

# Nehru and Resurgent Africa



Hari Sharan Chhabra

Much has already been written on Jawaharlal Nehru, the charismatic leader and builder of modern India. Naturally, in his birth centenary year there should be such a deep interest in studying and analysing the various facets of Nehru's life, work and seminal thought.

This is, however, a specialised study on Nehru's vision of Africa, an exploited part of the world that was so close to the heart of this humanist and champion of freedom and peace. It reveals how even as a young man, the tragic period of slavery and brutal suppression in Africa moved him so intensely that he started telling the international community of its "special responsibility" towards the peoples of Africa.

After India's independence, his contribution to the process of decolonisation, especially in regard to Kenya, Algeria and Portuguese territories makes a fascinating reading. His voice on the problems of hapless Congo and the tripartite aggression on Egypt after the nationalisation of the Suez Canal was loud and clear. It was a voice of sanity and morality. His words had the breadth of his vision.

Nehru had no doubt in his mind that the obnoxious policy of apartheid was an affront to human dignity. His advice to Indian settlers in Africa that they should identify themselves with the urges and aspirations of the indigenous population is considered unique, though controversial.

Nehru viewed that the independence of African countries could only be safeguarded through economic strength. He passionately advocated Indo-African economic and technical cooperation which has today become a model of South-South cooperation.

*Nehru and Resurgent Africa*, is not only relevant for Indian and African scholars, researchers and foreign policy-makers, but should be of immense interest to the developing world as a whole, being the only in-depth study of its kind made so far.

Mr. Eruja Reddy  
With best regards

Ami sam chhala

New Delhi

4-1-90



## NEHRU AND RESURGENT AFRICA

*By the same author*

INDIA AND AFRICA (1986)

**Nehru  
and  
Resurgent  
Africa**

**HARI SHARAN CHHABRA**

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# CONTENTS

## Preface

1. Early Days of Sensitivity 1
2. Decolonisation: Harbinger of New Life 21
  - Kenya
  - Algeria
  - Portuguese Colonialism
  - Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)
  - South-West Africa (Namibia)
  - Egypt and Suez Canal
  - The Congo
  - Wind of Change in Africa
3. South Africa: Affront to Human Dignity 64
4. Settlers from India: An Emotional Link 85
5. Cooperation: Strengthening Independence 101
6. Vision of a New Africa 121
7. Fall-out of India-China Conflict 130
8. Africa Mourns Nehru 144

## *Appendixes*

- Nelson Mandela on Nehru 151
- Nehru Speaks to African Students 157
- Note on Action Against Apartheid 161

*Bibliography of Consulted Material* 165

*Index* 167

*When one day India enters the ranks of the super powers, two individuals in history would still remain important far beyond India's borders. Men in distant lands who study the origins of Afro-Asianism will remember the "naked fakir", Mahatma Gandhi, who helped to shape the doctrine of passive resistance as a strategy of liberation in colonial days; and the Brahmin aristocrat, Jawaharlal Nehru, who helped to shape the doctrine of nonalignment as a strategy of liberation after colonial rule.*

*Professor Ali A. Mazrui  
Kenya*

## PREFACE

Jawaharlal Nehru was the first non-African to make the world aware of the problems and the importance of the African continent. Even though Mahatma Gandhi valiantly pioneered the cause of the Indians in South Africa before him, the credit for making India and the world "Africa-conscious" must undoubtedly go to Nehru.

The early years of Indian independence heard Nehru tirelessly speaking of the travails of the African people, especially the brutalities of racialism in South Africa and the British reign of terror and bloodbath in the post-Mau Mau Kenya. As a young student of political science, fresh from the university, I was virtually mesmerised by Nehru's passionate advocacy of African freedom. In the mid-fifties, the study of Africa became my life's mission. It began with a short research stint at the Department of African Studies in the University of Delhi, which had just then been inaugurated by Nehru himself.

I cannot forget my sense of satisfaction and pride when Nehru complimented me as I presented to him a few weekly issues of my newly-started weekly *Africa Diary* in September 1961. After closely glancing through some pages for a couple of minutes, he patted me and said: "It is a very good effort producing this publication, sitting in New Delhi."

Nehru, the crusading humanist, continued to hold me in fascination. What struck me most about him was his robust optimism about the future of Africa. Indeed, his perceptions were so much to the point that he was able to forecast that the African continent would be liberated sooner than many people thought. In his life span, Nehru saw a large number of African countries winning independence one after another. Africa's place in the world today would have thrilled Nehru, had he been alive. He would have been so happy to see that today in the nonaligned movement, which he helped to establish, African countries constituted 50 per cent of its numerical strength.

I have also lived through the stirring times of African liberation. I have been a witness to the emergence of African personality. Although I have travelled far and wide in Africa, it was a unique honour for me to have been present in Addis Ababa in May 1963 to witness the giant leaders of Africa putting their signatures one by one on the Charter, establishing the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Similarly, I felt gratified to be in Namibia in May

this year to watch this brave nation's march towards freedom.

The birth of the Organisation of African Unity, by all accounts, constituted a turning point in African history. Till then, Nehru, as his own foreign minister, saw to it that India took the lead in highlighting African causes at the United Nations and other world forums. But once the Africans made their presence felt in the comity of nations, Nehru was meticulous in insisting that Indian diplomacy must follow the lead given by the African nations and the OAU on issues concerning them. This guideline is being followed even today.

I cannot presume to speak for the Africans. But still, I make bold to assert that Africans love Nehru and revere him. On November 14 last year, the beginning of the Nehru centenary celebrations, I was privileged to participate in a seminar on Jawaharlal Nehru in Lagos. My heart was filled with pride when I heard Nigerian scholars, economists and editors, vying with one another in paying sincere and rich tributes to free India's first Prime Minister and foremost leader. I was convinced that Nehru belonged as much to Africa as to India.

On the occasion of Nehru's birth centenary, which also happens to be his 25th death anniversary, this book is my humble tribute to my "guide and mentor". I must thank the Nehru Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee for the grant enabling me to undertake this project.

I am only a newspaperman, an analyst of current African affairs. This book may not be the product of any deep scholarship. But it is more than made up by my sincere devotion to Nehru, and to Africa, and by my deep involvement in promoting greater understanding between the peoples of India and Africa.

New Delhi  
November 2, 1989

*Hari Sharan Chhabra*

# 1

## Early Days of Sensitivity

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU was, first and foremost, an internationalist who belonged to the entire mankind. His internationalism was acquired from abroad, even as it carried within it strong indigenous constituents.

A born visionary, often given to soar high, Jawaharlal in his younger days became intensely conscious of the vast expanse of injustice that was left behind in most parts of the world during imperialism's sweep through the centuries. Indeed, his awareness of colonial exploitation in a way opened up his career as a political activist, which saw him struggle for four decades for his country's emancipation and later lead it to a stature of nobility, decency and leadership in the emerging comity of nations.

Nehru's nationalist fervour itself derived a part of its strength from his perception of the prevailing world order under imperialist yoke. He thus grew up as an intense internationalist, while being an ardent nationalist. The two were so intimately enmeshed in his personality that even he could not set them apart.

He viewed India's slavery as a part of worldwide curse of colonial dominance. Hence, he could never view India's struggle for independence in isolation. There can be no two opinions that India's long march to freedom and the worldwide movement against imperialism have been so intermingled in historical perspective that it would be difficult to separate one from the other.

Nehru rightly observed in July 1938: "If India were free it would make a tremendous difference to the conception of empire

throughout the world, and all subject people will benefit thereby." This statement, made about a year before the outbreak of the Second World War, clearly establishes that his own thought process was leading him to the conclusion that India's destiny was closely linked with the liberation of all the oppressed peoples of the world. At the same time, the historian in Nehru made him realise that the British conquest of India had provided the rising imperialist power a convenient springboard to establish its sway over the rest of the world. This firm belief led him to speak out bluntly and frankly at the Brussels meet of the oppressed in 1927: "Both Egypt and other parts of Africa have suffered domination, because British imperialism wanted to strengthen its hold on India and to protect its sea routes to that country."

The driving power for all imperialist expansion was enslavement and exploitation. It was an integrated strategy of the colonial powers. The only way this strategy could be fought was for the peoples of the colonies to forge a united and strong countervailing force. Nehru made the countries of Asia and Africa understand that if India became free, the liberation of their own countries could not be far behind. Conversely, it was well understood that the countries of Asia and Africa could never hope to throw off the foreign yoke unless India became free. *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is but a family) was one of the appropriate mottos which India's unique philosopher-statesman Dr S. Radhakrishnan suggested when India became free. It encompassed in it what Mahatma Gandhi taught, and much more than that. The essence of this oft-repeated Sanskrit saying was reflected in Jawaharlal Nehru's life and work.

The visits to Europe sharpened Nehru's sense of history. His world vision got refurbished; he could understand and analyse the working of imperialist forces and, in this context, visualise India's role in the emerging new world. As his biographer S. Gopal notes: "However, the real significance of these travels was that Jawaharlal now came into contact with European political workers and movements and these gave him a new depth to his thinking and activities."

While abroad, Nehru had considerably more time to read and ruminate. This stirred his mind and prepared him to assimilate new ideas and thoughts. His early education in England, the visit to Europe in the twenties, he undertook in connection with his wife, Kamala's illness, and later his two visits to Europe in the thirties (to escape from the "sterile Congress party politics" after office acceptance), could all be characterised as important mile-

stones in the evolution of the internationalist in Jawaharlal.

The Indian National Congress, the vanguard political movement of the time with its liberal sensibilities, was cosmopolitan in character from its very inception. Not only Nehru, but a number of other Indian nationalists returning home after Western education, gave the Indian freedom struggle an international outlook. Inside the Congress, they raised the banner of freedom on a universal plane. Given this fact, the Congress party always considered it desirable that India should develop contacts with other countries and peoples who were also suffering under imperialism. Right from the beginning of the twentieth century, the history of the Congress party is replete with examples of actions upholding internationalism. Some of these are opposition to British expedition to Tibet and support to nationalist movements in Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, China, Ethiopia and Spain. It is also well worth noting that the Congress party felt the presence of Western imperialism in other parts of the world constituted a great menace to India's freedom struggle.

Jawaharlal, it was obvious, deepened and widened his political awakening and international outlook after he joined the Trinity College (Cambridge) in October 1907, having completed two years in Harrow. In his *Autobiography*, Nehru writes of some eminent political leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal, Lajpat Rai and G.K.Gokhale, who visited the Indian students at Cambridge. During his law studies in London, he was "vaguely attracted" to the Fabians and socialist ideas, and got interested in the political movements of the day, particularly the Irish problem and women's suffrage movement.

