankly admitted, meant to produce English-knowing *babus* (clerks) to work in the British run offices in India.

The movement of ideas from one country to another cannot be controlled. Ideas have not only legs but wings also. They can travel fast. English became the medium of instruction in high schools and colleges and some Indians went to England for higher education, mainly in law and medicine. They brought back with them liberal ideas of democracy and the rule of law, freedom of expression, no taxation without representation etc.

The British rulers tried to channel these new-fangled notions of the educated Indians by encouraging the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Its first President was an Englishman, Hume, a member of the ICS. However, when they found the Congrees was getting out of control, they encouraged the formation of the Muslim League, under the Aga Khan and Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan. To carry further the policy of 'divide and rule', they introduced the pernicious doctrine of 'separate electorates', under which Muslims could be elected by Muslim voters only. This was the exploitation of religion for political purposes and contrary to the British practice at home.

As Lady Minto noted in her diary, the formation of the

Muslim League and the introduction of separate electorates would ensure the perpetuation of British Raj in India.

The British rulers had misread Indian history and misinterpreted India's past glory and future destiny. We had welcomed foreigners through the centuries, absorbed them and made them part of our own society. We had imbibed some of their culture, customs and religion and they had made India their home. This applied to even foreign conquerors, especially from Asia. Alexander the Great was the only exception although many of his soldiers married and settled down in northern India. But the British looked upon 'merry little England' as their eternal home and did not settle down permanently in India. A few did, but they were the exception rather than the rule. And they were looked down upon and ostracised by other Britons.

This is one reason why the empire-builders of Britain could not keep India within the Empire. They might have succeeded in having India as an equal partner, but the relationship of master and servant went against the grain of the proud Indian people and could not endure.

Gandhi came on the Indian scene in 1915 and within 4 years trasformed the Congress from an upper class bourgeois intellectual club into a mass organisation. He had dealt with the British in South Africa and knew how to beat them—not by violence but through non-violent civil disobedience. The British rulers in India did not at first take him seriously, but when they saw his mass appeal and methods of organisation, they became panicky. They tried to gag the expression of public opinion through the Rowlatt Act, which abolished trial by jury and authorised arrest without trial. Gandhi replied by organising protest meetings throughout the country. The massacre at Jalianwala Bagh in Amritsar, in 1919, is a glaring example of British barbarity and cruelty. They added insult to injury by the infamous order under Martial Law in Punjab forcing Indians to crawl in the streets before British officers.

This not only tarred the image of Britain's rulers in India, but resulted in uniting Indians in their struggle for freedom. This was the turning point and from now on began the downfall of the Raj in India.

There is Sanskrit saying '*Vinasha Kale Vipareeta Buddhi*' (he who destroys himself first loses his senses). From 1921

onwards began periods of extreme repression, followed by crumbs of 'reforms' thrown from the imperial table in London, from time to time. An opportunity came at the Round Table Conference in 1931 and 1932 for the British to part as friends with a united India and ensure a continuing friendship for the future. But this opportunity was lost by the British because of their mistaken belief that they could still keep India as a subordinate member of their exclusive club—the British Commonwealth. Under the Statute of Westminster of 1931, the 3 white colonies—Canada, Australia and New Zealand—were granted dominion status, but non-white colonies like India were not considered fit for self-rule.

Then came World War II. Britian lost the last chance of enlisting united India's wholehearted cooperation in their war effort against Nazism and Fascism, as a free and independent dominion of the Commonwealth, like Australia or Canada. But Britain again failed to grasp the opportunity. It was only when the British suffered reverses in South-East Asia that they sent the Cripps Mission to India in 1942. Even then they were not prepared to entrust defence and external affairs to Indian hands. When at last the British realised they could not hold India any longer, they sent a Cabinet Mission to India in early 1946 and divided the country before they agreed to quit.

This assessment is not aimed merely at finding fault with Britain's imperial policy. We Indians were also to blame for letting them come, in the first instance, and then allowing them to stay and gradually divide and dominate us. If we had not been divided among ourselves, if we had a strong and imaginative government of our own, the British could not have dominated, divided or conquered us.

However, Britain could not expect all Indians to take things lying down. They were not wise enough to learn the lessons of history. They failed to see the rising tide of nationalism. They could have stayed on as friends and equal partners, become Indian as other conquerers had done before them. But they preferred to stay apart as a ruling class, as a superior race, carrying the white man's heavy burden on their narrow shoulders. They did so for a time. There arose a tribe of empire-builders among them, people like Lord Curzon, who

were able but short-sighted. They tried but failed to understand the real India that later found expression through Gandhi.

But for Gandhi, Indian history could have taken a violent turn leading to the wholesale massacre of Britons in India, to civil war, even to a bloody revolution and its aftermath. That may or may not have succeeded in keeping India united. Gandhi did not succeed either in this regard. But he did succeed in achieving the transfer of power from Britain peacefully, even though it led to Partition, the killing of a few hundred thousand and migration of a few million people. This need not have happened but for the introduction of separate electorates by the British rulers in India.

All this is past history. What of the future ? Nehru succeeded in transforming and saving the Commonwealth. He kept the Indian Republic in the Commonwealth against strong opposition in India. Gandhi and Nehru were the two men who helped maintain friendship between the peoples of India and Britain, in spite of the past.

The Raj was but a limited interlude in the long history of India. It came and it passed like all empires. It left behind many things, good as well as bad. Parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, the rich legacy of the English language are some of the good things that we cherish, though we shall have to modify and adapt them to suit our own needs and requirments. The British also left some bad legacies—intricate and complicated procedures, checks and balances that hamper the administration of a developing country, bad traditions in the police force, which still raise their ugly head from time to time, an impoverished peasantry, feudal landlords and princes, whom they buttressed.

But we are now a sovereign independent country and it is no use blaming the Raj for the many faults we still have in our system. It is up to us as a mature independent nation to set things right and take full responsibility for our present shortcomings.

The Raj had its day and is dead and gone, but friendship between the Indian and British peoples remains. That is the greatest tribute to Gandhi and Nehru and to the people of India in whom again vests the sovereignty of this ancient land.

It is for the people of both Britain and India to appreciate

the value of mutual friendship. A relationship based on equality, partnership, mutual respect and understanding can endure and be of mutual benefit.

Britain has lost her empire and is becoming an extension of Western Europe and America. She is a member of the NATO and the EEC. India is a leading non-aligned, democratic, developing country with vast natural resources and great human skills and talents. Britain could serve as a bridge between America and Europe as India could be a bridge between the East and the West, the North and the South. The two have their distinctive roles, which need not necessarily clash. There will be differences in their respective points of view and attitudes to specific situations. But with imagination and understanding it is possible to reconcile and harmonise these in most cases.

It is up to the statesmen and leaders, the intellectuals and the people, especially the younger generation, in both countries, to work out a relationship that can endure and be of benefit to both and to the world at large. 1947 was the watershed. The fifties, sixties, and seventies were a tough testing time. The eighties and nineties can be points of convergence or divergence. The Raj is dead and gone and Swaraj has been won. As the British say 'The King is dead. Long live the King.'

What were the consequences and problems India had to face in the aftermath of Independence ? And what are the prospects for the future ? We shall deal with these in succeeding chapters.

SWARAJ
(1947-81)

CHAPTER 13

INDEPENDENCE AND AFTER

As young students in the early thirties, we were thrilled at the prospect of achieving Independence. Our hopes and expectations soared high, under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru. They had told us that India's Independence would remain incomplete, as long as there were other countries under colonial and foreign rule. We had hoped and believed that an independent India would not only remove inequalities and injustices, poverty and disease within India, but also help in removing them throughout the world.

This was perhaps youthful idealism, but it helped to sustain our faith and hope. It kept us going in the midst of great hardships and difficulties and held us back from the path of violence and terrorism.

When Independence came, on the midnight of August 14/15, 1947, and Nehru spoke of 'India's tryst with destiny', we were deeply moved. But our euphoria was subdued by the realities around us—partition, communal riots, killings of innocent people and mass migration of refugees. Was this the independence we had struggled and longed for ?

The swearing-in of Mountbatten, as the first Governor-General of the dominion of India, did not particularly enthuse us, but we accepted it because Nehru supported it. Some elderly people thought that it might facilitate the development of friendly relations between India and Britain, and thereby help increase understanding between India and the U.S.A. At that time U.S. policy towards the sub-continent was guided

largely by Britain's policy—unlike today, when it is the other way round.

However, the policies of Britain and the USA—or for that matter of any well-established country—are based on their own national, regional and global interests. We soon found, to our cost, that in spite of our affinities with Britain and the West, their attitude on issues of vital interest to us, such as Kashmir, was hostile.

The newly created dominion of Pakistan, with Jinnah as its first Governor-General, tried through intimidation, infiltration, coercion and force to grab the State of Jammu and Kashmir, in September-October 1947. The Maharaja deserted Srinagar, the summer capital, in the dead of night. But Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference Volunteers resisted the invaders. The State acceded to India, on October 26, 1947, in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Independence Act. With the blessings of Gandhi, Nehru ordered Indian troops to be flown to Srinagar, on the same day, to defend the State, now an integral part of India. I was deeply agitated, when my birth-place Baramull was ransacked by Pakistani raiders. They looted Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and did not spare even the nuns at St. Joseph's Convent. I wanted to go back and join the Kashmiri people's struggle but Government of India in their wisdom thought I was more useful where I was, at the UN with Mrs. Pandit. Our armed forces succeeded in driving out the invaders from the outskirts of Srinagar to Uri (50 miles south). We could have driven them completely out of the State, but Mountbatten persuaded Nehru and his Cabinet to refer the question of Pakistan's aggression in Kashmir to the United Nations.

I was at the U.N., as the Deputy Secretary-General of our delegation. Vijayalakshmi Pandit was leading the Indian delegation to the 1947 session of the General Assembly. Sardar Panikkar and B.C. Roy were also there. The British and US delegations worked hard to convince them of the desirability of referring the Kashmir issue to the U.N. Mountbatten had already prepared the ground, in Delhi. We fell into the trap and have not been able to extricate ourselves to this day. Instead of fighting it out beyond Uri, we accepted, in January 1949, a ceasefire-line that was not in our interest, politically

or strategically. It left more than a third of the State in the hands of Pakistan—32,000 out of a total area of 84,000 square miles.

This was a mistake made in good faith and in the hope and belief that the West would support our just cause. Pakistan was militarily weak, at that time. China was not involved in the Indo-Pak conflict, but busy with her own civil war. The Soviet Union was still nursing her World War II wounds and watching the situation. The UK and the USA would not have dared to intervene, if we had gone ahead and thrown the Pakistani aggressors out of Kashmir, now an integral part of India, legally and constitutionally. The instrument of accession had been signed by the Maharaja and supported by Sheikh Abdullah, the Head of the largest political party, the National Conference.

Nehru was beset with internal problems. This was also the 'idealistic period' in the first flush of our independence. Nehru preferred the path of peaceful settlement to continuation of the war. So we lodged our complaint with the U.N. against Pakistan's aggression as an act of faith in the U.N. Charter and on the advice of our Anglo-American friends. However, we were soon disillusioned. We found that the American and British delegates tried to enlarge and complicate our simple complaint against Pakistan's aggression by naming it as the 'Indo-Pak question', thus equating the aggressor with the victim of aggression.

It is often forgotten that the Kashmir question is not a territorial or boundary dispute between India and Pakistan, unlike the Sino-Indian border dispute. Even Pakistan does not claim any part of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir as its own. What Pakistan wants is to give the right of 'self-determination' to the people of this State, which is legally an integral part of India. If the same principle is applied to other sovereign countries, the whole map of the world will have to be redrawn. Pakistan itself will have to give this right to the Baluchis, Sindhis and Pathans who are dominated by the Punjabis. Britain would have to concede the demand of Scottish and Welsh nationalists to independence. America, China and Russia would have to be split into a large number of independent States. Indonesia, Nigeria, Zaire, Tanzania

and others would break up. A line has to be drawn somewhere, sometime in history. The doctrine of self-determination is only applicable to colonial and non-self-governing territories, not to integral parts of a sovereign State.

On January 30, 1948, Gandhi was shot to death by a Hindu fanatic, while going to his daily prayer-meeting. Some extreme, militant sections of Hindus were sore at Gandhi's "appeasement" of Pakistan, He had compelled the Government of India to pay Pakistan the huge amount of Rs. 55 *crores* (550 million) as partition debt, at a time when Pakistan was forcing Hindus and Sikhs to flee to India. Nehru was nicknamed 'the only nationalist Muslim in India'. But Gandhi's assassination, like the crucifixion of Christ, produced an effect quite opposite to what the fanatic Hindus had intended. Martyrdom has always appealed to the human mind, especially in a deeply religious country like India. Gandhi's martyrdom made him not only a Mahatma (great soul) as he was already called, but a saint. It weakened and discredited the forces of Hindu fanaticism and chauvinism by elevating Gandhi to the Hindu concept of sainthood, which is almost equal to god-head. We heard the sad news in Moscow. I wept bitterly that night alone in my room, in Metropole Hotel. Gandhi had indeed entered our heart and soul, but we felt this only after his assassination.

This was the moment when Nehru could have banned all communal parties, but he did not utilise the opportunity (some say because of Patel's reluctance). As a result, communal forces got a lease of life. They hibernated for a while but then raised their heads again. Such an opportunity does not often recur and Nehru missed it. He was too much of a democrat and believed in a multi-party system. Most of the other developing countries have since gone over to the one-party or Presidential system. Nehru was, perhaps, too much under the influence of the British system. A democratic multi-party system in India need not permit narrow sectarian groups that spread religious hatred for political ends and work against the cause of national unity and harmony.

We have copied the British model, almost blindly, without changing it to suit our own requirements. Even today Erskine May's 'Parliamentary Procedures' is quoted in our Parliament,

as if it was the Bible. We also kept the colonial administrative structure and its bureaucratic rules and regulations untouched. This may have provided a sense of continuity and a semblance of stability, but it hampered the rapid implementation of the lofty ideals and plans that had been formulated by Gandhi and Nehru, before Independence. The Indian bureaucracy, the old steel frame of the ICS, was patriotic but conservative and prone to look up to the British colonial model, in season and out of season. Nehru should either have changed it or gone out of government and continued the Movement. But Sardar Patel was against a change and Gandhi had nominated Nehru as his political heir. And so the revolutionary in Nehru had to give in to Nehru the Prime Minister.

Had Gandhi lived, he would have undoubtedly separated the Congress *Movement* from the ruling party. In fact, he had written a new constitution for the Party with that aim. It might have been a good thing, for it would have kept the Movement alive. Even though parties other than the Congress might have gained political power, the Movement would have kept them on their toes. Gandhi's death was also the death of the Movement. Congressmen strove for office and political power. Their earlier enthusiasm for social revolution and economic reforms degenerated into a half-hearted piecemeal effort to tinker with the fundamental problems rather than tackle these at their roots. Decisions regarding land reforms, untouchability and the economy were allowed to linger and even drift. Once you stem the tide of a national upsurge or revolutionary movement, it is not easy to revive or recapture its momentum.

Nehru, almost alone in his Party, was still imbued with his former ideals. But he was not an organiser of parties or movements. He fitted well into the pattern of parliamentary government, but his revolutionary fervour could not grow or prosper within its narrow framework, All his energies were absorbed in the day-to-day crises of administration. He was forced to make compromises. For instance, the UN Resolution on Ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir was accepted in January, 1949, much against our original stand. It was the beginning of our difficulties with Pakistan and its supporters in the West.

Nehru tried to implement his ideas in the field of foreign

affairs. His broadcast to the nation on September 6, 1946, is a masterpiece. The Asian Relations Conference in February, 1947, was an attempt to raise Asia's status and create an Asian personality. The conference on Indonesia, convened by Nehru, in 1949, in New Delhi, lodged Asia's protest against Western dominance. These were laudable pursuits, but more in the nature of gestures of moral protests. They had little effect on the so-called great powers, and could not by themselves produce Asian unity and solidarity.

Fissures were already developing and visible. Attempts were being made by the USA and the West to bring some of the newly independent developing countries such as Pakistan, and the Philippines into their own orbit. The USSR was trying to dominate Iran. It was with difficulty that the Soviets were persuaded to leave Azerbaijan in northern Iran. China was beginning to flex her muscles, in an attempt to recover some of her lost territories like Tibet and Outer Mongolia. The Eastern and Western military blocs were competing for hegemony over West Berlin.

It was at this stage that Nehru evolved his policy of non-involvement in the great power military blocs. It came to be known, later, as Non-alignment. Nehru believed that peace was the most urgent need of the world in general and of newly independent countries in particular. He felt that if these latter countries kept out of the two rival, hostile, military blocs, they would increase the chances of peace; if they lined up with one bloc or the other, they would only play into the hands of the great powers and thereby increase tension and the danger of war. This new policy of non-involvement appealed to some like-minded countries such as Indonesia and Burma. Close personal relations developed between the leaders of these governments—Nehru, Soekarno and U Nu.

Undaunted in his enthusiasm, Nehru even ventured to appeal to Stalin, Attlee and Truman, in 1949, to defuse the cold war and come to a peaceful settlement of their differences. I was First Secretary in our embassy at Washington, at the time. James Reston came to see me and showed me a copy of Nehru's message to the three world leaders. He asked if I could confirm or deny it. I told him it was not a fair question. I did not ask him about his source and asked if he would respect my

confidence, if I answered his question. He said he would and I confirmed his information. I must say to his credit that he did not attribute his published report on the subject to the Indian embassy.

This was almost my first encounter with American reporters and I am happy to say that it has created trust and confidence between them and me, ever since. In fact, I have come to the conclusion, after my long spell in diplomacy, that trust begets trust. It is no use hiding facts from the media, unless there are important security considerations involved.

India's voice did represent the feeling and sentiments of vast sections of humanity all over the world. World War-II had ended only about four years earlier; people were sick of the horrors of war and yearned for peace. But Nehru's voice had no sanction behind it, except that of moral force. It did not produce any tangible change in the policies of the great powers, though it did help to mobilise public opinion in the developing countries and even in sections of the two blocs.

However, the ruling circles in the West did not seem to like Nehru's 'meddling' and 'preaching' and looked askance at his policy of 'non-involvement'. John Foster Dulles called it 'immoral'. Stalin's Russia seemed to suspect it as a 'clever trick of the British to use Nehru'. Mao's China ruled out a 'third' way. Mao had said : "You have to lean to one side or the other, there is no middle way".

Nehru perhaps had hopes that he would be able to make some impression on the minds of the British and through them exercise a softening influence on the US administration. He attended the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London and the UN General Assembly session in Paris in 1948. He also went to America in October, 1949. These visits did not produce much effect. Nehru still thought that the Commonwealth was a useful body and continued India's link with it. He was at this time somewhat suspicious of Stalin's Russia, as they were of him. Sending his sister, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, as India's first Ambassador to the USSR did not produce any significant response. Nor did Asaf Ali's appointment as our first Ambassador to America or Krishna Menon's as our first High Commissioner to the U. K.

Britain and the USA were taking up a pro-Pakistan and

anti-Indian posture, on the question of Jammu and Kashmir. The Soviet Union was neutral. Nehru did not like this. So his thoughts again turned to Asia. He thought of befriending China, as a possible alternative course that might deter both the West and Russia from dominating Asia. If India and China, the two largest countries of Asia, would cooperate and be friendly with each other, they might be able to prevent Asia's domination by Russia or the West. Nehru's India was the first non-Communist country, apart from Burma, to recognise the new revolutionary Government of the People's Republic of China, at the end of December, 1949.

This step annoyed America in particular, and the West in general. They shut their eyes to the new emerging realities in China. The Soviet Union did not mind it, for China was now Marxist. Lenin's theory about the onward march of communism through China to India could, they thought, now come true. Sino-Soviet differences had not surfaced till then and China was still largely dependent on the USSR.

The attempt to build an Asian personality and bring Asian countries closer to one another was an idealistic venture, which had little basis for realisation. Nehru had hopes but few illusions. He worked hard to achieve Asian unity, in spite of the many obstacles.

India was a militarily weak and economically backward country. It had emerged into political independence after two centuries of colonial exploitation by the British. There was little she could do in the economic or military field, but her moral influence in favour of peace and cooperation did give her a place of her own in the world. She took a leading part in the struggle against South Africa's policy of *apartheid*, at the U.N. and scored a moral victory, for the first time, against it, in 1947. India's prestige in the Asian and African world rose. She came to be regarded as the spokesman for these two continents. Peking was not represented at the U. N., (Chiang Kai Shek's government in Formosa represented China in the U. N., at that time). India's advocacy of the right of the Peking Government to represent China also raised her status in the eys of Asia and Africa. The USSR also began to realise that Nehru's India was not a satellite or camp-follower of John Bull/or Uncle Sam,

but an independent country forging an independent foreign policy.

In spite of tremendous difficulties at home and the growing cold war and tension in the world outside, Nehru was able to achieve a position for India, in the comity of nations, a position far in excess of her military or economic strength, as a newly liberated colony of Britain. Nehru gave vent to the feelings, hopes and aspirations of all mankind for peace and freedom, in particular of the large areas in Asia and Africa still under colonial rule.

1947-49 may be described as the 'idealistic' period of Nehru's foreign policy, when he tried to solve the Kashmir question through the U.N., prevent the cold war from spreading, evolve an Asian identity and personality free from Western or Russian domination. Last, but not the least, it was the formative period of Nehru's policy of non-involvement in great power military blocs; later, this developed into the concept and practice of non-alignment. In those days of the cold war, it was not easy for a newly independent country to be independent of both the power blocs. Nehru's India had to resist many pulls and pressures from either side.

It is often forgotten that a country's foreign policy is closely linked to and dependent on its internal situation. Nehru was aware of this, as he said in many of his speeches at the time and later. In spite of his flair for planning and his laudable goals of industrialisation, agricultural development was not neglected. He told me once; "The stability of an Asian country used to be judged in the past by the availability and price of foodgrains. It is even more true today." But the tools and instruments that Nehru selected to run the country, and the conservative elements in his party restricted his plans for land reform. Also the conflict with Pakistan and continued strained relations with it drained our resources and diverted our energies from development. We shall deal with this and allied matters, in succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER 14

RUSSIA (1947-49)

World War-II ended, in May 1945, in the West, and in August, in the East. Mankind heaved a sigh of relief, but not for long. A new kind of war called the 'Cold War' started between the former allies—the Soviet bloc of countries, on the one side, and the USA and its West European allies, on the other. There was hard bargaining between the two, in setting up the United Nations Organization and formulating its Charter. The basic assumption of the Charter was that unanimity among the great powers (USA, USSR, UK, France and China) was essential to safeguard peace and security in the world. Hence their permanent membership of the Security Council and the so-called right of veto. Under this provision, any one of the five great powers could vote against a resolution of the Security Council and thus render it ineffective.

The U. N. General Assembly has only a recommendatory role. Its resolutions have only a moral and not a mandatory force. The USA and its friends enjoyed a numerical majority, in the General Assembly, where almost all the then sovereign independent countries of the world were represented, barring the former enemy countries and some of their friends. Switzerland voluntarily stayed out, to maintain her traditional neutrality. America became the leader of the western bloc and had the monopoly of the atom bomb, until 1949.

The scramble for power and influence had started, during the concluding months of the War. The USA had rushed to occupy Tokyo, while the Soviets occupied the Kurilles and Southern Sakhalin. Berlin was divided into four Sectors, one each under

the occupation of the USSR, Britain, France and the USA; while the rest of Germany was similarly divided into four Zones. Chiang Kai Shek managed to get back Formosa, but had to concede the right of independence to Outer Mongolia, which became the Mongolian People's Republic. It entered into a treaty of mutual security with the USSR. The French managed to get back to Indo-China (with the help of the British), which they had surrendered to the Japanese earlier. Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were thus cheated of their Independence, to placate the French. The British already had more than they could hold and were wise enough not to ask for more. They had to concede the demand for independence to the Indian sub-continent and Burma.

Europe which had been the theatre of War in 1914-18 and 1939-45 presented quite a different picture now. Western Europe became a camp follower of America, while Eastern Europe came under Russia's sphere of influence. The Middle East or West Asia was simmering with signs of future conflict, where as Africa and South-East Asia were hoping to achieve Independence in the wake of India.

Such, in brief, was the world situation, when I went to open our embassy in Moscow, in July, 1947. Nehru's sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, the Ambassador-designate, arrived about a month later and we were all lodged in Hotel Metropole. The living conditions were indeed difficult. The Soviet Union had lost twenty million lives in the War—almost one from every family. The damage caused by the war was colossal and visible to the naked eye. It was even worse in Germany where the allies had practically bombed whole cities in the last few weeks and months of the War. In Berlin, on my way to Moscow, I saw almost 90% of the buildings razed to the ground. People were hungry, begged for cigarettes, chocolate, and even bread. London was pretty bad but the damage was nothing as compared to Berlin. Western Europe had virtually surrendered to Hitler without a fight and the outward physicaldam age was not so great. The American main land had hardly seen war on its own soil and was practically untouched. Sweden and Switzerland were the two European countries that had succeeded in keeping out of the War. Japan had suffered the horror caused by the atom bombs in Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Among the Allies, the Soviet Union had borne the brunt of Hitler's wrath and suffered the most damage. The Ukraine, Bylo-Russia and Stalingrad had been devastated. Leningrad had withstood the siege for 900 days and survived. Moscow had managed to escape unscathed, although its suburbs had suffered under German occupation. The defence of Leningrad and Moscow was heroic. Stalingrad had turned the tide of war against Hitler.

I am mentioning these well-known facts to emphasise the spirit of patriotism of the Russian people, their resistance and stoicism, in the face of starvation and death. I was not surprised to see long queues in front of food stores and restaurants, but the longest line in front of ice-cream vendors in mid-winter was indeed surprising. I was told by Russians that ice-cream was warmer than the outside temperature! When Churchill visited Moscow during the war and saw a mile-long queue for ice-cream in mid-winter, he remarked that it was as impressive as a division of infantry.

The Russians had suffered much from friends as well as foes. They told me that many foreigners who posed as their friends turned out to be enemy spies. They were suspicious of all foreigners, even of their socialist friends. No foreigner was allowed to travel more than 40 km. outside Moscow, without permission. Soviet citizens were forbidden to meet foreigners, especially diplomats. Only a few officials and selected intellectuals were allowed this privilege. One met them time and again at the various National Day Receptions of Embassies.

As the cold war became more intense in Berlin and relations with Tito's Yugoslavia more strained, the Soviet suspicion of foreigners increased. Restrictions on movements and meetings became even more rigid. All diplomats, even of Socialist countries, were kept under close watch and were followed wherever they went. Telephones were tapped, hotel rooms searched. The Russian staff which could only be engaged through BUROBIN—the Bureau for Service (or dis-service) of Foreigners—were asked to submit daily or weekly reports. The Americans, the British and the French were the main targets; but after the rift with Tito, in 1948, the Yugoslav Embassay also shared this distinction. There was perhaps more bureaucratism in Stalin's Russia than anywhere else. It was partly due to old traditions

and partly to new fears and suspicions. We were used to a certain amount of bureaucratism, in India, before and after Independence, but even we found the Russian bureaucracy irksome and wooden, at times.

I recall an instance where the head of the South Asia division in the Soviet foreign office could not make up his mind whether his Ambassador in Delhi should or should not sign the condolence register on Gandhi's assassination. He did not appreciate that though Gandhi occupied no official position he was the Father of our Nation. Even after I pointed out that the omission would cause resentment and serious misunderstanding in India, it took the Soviet authorities three days to send some one to sign the condolence register in our Embassy, and for the Soviet Ambassador to do the same in Delhi.

Another instance, less serious but embarrassing, was when Mrs. Pandit asked me to tell the Chief of Protocol that she wanted the two fat, ugly maids sent by Burobin to be changed immediately as she did not like to see their faces the first thing in the morning. When I conveyed this to Molotchkov, he smiled and asked 'Are you sure it is your Ambassador's wish?' I told him to go and ask her himself. Two good looking English-speaking maids were sent the next morning. One of them was in the habit of looking through Mrs. Pandit's papers and made no secret of it. One day when a letter from the Prime Minister to the Ambassador was missing, I asked the maid if she had seen it. She took me promptly to the Ambassador's study and produced the letter from her writing desk. Mrs. Pandit was not used to this kind of a closed atmosphere and found it difficult to adjust, getting into a foul temper every morning. One morning I asked her "Are you feeling well? She replied, "Yes, why are you asking?" I said "Because you have not scolded anyone this morning!" She smiled and said "You are becoming naughty." We both laughed and she was her usual charming self after that.

In such an atmosphere, it was difficult to study or understand Russia. Most diplomats and foreign journalists were hostile to Stalin's Russia and very subjective in their criticism.

We had come from India wjth an open mind, full of sympathy and admiration for the Soviet people. But we found

it difficult to make any contacts or meet with Soviet citizens and intellectuals. Stalin's Russia, with Beria at the head of the KGB, was a terror to Soviet citizens many of whom had been taken prisoners and shot without trial on mere suspicion. But one had to bear in mind all that Russia had gone through under the Czars, during and after the Revolution and in World War-II, to understand the real situation.

It was not an easy task, but we persisted. We did not expect any special favours or preferential treatment. We tried to seek permission to visit some of the Asian Republics but were politely told that 'suitable' hotel accommodation was not available. This may have been true, but we did not expect posh hotels or the comfort and luxury of America in war-damaged areas of the Soviet Union. We appreciated their difficulties and would gladly have roughed it out. When I mentioned this to a senior Soviet official, he replied that he believed me, but if they gave us permission they could not refuse it to others.

All we managed to see during almost two years in the Soviet Union (July 1947—April 1949) was Leningrad, Yasnaya Polyana (Tolstoy's House, 100 km. from Moscow), and the beautiful monastery at Zagorsk (150 km. outside Moscow). Of course, we enjoyed the ballet at the Bolshoi, plays at MXAT (Moscow Art Theatre) and concerts at Tchaikovsky Hall. We also saw the various museums and art galleries.

But this was not enough to keep us fully occupied. We took lessons in Russian from a private teacher, tried to wade through the daily 'Pravda' and 'Izvestia' (not an easy task), and went for long walks in Gorky Park, Khimki and Lenin Hills. The evenings were spent mostly at diplomatic parties and gatherings. It was an artificial life where diplomats and foreign correspondents lived a sort of incestuous inbred existence, exchanging notes and indulging in local gossip.

The only worthwhile local contact Mme. Pandit was able or allowed to make was with Mrs. Kollanntai, whom she would visit in her well-kept apartment, sometimes. I accompanied her on two occasions and was impressed by Mme. Kollantai's relatively easy manner and the confidence with which she spoke. She had been Lenin's first envoy to Sweden and the first woman envoy in the modern world. But she had retired, was

on pension and not in very good health. Even she had to keep in touch with the Government. She privately advised us not to try or expect to make much contact with Soviet citizens, as it might be embarrassing and awkward for them. She was right and we soon found that even the few contacts we had made disappeared after Zhdanov's decrees in late 1948.

We read books about Russia, its history, the revolution and its aftermath, collectivization of agriculture etc. but it was more of an academic exercise. We were impressed with Russian writers like Tolstoy, Pushkin, Turgenev, Chekhov, Mayakovsky, Yessinin and others. We admired Stalin's language policy and the way he had managed to weld the minorities into the Soviet system. We could not but feel disappointed at and disgusted with the terror and fear among the Soviet people, the widespread net of the KGB and the cruel harsh and arbitrary methods of their dealing with their own people. We admired the stoicism and fortitude, the faith and patriotism of the Russian people. It reminded us of the qualities of our own people in India, through the millenia. The Russians, like us, would survive the present troubles and travails and perhaps be able to evolve a better way of life, in due course.

It was a pity that Russian leaders were so engrossed in their dealings with America and Western Europe that they had little time to devote to or discuss Asia in general, and India, in particular. They still looked upon India as a colony of Britain and failed to understand the new India of Gandhi and Nehru. Perhaps we were partly responsible for this. The Russians could not understand why we still wanted to remain in the Commonwealth, when we had suffered so much at the hands of British imperialism. They were surprised that we were content to remain a 'Dominion' and the Queen of England still signed the letters of credence and appointment of our Ambassadors.

We felt this ourselves and persuaded Mrs. Pandit to send a telegram to her brother advocating our withdrawal from the Commonwealth. But Nehru the Prime Minister, had other considerations in mind and took the decision to remain in the Commonwealth. Sometimes I wonder if the British really

appreciated the significance of this gesture or merely misinterpreted it as a sign of India's continuing dependence on Britain.

It was with mixed feelings of faith and pessimism, hope and resignation about the future of Indo-Soviet relations that I left Moscow with Mrs. Pandit, in April, 1949, for Bombay.

When asked by the Press, in Bombay, if she had met Stalin, she bluntly answered 'not even once'. This was true but the fault was partly hers. When I had suggested to her in Moscow, weeks before her scheduled departure, that she might request a farewell call on Stalin, she said "Why should I? He can call me if he likes." She was partly right but according to protocol it is for the departing envoy to make such a request. Perhaps Mrs. Pandit had expected to be treated with the same attention and fuss as in the USA But the Russians were engrossed in their own problems and did not understand or realise the importance of India at that time.

It was the period when Soviet academicians and the media regarded Gandhi as a 'bourgeois reformist' and Nehru as a 'lackey of the British imperialism.'

In Bombay, we stayed with Mrs. Pandit's younger sister, Krishna Hutheesingh. When I asked her why Krishna had not joined politics. Mrs. Pandit tartly replied "She married money but politics and money do not go well together." I do not know if Mrs. Pandit was serious for she could say the most outrageous things with a smile and get away with it.