Back home in 1912, after being called to the Bar, Nehru discovered that there was a lot of interest in the problems of the overseas Indians, especially of those in South Africa. Nehru attended the Bankipore Congress during the Christmas of 1912, as a delegate, and there he heard from Gokhale, fresh from South Africa, the problems of the Indian community and the work being done there by Gandhiji against the racial policies of the white minority government. His interest in the problem of Indians overseas led him to take up the joint secretaryship of the United Provinces South African Committee for the collection of funds for Gandhiji's passive resisters in South Africa. This, S. Gopal says, was not an anti-government activity, for the then Government of India frequently expressed its support for the Indian community in South Africa. But B.N.Pande, another biographer, highlights

Nehru's work for South African Indians as "his first major public work after his return to India from the UK". This South Africa connection made Nehru turn his attention to colonial problems in other parts of Africa.

It was Nehru's interest in South African Indians that made him meet Gandhiji, who was to become his future mentor. In his *Autobiography*, he writes of Gandhiji rather interestingly:

My first meeting with Gandhiji was about the time of the Lucknow Congress during Christmas 1916. All of us admired him for his heroic fight in South Africa, but he seemed very distant, different and unpolitical to many of us young men. He refused to take part in Congress or national politics then and confined himself to the South African Indian question. Soon afterwards his adventures and victory in Champaran, on behalf of the tenants of the planters, filled us with enthusiasm. We saw that he was prepared to apply his methods in India also and they promised success.

While English education and extended contacts with the Western intellectuals sharpened Nehru's world outlook and awareness, his understanding of the Indian situation was not that easy to come. Even this was spread over a period of years, interspersed with marriage with Kamala, his honeymoon, his short interlude at the Bar, his stint as Chairman of the Allahabad Municipality, his almost first contacts with the Indian peasantry, and his brief detention in prison. In a way, the period since his first meeting with Mahatma Gandhi during the Lucknow Congress in 1916, and until he left for Europe following Kamala's illness in 1926, can be described as Nehru's initiation in the domestic politics of India.

No doubt, this period also saw him intensely involved in the activities of the Congress party with the result that, as he himself described, Gandhiji had almost made him a "semi-permanent secretary of the Congress". These early formative years of this young Indian leader were no doubt valuable in his evolution as one of the greatest Indian personalities. But in terms of the evolution of his personality as an internationalist, one has to await his visits to Europe which, in retrospect, proved to be a turning point.

All the assessments and analyses of Jawaharlal Nehru's growth as a pioneering world statesman are unanimous on the point that it was his 22-month long European stay, from March 1926 to December 1927, that had perhaps exercised the most profound influence on him. The visit and the long stay had been planned primarily to facilitate the most modern treatment for his wife. But, as he himself says rather cryptically: "I wanted an excuse to go



out of India myself."

He had become a devoted Congressman and an ardent disciple of Gandhiji. But both Congress and Gandhiji were then going through a period of internal bickerings and aimless wandering. Communal forces had begun to make their existence felt and a surprised Nehru found that on all such occasions, many senior Congress leaders themselves started reacting more as "Hindus and Muslims". All these and the sterile controversies between "Swarajists" and "no-changers" apparently had a depressing effect on young Nehru. Rather than getting involved in them, the suggestion for a visit to Europe provided him with an excuse which, he says, he was himself looking for.

Mahatma Gandhi was prophetic in his comment on this visit of Jawaharlal Nehru to Europe. In his letter to Jawaharlal's father, written on February 17, 1926, Gandhiji said: "I expect great results from this trip, not only for Kamala, but also for Jawaharlal."

Nehru in his *Autobiography* himself sums up the effects of this visit in these words:

I felt full of energy and vitality, and the sense of inner conflict and frustration that had oppressed me so often previously was, for the time being, absent. My outlook was wider and nationalism by itself seemed to me definitely a narrow and insufficient creed. Political freedom, independence were, no doubt, essential, but they were steps only in the right direction; without social freedom and a socialistic structure of society and the state, neither the country nor the individual could develop much. I felt I had a clearer perception of world affairs, more grip on the present-day world, ever changing as it was. I had read largely, not only on current affairs and politics but on many other subjects that interested me, cultural and scientific.

There was also a vigorous growth in Jawaharlal's intellectual perceptions. He was acquiring the tools and the expertise with which he was to address himself to the problems created by imperialism. The broad contours of his world outlook were drawn; the contents of a foreign policy of India were cultivated during that period. He made several trips to many European capitals to have a clear grasp of the situation. How correct he was in his assessment of the world situation is clearly brought out by later events. Nehru was told that life in Europe was slowly settling down after the ravages of the First World War, but he was not so sanguine. He wrote: "But, I came back with the conviction that this settling down was superficial only, and big eruptions and mighty changes were in store for Europe and the world in the near future."

The 1927 International Congress against Colonial Oppression

and Imperialism, held at Brussels (popularly known as the Meeting of the Oppressed), which Nehru attended as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress, would stand out as the most instructive factor in the making of his world outlook. (However, the League Against Imperialism, an offshoot of the Brussels Congress, acted in a churlish manner in later years when it expelled Nehru on charges of counter-revolution.) The deliberations of the Brussels Conference did send out warning signals to the imperialists. Its influence on the growth of Nehru, however, was singularly decisive.

The biggest imperial power then was certainly Britain; any conference whose primary function was to fight imperialist sway in the world had, therefore, to be essentially anti-British. India was a classic case of British imperialist possession and as the sole representative of India, Nehru was an important participant in the Brussels Conference. He was elected to its presidium.

Personal contacts had always played a vital role in the development of the world outlook of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was keen to meet world leaders and establish a rapport with them all. In his report to the Congress party on his return to India, Nehru said the Brussels Conference enabled him to meet an assorted gathering of world intellectuals. Representatives of nationalist organisations from Java, Indochina, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Arabs from North Africa and "African Negroes" (Nehru apparently is referring to the delegates from Africa and had wrongly used the word Negroes) attended the Conference. Prominent among them were George Lansbury, Henri Barbusse, Ellen Wilkkinson, Fenner Brockway, Harry Pollitt and Mohamed Hatta. Nehru was already conversant with the race problem in South Africa. But at Brussels he became deeply interested in it after meeting and talking to three South African delegates, Josiah Gumede, President of the African National Congress, J.A. Laguma, a Coloured (mixed race) leader, and D. Cobrine, a white trade unionist. Nehru was impressed with the resolution the three had drafted on South Africa.

Nehru's address to the conference was focussed on India and the ravages of British rule there. But he was all the time conscious of the international ramifications of imperialism even when he was expounding the havoc it wrought in his own country. He said:

Whatever face of imperialism you study, you have a wonderful example in India. Our problem, of course, concern us deeply, but I would venture to point out to you, whether you come from China, Egypt or other distant countries, that

our interests are much the same, and the problem of India is of interest and importance to you.

British rule in India was certainly the theme-song of Nehru's address in Brussels, but what saddened him more was his realisation that because of its control over India, Britain was able to continue its oppression of the peoples of several other countries. He told the Conference:

The result is India has suffered and is suffering. But that is not all. On account of India, a large number of other countries have suffered and are suffering. You have heard of the most recent example of British imperialism in regard to India—the sending of Indian troops to China. They were sent in spite of the fact that the National Congress of India expressed its strongest opposition. I must remind you that Indian troops, unhappily to my shame I confess it, have been utilised many times by the British in oppressing other people. I shall tell you the names of a number of countries where Indian troops have been utilised many times by the British for this purpose—in China they first went in 1840, in 1927 they are still going, and they have been actively engaged there innumerable times during these 87 years. They have been to Egypt, Abyssinia, the Persian Gulf, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria, Georgia, Tibet, Afghanistan and Burma. It is a fairly formidable list.

He concluded his address in these words:

I do submit that the exploitation of India by the British is a barrier for other countries that are being oppressed and exploited. It is an urgent necessity for you that we gain our freedom.... We desire the fullest freedom for our country, not only, of course, internally, but the freedom to develop such relations with our neighbours and other countries as we may desire. It is because we think that this International Conference affords us a chance of this cooperation that we welcome it and greet it.

The nine-day Brussels Conference did make Nehru tired, because of long, late hours. But his own assessment of its outcome, as mentioned in his report to the Congress, contained no evidence of this. On the contrary, it was a hopeful testament, seeking to add a significant world dimension to the National Congress struggle for Indian liberation. In particular, Nehru mentions the deep impression created in him by the representatives of Africa. He praises them as "able men, full of eloquence and energy, but they all bore traces of the long martyrdom which their race had suffered, more perhaps than any other people, and there was a want of hope in the dark future which faced them". His emotional involvement in the pathetic plight of the peoples of Africa, who had suffered for centuries the ravages of slavery and racism, finds vivid expression

here. He goes on to explain that the South African Trade Union Congress of white workers had also sent their representative to the Brussels Conference as also the Natal Native Council, an organisation of the Africans. He says:

In these days of race hatred in South Africa and the ill-treatment of the Indians, it was pleasing to hear the representatives of the white workers giving expression to the most advanced opinions on the equality of the races and of workers of all races. The Negro and the white man jointly represented South African workers and they worked together in the Congress.

His report noted with satisfaction that South African delegates had undertaken to form a branch of the League Against Imperialism in South Africa in collaboration with the advanced wing of the white workers, the negro workers, the Negro Congress (apparently he meant the African National Congress of South Africa that was born in 1912), and the South African Indian Congress. "This branch will specially work against all colour legislations and discrimination."

It was not as if Nehru identified the African peoples as the sole victims of British imperialism in that continent. He was equally conscious of the sufferings of the Arabs. He notes with some significance that the principal Egyptian delegate to the Brussels Congress was Hafiz Ramadan Bay, the leader of the Egyptian National Party.

Nehru's world view was in a way finalised. He was in the unique position to visualise the broad pattern of free India's foreign policy. Indeed, he returned fully equipped to become free India's first foreign minister, as he did exactly two decades later.

There is, therefore, a peculiar naturalness—indeed even inevitability—in Jawaharlal Nehru delineating exhaustively both the contours and contents of the Indian foreign policy. The note drafted by him on a foreign policy for free India to the All India Congress Committee, dated September 13, 1927, opens with this rather cynical observation:

To some of us in India it may appear a foolish waste of time to indulge in fancies about a foreign policy, for, we wish it or not, India cannot remain, now or hereafter, cut off from the rest of the world. No country can do so. The modern world is too closely knit together to permit of such isolation.

In this document of about ten thousand words Nehru presents what remains even today a most workable mix of idealistic and action-oriented foreign policy. He suggested that Indians must

educate themselves in problems of world polity so that they might be able to serve their country better.

It means that whenever possible we may take part in international joint action when this is to our advantage. It means also that we should gradually train a body of men and women who can be relied upon to serve Indian interests abroad when the power for doing this comes into our hands.

His own participation in the Brussels Conference had firmed up his conviction that national struggles and international movements reinforced each other; he was understandably keen to encourage this trend in the Congress party.

What is the position of the Indian in foreign countries today? Nehru poses this question bluntly and answers it in the following candid manner:

Apart from a few students and others, he has gone either as a coolie or as a mercenary on behalf of England. As a coolie, he is looked down upon with contempt, and as a hireling of the exploiters, he is hated. Indian soldiers and the police have been used by the British Government to further its own interests in China, Egypt, Abyssinia, Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf, Arabia, Tibet, Syria, Afghanistan and Burma, and wherever they have gone, they have made the name of India hated.

It is now part of free India's history that Nehru advocated India's continuance in the British Commonwealth even after becoming a Republic; but, in 1927, he was firmly set against any such relationship. What does the British Commonwealth stand for today? Nehru asks and replies in the foreign policy note:

In its domestic policy we see colour and racial prejudice and the doctrine that the white man must be supreme even in countries where he forms a small minority. South Africa offers the most flagrant example of this, but Canada and Australia are equally strong believers in this doctrine. In Kenya and the adjacent territories it is now proposed to create a new federation or dominion with all the power in the hands of the few white settlers, who can do what they will to the large number of Indians and overwhelming African population. Can India as a state associate itself with this group and be a party to colour bar legislation and the exploitation and humiliation of her own sons and the races of Africa?

Nehru, however, adds that this should not mean "friction and enmity with England". "We shall want peace and peaceful relations with all countries and we shall gladly welcome England as a friend if she chooses to meet us half way, in spite of her previous record in India. Indeed, friendship between England and India is only possible after India has broken the British connection. No

friendship can be based on compulsion.”

It appears that the problems faced by Indians overseas, especially in Africa, were uppermost in Nehru's mind. In the foreign policy document of 1927 he underlines:

India will have to keep watch on the many Indians who are abroad and lay down a policy for their guidance. They should be free to go where they like for the purpose of labour or business, but only to countries they are welcome and are treated honourably. We cannot thrust them down in other lands and win for them a privileged position by force as the imperialist powers have so often done with their nationals. An Indian who goes to other countries must cooperate with the people of that country and win for himself a position by friendship and service. In Kenya, for example, there are many Indians, fellow-sufferers with the Africans, under the domination of a few white settlers. The Indians should cooperate with the Africans and help them as far as possible and not claim a special position for themselves which it denies to the indigenous inhabitants of the country.

Nehru's foreign policy note exerted a great deal of influence on the Congress and its global outlook. At the Calcutta Congress session in 1928, under Nehru's guidance, the party allied itself with the worldwide anti-imperialist struggle with the following resolution:

This Congress being of the opinion that the struggle of the Indian people for freedom is a part of the general world struggle against imperialism and its manifestations, considers it desirable that India should develop contacts with other countries and peoples who also suffer under imperialism and desire to combat it. The Congress, therefore, calls upon the All India Congress Committee to develop such contacts and open a foreign department in this behalf.

Nehru was only 40 when he was elected to preside over the historic Lahore session of the Congress in 1929. By then his credentials for leading the freedom struggle from the front seat had come to be accepted. He had imparted a vision and dynamism to the nationalist movement. It was, therefore, befitting that in his presidential address, his views on his favourite theme—India and the World—attracted universal attention. He told the delegates:

You will discuss many vital national problems that face us today and your decisions may change the course of Indian history. But you are not the only people that are faced with problems. The whole world today is one vast questionmark and every country and every people is in the melting pot.

*Purna Swaraj* (complete independence) was the call given by the Lahore Congress. Nehru explained the concept, cooperation with

the world in these words: "Independence for us means complete freedom from British domination and British imperialism. Having attained our freedom, I have no doubt that India will welcome all attempts at world cooperation and federation, and will even agree to give up part of her own independence to a large group of which she is an equal member."

The British empire today is not such a group (Commonwealth), and cannot be so long as it dominates over millions of peoples and holds large areas of the world's surface despite the will of their inhabitants. It cannot be a true Commonwealth so long as imperialism is its basis and the exploitation of other races its chief means of sustenance. The British empire today is, indeed, gradually undergoing a process of political dissolution. It is in a state of unstable equilibrium. The Union of South Africa is not a very happy member of the family, nor is the Irish Free State a willing one. Egypt drifts away. India could never be an equal member of the Commonwealth unless imperialism and all it implies is discarded. So long as this is not done India's position in the empire must be one of subservience, and her exploitation will continue. The embrace of the British empire is a dangerous thing. It cannot be the life-giving embrace of affection freely given and returned. And if it is not that, it will be, what it has been in the past, the embrace of death.

There is talk of world peace and pacts have been signed by the nations of the world. But despite pacts, armaments grow and beautiful language is the only homage that is paid to the goddess of peace. Peace can only come when the causes of war are removed. So long as there is the domination of one country over another, or the exploitation of one class by another, there will always be attempts to subvert the existing order, and no stable equilibrium can endure. Out of imperialism and capitalism peace can never come.

Nehru's presidential address had practically no direct reference to the liberation of Africa; this could probably be explained by the fact that at that time there were no strong national movements in any of the African countries, except perhaps in Egypt and South Africa. And he did make a mention of these two countries.

The latter half of 1935 took Nehru to Europe again, primarily for his wife's treatment in Switzerland. He paid short visits to England in November 1935 and January 1936, when temporary improvement in his wife's condition permitted him to leave her bedside. His own bitter experience of British oppression in India prior to his departure for Europe had made him reluctant to undertake even these visits, but it was Gandhiji who had urged him to go to England.

In London, he declined to meet any member of the British Government. But he could not wholly avoid politics because of his meetings with a few of his personal friends. One such meeting in

London had an interesting "African undertone". This was his meeting with A.G. Fraser, Principal of the Achimota College in Accra, in what was then Gold Coast. Fraser had invited Jawaharlal for a dinner at his club. The secretary of the club objected to the Indian appearing publicly in the dining room. Nehru's host took such strong objection to this that he resigned from the club. Nehru also met the leading British Communist leader, Rajni Palme Dutt, and also V.K. Krishna Menon who made a lasting impression on him. He recalls his meeting with Menon with the remark: "He is very able and energetic and is highly thought of in intellectual, journalistic and Left-wing labour circles. He had the virtues and failings of the intellectual."

Nehru was at his wife's bedside in Lausanne when she died on February 28, 1936. He had to return to India immediately thereafter because of his re-election as the Congress President for a second term. On his way back, he had to have a brief stop-over in Rome. He avoided a meeting with the Italian dictator Mussolini because he apprehended that it might be used for fascist propaganda and might also serve to misrepresent his views which were strongly against Italy's invasion of Abyssinia.

It is worth quoting Nehru himself from his *Autobiography* on this interesting incident:

Some days before my departure a message was conveyed to me that Signor Mussolini would like to meet me when I passed through Rome. In spite of my strong disapproval of the fascist regime, I would ordinarily have liked to meet Signor Mussolini and to find out for myself what a person who was playing such an important part in the world's affairs, was like. But I was in no mood for interviews then. What came in my way even more was the continuance of the Abyssinian campaign and my apprehension that such an interview would inevitably be used for purposes of fascist propaganda. No denial from me would go far. I remembered how Gandhiji, when he passed through Rome in 1931, had a bogus interview in the *Giornale d'Italia* fastened on to him. I remembered also several other instances of Indians visiting Italy being used, against their wishes, for fascist propaganda. I was assured that nothing of the kind would happen to me and that our interview would be entirely private. Still I decided to avoid it and I conveyed my regrets to Signor Mussolini.

I could not avoid going through Rome, however, as the Dutch KLM airplane I was travelling by spent a night there. Soon after my arrival in Rome, a high official called upon me and gave me an invitation to meet Signor Mussolini that evening. It had all been fixed up, he told me. I was surprised and pointed out that I had already asked to be excused. We argued for an hour, till the time fixed for the interview itself, and then I had my way. There was no interview.

The background to Nehru's total opposition to having any dealings



with the Italian dictator is provided by his analysis of the Italian perfidy in Abyssinia. Nehru charges Mussolini with having planned the attack on innocent Abyssinia for a long time and hesitating only because he was not sure what the attitude of Britain and France would be to his military adventure. British soft-peddling of Hitler's unilateral repudiation of the Treaty of Versailles and his huge armament programme, without the knowledge of France (its oldest ally), had sent France hurrying to Italy to safeguard its Italian frontiers. This, according to Nehru's incisive analysis, emboldened Mussolini to undertake his Abyssinian invasion in the confidence that neither France nor Britain would raise any serious objection to it. Nehru says in *Glimpses of World History*:

In October 1935, this invasion began, when the League of Nations was actually in session. Abyssinia was a member of the League and the world was shocked. The League declared Italy to be the aggressor and after much delay applied some economic sanctions against her—that is member-states were forbidden to deal with her in regard to many commodities. But the really important articles which were essential for the war, such as oil, iron, steel, coal were not included in this list. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company worked hard and overtime to supply oil to Italy. Italy was inconvenienced by the sanctions but no great difficulty was placed in her way. The United States of America suggested an embargo on oil, but Britain will not agree.

In the meantime, the Abyssinians, though they fought bravely, could not stand up to the wholesale bombing from low-flying aeroplanes. The Italians indiscriminately used poison and gas bombs on the hapless Abyssinian masses. The entry of Italian forces into Addis Ababa in May 1936 marked Italy's victory and occupation of the country. But Abyssinian resistance continued all through the long years of Italian occupation. An anguished Nehru wrote to his daughter:

The tragedy and betrayal of Abyssinia by the League Powers showed the world that the League was powerless. Hitler could now defy it without fear and, in March 1936, he marched his troops into the demilitarised zone of the Rhineland. This was another violation of Versailles treaty.

Following the Italian attack on Abyssinia, Nehru, in his capacity as the leader of the Congress party, called for demonstrations throughout the country as an expression of sympathy and solidarity with the Abyssinians. In his statement to the Press, Nehru said: "The people of India could give no substantial assistance, but they should at least express their determination to stand together with victims of imperialism elsewhere, especially as the

British were making clear their support of Mussolini."

The war clouds over Europe in 1938 proved irresistible for Nehru and he decided to undertake another trip to that continent. This trip acquires importance for the meetings he had with the leaders of the British Labour Party and the Communist Party. George Padmore, who was later to become adviser to Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, also saw him to explain the problems of Africa. Nehru took the opportunity to pay a visit to Spain for a study of the civil war situation.

Nehru's national and international stature had grown considerably by the time he undertook this visit. He was often described as "Super Prime Minister of India". His major engagement, however, was his presidential address to the International Conference on Peace and Empire, organised under the auspices of Krishna Menon's India League and the London Federation of Peace Councils. While his observations on the dangers of both fascism and imperialism aroused considerable acclaim from the participants, what stood out in it were his references to the situation in Africa:

I do not propose to refer to the large number of countries which are subject countries, or countries which have other social troubles today, because almost every country has them. It may be that we can consider their problems later on, but I do think we must not forget the countries of Africa, because probably no people in the world have suffered so much, and have been exploited so much in the past as the people of Africa.

It may be that in the process of exploitation to some extent even my own countrymen have taken part. I am sorry for that. So far as we in India are concerned, the policy we wish to follow is this. We do not want any one from India to go to any country and to function anywhere against the wishes of the people of that country, whether it is Burma, East Africa, or any other part of the world. I think the Indians in Africa have done a great deal of good work. Some of them have also derived a great deal of profit. I think Indians in Africa or elsewhere can be useful members of the community. But only on this basis do we welcome their remaining there, that the interests of the people of Africa are always placed first.