I once asked her if she really meant all she said about others. She looked me straight in the eye and said "If you want to get on with me, discount 90 per cent of what I say in public." That was Vijayalakshmi—frank and blunt, gracious and charming at the same time.

We flew from Bombay to Delhi. I reached her to the Prime Minister's residence, Teen Murti House. Nehru smiled and shook hands with me. He asked me to stay with him but Mrs. Pandit promptly remarked that my sisters and family were eagerly looking forward to seeing me. I thanked the Prime Minister, bade good-bye to Mrs. Pandit and went on two months' leave. This was the first long leave I had taken in 12 years.

I reflected on my two years in Moscow and thought of the many opportunities missed to develop mutual relations. There

were suspicions on both sides, owing to lack of knowledge and contact. We had tried our best to make such contact, but the Soviets were still in the dogmatic period of Stalinism and did not assess correctly the potential value of India's friendship. China was fighting a civil war and had not yet become their ally. The Sino-Soviet alliance was yet to come and the rift between them was still far off. The Soviets did not need India at the time, as they would later. This was also true of India. Besides, the cold war and the threat to peace were more intense and imminent in Europe than in Asia. The Soviets were preoccupied with it as well as with the urgent need to repair the war damage and rebuild their economy.

We had perhaps expected too much, without paving the ground for our expectations. This was even more true of our relations with Britain, with which we had closer ties; it was also evident in our high hopes of building relations with America. International relations are built on the solid foundation of mutuality of interests, understanding and respect, and not on fond hopes based on emotional or sentimental grounds. This was the lesson I learnt, after two years' stay in Moscow.

CHAPTER 15

AMERICA (1949-50)

India without Gandhi was not the same as before. Nehru was now a lonely man. He had nowhere and no one to go to for advice or solace. Although he and Patel were trying to work together, the gulf between their ideas was too wide. However, they did succeed in bringing most of the adjoining princely States within the Indian union. The main credit for this goes to Patel who did not hesitate to warn some of the recalcitrant princes that they would meet a worse fate if they kept out. Nehru was too much of a liberal democrat to use such methods, but he was quite happy at the results. The Indian Union now comprised a larger area than the old British India without the princely States. However, the main problems such as untouchability, agrarian reforms, industrialisation, combating extreme religious fanatical elements, social and regional integration of the various castes and provinces still remained. Relations with Pakistan continued to be strained. Far from remaining neutral, the West took a pro-Pakistan attitude, on the question of Kashmir. From a purely bilateral issue between India and Pakistan, it was converted into an international issue, by involving the U.N. The Soviet Union was at that time neutral, on this question, not being sure which way India would go.

The Soviet Party sent some youth leaders to contact the Communist Party of India, in 1948, and encouraged the violent line as in Telengana. Soviet Indologists such as Dyakov still called Nehru the 'lackey of British imperialism' and Gandhi a 'bourgeois reformist'. When dogmatic doctrines are

applied blindly, they ignore the realities and draw wrong conclusions. This was one of the reasons why relations between Stalin's Russia and Nehru's India did not make much headway.

India proclaimed itself a sovereign independent Republic, on January 26, 1949, but still maintained its link with the Commonwealth. There were perhaps good reasons for this, but the outside world, especially the USSR, failed to see them. Even some American circles were surprised.

Mrs. Pandit asked me to join as First Secretary in the Embassy at Washington. I welcomed the opportunity to see the New Capitalist World, after having seen a bit of the New Communist World. I went with an open mind, as I had done, when I went to the Soviet Union, two years earlier. America certainly impressed me with its sky-scrapers, clean well-run factories, its advance in science and technology. I toured extensively from the East to the West coast as well as to the North. The South with its Ku Klux Klan and Jim Crow did not attract me. I liked San Francisco and Philadelphia—the former as the symbol of the dynamic, free America with its new frontiers and horizons, and the latter as the birth place of the great American Revolution and Independence. Cities like New York and Los Angeles, with their night-life and crime did not impress me much. But I admired a number of museums and art galleries, in both the cities. The Hollywood Bowl, where religious as well as public meetings were held, had an atmosphere of its own. Chicago as an industrial city in the North was impressive. Niagara Falls, on the Canadian border, and Boston on the East coast, were indeed beautiful.

This sketchy view is based on some of my personal experiences. I and my friend and colleague Col. Unni Nair, our PRO, narrowly escaped a shoot-out in a joint on Sunset Boulevard, in Los Angeles. After finishing the day's work with Mrs. Pandit, we decided to see a bit of night-life. Our hosts took us to this place where music and singing were deafening, while a hundred couples were dancing on the small floor packed like sardines in a tin. It was an exciting novelty for a while, but then it became a bit of a bore. We left the place just before midnight, when things seemed to be getting hot. ext morning, we read in the local newspapers that there

had been some shooting and the police had raided the place. We felt like innocents abroad and thanked our stars. There were, however, other places where only a select few like writers, film stars and tycoons were admitted. These were too expensive, but we managed to have a peep into them also.

A visit to the United Studios in Hollywood really got us excited. Walter Pidgeon, Ava Gardner, Jane Russel, Gregory Peck and others were introduced to Mrs. Pandit and we shook hands and talked with them. They were like most first-rate film stars off the screen—intelligent, good looking, well-dressed, polite, but not glamorous. They lived an artificial life in a small strange world of their own, at a tempo that was too fast and a strain on their highly strung personalities.

In contrast to Los Angeles, Boston was a relatively placid, cool and beautiful place. A visit to Wellesley College (where Mrs. Pandit's two daughters had been educated) charmed me much more than Hollywood. The young rosy cheeks of the girls and their natural carefree attitude to life in that beautiful campus, was a refreshing contrast to the heat, dust and fast life of Hollywood. I told the Principal it was a pity that Wellesley was not co-educational.

We met many interesting personalities such as Paul Robeson, Walter Lipmann, Henry Luce, and others—each famous in his own field. The tall figure of Robeson and his deep bass voice full of the suffering of his people still haunt me. The quiet, soft, subtle and sophisticated analyses of Lipmann are in a class by themselves and still unsurpassed. I used to meet him at the Embassy and in his home and corresponded with him from Peking. Henry Luce was at the top of his profession, as a publisher. He held ultra-conservative views on most international problems and it was stimulating to listen to his rapid provocative sentences.

Among the top officials, President Truman was a quiet but firm man who did not mince his words. He had the strength and courage to dismiss a war hero like General Douglas Mc Arthur who tried to disobey his orders in Korea. John Foster Dulles was a fanatic, a dogmatic and self-righteous missionary turned politician. One day at lunch with Mrs. Pandit, I listened with rapt attention and amazement to his passionate plea that India change its policy towards Peking and on the Korean

question. Mrs. Pandit promised to report this to her brother, Nehru, knowing full well that he would not consider such pleas as they were contrary to our basic policy and national interests. Mrs. Pandit was pleasant to everyone who was nice to her and believed it was no use arguing with Dulles whom she could not re-convert.

But with Dean Acheson she once had quite a brush up. I was with her, when she called at the State Department. Acheson in his usual suave, sophisticated manner (unlike Dulles) asked Mrs. Pandit if she really meant what she had said on the Chicago Round Table : that President Truman's Point 4 Programme was 'ridiculous'. She replied "of course" and Acheson let it pass. The next day, I had to explain to Bert Mathews, the Assistant Secretary, that my Ambassador was only trying to help the US Administration to get more funds from the Congress, as four million dollars was a ridiculous sum for a dozen developing countries, They chuckled, meaning almost to say 'oh yez?'.

Post-war America was quite a contrast to post-war Europe. It was rich and prosperous. The shops were full, automobiles were aplenty, industry was going ahead full speed, US banking and commerce were leading the capitalist world. America was the strongest military and economic power in the world, with a monopoly of atomic weapons. It was helping Western Europe with the Marshall Plan, giving largescale grants amounting to several billion dollars in money, machinery and capital goods. It was trying to raise West Germany and Japan from the ashes of World War II. America was the master of the Atlantic and the Pacific regions. But could this state of affairs last long?

US policy towards the Soviet bloc was hardening. Her refusal to deal with the Peking Government and her attempt to bolster Chiang Kai Shek's Government in Formosa, her support of the unpopular regime of Synghman Rhee in South Korea, her help and encouragement to the French to reconquer Indo-China were disturbing the peace of the world and causing anxiety to many leaders like Nehru. The US emphasis seemed to be on giving military aid to unpopular dictatorships and tottering regimes. The economic aid given to Western Europe was

impressive, but the aid to developing newly-independent countries was disappointing.

Mrs. Pandit, as India's Ambassador to the USA, was in her element. She got a lot of publicity, both in her own right and as the sister of Nehru. This was in sharp contrast to her experience in the USSR, where she was given no prominence and hardly any attention. But even in the USA, the State Department did not like her frank outspoken remarks on public platforms. She made up for it, by being gracious and friendly in private conversations. She succeeded in persuading her brother, the Prime Minister, to pay an official visit to the USA, in October 1949.

Nehru's visit was an opportunity for both sides to achieve a correct understanding of each other's policies and interests as well as their respective roles in the bilateral, regional and global fields. But the basis for such an understanding was lacking. America still looked upon India through British eyes as a poor dependent country, which could be persuaded to toe America's line through economic aid. Bankers and industrialists, under the State Department's advice, offered Nehru attractive deals, credit and other facilities. However, Nehru was not taken in by these. As he remarked to me, one evening, in Waldorf Astoria Hotel : "They don't realise that we are sitting on the top of a volcano. Unless we strengthen our base, the whole thing may blow up. We have got to be self-reliant and independent, both politically and economically." This was in reply to my humble suggestion that we could get wheat at concessional rates from the USA, to tide over our food shortage,

Nehru was right in his basic approach. He wanted to make India self-sufficient in food grains within two years. It could have been done with the help of land reforms and modern technology. Getting food grains at concessional rates might have helped us get over the immediate difficulty, but it would have made us more and more dependent and less self-reliant (as we found in the late sixties). The American farm lobby seemed more interested in selling the surplus grain abroad than in helping us develop our own potential.

On the political plane too, the two sides failed to understand each other's basic stand. Americans did not appreciate

the difference between our policy of non-involvement in great power military blocs and neutrality. Nehru had to spell this out in his address to the US Congress where he said: "We cannot and shall not be neutral where freedom is threatened or justice denied. To be neutral in such circumstances would be a denial of all that we stand for". In spite of this, attempts were made to force us to toe the US line on Korea, China and the USSR. The American administration either did not understand our basic policy or thought they could lure us to change it by offers of aid.

Nehru was impressed with America's advance in science and technology and its great potential for peace and development throughout the world, but he was disappointed at the lack of foresight and vision in the American administration. He visited Columbia University and addressed the students and faculty. Eisenhower presided over the function as President of Columbia. Nehru also met Einstein and enjoyed the talk with him. It was a meeting of two great minds. Many people of minority and other groups such as the Negroes, the socialists, liberals and others called on him and apprised him of their differences with official US policy. But they were only a small minority and not very influential. Although the ruling circles regarded Nehru as a 'crypto communist' because of his penchant for socialism, the average American was impressed by his simplicity. As a New York cab driver said 'Nehru is a regular guy'—a compliment rarely paid to a foreign visitor.

Nehru's visit failed to achieve the high hopes that had been built up by officials on both sides. Perhaps it was premature; adequate preparations had not been made to sound each other on the respective interests involved and explore possibilities of greater understanding and cooperation. We realised that super powers have their own predilections and points of view which override the larger considerations of peace, security, progress and development of newly independent countries such as India. This was one reason why, in spite of a common language and ideals, 'the two largest democracies' could not see eye to eye on even the most burning problems facing the world in 1949 : issues like disarmament, decolonisation, apartheid, China, Korea and the Third World.

CHAPTER 16

CHINA (1950-54)

I had had enough of Moscow and Washington and asked for a transfer to Peking where so much was happening. My request was granted by Nehru, in September 1950.

Moscow to Washington had been quite a change, but Washington to Peking was a much bigger one. Moscow was almost European, Leningrad completely so. Peking was entirely Asian; yet it was so different from other Asian capitals. The Chinese are always Chinese first and then anything else, whether communist or capitalist. This is probably true of all races but much more so of the Chinese. India, for instance, is very Indian, but it is diverse, with many cultures, languages, races and religions. China has Sinofied the various minorities, the Mongolians, Manchurians and others and absorbed them in the Han culture; only the Tibetans and some of the small tribal minorities in the outlying provinces have not yet been completely Sinofied.

1950 was a turning point in China's history. The communists had established the People's Republic of China and proclaimed their Government in Peking, on October 1, 1949, but they had not yet brought outlying areas like Tibet under their control. We had tried to plead with the new Government in Peking to settle peacefully their differences with the Dalai Lama, the temporal and spiritual head of Tibet, under some form of autonomy. The Chinese had not only ignored our suggestion, but had attacked it as interference in their internal affairs and called us 'agents of Anglo-American imperialism'.

They sent their troops into Tibet and forced the Dalai Lama's representative to sign a 17-point Agreement at Chamdo, in May 1951. Under this Agreement Tibet became 'the Tibet Region of China' with a loose form of 'autonomy' that was more theoretical than real. The Chinese military commander of Tibet became the overlord.

The Korean war was at its height, when I arrived in Peking, in November 1950. General Mc Arthur had ordered the forces under his command to cross the 38th Parallel, in spite of warnings conveyed by Chou En-lai through Sardar Panikkar, our Ambassador in Peking. The Americans thought Chou was bluffing, but he proved true to his word. China sent wave after wave of 'volunteers' to Korea and drove MecArthur's forces south of the Parallel.*

By this time, the Chinese anger against India's 'interference' over Tibet seemed to have died down and they made some friendly gestures. They were, perhaps, feeling isolated and did not want to depend entirely on the USSR. They used India to convey various feelers to America. Panikkar received several mid-night calls from Chou En-lai to see him about negotiations for a ceasefire in Korea. India's refusal to vote for the UN Resolution branding China the aggressor in Korea made an impression on the Chinese leaders. India's repeated efforts to get the Peking Government into the UN in place of Chiang's representative also impressed upon the Chinese that India was not a lackey of Anglo-American imperialism.

America and the West had got bogged down in Korea and could not win unless they dared use the atom bomb. However, President Truman was wise enough to disallow this and even recall General Mc Arthur. India's ability to play a catalytic role in Korea was recognised, both by the West as well as by China and the USSR. Nehru's efforts helped in bringing about a ceasefire and India was asked by both sides to be Chairman of

* I had been given a letter by Nehru for Panikkar telling him that the Americans did not take Chou's warning seriously. They called Panikkar 'Mr. Panicky'. However, when Chou's warning proved correct I was informed to destroy Nehru's letter and not deliver it. When I related this to Panikkar in Peking, he chuckled with some self-satisfaction.

the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) in Korea.

India refused to sign the US-sponsored Peace Treaty with Japan. India signed a separate Peace Treaty, in 1952, which did not smack of the anti-Communist undertones and dominating overtones of the US Treaty. This fact did indicate, even to the Chinese and Russians, that India's foreign policy was by and large independent of the West and the East, that India was really independent and non-aligned. They recognised and welcomed this and utilised India's efforts to reduce international tension and soften the cold war.

America also realised that she was not the sole custodian of the atom bomb. Her nuclear monopoly had been broken, with the USSR exploding an atomic device, in 1949. But the US attitude to 'International Communism', and China in particular, was becoming harder. She formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in 1950, and signed the ANZUS Treaty with Australia and New Zealand, in 1951. She launched a world-wide campaign against what she termed 'the threat of international communism' and would not recognise the realities on mainland China. Perhaps she thought she could isolate China and thereby weaken her. So she entered into a treaty with Chiang Kai Shek's Formosa. May be she thought that if mainland China was stabilised under a communist regime, it could form a dangerous communist monolith along with the Soviet Union. China had entered into a 30 Years' Treaty of Mutual Alliance with the USSR, in 1950. The US administration did not seem to realise that by isolating China, they would make it even more dependent on the Soviet Union and draw the two closer. Some circles in the USA did warn against this, but they were in a minority and were hounded by Senator Mcarthy and his group. Anti-Chinese and anti-communist feelings were deliberately roused and fanned by this influential group which included Richard Nixon, among others.

If America had followed a more reasonable and realistic policy towards India, China and the developing Third World, the course of history in the fifties and thereafter might have been different and, probably, more peaceful and fruitful. But strange are the ways of great and super powers. They did

not and still do not appreciate the natural force of nationalism in the newly independent countries, which have suffered from different forms of imperialism and colonialism in the past.

One thing led to another. The Chinese reaction to US policies was strong and sharp. They launched many nation-wide campaigns, to unify their vast country and oppose American policies. One such was named 'Defend Korea, oppose America and save the Fatherland'. The other was 'San Fan-Wu Fan' (the three antis and five antis) which was aimed against internal enemies such as bureaucratism, corruption etc. As a new-comer to China, I was deeply impressed by these movements. *China was no longer the 'sick man of Asia', but* a resurgent, revolutionary nation on the march. It had great potentialities—for good as well as evil. Such a massive movement of 600 million people could not be ignored or isolated. I felt this sincerely and reported to my Government accordingly.

China was still in the first flush of its revolution, unlike Russia, which had had more than thirty years' experience. Russia had faced the Western world alone, after 1917, and until World War-II, but she had succeeded in stabilising her position and safeguarding her security. China was not alone, but had the whole socialist camp with her and the sympathy of most countries of the Third World. She succeeded in consolidating her far-flung 'empire' as Russia had done. Like Russia she had 'liquidated' millions of landlords and subversive elements; she had also raised a huge Red Army, the PLA (People's Liberation Army)and many more millions in the National Militia.

It was becoming more and more clear to perceptive diplomats in Peking that the new China would not be a satellite of any other country, including the Soviet Union.

Unfortunately, America refused to see or read the writing on the Great Wall of China. John Foster Dulles adopted a policy of 'massive retaliation' against both the USSR and China. He tried to encircle both by a ring of military alliances. He dubbed India's non-alignment as 'immoral' and propounded his doctrine : 'Those who are not with us, are against us'. In one of his conversations with Nehru, Dulles conceded that Nehru's world-view was probably correct in the *long run*. But Dulles was concerned more with the short run.

The war in Indochina was going against the French, in spite of massive US aid in the economic and military fields. The French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, in May 1954, initiated the withdrawal of French forces from Indochina, under the Geneva agreement of July 1954. This was an occasion for Dulles to meet Chou En-lai, but he refused even to shake hands with Chou. Unable to prevent the Geneva Agreements, Dulles launched a new military alliance in South-East Asia (SEATO) roping Thailand, the Philippines and Pakistan into it. Under Art. IV of this Treaty, its umbrella was extended to protect even South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia from communism.

Dulles was feeling sore at India's policy of non-alignment and her friendship with China. He entered into a military aid agreement with Pakistan, under which the US gave about 1.8 billion dollars worth of weapons to Pakistan, as a grant. This upset the military balance on the Indian sub-continent. With the formation of SEATO, the cold war was extended to South-East Asia, to the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.

Dulles was not happy with the role India had played in bringing about the Geneva Agreements on Indochina. Nehru had convened a meeting of six Asian countries at Colombo, just before the Geneva Conference, and sent Krishna Menon to work behind the scenes at Geneva. Menon played a useful role in bringing the British, Soviet and Chinese points of view closer.

Krishna Menon had a razor-sharp mind and often anticipated his adversary's thinking. But he also had a very sharp tongue which made enemies of friends instead of friends out of enemies. His basic understanding of Nehru's mind was perhaps closer and more accurate than that of any other colleague of Nehru. He aroused jealousy and created many enemies in Nehru's Cabinet. He had been too long in Britain, away from India, and lacked a solid base in the country. This delayed his induction into Nehru's Cabinet by some years, though Nehru used him as a trouble-shooter in many international crises such as Vietnam, Korea and Suez. His role in restating India's case on Kashmir and bring it back to its proper perspective in the UN was laudable. After that, Nehru inducted him into his Cabinet and he played an outstanding, though not always successful, role as Nehru's principal proponent of India's

foreign policy. As Nehru's defence minister, he introduced many improvements in defence production, to make India self-sufficient. His greatest failure was his handling of the military brass-hats whom he treated with scant courtesy.

China was sore with US attempts to encircle her and strengthen Chiang Kai Shek in Formosa. She regarded Indochina as vital to her own security and falling within her sphere of influence. She did not want Soviet influence to extend to Indochina. China had ambitions of becoming the overlord of Asia and leader of the communist world, after Stalin's death, in March 1953. But it was still dependent on the USSR and could not openly defy her and isolate itself. It tried to befriend India, in order to neutralise any possible obstacle to its expansionist designs in South-East Asia.

India herself was somewhat isolated. She was a member of the Commonwealth, but the British attitude to the Kashmir question, which was of vital concern to India, was pro-Pakistan and anti-India. The US attitude to India was even more hostile. The US efforts to arm Pakistan were ostensibly aimed against international communism, but made in the full knowledge that Pakistan would use these arms against India as Nehru had warned Eisenhower. As Krishna Menon said, 'no one has yet invented a gun that can fire only in one direction'. The Soviet Union was still distant, though it now showed a friendly attitude to India's stand on Kashmir, in the UN.

Nehru was aware of the threat of Chinese expansionism, especially under a united, militant communist party. He wanted to cultivate better relations with China. He hoped that friendship between India and China, if achieved, would stabilise peace in Asia and prevent Soviet or Western dominance. He threw feelers to China about entering into some arrangement or agreement which would guide relations between the two, to safeguard their peace, security and independence.

To cut a long story short, India and China signed an 'Agreement on Trade and intercourse between India and the Tibet Region of China, on April 29, 1954, in Peking. I had conducted these negotiations for four months in Peking.* The preamble to this Agreement mentions the five principles of peaceful co-

* For details see my '*Diplomacy in Peace and War* (Vikas, 1979)

existence, popularly called '*Panch Sheel*', an ancient Sanskrit term. This agreement was the climax of three years' effort.

When Chou En-lai stopped in Delhi, on his way back from the Geneva Conference, in July 1954, these five principles were reaffirmed by him and Nehru in a joint communique.* This gave '*Panch Sheel*' added weight and respectability. Many Asian leaders affirmed them, thereafter, during official visits to India.

This was the 'honeymoon' period of Sino-Indian relations when slogans like "*Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai*' (Indians and Chinese are brothers) became popular in both the countries. There was a certain euphoria in the minds of our people and even in the media. But Nehru and those of us who had negotiated the agreement with the Chinese had our misgivings. We did not express them publicly, for we still hoped it might be possible to resolve our differences with China peacefully, in accordance with '*Panch Sheel*'. But China had other aims and ambitions, as we shall see in the next chapter.

If China had respected *Panch Sheel*, relations between our two countries could have provided a bulwark for peace and stability in Asia. The future course of events would have been different from what it has been. Nehru had the vision to see this possibility. He had no illusions. He tried his best, but the Chinese leaders did not seem to appreciate his efforts.

* I was the only aide of Nehru in his talks with Chou. Chau Kuan Hau, Chou's special assistant at that time and later Foreign Minister, was the only aide of Chou, apart from an interpreter. Chou praised India's policy of non-alignment and said to Nehru 'We would like the three Indochina States to follow a similar policy." I took down verbatim notes of the Chou-Nehru talks and dictated a full record to Nehru's personal assistant in Nehru's study the same night. When Nehru had finished his evening work and wanted to retire for the night, he peeped in and was suprised to see me. Next morning when the note was ready, he complimented me on my 'photographic memory and faithful record.'

CHAPTER 17

SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS (1954-62)

India and China are two interesting case-studies, similar in some respects, running parallel at many points, but widely divergent in their aims and methods. Both had suffered from foreign exploitation for over two centuries, had huge populations, mostly poor and living below the poverty line, when they re-emerged into national independence, in 1947 and 1949, respectively. Before that, India had been a British colony, while China, though nominally independent, had been the victim of Japanese, British, French, German, Russian and American colonialism and imperialism. Both are large Asian countries with ancient civilisations that never came in direct conflict, except in 1842, during the ill-fated expedition of General Zorawar Singh into Tibet, and in 1962.

As Nehru told me at an hour-long breakfast meeting alone with him, in October 1950, the two civilisations and influences had spread to neighbouring countries. Indian cultural influence had spread to Sri Lanka, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, while the Chinese influence spread to Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Manchuria and Mongolia. The two cultural influences met in Indochina—as its very name implies—but never came into direct conflict. Very few Indians went to China and only a few thousand Chinese settled in India, as compared to about ten millions in South-East Asian countries. Travellers and pilgrims like Huen Tsang and Fahiyan came from China to India and wrote interesting accounts of their journeys to and through India. India sent mostly religious

preachers like Padma Sambhava into Tibet and some traders to Canton in South China. Some Indian Buddhist influence penetrated into North China through Gandhara (modern Kandahar in Afghanistan) and Kashmir. Kumara Jiva from Kashmir is referred to in Chinese annals as 'the son of light'. Also the silk caravan route went from Northern-most India into Sinkiang.

There was, however, one main difference between the expansion of Indian and Chinese styles. India did not try to 'Indianise' other countries as China did to 'Sinocize' her neighbours. India did not have territorial ambitions as China had. Chinese maps in school text-books, even as late as 1954, depicted Ladakh, Bhutan, Sikkim, NEFA (North East Frontier Agency, now Arunachal), Burma, Malaysia, Indochina, Thailand, Korea, the far-Eastern and Asian Republics of the USSR as well as the Mongolian People's Republic as part of the Chinese Empire. In contrast, Emperor Ashok of India gave up the concept of military conquest and erected a pillar with an edict to this effect, at Kalinga. After regaining her independence, in 1947, India helped Bhutan and Nepal to attain sovereign, independent status, unlike in the British days, and gave up her extra-territorial rights in Tibet, under the 1954 *Panch Sheel* Agreement with China.

If claims are to be made on the basis of old empires, then India could claim many more regions and territories, as China is doing now. But a line has to be drawn somewhere, sometime, so that newly independent sovereign countries may have secure frontiers and live in peace and friendship. This is the main difference between the Indian and Chinese concepts of Asia. India had tried through the five principles of peaceful co-existence (*Panch Sheel*) to introduce a *modus vivendi* and code of conduct between sovereign, independent countries. But China had her own designs and used the 1954 Agreement with India only to gain time to regain her 'lost territories' and stake her claim for more.* China had always regarded herself as 'the centre of the

* The Chinese wanted the duration of the Agreement to be only 5 years while we had asked for 25. Ultimately, they agreed to 8 years. This roused my suspicion and I reported to Nehru that the Chinese would consolidate their hold over Tibet in 5 to 8 years and recommended

Universe', 'The Middle Kingdom' and the 'Overlord of Asia', if not of the whole world. This was in sharp contrast to India's agreement to let the British carve out another sovereign independent State, Pakistan, from within the Indian sub-continent.

China wanted not only to be the 'Overlord of Asia', but also 'The Leader of the Communist World' after Stalin's death. It was something like America wanting to be the dominant super power on this planet, in outer sapce and the sea bed. But while America had the military and economic strength to stake this claim, China did not. And if America, in spite of her wealth and power, resources and technology did not succeed, would China have any chance? The Chinese were, perhaps, banking on the strength of the Soviet Union, to achieve this aim. They demanded a sample atom bomb from the USSR, in 1954. But Soviet leaders were wiser' after having seen China's expansionist ambitious designs, which could affect them adversely—politically, strategically and territorially. They refused to give China the sample atom bomb.

China thought of another way of establishing her claim to become at least the 'Overlord of Asia'. India appeared to her to be the main stumbling block to her expansionist designs. She could not expand eastwards because Japan had a security arrangement with the USA. She could not expand northwards against the Mongolian People's Republic which had a mutual security alliance with the Soviet Union. So China thought of expanding south and southwest. She expanded her military and economic aid to Indochina, in order to strengthen her influence there. She infiltrated into north Burma and tried to extend her influence in Nepal. She offered military weapons and training to some of the dissident Indian tribes in the North-East. She

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strengthening our border before that. He agreed and issued orders accordingly but, alas, neither the defence nor home ministry implemented these orders, because the Finance Minister would not sanction the funds. This was a sad neglect for which we paid dearly in 1962.

Another factor that aroused my suspicion was the reluctance of the Chinese side to put the Five Principles in the preamble of the Agreement. They said these could be incorporated in a joint press statement. We insisted and had to go up to Chou En-lai himself to put them in the preamble. Obviously, they did not attach the same importance to these principles as we did, as later events proved.

tried to create trouble in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, through the large Chinese populations in these countries. The aim was to soften the States around her Southern and South-Western underbelly, to encircle India and establish her own sphere of influence in Asia. She found a willing friend and ally in Pakistan, for this purpose.

No sooner was the ink dry on the *Panch Sheel* Agreement than she started nibbling at Indian territory, built the Aksai Chin road (1956) over Indian soil, to link Sinkiang with Western Tibet, made claims on large chunks of Indian territory, in the North-East and North of India. She started occupying some of these areas by force. This was in flagrant violation of the Five Principles. India protested, but her protests were ignored. India pleaded for discussion through diplomatic channels, but China went on expanding her claims and forcibly occupying Indian territory, especially in the Ladakh province of Kashmir.

The Chinese faced trouble in Tibet. They tried to suppress it by force, but failed. The Dalai Lama with twenty thousand followers fled to India, in March 1959, across the many mountain routes and passes over which the Chinese had not yet established full control. They had already roused Indian feelings by shooting at the Indian police patrols at Kongka Pass and Kurnak Fort in Ladakh, in 1958. There was countrywide sympathy in India for the Dalai Lama and his followers. .This enraged the Chinese who increased the tempo of their 'forward' movement in Ladakh.

Chou En-lai came to India, in 1956, and was given a very warm welcome. In his talks he gave no indication then of any desire to settle or raise the border problem. But when he returned in April 1960, he unexpectedly raised the question and disputed the entire 2,000 mile long border, not only the few areas which were in question. This was similar to Chinese tactics *vis-a-vis* the Sino-Soviet border, where they claimed more than 1.5 million square kilometres. While China could not risk a war with ths USSR, she felt no qualms about provoking one against India. Many believe that China wanted to humiliate and defeat a peaceful, non-aligned India, reduce India's growing influence and stature in Asia and Africa, so that she could pose as the Leader of Asia and the Third World. She tried to divert the attention of her people from internal troubles, by rousing

national feelings and scoring military victories.

As a result of Chou's visit in 1960, it was agreed to have a joint Committee of officials to examine the relevant evidence on both sides and report to the two Governments their findings and recommendations. The officials met during 1960-62. They submitted two separate reports (instead of a joint one) each differing from the other. While the Government of India was considering the next step, Chinese forces launched a massive attack at Thagla Ridge, in the North East Frontier Agency of India, on September 8, 1962. The excuse they gave for this was Nehru's statement that the Chinese would be thrown out. He had said this regarding the Thagla Ridge, but the Chinese took it as a 'grave provocation'. Nehru had wanted to localise the Thagla Ridge incident, but the Chinese wanted to escalate the conflict.

Nehru was in London, at that time, for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. I was the Deputy High Commissioner. Nehru had agreed to my suggestion to send a cable to the Chinese Government to fix a date and venue for considering the Officials' Reports at a higher level, but the stunning news of the Chinese attack across Thagla Ridge came before this cable could be despatched. Parliament demanded action. Nehru tried to calm and subdue the national temper, but the Chinese gave him no respite. They launched a massive invasion, on October 19/20, both in Ladakh and NEFA.

The Chinese knew we were not expecting or prepared for such a massive invasion. We had relied too much on the *Panch Sheel* Agreement and Chou En-lai's repeated assurances that all differences could be resolved peacefully through diplomatic channels. We did not think they would so brazenly violate the Five Principles they had solemnly signed with us. Border differences between neighbouring countries have existed for centuries. Civilised countries settle them peacefully and not by going to war. We had thought the Chinese were too civilised to go to war against us when we posed no threat to them.

We failed to understand the new China and its leaders. We neglected our defences. No agreement, however solemnly entered into, can be enduring, unless it is backed by strength.

The Chinese won a military victory in 1962, but lost the friendship of many generations of Indians. Their invasion

galvanised the Indian nation into one united people against all external aggression. The Chinese had not expected this strong reaction. Their lines of communication had lengthened and the world opinion was rising against them. So they made a virtue of necessity by declaring a 'unilateral ceasefire', keeping what they wanted and withdrawing from what they could not keep.

1962 was the lowest point in Sino-Indian relations. Our friendship had increased suddenly and declined as suddenly. In a matter of eight years, we had turned from close friends to bitter enemies. Neither could really overpower or dominate the other. They would have to come back to *Panch Sheel*, one day. But it would take a long time. Chinese leaders had broken faith with Nehru and stabbed India in the back. The wounds inflicted by China would take time to heal.

Nehru was a sad and shattered man, but he kept his nerve. He converted a national calamity into a national movement, to mobilise the Indian people, to protect the motherland and safeguard its sovereignty. Another leader or country might have broken apart, under such a defeat. The Chinese invasion proved indeed to be a blessing in disguise. India woke up to the need to mend her defences, unite the people and harness her resources. India had lost a battle but not the war. It is at such times that the qualities of a leader and people are tested. India emerged more determined than ever to defend her independence, through her own efforts and such help as she might be able to secure from friendly countries without compromising her policy.

The lesson of our dealings with China was that as a non-aligned country we had to depend on ourselves and make the most of our own resources. We had to become self-reliant in the economic, defence and political fields, to the maximum extent possible in the minimum time. We had to look for reliable friends who had a mutuality of interests with us and on whom we could rely in times of difficulty. The Chinese invasion of 1962 was the first serious threat to our policy of non-alignment. But, it increased our faith in this policy which helped us to forge better and more enduring friendships that stood us in good stead in later years.