We think of India, China and other countries, but we are too often apt to forget Africa and the people of India want you to keep them in mind. After all, though the people of India would welcome the help and sympathy of all progressive people, they are today perhaps strong enough to fight their own battle, whilst that may not be true of some of the peoples of Africa. Therefore, the people of Africa deserve our special attention.

En route to London to participate in the Conference on Empire and Peace, Nehru had an opportunity to spend two days in Egypt in June 1938, at the invitation of Wafdist leader Nahas Pasha and his colleagues. Nehru was travelling by boat and when it was

passing through the Suez Canal, he received a cable from Cairo, conveying to him the welcome of the Wafd party (Egyptian nationalist party founded in 1918 by Zaghlul Pasha to press the Egyptian demand for independence from Britain) and requesting him to get off at Suez and proceed from there by a private plane which had been chartered to take him to Alexandria to meet Nahas Pasha.

His talks with the Wafd leaders revealed many common bonds of the nationalist struggles of the Wafd party and the Congress party in India. Nahas Pasha also told him that in 1931 when Gandhiji was travelling to England to participate in the Round Table Conference, he had tried to meet Gandhiji at Port Said but the then government in Egypt would not allow him to go on board the ship, nor was Gandhiji allowed to set his foot on Egyptian soil. In this way, Nahas Pasha regretfully told Nehru, his attempt to meet the great Indian leader had been frustrated and he was denied the chance to convey the greetings and admiration of the Egyptian people to the people of India. According to Nahas Pasha, those were real black days for Egypt.

Nehru spent another couple of days in Egypt on his return voyage. He again had meetings with the Wafd leaders. A delegation of the Wafd party visited India and attended the annual Congress session. Nehru always felt impressed by the Wafd party from two angles: first, at that time, Wafd was the only nationalist party in Egypt and, secondly, there was no communal division as it existed in India.

Nehru had acquired an excellent background of Indo-Egyptian relations and, since 1920, had always been sympathetic to the Egyptian nationalist movement which he describes in his book *Glimpses of World History* as a model for other Arab countries. It was revealing for Nehru that the daily newspapers of Cairo went to all the Arab countries and had great influence there.

Nehru views the Egyptian struggle for its liberation from British hegemony as another struggle between growing nationalism and an imperial power. He says:

The power there, as in India, is Britain and it has been there for a comparatively short period, and yet there are numerous parallels and common features in the two countries. The nationalist movements of India and Egypt have adopted different methods but, fundamentally, the urge to national freedom is the same and the objective is the same.

Nehru was intensely aware of the travails of the early pioneers of

Egyptian national movement like Arabi Pasha and Saad Zughlul. He noted that in combating the rising tide of Egyptian nationalism, the British followed almost the same tactics and strategy as they did in India. Attempts were made to divide the people; alliances were forged with feudal elements and slogans were put out that they were in Egypt only as "trustees" of the "dumb millions". All the time the most cruel form of repression was also going on. For long periods Egypt was under martial law. It was at the end of the First World War that the Wafd party was formed as a forum for Egyptian nationalist leaders who first wanted only to go in a delegation to London to present a memorandum pressing the Egyptian case for freedom. "Wafd" in Arabic meant a "delegation" and those who identified themselves with this move became known as "Wafdists". The delegation never went and all its leaders were jailed.

Nehru describes how the British repression virtually provoked a "revolution" in Egypt. After nearly two years of unending violence, the British came out with an announcement about the recognition of an independent sovereign Egypt. But this was accompanied by the imposition of a most reactionary constitution under a resurrected monarch, King Faud. The independence was hedged in by so many reservations that Nehru felt like calling it a shame and a fraud.

Like the Congress in India under the Government of India Act of 1935, the Wafdist party too won in Egypt successive elections with huge majorities, and despite repeated attempts of the Wafd leaders to accommodate the British demands, the Wafdist governments were dismissed prematurely and parliament dissolved.

Nehru pays a moving tribute to Zughlul Pasha, the founder of Egyptian nationalism, on his death in 1927. He says his memory lives in Egypt as a bright and precious heritage and inspires the people. His house in Cairo became the headquarters of the Egyptian nationalists.

Jawaharlal Nehru's overseas journey by ship on this visit to England was thus highly eventful. Apart from his Italian "Odyssey" and Egyptian meetings, Nehru had also an opportunity to know first hand the plight of overseas Indians, especially in Masawa. This came out in the course of the welcome accorded to him by Indians settled in Ethiopia and Somalia. They were mainly Gujaratis, Hindus and Muslims, many of whom had travelled long distances from the interior, Asmara. Adverting to the discussions he had with them, Nehru in his report to the All India Congress Committee said that a delegation of the Indians came to see him

on board at Massawa and they complained to him of the various disabilities they were suffering from and how the Italian Government was trying to squeeze them out. He was told that the relations of Indian merchants with the local population were excellent, which made him naturally happy. The Indian merchants wanted him to move the Congress party to take up their problems with the Italian Government. He had in turn suggested to them to send a full memorandum to the foreign department of the AICC.

In this report to the Congress, Nehru said: "We may not be able to do much for these outlying colonies of Indians, but I do feel that we must keep up contacts with them. Their eagerness to meet me and display their solidarity with the national struggle in India was pleasing and encouraging. And in this welcome the Muslims took the lead, as they appeared to be the most important merchants there."

Nehru's exposition of India's attitude towards its children overseas is spelt out by him in following words:

Whenever there has been conflict between Indian settlers and others in distant countries, we have naturally supported the just rights and claims of our countrymen and defended the honour of our country, for that honour is very dear and precious to us. But, always, we have made it clear that we want no advantage which might injure the people of the country. Some of our vested interests in foreign countries have resented this attitude but we have stuck to it, for we could not reconcile any other attitude with our own demand for freedom. In East Africa, which owes so much to Indian enterprise, we are prepared to submit to any change or loss, provided this is for the good and advancement of the Africans. But we see no reason whatever to submit to any differential treatment as between Indians and European settlers. We want no imperialism, British or Indian, anywhere.

This cardinal principle in his approach to the problems of overseas Indians was applied during the boycott of Zanzibar cloves by Indians in 1937. In his Press statement issued on August 28, 1937, Nehru observed: "It is utterly wrong to say that our struggle in Zanzibar is to protect Indian vested interests as against the interests of the people of the country. The Congress holds by the principle that in every country the interests of the people of that country must be dominant and must have first consideration."

The Zanzibar agitation was provoked by the attempts of a monopoly with British support to squeeze out Indian interests from the clove trade. Indian traders were opposed to the clove growers' monopoly of the trade. The then Government of India protested to the British Government against a legislation guaran-

teeing the association's monopoly. As a result, some concessions were obtained but these being inadequate, Zanzibar Indians appealed to the Congress party in India for help. The Congress, supporting their demands, called upon traders in India to boycott clove imports from Zanzibar. Nehru felt this was the least that Indian people could do to help their countrymen abroad in their hour of trial.

The plight of overseas Indians, especially in South Africa, as also of the Africans living there, had always moved Nehru. Often he becomes emotional and his description moves his readers too. In his *Glimpses of World History*, he writes:

Our fellow countrymen in other countries have little honour shown to them; they are seldom made welcome anywhere. And this is not surprising, for how can they have honour elsewhere, when they have no honour at home? They are being turned out of South Africa where they were born and bred, and some parts of which, especially in Natal, they had built up with their labour. Colour prejudice, racial hatred, economic conflict, all combine to make these Indians in South Africa castaways with no home or refuge. They must be shipped away to some other place, to British Guiana, or back to India, where they can but starve, or anywhere else, says the Government of the Union of South Africa, so long as they leave South Africa for good.

Next to South Africa, there were large Indian settlements in East Africa, especially in Kenya. There too the Indians came in for severe repression and discrimination at the hands of the White settlers whose population was reasonably large. The contact between Indians from East Africa and their mother country was more frequent and intimate, apparently because these settlements were closer to India, next shore. Many East African Indians visited India frequently. Dealing with their position in his *Glimpses of World History*, Nehru says:

In East Africa, Indians have played a great part in building up Kenya and the surrounding territories. But they are no longer welcome there; not because the Africans object, but because the handful of European planters object to them. The best areas, the highlands, are reserved for these planters, and neither Africans nor Indians may possess land there. The poor Africans are far worse off. Originally, all the land was in their possession and was their only source of income. Huge areas of this were confiscated by the Government, and free grants of land were made to the European settlers. These settlers or planters are thus big landholders there now. They pay no income-tax and hardly any other tax. Almost the whole burden of taxation falls on the poor, downtrodden African. It was not easy to tax the African, for he possesses next to nothing. A tax was put on certain necessities of life for him, like flour and clothing, and indirectly he had to pay it when he bought them. But the most extraordinary tax of all was

a direct hut and poll tax on every male over sixteen years old and his dependents, which included women. The principle of taxation is that people should be taxed out of what they earn or possess. As the African possessed practically nothing else, his body was taxed. But how was he to pay this poll tax of twelve shillings per person per year if he had no money? Therein lay the craftiness of this tax, for it forced him to earn some money by working on the plantations of the European settlers, and thus paying the tax. It was a device not only to get money, but also cheap labour for the plantations. So these unhappy Africans sometimes have to travel enormous distances, coming from the interior 700 or 800 miles away to the plantations near the coast (there are no railways in the interior and just a few near the coast), in order to earn enough wages to pay their poll tax.

Nehru invariably appears agitated whenever he talks or deals with the problems relating to Africa. His deep nationalist commitments and his dynamic global view certainly help him to bring to bear the most appropriate perceptions. What is more striking is the heavy overlay of sentiment as he formulates his approach and policy on the basis of his appreciation and understanding of the African situation. He describes the situation thus:

There is so much more that I could tell you of these poor exploited Africans who do not even know how to make their voices heard by the outside world. Their tale of misery is a long one, and they suffer in silence. Driven off from their best lands, they had to return to them as tenants of the Europeans, who got the land free at the expense of these Africans. These European landlords are semi-feudal masters, and every kind of activity which they dislike has been suppressed. The Africans cannot form any association even to advocate reforms as the collection of any money is forbidden. There is even an ordinance proscribing dancing, because the Africans sometimes mimicked and made fun of European ways in their songs and dances. The peasantry are very poor, and they are not allowed to grow tea or coffee because this would compete with the European planters.

The next significant manifestation of Nehru's deep concern for the future and welfare of the peoples of Africa came at the Asian Relations Conference he organised in Delhi between March 23 and April 2, 1947. He was then Vice-President of the Interim Government of India. The country was on the threshold of freedom. Despite the imminence of Partition, there was all round euphoria. Even at such an hour, as one of his noted biographers points out, Nehru gave all his attention to the Asian Relations Conference. The idea of organising such a conference had captured him in December 1945 itself, although it was only in September 1946 that invitations could be extended. India was not yet free and the conference had, therefore, necessarily to be non-official. Although restricted to Asian countries, Nehru could not resist the temptation

to have some kind of symbolic representation of Africa. Hence Egypt was a participant. The agenda of the conference consisted of only national freedom movements, racial problems, economic development and migration. All controversial issues involving the participating countries, including problems relating to security and defence, were kept out of its purview.

In his historic Presidential address at the ARC Jawaharlal Nehru gave vent to his feelings on Africa thus:

We of Asia have a special responsibility to the people of Africa. We must help them to their rightful place in the human family. The freedom that we envisage is not to be confined to this nation or that or to a particular people, but must spread out over the whole human race. The universal human freedom also cannot be based on the supremacy of any particular class. It must be the freedom of the common man everywhere and full opportunities for him to develop.

Nehru no doubt viewed New Dehli as a kind of natural centre of the resurgent continents of Asia and Africa, determined to forge closer links for the future. He, therefore, thundered:

Standing on this watershed which divides two epochs of human history and endeavour, we can look back on our long past and look forward to the future that is taking shape before our eyes.... For too long we of Asia have been petitioners in Western courts and chancelleries. That story must now belong to the past. We propose to stand on our feet and to cooperate with all others who are prepared to cooperate with us. We do not intend to be the playthings of others.



## Decolonisation: Harbinger of New Life

LEADERSHIP OF the decolonisation movement after the end of the Second World War came naturally to Jawaharlal Nehru. A leading light in his own country's liberation, his innate introspection led him to the firm conclusion that freedom, like peace, was indivisible. Peace, he had incessantly argued, could come only when nations were free and also when human beings had freedom, security and opportunity. "Freedom and peace are indivisible" was his favourite refrain. Freedom and peace had to be considered in both their political and economic aspects.

He was also a votary of the one world idea and, therefore, he believed in the United Nations. For all its faults and drawbacks, Nehru felt, the UN had the potential to realise this ideal. He was even prepared to forgo a part of his country's sovereignty for this purpose.

To him the continuance of racism and colonialism carried with them the seeds of world conflict. Ending them would not only rid the world of a constant irritant but also lead to the recognition of human dignity.

His background and understanding of the contemporary world made him an opponent of all forms of colonial domination. As a sequel, India was involved in opposing all forms of colonial subjugation. Nehru's primary stake in foreign policy was to see that the people who were subjugated became free and there was racial equality in the world.

Africa became his first concern because, as he had often said, no people had suffered so much from colonialism and racialism

as the people of Africa. Uppermost in his mind were the ravages of slavery with the hunted people from Africa dying in the galleys of slave-owners' ships.

As a historian, Nehru was aware that slavery and colonialism had kept the African people suppressed to such an extent that it would be difficult for them to fight their battle for freedom all by themselves. Hence, Nehru had often talked about India's and Asia's "special responsibility" towards the people of Africa.

During his own life time he was happy to witness Africa moving with a "lightning" speed towards the goal of total emancipation. When Ghana became free, Nehru felt that Africa had very much moved to the centre of the picture and that the voice of the Africans was no more soft—it was assertive and even aggressive.

In the early sixties, after a large number of African states had graduated to freedom by throwing off the yoke of foreign rule, Nehru could see that the newly liberated people wanted to think and act for themselves. He was satisfied that they had rejected the idea of being told what to do and what to avoid. This change was bound to influence world events. This was precisely what had happened in the case of Suez crisis, in the developments in the Congo, and the formation of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963.

Although slow, the march of freedom was comparatively smooth in the French-speaking countries of Africa and also in some English-speaking countries like Nigeria, Gold Coast, Tanganyika, to mention a few. But, in some others, notably Kenya, Algeria and Rhodesia, settler colonialism came in the way of freedom. In the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, the colonial powers resisted the forces of change. The march to freedom in these countries, therefore, was of a violent nature. In the Congo, the Belgian imperialists tried to put the clock back. The tripartite aggression was a challenge to Egyptian sovereignty. White minority rule in South Africa continued to be unacceptable.

Nehru was a witness to the unfolding African drama, both happy and unhappy. Perhaps he saw the most eventful years in Africa's modern history. In a way, Nehru himself was an important actor in the African drama. In the following pages, an attempt has been made to analyse Nehru's attitude to the problems of changing Africa and to highlight his role in promoting freedom, peace and stability in this once Dark Continent. He wanted Africans to find African solutions to their problems, without being dictated to or guided by others. He gave no role to the major powers in this sphere.

## *KENYA: Colonial Opposition to Change*

The forces of change led by the nationalists were in action in many countries of the world. The continent of Africa, too, did not escape this worldwide phenomenon. While the colonial powers in most regions had begun to realise the inevitability of change, in some pockets of resurgent Africa the imperialists were resisting the moves of the nationalists. Oppression and tyranny were the methods employed by them to delay the march towards freedom and self-determination.

Kenya was a classical example of the colonialists' opposition to change. A large body of British white settlers had usurped all levers of economic power through farming, trade, industry and professions. To safeguard their vast economic interests, the white settlers were able to persuade the British colonial regime in Kenya to enact several discriminatory legislations which, in effect, delayed the process of decolonisation.

This naturally provoked violent opposition from the indigenous African population. This was specially so in the case of the landless Africans who had no other alternative but to work as farmhands on low wages and under inhuman conditions. Educated Kenyans returning to their homeland after breathing free air in the Western countries, provided them the leadership. This gave rise to the birth of a secret society in the early fifties, which came to be known as "Mau Mau". The primary aim of the movement was to oust the white settlers from their land, to be followed by wresting power from the colonial masters.

For many decades, and even before Indian independence, Nehru had evinced a keen interest in the affairs of Kenya, India's next-shore neighbour. He had watched with admiration the contribution made by Indian workers in building the Kenya-Uganda Railway in the early twentieth century. But he had been advising the Indian settlers to appreciate the urges and aspirations of the African majority and to associate with them in their just demand for freedom.

Soon after India's independence, Nehru initiated a programme of providing scholarships to Kenyan students, of both African and Indian origin. Nehru viewed this as India's contribution towards helping Kenya's march towards freedom.

He was greatly upset on the failure of an Indian bank called the Exchange Bank of India and Africa Ltd in East Africa in 1949. What

caused concern to him more was the fear that this might result in tension between the Indians and Africans, because the victims were a number of African depositors. Nehru's government made a contribution of Rs 100,000 to enable the Indian Commissioner in East Africa to make ex-gratia payment to some poor depositors.

Nehru's overriding anxiety to promote African interests in Kenya was evident all through. The visit to New Delhi of Dr Peter Mbiyu Koinange, a prominent leader of the Kenya African Union and a trade unionist, provided an opportunity to him to reiterate his views. In his letter to the Chief Ministers of Indian States on August 15, 1949, Nehru explained that Koinange's visit was important in bringing the question of Africa before our people. He wrote: "Africa is undoubtedly going to play an important part in the future and many people there look to India for help and sympathy. We have made it clear that we do not want any Indian interests in Africa or elsewhere which in any way come in the way of the progress of the people there. We hope to go much further and help in this progress by providing scholarships for the education of their students."

In keeping with the highest importance that he attached to India's relations with Africa, Nehru had sent one of his ablest diplomats, Apa B. Pant, as Commissioner in British East Africa. The good work done by Pant in East Africa was highly appreciated. Pant was sending excellent analytical reports on the political developments and changes taking place in East Africa, particularly in turbulent Kenya, besides being largely responsible for strengthening Indo-African relations. At times these relations were strained because of the activities of a few individual Indian settlers who were openly siding with the British imperialists.

Nehru was able to keep himself abreast of events in Kenya because of the briefs from Apa Pant. He was concerned when the Mau Mau movement took a violent turn. This was reflected on a number of occasions, especially in his letter to the Chief Ministers. In one such letter dated December 4, 1952, Nehru had this to say about the Mau Mau:

Far more serious developments are taking place in East Africa where there appears to be a complete break between the Africans and the British ruling authority. It is stated that a secret society among the Africans, called the Mau Mau, has been indulging in murders and other terroristic activities against government officials and those who are loyal to them. As a result of this, very stern repressive measures have been taken against them. Practically, large parts of Kenya are under martial law and the Africans are living in a state of terror.

Whatever the faults of the Mau Mau might be, and it is obvious that they will not achieve anything by terroristic methods, it is still more obvious that this method of repression of a whole people must end in utter failure. The whole of Africa is being powerfully influenced by these developments and a situation has been created which might lead to the most disastrous results.

While Nehru regretted the violent phase of the Mau Mau movement, he felt that in the face of British provocation, the Africans had no other alternative but to resist. In a note recorded on March 25, 1953, he explained "how any decent person who is an African can be a loyalist passes any comprehension". He felt that all talk of evolving a multi-racial society and condemning terrorism and violence, or even highlighting the importance of safeguarding the interests of the Indians in Africa, would be meaningless in the face of the heavy offensive that the British were mounting against the people of Kenya. Nehru burst out: "We are all for the multi-racial society, but I am getting a little tired of the repetition of this phrase when the African is being kicked, hounded and shot down and the average Indian prays for safety first."

Dilating on this theme, Nehru in a letter to Apa Pant written on April 8, 1953, says: "At present there is no question our teaching Africans anything. You do not teach anyone when his house is on fire." Nehru was clear in his mind; he was interested only in standing by the people who were in great trouble and who had to face tremendous oppression by a powerful government. That was the only way he could serve them and even bring them round to what he considered to be the right path.

In the wake of Mau Mau, what exasperated Nehru was the attitude of the British Government and its policies. He was convinced that the British residents in Kenya and the colonial administration there exercised decisive influence on the British policy. The British Government as such did not have much initiative in handling the Mau Mau which, in some quarters, had been likened to a liberation movement.

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Nehru was aware, favoured a tough policy, and Colonial Secretary Oliver Lyttleton was "exceedingly narrow-minded and vengeful". In a speech made in Delhi on April 13, 1953, Nehru was sharply critical of the British Government's policy in dealing with the Mau Mau agitation. He also assured the people of Kenya of India's sympathy. The then British Commonwealth Secretary, Lord Swinton, was angry with Nehru's views so openly expressed. He objected to this as an interference in the British domestic interests and cheekily asked

Nehru how he would feel if the British Government were to criticise Indian Government's policy on the separation of Andhra Province or in dealing with untouchability.

Nehru was more than surprised by this reaction. He told Swinton that racialism in Africa was a problem that agitated peoples all over the world; it was a problem on which Indians held strong opinions and if he had not given expression to it someone else would have said something much stronger. He reminded the British Minister that India had repeatedly supported its own membership of Commonwealth and he had himself praised British policies on many matters. His arguments in support of the British would have appeared weak if he had chosen to remain silent on the Mau Mau issue.

The British Government proclaimed emergency in Kenya when the Mau Mau movement had reached its peak in 1952. It also committed the folly of arresting Kenya's foremost leader Jomo Kenyatta who was the President of the Kenya African Union. Kenyatta's arrest disturbed Nehru a great deal. Nehru was convinced that at this juncture the Indian community could have played a more helpful role. In his view, not only did they not do anything but showed amazing timidity. He was particularly distressed that with the exception of a solitary young Indian lawyer (Achru Kapila), Indian lawyers even refused to defend Jomo Kenyatta and other African leaders who were being accused of complicity in Mau Mau.