Sino-Indian relations will take time to be normalised, in view of the internal changes taking place inside China and their

repercussions on her foreign policy. The situation is further complicated by the present convergence of Sino-US policies, both of which are aimed primarily against the USSR and countries friendly to her, such as India and Vietnam. India cannot accept any dictation from China, the USA, or any other country as to who her friends should be. When India becomes stronger economically and militarily, both China and the USA will be keen to have our friendship. But we must not give up reliable friends in order to acquire doubtful ones who have violated our integrity and acted against our vital national interests in the past and may do so again. Unless and until China sees a mutuality of interests with India, respects our territorial integrity and sovereignty, gives up interfering in our internal affairs and turning some of our neighbours against us, the prospects of friendly relations developing between our two countries are dim.

The visit of the Chinese Foreign Minister, Huang Hua, to Delhi in 1981, demonstrated this. After attempting to hoodwink the previous Janata Government by shelving the border question, the Chinese now admit that this question will have to be tackled. This is, perhaps, a tactical gain for India, but whether China is prepared to 'give and take' and not merely 'keep what she has taken' remains to be seen. She may accept Sikkim as part of India. She may even accept our special treaty relations with Bhutan. But would she be willing to go back to the 1956 line in Ladakh and cede the Chumbi valley to India in the east? Unless she agrees to some such give and take, it will not be easy to settle the border question. Accepting Arunachal (old NEFA) as Indian is no concession to India, for China never exercised any control over it; in fact, she accepted the eastern part of the MacMahon line as the frontier in her treaty with Burma. If she wants to keep eastern Aksai Chin, she will have to cede something for it. Another thorny problem relates to the 4000 sq. km. territory belonging to India which Pakistan gifted away to China under the 'provisional' Sino-Pak border agreement of 1962. The Chinese have built the Karrakoram highway over it which poses a serious threat to northern India.

However, taking a long range view, public opinion in China is bound to change and exert its influence on China's rulers. India and China have to live as neighbours. Geography cannot

be changed either. Neither can dominate the other. A *modus vivendi* to live in peace, if not in friendship, will have to be evolved, sooner or later. Neither the USA nor the USSR can use India and China as pawns on the chessboard of the super-power game. India and China can and will have to settle their differences themselves, bilaterally and peacefully. There is no other way. But India cannot trust China's word, after her experience of 1962. China will have to prove by deeds, and not merely words, that she wants to live in peace and friendship with India. Any agreement that is reached will have to be given more substance and greater sanction than the old 1954 Agreement. A dialogue with China is desirable, but China will have to show greater respect for India's vital interests than she has done so far.

CHAPTER 18

SOUTH ASIA

India's geographical and geopolitical situation in Asia gives her a strategic place, on the Asian map. She stands at the cross-roads of Asia and serves as a bridge between Central and South Asia, as well as between South-East and South-West Asia. What happens anywhere in these regions is of vital concern and interest to her, for her own security and peace. Equally, what happens in India has an effect on the countries of these regions. This has been proved both in the past and recent history.

Of the many countries of these regions, India is vitally concerned with Afghanistan, Burma, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. These are the immediate smaller neighbours adjoining her territory. Their stability, peace and security are vital to India's own and *vice versa*. But being smaller neighbours, some of them have a tendency to adopt a sort of love-hate relationship with India. They tend to look for friends further away, to balance the influence of 'big' India. There are psychological and historical reasons for this. A small country is usually suspicious of a big neighbour and when it is wedged in between two big neighbours, it tries to play off one against the other or enter into an alliance with a third still bigger power.

This has been the recent history of these countries. Nepal, Sri Lanka and Burma have very friendly relations with India, but try to remain neutral, as between China and India, out of fear of China. They know that India has no territorial ambitions against them and that if there is a threat to their independence from outside, India would give them all possible help, because

their security is interlinked with that of India. They tend, therefore, to take India for granted and bend over backwards to win China's friendship, sometimes at a risk to their own security. For instance, the Kodari-Kathmandu road built by the Chinese in Nepal has specially constructed bridges that can carry medium tanks, in order to connect it with the Chinese military roads in Tibet. I travelled on this road and checked this report myself, soon after it was built. Burma has tacitly allowed Chinese troops in civilian clothes to overrun the North, where the Rangoon Government has practically no control. This was admitted by Burmese senior officials, in their private conversations with us.

Bhutan, on the other hand, realises that her security is closely linked with India's. Her rulers have been wise enough to have a special treaty relationship with India. They know that if it comes to the crunch, India would defend their security because it is vital to her own. China does not seem to have reconciled herself to this special relationship but has not dared to violate it. She has thrown gentle feelers, followed by vague threats through Bhutanese graziers, cowherds and frontier guards, from time to time, but Bhutan has stood firmly by her Treaty with India.

I had several intimate conversations with the late King of Bhutan, during the sixties. He was a wise and shrewd ruler. He told me that Nehru was his *guru* (teacher) and Bhutan felt safe in the special Treaty relationship with India. He confided to me that China was throwing feelers for a closer relationship and so were some Western countries. He had told them that Bhutan was a small country and got all the aid and cooperation she needed from friendly India and could not absorb more aid from other countries, especially the great powers. However, he did accept some trucks from Australia, a rice research station from Japan and some dairy equipment from Switzerland. He told me that some younger elements in Bhutan were itching to develop relations with the great powers but he would not allow this, as it would make Bhutan the battleground for conflicting and competing ideologies. That was one reason why he did not want Bhutan to join the Commonwealth.

When India sponsored Bhutan for membership of the U.N., the suspicion against India among some of the younger elements

seemed to disappear and an era of closer cooperation was opened. The new King is a modern minded young man but deeply rooted in the soil and traditions of Bhutan. I met him several times—once with Mrs. Gandhi (in 1972)—and found him wise and shrewd like his late father.

India cannot take Bhutan for granted, or Bhutan India, in the changing situation in this region. Unlike Nepal, Bhutan has followed a closer relationship with India so far because it accords with the security and national interests of both the countries. However, this close relationship must be given more substance and strength on a reciprocal basis, through continuing consultations and meetings at higher levels. It is the sovereign right of Bhutan to have an Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT) and, unlike Nepal, she has not so far succumbed to Chinese pressures in this regard. India has also contributed generously to the economic development of Bhutan. This provides the necessary basis for further cooperation in their mutual interest.

Nepal, on the contrary, has constantly whittled down its Treaty relationship with India, during the last two decades, mainly out of fear of China and at its instance. This is partly due to internal pulls and pressures and partly due to external forces. India's defeat by China, in 1962, created a sense of fear in the minds of the Nepalese rulers and their faith in India's ability to safeguard Nepal's security and integrity decreased. The merger of Sikkim with India and the victory of India in her conflict with Pakistan in 1971 revived the old fear of India in the minds of the rulers of Nepal. They tried, therefore, to forge closer links with countries hostile to India, such as China and Pakistan.

It was mainly the pressure from China that compelled the Government of Nepal to ask for the withdrawal of the Indian Military Mission and our technical personnel from their border checkposts. I conducted talks regarding this in Delhi with the Nepalese Foreign Secretary, in the late sixties, and offered him reciprocal rights in India. But I was informed that the pressure from China was so great that they would have to accept a Chinese Military Mission too, if they allowed India to retain hers. When I argued that Nepal was a sovereign country and could exercise her sovereign right to do whatever she felt was necessary

to safeguard her own security, they pleaded that they were a small country wedged in between two big neighbours—India and China—and had to maintain balanced friendly relations with both.

We did not press the issue, but it remains to be seen whether this policy will be in the national interests of Nepal. She has a long open border with India and her people have the freedom to enter India at will, seek employment and business in India, while Indians are not allowed the same facilities in Nepal. However, it would be unwise for India to take any steps that may hurt the interests of the Nepalese people. They have close historical, traditional, religious and cultural ties with the people of India. These need to be developed further. They could provide an unshakeable guarantee for mutuality of interests and a greater foundation of friendship than a military mission.

However, we must not let the Nepalese rulers take us for granted, in their attempt to appease other powers. A friendly but firm approach is necessary, so that our own national and security interests do not suffer.

Pakistan is a special case. It became a sovereign independent State as a by-product of India's struggle for freedom. Its rulers and leaders never went to British jails or joined the Civil Disobedience Movement. They belonged mostly to the feudal landlord and big industrial classes, till the military took over. Pakistan thought of becoming 'the biggest Islamic State' in the world but failed, because more Muslims stayed on in India than went to Pakistan. Pakistan's colonial policy towards her Eastern Wing, which was culturally and linguistically different, resulted in the dismemberment of Pakistan an the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign, independent country, in 1971-72. With India, Pakistan's relations have always been strained because Pakistani rulers have tried to establish an identity culturally separate from India and closer to West Asia, America and China. Unlike the African and Latin American States, which are keen to have closer regional cooperation, Pakistan has so far opposed proposals for even sub-regional cooperation made by India and others. It seeks to establish military and political parity with India, which is ten times bigger in area, has six times the population and therefore greater responsibilities and requirements.

At first, Pakistani rulers posed as the guardians of the Muslims of India and claimed Kashmir, as it has a Muslim majority. When the National Conference of Kashmir, headed by Sheikh Abdullah, rejected their claim, they resorted to sabotage, subversion, infiltration and finally invasion. They *entered into military alliances like SEATO and CENTO and* the 1959 Executive Agreement with the USA, to get Paton tanks, Sabre jets etc. They invaded India thrice, since 1947, but failed each time to gain their objective. In December 1962, they entered into a 'provisional' agreement with Peking under which they gifted away to China over 4,000 square kilometres of Indian territory in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK). China rewarded them with large quantities of arms and built two military roads across POK, linking China to Pakistan.

It is a tragedy that Pakistan, whose people speak the same languages, eat the same food, wear the same dress, enjoy the same music and dance as their neighbours in India, should seek to forge closer ties with China and the West than with us. India has been extending the hand of friendship and cooperation for the last thirty years. After losing their Eastern Wing in 1971, they are now looking more and more towards the Islamic world with which they have little in common, except religion. The religious bond could not hold together the two Wings of Pakistan. To deny the obvious economic, historical, strategic and cultural bonds with India is a sign of the Pakistani rulers' paranoia and sense of insecurity *vis-a-vis* their own people's aspirations.

India has tried hard to develop trade with and transit through both to third countries, but Pakistan does not allow it. They were buying coal from third countries at 3 times the price India offered, just because they did not want to develop trade links with India. It is a short-sighted policy and is like cutting one's nose to spite one's face. It cannot endure.

At the Simla Conference, in July 1972, there was a glimmer of hope that the Pakistani rulers might agree to usher in a new era of peaceful cooperation with India. Had Bhutto lived and not been assassinated by the present rulers of Pakistan he might have mended relations with India. I recall his long monologues during the Simla Conference. He said he would have settled all pending problems, including Kashmir, then and there, but he

represented a defeated country and any settlement might smack of having been arrived at under pressure. But he assured us that within a very short time of his return to Pakistan, he would recognise Bangladesh and prepare the ground for a peaceful settlement of all problems with India, as envisaged in the Simla Agreement.

He had his difficulties with the army and with others. He could not fulfil his promise. Like his predecessors in office, he also tried to get closer to China and the USA and received large scale military equipment from both. The difficulty in reaching any durable settlement with Pakistan is that they have hardly ever had a duly elected and stable representative Government for long. The present set up is the most unrepresentative. The people of Pakistan do not approve of its policy towards India or Afghanistan. They would prefer closer cooperation with both, instead of confrontation, and less meddling by the great powers who see the world in terms of competition rather than cooperation. They aid and abet all such moves and tendencies whose aim is to dissipate the Power of the Sub-continent so that their chalked out strategies for the region are not obstructed.

One may hope that in the not too distant future, Pakistan may have a stable representative Government with which India could have a durable agreement regarding economic, cultural and even security arrangements. There is, however, some danger that an unpopular military dictatorship in Pakistan may embark on a military misadventure against India, to detract the attention of its own people and the world outside from its internal troubles. Yahya Khan did this in 1971 and Zia, though more intelligent, is quite capable of doing it. His successful bid to get something 'more than peanuts' from the US Government in the shape of sophisticated weaponry is a danger signal which India can ignore only at her own peril.

Bangladesh is also a special case, like Pakistan, though for different reasons. It started, under Sheikh Mujib, a very close and friendly relationship with India. India helped the freedom fighters in their struggle against West Pakistan forces. Bangladesh under Mujib appreciated this. They entered into a treaty of peace and cooperation with us, in June 1972. It was drafted on a steamer by the Bangladesh Foreign Secretary and myself,

while our respective Prime Ministers were having a view of the surrounding panorama from the deck. They had given us directions to keep the draft ready by the evening, when we landed at Dacca. The Bangladesh Foreign Secretary had a draft and we took that as the basis and worked on it. We had it typed on the steamer and got it approved formally by the two delegations and Prime Ministers, after dinner. Subimal Dutt, our first Ambassador to Bangladesh, had to sit up till midnight to do the Bengali text on which Mujib insisted. The English and Bengali texts were printed the same night and were ready for signatures next morning at 9 a.m.

I am mentioning these details to indicate the degree of mutual trust and confidence between the two countries and their leaders at that time. But it was a short-lived honeymoon. Mujib became over-confident, ignored his own colleagues and the army, some of whom got together and conspired to liquidate him. He was warned of the danger by us, but he laughed it off.

He was an orator and could rouse a mob to tears. I remember his speech of welcome to Mrs. Gandhi, in June, 1972, at the Maidan in Dacca, when a million people were present. There was pin-drop silence, when he spoke. Such was his charisma. But he had become over-confident and careless about his security arrangements. He and his whole family were massacred in cold blood by a few military hot heads, on August 15, 1975. His loyal colleagues were imprisoned and done to death in their jail cells.

Since then some circles in Bangladesh have been rousing anti-India feelings, making overtures to China and the USA as well as to Pakistan and the Islamic bloc. They tried to browbeat the Janata Government on the Farakka waters issue and succeeded. But they did not keep their word about bilateral harnessing of the eastern rivers, which cause havoc in both the countries; instead they are trying to internationalise the issue.

Bangladesh is going through difficult times. The economic situation is bad, inflation is raging, the population is rising rapidly, the pressure on land is tremendous. People are demanding agrarian and political reforms. Zia-ur Rahman, President of Bangladesh, unlike his counterpart in Pakistan, Zia-ul-Haq, was a little more liberal and clever. He formed his own Party, held elections and won. But how long could he

continue to shield the assassins of Mujib and carry on in this way ? No wonder he was also shot to death by some disgruntled military men. The future of Bangladesh is uncertain. Things may grow worse before they get better. We should be prepared for this, so that there is not another exodus of refugees from Bangladesh.

However, one thing seems fairly certain. Having overthrown the yoke of Pakistan, Bangladesh will not re-join its western Islamic brother. Nor can Bangladesh afford to antagonise India for long. Its economic, cultural, political and strategic interests are either very close or complementary to India's. India and Bangladesh will have to work out mutually satisfactory arrangements, in all these fields, rather than look to outside powers. A move in this direction for closer cooperation between Bangladesh and India is bound to come, for it is in the inerests of both the countries. As and when there emerges a fully representative Government in Bangladesh, its relations with India can and should improve.

But India must not make the mistake that Pakistan, China and the USA often do, i.e. interfere in Bangladesh's internal affairs. Bangladeshis, like our own Bengalees, are proud, sensitive and highly emotional. We must show understanding of their problems, have frank and sincere exchange of views and not take advantage of their difficulties or encourage them to take advantage of ours. Friendship is not easily built but can be easily lost. This is the lesson of Bangladesh, and we should not forget it.

Sri Lanka and Afghanistan are at the southern and northern tips of India respectively. The former is separated from India by a narrow strait, the latter by the tongue of Wakhan—a small area north of Kashmir (POK). Being an island gives Sri Lanka a little more manoeuverability than a landlocked State like Afghanistan can have. But so far as India is concerned, it has historical, cultural and traditional ties of friendship with both.

Afghanistan's proximity to the Soviet Union and the hostile attitude of Pakistan to her, instigated and inspired by China and the USA, has compelled her to depend more and more on the Soviet Union. India is on principle against the presence of foreign troops in any country, especially a non-aligned country

like Afghanistan. But India cannot expect Afghanisan to surrender to insurgents and rebels backed by Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, apart from the USA, China and some western countries. As between the two evils, from India's view of her own security, Soviet presence is a lesser evil than the other. India is against interference in the internal affairs of sovereign countries. This must stop and Afghanistan can then be expected to ask the Soviets to withdraw their troops. They are there at the request of the legal, sovereign Government of Afghanistan. It is for the Afghan people to choose what form of Government or social system they like. The continued interference by Pakistan and the consequent presence of Soviet forces pose a serious threat to the region. Pakistan's refusal to talk to the Government or even the ruling Party in Afghanistan is unreasonable and against the interests of Pakistan herself. If America and the People's Republic of China could talk for 15 years in Warsaw without having diplomatic relations, there is no reason for Pakistan's refusal to talk to her small neighbour, Afghanistan.

Ultimately, some form of regional security arrangements will have to be devised amongst and by the non-aligned countries of this and other regions, to prevent outside interference from the great, medium or other powers, within or outside each region. Such an arrangement between Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Bangladesh is desirable. If any of these countries is not willing, the others could make a start. Unless this is done, a small non-aligned country like Afghanistan cannot be expected to defend herself against outside interference, especially when this is encouraged, instigated or inspired by a great power. She will have to ask for such assistance as may be necessary from a friendly neighbour.

As for Sri Lanka, it is going through an internal transformation, from a parliamentary to a presidential system. That is its own business. But if it leads to the granting of military, naval or air bases or 'facilities' to great powers—as is rumoured —it will be a cause for grave concern to India and the whole region. Another irritant between India and Sri Lanka is the plight of the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. This problem must be tackled by both Governments in a spirit of mutual understanding and respect for minorities, otherwise it can have

serious repercussions. It can be resolved amicably as was the question of Kachathivu island some years ago.

The Maldives are a collection of small islands to the south-west of India. Their strategic position, because of their proximity to India and Sri Lanka, is important. Any attempt by the UK to revive their old air base on Gan Island or similar attempts by outside powers would pose a threat to the region. We must resist all such attempts and try to bring the Maldives closer to our region, economically, politically and culturally.

To sum up, India's relations with her smaller neighbours are good, except with Pakistan. However, there is danger of relations with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka being adversely affected, should these two countries give 'facilities' inconsistent with the policy of non-alignment to great powers. To forestall such a possibility, it would be desirable for India to propose sub-regional and regional arrangements between the non-aligned countries of this region, to promote peace and cooperation and safeguard mutual security. The eighties will be a decade of challenge and opportunity in this regard; we should take up the challenge and not miss the opportunity.

As India becomes economically stronger and more self-reliant, better capable of defending herself and her smaller neighbours, in friendship and cooperation with them, her credibility and their confidenee in her will increase. India has already proved that she has no designs to acquire the territories of her neighbours. She withdrew her armed forces from Bangladesh, in February, 1972, two weeks before the stipulated date. Under the Simla Agreement of 1972, she returned over 5,000 square miles of territory she had occupied during the 1971 conflict in West Pakistan. India does not aspire to be the leader of any bloc or dominate her neighbours. What she can and should strive for is a sub-regional or regional treaty of non-aggression and economic cooperation with all her smaller neighbours, to promote peace, safeguard security, foster development, on a basis of equality and partnership, free from outside interference. This was the aim of the Simla Agreement with Pakistan and the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with Bangladesh in 1972. It points the way to India's relations with all her smaller neighbours in South Asia, in the future.

CHAPTER 19

SOUTH-EAST ASIA AND JAPAN

South-East Asia is an important region of Asia and the world. It is different from South-West Asia, which is almost entirely Islamic. This region comprises countries and peoples who profess almost all religions, as India does—Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and many forms of tribal beliefs. It also has people following Taoism and Confucianism—evidence of Chinese influence. It is a bridge between India, China and Japan, between South and East Asia.

India's relations with the countries of South-East Asia and Japan date back to more than 2000 years, when Indian boats sailed across the seas with preachers and pilgrims, monks and merchants. Though Indian cultural influence spread to many of these countries, they made it their own and enriched it thereby. *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the famous Indian epics, staged and set to dance and music in Thailand and Indonesia are very popular. The fusion of so many cultures, races and religions has given South-East Asian countries an almost cosmopolitan character and outlook. Islam and Hinduism have shed their fanaticism and Buddhism of the *Mahayana* School is more prevalent than the more orthodox *Hinayana*.

When European powers dominated this region—the Dutch in Indonesia, the French in Indochina and the British in Burma, Singapore and Malaya—cultural contacts between India and this region were snapped, except for petty traders and indentured labour (as in Fiji). Australia and New Zealand were British colonies inhabited by the descendents of the British

convicts who were settled there. The original inhabitants, the aborigines, were neglected and became almost extinct.

Japan is a case *sui-generis*, almost like the British Isles in the West. Buddhism crossed with Shintoism, became millitant. This welded the Japanese into a disciplined island nation. It embarked on invasions of China, Korea, Taiwan (Formosa) and started the so-called East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, to create its own vast empire. Like all imperialists, the Japanese were racially arrogant, tough administrators and failed to take root in the territories and among the people they had conquered. And like all imperialists, they had ultimately to quit and go back into their own island shell.

Hardworking and disciplined as the Japanese are, they rose from the ashes of World War II and, with American help, became the third most industrialised country in the world, as West Germany did in Europe. But unlike West Germany, which formed a partnership with France, Italy, the Benelux countries, Great Britain and others in the European Economic Community, Japan tried to dominate the economy of South-East Asian countries, keeping countries like India and China out. *Vis-a-vis* China, Japan had a guilt complex, as it were, having invaded its 'cultural guru' as many Japanese regard China even today. As for India, in spite of India's friendly gestures (e.g., in signing a separate peace treaty and giving up the right to reparations), Japan was jealous of its influence in the region where it wanted to become the sole leader.

The people of this region had not forgotten the Co-Prosperity Sphere and Japanese atrocities during World War II. They were naturally suspicious of Japan's motives in giving them economic 'aid' and investing their skills, technology and money.

It was against this complex background that India had to shape her policy towards South-East Asia and Japan, after she became independent in 1947. Before World War II, the British had left this region more or less at the mercy of Japan and its European friends—the French in Indochina and the Dutch in Indonesia. Britain was interested mainly in keeping the sea route safe and open to Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand and was satisfied with keeping Singapore and the Malayan peninsula under its control.

Independent India's interests and policies were different

from those of pre-war Britain. India aimed at securing the independence of all countries of the region. This meant mainly the withdrawal of the Dutch from Indonesia, the French from Indochina and the British from Malaya. India was in no *position to help achieve this militarily or through economic* pressure. But Nehru mobilised public opinion in the whole region by holding the Asian Relations Conference, in 1947, and a Conference on the Dutch aggression on Indonesia. in 1949, at New Delhi. These two events gave India a position of respect, political and moral force which strenghened and revived the old cultural bonds. When most of these countries became independent, they had not the same need for India's spokesmanship. In addition, India became directly involved in her troubles with Pakistan and indirectly with the West. She could have strengthened her cultural and commercial ties with the countries of South-East Asia but neglected to do so. Some countries like Indonesia had aspirations to become leaders in the region. This led to a certain amount of rivalry with India. There were also efforts by the British, the French and the US to revive their influence and strengthen their economic, political and military hold on this region. Military pacts like SEATO and ANZUS were formulated and some countries like Thailand, Philippines and Pakistan joined SEATO, while Australia and New Zealand joined ANZUS.

There was talk of forming NEATO (North East Asian Treaty organization) but Japan preferred to have the camouflage of economic cooperation and suggested the formation of ASPAC (Association of the Pacific and Asian Countries). The obstacle in getting these through was the opposition of non-aligned countries like India, Indonesia and Burma, which refused to join them. Then Japan tried to keep India out and suggested the formation of SEAMEC (South-East Asian Mutual Economic Cooperation Organization), but this also did not materialise.

The main reason for the failure of these attempts was the growing force of nationalism in most countries of Asia and Africa. This had been given formal expression at the Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian countries, held in Indonesia in April 1955. Nehru took the initiative and played a leading role in convening this Conference. He succeeded in getting China

invited, hoping that this would reduce the isolation of China and bring her within the mainstream of Asian nationalism. However, China exploited the Conference for her own aims and started increasing her influence by spreading her tentacles in this region. She played on the vanity of Soekarno and turned him against India. Then she tried to use the Chinese population and local communists in Indonesia, Malaya and Thailand, to subvert the Governments in power. The ruling circles and people saw through this and suppressed these subversive and Communist elements ruthlessly. Soekarno lost his popularity and became a mere figurehead.

The influence of India decreased considerably, after her invasion and defeat by China, in 1962. But there was sympathy for India, especially after other South-East Asian countries had themselves a taste of Chinese subversion.

I recall a visit with Foreign Minister M.C. Chagla to Malaya and Indonesia, in 1967. Tungku Abdul Rahman, the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, was very friendly and warm. He urged greater co-operation between his country and India. His main worry was the 40% Chinese population in Malaya, 80% in the adjoining Singapore and the active Communists (of Chinese origin) in Thailand who committed frequent border raids in Malaysia. The Tungku was a liberal, mildmannered and soft-spoken Muslim of the old school. He said his prayers regularly and built a beautiful new mosque in Kuala Lumpur. He wanted Chagla to join in the Friday prayers, but Chagla declined. When I met the Tungku, he asked me: "What kind of a Muslim is your Foreign Minister, if he won't join us in Friday prayers?" I had tried to persuade Chagla to join the prayers 'in the national interest', but he would not and said: "I don't believe in it and cannot be a hypocrite". I told the Tungku that Chagla was a good Muslim but was not feeling well. Of course, the Tungku understood, but said no more. He was a good Muslim but he enjoyed his whisky before dinner and a cognac and cigar after—unlike the present Islamic President of Pakistan. So did the Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, who succeeded him.

I visited Malaysia again with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in 1968. Shafi Bin Ghazali was my counterpart then (he is Foreign Minister now) and I had long, intimate, frank and

friendly exchange of views with him. He was a practical, pragmatic and highly intelligent man; he was neither a 'rightist' nor a 'leftist', but a staunch nationalist. I met him again, in 1979, and found him very balanced, in his approach to Vietnam, unlike Raja Ratnam, the hawkish Foreign Minister of Singapore. But Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore is a seasoned statesman and keeps his small city State in good order. India has sizeable population of Indian origin in both Malaysia and Singapore. We have good economic relations with both but these could be bettered. Efforts in this direction need to be strengthened as also in the field of culture.

Malaysia had some differences with Indonesia and we tried to help sort these out. I recall meeting President Soekarno in his palace at Jakarta, in the last days of his declining glory. He was dressed in his smart outfit, carried a silver-topped ebony baton and wore a cap (to hide his bald head, I was told). He talked nostalgically of the past, of his close friendship with Nehru. He had lost his power but not his majestic manner. When Adam Malik, the Vice-President, took me to him, Soekarno chided Malik with 'playing political games' but Malik just smiled.

The Indonesians are a delightful people, especially the Javanese. They will do a lot of shadow boxing but not come to blows, unless it becomes absolutely necessary. This is their great quality—to talk things out and settle most problems by *Mushawara* (consultation) and *Muwafikat* (consensus). Indonesia is the most important country in South-East Asia, in size and population and because of its strategic position. There is no conflict of national interests between India and Indonesia and our relations today are much better than they were during the hey day of Soekarno. There is an under-current of jealousy of India in some circles in Indonesia which is understandable. This need not, however, stand in the way of our developing closer bilateral relations in the economic, commercial, political and even the security fields. Greater efforts in this direction are necessary by both sides.

The Thais are in a class by themselves. Proud of being the oldest independent South-East Asian country, they manage to play one side against another and thus maintain their independence. They sided with the Japanese, at one time, then with the

British and the Americans; now they are chumming up with the Communists in China, against their socialist, non-aligned Vietnamese neighbours. How long they can go on playing this game remains to be seen. With India, they have been generally friendly. They have strong cultural links with us which could be further strengthened. We have good commercial ties with them which could be bettered. There are about 20,000 Indians living and doing well in Thailand.

The three States of Indochina—Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (now Kampuchea)—have a long history of cultural relations with India. The Angkor Wat and Batum Serai temples in Kampuchea are a reminder of the influence of Hinduism. The 1,000 elephants and Buddhist monks and monasteries in Laos are evidence of India's links with that country. Vietnam was influenced more by China than India, in the past. The people are more Taoist and Confucian than Hindu or Buddhist in their traditions.

After India became independent, in 1947, Nehru took keen interest in the struggle for independence in Indochina. He developed close personal relations with Ho Chi Minh. Nehru convened a Conference of six South-Asian countries in Colombo, in 1954, to espouse the cause of Indochina.

The Christmas carpet bombing of North Vietnam, in 1972, and the overthrow of Sihanouk and his replacement by Lon Nol in 1970, the attempt to divide the nationalists and socialists in Laos are some of the many attempts made by Nixon and Kissinger to divide the three Indochina States at the cost of numerous human lives—both American and Indochinese. This policy was a blunder and doomed to fail. Recent attempts by China to bolster the hated Pol Pot's remnant forces across the Kampuchean border in Thailand are of the same character but much more dangerous. They are bound to fail, in spite of China's proximity, because there is a determined spirit of nascent nationalism in all the three countries of Indochina.

I am basing this judgement on my personal contacts and intimate conversations with the past and present leaders of the three countries, including Ho Chi Minh, Pham Van Dong, General Giap, Prince Souvana Phouma, Prince Sihanouk and others. I met them during 1957, 1958, 196?, 1969 and 1979.

India was requested to be Chairman of the International Commissions in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, on the conclusion of the Geneva Agreements, in July 1954. We had many difficulties in South Vietnam. Our premises were set on fire, demonstrations were held outside our office, but we acted with patience and perseverance. I was sent as Leader of the Indian Delegation and President of the International Commission for Supervision and Control (I.C.S.C.) to Vietnam, in early 1957. Things had quietened down but tension was building up with the increasing number of US advisers and weapons in the South. American interference in Laos and Cambodia was even greater.

In the International Commission in Vietnam, we tried to hold the balance between Canada (which was pro-West) and Poland (which was pro-Communist), the two other members of the Commission. We also tried to contain the over-enthusiasm of North Vietnam and control the deliberate defiance of the Geneva Accord by the South. We had to deal with the British and Soviet Foreign Ministers who were the two co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference and send periodical reports to them. We had to resist the pressures of the British, the French and the Americans, in the South. The Soviets in the North did not give us any trouble. They adopted a low profile, partly because of China but mainly because the North Vietnamese were capable of looking after their own interests.

It was a most difficult but interesting assignment. I learnt more of diplomacy in peace and war there than in the big world capitals like Washington, Moscow, Peking and London. The Commission was like a mini-UN, but free of its strangulating procedures. We had to depend on our own resources and evolve our own procedures. The Geneva Agreements were deliberately vague on ticklish questions and the two co-Chairmen hardly ever gave us any decisions on the several matters we referred to them. This was because Britain was now closely tied up with the US and the French and the cold war was at its height. The two co-Chairmen (UK and USSR) did not agree, on most things.

I do not wish to dilate on the work of the Commission and the situation in Indochina. Here I am mainly concerned with India's relations with these three States.

By and large, India has gained the respect of the peoples

of the three Indochina countries. They look upon India as a non-aligned, peace-loving country that is against interference by great powers in the affairs of smaller countries. They have greatly appreciated the stand of India on the Chinese invasion of Vietnam in February 1979, and India's attitude to the barbarities and atrocities committed by the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea. India's recognition of the new revolutionary Government in Kampuchea has been widely acclaimed, but they expect much more from India—both in the political and economic fields. They would like to use India's good offices to improve their relations with ASEAN member countries. India can and must play the role of a catalytic agent and bring the two sides closer. This will, of course, need greater initiative and subtler diplomacy by India. India is a country they trust and look upon, to save them from the machinations of some great powers and their agents in the area. Malaysia and Indonesia are more reasonable than Singapore and Thailand. The situation needs urgent attention to prevent its escalation.

In the economic and cultural fields, there is scope for greater cooperation between India and these countries. Our films and songs, dance and drama are very popular. Our experience in agriculture, animal husbandry and small and medium scale industries could be of benefit to them. This applies not only to the three States of Indochina but to members of ASEAN too.

There is need to form a regional arrangement between the Indochina States and ASEAN members, for promoting economic cooperation and safeguarding security. The presence of India, in any such arrangement, would give it greater credibility and strength and help keep out great-power interference.

Mrs. Gandhi had hinted at the possibility, during her tour of South-East Asian countries, in 1968. I accompanied her and at first found her a little hesitant to make such a bold proposal. She felt, perhaps, that the countries of the region might misunderstand India's motives and attribute to her ambitions of leadership. But, she did make the proposal for an international convention or agreement, to ensure respect for the non-alignment and peace of the three Indochina States. Prince Sihanouk at first felt inclined to support the proposal but had second thoughts and told me that China may misunderstand it. Thirteen years

have passed since and the situation has changed. It is time India looked ahead and played its due and natural role as a bridge between the different regions and sub-regions of South and South-East Asia, and took bold initiatives in this regard.

There is no reason for India to be apologetic about her recognition of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. She may be in a minority today—as she was at the time of recognising the People's Republic of China, in 1949—but more and more countries are bound to recognise the realities, sooner than later. When that happens and encouragement to Pol Pot's remnant forces ceases, the Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea—which are there at the request of the Government—can and should withdraw. There will then be no need for them to stay on.