The Prime Minister of India was happy that at the invitation of some African organisations, Diwan Chaman Lal, a member of Indian Parliament and an eminent lawyer, went to Nairobi to assist in the defence of Jomo Kenyatta and five others who were facing trial for their alleged complicity in Mau Mau activities. Nehru praised Diwan Chaman Lal's contribution, and said:

The Africans, though angry at the attitude of local Indian leaders, still look to India as a kind of an elder brother who will support their legitimate demands for freedom. As a Government we cannot intervene in this matter, though we have drawn the attention of the British colonial authorities to the disastrous consequences of the policy they are pursuing.

Nehru kept on emphasising that Diwan Chaman Lal went to Kenya not on behalf of the Indian Government but in his private capacity. Chaman Lal was to assist D.N. Pritt, the British QC, who was the chief defence counsel. Nehru said that Pritt had become very popular and, to some extent, Chaman Lal had also acquired

popularity in East Africa. "The East Africans are anxious for the help of India in various ways and it is possible that some of their representatives might come here to consult us."

Jomo Kenyatta and five others were convicted in April 1953 on charges of active involvement in the activities of the Mau Mau society and sentenced to seven years' hard labour. An anguished Nehru is on record having said that "the conviction of and the sentence passed on Jomo Kenyatta has added to the fire that is gradually spreading in those areas". He had no doubt that despite their indulging in violence, which provided some justification for the terrible repression unleashed on them by the government, the African leaders had come to be looked upon as champions of African freedom and respected as such.

Kenya continued to occupy Nehru's attention. He was particularly shocked by the enormity of British repression. In a letter to the Chief Ministers, he said: "I read the other day that 15,000 Africans had been killed in the course of this emergency... Our consciences have grown dull and we do not react to these vast killings now, as we would have reacted to something infinitely smaller previously."

Continuing his references to the horror in Kenya, Nehru said that a recent court martial in Kenya had brought out some facts which had shocked even the British opinion. Africans, and notably, Kikuyus, have been shot down as if they were wild animals and each battallion had kept a score board of "kills". "Apart from the inhumanity of this, it passes one's comprehension how any responsible person or government can think this is the way to achieve peace and stability."

Further shocks awaited Nehru as the Kenyan situation steadily worsened. He was disturbed when the news reached him in April 1954 that the office of the Indian Commissioner in Nairobi had been raided by British troops. Some members of the Indian staff were beaten up and all Africans working in the Commission were arrested and taken away. Nehru remained uneasy even though the British authorities in Kenya apologised to the Indian Commissioner.

The colonial authorities in Nairobi were never happy with Apa Pant, whose residence in many ways had become the hub of political activities in Kenya. They finally succeeded in securing his recall.

Nehru sums up his understanding of the developing Kenyan situation by saying that "some wisdom" was gradually dawning on the colonial government as well as the European settlers, and

they were beginning to realise that they would not be able to solve the problems through repression and terror. He felt that the Africans had also begun to feel that the way of violence would not yield any result.

Nehru was, however, upset that African political organisations remained banned until 1960. From 1957 onward, the mantle of urban leadership fell upon the shoulders of a young Luo trade unionist, Tom Mboya. It was good to see Mboya in touch with Nehru on the political and constitutional problems of Kenya. During one of his visits to India in 1960, Mboya had long discussions with Nehru.

The Indian Parliament cheered Prime Minister Nehru on August 16, 1961, when he expressed his happiness at Kenyatta's release after "nine long years" of imprisonment. "It is a tremendous long period and we think that his release would lead to unity of the popular forces in Kenya and that would lead to the freedom and independence of Kenya."

Indira Gandhi, in her capacity as patron-in-chief of Indian Council for Africa, visited Kenya soon after Kenyatta's release. At her meeting with the Kenyan leader, she said: "The Government and people of India rejoice that you, Mr Kenyatta, are now free to undertake the task of building unity, progress and all the things you need." At the Nairobi airport, she expressed the hope that her visit would pave the way for her father's (Nehru's) visit to Kenya. "I also hope many African leaders will visit India."

Prime Minister Nehru always ridiculed the British authorities and the white settlers in Kenya when they called Kenyatta a leader "to darkness and death". Kenyatta's moderation after his release did not come as a surprise to Nehru who saw the Kenyan leader agreeing to share power with his erstwhile political opponents; thus forcing the hands of the British to concede independence to Kenya in December 1963.

### *ALGERIA: Heavy Price for Freedom*

Dawn of independence of India on August 15, 1947, found half a dozen small colonial pockets under French and Portuguese rule. These were Pondicherry together with Mahe, Yanam and Chandranagore under the French, and Goa, Daman and Diu under Portuguese hegemony. Nehru admitted that these were small



pecks on the Indian map with practically very little economic and other significance. But he could not conceive or tolerate the idea that any foreign foothold should remain in India. Soon after Independence, India started negotiations with the two colonial powers—Portugal and France—with a view to finding a peaceful and negotiated settlement.

While Portugal dragged its feet, forcing India ultimately to liberate Goa by force in December 1961, France gracefully agreed to transfer its territory of Chandranagore to India in June 1952, while agreement on Pondicherry's merger with India was reached in 1955. On a number of occasions Nehru appreciated the French Government's cooperative role and felt gratified that all French territories had become part of India, "leaving no problem behind, not even bitterness".

Meanwhile, India was keenly watching the political developments in the French-ruled territories of North Africa, particularly, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Having peacefully settled the question of French possessions in India, it would have pleased Nehru if France had withdrawn from this region also, peacefully and gracefully.

At the Asian-African Conference in Bandung in 1955, special attention was paid to Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Commenting on this, Nehru told the Indian Parliament on May 22, 1956, that India had joined the other governments of Asia and Africa at Bandung in declaring their support for the rights of the peoples of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia to self-determination and independence, and in appealing to the French Government to bring about a peaceful settlement of the issue without delay. According to Nehru, this approach had two essential aspects: "Our support to freedom movements and our adherence to a peaceful approach."

In a letter to the Chief Ministers on October 14, 1955, Nehru reviewed the activities of the armed freedom struggles then sweeping North Africa, and spoke of this continuing tragedy: "France, so proud and great, still thinks in terms of her ancient power and glory and does not recognise that she is no longer capable of supporting the Empire except with the goodwill of the people concerned. This is a double tragedy — tragedy for France and tragedy for the North African countries."

It was a matter of great satisfaction to India that the French and Moroccan governments reached an agreement on March 2, 1956, by which the independence, sovereignty and integrity of Morocco was recognised. On March 20, 1956, France also recognised

Tunisia's independence. Welcoming the independence of Morocco and Tunisia, Nehru told Parliament: "The Government of India takes this opportunity of according their full recognition of the wisdom and statesmanship of the Government of France and the generosity of all the parties concerned in bringing about a solution of the problem of Morocco and Tunisia." He also expressed the hope that the claims of the Algerian nationalism would be sincerely met.

In Algeria, the freedom fighters under the leadership of the National Front for Liberation (FLN) launched an armed struggle against the French colonial army. In 1955, the French Government, which was used to treat Algeria as an integral part of France itself, proclaimed an emergency and tried to suppress severely the nationalist movement. But guerilla attacks on French forces and military posts showed no sign of abatement. In the meantime, the FLN proclaimed a Provisional Government of Algeria in Exile (GPRA). Nehru did not chose to recognise it, always arguing that he did not want to close his options with France on the question of Algeria. Nehru was certainly critical of the French policy in Algeria; but he realised that there were special factors and complexities in the Algerian situation, such as the presence of a large French white settler community there.

Nehru outlined India's policy on Algeria in Parliament on May 22, 1956: "The Government of India consider that the first step to peace and settlement in Algeria is stopping of violence and bloodshed.... A cessation of fighting in Algeria, the desire for which has recently been expressed from diverse quarters, including the two sides (France and FLN), is the first and essential step. We hope that the French Government will pursue in Algeria the path which yielded helpful results in Morocco and Tunisia and that the Algerian people will be ready to respond."

He ventured to make the following suggestion on Algerian settlement:

- 1) The atmosphere of peaceful approach be promoted by formal declarations by both sides of the substance of their recent statements in favour of ending violence;
- 2) The national entity and personality of Algeria be recognised by the French Government on the basis of freedom;
- 3) The equality of the peoples in Algeria, irrespective of races, be recognised by all concerned;
- 4) Algeria is the homeland of all the peoples in Algeria irrespective of race be recognised; and

5) Direct negotiations based on the above-mentioned basic ideas and in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations be inaugurated.

Even as India did not accord diplomatic recognition to the GPRA, as demanded by many political circles in India, Nehru let the FLN have its office in New Delhi. Nehru chided the French Government when the latter said it did not know whom to deal with in Algeria. He pointed out:

I think it may well be said that what is called the Provisional Government of Algeria represents all the elements in Algerian nationalism, moderate and extremists, and, therefore, it should be easy to deal with them as representing Algerian nationalism. I would hope that the French Government will deal with these people, because it is obvious that there is no way of settling the Algerian problem except by recognising Algerian freedom.

The question of Algerian self-determination had been before the United Nations since the mid-fifties. The King of Morocco and the President of Tunisia were also offering their good offices towards a settlement of the Algerian problem, a move that was welcomed by Nehru.

In 1955, France angrily walked out of the UN General Assembly because it decided to consider the question of Algeria, in spite of the opposition of the United States and the United Kingdom. The question had been raised in the General Assembly by 14 countries, including India, to discuss the denial by France of the right of self-determination to the people of Algeria, where the situation was threatening to cause disruption of peace in the entire Mediterranean region.

After the French withdrawal from the United Nations, the Political Committee of the UN decided, by a unanimous vote and without debate on November 25, 1955, at the initiative of the Arab-Asian group led by V.K. Krishna Menon, to remove the question of Algeria from the agenda of the Assembly for the then current session. The formula devised by Menon was to bring back France to the General Assembly and this did not imply any change in the political or moral attitudes of the Arab-Asian group on the Algerian question. Following this, the French delegation returned to the Assembly after an absence of two months.

Despite French objections, the Algerian question was again discussed in the United Nations General Assembly in 1957 and on subsequent occasions. The Arab-Asian group had proposed the idea of a referendum so that the people of Algeria could

decide their future—whether to remain with France or to be independent.

General Charles de Gaulle took over the reigns of France in May 1958 following a political crisis on the Algerian issue. After some announcements which were rejected by Algerian nationalists, de Gaulle announced on September 16, 1959, that Algerians would, within four years of the restoration of peaceful conditions, settle their future by a free vote.

A little before Algerian liberation, the issue figured prominently at the first nonaligned summit in Belgrade in September 1961. Prime Minister Ben Khedda of the Provisional Government of Algeria, addressed the summit meeting and said that the GPRA was willing and ready to resume negotiations with France. He linked the Algerian struggle with the global fight against colonialism, especially in Africa. He said the nonaligned summit should consider "practical means of helping the colonised people, including the people of Algeria, to free themselves".