Fiji, Tonga, Nauru and Western Samoa are far away from India, geographically, but look for closer relations with her in the economic, cultural and educational fields. There is a large Indian population in Fiji (over 50 per cent) and it could play an important role in the development of the region. Sir Ratu Mara, the head of Fiji's Government is a remarkable leader. I was greatly impressed by his wisdom and statesmanship when I visited Fiji in 1968. The King and Queen of Tonga are great; they charmed the people of India on their visits.

With Australia and New Zealand, India has good economic and cultural relations. They are, like Fiji, fellow members of the Commonwealth. Though geographically in this region, they are politically tied more closely with the USA and the West. They may, sooner or later, have to make up their mind about which ties are more important—geographical or political. If they want to improve their economy and their relations with the countries and peoples of this region, Australia will have to revise their 'White Australia' policy. So far as India is concerned, we have no conflict of interests with either, but cooperation could be greater and closer, especially in the fields of commerce, culture and education.

South-East Asia is flanked by Japan in the East and China on the North. With the withdrawal of the US from Indochina, this region is facing greater economic influence of Japan and political domination from China. Friendship with India provides a much needed and desired counter-balance.

CHAPTER 20

IRAN AND SOUTH-WEST ASIA

It was the fall of 1958. I had spent almost two years in Vietnam, as President of the I.C.S.C. Personally, for me, it was a rewarding experience, though as a Commission we had not had much success. However, we were told that the very presence of the I.C.S.C. was a success, since it prevented a large-scale war between North and South-Vietnam. This was not very satisfying by itself. It was only a temporary suspension of war, a fragile peace. The war clouds were gathering and becoming thicker and darker. The American entanglement was increasing; so was the Vietnamese determination to throw them out and unify the country.

Compared to Vietnam, Iran, or the old Persia, was at that time (1958) outwardly quiet and peaceful. As Ambassador of India, I found it very pleasant and comfortable. The language was no problem, as I read and spoke some Persian. The scenery was similar to that of my native Kashmir—only less green. Chinars, poplars, cherry, plum, peach, pear, pomegranate and apple dotted the countryside, especially in the North and North-East. Across the Elborz range was the Caspian Sea, with lovely beaches and plenty of good caviar. In the South was Shiraz, the home of Hafiz and Saadi, with two lovely mausoleums built in their honour. In the Centre was Ispahan which was called *Nisf Jahan* (half the world). Its lovely mosques and minarets, domes and yards—with blue, green, white and yellow tiles—were unrivaled in the world. Qum was the citadel of the clergy, with their white turbans and flowing black robes. In the East was

Mashed, the holy of holies for Shias, where non-Muslims were not allowed to enter the shrine ; but I was, as a special case.

Iran is a beautiful country with an ancient civilisation, rich language and literature, a mixture of Aryan and Islamic influence, mainly Shia, and a sprinkling of five Arab tribes (Khamsa) in Khuzistan province, in the South-West. The Shias still celebrate the pre-Islamic Aryan New Year, which usually falls on March 21. They observe the same rites as we do in Kashmir, on this occasion e.g. presenting a plate with nine precious grains and fruits (rice, dried grapes, almonds, etc.) and a small mirror in which you are supposed to see your face to bring you luck in the New year.

The handicrafts in Iran are similar to those in Kashmir—carpet weaving, embroidery, shawl-making etc. The food is also similar, except that they use less chillies and spices than we do in Kashmir. The complexion, features, eyes, hair of the men and women are like those of Kashmiris. Even their music and singing, dance, drama and poetry are very similar to ours. Persian was the court language in Kashmir before the British came and Kashmir is called *Iran-e-Saghir* (little Iran).

I felt completely at home in Iran, but not so in Tehran itself. The capital was ruled by feudal landlord families and the *nouveau riche* merchant classes who, as in India, were vulgarly ostentatious in their imitation of French, German or British modes. The city was full of mansions, gardens, and swimming pools filled by underground channels of water called *Qanats*, coming down from the Elborz mountain range. In winter there was skiing on the slopes of Mount Abe Ali, just outside Tehran. In the evening there was drinking, ballroom dancing and the 'high' life.

In the villages and small towns, people were more religious and conservative. I used to be out of Tehran almost half the month. I would enjoy the hospitality of an ordinary *Chai Khana* (tea house) and share the simple but delicious food and sometimes even the earthen bed of our hosts. They would recite poems of Hafiz and Saadi ; though simple and poor, they were proud of their civilisation and culture.

In Isfahan, I joined the *Sufi dervishes* (holy men) round a fire, reciting the poems of Maulana Rumi, sipping the local white wine. They say that sherry really originated in Shiraz

which may be true, for that beautiful city has some of the loveliest vineyards I have seen anywhere.

I also visited the schools, colleges and universities (of Tehran and Shiraz), met the faculty and students and discussed many things with them—poetry and politics, education and ethics, philosophy and religion, love and liberty. Once you got to know them, they would talk freely. I sensed an undercurrent of discontent, especially among the students. They were not happy with the Shah's system of governance—the wide network of *Savak* (Security and Intelligence Organization), the secret and sudden disappearance of some of their friends and colleagues, the rampant corruption and nepotism.

I had occasion to meet some members of the banned Tudeh Party. They told me the Shah's days were numbered, unless he changed his ways. His so-called land reforms were an eye-wash and gave large estates to his family or the Pahalavi Foundation managed by them. His reliance on the West, especially America, and the large number of American 'experts' and advisers annoyed them. I did not at first believe them, but when I met many educated young men and women at their home or in mine, I found them speaking in a similar vein.

I also toured some of the Arab strongholds in Khuzistan and stayed with their tribal Chieftans. They were excellent shots and could hit a coin tossed high up in the air. Their women folk were not kept in *purdah* and joined in the conversation. They had photos of President Nasser of Egypt decorating their drawing rooms, but not of the Shah. The Shah's police harassed them and I heard later that some of these chiefs had been shot without trial.

The Mullahs of Qum and Mashed were dissatisfied because the Shah had ordered removal of the *Chador* (a black cloth veiling a woman's head, face and body down to the knees or ankles), introduced drinking and ballroom dancing, confiscated religious estates and sent some of the religioue leaders into exile.

There was discontent seething under the surface, though outwardly Tehran looked like a prosperous city with wide boulevards and impressive buildings. The country was ruled by the Shah with a strong hand through the *Savak* and the 2,000 feudal families whose scions were moved from one office to another,

as in a game of musical chairs. They had to dance and sing to the Shah's tune.

I toured each province twice over, during the two years I was there. I found the feeling of discontent even stronger in the North-West, in Tabriz, and in the North, in Gorgan and Mazenderan. The Kurds in Kurdistan were biding their time to seize the first opportunity they could get to revolt against the Shah. The Arab population of Khuzistan was looking to Nasser, to liberate them. The South was mostly a desert and I travelled through it in my Jeep Station Wagon from Kerman to Shiraz, and Persepoils to Yeazd. The grand ruins of Persepolis reminded one of the fate of all emperors and conquerors who fail to cater to the needs of the people.

Mohammad Raza Shah Pahalavi (the son of Raza Shah who had seized the throne in 1925) was impervious to the lessons of history of his own country and of the world. He developed illusions of building a great empire and controlling not only the Gulf, but also the Indian Ocean beyond. He squandered Iran's oil wealth in buying large-scale weaponry from America and the West. He celebrated 2500 years of the empire of Cyrus the Great by erecting a luxurious city of tents near Persepolis and entertained heads of almost all States and their delegations on a lavish scale. Chefs, champagne and wines were flown from France, scotch whisky, gin, butlers and waiters from Britain, helicopters from America to ferry his guests from one site to another.

This was in the year 1971. But in earlier years, when I was Ambassador there (1958-60), the Shah was still sober, modest and not so sure of himself. I had several talks with him alone at his palace in Tehran and nearby Shemiran. When he asked me about my impressions of his country, I told him frankly what I had seen and felt. He did not take my remarks amiss and said he was trying to modernise his country but was faced with opposition from the obscurantist clergy and the feudal landlords. I suggested his making use of the thousands of Iranians who were studying abroad, but he seemed afraid of them. He said the students in Tehran were bad enough and those abroad were worse. He was afraid because they criticised his regime and held demonstrations against him.

The Shah was surrounded by sycophants and flatterers,

cronies and the jet-set, who exploited the country and took advantage of his friendship to enter into shady deals. The Iranian Army, Navy and Air Force were as corrupt at the top echelons as the civilians. The country was living in an artificial boom at the top with volcanic discontent in the middle and abject poverty at the bottom. The volcano would burst one day. I reported to my Government that I did not think the Shah's son would be able to ascend the throne. My Government did not quite believe me. at the time.

Pandit Nehru, accompanied by his daughter Indira, came on a State visit to Iran, in 1959. He was somewhat surprised, when I told him that the peasantry in Iran was even poorer than in India. He said; "That is impossible." But when he went round the countryside, he changed his mind. He had lunch with the Shah, in the Palace at Shemiran. Soldiers with tommy guns were walking outside the dining room. Nehru noticed them. I could see the flash of anger and disgust in his eyes. After lunch, he asked me about it and I told him that the Shah had even built a helipad in the Palace grounds for ready use in case necessity arose. In spite of his outward calm, the Shah was a lonely and insecure monarch.

After lunch, Nehru was taken in a cavalcade in a closed car, with outriders on motorcycles, through the town and the countryside. I was with him in the car. Indira was in the car behind with the Iranian Ambassador to India. Nehru suddenly flared up, ordered the driver to stop and refused to go any further in a closed car. The Iranian Ambassador complied with his wishes, said it was no problem and had the hood of the convertible folded.

Now Nehru was in his element, happy as a child. He ordered the chauffeur to drive fast so that the outriders could not keep pace. He drove in the open car through the town—an unheard of thing for a VVIP to do in Tehran—and waved to the crowds outside. I heard later that the chauffeur and the outriders were punished by Savak.

Next day Nehru addressed a public meeting in the Stadium, much against the Shah's wishes. But even the Shah dared not displease Nehru. The grounds were full. in spite of Savak's restrictions. Nehru recited a Persian couplet I had written down for him. There was widespread applause and clapping.

Nehru had won the hearts of the Iranian people.

The following day he was to receive an honorary doctorate at Tehran University. He spoke *ex-tempore* for over an hour on the theme of 'Continuity and Change'. I recorded his speech and had it translated into Persian as "*Imroz-i-Farda*" (Today and Tomorrow). We printed 100,000 copies which were sold within one week and had to print more.

At the dinner I gave for him, there were 150 guests from Government, intellectual and other circles. In his own inimitable way, Nehru put his left arm round my cook Pritam Chand's shoulder, and had a photograph taken. We printed this photo on the cover of our weekly bulletin and it attracted wide applause. Here was Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, openly 'rubbing shoulders' with an Indian cook! Would the Shah dare do such a thing? the Iranians asked.

On the day of his departure, I requested Nehru to transfer me from Tehran. He asked: "Why? You are quite comfortable and popular and you seem to be doing a good job!" I told him frankly that if he did not transfer me, I would get so used to the pleasant and comfortable life in Iran that I would never want to leave and would be unfit for anywhere else. He promised to send me to a place where I would have to work much harder. I said I did not mind and we left it at that.

During my stay in Tehran, Mounbatten paid a visit and stayed at the British Embassy, which had a huge walled compound like the Soviet Embassy. I called on him and we talked freely and frankly about the state of affairs in Iran. He agreed with my views and went even further to say that the Shah's days were numbered. I reported the conversation to my Government.

The day after Mountbatten's departure, the Foreign Minister of Iran called me and asked if Mountbatten had expressed anti-Shah views to me. I said it was a personal, confidential talk and I was not at liberty to disclose what he had told me. It is possible that either some junior officer in the British Embassy or agents of Savak must have been evesdropping. The Foreign Minister asked the British Ambassador. I do not know what he told him. I heard a week later from my Government that Mountbatten had been embarrassed at the disclosure of his talk with me to the Iranian Foreign Minister.

I challenged the insinuation that I had leaked it out and asked my Government's permission to sort it out with the Iranian Foreign Minister and the British Ambassador. My Government believed me and did not press the matter further. I learnt later that the British Embassy were not very happy at my close personal relations with Mountbatten, the Iranians and the Soviet Ambssador Pegov (who was later posted to India). Some jealous junior officers at the British Embassy had concocted a story they were not prepared to be faced with. I am mentioning this episode only to point out the occasional hazards and risks of diplomatic life. Sometimes one has to be as diplomatic with one's own foreign office as with that of the country of one's accreditation. However, I believe that in the long run it is best to be honest and frank with one's own Government and diplomatic but firm with others.

After two years in Iran, I was asked to go to London as Deputy High Commissioner with the personal rank of Ambassador. Mrs. Pandit was the High Commissioner. She was not keeping good health. I had worked with her in Moscow and Washington and welcomed the opportunity to work with her again. Also, my son and daughter had passed their 'Senior Cambridge' examination in India and I wanted them to have a dose of British schooling which would do them no harm. I had really enjoyed and greatly benefited from my three years in England, as a student. It had broadened my outlook and mental horizon and increased my love and admiration for my own country.

As for Indo-Iranian relations, we tried our best to befriend Iran and promote cultural and economic relations. We succeeded in setting up a chair in Sanskrit studies in Tehran University. We also admitted scores of Iranian students to Indian institutions for medicine, engineering and other subjects. Cultural delegations were exchanged. But there was little contact at the people to people level, because the Shah's Government screened everybody very minutely.

On the economic front, we did not go very far because Iran had not till then acquired the oil wealth to invest in joint ventures, as was done later. However trade prospered and more than a thousand Indian traders living in Iran flourished. Some Indian companies also got contracts to build transmission

towers and the like. In the field of oil, India seemed reluctant at that time to collaborate with Iran because of Iran's close ties with Pakistan and the uncertainty of getting oil from Iran in case of trouble with Pakistan.

On the political side, the Shah was very keen to play a mediatory role between India and Pakistan, especially on Kashmir. His Government was so openly pro-Pakistan that we could not trust them. Besides, we did not want to involve any third country in our bilateral differences with Pakistan. We had had bitter experience of UN mediation. Our suspicions proved right. During the Indo-Pak conflict of 1965, Iran supplied Pakistan with military trucks, ammunition and even sabre jets against us.

In April 1971, as Foreign Secretary, I was sent as a Special Envoy of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to see the Shah and persuade him to use his good offices with Pakistan to release Sheikh Mujib and negotiate with him about the future of East Pakistan. We did not want to get involved in this internal conflict of Pakistan, but we were being dragged in by Pakistan which was creating border incidents against us. We were seriously concerned about the atrocities being committed in East Pakistan and the flow of refugees into India.

The Shah listened to me carefully but would not commit himself. He said he was not against talking even with traitors, but he could not impose his views on Yahya Khan, President of Pakistan. His Foreign Minister, Ardeshir Zahedi (who was later Ambassador to USA, when I was there too) went even further. He said, in the Shah's presence, that if there was war between India and Pakistan, Iran would fight on the side of Pakistan. He did not hide the fact that Iran had helped Pakistan in 1965.

The Shah tried to soften the bluntness of Zahedi by saying "What he means is that if India commits aggression on Pakistan, our sympathies will be with Pakistan". Anyhow, I got the message and did not pursue the matter further. I only said that India had no intention of invading Pakistan, but if Pakistan dared attack any part of India, including Kashmir, they would regret it, no matter who helped them. On the mention of Kashmir, the Shah suddenly brightened up and said "I don't understand why India and Pakistan are quarrelling about

Kashmir. Why not give it to Iran?" I was not a little amused, smiled and shot back: "Your Majesty, this reminds me of a story I heard in Vietnam. When Ho Chi Minh had his first meeting with Mao Tse-Tung the latter offered him the whole of Yunan province. He was intrigued and asked for time to think it over. The next morning Ho told Mao "Your Yunan province has a population of 50 million while Vietnam has only 25. Thank you for your kind offer but I don't think we can accept it." The Shah understood, smiled and kept quiet.

The Shah is dead and gone. The Iranian revolution has some positive elements. It is fiercely nationalist, even in its Islamic fundamentalism. It has stood up against the pressures of various powers and even against the Pan-Islamic Conference which it refused to attend. It has a strong patriotic base, and is against any form of external interference. Its fanatic Islamic fundamentalism has yet to spell out a social and economic programme that can lift up the masses from centuries of exploitation. The future will show which way Iran will go, but it cannot go back to the Shah's despotism and corruption, false grandeur and subservience to America or any other foreign power. But things may get worse before they can get better.

Countries like India can play a positive and useful role in cooperating with the emerging forces in Iran for safeguarding peace and security and preventing outside interference by great powers in this region. There are many difficulties, of course. The Iran-Iraq war has complicated the situation. Pakistan's bid to acquire sophisticated weapons from America will make things even more difficult. But India, along with other non-aligned countries, must take the initiative in resolving the Iraq-Iran conflict through peaceful negotiations, in proposing a trade and transit agreement, and in signing agreements of peace, cooperation and non-aggression among the countries of this region. If Pakistan is not willing, others could be persuaded in this direction. It would also help in reducing tension in the area and even in finding a peaceful political solution to the complex situation in and around Afghanistan, through bilateral or regional dialogue.

India is not suspect in Iranian eyes, as some other countries are. There is a great fund of goodwill in Iran for India, as there is in India for Iran. There is no clash of bilateral or regional

interests; on the other hand, there is a common stake in preventing war, safeguarding peace, promoting development and keeping out great power interference.

India and Iran have a vital interest in keeping the oil lanes open in the Gulf, not by inviting great power protection but by entering into mutual arrangements with the Gulf countries. Pakistan wants to use them for its own narrow ends by entering into security arrangements with the USA. But Iran and India do not want any great power projecting its presence into this region directly or through its client States. After the Shah's fall, the US Administration is keen to put the Shah's mantle on Pakistan's shoulders and the present military regime of Pakistan seems keen to play this role. It has already announced that the security of Pakistan is vital to the security of the Gulf and that it is therefore necessary for it to get sophisticated weapons. The Shah used to talk similarly, a few years ago.

The arming of Pakistan by America with sophisticated offensive weapons like the F-16 is a dangerous game. It will increase Pakistan's ambitions to dominate the Gulf, enhance tension and endanger peace and security in the region. It will bring the great and super power rivalry right into the Gulf. The Soviet Union will watch for a while, but will not sit idly by, if America gets a foothold in the Gulf directly or through Pakistan. The longer the tension lasts the more difficult it will be to get the Soviet troops out of Afghanistan. Once the military get entrenched in an area, they do not easily get out.

If Pakistan is using this only as an excuse to attack India when it becomes stronger, as it has done before, it is in for even more trouble. It will not have the support of Iran, this time, nor of most of the Gulf countries. They have no qurrel with India. Pakistan's military rulers may want to avenge their defeat of 1971; but if they attack India, 1971 may be repeated and Pakistan may see further dismemberment, signs of which are already there.

India would like to see a stable, peaceful and friendly Pakistan, friendly to India and other countries of the region. India would not like to see any country of the region becoming a surrogate of any great power. If Iran and India work together, they can help bring about peace and peaceful cooperation in this region. If Pakistan cooperates in this effort, Afghanistan may

also feel inclined to join in. Soviet troops could then be persuaded to withdraw from Afghanistan and American bases from the Gulf. Herein lies the importance of Indo-Iranian cooperation for the whole region.

India's relations with the Gulf countries are cordial. They are developing steadily, especially in the economic field. Thousands of Indians are working in these countries as teachers, accountants, medical doctors. engineers and technicians. There is great scope for further developing these and cultural relations. Not enough is being done in this direction. The security of the Gulf area is of vital interest to India. Neither India nor they want any great power presence or domination in this area. They are suspicious of Iranian ambitions and apprehensive about Pakistan's designs. The bond of Islam is tenuous, because a religious link by itself does not necessarily ensure a common political or security interest. Besides, India has the second largest Muslim population of the world. All these are important factors that provide possibilities of further strengthening our relations with the Gulf countries.

With the Arab world, India has close cultural, economic and political ties which go back to the pre-Islamic period. Islam has provided an additional bond. India has strongly and consistently supported the inalienable right of the Palestinians to a homeland of their own and urged the withdrawal of Israel to the pre-1967 line. India recognises the State of Israel but has not established diplomatic relations with it, because of its refusal to comply with UN Resolutions.

Unfortunately, the Arabs are divided among themselves, especially after the Camp David Accord. The assassination of President Sadaat of Egypt has created further uncertainty about the future. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO.) provides a meeting ground for all Arabs and could be a uniting factor. India has recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians. No enduring solution to the Arab-Israeli problem can be found, without the participation of the PLO. Those who do not recognize this are only impeding and not facilitating a peaceful, political solution.

India, Yugoslavia and Iran had proposed in 1947 at the UN that a federal State of Jews and Arabs be formed in Palestine. But the great powers, in their wisdom, rejected the proposal, as

did the Arabs also. The State of Israel was formed but it can only endure if it comes to terms with its Arab neighbours on a just, fair and equitable basis.

The attempt by some great powers to exploit the Arab-Israeli conflict as a cold war issue and spread their own sphere of influence in the region will only complicate the situation. I had urged Henry Kissinger, in 1973, after his achievement of the first disengagement agreement, that he should get the Soviet Union and the PLO invited to and involved in a Geneva type Conference. But he seemed more keen to oust the Soviet Union from the area than to achieve an enduring settlement. This approach has failed and cannot succeed. A broader approach is necessary, in the larger interests of peace and security in the area. India could play a useful, constructive and positive role in this regard.

CHAPTER 21

INDIA AND BRITAIN

I recall an interesting cónversation with Hugh Gaitskell, the Leader of the British Parliamentary Labour Party, in 1961. He was a fine man, frank, honest and outspoken. At a dinner party at my house, I asked him, half seriously, half teasingly, why Britain did not join the non-aligned group and take its leadership. She would be politically more independent of America and Western Europe and gain in prestige and influence in the Third World.

Gaitskell listened with some surprise and asked "Are you serious ?" I said I was. He admitted, with a tinge of sadness, that Britain was not independent enough to adopt such a line. She was too much dependent on the USA for her security and on Western Europe for her economy.

Historically, no two countries are perhaps as far apart as India and Britain. When India was at the height of her glory in the golden age of the Gupta (500 AD) or Mauriya period (300 BC), Britain was a backward, primitive island, insecure, at war within and without. But in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries AD, Britain went ahead, had its industrial revolution, while India stagnated, was dominated and then conquered by the British.

Culturally also, the two countries are very different. India has an ancient culture and religion going back to 5,000 years. Britain's claim to a civilised culture dates back hardly to 1,500 years. India is a land of many races, religions and languages, while Britain is predominantly Christian, Anglo-Saxon and English-speaking.

India is a sub-continent with a population of 683 million, while Britain, after losing its empire, is hardly equal to one medium-sized State of India, in area and population.

The British ruled India for more than 200 years and divided the country into two, before withdrawing in 1947. They ruled with an iron hand and jailed hundreds of thousands of men and women who joined Gandhi's Civil Disobedience and 'Quit India' Movements. They committed some brutal atrocities like the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the execution of Bhagat Singh and his colleagues. But, on the whole, they were not as bad, perhaps, as the French, the Dutch, the Portuguese and other imperialists. When they realised the strength of Gandhi's non-violence and his mass appeal, they changed their tactics and strategy. And ultimately, when they found they could not hold India any longer, they went while the going was good, unlike the Portuguese, who tried to cling on to little Goa, Daman and Diu until 1960, when they had to be driven out.

This does not, however, explain the friendly relations between India and Britain after 1947, and the appointment of Mountbatten, at free India's request, as its first Governor-General. The credit for saving Indo-Britian friendship goes first of all to Gandhi, who taught us never to hate the British people but only their 'satanic Government' in India. After India's independence, Jawaharlal Nehru, more than any other person, tried to preserve and develop Indo-British relations. This was partly due to his British upbringing, his faith in parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, freedom of expression which he had imbibed during his seven years as a student in Britain. Credit must also be given to those leaders of the British Labour Party who had sympathised with India's struggle for independence and helped Krishna Menon and his India League in Britain to project India's cause before the British people. People like Attlee, George Lansbury, Fenner Brockway, Julius and Sydney Silverman, Rev. Sorenson, Anneuran Bevan and his wife Jenny Lee are some of the many who supported India's case in and outside the British Parliament.

The older generation is gone. How do the younger people in India and Britain look upon each other ? Britain is now a member of the EEC and very close to the USA while India is

not very happy with US policies towards this region. How are India and Great Britain to react to this new situation and what effect will it have on their bilateral relations?

Before answering this question, it might be useful to examine how Indo-British relations have affected each country's economic and political outlook and their overall national interests during the last thirty years. It might help to assess future possibilities.

The British are known the world over as a nation of traders. They were our biggest partners in trade till a decade, ago. Now they are number three after the USSR and the USA. This is understandable, since they have joined the EEC. India's trade with bigger countries, like the USSR and the USA, is bound to be greater, now that Britain has ceased to be the middleman or broker for India's primary products or semi-processed and manufactured goods. British technology and workmanship are still appreciated in India. Some of India's products like garments, tea, mica, accessories etc. are liked and needed by the UK. So prospects on the economic score are quite good and likely to remain so for the next decade or two.

Although Britain is again divided on the issue of remaining within or outside the EEC, the likelihood is that she will continue the link because of economic pulls and pressures. In 1961-62, when I was Acting High Commissioner for India in the UK, long and heated debates were going on within both the Labour and Conservative Parties, on this issue. Both Parties were equally divided within themselves. I wrote an article which was printed on the centre page of the London *Observer* under the heading "An Exclusive Club—by a Senior Indian Diplomat" without mentioning my name. Nehru saw it and complimented me.

The anti-EEC people were afraid that the European Common Market would weaken the Commonwealth which gave Britain prestige and influence. The pro-EEC lobby felt that with the loss of the empire, it was necessary for Britain to recognise the facts of life and consider herself an extension of the European continent, not apart from it. The political pulls of NATO and OECD were pushing Britain closer to Europe and away from the Commonwealth. The USA was also pressing Britain to join the EEC. Competition from West Germany and

France were additional factors which swung the balance. Britain had enjoyed the imperial preference for its goods, under the Ottawa Agreement of 1932. Now that the other Commonwealth countries were no longer colonies, they were beginning to enjoy reciprocal benefits in the British market. However, they were denied these, when Britain joined the EEC, which would not respect these preferences. Britain tried hard but failed to retain these for long.

India could, perhaps, bear this better than most other Commonwealth countries. She entered into separate agreements with the EEC. On the political side, however, the cleavage, between Britain and India widened. Britain could no longer even pretend to take an independent line, on international affairs. She had to toe the American and European line, on most matters. Even France and West Germany showed greater independence *vis-a-vis* America than Britain, which became a sort of junior partner to the USA.

It was still possible for India and Britain to develop their bilateral relations. There was no conflict of bilateral interests between the two. After Britain's withdrawal from east of Suez and the achievement of independence by her erstwhile colonies in Asia and Africa, the previous painful memories faded. Why could not India and Britain start with a clean slate as two independent sovereign countries and work together in the political field ?

Unfortunately, Britain had lost its previous influence with America. Instead of guiding the USA in its policy in Asia and Africa, Britain was now guided by the USA. She now looked at India through American eyes. The hangover of the former British empire still coloured British thinking and she did not fully appreciate the potential value of a non-aligned, independent India as a friend. Like America, she tried to take sides on Indo-Pak differences on Kashmir. She adopted an anti-Indian attitude, on Goa.

I remember a public argument I had with Lord Home, the British Foreign Secretary, at the time we liberated Goa. Home was asked his reaction on the BBC TV. He said he had ordered three British warships in the Gulf to sail immediately to Goa, to protect half a dozen British citizens there. I was asked my reaction to this statement the same evening on ITV. I said

there would be no need for this because Goa would have been liberated by us long before the arrival of the British warships and the six British citizens would be safe. Next day, I met Home. He was gentlemanly enough to admit that I had scored a point over him.

Even some members of the British Labour Party who were regarded as friends in India adopted a blatantly anti-Indian posture. This reminded me of a quip I had read in the *Krokodil* magazine which is the *Punch* of Moscow. It asked a question: "How does the British Labour Party resemble a violin ?" and gave the answer "because a violin is held in the left hand and played on by the right !"

During the Indo-Pak conflict, in 1965, Harold Wilson, the then Prime Minister, took an anti-Indian position and on September 6, accused India of committing aggression on Pakistan, while the facts were otherwise. Pakistan first launched an attack on Kashmir. It was only after this that India retaliated. But for Wilson's admission that he had been wrongly briefed by his Commonwealth Relations Office, India might have gone out of the Commonwealth. Public opinion in India was greatly incensed at the partisan statement of Wilson.

1965 was perhaps a turning point. From then on, the British Government realised that they could not equate India and Pakistan or take sides against India. They adopted an attitude of neutrality which has lasted till today. In spite of the US tilt against India, in 1971, Britain adopted a neutral attitude during the Bangladesh war and even expressed sympathy with India.

I recall Indira Gandhi's visit to the UK, at the end of October 1971. She urged friends of Pakistan to persuade Yahya Khan to release Mujib and hold talks with him for a political settlement of the Bangladesh problem. Indira Gandhi asked Heath to intercede with Nixon and Yahya. Heath said he would try but frankly admitted he did not have much hope of success.

We stayed the night at Chequers, the week-end lodge of the British Prime Minister. I can never forget the Tudor bed I had to sleep on. It had a hump in the centre with both sides sloping down. I could not sleep on the hump or on the sides, for in

either case I would slip down. Next morning when Heath asked me if I had slept well, I thought he was joking! He showed us a famous painting (in the dining room) on which Winston Churchill had added a little mouse with his own brush. It somehow fitted on the canvas with Churchill's initials underneath.

I liked Edward Heath, personally. He was a bachelor, down to earth and fond of telling stories for 'men only'. At a dinner party in my house, in June 1961, Jenny Lee greatly resented having to join the ladies, while the men smoked their cigars. When the ladies had left the dining room, Heath narrated many jokes one of which can, perhaps, bear repetition: "An English woman and a French woman were talking, on a hot summer day on June 21st. The former said 'I love 21st June because it is the longest day in the year.' The latter exclaimed: 'Alas, it is the shortest night in the year!"

Harold Macmillan was a very able Prime Minister and had great regard for Nehru. One Saturday, I received an urgent message from Nehru to be delivered to Macmillan personally. The British observe their week-end and sabath scrupulously. I admire them for it and wish our people and leaders would do the same. But Macmillan made an exception and received me late in the afternoon and thanked me because the message was an important one.

Macmillan wanted to confer the honoured title of 'Dame' on Mrs. Pandit. She felt quite thrilled and told me about it. I advised her against it, as it would create a bad precedent. She insisted on writing to Nehru and sure enough got a mild reprimand from him for even thinking of such a thing.

Mrs. Pandit had very cordial relations with the Queen, the Mountbattens and the aristocracy. The Queen graced her home at 9 Kensinghton Palace Gardens, just before her visit to India, in January 1961. Mountbatten wanted Queen Elizabeth II to be given the main seat on the dais and receive the salute at the march past on our Republic Day. Mrs. Pandit conveyed Mountbatten's suggestion to Prime Minister Nehru. He summarily rejected it, in spite of his regard for the Queen and Mountbatten. Only our President, as the Head of our Sovereign State, could receive the salute. The Queen was a symbolic Head of the Commonwealth but nott he sovereign Head of our re-

public. After January 26, 1950, when India became a Republic, the Queen no longer signed the letters of appointment of our Ambassadors.

When Mrs. Pandit was leaving London, I persuaded her to meet some left-wing friends of India. She reluctantly agreed and thanked me later for my suggestion. I had close and cordial relations with them as well as the Conservative Party leaders, but the former had certainly been more sympathetic to India during our struggle for independence. We could not ignore them because a Conservative Government was in power.

I recall a dinner party at my house where both Lord Home, as Foreign Secretary, and Hugh Gaiteskell as Leader of the opposition, were present. I asked Home why his Government did not allow diplomats in London to get Scotch whisky free of duty. He replied: "When Scotland becomes independent we shall do so." I quipped: "But, why should Scotland want to be independent of England. The Prime Minister is a Scot, the Foreign Secretary is a Scot, Scotland is ruling over England!" Every one laughed and agreed with me. A few years later my proposal was accepted.

Duncan Sandys, the Commonwealth Secretary was quite a character. He told me once quite bluntly: "You have been Acting High Commissioner for almost one year. Why does not your Government make you the permanent High Commissioner? You are doing very well so far as we are concerned. But, if your Government wants to send an older man, let them do so and not keep you dangling like this." He was trying to tease me but was quite serious. I had this conveyed to my Government who selected M.C. Chagla, an eminent jurist, as the new High Commissioner. He was a delightful man, very liberal in his outlook and a perfect gentleman. I enjoyed the three months I spent with him, before I was posted as Ambassador to Moscow. He later became Education Minister and then Foreign Minister of India.

I was concerned about the 5,000 odd Indian students in Britain. They were fine young men and women and keen to project a good image of India abroad. But they lacked the necessary information, facts and figures that could counter the deliberate distortion of events in India by the western media. The British press and television were not quite so bad as the

American, but they were bad enough. I, therefore, arranged monthly meetings of the Indian students in London, went myself and sent my colleagues to visit and address those outside London. The experiment was rewarding and our students did a marvellous job by writing letters to editors and organising meetings to counter British propaganda against India on Goa, Kashmir, China and Pakistan. I'am mentioning this because our diplomatic missions abroad are not doing enough to tap this potential of Indians overseas, especially students. For instance, the YMCA hostel for Indian students in London, Maison de I'Inde in Paris, numerous Indian Associations and Indian students' bodies like the Indian League, the Association of Indians in America, the Oxford and Cambridge Majlis are really our unofficial ambassadors and need to be cultivated, encouraged aud utilised much more than they are at present. I have very pleasent memories of my meetings with such bodies and their members. They proved very useful in informing me about the state of public opinion in their areas and in giving the people correct information about India, even during the Emergency (1975-76) when the western media and Governments were very hostile to and critical of India.

When M.C. Chagla had taken over as High Commissioner in London, in 1962, Morarji Desai visited U.K. He was keen to see a British play. Chagla was new and asked me to arrange it. I was fed up with Desai's pretence and fads and deliberately chose a play called 'Lock up your daughters' at the Marmaid Theatre for him and Chagla to see. During the play, various characters moved into the audience. I asked the director, Herbert Mushall, an old friend of mine, to ask two of his most beautiful actresses to sit, one each, on Chagla's and Desai's lap. When the play was over, Chagla told me with great good humour that he had enjoyed the joke but as Chagla put it 'Desai really loved it, though he pretended not to!'

During the same visit, Duncan Sandys told me over a couple of cognacs "Thank God Desai has gone back. I had a hell of a time finding goat's milk and fresh, cottage cheese made from cow's milk for him at lunch!" Desai did not want Chagla to serve any alcohol in his party for him. But Chagla did, much to Desai's discomfiture. On a previous visit, when Desai was staying with me, I invited Edward Heath and Harold Wilson to

dinner in his honour. Desai threatened to boycott the dinner, if I served alcohol even to the guests. I agreed and informed my guests. But when Desai said "Vijaya Lakshmi did not serve meat either" I protested and said that was going too far and did serve meat.

As against such fads, I found Shastri and Chavan delightfully liberal in their attitude to alcohol being served to guests, when they visited Moscow during my tenure as Ambassador.

I am mentioning these seemingly unimportant things, because they only make us the laughing stock of people abroad and do not raise their opinion of India or Indians. I have never seen Indira Gandhi take alcohol but she does not mind others having it. Mrs. Pandit loved a couple of martinis before lunch or dinner and the choicest wines during meals. And she did not play the hypocrite or hide the fact that she was not a teetotaller.

Of course Gandhi was totally against taking alcohol. His colleagues respected his wishes in his presence, but I am told that some of them used to take alcohol in silver tumblers by themselves at their home in the evenings. Nehru never touched alcohol at home but did not mind sipping sherry or wine—but not spirits—when abroad. Why we make such a fuss about prohibition at home is understandable, but to do so abroad is not. The sooner we give up this cant and hypocrisy the better. We need not drink ourselves—it is not a must—but we should not try to force our drinking or eating habits on other guests. Krishna Menon was a vegetarian and drank dozens of cups of tea and tomato soup, but never imposed his habits on his guests, Indian or foreign.

And so we come back full circle to Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister in Britain and Indira Gandhi in India. Both are tough, down to earth and pragmatic. One is far to the right of centre—the other is left of centre. Whether they can meet somewhere around the centre remains to be seen. The visit of Mrs. Thatcher and her ill-considered statements on US arms supplies to Pakistan and immigration did not make her exactly popular in India.

But the people of India and Britain, especially the younger generation can certainly meet. They do not suffer from the hangovers of the past as the older generation does. There is no

reason why they cannot join hands in the common task of building bridges of understanding between our two countries and in the world at large.

A demonstration of this was seen in the recent riots in Britain. The young Indians and Britons joined hands in protest against the social and economic policies of Mrs. Thatcher. There were a few marginal incidents of racial violence too, but the main thrust of the riots was a common struggle by the whites and non-whites against the Establishment's unimaginative policies. Enoch Powell and his ilk will continue to stir up racial trouble but the youth of Britain—white and non-white—have seen through this game.

The racial undertones and overtones of Britain is recent immigration legislation are an irritant between Britain and India. Unless their racist character is changed, they will continue to embitter Indo-British relations. Public opinion in India is feeling concerned about it. If Britain does not change its racist immigration laws, public opinion in India may compel the Government to take retaliatory measures. That would be unfortunate, but the ball is really in Britain's court and India has shown enough patience and tolerance so far.

Can Britain and India play any significant or useful role in world politics, either singly or jointly ? Britain still has some influence with the USA, while India has considerable prestige in the non-aligned world and the USSR. Each could act as a catalytic agent by itself. A joint role is possible, if Britain is prepared to adopt an independent line on such issues as nuclear disarmament. The nuclear armaments race is the greatest threat to mankind today. If steps are not taken to ban the production and use of nuclear weapons, freeze the existing stockpiles, with a view to destroying them within the next five years or so, there will be danger of a nuclear holocaust that will destroy the human race. India and Britain could join hands, along with other like-minded countries, to prevent this catastrophe. But, will Britain respond ?

CHAPTER 22

THE COMMONWEALTH

There is a strange, undefinable relationship still persisting between India and Britain, which most other countries and even many Indians and Britons fail to understand. How can two countries, one of which was ruling and exploiting the other till recently, continue to live as friends and members of the same club—the Commonwealth ? May be there is in the British mind a feeling of some guilt towards India and they want to make up for past misdeeds; or perhaps there is in India a feeling of forgiveness for the past, because compared to other colonialists the British were not so bad. However, this is not entirely true. The British are not so sentimental or repentant by nature, nor are the Indians so forgiving.

Relations between Governments are based on a hard-nosed assessment of realities and national interests, not on mere sentiment and emotion. How else can one explain the realignment of relations between former enemies of World War II like Japan, Italy and Germany on the one side and the West and America on the other ? The same explanation applies to the cold war between former allies—the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies on one side and the NATO partners on the other.

Even a common ideology does not hold together countries for long, nor a common religion. If they did, China would not regard the Soviet Union as its enemy number one today, nor would Bangladesh have broken away from Pakistan.

Much is said about the link of the English language between India and Britain. It is true that language helps better understanding and makes people feel at home in a foreign country.

But English is only a partial and one-sided link, for very few Britons speak any of the Indian languages and hardly 5 per cent of the Indian people speak, read and write English. The English language is a link, though not the most important one. It is India's international link language. It is spoken by the elite and the ruling and professional classes in India, but it can never become the national language of India. Only Hindi has a chance of becoming that in due course, for it is understood by more than half the population.

The evolution of the Commonwealth of Nations is a phenomenon that is as surprising as it is natural—surprising because it shatters the usual doctrine and dogma that the imperial and colonial panther cannot change its spots; natural because it is peaceful and healthy development of a system that would otherwise have died an unnatural death through bloodshed and revolution. The emergence of the dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa from their colonial status was not so surprising because they were, more or less, offshoots and offsprings of the mother country. The test of the Commonwealth came when countries like India, Pakistan and Ceylon gained their independence and in spite of different racial, religious, historical and cultural backgrounds chose, of their own free will, to stay in the Commonwealth. In the beginning, i.e. in 1947, and soon thereafter, there were misgivings in the minds of many, in these Asian countries, that a link with their erstwhile rulers might taint the fruits of freedom and dim the first flush of independence. How is it then that these misgivings soon gave place to a renewed faith in the Commonwealth idea?

It is easy enough to pinpoint a few salient events which were responsible for this. The Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conferences, where the Heads of the various Governments came face to face and discussed matters of mutual interest and international problems, as equals and friends, in a spirit of mutual goodwill, removed the initial doubts and suspicions in the minds of many. Mutual cooperation and consultation in economic, educational, scientific and cultural matters, which facilitated development in these fields to the benefit of all members, further strengthened mutual trust and confidence in the minds of the peoples and Governments in the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth faced a crucial test, when India proclaimed herself a Republic on 26th January, 1949, while still staying in the Commonwealth. This was a test not only for India but also for the other members of the Commonwealth. It was a symbolic affirmation of the real affinity between the various members. It proved that the Commonwealth was a free association of sovereign, independent countries who felt attached to each other not by any legal treaty or formal alliance but, what is more lasting and enduring, by mutual faith and trust, by a similarity of approach and ideals, in spite of differences in regard to important world problems. After this symbolic affirmation, criticism of the Commonwealth link in India almost completely ceased and in its place grew a new confidence in this free association of independent countries.

There is, of course, an occasional voice raised in India in criticism of the Commonwealth link. The Commonwealth club is not merely a get-together of former colonies of the British Empire in London. It is rather a meeting of minds in which the Prime Minister of each member country is able to put across his/her ownpolicies and point of view. A welcome result of such meetings is a greater understanding of each other's problems and attitudes, instead of a unilateral communication of preconceived ideas.

The Commonwealth took a stride forward, when Malaya and some of the African countries like Ghana and then Nigeria and others joined the club. It changed not only the whole colour and complexion of the Commonwealth but gave it a definite Afro-Asian majority. Although the Commonwealth does not operate in groups or blocs, yet the fact that an Afro-Asian majority works together with a white minority and the club continued to function was in itself proof of its ability to adjust and evolve according to the radical and revolutionary changes taking place in the world. It was a happy contrast to some other countries emerging into freedom whose relations with their erstwhile rulers became considerably strained.

Some of the difficulties that the Commonwealth has faced have strengthened it. Democratisation of international politics demands peaceful co-existence not only between those who are like each other, but also between those who are unlike each other. It is easy enough to co-exist, when people like each other,

because no problems are involved and no special effort is needed. Peaceful co-existence can be said to be effective only when there are differences in opinion and in ways of life and yet people try to understand each other. This to me seems to be the most important feature of the Commonwealth. The points to likeness are many, but there have been serious points of difference which, however, have not been allowed to come in the way of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting, consulting and cooperating with one another.

The Commonwealth idea embraces a growing dynamic association of vastly different, sovereign and independent countries. They may not and do not see eye to eye on some fundamental and many current problems of the world. They may and do vote on different sides in the United Nations, but they share a common desire for peace and prosperity. They believe in the method of peaceful negotiation, to settle disputes. They have grown up in the habit of sitting round a table and exchanging views and ideas without binding one another, and because of this, they exercise a powerful influence on each other and on the rest of the world. As long as this feeling persists, the Commonwealth idea will live and develop.

That does not mean that the Commonwealth will have smooth sailing and all that is needed is to sit round a table and talk. The strength of the Commonwealth lies in its being an example to the rest of the world as a group of countries whose association together in a free, informal and friendly manner helps solve matters of common interest. Once the Commonwealth ceases to be this example and is unable to exert its influence on the side of peace and friendship, racial equality and liberty, and in favour of the social, econonmic and political development of the under-developed nations of the world, it will lose its force and strength, its *raison d'etre.* The Commonwealth is a symbol of the future world where countries will learn to live in peace and friendship with one another, where the supreme interest of the whole human race will count far more than the group interests of a few, where freedom, liberty, human dignity and social and conomic well-being of people will find first place in national plans and international cooperation.

The importance of the Commonwealth as a link between

India and Britain is often exaggerated. It is no longer the *British* Commonwealth. The Asian, African and Caribbean countries far outnumber the British or their white country cousins—the Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders. The members of the Commonwealth are at different stages of social and economic development. I remember Krishna Menon, who was one of the most ardent supporters of the Commonwealth, saying once, "What is there common in the Commonwealth?—Certainly not wealth."

I think it was Bernard Shaw (and not Krishna Menon, as some believe) who invented the quip "the sun never sets on the British Empire, because God would not trust the British in the dark". I was reminded of this during the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting, in 1962, when Britain was trying hard to keep South Africa in the Commonwealth, in spite of opposition from the African, Asian and even Canadian members. I watched Harold MacMillan pleading, with tears in his eyes, bemoaning the beginning of the demise of the Commonwealth, should South Africa be expelled. I whispered to Nehru, who was sitting in front of me 'he seems to have missed his profession'. He asked me afterwards 'what did you mean?' I replied that MacMillan would have made a great actor. May be I was unfair to MacMillan. It is possible he was genuinely sorry at the impending departure of South Africa because of its refusal to give up its racist policy of *apartheid*.

The point of the story is that even such a loosely-knit body as the Commonwealth could not keep South Africa within its fold, merely on the basis of past connections. The Commonwealth had to take a stand against *apartheid*, if it wanted its non-white members to remain within the fold. So a compromise formula was devised: to let South Africa withdraw from the club instead of expelling her. It was a face-saving device, but it committed the Commonwealth to the principle of racial equality.

Similarly, there was a crisis regarding the white minority Government of Southern Rhodesia and the right of the black majority to form a Government on the basis of 'one man one vote'. Harold Wilson, who was the British Prime Minister and presided over the Conference in London, tried very hard to split the majority view of the non-white members. I remember

Kwame Nkrumah, Milton Obote and the Prime Minister of Sierra Leone, making hard-hitting speeches in the closed meeting. The meeting was adjourned and the Afro-Asian members decided to meet separately, under India's Chairmanship. Sardar Swaran Singh, our Foreign Minister at the time, took the meeting. It was an informal consultation and Wilson was waiting anxiously down-stairs in Marlborough House for the result of our deliberations. I was sent by Swaran Singh to inform Wilson that our consultations would go on till lunch and the main conference could only meet after lunch. I conveyed this to Wilson. He was obviously rattled and uttered a few unprintable words. But he had to wait and it was just as well, for the Afro-Asian 'caucus' (as it was called by Wilson) had succeeded in achieving a consensus compromise formula which was later accepted by the Conference. It was a tough fight but it is good that the British showed a sense of realism, which later resulted in the peaceful transfer of power to the black majority in Zimbabwe.

I have mentioned these instances to show what keeps the Commonwealth together. It is a sense of realism, a common faith in the peaceful settlement of international problems, a meeting of different minds and viewpoints to safeguard peace and cooperate in arriving at a consensus to solve various problems—economic, technical, political. The continued existence of the Commonwealth is a tribute to its member countries, belonging to different idelogies, races and religions. They meet together and try to find the greatest common agreement on most questions. It helps them to understand one another's problems and policies and creates a congenial atmosphere for cooperation in other international forums.

The Commonwealth is not a legal or constitutional body. Although the Queen is accepted as the symbolic Head of the Commonwealth, she is not the 'sovereign' of its various members. This was made clear in 1949, when Nehru, in spite of declaring India a Republic, continued India's membership of the Commonwealth. It helped to prolong the life of this body and make it more resilient so as to accommodate several other member countries which declared themselves Republics following India's example. India's population of 683 million constitutes more than half the total population of the Common-

wealth. Without India, it would not be the same. The credit for saving the Commonwealth goes to Nehru and this was in fact recognised at the time, though people are apt to forget it.

The *British* Commonwealth emerged into *the* Commonwealth. Britain was now only a founder member and not the super partner in this club. The venue for meetings was usually London, which was central to the whole area, but members insisted that the venue be rotated. I remember attending one in in Singapore, in January 1971. Lee Kuan Yew, Prime Minister of Singapore, performed his functions, as Chairman, very ably. But ability alone does not ensure the success of such meetings. The ticklish issue of British supply of armed helicopters to the Simonstown base in South Africa came up for heated discussion.

Edward Heath, British Prime Minister, was in a minority of two or three—only Australia supporting him openly. Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, played a crucial role. It looked as if the Conference was going to fail and the Commonwealth would break up. It was decided to hold a closed door meeting of the Heads of Government without aides. I asked Heath, as he came out during a break, how it was going. He said it was 'touch and go' but he would not yield. In the end, a compromise formula was evolved and the crisis averted.

It seems that the main things that are going to hold the Commonwealth together in future are not political ties, but economic, technical, educational and scientific cooperation. Most of the Asian, African and Caribbean members are non-aligned, while Britain and Canada are members of NATO and Australia and New Zealand of ANZUS. On political matters, there is more difference than unity in the Commonwealth. Even in the economic field, with Britain in the European Economic Community (EEC), the erstwhile preferences between Britain and the developing countries of the Commowealth have been neutralised. Some countries have joined as Associate Members of EEC, but countries such as India are not prepared to accept a subordinate status. Britain's joining the EEC is understandable, but it has certainly weakened the economic links inside the Commonwealth.

However, in the fields of education, technology, science,

health, exchange of books, artists, teachers, the Commowealth can play a very useful and positive role. Since the election of Ramphal, as Secretary-General greater attention is being paid to these fields. Herein lies the scope for future development of the Commonwealth,

But Britain is raising fees for foreign students and making it difficult for them to stay on or come in. Canada is not very liberal in its immigration policies, although it is larger than the United States and has only one-tenth its population. Australia is following the 'White Australia' policy. India, on the other hand, is throwing its doors open to foreign students and trainees, especially from the developing countries. If the white members of the Commonwealth do not play their due role in this regard, I am afraid, the Commonwealth will lose much of its charisma.

Has the Commonwealth a future? Yes and no. We are living in a dynamic, fast changing world where new alignments and centres of power are emerging. They are pulling the Commonwealth countries in different directions. One should not exaggerate the importance of the Commonwealth in this new situation. But, as an informal meeting-ground between developing and developed countries, aligned and non-aligned States, white and non-white peoples, it has a value. Its historical background, the link of the English language and possibilities of developing contacts in the legal, scientific, cultural and technical fields provide an enduring basis for its continuance.

CHAPTER 23

INDIA AND THE THIRD WORLD

The term Third World is a loose expression but has gained currency as it covers over one hundred non-aligned and developing countries, members of the UN. They have many things in common but also some differences.

They were all victims of imperialist and colonial exploitation by the developed countries, until they achieved political independence, 1947 onwards. They are still suffering from the after-effects of colonial rule. Added to it is the present neo-colonial exploitation through economic, political and military pressure exercised by the developed countries, many of whom were their erstwhile rulers. Most of them missed the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century and are therefore keen not to miss the technological and electronic revolution of today. But they lack the resources. The terms of aid and transfer of technology imposed by the developed countries are so stiff that the Third World countries have to choose between going without these or becoming economic satellites of technologically advanced countries.

All of them need both internal and external peace, to reconstruct their economic and social structures which remained almost stagnant for more than a century or two when they were under foreign rule. Hence, most of them want to keep outside the rivalries of the two great power military blocs and not get sucked into their military orbits. They all subscribe, in varying degrees, to the Five Principles or criteria of non-alignment formulated at the Belgrade Summit, in 1961.

However, because of their economic dependence on the

developed countries, they are subjected to varying kinds and degrees of pressure by the great power alliances. Their ability to withstand such pressures varies from country to country depending on size, population, stage of development, political stability etc. Individually, most of these countries, especially the smaller ones, are not able to withstand such pressures. But collectively they could and, in some instances, have succeeded up to a point.

The oil-producing and exporting countries (OPEC) have successfully used the oil weapon by nationalising their oil production and raising the oil prices. But it has benefited only the OPEC countries and hit some of the oil-importing developing countries even harder than the oil-importing developed countries. India, for instance, has now to spend 70% of its foreign exchange earnings on the oil import bill. The OPEC have not made use of their petro dollars by investing these in the other developing countries; they are squandering them in purchasing real estate and weapons in the West and in ostentatious living. South Kensington in London is now nicknamed 'Saud Kensington'!

Unless the developing countries can pool their resources, banking facilities, technical talent and human skills, their raw-materials, shipping and transport services etc., they will not be able to improve their own position or exercise their collective bargaining strength in dealing with the developed world. A start could be made, in this direction, by having sub-regional and regional cooperation between the non-aligned, developing countries and linking it in an inter-regional arrangement.

The economic and technological aspects of non-alignment have been emphasised, since the Lusaka Summit in 1970, at Algiers (1973), Colombo (1976) and Havana (1979). But because of bilateral and regional rivalries and the pulls and pressures of the developed countries, little progress has been made so far.

India, among all the non-aligned developing countries, occupies a key position and could play an important role. India's faith in the policy of non-alignment is firmly based on its freedom struggle launched under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru. Nehru tried to translate Gandhi's philosophy of

non-violence into a policy of peace, cooperation and disarmament in the international field. In spite of pulls and pressures from both blocs, he succeeded in keeping India non-aligned in the political field. His vision covered the freedom and independence of all countries and he did not regard India's freedom complete, as long as there were other colonial pockets left in Asia, Africa and other parts of the world. Non-alignment, in his concept, included anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, anti-racism, peace and peaceful settlement of disputes, without the interference of outside great powers. He extended the concept to include disarmament, in general, and nuclar disarmament, in particular.

In cooperation with leaders like Tito and Nasser, Nkrumah and Soekarno, Nehru was able to make non-alignment attractive to most of the newly independent countries. The number of the non-aligned increased, from 25 at Belgrade (1961) to 59 at Cairo (1964) and 94 at Havana (1979). However, some of the new entrants to the movement joined it mainly with a view to gaining respectability and are being used by some of the great powers to divide the Movement from within. The large number of non-aligned countries gives the Movement a symbolic strength but also dilutes the basic principles formulated at Belgrade, in 1961.

The situation in Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq conflict, the tension between Indochina and ASEAN, the emergence of a large Islamic bloc within the non-aligned, are some of the difficulties that the movement is facing today. These threaten to divide it from within. However, there are over-riding factors which still unite them as was shown at the Foreign Ministers' non-aligned meet in New Delhi, in February 1981.

The economic struggle between the North and the South, the need for greater collective self-reliance and cooperation, the struggle against racism in South Africa and Zionism in the Arab world, the danger of a nuclear holocaust, the need to convert the Indian ocean into a zone of peace are some of the uniting factors These important problems cannot be resolved, unless the non-aligned show unity and solidarity in action.

But will they? Can they? They certainly can and must. This is where India can play a constructive role in producing a consensus even in the midst of conflicting views, as she was

able to do at the Delhi Conference, to a large degree. But, as Prime Minister Indira Gandhi warned at the Conference, mere jugglery with words and phrases is not enough. Political will and determination are necessary to produce concrete, positive and constructive results which alone can keep the Movement alive and going.

India is a State that is *sui generis* among the non-aligned, because of its size, strategic position at the cross-roads of Asia, and its huge skilled manpower resources and infrastructure for development. India has been sharing its technical knowhow with other Third World countries and is training about 20,000 students of theirs in various fields, such as medicine, engineering, social sciences. However, India alone or, even in cooperation with one or two countries, cannot achieve the goal of collective self-reliance, security, peace and development, to keep the Third World free from great power interference.

The threats to the Third World arise from many sides—economic, political, social and military. They are both internal and external, domestic and foreign, from one bloc or the other. They arise partly from the rivalry between the two power blocs and their attempt to suck the countries of the Third World within their spheres of influence. They also arise from the expansionist ambitions of some great powers to extend their hegemony and domination over their neighbours. The non-aligned countries also face threats from within, because of the legacies of imperialism and their inability to resolve their social, economic and political problems peacefully.

It is for each country to resolve its own internal problems as its people desire. There should be no outside interference, from great, medium or other powers in the internal affairs of a country, however small. But this is not possible, unless the non-aligned countries are able to safeguard their integrity, sovereignty, independence and security. All of them cannot do this by themselves, especially the smaller ones. To give them confidence and security, it is, therefore, necessary that the non-aligned in each sub-region or region should evolve some kind of a mutual security arrangement among themselves which would deter outside powers, especially great powers,

from interfering in their internal affairs. Collective self-reliance in the security field is as important as it is in the economic.

Two big countries, such as India and the Soviet Union, with different social, economic and political systems could and did enter into a Treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation, providing for mutual consultations, if there is a threat to the peace of either. Why then cannot non-aligned countries, which have so much more in common, enter into similar treaties in such sub-regions as South, South-East and South-West Asia? Such treaties need not be a carbon copy of the Indo-Soviet Treaty. They could provide for cooperation in trade and transit, technology and development, mutual non-aggression and mutual consultation in case of a security threat.

Mere friendship treaties or those like the Sino-Indian *Panch Sheel* (Five Principles) Agreement which make purely pious declarations are not enough. They must have some substance like the Indo-Soviet Treaty, so that they can serve as an effective warning and deterrent to outside powers, as the Indo-Soviet Treaty did in 1971. Once we have such treaties in each sub-region, they could be interlinked into a regional arrangement. The great powers would not be the original signatories but they could endorse them, if they wished. India initiated with Pakistan the Simla process, in 1972, to settle bilateral matters bilaterally, peacefully and without outside invervention. This process needs to be strengthened, in order to prevent the great powers from fishing in troubled non-aligned waters.

This is an idea that India could and should put forth. There is no need to feel shy about it. The presence of India in such treaties would give them greater credibility. With the attempts of some great powers to force the non-aligned into their orbits, through tempting offers of military and economic aid, the time has come when countries such as India, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Burma, Nepal, Bangladesh, Shri Lanka, the Maldives and others should take the initiative. If we wait too long, the opportunity may be lost and non-alignment may become an empty slogan without much meaning to it, especially for the smaller countries.

Fissures and cracks are undoubtedly appearing in the non-aligned Movement. It is no use shutting one's eyes to them. These are mostly due to the machinations of outside or great

powers and their allies who are trying to divide the non-aligned. Bilateral disputes are being escalated into complex international issues in the context of the cold war. This makes them more and not less difficult to resolve.

Differences are bound to arise, in a large Movement covering over 100 sovereign countries. Differences are apparent even inside the two great power blocs. If they can resolve their differences peacefully among themselves, in each bloc, why cannot the non-aligned do so bilaterally, sub-regionally or even regionally, without outside interference? The possibilities and prospects for the non-aligned are greater, since other non-aligned countries, unlike the great powers, have no designs on those involved in bilateral conflicts and could act as catalytic agents to resolve them peacefully.

The Iran-Iraq war is a test and challenge for both these countries and an opportunity for other non-aligned countries to play a positive, constructive ahd peaceful role. The Afghan situation also offers an opportunity for the non-aligned to play a role in preventing the arming of Afghan rebels in Pakistan, persuading them to go back and asking the Soviet troops to withdraw. The situation in Kampuchea is another case where the ASEAN and Indochina States could get together and resolve not to give aid to Pol Pot's remnant rebels so as to enable Vietnamese troops to withdraw.

If the non-aligned can succeed in one or more of these situations, it would serve as a model for the future. They have taken up the most difficult of the three, i.e., the Iran-Iraq conflict. There is no reason why they should not take up the other two as well, which are perhaps easier to resolve, as there is not a declared war going on there yet. The initiative should be taken before the situation escalates, as it may create further complications then.

The challenge for the non-aligned is one of survival. They are subject to all kinds of pulls and pressures, direct and indirect, in the political, economic and military fields. They have their many internal problems to deal with. If left to themselves, they could perhaps resolve their problems more easily and peacefully. If they need any outside assistance, it should come first and foremost from the non-aligned countries and not from the great powers who have their own ulterior motives

to promote in their cold war rivalry against each other. The non-aligned must keep out of the great power military blocs and not become surrogates or client States. They must stand together, develop individual and collective self-reliance, mutual cooperation, in all fields, for their social, economic, security and developmental goals.

India can act in this process as a sort of bridge between Central and South Asia, on the one hand, and between South-East and South-West Asia, on the other. India has no territorial designs on any other country nor does it believe in the leadership concept among sovereign States. India believes in the sovereign equality of all independent States. Because of her size and strategic position, her faith in peace and equality of all peoples and nations, her resources and infrastructure, India has a role to play that she cannot avoid. History and geography cast a responsibility on her shoulders which she cannot shirk.

India, in partnership with other like-minded non-aligned countries, can and must play this role and strive to keep the non-aligned Movement alive and going.

It is a pity that during the Janata Party's rule in India, from 1977 to 1980, attempts were made to dilute the basic concept of non-alignment into one of neutrality. Attempts to inject 'equidistance from the two super powers,' into the concept were not successful because they cut at the very root and basis of non-alignment. The essence of non-alignment is independence of judgment and action based on the merits of each issue and not on a pre-conceived notion to take one side or the other, because of a military alliance, irrespective of the merits or demerits of a problem. Non-alignment is not neutrality which takes a pre-determined position, irrespective of a concrete situation and what effect it may have on the peace and security of a country or region.

Non-alignment does not preclude neutrality or even belligerancy, but keeps its options open. It is a relationship based on equality and reciprocity. To the extent a country is hostile to us, we shall do everything possible to blunt its hostility and win its friendship. But we cannot equate friends and foes, whether they be super or great powers. The concept of 'equi-distance' is totally opposed to the basic principles of non-alignment, as is

a military alliance or giving of bases for military purposes or stationing of foreign troops on one's soil.

As long as the world is divided by different and conflicting ideologies, great power military alliances, the gap between rich and poor nations, and threatened by racism and a nuclear holocaust, there will be need for non-alignment. But, if and when military alliances disappear, rival ideologies do not create confrontation and conflict, the exploitation of the South by the North, by the developed of the developing countries ceases, racism and imperialism no longer exist, and the world advances to the goal of ONE WORLD—then and then alone will there be no need for non-alignment. But that is a distant dream and until it is achieved the Third non-aligned world will have to continue to struggle to achieve that goal. Hence the need to bring about a new, just economic and information world order, so that countries and nations may understand and know each other better, so that cooperation may develop between them, instead of conflict. It is a long and hard struggle and therefore, the need for non-alignment is greater today than ever before. The Third World will continue to exist as long as there are two conflicting worlds—each trying to force the third into its orbit, as is happening today.

CHAPTER 24

INDIA AND THE SUPER POWERS

The struggle of Bangladesh for freedom and the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 brought out the sharp contrast in India's relations with the two super powers, or rather in their attitude towards India. It was a test of India's policy of non-alignment as well as of India's friendly relations with the USSR. Equally, it showed how far the US administration could go against American and world public opinion in its pursuit of power.

I was intimately involved in all these matters, as Foreign Secretary, and saw the whole game from within. Why did the Soviets help us and why did Nixon and Kissinger do everything to oppose us and the freedom fighters of Bangladesh?[1] It was quite clear to us that the US administration was trying to use Pakistan against India and trying to involve China also in the conflict. But why? Why were Nixon and Kissinger against the people of Bangladesh, when the US media and public opinion were full of sympathy for them and for India's heavy burden of ten million refugees from Bangladesh?

Based on my talks with Kissinger, at that time (1971) and later, when I was Ambassador to the USA (1973-76), I could see a deliberate design of one-upmanship in this game of super power rivalry. India and Pakistan, Bangladesh and China were being used as pawns on the chessboard of this dangerous game

1. I have exposed their duplicity and wheeling and dealing tactics in my book '*The Kissinger Years—Indo-US Relations*' (Arnold Heinamann, India, 1980).

by Nixon and Kissinger. They had played this game earlier in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, but had not completely failed there by 1971. They were still hoping to use China against the USSR, and Pakistan against India, in their bid to become the dominant power in South and South-East Asia and the rest of the world.

The Chinese were wiser and, in spite of making loud noises, did not jump into the fray when Nixon sent a task force of the US Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal.[2] Kissinger had told me, during a long intimate conversation, in July 1971, just before his secret visit to Peking, that America would not tolerate an invasion of India by China. But a few weeks later, after his return from Peking, he warned our Ambassador in USA that the US would not do anything if China invaded India!

When Nixon's tilt failed to frighten India or the Bangladesh feeedom fighters, Kissinger and Nixon's aides tried to browbeat the Soviets and asked them to tell India to lay off. But the Soviets did not comply. Instead they had their fleet not far from the US Seventh Fleet. Nixon and Kissinger made a last effort to delay the surrender of the Pakistani forces in Bangladesh. They persuaded Yahya Khan to tell the commanders of his forces in Bangladesh, Generals Niazi and Farman Ali, who were ready to surrender on the 10th and 12th December, 1971, not to do so. This only delayed the surrender by a week, during which hundreds of intellectuals in and around Dacca were murdered by the Pakistani troops.

I am mentioning these details only to indicate that India is not a country that will yield to threats from the super or great powers. Nor will any country or nation, such as Vietnam, that values her hard-won freedom. Bangladesh emerged as a free nation. This was followed by the withdrawal of US forces from Indochina, in 1973. And now the US is trying to stage a come-back to Indochina by proxy (of China) and into the Gulf area through its client state, Pakistan. At the same time the new US administration is trying to have a direct military presence in the Indian Ocean.

It is against this background that we have to consider the

2. Kissinger has in his book 'White House Years' admitted he had expected China to join in, but was disappointed they did not.

development of India's relations with the US and the USSR.

This, however, is looking at the situation in the background of the events of the by-gone decade or so. Taking note of the scene within 3/4 years after World War II, we can hardly miss to see the fact that super powers have not only a number of strategies to meet their interests in this or that region, but a global strategy. The regional strategies are of the nature of foot soldiers on a chess-board, whose slightest moves affect the whole design. Seen in this light, it is apparent that the US aim, on the one hand, has been to disallow the Power of the Sub-Continent to become a positive force playing a constructive role for the betterment of life in the Sub-Continent. The same pattern is followed in Indochina, ASEAN, Korea and the Middle East. All this is pursued, on the other hand, with the purpose to bring China on an equal level with Russia so that the US would emerge above both. Pursuit of such a policy comes into conflict with the very concept of One World, which can be brought about only when the constituent elements are allowed diversity within, and unity and cooperation in their mutual and collective relations. This policy is the hangover of the Greko-Roman-European cultural pattern, which accepts competition as a value in life. The whole history of the last 700/800 years can be summed up in a single phrase—the Balance of Power. But this concept is undergoing constant change and will have to be completely revised, if we are to avoid a nuclear holocaust and advance towards the goal of One World.

CPAPTER 25

INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS (1955-1962)

Relations between any two countries, especially large ones like India and the USSR, India and China or India and the USA are not easy to build. Internal and external factors, regional and global interests and policies complicate issue, especially between large countries whose social, political and economic systems and ideologies are different. However, the main determining factor in relations between any two countries is the extent to which the national interests of each, such as security, peace, defence and development are affected.