The final communique of the Belgrade summit, it has to be noted, gave first place to the Algerian issue in its demand for the "immediate, unconditional, total and final abolition of colonialism". In its reference to Algeria, the communique said: "The participating countries consider the struggle of the people of Algeria for freedom, self-determination and independence and for the integrity of its national territory, including the Sahara, to be just and necessary and are, therefore, determined to extend to the people of Algeria all the possible support and aid."

According to many reliable reports, Nehru had played a major role in the first nonaligned summit to highlight the Algerian issue. Talking to pressmen outside the conference hall, Nehru said India had already given de facto recognition to the GPRA, and there was no question of going beyond that.

Soon the developments in Algeria gathered unexpected momentum. A ceasefire in Algeria was signed on March 18, 1962. A referendum held on July 1 that year showed the people overwhelmingly declaring themselves in favour of an independent Algeria. Two days later President de Gaulle recognised the independence of Algeria.

Nehru had been closely following these developments with sympathy and hope. Expressing his delight on the Algerian ceasefire, Nehru congratulated the people of Algeria as well as the French Government under President de Gaulle. He said: "While we may disagree with much that had been done by the French

Government in Algeria, we must recognise that all kinds of difficulties and extraordinary conditions came in the President's way, but he adhered to his resolve to agree to the Independence of Algeria and, therefore, he deserves credit for it."

Hailing the valiant people of Algeria, Nehru made an emotion-packed statement in Parliament on March 19, 1962:

I doubt if we can easily find in the records of history a struggle as intensive as that waged by the Algerian people during the past several years and more, attended by such intense sufferings, and such a large number of casualties and killings. No one can deny that if a price had to be paid for freedom, the Algerian people have paid much more than any price that could have been laid down. . . . I hope that the Algerian people after having paid such a heavy price for their independence.... will progress rapidly and become a bulwark of peace and cooperation in the world.

Nehru welcomed the independence of Algeria in these words:

The almost unanimous vote of the Algerian people in the referendum for independence, and the French Government's formal acceptance of the independence of Algeria, bring to a happy end the epic story of Algeria's struggle for freedom. Surely history gives us few examples of such a valiant struggle against great odds and involving tremendous sufferings and sacrifice. In a world where almost every day brings some news which distresses us, the news from Algeria has come as a tonic and a blessing.

Every one who believes in freedom will rejoice at this happy consummation of a long struggle. We in the Government of India and the people of India are particularly happy and would like to convey our warm and fraternal greetings to the people of Algeria and their brave leaders, more especially the Provisional Government which has for so long guided and inspired their heroic struggle. We rejoice that the ideals which they have set before them, of social justice, secularism and non-discrimination on the basis of race, religion or creed are ideals which we have ourselves enshrined in our Constitution. We look upon them, therefore, as partners in common endeavour.

### *PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM: Barbarous Behaviour*

Jawaharlal Nehru took an integrated view of the problem of liberation of Goa and Portuguese colonies in Africa, notably Angola and Mozambique. When the French possessions in India peacefully rejoined free India, only Goa, Daman and Diu were left as the remaining foreign pockets in India under Portuguese rule. Nehru often referred to this anachronism as "pimples" on the fair face of free India.

As he himself put it, with the touch of a consummate historian,

The seminar on Portuguese colonies was attended by representatives of the freedom movements in Goa and a large number of senior leaders of the Portuguese colonies in Africa. There were also a number of special invitees, including Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. African leaders expressed confidence at the seminar that if India and the African leaders worked together for the liberation of the oppressed people, the day of their freedom would not be far off.

Nehru described the seminar as a unique event which had brought the people of India and Africa together. The two had been close in the past, but in the last decade or so, India had taken an intimate interest in the freedom movements in Africa and in some measure, tried to help them in the councils of the world body, he said.

The participants in the seminar were satisfied with the way Nehru had tied up the problem of Goa with events in Africa. They also felt that the growing crisis in Angola impinged increasingly on Indian policies. Goa, Angola and Mozambique had become parts of a single problem—that of Portuguese colonialism.

The anti-imperialist forces the world over were happy with Nehru's decision to liberate Goa in December 1961, but the freedom fighters in Africa, particularly from the Portuguese colonies, hailed it as directly strengthening their struggles. India's image as a champion of freedom went up still higher in Africa and the Indian foreign policy under Nehru, who was his own foreign minister, was seen by Africans at its brightest. Solidarity between India and the African liberation movements became the order of the day. India, through its actions in Goa, had also showered its blessings on the armed struggles being waged in many parts of Africa. Nehru was seen as a pole star for guiding the liberation movements in Africa.

B.N. Pande, in his biography of Nehru, views the Indian Prime Minister's decision to take over Goa in a different perspective. He believes that an important factor that led Nehru into Goan operation was "African pressure". Pande writes:

Portugal was treating the nationalists brutally in its African possessions, which included large territories like Angola and Mozambique. Nehru was particularly distressed at the manner in which the Portuguese were suppressing the anti-colonial movement in Angola. African leaders and nationalists looked up to Nehru. In October 1961, a seminar on Portuguese colonialism was held in New Delhi. Many important leaders of African parties and groups attended it. At the seminar Nehru realised that in the eyes of the African leaders, and

especially of those struggling against Portuguese colonialism in Africa, Goa was playing an important part. They attached much importance to what India did in Goa. Liberation of Goa would lead to the liberation of Portuguese possessions in Africa. The Africans by tying up Goa with Angola placed an obligation on Nehru to make the first move towards the liquidation of Portuguese empire.

The same year Prime Minister Nehru took up cudgels against Portuguese imperialism at the first nonaligned summit held in Belgrade in September 1961. "Angola, the horror of Angola," thundered Nehru with intense passion. He said:

I do not know how many of the delegates present here have had occasion to read the detailed accounts of what has happened in Angola—not only in Angola but round about—which has a kind of horror which one hardly associates with the modern world, massacres, genocide, and so on. Of course, our minds go out and we need not only to sympathise, we want to do what we can to put an end to this.

It is well to remember the odd fact that today the Portuguese empire is the biggest empire—possibly the worst too—that exists in this age of the liquidation of imperialism and colonialism. It is an odd fact that when great and more powerful empires have given way very largely, the Portuguese empire should continue. It is, of course, in a bad way today, and in its major territories in Africa like Angola, the situation has been particularly horrible and painful, and probably even the past records of imperialist domination will not give us an example of what is happening there now. I have no doubt in my mind that in Angola, and certainly also in other Portuguese dominions like Mozambique, the Portuguese empire is doomed. Although we have not on our part been very favourably inclined towards Portugal during the last many years, what is happening in Angola has been so horrible that the reaction of whoever has heard of it, whether in this country or in any other country, has been one of extreme anger.

Massacres have taken place on a big scale and yet the people of Angola have been struggling, not without some success. It is not now an easy matter for the Portuguese Government to suppress the Angolan people, though it may be a long business. Of course, there is Mozambique and there are the other Portuguese territories, which may also be drawn into this conflict. One aspect of these Portuguese colonies, more especially Angola now and Goa a little time ago, is the indirect help or rather encouragement—sometimes help in addition to encouragement—that Portugal has received from the fact that it is a NATO country. That is a very important fact which, I have no doubt, has made a difference to the Portuguese also. But so bad have been the Portuguese activities in Angola recently that many countries, even NATO countries that encouraged Portugal or helped it, have had to desist and express their displeasure. Even the United States of America voted against Portugal in the United Nations on this issue. One NATO country, Norway, has openly and publicly said that it will not assist directly or indirectly in anything Portugal does.

Nehru's speech in the UN General Assembly on November 10, 1961, although it dealt with the Congo question in detail, had a

major reference to Portuguese colonialism in Angola. He said: "Apart from the theoretical question of colonialism, from the practical point of view what we have heard of events in Angola has been distressing in the extreme. We can imagine how much it must distress people in Africa. I earnestly hope that this remnant of colonialism will also peacefully change."

African nationalist leaders from the former Portuguese colonies still remember with admiration that Nehru's voice against the Portuguese atrocities was loud and clear and was heard with rapt attention. He helped build up international opinion against Portugal, even inside Portugal. While the Organisation of African Unity, year after year, condemned Portuguese imperialism till its end in 1975, India kept the issue alive in the United Nations and the nonaligned movement.

India's determination in canvassing world support for the struggle of the peoples of Angola and Mozambique against the brutal suppression by Portuguese colonial masters was creating a dent on international opinion. In 1960, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution denouncing colonialism in general and Portuguese colonialism in particular and, in the very next year, in November 1961, Portugal was again condemned for non-compliance with its obligations under the Charter and creating increasingly dangerous situations in the world.

India told the UN Trusteeship Council on November 11, 1963, that only a combination of measures, including economic sanctions and pressures, would persuade Portugal to abandon its colonial policy. An Indian delegate at the UN said that the Portuguese were seeking to debase and distort the meaning of the term self-determination. The Portuguese rulers' claim to a non-racial record was reduced to mockery when it was overlaid by "cultural genocide".

Nehru's strong condemnation of the persisting Portuguese colonialism, since Goa's liberation, had its effect when President John Kennedy disassociated the United States from Portuguese imperialism and came out openly in condemning it. Its other NATO allies were also becoming equally uneasy about Portugal's stubborn stand, and countries like Norway became vehemently critical. Persistence by India was beginning to have its effect and Portugal was steadily getting isolated.

Following Nehru's decision to take over Goa, India earned the wrath of the Portuguese authorities when they began expelling Indian residents in Mozambique. About 23,000 Indians had to be repatriated to India from Mozambique as a result of retaliatory



actions of the Portuguese colonial administration. Among the steps taken by India to assist these repatriates were grant of special customs facilities and financial assistance in some cases. A small population of Indians in Angola was also a victim of ill treatment by the Portuguese rulers. The Government of India had protested against these arbitrary actions of the Portuguese authorities in denying facilities to Indian nationals in Mozambique who were obliged to leave for India. The protest notes were sent to the Portuguese Government through the Egyptian Embassy in New Delhi, in the absence of diplomatic relations between India and Portugal.

### *RHODESIA (Zimbabwe): Unabashed Treachery*

As one studies the process of decolonisation in Africa, the independence of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was the culmination of a complicated and long-drawn course. Its neighbouring territories, Nyasaland (Malawi) and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) made the Rhodesian issue a lot more complex because British colonialists united them with Rhodesia into an infamous Central African Federation.

The presence of a sizable white settler community in Rhodesia was another major complicating factor. The Rhodesian white settlers, who also believed in the superiority of the white race, always looked to the ruling white minority in neighbouring South Africa as a model and as a source of inspiration. It is noteworthy that the apartheid regime in Pretoria volunteered to extend its support and blessings to Rhodesia which became a junior partner in the perpetuation of the obnoxious myth of the superiority of the white race.