Sometimes relations develop rapidly and then there is an equally sudden decline. This happened in the case of India's relations with China. They grew rapidly, from 1954 to 1956, then started deteriorating up to 1959, and became hostile from 1959 to 1962, when a Sino-Indian conflict erupted. Sometimes relations are based on common ideals, but if there is lack of common outlook or mutuality of interests, they do not even take off the ground. Commonality of ideals by itself is not enough to build relations between two countries, such as India and the USA or China and the USSR. At the same time, differences in ideologies need not be an obstacle to the development of mutual relations. In the latter case, relations grow slowly at the start but build up steadily if there is mutual respect, understanding and commonality of interests. This is what happened in the case of India's relations with the USSR.

Relations between two sovereign independent countries

are like a sensitive plant. In spite of mutuality of interests, they need constant care and have to be nurtured assiduously' without any false hopes or illusions. Attempts are sometimes made by propagandists of Indo-Soviet relations to trace our friendship back to Afanasi Nikitin's visit to India, 500 years ago. This may be historically correct, but is irrelevant to our present-day relations. Similarly, stories are spread of Indian revolutionaries seeking refuge from British imperialism in the USSR, to demonstrate the Soviet Union's support to India's struggle for freedom. While it is true that after the Socialist Revolution, particularly during Lenin's lifetime, the Soviet Union was sympathetic to India's struggle for freedom, there was very little it could do to help us. India's Independence Movement was entirely indigenous, led by outstanding stalwarts, like Gandhi and Nehru, who were deeply rooted in the soil, history, culture, and traditions of India. We did not seek any outside help in this struggle and were able to achieve our independence because of this leadership and the faith of the Indian people in their cause.

Development of Indo-Soviet relations started on a more concrete basis after Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1955, though trade and credits on a small scale had started in 1953. This was a result of the geo-political forces prevailing in the world at that time.

Gandhi had said that the Soviet Union was an enigma to him. Equally, the Soviets considered Gandhi a mystery. They could not understand him and called him a 'Bourgeois Reformist' in their Great encyclopaedia, during Stalin's time. Although they had dubbbed Nehru a 'lackey of Anglo-American Imperialism', during the Stalinist period, they recognised later the vision of Nehru, appreciated his humanist approach to politics and his fiercely independent attitude to international problems. This became evident particularly after Khruschev came to power and addressed the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, in 1956, when he made his famous speech about the possibility of a peaceful and parliamentary path to socialism.

India had signed the *Panch Sheel* Agreement with China in 1954, but it was showing signs of withering away by 1956. Indo-Pak and Indo-US relations were deteriorating because America enteried into a military aid agreement with

Pakistan in 1954 supplying her large quantities of weapons on a grant basis. The formation of CENTO, the same year, had serious repercussions on the peace and security of this region.

India and the Soviet Union began to find a mutuality of interests and attitudes *vis-a-vis* these countries, the Third World, as well as bilaterally and regionally. Although Nehru was firm in dealing with the communists at home, it did not prevent him from developing relations with communist countries like China and the USSR. In view of China's attitude to India after 1956, and the possibility of developing friendly relations with the Soviet Union after Stalin's death, Nehru did not hesitate to explore avenues of friendship with the Soviet Union. He did not believe that bilateral relations between two countries such as India and the USSR should be depdendent on India's relations with third countries, such as China or the USA, though they might have some impact.

The return visit of Khruschev and Bulganin to India, at the end of 1955, further strengthened mutual respect and understanding between Soviet and Indian leaders. It led to greater cooperation in various fields such as energy, oil exploration, mining, metallurgy, pharmaceuticals etc. Soviet-aided complexes grew up at Bhilai, Rishikesh, Hardwar, Hyderabad and elsewhere, in India· The steel mill at Bokaro is an example of Soviet appreciation of India's needs. India had first approached the USA which did not respond favourably; when we approached the Soviet Union, it went all out to support the project.

The success of the Soviet Union's attempts to build economic and technical relations with India is due to the approach towards building a strong industrialised India. While the Soviet Union built up trade with India, both in the private and public sector, her cooperation in the industrial and technological fields was mainly concentrated on strengthening the public sector in India, as India herself wanted. In contrast to this, the U.S. would trade only with our private sector and not cooperate with our public sector industries. Indo-Soviet cooperation expanded into other fields such as culture, sports, films, the media and the field of defence production.

By the time I reached Moscow to present my credentials as Ambassador of India, at the end of October, 1962, the international situation had deteriorated. The Cuban crisis was at

its height and could have led to a thermo-nuclear war between the two super powers. The Sino-Indian conflit was assuming serious proportions. Nehru had approached friendly countries including the USA, the UK, and the Soviet Union, for such political or material support as they could give in our struggle against China's aggression. The response had been sympathetic from the USA and the UK at first. But they tried to tie up their supply of military equipment with a settlement between India and Pakistan on Kashmir and a joint defence pact against communism. They wanted us to give up more than half of the Vale of Kashmir to Pakistan as a 'quid pro quo'. While discussions were still going on, the Pakistan Government signed a so-called 'provisional' agreement with Peking, giving away 4,000 square kilometres of Indian territory in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (POK) to China. This knocked the bottom out of the efforts of Duncan Sandys and Dean Rusk. Besides, Nehru was not prepared to barter away non-alignment and enter into a defence pact with Pakistan against so called international communism. The Anglo-American effort to join India and Pakistan together in a defence pact was aimed mainly against the USSR and possibly against China as well. Pakistan could hardly contribute anything to this idea, while India, would have had to bear the brunt and become the battlefield of the anti-communist crusade launched by the West. This would have sounded the death knell of India's non-alignment. Nehru had no compunction in rejecting the Sandys-Rusk proposals. I am basing this assessment on my personal correspondence and discussions with Nehru on the subject at the time.

Nehru had warned me that though the Soviet Union was friendly to us, we should not expect immediate results. Hard work, patience, perseverance and mutual understanding were important, before concrete results could be achieved. At first, I found a certain hesitation on the part of the Soviet leadership to support India in the Sino-Indian conflict, even by words. Their attitude, at the end of October 1962, was not even neutral. but slightly tilted in favour of China. This was, as Khruschev explained to me later, due to the fact that the Cuban crisis was at its height and the Soviet Union could not afford to relax its combat readiness for a possible conflict with the USA over

Cuba. But as the Cuban crisis subsided, the Soviet attitude became neutral, especially in their public statements. As further time went by and India showed a spirit of determination to resist China's aggression, the Soviets were impressed. Their attitude became more sympathetic to India, both in their public statements and even more so, in their private conversations. Correspondingly, Sino-Soviet differences increased and came in the open. As Khruschev told me frankly, one of the reasons for differences between China and the Soviet Union was Soviet friendship with India.

The Soviets did not want the Sino-Indian conflict to escalate and advised both sides to find a peaceful political solution to the border question. They were also watching how India would emerge from the conflict and how China and the West would react. The declaration of a 'unilateral ceas fire' by China was in Soviet eyes, as they told me, a recognition by China of India's unity and potential strength, the realisation by China that she had gone too far and had extended her lines of communication, without being able to support them. China had achieved its immediate objective, i.e., to take Aksai Chin and humiliate India, particularly in the eyes of the Third World. They were expecting India to go down on its knees and beg for peace. When this did not happen and they saw the unity and determination of India to resist, they made a virtue of necessity by declaring a unilateral ceasefire.

The Soviet leaders told me that they were impressed by India's determination not to give in to the aggressor. They knew better than anyone else China's strength as well as weakness. They had, perhaps, under-estimated India's potential, at first, but were impressed with Nehru's adherence to the policy of non-alignment. They also saw the attempts of the West to turn India against them and India's refusal to do so. Both India and the Soviet Union found common ground in the danger from the Sino-Pak axis which would pose a threat not only to India, but also to the Soviet Union's southern underbelly. Pakistan had already joined SEATO and CENTO. India had refused to do so. The Soviet Union realised that a strong, stable, non-aligned India, friendly to the USSR, was of importance to the Soviet Union's own security. The supplies of Soviet military equipment to India started to arrive, eventually, according to

our agreement and even earlier. The Soviet Union was keen to fill the gaps in India's defence, which the US-Pak agreement had widened. However, India paid for all purchases made from the Soviet Union and did not take anything as a grant. This not only raised Soviet respect for India, but also suited them.

The Soviet Union's attitude to the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, their open support to India's stand, both politically and materially, was significant. It is perhaps the first instance in recent history where one communist country has not only not sided with another communist country in the latter's conflict with a non-communist country, but criticised it, sympathising with the non-communist country. It is significant because it shows that security is more important than ideology. "International Communism" is no longer the monolith bogey it was in the eyes of John Foster Dulles any more than 'international capitalism' is in the eyes of the communists in China today. The lesson of the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict was that India had to strengthen her defences in order to preserve her independence and integrity; it could not merely rely on diplomacy. Nonalignment does not mean that we should stand alone and aloof in this world and spurn the friendship of a neighbour who may be ideologically different, but has a mutuality of interests with us. 1962 was a testing time for India's policy of non-alignment. India stood the test and realised that non-alignment must be based on self-reliance and strength. It need not preclude building enduring friendship with others who may not be non-aligned. As long as we do not get entangled in military alliances formed in the context of great power rivalry, we can remain non-aligned.

CHAPTER 26

INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS (1962-71)

It was the middle of October 1962. The Chinese had attacked in the North-East as well as in Ladakh in the North. It was a massive invasion, not just a border skirmish as some had thought it might be, in the beginning. It was a challenge and threat to the very unity and integrity of India. The whole country was shaken in its belief that China was a friend. Relations had already become strained, in 1959, when the Dalai Lama sought refuge in India, but few had expected China would openly violate the Five Principles. Nehru wrote to various Heads of Governments seeking moral and political support and such arms as they could spare. The response was, by and large, one of lip sympathy and moral support. The Soviet Union was involved in the Cuban crisis and not in a position to do much. The British and the Americans promised to give some mountain artillery and small weapons but no tanks, bombers or fighter interceptors.

I had been asked by Nehru, when he was in London for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, in the first week of September, 1962, if I would go as High Commissioner to Pakistan. I had actually been posted as Ambassador to Vienna, but had written to Nehru that I wanted to go home. If a home posting was not possible, I said, I would like a more challenging assignment. I did not want a holiday in Vienna. He was good enough to cancel my posting to Vienna, although the agreement of the Austrian Government had been obtained.

I had never cared much for the then Pakistani leadership and their policies. I had no illusions that Nehru or his High

Commissioner in Pakistan would be able to improve relations. I told him so quite frankly. He flared up and said : "Pakistan is one of the most important countries for us. It is a challenging post and that should satisfy you." I felt flattered, but I was quite convinced in my own mind that I was the wrong choice for Pakistan. I liked the people, had many friends among them, spoke the language. But I also knew I would not be able to make any worthwhile contacts in the closed society and suffocating atmosphere created by the military dictatorship in Pakistan. I could not say no to Nehru. I had the highest respect, admiration and affection for him. He was my ideal, but I could not be false to myself. I was not the sort of a professional diplomat who would fit in anywhere. I had strong convictions, likes and dislikes.

I told Nehru frankly, though with some hesitation, that I was a native of Kashmir and felt strongly about the way Pakistan had brazenly invaded Kashmir, killing, looting and raping Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and even Christians there. It might be embarrassing and even counter-productive, if I went to Pakistan and gave expression to my feelings and convictions. *I added that I would like a home posting as I had been abroad* for six years. Nehru thought for a while and then said he could not give me a home posting. There were people senior to me already there and there was no suitable vacancy. He then asked me all of a sudden: "There is something in what you say about going to Pakistan. Would you like to go to Moscow? You have been there before and speak the language." I felt a little relieved and replied gratefully: "Sir, if a home posting is not possible, then I would like to go to Moscow." I left it at that. I had made my point and Nehru had been more then generous and patient with me. Few foreign ministers would have been so understanding.

The Chinese invasion was continuing and assuming serious proportions. We were routed in the North-East mainly because our troops were not properly equipped and had been collected helter skelter from various places at the last moment. But we put up a stiff resistance in Ladakh, where our troops had been acclimatised for a longer period and were better equipped. Even in the North-East, we had inflicted heavy losses on the Chinese manpower, but that did not deter them.

We had not received any substantial response from the USA or the UK. Moscow was not very forthcoming in the beginning, but had kept open the question of military supplies. I was instructed to proceed to Delhi from London immediately, in the middle of October, and to go to Moscow from there.

I met Soldatov, the Soviet Ambassador in London, and tried to probe him on China. He was non-committal. I had some misgivings in my own mind about the Soviet attitude, but felt there was a possibility of making a dent on their thinking, because of their own differences with China, which had been simmering for some time. India was non-aligned and big enough to defend herself, if only she had the weapons. The Soviets had a common interest in bolstering up India's strength, in order to stem the tide of Chinese expansionism which was also a threat to their own security.

With these thoughts in mind, I reached Delhi on October 20. The scene in Delhi was heartening. Our defeat in NEFA had galvanised the people into one nation. Patriotic fervour was at its height. China had betrayed us, but we were not going to give in. Our Parliament passed a unanimous resolution that India would recover every inch of Indian territory forcibly and illegally occupied by China. People were giving their all to defend the country. Mass rallies and meetings were held everywhere, to support the Government. The one casualty was the much maligned Krishna Menon who had been made the butt of attack in Parliament and the media.

I met Menon several times, during my ten days in Delhi. He was keen that the Soviets should send some MIG 21 fighter interceptors immediately. He called the Soviet Ambassador, Benediktov, to his office and asked me to be present. The interview was not as Menon had hoped it might be. Benediktov was a pompous Russian of the old school. He had served as a Minister under Stalin. To Menon's query, he merely replied that he would report to his Government and all contracts would be fulfilled according to schedule. He was referring to the contract regarding MIG 21's which were due to be delivered a few months later. Menon almost lost his temper and said, "Mr. Ambassador, you are talking like a lawyer, don't you see the urgency?" Benediktov did not like this and repeated his previous answer.

I reported this conversation to Nehru. He said I must proceed without delay to Moscow and try to impress on Soviet leaders both the short and long-term implications of the Chinese invasion. Nehru was not pessimistic and hoped the Russians would soon see our point.

Nehru had been to the Soviet Union in 1955, had toured extensively, held long talks with Khruschev and his colleagues and had been widely cheered and acclaimed by the people.* Never before had any other foreign leader been received so warmly. He invited Khruschev and Bulganin to India, at the end of 1955, and got to know them well. They appreciated for the first time the experience of travelling in an open car in a foreign country.†

Relations between India and the USSR had developed steadily after Nehru's visit. Trade, economic and technical cooperation had increased. It was not like our sudden spurt of friendship with China, based on Asian sentiment, which had blossomed so quickly and withered even more rapidly. Our relations with the Soviet Union developed slowly at first, steadily after Nehru's visit, and have gone on developing for the last two decades.

The reasons for this are not far to seek. The Soviet Union and India are near neighbours. There is no conflict of national interests; on the contrary, there is a mutuality. The soviet Union has enough territory of its own and does not want more, unlike China. What she wants is an area of peace and friendship around her. She has her security belt or sphere of influence in the immediate West. She has a treaty with the Mongolian People's Republic to her East. She had a treaty with China which became a dead letter, long before its term (1950-1980) expired. America was trying to ring her round

* Kuznetsov, the Senior-most Vice-Foreign Minister was attached to his party (He is Vice-President now). His name in Russian means 'blacksmith' and he told Nehru and his daughter to call him 'Mr. Smith'. He is a very able and affable person and I found him the pleasantest Vice-Foreign Minister to deal with.

† In Calcutta the huge crowds that came out to greet them made it impossible for their car to move forward. Their security chief got worried but our own, G.K. Handoo, had the presence of mind to put them in a closed van and whisk them away.

with military alliances and bases. Russia had achieved military balance in the West. She had strengthened her forces all along the Sino-Soviet border. But her southern underbelly was more vulnerable, because of CENTO, and the Sino-Pak and US-Pak virtual alliance. She was facing the Chinese colossus, which claimed 1.5 million sq. km. of her territory. She therefore welcomed India's friendship, even though India was non-aligned.

I reached Moscow, on November 2, 1962. I was visiting Moscow after a lapse of thirteen years. Things had changed considerably between Stalin's and Khruschev's time. Those who had not been to the Soviet Union during Stalin's rule could not appreciate the remarkable difference between then and now.

I was struck by the greater availability of consumer goods, more public and private transport facilities, less fear and suspicion on the faces and in the eyes of the ordinary people, a general relaxation in the manner and attitude towards foreigners.

This was all good, but I had come not merely to study the changes in the USSR. I had come for a specific purpose : to probe the Soviet leadership for building closer relations with non-aligned India. Would the changes that had occurred internally in the Soviet Union since Stalin's death have a favourable impact on Indo-Soviet relations? One thing soon became clear. I would be able to have quicker and easier access to the top leadership. I presented my credentials to President Brezhnev, within a week of my arrival. I met Khruschev twice, in the succeeding fortnight. He was very frank and forthright, tough in the beginning, but more friendly and understanding after each meeting. I was able to meet almost all the top people in the Government and the Politbureau, as well as in public organizations, within the first three months of my arrival.

As the Cuban crisis and the Sino-Indian war subsided, the Soviets grew more and more friendly and helpful. Many delegations were exchanged, trade and technical arrangements signed, exhibitions held. Other Embassies began to vie with the Indian Embassy. Military and other equipment was supplied in time and even before time, trade expanded almost five times

during my three and a half years in Moscow. Culture and education, health and sports, science and technology, including the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes were the main fields in which our relations were strengthened significantly.

However, there was no euphoria about Indo-Soviet friendship, as there had been about Sino-Indian 'brotherhood' in the mid-fifties. Relations were based more on mutuality of interests than on emotional or sentimental grounds. The Soviet Union was not an Asian country, although two-thirds of its territory was in Asia, South and East of the Urals. Nor was it a totally 'European' country. It was a mixture of East and West, of Europe and Asia. India was also, though in a somewhat different sense, a mixture of the East and the West, a sort of non-aligned bridge imbibing something of the West and something of the East, trying to bring the two closer to each other. Geopolitically, India and the USSR complemented each other. They did not need to compete with each other as China and the USSR or as China and India did.*

Indo-Soviet relations developed steadily, from 1955 until Nehru's demise in May 1964, which created a brief but temporary period of uncertainty about the immediate future. Khruschev considered Nehru's death as a personal loss and told me so, when he called at the Embassy to sign the condolence register. Kosygin was more matter of fact. He probed me about the shape of things to come, in his cabin, on the special plane which carried us both from Moscow to Delhi for Nehru's funeral.

* When an Indian delegation came to Moscow in mid 1964 to negotiate some credits, one of its members was the late M.G. Kaul, Finance Secretary. When he was introduced to Khruschev, the latter exclaimed, "What, another Kaul! One is quite enough to deal with us."

On another occasion when there was a New Year party in the Kremlin, Khruschev proposed several toasts such as 'To Peace' 'To the Struggle for Peace', 'To the Solidarity of the Socialist World' etc. There was not a single toast to non-alignment. I asked the UAR and Yugoslav Ambassadors if they would join me in toasting Khruschev for non-alignment. They were hesitant. So I walked up alone to the high table and asked Khruschev if he would drink a toast to non-alignment. Sure enough he got up and proposed a toast to 'non-alignment, much to the surprise of everyone, especially his colleagues.

They were not quite sure about the acting Prime Minister, Gulzari Lal Nanda, or Prime Minister-elect, Lal Bahadur Shastri, who were strangers to them. Things became clear when Indira Gandhi joined Shastri's Cabinet as Minister of Information and Broadcasting. Soviet misgivings were further dispelled, when Lal Bahadur Shastri visited the USSR in May 1965.

Khruschev fell from power, in October 1964. This created some anxiety in India as to whether his successors would continue his policies towards India or try to win over the Chinese leadership at India's expense. Indira Gandhi paid a short visit to Moscow from Belgrade and met Suslov and others (Brezhnev was down with influenza). They assured her that friendship with India was not going to be weakened.

Chou En-lai visited Moscow soon after Khruschev's fall and just after the first Chinese atom bomb was exploded.[1] There was speculation about a possible rapproachement between the two parties, but it failed to come about. Mao had wanted to become the leader of the communist world after Stalin, but the Soviet leadership had resisted this during Khruschev's time. Would they now give up that stand and accept Mao as their common leader? Would they at least accept him and China as the overlord of Asia, which Khruschev had refused to do earlier?[2]

1. At the Kremlin reception for Chou, he held my hand for a long while, took me aside and said: "Let us forget the past. Let us look to the future." I asked "which past-the Panch Sheel past?-and which future?" He merely said "You know what I mean. We can talk at Algiers when the Afro-Asian Conference meets." I was intrigued why Chou had spoken to me at Moscow and not to our Embassy in Peking or through his Embassy in Delhi. I reported the brief conversation to Delhi. The Algiers Conference could not be held because China opposed participation by USSR and others did not want China there. And so the 'meeting' did not materialise.
2. I was told by a senior member of the Politbureau that when Khsurchev went from Camp David to Peking to attend the 1 October celebrations in 1959, Mao told him: "You look after Europe. Leave Asia to us." Khruschev replied "No one has asked us to look after Europe. Who has asked you to look after Asia?" Mao apparently did not like this and hated Khruschev thereafter.

The Soviet stand was based on their own national interest and security. In spite of the absence of semantic polemics (which Khruschev was fond of uttering but the new leadership avoided), no headway was made towards a rapproachement. The two points of view seemed irreconciliable. Soon after Chou's return to Peking, the Chinese media dubbed the new Soviet leadership's policy as 'Khruschevism without Khruschev'.

The new Soviet leadership did try to smoothen their relations with Pakistan. Ayub visited Moscow, in 1965, and was taken round the country. With his glib tongue and pleasing manners, he was able to make some impact both on the civilian and military leaders of the USSR. Parliamentary delegations were exchanged and a few economic and cultural agreements signed.

The Soviets kept us informed, lest we should misunderstand. They said they wanted to wean Pakistan away from China and America. I had my doubts which I conveyed to them frankly 'as a friend'. I left them in no doubt about Pakistan's intentions towards India. They did not quite believe me and thought I was too cynical and pessimistic. I wished them luck in their efforts, but warned them of the danger of weakening Indo-Soviet relations, if they gave any military equipment to Pakistan. It would only encourage an arms race on the sub-continent.

Events soon occurred to justify my fears. Pakistan attacked us in the Rann of Kutch in April, 1965, and then in Kashmir in August. Shastri was firm as a rock and mobilised the whole country. Pakistan's military misadventure did not pay off. Both sides agreed to a ceasefire, but this did not ensure a durable peace.

The Soviets considered this a suitable opportunity to bring India and Pakistan together on the Soviet soil. They offered their good offices for a meeting at Tashkent. After some initial hesitation (during which I had very frank talks with the top leaders of the Soviet Government and Politbureau), India and Pakistan accepted the Soviet offer to meet in Tashkent. In spite of predictions of failure by the West, the two sides agreed to sign the Tashkent Agreement, on January 10, 1966. It was a compromise agreement, with some give and take on

either side, and could have paved the way for a new era of friendship between India and Pakistan.

But no international agreement—bilateral or multilateral, and especially bilateral—can succeed unless there is a genuine will to respect it on the part of the signatories. India was determined to implement the Agreement. Pakistan, especially Foreign Minister Bhutto, was not.

Shastri's sad and untimely demise left a temporary vacuum and the Soviets again wondered as to who would succeed him. He had been able to maintain Indo-Soviet relations on an even keel. The election of Indira Gandhi as the next leader of the Parliamentary Congress Party by an overwhelming majority set Soviet doubts at rest. They knew her personally and considered her a progressive leader in her own right, apart from being Nehru's daughter. She visited Moscow, in September 1966, as Prime Minister. They showed special respect for her and gave a banquet in her honour, in St. George's Hall in the Kremlin, at which leading members of the Politbureau were present.

I had taken over as Secretary, External Affairs Ministry, in June 1966, and accompanied Mrs. Gandhi on this visit. I had again to tell our Soviet friends that if they equated India and Pakistan, they would be making a grave mistake. They would not be able to wean Pakistan away from American or Chinese influence, but they might well weaken Indo-Soviet friendship.

The Soviet side felt sore at my frankness, which did not deter them from throwing feelers to Pakistan and giving them some military equipment. This raised doubts in India. However, the Soviets soon realised their mistake. Kosygin visited India, in September 1968. He virtually admitted that Pakistan was too far gone into the American and Chinese net and that their leadership could not be weaned away. He went all out to assure Indira Gandhi that the Soviet Union wanted to see a strong, prosperous, non-aligned India playing its natural role in this region and beyond. The Soviet Union would be happy to render any assistance possible in this regard.

We took note of Kosygin's forthright statement. I wanted to spell out the details then and there, but Mrs. Gandhi rightly said we would consider matters carefully and let them know.

This was what encouraged some of us to think in terms of a treaty relationship between the two countries and eventually led to the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Co-operation and Friendship on 9 August, 1971.

CHAPTER 27

INDO-SOVIET TREATY (1971)

Treaties and agreements between two sovereign, independent countries fall into various categories. Some deal with such matters as consular or commercial, transit or navigation; some with military or defence matters; others are purely cultural. Some are political in character, spelling out an affinity in outlook and goals, and serve as notice to third countries to keep their hands off either signatory. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation was predominantly political in character.

How and why did India and the Soviet Union enter into such a Treaty? Was it in harmony with India's policy of non-alignment and the Soviet policy of international socialist solidarity? India was neither communist nor even socialist. The two social, political and economic systems were different, though not necessarily antagonistic to each other. In fact, there was a large measure of mutuality of interests between the two countries and even a close approximation in their immediate goals. Both wanted peace in the region and the world to reconstruct their social and economic structure. Both needed security against threats from China and Pakistan, which was aided by America. There was also scope for developing mutual economic and technical co-operation, which would be of benefit to both.

Non-aligned India and socialist Russia were drawn towards each other partly because of these factors and partly because they are near neighbours. They could either be friendly or hostile (as China was) but not indifferent to each other. America

thought it could adopt an attitude of 'benevolent indifference' towards India, which was far away from it. The USSR could not do this because India's strategic position and potential capability were of vital concern to its own peace and security, and *vice-versa*.

Non-alignment did not mean equi-distance from or equi-closeness to the two super or other great powers. As Nehru said in 1962, when China invaded India: "You cannot be non-aligned towards a threat to your own sovereignty and independence." So when India and the USSR realised that they were facing common threats, that the independence and security of one was vital to that of the other, that they had no foreseeable clash of natioual interests had much in common that was of mutual benefit, feelers and probings were started about solemnising our existing friendly relations and putting them on a firm footing.

There were some, like me, who had been advocating this ever since 1951, when I made such a proposal from Peking. But as the Russian saying goes: "There is a proper time for *sowing every vegetable and a time for its ripening.*" India in the early fifties was trying to forge Asian and African solidarity. Ties with the Soviet Union at that time were tenuous. They had not been tested by time and by the stresses and strains of international pressures. Governmental and public opinion in India or in the USSR at that time was not too warm towards each other. Most influential people, including Nehru, felt the time was not ripe for such a step.

But after China's invasion in 1962, and its anti-Indian postures in the 1965 Indo-Pak conflict, the American tilt towards Pakistan and against India in 1969-71, and the support given by the Soviet Union to our stand on Kashmir, Goa and the Sino-Indian conflict, it became clear who were our reliable friends in the world. The situation on the sub-continent was explosive. Bangladesh was in the throes of a struggle for freedom from the yoke of West Pakistan's military dictatorship. India was flooded with millions of refugees from Bangladesh, fleeing from the atrocities of Yahya Khan's soldiers. India's economic, administrative and social structure in the States neighbouring Bangladesh was severely strained.

On top of it all, Yahya Khan deliberately incited border

incidents against us, in the East, and tried to provoke us into a conflict, in order to divert the attention of his own people and of the outside world from his troubles in Bangladesh. India tried its best to impress on Yahya Khan, through his Western friends and allies, the need to reach a direct political settlement with the already elected leaders of East Pakistan, especially Sheikh Mujib. But Yahya Khan would not agree. He thought China and the USA would come to his rescue and he would be able to suppress the Bangladeshis.

It was this situation that created the 'proper time' for signing the Indo-Soviet Treaty. It had been talked about, in a general sort of way between the two Governments, for about two years. D.P. Dhar, our Ambassador in Moscow and I, as Foreign secretary, had many informal discussions with the Soviet side. I had even given them a rough draft, during my official visit to Moscow in 1970. They had made some counter suggestions. But these had been more in the nature of feelers. We also had talks with the US Administration, in the early fifties, for a Treaty on Navigation and Consular matters. These had never got off the ground because the US had insisted on the pattern of treaties they had signed with some Latin American countries. These had discriminatory clauses which India could not accept.

The Soviet side was patient and never hustled us. They were open to argument. They also gave us copies of some of the treaties they had signed with other countries, such as Finland and Afghanistan. We argued that the situation in 1970-71 was different, as was India's position as a leading non-alignment country. India would not compromise her policy of non-alignment or enter into a defense pact or military alliance. We would never agree to the giving of military bases or the stationing of foreign troops on our soil. The Soviets did not contest our arguments and a mutually agreed draft was prepared by the end of 1970, after friendly informal discussions for about two years. It was one of the few closely guarded secret negotiations that India has ever conducted. On our side, hardly half a dozen people were aware of it, including the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. The media got no scent of it.

The main question, however, was how and when to

persuade our Government to sign it. From our point of view, there could not be a better time than the summer of 1971, when a serious situation was developing on the sub-continent. China was making loud noises against us and America was tilting towards Pakistan. The situation was explosive and could lead to war. It needed to be defused. America and China perhaps thought that Pakistan's military might was more than a match for India's, especially with their backing. Pakistan had embarked on military misadventures against India, in 1947-48 and 1965. They were militarily stronger, in 1971, than in 1965. They could depend on the Shah of Iran and other friends to support them in a war against India. Yahya Khan was confident America and China would intervene on Pakistan's side.

Non-aligned opinion was vague. The non-aligned had adopted a neutral attitude, in the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict. They were now further divided because of Islamic sentiment in favour of Pakistan in several Muslim non-aligned countries. India's non-aligned neighbours were afraid of China, especially after 1962.

Public and parliamentary opinion in India was sympathetic to the cause of Bangladesh. Even Western and American public opinion, as reflected in the media, was against Pakistan and for Bangladesh. But Governments usually are way behind public opinion. Even in India, Indira Gandhi was not quite sure how her own Cabinet and Parliament would react to such a treaty with the Soviet Union. She sounded some of her colleagues, directly and indirectly. They were in favour of it. In the Opposition parties, the left was strongly in favour of it. The only possible opposition could come from some of the rightist opposition parties, but even they would be careful not to go against public opinion.

After considering all the *pros* and *cons*, Indira Gandhi decided that the time had come to take this step. She was pragmatic and had a strong sense of timing her decisions carefully and correctly. The political Affairs Committees of the Cabinet was first consulted. They welcomed such a treaty. The Soviet Government was informed to send Gromyko to sign it with our Foreign Minister, Swaran Singh. The whole Cabinet was consulted and they all supported it. The Treaty was signed on 9 August, 1971, in New Delhi. Reaction in Parliament was

even more enthusiastic than expected. Only a few *Swatantra* (right conservative) members spoke against it. Even the *Jana Sangh* (militant right party) members supported it. The Nixon tilt against India and the atrocities committed by Pakistan in its eastern wing leading to the movement of millions of refugees into India could not be ignored even by pro-American circles in India. The Treaty was hailed by the media and the people. India was no longer friendless or alone. America and China would have to take note of the Treaty, as a warning not to interfere in the sub-continent.

Yahya Khan and his Government were taken unawares. They wanted to internationalise their internal problem in Bangladesh, by embarking on a war against India before the Treaty had time to take effect. They stepped up their border incidents in the East and the tempo of their suppression of the freedom struggle in Bangladesh. India tried to localise these border incidents and, in spite of grave provocation, did not allow them to escalate into a large-scale war.

Indira Gandhi made a last effort to persuade Yahya Khan through his Western friends and allies to release Sheikh Mujib and hold negotiations with him for a political settlement. At the end of October 1971, she visited the USA, UK, France, Belgium, FRG, Austria and Egypt, for this purpose. She drew a blank from Nixon, in her private discussions, though he praised her in his formal banquet speech.* The others were sympathetic, though they expressed their helplessness against Nixon's obduracy and Yahya Khan's stubbornness.

* Nixon's remarks at the White House Banquet for Mrs. Gandhi on November 4, 1971:

"This is a very historic occasion for a very historic room. Churchill, de Gaulle, Adenauer, Kishi, Soekarno have been entertained here. This occasion is particularly historic. We see the great genius in politics transferred to the second generation. Nehru was in this Chair in 1957 representing the greatest democracy in the world. He had received more votes than anyone else in the world and never lost an election. The same chair is occupied today by the daughter of Prime Minister Nehru—the daughter of one of the most legendary figures in the world. But she is here in her own right. She has won respect from her own people who have given her a mandate. Our honour and respect for what she stands for. As Nehru used to keep Robert Frost's poem by his bed-side—he had

To cut a long story short, when Indira Gandhi returned to India, in the first week of November 1971, she found the situation had further deteriorated. Pakistan was determined to have a show down with India. She kept calm and cool. She did not rush into recognising the Government of Bangladesh. She waited for the result of her talks with Western leaders, but in vain. Pakistan became more and more bellicose. On 3 December, 1971, at 6 p.m. it launched a blitzkreig attack on nine airfields in West and North India, including Kashmir.

Mrs. Gandhi was in Calcutta, at the time. She flew back to Delhi, on hearing the news, held a meeting of the Political Affairs Committee of the Cabinet, where some of us and the three Chiefs of the Army, Navy and Air Force were present. Important decisions were taken and their execution left in the hands of the military and civil authorities concerned. Pakistan formally declared war against India, on the morning of 4 December, 1971 and our plans went into full operation.

The Bangladesh war was an example of how calm, cool and determined leadership, with confidence in the civil and military authorities and complete cooperation between them, can produce results. Throughout the Bangladesh struggle for freedom, we used to meet every day, sometimes twice a day, to coordinate our thinking and plans and watch their full implementation. Indira Gandhi was in full charge as Prime Minister and showed remarkable qualities of leadership.

I recall only one occasion on which I could not reach her in time. I got an urgent telephone message, on the afternoon of 4 December, 1971, from Air Headquarters that a Pakistan International Airline plane was overflying India in Madhya Pradesh and going towards Bangladesh. Should we force it to land? I was inclined to say yes, but thought it advisable to consult the Prime Minister, as it could have serious political implications. I had to give a reply in 30 minutes, otherwise the PIA plane would have crossed into Bangladesh. I could not get the Prime Minister, so I telephoned the Foreign Minister

many promises to keep. He would have been a happy man today to see his daughter fulfil his promise. She prefers progress through freedom. We remember his famous speech regarding 'generation of Peace'. We are committed to that goal. Prime Minister, we honour you as one working for peace and progress. It is indeed a historic occasion."

who was in Jullundur. He said it would be wiser to let the plane go, although overflights had been banned already and we were at war. There may be civilians in it and if any deaths were caused, it would go against humanitarian principles and arouse world opinion against us. Perhaps he was right, although we knew that Pakistan was using civilian aircraft to transport military personnel. It was only the first day of the war and we decided not to inflame public opinion in Pakistan, by forcing the plane to land. I informed Air Headquarters accordingly and they were naturally disappointed.

I am mentioning this incident to show how considerate our leaders were. There was no feeling of vengeance against Pakistan and no hatred towards their people; on the contrary, there was a lot of sympathy for the people of Pakistan, who were suffering under the cruel yoke of a military dictatorship.

I recall another incident. The 1971 war was over. My brother was commanding a brigade in the Shakkargarh area and had captured some West Pakistani territory near Nurpur. I visited him and met some of the Pakistani men and women who had not left the village. They told us many stories of Pakistani military officers and soldiers taking away young girls, food grains, sheep and chickens from them forcibly. The morale of the Pakistani military was very low and their training and efficiency had suffered because they had tasted power and influence by remaining too long in charge of civil affairs as well. Our officers and men in the Armed Forces, in contrast, showed exemplary behaviour, dedication to duty and professional quality.

The Pakistani forces were ready to surrender in the East, nearly a week after the war started. But Yahya Khan still hoped the Chinese and Americans would come to his aid. Nixon sent a task force of the US Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal. As Kissinger has revealed in his 'White House Years', he had hoped and expected that the Chinese would also come in, but they did not. The US task force beat a hasty retreat. They realised that Soviet submarines were there, right under their fleet. The people of Bangladesh were determined to resist, the Indian Armed Forces were far superior to the Pakistanis, China was having second thoughts and American public opinion was strongly opposed to Nixon's policy.

Nixon and Kissinger had perhaps hoped to fight to the last Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi, with a few hundred thousand Chinese thrown in. This would have been a blood bath of Asians fighting Asians. This was not the first time they were proved wrong. Their intervention had only helped to prolong the war by another week. It was only when Yahya Khan realised that the Chinese and Americans would not or could not come to his rescue that he agreed to the surrender of his forces in the East.

It is not my intention to describe the war in detail. I wish only to point out the relevance of the Indo-Soviet Treaty, its significance and importance for the period 1971-81 and its possible implications for the future. The Treaty stood the test of the crisis of 1971-72, strengthened India's policy of non-alignment and has deterred outside interference in the past decade. Attempts to upset this balance on the pretext of the present situation in Iran and Afghanistan, by injecting large-scale sophisticated weapons into Pakistan, make the Treaty even more meaningful and significant.

CHAPTER 28

THE TREATY AND AFTER

The test of any treaty or agreement between two sovereign countries comes in times of danger or difficulty to either or both. The test is all the more severe, when the danger is more direct to one and only indirect to the other. If both are involved in a common threat, it is understandable that they should stand together. But when the threat more directly concerns or involves only one of them, the other weighs the *pros* and *cons* of its involvement carefully, before committing itself.

The Indo-Soviet Treaty tries to cover both contingencies. Article IX provides against the eventuality of "*either* country being subjected to an attack or threat thereof." The test came soon after the Treaty was signed. The situation in Bangladesh was getting more grave with the burden of refugees fleeing to India increasing every day. Attempts were being made by China and America to frighten India and support Pakistan politically and militarily.

Henry Kissinger, Nixon's National Security Adviser, paid a visit to India, just before his secret visit to Peking via Pakistan in July 1971. It was announced that Nixon had been officially invited to Peking and would go there soon. Yahya Khan, who had been helpful in arranging Kissinger's secret visit to Peking from Nathiagali (Pakistan) was duly rewarded by promises of political and military support. Feeling encouraged, he became more bellicose and issued threats of war against India.

India's stand was clear and categorical. As Indira Gandhi

said at the Moscow luncheon in her honour on 28 September 1971:

"Indian history will remember 1971 as an eventful year. We are certainly at a momentous juncture. From March until now, there have been many important developments. . . . One cannot but be perturbed when fire breaks out in a neighbour's house. What has happened in East Bengal—or Bangladesh, as the world has begun to call it—can no longer be regarded as Pakistan's domestic affair. More than 9 million East Bengalees have come into our country· Do they not have the right to live and work in their own homeland? We cannot be expected to absorb them. . .

"This is not an India-Pakistan dispute. The problem is an international one. But the weight of it has fallen on India. . . . It is surely the duty of the world not to delay in creating conditions in which these refugees, irrespective of their religion, can return without fear. . . .

"The basic issues involved and the real threat to peace and stability in Asia are being largely ignored. We are glad that the leaders of the Soviet Union have counselled Pakistan to reach a political solution which will satisfy the aspirations of the people of East Bengal. We hope that these efforts will bear fruit."

Indeed, the Soviet Union had issued many appeals to Yahya Khan and made several official statements supporting India's plea for the release of Sheikh Mujib and peaceful political negotiations with the already elected leaders of East Bengal. However, these pleas by India and the Soviet Union fell on deaf ears. Relying on the support of Peking and Washington, Yahya Khan became more and more intransigent.

The Indo-Soviet Treaty was not a dead letter. It came into full swing. Consultations between the two sides continued at all levels. As the Indo-Soviet Joint Statement of 29 September, 1971, emphasised : "The two sides expressed their concern over the grave situation, which has arisen on the Indian sub-continent as a result of the recent events in East Bengal, and declared their determination to continue their efforts aimed at the preservation of peace in that region." It went on to say : "The Soviet side took into account the statement by the Prime Minister that the Government of India is fully determined to take all necessary measures to stop the inflow of refugees from

East Bengal to India and to ensure that those refugees who are already in India return to their home-land without delay." It added : "Taking into account the seriousness of the situation which has developed in the Indian sub-continent, the two sides agreed to maintain further mutual contacts and to continue to exchange views on questions arising in this connection."

This was a serious enough warning to Pakistan and its friends and allies, but they failed to take note of it. Instead of creating conditions which would have encouraged and enabled the refugees to return in honour and safety, the atrocities by Pakistani troops increased. Attempts were made to provoke India through border incidents. There was great pressure on Indira Gandhi to recognise the emigre Government of Bangladesh, but she refused to be rushed. It would only have given an excuse to Pakistan to accuse India and mislead the world into believing that the freedom struggle in Bangladesh was not genuine, but inspired by India.

Mrs. Gandhi played the few cards she had in her hand skilfully and patiently. While trying her best to persuade Yahya Khan through his friends and allies, she made due allowance for his follies. We had faced misadventures by military rulers of Pakistan before and Yahya Khan was not the brightest among them. We made our plans to meet any threat that might arise from China or Pakistan or both, but we did not provoke them. We got most of the military supplies we wanted from the Soviet Union, in time. They also gave us their full political support in and outside the United Nations.

But no bilateral treaty can be a substitute for a country's own strength and determination, her vision and goals, her spirit of sacrifice and self-reliance. The Indo-Soviet Treaty was a great help, but without India's own effort and determination, it could not have successfully deterred China and the USA from intervening militarily in the 1971 war.

It is said by some that the provisions of the Treaty strengthen our policy of non-alignment. It is charged by others that Article IX of the Treaty amounts virtually to a military alliance and hence violates the very basic principles of non-alignment. A close examination will show that this is not so. The only obligations on both sides under this Article are :

(i) "to abstain from providing any assistance to any third party that engages in armed conflict with the other party" and

(ii) "In the event of either party being subjected to an attack or threat thereof, the High Contracting Parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries."

Non-alignment does not mean giving assistance to one party engaged in an armed conflict; on the contrary, it envisages keeping out of involvement, especially where a great power is involved. This clause was more beneficial to India because it precluded any Soviet assistance to Pakistan, America or China, in case they were involved in an armed conflict against India. There was little likelihood of any of these countries getting involved in direct conflict with the USSR. Even if that did happen, India's only obligation was not to assist them. This was not only in consonance with the principles of non-alignment, but also in India's national interest. The operational effect of clause (i) of Article IX was more to the benefit of India than to the USSR, because the threat to India was imminent while that to the USSR was remote.

As for clause (ii), non-alignment does not disallow the sovereign right of a country to enter into consultation with any country, especially a friendly neighbour, should a threat arise to her own security and peace or to that of her neighbour. The obligation to consult does not envisage the stationing of foreign troops or giving of military bases. Each situation is to be considered on its merits and only such effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries will be taken as are considered appropriate and agreed upon by *both* the signatories. Non-alignment is not neutrality. This sub-clause was a warning to third countries and proved effective.

Non-alignment does not mean that we will allow any country to violate our territorial integrity and sovereignty with impunity or give up our right to seek such assistance as we may need and consider necessary in a given situation. This is what distinguishes this Treaty from the Sino-Indian Agreement of

1954, which merely laid down the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence (*Panch Sheel*), without providing them with any sanction or substance. Hence also the greater relevance and utility of the Indo-Soviet Treaty. Non-alignment is against a commitment in advance, in accordance with a military alliance, to side with one country against another, irrespective of the merits of a case. The Indo-Soviet Treaty did not commit either signatory in advance against any particular third country, but it was a warning to all third countries who may have had any aggressive designs.

This was emphasised by me as Foreign Secretary to the Ambassadors of the USA, France and others, on the very day of our signing the Treaty. In fact, I invited them to sign similar treaties with us, if they so desired.

As the Joint Indo-Soviet Statement of 12 August 1971 stated: "This Treaty is not against anyone, it is meant to be a factor in developing friendship and good-neighobourliness, in keeping with the principles of the UN Charter." Foreign Minister Swaran Singh said in the Lok Sabha (Indian Parliament), while laying a copy of the Treaty on the Table of the House, on 9 August, 1971:

"We hope that this Treaty will provide a pattern for similar treaties between India and other countries of this region. Such treaties between countries of this region would stabilise peace and strengthen their independence and sovereignty."

Alas, this hope was not fulfilled, except in our Treaty with Bangladesh. But even with Bangladesh, we did not make full use of it. We did not make adquate efforts to pursue this idea with other countries of the region. They were, most of them, afraid of displeasing China or America, but we could have pursued the idea with patience and perseverance. It is time we do so now.

As for America, when Indira Gandhi reached Washinghton, at the end of October, 1971, Nixon in his welcome speech at the White House said that the two largest democracies of the world did not need any formal agreements to cement their ties. These were hollow words uttered to hoodwink us. Nixon was already giving all kinds of weapons to Pakistan, in spite of the 1965 ban which was still operative. Soon thereafter, he suspended econo-

mic aid to India and set up the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG) under Henry Kissinger. Kissinger told the Group, as revealed by Jack Anderson: "I am getting hell every half hour from the President that we are not being tough enough on India . . . He wants to tilt in favour of Pakistan."

Coming back to the Treaty, far from violating the principles of non-alignment, it expressly states in Article IV: "The USSR respects India's policy of non-alignment and reaffirms that this policy constitues an important factor in the maintenance of universal peace and international security and in the lessening of tensions in the world."

Article VIII obliges both contracting parties "not to enter into or participate in any military alliance directed against the other party . . . . and to prevent the use of its territory for the commission of any act which might inflict military damage on the other party." This is in keeping with India's policy of non-alignment and a gain from her point of view, in as much as it commits the Soviet Union to a specific obligation in favour of India. In fact, there was a long discussion on this Article, which was proposed by us. The same is the case with Article X, which obliges each party "not to enter into any obligation, secret or public . . . . which might cause military damage to the other party."

Apart from these Articles, the Treaty provides for 'regular contacts' (Article V), besides economic, scientific and technological cooperation (Articles VI and VII). These have proved their worth in the decade since the Treaty was signed. However, for a short period when the Janata Government was in power (1977-1979), adequate contacts were not maintained at all levels. There was a cooling of the close relations. An attempt was made to weaken Indo-Soviet friendship by qualifying the concept of non-alignment with such words as 'genuine' or 'proper' and equating it with neutrality or 'equi-distance' from the two super powers. Both sides are now trying to revive the previous relationship of close mutual consultations, exchange of information and assessments and improvment of bilateral cooperation in various fields.

The Treaty acquires added significance and importance for India, in view of the impending large-scale induction of sophisticated weapons by America and China into Pakistan. It is all

the more important, both for India and the USSR, to give greater meaning and content to the Treaty, in view of the situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, the Gulf and Indochina. The situation in these areas can pose a serious threat to both India and the Soviet Union, and to the region as a whole. The new US Administration's pronouncements and some of their actions are of serious concern to India. The bellicose declarations from Beijing pose a threat to Indochina and the USSR. It is better to have a reliable friend than a doubtful ally.

The time has come when India should seriously consider entering into similar treaties with the non-aligned countries of this region. Asia is a large continent and it will not be possible to bring in all countries in one treaty. That could be done later, when feasible. But a start could be made by entering into such treaties with those who are willing. It would help create confidence among the smaller countries of the region and discourage great power interference. This was evisaged by India, at the time of signing the Indo-Soviet Treaty in 1971. The time is long overdue when we should make a serious move in this direction.

India is at the crossroads of this whole region and, strategically, and geopolitically the fulcrum of any arrangement for peace, security and development in this area. It is, therefore, for India to take the initiative in this regard and not wait for the great powers to suck non-aligned countries within their respective orbits, as is beginning to happen already.

CHAPTER 29

INDO-US RELATIONS (1951-61)

What is wrong in India's relations with America? Nothing, and yet almost everying. There is no direct conflict of national interests. There is a large measure of commonality of ideals and beliefs. 'The two largest democracies of the world' is a phrase heard often enough. It reminds one of the '*Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai*' (Indians and Chinese are brothers) slogan in the 1954-56 period. Both slogans became trite and ceased to be meaningful. Why?

Perhaps part of the reason is that India expected too much of and from America, more than we did from any other country. America had given moral and political support to India's struggle for freedom. President Roosevelt had pleaded and intervened with the British, although it did not have much effect. The American people and media had been even more sympathetic. It was natural, though somewhat naive, for Independent India to expect greater understanding and support from a country like America, which had also broken away from British imperialism and colonialism. But that was 170 years earlier, and by 1947, the US policy had undergone much change.

Some of our revolutionaries like Har Dayal and others had taken refuge from British oppression in California and formed the *Ghadar* (Revolutionary) Party there. J. J. Singh was more moderate, but took a cue from Krishna Menon in London, in forming the India League of America. More than anything or anybody else, Gandhi's name struck a chord in the hearts and minds of American intellectuals and blacks. Nehru aroused mixed feelings of admiration as well as suspicion—admi-

ration for his bold humanistic approach and suspicion of his socialistic bent of mind. There was interest in India's ancient culture and civilisation. Swami Vivekananda's visit to America and his address at the World Religions Congress in Chicago, in 1893, had made a deep impression on the minds of many Americans. His visit encouraged many *Swamis* and *Yogis* to go to the USA Some of them, such as Swami Ram and Mahesh Yogi, have done good work and attracted many disciples and followers. Rabindranath Tagore's poems had created a stir in literary circles in the twenties.

All this provided fertile ground for the development of Indo-American relations, when India achieved independence in 1947. Many American missionaries in India such as Rev. Stanley Jones, Sam Higginbottom and others, had done excellent work in the field of education, medicine and agriculture. The medical colleges and hospitals in Ludhiana and Vellore are standing monuments to their good work.

What then clouded the seemingly bright prospects of Indo-American relations? From 1947 to 1949, they looked good, but were marred because the US Administration looked at India through British eyes. They thought Britain knew this area better and were guided by her advice. This "third eye view" created problems and difficulties, because Britain had not quite got over its loss of the empire and wanted to retain its influence over the sub-continent. British writers and politicians revived the 'vacuum theory', the concept of 'wells of power', spheres of influence which had been eroded in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Our first difference with the US Administtation arose over the question of Kashmir. On the advice of the British and American Governments, India went in good faith to the UN with a complaint of aggresion against Pakistan. But the Anglo-American 'experts' converted it into an Indo-Pak 'dispute' and enlarged its scope. Instead of asking Pakistan to vacate the areas forcibly and illegally occupied by it in the State of Jammu and Kashmir which had duly acceeded to India, they succeeded in imposing a ceasefire and appointing a UN Kashmir Commission. This was a device to bring both Pakistan and India under Anglo-American influence and if India proved 'obdurate' to weaken her by supporting Pakistan. This is exactly what happened.

India has not claimed any Pakistani territory. She accepted Partition as the price for independence and respects Pakistan as a sovereign Independent State. But she cannot yield to military or political pressure or the obscurantist forces of religious fanaticism, to give up any part of her own territory, in Kashmir or elsewhere.

Unfortunately, the British did not realise the force and strength of Indian nationalism. The Americans, though more sensitive to it, were misguided by their British friends and allies in the beginning.

Later, as leadership of the Western world was thrust upon the shoulders of the USA, it adopted a blatantly anti-Communist policy and tried to join as many new and old independent countries within its chain of military alliances. Those like Nehru, who refused to join either of the two hostile great power blocs, were regarded as crypto-communists, even though they dealt firmly with the communists in their own countries. It was the period of John Foster Dulles, who regarded non-alignment as 'immoral' and said in effect 'those who are not with us are against us'. Pakistan, which was willing to join SEATO and CENTO, received large-scale military grants which upset the military and strategic balance on the sub-continent. This, combined with the US partisan attitude on such matters of vital concern to India as Kashmir, created disappointment and resentment against the US Administration in India.

To add to it, differences arose between India and the USA over the recognition of the People's Republic of China and the conflict in Indochina. In the U N, America took the side of its allies, even on such matters as decolonisation and *apartheid*, from 1947 to 1960. India took the lead against the colonial powers and South Africa. This not only embarrassed but angered people like John Foster Dulles who were formulating the US foreign policy at that time.

Nehru was not a man who would sell his country or policies to any other country, however great and powerful. He tried his best to strengthen the non-aligned movement, Afro-Asian cooperation, and the struggle against colonialism and *apartheid*. India's influence in the Third World grew and Nehru tried to use it for peace and relaxation of international tension. America had to recognise this at the Geneva Conference on Indochina

in 1954, when India was asked to be the Chairman of the three Indochina Commissions in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. The US Administration had also to accept India's peaceful and mediatory role in Korea where India was invited to be the Chairman of the N N R C (Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission).

It seemed in the mid-fifties as if India and America could perhaps come to terms about their respective regional and global roles and policies. This impression was further srengthened by the role India and America played in the Suez crisis, in 1956, when they persuaded France and the UK to accept Egypt's sovereignty over the canal and withdraw their aggressive forces from there.

Economic and technical cooperation, trade and commerce between the two countries started picking up and America became India's largest trading partner, replacing Britain. This was a natural development between two large countries like the USA and India whose economies and technologies were complementary and not competitive, unlike Japan's.

Unfortunately, even this upward trend was arrested because American multinational companies tried to dictate terms and impose their own patterns on India. For instance. when India wanted to set up a steel plant at Bokaro in the public sector, America refused to cooperate unless the plant was put in the private sector and we agreed to have a turn-key plant in which Indian technological expertise would play little effective role. The Soviets were wiser and responded to India's request which had been rejected by the Americans. The U S did not like India to have close economic or political relations with the socialist countries in general and the Soviet Union, in particular. But their actions and policies drove India more and more towards the Soviet Union and the socialist countries.

Instead of appreciating or accepting India's desire to have a strong public sector, especially in the field of heavy industry, the U S tried to impose their own concept of a free-market economy dominated by the private sector. Even in the private sector, they insisted on having majority share and control which was against Government of India's industrial policy resolution of 1956. They discouraged trade with developing countries like

India by imposing stiff tariff and quota barriers. They were also against the import of non-traditional or semi-processed or manufactured goods from countries like India and gave preference to Japan, Italy and other developed countries.

The US Commerce Secretary, Dent, told me frankly, during a discussion in 1975. that they had reserved 96% of some of the simple manufactured goods for their 'traditional' trading partners in the developed world. Only 4% import quota was available to the whole of the developing world, although we produced better goods and at cheaper prices in some cases such as flat ware, stainless steel, readymade garments etc.

In contrast, the Soviets were more sensitive to the trading patterns and requirements of India. They agreed to the Rupee Payment Agreement, under which we paid for all imports from the USSR through our exports, on a long-term basis. Credits were offered ranging from 5 to 8 to 12 and even to 15 years with 3 years' grace period and an interest rate of only $2\frac{1}{2}$% to 8%. Their prices were generally more reasonable than those of the US, even in items which the US was willing to supply. The US would not sell us military equipment and machinery which the Soviets did. The result was that our economic and technical cooperation with the USSR increased rapidly, while it remained comparatively stationary with the USA. Also, our pattern of trade with the Soviets developed so that the bulk of our exports to them (ranging up to 60%) consisted of manufactured and semi-processed goods. With the USA most of our trade is still confined to traditional goods like jute, textiles, cashew nuts, tea, handicrafts etc. However, there is much greater scope for development of Indo-US trade in engineering goods, accessories, spare parts etc. and of technological cooperation, if the US is prepared to liberalise some of her import and export policies and the terms and conditions of transfer of resources and technology *vis-a-vis* the developing world.

The main difficulty in dealing with the US is their belief that India is predominantly dependent on them for economic aid. The very concept of 'aid' is wrong. Aid is not grant or charity but credits on long terms with low rates of interest. In most cases, it is tied up with using American equipment, transport and shipping. In some cases, such as 'food aid' under P L-480, it created a huge Rupee account in favour of the US

which became an irritant in our relations. Also, President Johnson's 'ship to mouth' food supplies policy in the sixties was shortsighted and tantamount to a 'carrot and stick' approach. It proved counter-productive. It gave a bad name to the US because food was used as a political weapon to put pressure on India to change her policy towards Vietnam and the communist countries. It also deterred India from launching her own food self-sufficiency drive and lulled us into a feeling of complacency. Of course, this was our own fault and we cannot blame the US for it.

The US PL-480 funds in India accumulated and assumed alarming proportions. It was suspected by Indian circles that these funds were being misused for US intelligence and subversion in this area. It took many years to get this irritant out of the way. I recall telling Nixon, when I had a private chat with him after the presentation of my credentials, on 14 June 1973, that this irritant of PL-480 funds must be got out of the way. One of the very few suggestions he accepted was this one. A settlement about these funds was eventually reached in 1974-75.

When I was Ambassador to the USA, I said it publicly and privately that what India wanted was 'trade, not aid'. I addressed a hundred universities and colleges, scores of press conferences (including the National Press Club and the Overseas Press Club in Washingtion, D. C.), Chambers of Commerce, World Affairs and Foreign Relations Councils, during my three and a half years' tenure of office in the USA. I appeard on CBS (Face the Nation), ABC (To-Day) the PBS and other TV channels and networks. I spoke at prestigious clubs like the Executive Club of Chicago, Asia Society, New York and the Commonwealth Club, San Francisco. I met editors at Sao Paolo, St. Louis, San Diego, Los Angeles, Mineapolis, Boston, Dallas and elsewhere. I used to spend half the month travelling and visited 45 of the 50 States in the USA. The British Ambassador admitted to me that I had beaten his record. Everywhere I went, I tried to emphasise the need to develop Indo-US trade and mutual understanding of each other's problems. The people were responsive.* But the U S

* I recall visiting Prof. Salk's institute in San Diego in 1976. I was greatly impressed. We visited his home and his wife's studio. Mrs. Salk is

Administration was not too keen to develop trade with us, except on its own terms. Some Indians feel that the U S wants to keep India dependent on 'aid', so that India may not be able to follow her independent policies. This will only drive India away from the U S to other friends. As long as America regards India as a 'beggar' nation and does not treat her as a partner in trade and economic cooperation, economic relations between the two will not prosper. In fact, they will only become irritants and prevent cooperation in other fields.

I quote below verbatim an anonymous letter dated May 14, 1974, from "American Taxpayer" that I received as Ambassador in Washington. He had enclosed with the letter half a dozen contraceptives. I am quoting this letter only to show to my fellow citizens the feelings among some American taxpayers about India, even though it may give an exaggerated picture.

"My dear Ambassador:

I trust your Office is organized adequately for you to consider the urgent need suggested by the enclosed—may be it should have been sent to your father.

My long-smouldering desire to help India and other over-populated areas became fire last night on viewing NBC's Chancellor's footage and comments on hunger in your and other areas.

He as perhaps you and millions of others is duped by the wrong priorities : the attached is No. 1, not food, which should have been obvious. One doesn't start building a bridge by trying to hang the span on the sky. One begins with pier foundations.

One begins to solve your hunger problem by limiting population.

Even if I had all the money in the world, I wouldn't help feed any other people at least until their families were as small as mine : 3 kids.

You ought to be ashamed of yourself for trying to make me feel guilty. But then you are probably incapable of shame."

* Francoise Gillot (the author of *Life with Picasso*). She hates all kinds of cruelty and told me about a dream she hed after marrying Dr. Salk. She saw a long line of mice praying to her "Please save us from being killed by your husband?" They both visited India, at the end of 1976, when Dr. Salk received the 'Nehru Award'.

However, it is no use blaming only the US. The fault is as much ours, if not more. Why can we not make better use of our natural resources and human talents and skills ? We have the third largest number of trained scientific and technical personnel in the world. Why can we not utilise them in our own country and why do they have to go abroad and seek employment there? The brain-drain is something that should set us thinking. It is not America's fault, but our own lack of imagination and effort that lead to this colossal loss of brain power which has been trained at the expense of the Indian tax-payer.

Unless and until India is able to stand on her own feet, and stops begging for 'aid' from America, our relations cannot improve to any significant degree. But when India becomes strong and stable in the economic, political and defence fields, America will have to attach greater priority and importance to Indo-US relations. At present, we are very low on their list of priorities, while they feature very high on ours. This unbalanced and unequal relationship between 'the two largest democracies in the world cannot endure. It will have to change, for better or worse. It cannot remain static.

CHAPTER 30

INDO-US RELATIONS (1961-71)

Indo-US relations present a picture of misunderstandings, miscalculations and missed opportunities. This became even clearer, between 1961 and 1971, than it had in the previous decade. The U.S. made attempts to bolster Pakistan against India through injection of large doses of military equipment. The shock of this had been somewhat softened by the assurances given by Eisenhower to Nehru that the U.S. arms to Pakistan were meant to contain international communism and would not be used against India.

Eisenhowever's visit to India, in 1957 and 1959, and the very warm reception given to him created hopes of some improvement in Indo-US relations. These hopes were sustained partly by the economic assistance America gave to India, and the absence of any military conflict between India and Pakistan, from 1950 to 1965. However, this did not lead to any significant improvement in the political field because the US Administration continued to take an anti-Indian attitude and to support Pakistan's position on the Kashmir question, in and outside the U.N.

The 1961-71 decade led to further deterioration of relations between the two countries, except for a brief period during John Kennedy's Presidency. The strong denunciation by the US Administration of India's action to liberate Goa, not only surprised but shocked the Indian Government and public. The British and US opposition to India's action was in sharp

contrast to the support given by the Soviet Union on Goa and the Kashmir question.

America and Britain shut their eyes to the long history of India's struggle for freedom. India had won her independence from Britain through a peaceful, non-violent struggle. The French had agreed to withdraw from their three small colonies (Pondicherry, Chandernagore and Mahe) gracefuly, soon after the British withdrawal. But the Portuguese refused to agree to the patient and peaceful pleas of India for 14 long years to withdraw from Goa, Daman and Diu—the 3 colonial blemishes left on the face of free India.

Instead of appreciating India's peaceful and patient efforts, the Anglo-American allies of Portugal criticised India. India had to send her forces into Goa, to stop the massacre of unarmed Goans and people from the adjoining State of Maharashtra and the bombardment of the Indian coast by Potuguese warships.

I was posted in London, at the time, and was asked by BBC TV to appear in an interview with Richard Dimbleby on their live Panorama programme. When I asked Dimbleby, in reply to his question, how the British Government and people would react to a foreign power committing atrocities on their peaceful people in Birmingham or Manchester, he replied, "Sir, I am here to ask *you* questions and not to answer *yours*." I retorted "because you can't". Later he admitted to me the justness of our action and I received many congratulatory letters from both Indians and Britons.

I am mentioning this to emphasise the wide gap between British public opinion and the British Government at the time. It was almost as wide as that between the U.S. Administration's policy and the U.S. public opinion during the Bangladesh crisis. Governments are often way behind public opinion, in most countries. If only public opinion could be mobilised more effectively, in between General Elections, and make its voice heard, Governments would be compelled to change some of their outdated policies. Unfortunately, there is often a long time-lag. Politicians whose lust for power is insatiable are insensitive to the loss of a few thousand human lives, in order to keep themselves in power. This is what happened in regard to US policy towards Vietnam and Cambodia.

Coming back to Indo-US relations, I recall the statement of US Secretary of State, Christian Herter, regarding China's illegal and forcible occupation of Indian Aksai Chin. He said it was a far off place in which America was not interested. It reminded me of an earlier statement by Neville Chamberlain, the Brttish Prime Minister, regarding Czechoslovakia in 1938. . . 'that far off land, those strange people. . ."

US policy is often a mixture of *ad hocism* and their short-term perception of American security interests. More than a year is spent in the US Presidential election campaign and about a year in settling down after the election is over. In between hardly two years are left to chalk out long-term policies. Events overtake them, crises arise and are dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis. And so policy-making in the USA goes on from crisis to crisis, in spite of all their paraphernalia, computers and data banks. It is unfortunate, but it is a fact of US life. I have seen it at first hand in many instances—relating both to US domestic as well as foreign policy.

Unless a dynamic President, with vision and imagination comes to the White House, the US Administration will go along the beaten track, 'from precedent to precedent'. A US President who is average or mediocre becomes a prisoner of his bureaucratic advisers who wield colossal power without responsibility to anyone, except the President. This may be true of most Heads of Governments—but at least in parliamentary, democracies, they are accountable to their parliaments which keep them on their toes, all the time. Also, and perhaps more significantly, the impact of this defect in the less important countries is not so great on other countries, as in the case of a world power such as the USA.

The USA is a colossus that is capable of doing great good to or inflicting incalculable damage on other countries. So is the USSR; but there, at least, the President, the General-Secretary of the Party and the Prime Minister are subject to the Politbureau. Only when a single autocratic leader, like Stalin, combines in his person two important posts of Party Secretary-General and Prime Minister, is he capable of causing grave damage. A leader like Brezhnev, on the other hand, who is sensitive to the hopes and aspirations of his own people and the need for *detente* and peace, is capable of relaxing international

tensions, as he proved in reaching SALT I Agreement with the US as also the Helsinki Accord. It is perhaps not appreciated in the US Administration that Brezhnev's successors may become tougher. Brezhnev offers the last chance for achieving SALT II and *detente* for many years to come.

Unfortunately, the US has thrown up no outstanding leader since Franklin Roosevelt. John Kennedy had the makings of a great President. His assassination, in 1963, was a great loss not only to America but to the whole world. I remember attending a memorial service in his honour in a Moscow Church where Khruschev also came. There were tears in his eyes and he felt it almost as a personal loss. He had sized up the young President in Vienna, in 1961, as a tough man but with a vision of the world which Khruschev admired.

Kennedy's departure from the scene was a great blow to Indo-US relations. He had in his State of the Union Message delivered before Congress, on 30 January 1961, praised "the soaring idealism of Nehru" which no US President has done since. His wife, Jacqueline, captivated the hearts of many Indians, when she came to India, in early 1962. If Kennedy had lived, it is possible that our relations with the US would have been put on an even keel, on the basis of mutual respect and understanding.

However, even John Kennedy became a prisoner of his circumstances, to some extent. His Bay of Pigs adventure was a fiasco. But his statesmanship prevented the Cuban crisis from escalating into a thermonuclear holocaust. His attitude to the Sino-Indian war of 1962 was sympathetic to India. But some of his advisers tried to use it as a lever to put pressure on India; they failed. It was an opportunity America could have utilised to bring India closer to herself, but she missed it. The US Administration tried to tie India down in a joint defence pact with Pakistan, which went directly against India's policy of non-alignment and peace. Instead of appreciating India's potential value and strategic importance, US experts treated us as if we were a client State and wanted us to make impossible concessions to Pakistan on Kashmir.

When a country, especially with a proud and ancient civilization like that of India, is in difficulty, she appreciates gestures of friendship but reacts sharply to any attempts to put

pressure on her. This is how the opportunity was lost. To safeguard her security, India had, of necessity, to go to the Soviet Union, to buy essential military equipment, which the Americans were not willing to supply even at this critical juncture of Indian history.

What was significant was that, in spite of being a socialist country, the USSR eventually sided with non-aligned India and not with its socialist brother, China.

I recall a conversation with Khruschev in this regard. He told me that China was their brother and India their friend. How could they take sides in the Sino-Indian quarrel? I replied: "If my brother hits my friend, I shall not watch silently but do something about it." Khruschev smiled and said, "Ah, China is not such a small brother. But we shall see what we can do. We have been telling them since 1959 not to fight with India."

Of course, the Soviets had their own quarrels with China. They helped India because it was in their own interest to do so. But why could not America see it in a similar light? The Sino-US thaw had not yet started—it had to wait till Nixon came to power in his second term of office. India was like a 'brother' to America, in the Khruschevian sense; China was far from being their 'friend' at the time. Why then did America prevaricate, hesitate and vacillate in taking the one step that would have won the hearts of all Indians, i.e. promise to sell India weapons she badly needed to defend herself against the Chinese threat?

India was capable of defending herself without any foreign troops or bases on her soil. It would not have involved the US troops on the ground. And yet the US put conditions on their help which a non-aligned Independent India could not accept. Was it because the US Administration considered Pakistan a better 'friend' whom they could twist and turn as they liked? Was it because America did not like non-aligned India to gain any clout? If so, it was a very short-sighted policy as future events showed. Or was it the 'parity complex' between India and Pakistan which inhibited them? Perhaps, it was a mixture of all these and other extraneous considerations.

How could you equate India and Pakistan? India was five times the size and population of Pakistan. She had a much longer frontier by land and sea, to defend. She was facing a

threat from China, unlike Pakistan. Or was it that the US Administration was propping up Pakistan deliberately to cut India 'down to size'? In any case, it was a shortsighted policy which could not and did not succeed.

After the 1965 Indo-Pak conflict, when Pakistan could not win, in spite of US Paton tanks and Sabre jets, the US Administration did appear to have second thoughts. It imposed a ban on arms supplies to both India and Pakistan. If they had continued this policy, it is possible that our relations would have improved considerably, both with Pakistan and America. This policy was not only not continued but became even worse against India as Nixon ascended the American throne.

After Kennedy's assassination, President Johnson tried to continue for a while his predecessor's policy. Johnson's domestic policy was much appreciated by his people and others. But his foreign policy swerved to postures of 'toughness' *vis-a-vis* Russia, Vietnam and even India. Johnson was a tough Texan and perhaps believed that he could drive the people of Asia into the American fold as easily as he could the dumb cattle on his ranch. It was not so easy or simple. His policy in Vietnam failed and he had to give up the idea of standing for a second term because U.S. public opinion was against his Vietnam policy.

Towards India, Johnson made some friendly gestures, like attending our Ambassador's dinner in honour of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. But on matters that were of vital interest to us, he continued to be tough. Even on the question of food aid which India badly needed during three successive years of drought and floods in the sixties, he took the grace out of this great gesture by adopting a 'ship to mouth' policy and keeping us hanging on from month to month. On the whole, however, Johnson was not anti-India as his successor Nixon was. Even with regard to the growing relations between India and the Soviet Union, his attitude was pragmatic and not antagonistic like that of Nixon. He tried to adopt a neutral policy between India and Pakistan, after the 1965 conflict, unlike Nixon who was definitely hostile to us, as we shall see in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 31

THE TILT AND AFTER (1971-81)

The rise to power of Richard Nixon, in 1968, created doubts and misgivings in the Indian mind about the future of Indo-US relations. This was only natural, in view of the past record of Nixon, first as a supporter of Senator McCarthy and then as Vice-President. India's fears and suspicions were soon borne out by the tilt in US policy towards Pakistan and against India. From the beginning of 1969 to the end of 1970, the tilt was not open. By the time the Bangladesh crisis started, in 1971, it could not be concealed.

Many factors contributed to this deterioration of Indo-US relations. As Sino-Indian and Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated, India and the USSR developed closer relations. Nixon took advantage of the Sino-Soviet differences and started flirting with Peking. He also put greater emphasis on US relations with Pakistan and tried to give it stronger teeth. He tried to make Iran a strong bastion of US influence, in the Gulf. He became cool towards India and tried to bolster Pakistan and Iran as a counter to India.

Differences over Vietnam further strained Indo-US relations. Nixon's policy of suppressing the forces of nationalism in Vietnam led to increased US involvement on the ground. His support to Lon Nol in Cambodia resulted in the ouster of Prince Sihanouk, in 1970. Nixon was assisted in carrying out these policies by Henry Kissinger, his National Security Adviser.

India criticised this aggressive trend in US policy in South-East Asia. India also led the non-aligned world in its opposition to building US bases in the Indian Ocean. Nixon did not like India's criticism because it clashed with his global policy of wanting to be the world's policeman everywhere and the super power Number One. There was a fundamental clash between Nixon's America as a global super power and Indira Gandhi's India,as a middle regional power. No amount of sweet talk or common ideals could paper this crack.

I recall a conversation with Henry Kissinger, in his basement office at the White House in 1969, when, as Foreign Secretary, I visited Washington for bilateral talks. He expressed his differences with the State Department on various matters. When I tried to pin him down to concrete issues, he went into general policies. However, on Vietnam he was more specific. He said he would like to have a dialogue with North Vietnam and asked if India could help. I asked him what his President meant by 'Vietnamising the *war*'. Would it not be better to 'Vietnamise the *peace*' ? I asked. Instead of encouraging the North and South Vietnamese to fight each other, would it not be better to encourage them to negotiate a peaceful, political settlement ? He said he would put it to his President. A day later he told me that the President would not bite it.

Kissinger was still keen to talk to the North Vietnamese leaders and I said we would convey the message to them. He was simultaneously trying through the French.

Next day, when I talked to Secretary Rogers and his colleagues in the State Department, they seemed unaware of Kissinger's plans. Kissinger was a dangerous man to deal with. He said one thing to some and quite a different thing to others. He carried on his own personal diplomacy to serve his and his President's policy. He talked like a dove but acted as a hawk. The man's word could not be relied upon, only his deeds would show what he had in mind.

It soon became evident that Nixon was basically opposed to the Soviet Union and the non-aligned policy of India. He wanted to encircle the Soviet Union and contain its friends, such as India. He tried to do this by building up the Diego Garcia base in the Indian Ocean, flooding Iran with sophisticated weapons and military advisers, helping Pakistan directly

and through other States (Iran, Saudi Arabia and some of the Gulf countries) to become a military counter-weight to India. As Baldev Raj Nayar of McGill University has said in his book '*American Geopolitics and India* (*Manohar 1976*) : "Were India a smaller state in area and population, and were it not a successor to a historic civilization, it would perhaps have been easier for it to pursue a 'loyalist' course or assume a satellite role in relation to the United States . . . Confronted by the United States with its enormous will to power and domination, India has had to struggle desperately to maintain its independence and integrity. Thus, an adversary relation has been built into the logic of the situation of contact between an ambitious and expansive global power and a middle power anxious to preserve its independence and autonomy in international affairs."

Even in the economic sphere "the US refused to provide such aid as would help in the building of an independent centre of power in India . . . the US endeavoured to use economic aid (read loans) as a lever to influence India's foreign policy . . . To secure greater assurance in terms of its security concerns in relation to China, India developed a close relationsip with the Soviet Union. As a consequence, near the end of the 1960's, the US downgraded India's importance in its foreign policy concerns, reduced its foreign aid spending in India and, finally, terminated it." (*ibid*)

Nixon paid a hurried visit to New Delhi, in 1970, on his way from Guam, after propounding the Nixon doctrine. There was hardly any meeting of minds between him and Indira Gandhi. On his return to the U. S., he adopted a new approach of using "a concert of powers—the U. S., China, Iran and Pakistan—to catch India in a security crunch inside a nutcracker coalition" (*ibid*). Nayar concludes: "It is thus not only fallacious but also farcical to claim that there is no conflict of interests between the two countries."

This was true so far as Nixon's America was concerned. But it is not necessarily true for all time to come. It is a short-term judgement which was true during the Nixon period and may even hold true for some time more, but it should not cloud our judgement for ever.

The world situation has changed much, since India became

independent in 1947. There is not only one super power but two, both with huge arsenals of nuclear weapons. Nuclear capability is not confined only to the five great powers. India has it and Pakistan is also trying to have it, apart from several other countries. Vietnam is a united socialist non-aligned country at war with China which was her ally in the sixties and seventies. Sino-Indian, Sino-Soviet and Sino-Vietnamese relations are still strained and far from being normalised. Kampuchea and Laos are closer to Vietnam than to China or the ASEAN. Japan is coming closer, as America and Western Europe are, toward China.

In West Asia, the Arabs are split into three groups—Egypt, which is by itself close to America and trying to settle differences with Israel, the moderate Arab States which are anti-Israel but pro-America; the more radical Arabs, who are anti-Egypt, anti-Israel and closer to the Soviet Union than to America. Iran has gone through one revolution and is in the throes of another. It is no longer the bastion of America in the region. It is fiercely nationalistic and Islamic—unlike Pakistan whose military rulers use Islam to suppress nationalism and maintain themselves in power. The Iraq-Iran war has split the Islamic bloc. Afghanistan has had two revolutions and is trying to consolidate itself but not with any significant success so far.

The situation today is very different from what it was in 1971. America is trying to substitute Pakistan as its surrogate in place of the Shahs' Iran. It is arming Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, acquiring new military bases in Kenya, Somalia and the Gulf, besides strengthening its base in Diego Garcia and the Simonstown base in South Africa. It is stationing a Rapid Deployment Force in the area and thinking of shifting its Fifth Fleet more or less on a permanent basis to the region. Is America going to succeed in its plans any better in the eighties than it did in the seventies ?

In 1971, America made a break-through in its relations with mainland China. Nixon went there in 1972 and signed the Shanghai Communique under which he virtually agreed to treat South-East and South Asia as falling within the Chinese sphere of influence. In 1971, Nixon's tilt towards Pakistan encouraged that country to step up its atrocities in Bangladesh and provoke

India into a war. The result was quite the opposite of what Nixon had desired. Bangladesh became independent and Pakistan suffered a decisive defeat from India. Nixon was forced to resign because of the revelations of Watergate, but his basic policies were continued by Ford and Kissinger.

After making some empty gestures towards India, such as calling it the 'Predominant power in South Asia', welcoming The Simla Agreement and the Simla spirit, Kissinger resumed Nixon's policy of bolstering Pakistan again. First, he lifted the ban on the export of arms to Pakistan; he ignored the protests of India that it would lead to an arms race and obstruct the normalisation process between Pakistan and India, which had started at Simla in 1972. Then, the enriched uranium supplies for India's nuclear power plant at Tarapore were deliberately delayed. Economic aid to India, which had been suspended in 1971, was resumed only in name.

Kissinger made brave speeches, during his visit to India in October 1974, but their hollowness was soon exposed when he lifted the arms embargo on Pakistan in February 1975, soon after Bhutto's visit to Washington. This was done in indecent haste and he would not even wait for our Foreign Minister, Chavan, to visit Washington the following month. This showed how little the US Administration cared for India's susceptibilities. It also revealed the credibility gap in US promises.

As Ambassador, I had to speak strongly in public against this in Washington D. C. Kissinger found my statement 'unacceptable' but so did my Government find his statement 'unacceptable'. Chavan cancelled his visit. Relations went down to a very low level. I asked for a meeting with President Ford, to point out the serious consequences of the proposed step. I was told by two of Ford's senior advisers he would be glad to see me. But Kissinger advised Ford not to see me. Not that my meeting with Ford would have changed the situation, but it showed how far Kissinger could go, when he felt his credibility had been openly exposed.

Kissinger tried to make up with me, soon afterwards, but it was of little use. Relations between two big countries such as India the USA are not based on personal relations. I was quite cool after this and had little faith in Kissinger's words. I had told him, during his visit to India in October 1974, that India

would judge his great statements by his deeds and actions. His deeds, and actions were indeed the opposite of what he had said. He may think he is a clever man—and he is—but cleverness and cunning do not pay in the long run, either in personal or international relations. He was not dealing with a third-rate country, a satellite or client State whom he could alternately coax and threaten. He was dealing with India which lacked neither in intelligence nor courage.

During the Carter regime, things improved slightly but again his adviser, Brzezinsky, proved as bad as, Kissinger if not worse. Carter tried to sell the doctrine of 'equi-distance from the super powers' to the Janata Government which had ousted the Indira Gandhi Government from power in 1977. The same doctrine had been offered by Nixon to Indira Gandhi but she had rejected it. The Janata Government was tempted by it for a while and tried to sell it to the country, but failed. The loud American declarations of 'welcoming restoration of democracy' in India under Janata rule sounded empty and meaningless in the light of the American build-up in the Indian Ocean and their wooing of totalitarian China and the military dictatorship in Pakistan.

1980 saw the return of Indira Gandhi to power. She affirmed Nehru's policy of non-alignment and peace. She refused to swim with the main current of criticism against the Soviet Union, inspired by the US, China and the Islamic bloc, in regard to the Afghan situation and took an independent attitude. She accepted the realities of the situation in Kampuchea and recognised the Heng Samrin Government. She invited Brezhnev to India and his visit led to closer economic and political co-operation. She maintained links with other non-aligned countries, to find peaceful solution to the Afghan situation and the Iran-Iraq conflict.

All this did not fit in with the short-sighted and bellicose policies of the ruling circles in the USA.

With President Reagan in the White House and Alexander Haig in 'Foggy Bottom' (as the State Department is perhaps aptly described in Washington D.C.), the prospects for Indo-US relations are grim. Even the fig leaf of 'anti-communism' has now been lifted from the spectre of large-scale supply of sophisticated US weaponry to Pakistan. The reported figures (3 to 5 billion

dollars) exceed anything in the past and when calculated at the concessional prices given to Pakistan, assume frightful proportions. Even the Symington Amendment prohibiting economic and military aid to a country intending a nuclear blast is being changed to meet Pakistan's demands. This is in sharp contrast to the breach of contract with India regading the supply of enriched uranium for its Tarapore power plant, even under safeguards.

If Reagan and Haig are bent upon bolstering Pakistan militarily in this fashion and at this rate, when Pakistan is on the threshold of a nuclear blast, India cannot be expected to smile and say nothing, to sit idle and watch. If the US Administration does not realise the potential of India and its strategic importance and goes all-out to neutralise India's strength and capability, the immediate future of Indo-American relations is indeed dark. If India does not talk frankly to the US Administration, it will be failing its own national interests and those of peace, security and stability in the region.

India is pro-India but not anti-America. America has every right to be pro-America but it need not be anti-India. The indications, as of now, are that the short-range sights of the US administration are unlikely to overcome their blinkers and see the worth of India's friendship, until they fail again, as they have done in the past, in this region. The immediate effect of arming an unpopular unstable military regime like that of Pakistan will be that the people's voice there will be stifled, US arms will be used to suppress the people. Pakistani rulers will not dare attack Afghanistan which has Soviet support and presence. But a misguided military dictatorship may feel tempted to divert the attention of its own people and that of the outside world from its internal troubles by embarking on a military misadventure against India, as it did in 1965 and 1971—with disastrous consequences to itself.

India cannot afford to look with equanimity on the grave situation that is developing around her. We must be prepared for all eventualities. Eventualy when the US Administration realise its mistake of arming Pakistan and other countries with sophisticated weapons, she will change or revise her policies. But that will take time. Meanwhile, we have to be prepared for a period of the US Administration's coolness and even

hostility towards India and strengthen our own defences with the help of friends we can rely on, who see the new situation in a similar light as we do.

In the long run, however, the prospects of Indo-US relations are not gloomy, if India becomes economically strong, politically stable and is able to defend her integrity and sovereignty. Then and then alone will America's rulers appreciate India's potential and importance in the tnterest of their own security and global interests.

India is not a country that can be ignored by America for long; nor can India afford to ignore America. There has to be mutual understanding and mutual respect based on a correct appraisal of our respective national, regional and global interests. If this mutuality is absent, as seems to be the case at present, our relations will get worse before they can grow better. But when there is this realisation on both sides, relations can and will improve—even if it at be some distant time and not in the immediate future.

CHAPTER 32

EPILOGUE

India's history since Independence represents, in some ways, the trend and direction of events in the world, in general, and this region, in particular. Her Independence had raised hopes of a peaceful transfer of power to the people, in the rest of the colonial world. It took two decades and more to come about; but it was not entirely peaceful or total. Some colonial blemishes still remain on the face of this earth. Forces of neo-colonialism are getting more and not less powerful and are dominating newly independent countries through economic pulls and military pressures.

The world has seen the emergence of nuclear power and nuclear capability, since 1947. The US no longer has the monopoly of the atom bomb. First Russia and then Britain, France and China qualified to join the nuclear club. India has shown she has the capability but has used it exclusively for peaceful purpose so far. Pakistan is on the threshold of a nuclear blast. This may well change the situation in this region. It may either bring Pakistan down to earth, remove the feeling of inferiority complex *vis-a-vis* India, or encourage her to adopt more aggressive postures. Judging by the build-up of increasing nuclear arsenals by the nuclear-weapon powers, it seems unlikely that Pakistan will behave more soberly. If the past record of the military rulers of Pakistan is any guide, the chances are that nuclear capability may go to their head and tempt them to embark on military misadventures.

This poses a serious threat and danger to the peace and

security of this whole region, particularly India. With the new policy of the Reagan-Haig administration, to sell sophisticated arms to Pakistan at basement prices, the danger of tension and conflict in the region is likely to increase and not decrease.

In the circumstances, India will have to be ready for all eventualities and cannot afford to neglect her defences. This will involve more sacrifices and greater hardship for the people of India, but it is unavoidable. The 1980s are likely to be a more difficult decade for this region than the 1970s.

The situation in Iran and Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq conflict, the growing tension in South-East Asia, parts of Africa and Latin America are sparks which can inflame large parts of the world and involve the super and great powers in a war by proxy or even in direct conflict.

The decreasing tempo of *detente*, the increasing tension between China and Russia, on the one hand, and the growing collaboration between Pakistan, China, Japan, USA and the West, on the other, are danger signals of a possible show down in the eighties. The cold war is getting intensified and is bringing within itsfold non-aligned and developing countries in different parts of the world.

Indochina and ASEAN are getting polarised, on the two sides of the cold war. The countries of South Asia, such as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are going Westwards, while Afghanistan is going North. Pakistan is now firmly entrenched in the China-America-Japan axis. Iran is still in the throes of its revolution and it is not yet clear which way she will go. But America is leaving no stone unturned in the Gulf area and Pakistan to have surrogates in place of the late Shah of Iran.

The increasing presence of the U.S. in the Indian Ocean, on the East Coast of Africa and the Gulf, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, its Rapid Deployment Force and the likely positioning of the US Fifth Fleet in the region are alarm signals. They are already leading to an increasing presence of the Soviet Fleet in the area. If anything happens in Iran which is detrimental to Soviet security interests, it is bound to lead to a strong Soviet reaction. In this regard, it is significant to note that the bulk of the Soviet forces in Afghanistan are poised on the Iran-Afghan border. If early steps are not taken by India and other

non-aligned countries to stop interference by Pakistan in Afghanistan, the Soviet troops may get entrenched there permanently and the US forces in the Gulf.

The building of the Karakoram highway through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) and the large Chinese military presence in the area, pose a serious threat to Northern India and Afghanistan. In the East, Chinese influence and control in northern Burma are being consolidated. The same danger exists in northern Nepal with the Kodari-Kathmandu road built by the Chinese to carry medium tanks across its bridges, as in the case of the Karakoram highway. Further East, China's invasion of Vietnam, in 1979, the massing of Chinese troops north of Vietnam and Laos, and the aid being given to Pol Pot's remnant forces across Kampuchea in Thailand, are indications of China's designs and ambitions.

The situatian in the seven North-Eastern States of India—Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Assam—points to dangers, in varying degrees, of outside influence trying to exploit internal fissiparous trends. Even in Bhutan, China is trying to penetrate and increase its influence against India. Tibet is covered with a network of airfields and roads of a strategic nature which can be used against India.

Given this grim scenario, India is faced with a situation that may grow worse and not better in the early eighties. I do not wish to paint an exaggerated picture, but the trends are there for anyone to see. The situation is further compounded by the new hawkish postures of the Reagan-Haig administration. If it should lead to a military misadventure by the present rulers of Pakistan against India, it can create a serious situation for the whole region.

The situation in Pakistan is none too good. The military dictatorship has lost its credibility, in the eyes of the people. Discontent is prevalent everywhere, especially in Baluchistan, Sind and the Frontier province. Even the Punjabi youth, workers and the intelligentsia are dissatisfied. It is an explosive situation. No amount of military injections can save the present regime for long. Should Pakistan break up, the Chinese who are already in virtual control of the northern areas are likely to form a puppet Government in Hunza, Nagar, Chitral, Dir, Swat and the adjoining areas.

What can and should India do in the given situation? First and foremost we must set our own house in order. Fissiparous trends must be countered and defences strengthened. The administration must to toned up and the economy put on a stable footing. The people in general and the youth in particular must be organized on a national basis, in all parts of the country, to help maintain law and order, check corruption and black-marketing, keep an eye on anti-social and anti-national elements and form defence societies, in villages and towns, especially near the border areas. These are measures which need to be taken in any case, whether there is a threat of war or not.

In view of the existing and foreseeable threats that may arise in the near future, we have to ensure that our armed forces are properly and adequately equipped, to meet such threats. It is for serious consideration whether we should not have a combined Chief of Defence Staff to coordinate the plans and operations of the three Armed Services. At present, there seems to be little coordination between them. Similarly there is even less coordination between our defence, home and external policies, at the working level. The need for setting up a National Security Committee to advise and coordinate these is urgent.

In the field of foreign policy, the options we have are limited. While we should certainly engage in diplomatic dialogues with China and the USA, we should have no illusions that they will change their global or regional policies to meet our requirements. We must also engage in a continuing dialogue with Pakistan, but we must never ignore the people of Pakistan whose real interests are the same as ours. However, as long as the present regime is in power, we shall have to deal with it.

There is possibility of improving our relations with our other neighbours, such as Afghanistan, Nepal, Burma, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan and the Maldives. We must redouble our efforts to increase our cooperation with them in all fields and enter into mutual treaties of non-aggression, consultation, trade, transit and economic development.

Iran and the Gulf States present another area where we could further develop our relations; we need not feel shy in taking the initiative. We have a long tradition of friendship, economic and security cooperation with them. With the coun-

tries of South-East Asia, including Indochina, we have trade and transit, cultural, communication and common security interests. There is need to bring all these countries into one organization, to strengthen these ties. India could act as a catalytic agent for this purpose.

With East, North and Central Africa, we have good economic cooperation. It needs to be further increased and buttressed, by agreements based on common security and political interests in the area. With the Arab world, we have longstanding ties of friendship and culture, trade and commerce. These have been further strengthened by our support against Zionism, as against racism in Southern Africa.

We need not be afraid of the Islamic bloc, as long as it is not used against our interests, as Pakistan is trying to do. We have the third largest Muslim population in the world, numbering over eighty millions. Islam is not the monopoly of the Islamic bloc. It is a common heritage of all mankind. Islam could be a bond to further our common interests with the Islamic world and we should encourage its positive trends but resist its exploitation against us by some countries. We should not let our Muslims be misled by the pernicious propaganda of Pakistan and a few other Islamic countries.

With Latin America, we have links of non-alignment and possibilities of developing economic and cultural relations. With the Caribbean and South Pacific countries, we have ethnic, cultural and economic ties that need to be further strengthened.

With Eastern and Western Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, our relations have to be based on a realistic appraisal of the possibilities that exist and the prospects of developing them in future. Our attitude has to be one based on pragmatism and reciprocity.

Our relations with the Soviet Union have withstood the stresses and strains of the international situation, for over two decades, and emerged stronger than before. They are based on a mutuality of interests and commonality of outlook on the major problems of the world. We must not weaken them or allow them to weaken our relations with third countries. At the same time, we must not allow third countries to weaken our relations with the USSR. They have stood by us in times of need and difficulty—on Kashmir, Goa, the Sino-Indian

conflict and the Indo-Pak war of 1971. We must not weaken this strong friendship, for the doubtful gains of a dangling offer from those who have let us down in the past. But if we can win the friendship, of others without weakening our relations with the Soviet Union, we should welcome it. Our relations with any country should not be governed by the dictates or suspicions of a third country. Bilateral relations must be built with all countries, as far as possible, but only on the basis of equality, reciprocity, non-interference, non-aggression and mutual benefit.

Looking at the world in this perspective, it seems as if India and this region are going to face some serious problems and situations in the coming years. But with faith in our common destiny, the determination to avoid war and build peace and cooperation, it is possible to avert the catastrophe that looms large ahead. In spite of the hawkish postures adopted by some world leaders, no one is so stupid as to engulf this one planet of ours in a nuclear holocaust that will doom us all to death and destruction. Dangers of local wars do exist and must not be minimised. But even these could be avoided, at least in this region, by the efforts of a strong, stable, united, non-aligned India and other like-minded countries.

People, especially the younger people, of all countries want peace and not war, friendship and not hatred, cooperation and not conflict. This book has been written for the younger generation in India and the world, who will bear the consequences of what we do now and shoulder the responsibility of saving the world from disaster in the future. It is with faith in them and hope in their ability 'to shape the world nearer to their heart's desire' that I have endeavoured to express some of my experiences and ideas in a forthright way, without mincing my words or camaflouging their meaning.

APPENDIX "A"

"A" and "B" are two Russian engineers in their late thirties. They work in Moscow. Both are married, and acquired two-room appartments in 1958. They are reasonably well off; both husband and wife work and earn about 150 Roubles each per month making a total salary of Roubles 300 or Rs 3000. They are reasonably well dressed, judged by Russian standards, and possess a radio, a refrigerator, a television set, cooking range and the usual amenities. Both couples are well educated but do not belong to the Party or the Komsomol.

The following conversation took place between them, in my, presence, during the last week-end of October, 1964 :

"A" : Russian people want something to believe in. They always had someone to believe in—God, the Czar, then Lenin and then Stalin.

"B" : Not only the Russians, but all human beings want something to believe in.

"A" : Undoubtedly—but Russians, perhaps, more than other people. While Stalin was alive, Russian people believed in him almost as if he was their God. When he died, they wept bitterly not knowing what the future held in store for them. Malenkov tried to achieve popularity through his emphasis on consumer goods; but when Khruschev exposed Stalin and threw out Malenkov, there was a period of uncertainty. Russian people's faith in their leaders and their system was shaken. They could not believe that Stalin, their God,

was fallible. By exposing Stalin, Khrushchev shook the very foundations of Russian faith.

"B" : That is true, but Khrushchev did this with a purpose in mind. He was far inferior to Stalin and not superior to Malenkov. He exposed Stalin and had Malenkov thrown out because he wanted to gain power for himself.

"A" : That is not quite correct. Malenkov, Molotov and Kaganovich were thrown out because they had not obeyed the majority decisions of the Presidium and the Central Committee.. It is, however, true that Khrushchev did not maintain the drumvirate of himself and Bulganin, himself as First Secretary of the Party and Bulganin as Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and combined both offices in himself. It was not so bad because it gave the Russian people another personality in whom were concentrated the chief sources *of power. He was thus able to revive the faith of the* Russian people in their Government, their State and Party; because he was able to speak with authority on behalf of the Party and the Government.

"B" : But he was very crude. Remember his hitting the table with his shoe in the United Nations, in 1960. Remember his uninformed criticism of abstract art last year. Do not forget his mad drive about *kukurozi* (maize). He was uneducated, uncouth and did not deserve to become the Head of a Party and a Government of such a strong and powerful country as the USSR. He made us the laughing stock of the whole world.

"A" : That is being unfair to him. He may have made minor mistakes like the ones you mentioned, but by and large, he made important contributions both to his own country and to the world : Firstly, he carried out a large scale programme of housing construction, and

thanks to him, 60 percent of the Soviet people, not only in Moscow, but in all regions of this country, are now living in new apartments.

"B" : That is his only contribution—

"A" : Now wait a minute. Let me finish. His next contribution was that he emphasised light industries and made available to the people such consumer goods as shoes, textiles, radios, refrigerators, cameras, etc. which no one could afford to have before.

"B" : But Malenkov had also announced this programme. This was nothing peculiar to Khrushchev. Khrushchev provided these consumer goods but at very high prices, so that we can hardly make both ends meet with our combined salaries, at the end of the month.

"A" : It is true that the price policy of Khrushchev's Government was wrong. The prices of agricultural commodities like bread were kept very low, while those of consumer goods were kept deliberately high. Due regard was not paid to the labour that went into the production of agricultural commodities and light industry. For instance, the amount of labour put into the production of 10 kilogrammes of wheat is the same as that for producing 3½ metres of suit-length. And yet the price of the former is only about six Roubles, while the price of the latter is 60 Roubles. Similarly, although Khrushchev imported consumer goods from various countries like Yugoslavia, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, India, Japan and even, Western Europe, their retail prices in the Soviet market were fixed at 5 to 10 times the imported prices. This was wrong. But we should not blame Khrushchev for it. It was the fault of his bureaucracy. All the same, he did make these consumer goods available in fairly large quantities and the Soviet citizen today lives a much better life than he did before.

"B" : That may be so, but the Soviet citizen is also much more discontented today than he was during Stalin's time. Stalin was a strong man. He galvanised the patriotism of the people against the Nazis and it was through our sheer patriotism and not because of our superior weapons that we won the war. He deliberately prevented Russians from going abroad so as to avoid the impression that we had a lower standard of living than others in the outside world. Khrushchev made the mistake of allowing Soviet people to go abroad and when they saw the higher standard of living of other people, they became more and more discontented. Stalin knew how to rule Russian people, but Khrushchev did not.

"A" : But you are not being fair. After all, we cannot live for ever in isolation. Khrushchev's ideas were good; only he needed time to implement them. His third contribution was in removing the Stalinist terror from the people's minds. We couldn't talk like this in Stalin's time. We would have been arrested. But now we can discuss things freely. This would have been impossible in Stalin's time.

"B" : I agree. But I maintain that Khrushchev lowered the prestige of the Soviet Union in the outside world. The outside world was afraid of Stalin and respected the Soviet Union, during his time. Now people outside laugh at Khrushchev. They like him because he is like a buffoon and tickles their sense of humour, but he makes contradictory statements; he talks like a peasant and he does not heed the advice of experts and overrules them.

"A" : That is not quite correct. Khrushchev made the Soviet Union popular in the rest of the world. He made the Communist concept acceptable and respectable, both in the Western world and in the Afro-Asian countries. But his greatest contribution was to strengthen peace and the idea of peaceful co-existence between different social systems. He did not weaken the Soviet Union;

the development of nuclear science and space research made us superior to America and they respect us. Of course, we had to pay a price for it because our standard of living did not rise as much as it should have risen. Khrushchev perhaps boasted a little too much that he would overtake America in 7 years. Our 7-year Plan has not been fulfilled. Everybody knows it and yet he wanted to fix the targets in the next 7-year Plan much higher than the planners advised. He over-ruled them but it was because he aimed high and hoped that his people would be able to fulfil the high targets.

"B": It is not enough to have good intentions. It is not proper to talk and boast as Khrushchev did. Stalin was much better; he spoke only when necessary and he was feared and respected.

APPENDIX "B"

STALIN'S HEIRS

by

Yevgeny Yevtueshenko

The marble stayed silent
    The glass gleamed silently
The guard stood silent,
    Bronzing in the wind.
And the coffin almost steamed
    Breath flowed through a crack,
When they carried him out of the Mausoleum doors.
The coffin slowly shook
    As it brushed the bayonets' point.
He, too was silent—
        He too—
    But threateningly silent.
Sullenly clenching
    His embalmed fists,
A man only feigning death,
Peered through the crack in the coffin.
As if to remember all those,
    Who were carrying him out :
Those young recruits from Ryazan
        and Kursk,
In order, somehow, afterwards
    To gather his strength for a sortie,
And rise from the earth,
    And get at them, the foolish ones.

He has thought something up.
He's only been resting, napping.
So I turn to our Government
With a request,
To double
And triple
The guard at his tombstone;
So that Stalin will not rise,
And with Stalin—
The past.
I am not talking about that holy
And Heroic past
Of the Turksib,
And Magnitka
And the flag over Berlin.
In this case in talking of the past
I have in mind
Forgetting the good of the people,
The slanders,
The arrests of the innocent.
We sowed honestly
We smelted steel honestly,
And we marched honestly
Falling into line as soldiers.
But he feared us.
Believing in the great goal, he did not think
The means
Should be worthy
Of the greatness of the goal.
He was far-seeing.
And wise in the laws of struggle.
He left many heirs on the face
Of the earth.
It seems to me
As though there's a telephone in his coffin.
To Enver Hoxha,
Stalin sends his instructions.
Where else do the wires lead from this coffin?
No, Stalin has not surrendered.

He thinks death
Is curable.
Out of the mausoleum
We ejected
Him.
But how do you eject Stalin
From Stalin's heirs?
Some heirs trim roses in retirement,
And secretly believe,
Their retirement is temporary.
Some
Even curse Stalin from the podium.
Then,
At night,
They yearn for the old days.
Not for nothing are Stalin's heirs today probably
Having heart attacks.
These pillars of their time
Don't like times
When the camps are empty,
And rooms where people listen to poems
are full.
The Party
Has ordered me
Not to rest easy
Though sombody insists
"Take it easy"—I can't be at ease.
While Stalin's heirs are on the earth,
I'll always think
Stalin is still in the mausoleum.

PRAVDA. October 21, 1962.

Translation by H.S. Okun.

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