Nehru and other leaders of India and the Afro-Asian world as such always considered Rhodesia as a non-self-governing colony of Britain, but the colonial power's role was wavering and often unhelpful. For many years an impression was created by Britain as if it did not mind Rhodesia surreptitiously becoming a replica of South Africa. In the sixties, Rhodesia appeared to be emerging as the second fortress of racial discrimination.

A point not to be missed is that way back in 1930, the British colonial administration had excluded Africans from that half portion of the country that contained the best farming lands and

mineral wealth. This when the Africans, the indigenous population, constituted over 90 per cent of the inhabitants. Forcibly thrown out of their lands, the Africans were obliged to enter the labour market. In another racially discriminatory action, the British colonialists brought into force the Industrial Conciliation Act in 1934, which banned African majority from skilled employment. The Africans were left with no other option but to take up employment on subsistence wage in white-owned mines, farms and factories in virtual servitude. As an encouragement to the white settler community, the British administrators in Rhodesia financially subsidised the growth of white agriculture, mining and industry.

In the early fifties, the white minority persuaded the British authorities to create a Central African Federation, consisting of Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Rhodesia. The declared object of the scheme was to combine the large supply of cheap labour in Nyasaland, the vast mineral resources of Northern Rhodesia and the capital, technological know-how and coal-supplied power in Rhodesia. But, in reality, the treachery was to perpetuate and maintain white domination.

India had strong reservations to this idea of Central African Federation even before its formation and thereafter too, because it was considered to be a crude attempt to institutionalise apartheid and white minority rule. On numerous occasions Jawaharlal Nehru condemned this phenomenon of "settler colonialism" repeatedly rearing its head.

India was keenly watching the scheme of federating the three territories. Nehru made clear his view that the Central African Federation should be promulgated only after consulting and obtaining definite consent of the African populations of the three territories. This was considered of particular importance because African opposition to the scheme had already been expressed quite strongly. India was also concerned about the future of the Indian population in the three territories and at the likelihood of the future government adopting for the federal territory the ban on Indian immigration that existed in Rhodesia.

At a public meeting in New Delhi on April 13, 1953, Nehru spoke out about the Central African Federation. He said: "As regards the proposed Federation of Central African States, this was an attempt to give to a handful of white English and German settlers there complete control over the African people in that area. These white men enjoyed full rights, whereas the African people

living there had no rights at all. In fact, the position of the Africans under the Federation would be far worse than the status under a colony. Under a colony, there were certain restrictions against complete domination of Africans, whereas under the Federation Government, there would be no such restriction. This was a very bad thing as the African people would have no voice in the affairs of the proposed Federal Government."

After the Federation came into being, India, under Nehru's leadership, kept on urging that necessary steps should be taken for the removal of the disabilities from which non-whites, including Indians, suffered in the federated territory. India wanted an assurance that no fresh disabilities would be imposed.

Nehru was also concerned about racial discrimination in South Africa and was worried about the plague of apartheid spreading to the Federation. He told the Indian Parliament on August 17, 1960: "So far as the Central African Federation is concerned, their proclaimed policy is not one of racial segregation, although, in practice, it is so and we have suffered from it."

India was greatly disturbed when riots broke out in the Central African Federation in 1958-59, leading to the arrest of a number of African nationalist leaders. A commission of enquiry appointed by the government did not find sufficient material to substantiate the administration's allegation that the African National Congress had planned massacre of Europeans, Asians and loyal Africans. It described Nyasaland as a police state and held that Federation was universally unpopular.

India extended the jurisdiction of its Commissioner for East Africa stationed in Nairobi in 1952 to the Central African territories. The then Vice-President of India, Dr S. Radhakrishnan, during his African tour in July 1956, also paid a visit to the Central African Federation. He took the opportunity to present 75 books on India to the University of Rhodesia in Salisbury.

India was happy when the Federation was dissolved in 1963, paving the way for the independence of Zambia and Malawi on the basis of majority rule. But Britain was unwilling to decolonise Rhodesia until some sort of accommodation could be worked out between the privileged whites and the deprived blacks.

Nehru was a witness to a developing drama in which Ian Smith, a Right-wing white, came to power as Prime Minister of Rhodesia. The white rule became more unabashed. Smith moved rapidly to curb the activities of the African nationalists by detaining them; but happily for Nehru he did not live to see the ugliest part of the

drama enacted on November 11, 1965—the Unilateral Declaration of Independence as the realisation of the white minority dream. Britain chose to turn a blind eye to this act which was a treason against the crown. Britain refused to use force to undo this illegality as demanded by the Organisation of African Unity and by countries like India. Smith was to rule illegally for fifteen long years before Robert Mugabe, after a long, bloody and protracted armed struggle, won the election and came to power in April 1980, renaming the country Zimbabwe.

### *S-W AFRICA (Namibia): Thwarting Annexation*

The League of Nations established a mandate in December 1920 authorising South Africa to administer the former German colony of South-West Africa, known today as Namibia. Among other obligations, South Africa was to promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and the social progress of the inhabitants of the territory. In the ensuing years, however, South Africa sought to annex the territory, exploit its resources, and extend its racial policies of apartheid into South-West Africa.

In 1946, the UN General Assembly rejected a South African proposal to incorporate South-West Africa into the Union of South Africa. It recommended that the territory be placed under the international trusteeship system. Furthermore, in 1950, South Africa refused to accept the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, by which the Court concluded that South-West Africa was still a territory under international mandate and the supervisory functions of the League of Nations were to be exercised by the United Nations.

Since South Africa did not comply with the directives of the United Nations, the UN General Assembly decided in 1966 to terminate South Africa's mandate and place the territory under the direct responsibility of the United Nations.

When, after the Second World War, the independence of South-West Africa became an international problem, India backed the assertion that the mandate system had given way to trusteeship. India welcomed the findings of the International Court of Justice and the UN General Assembly's decision to take over the reigns of the territory. India called it a unique, historic and sacred responsibility.

Nehru had great admiration for Reverend Michael Scott who represented some tribes of South-West Africa at the UN in 1946. South Africa expelled Scott from the country in 1950, but Nehru called him "the greatest and bravest of the champions of the Africans".

When the South-West African issue came up before the United Nations, Nehru, in a letter to the Chief Ministers on December 6, 1948, described India's attitude as a straightforward one, championing the cause of the Africans and against the domination of the Union of South Africa over South-West Africa.

At the UN Trusteeship Committee meeting on November 16, 1948, the Indian delegation moved an amendment to the resolution on South-West Africa, proposing that the territory be placed under the UN Trusteeship system and that South Africa be barred from integrating it into the Union. This amendment was lost by one vote, with eleven abstentions. India was opposed to the UN General Assembly resolution on the subject because it had expressed satisfaction over the South African assurances that it had no intention of integrating the territory and had asked South Africa only to report to the UN periodically about the conditions in South-West Africa.

Nehru was greatly annoyed by the fact that the South African Government had been defying the UN directives. The policy of the Government of India was to pressurise world opinion on this issue. Nehru felt gratified when, on November 20, 1952, the General Assembly passed a resolution sponsored by 18 Afro-Asian nations, including India, recommending that a UN Fact Finding Mission should investigate the problem of racial discrimination in South and South-West Africa and study the international aspects and implications of apartheid.

A so-called Good Offices Committee comprising the United States, the United Kingdom and Brazil had negotiated a deal with South Africa for partitioning South-West Africa. Under this plan, South Africa was to annex the mineral rich southern half of Namibia, with the northern half to be under trusteeship. India led the fight against the proposal and succeeded in securing its rejection.

Speaking in the Indian Parliament on August 17, 1960, Nehru said the whole continent of Africa was in ferment. Referring to South-West Africa, India's Prime Minister said:

In this matter we and other countries have repeatedly spoken in the United Nations about the behaviour of the Government of the Union of South Africa,

which does not acknowledge South-West Africa as a mandated territory and has functioned almost as if it were a part of its own domain and it could do what it liked with it. It refused to send any kind of report to the Trusteeship Council on the basis that the territory was given to it by the League of Nations and that the League of Nations having ceased to exist, the Council could not derive any right over it. The issue was referred to the World Court and the Court's decisions were not in favour of South Africa's stand. Even so, the Government of South Africa has not reformed. The capacity of the Government of the Union of South Africa to persist in errors is really quite remarkable, but I take it that if a country, as an individual, persists long enough in error, retribution comes.

Nehru missed no occasion where he did not condemn South African policy on South-West Africa on two counts: First, the imposition of apartheid policies and, secondly, the defiance of the United Nations. He even raised the matter in his speech at the first nonaligned summit in Belgrade in September 1961.

India was keen on a united action of the African and Asian countries against South Africa on this matter. In a note presented to the African and Asian nations through Indian diplomatic missions in those countries, the Government of India stated that it would be glad to coordinate with those governments further action in regard to South-West Africa, both inside and outside the United Nations, to ensure that the mandatory authority carried out in full the obligations undertaken by it to promote the well-being of the inhabitants of the territory.

India continued to take the lead in the UN in all debates on Namibia until African states joined the UN in the sixties and the Namibian people launched the broad-based national struggle under the leadership of the South-West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) in 1960.

### *EGYPT And Suez Canal: Tide Turns*

Nehru was a great admirer of Egypt and its ancient civilisation. Apart from his early political contacts with the leaders of the Wafdist movement in Egypt, especially Nahas Pasha, and his visits to Cairo prior to Indian independence, Nehru was greatly attracted by the development of education, art and culture in the country even when it was under British tutelage. He was conscious of the age-old Indo-Egyptian contacts in trade and cultural exchanges. All this had resulted in Nehru evincing a deep and personal

interest in the developments in Egypt.

During the Second World War, despite its nominal independence, but virtual colonial status, Egypt was in effect under the occupation of the British Army. On May 7, 1946, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee announced the withdrawal of the British forces, and that in effect meant the independence of Egypt, although under a corrupt monarchy.

There were, however, differences with Britain over the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and every Egyptian, including the leaders of the Wafd party, wanted Sudan to be part of Egypt, under the illusory slogan of "Nile Valley Unity". While Britain wanted that the Sudanese be allowed to decide their own future, it was strange that even the Arab League in 1947 announced its support for Egyptian demands on Sudan.

The establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, as a result of collaboration with the international Zionist movement, the mandated power, Britain and the United States angered the entire Arab world, more so Egypt, which was a leading light in the then established Arab League. But the war that broke out between Israel and Egypt immediately after Israel came into being, went against Egypt.

Nehru was critical of the roles played by both Britain and the United States in the proclamation of the State of Israel. Nor was he inclined to accord diplomatic recognition to the new state in spite of receiving a request to this effect shortly after its creation. Nehru was not surprised when war broke out between the new State of Israel and the neighbouring Arab countries, including Egypt. In his letter to the Chief Ministers on May 20, 1948, Nehru referred both to the creation of Israel and the war that broke out. He said:

The Government of India have received a request from this new State of Israel for recognition. We propose to take no action in this matter for the present. India can play no effective part in this conflict at the present stage either diplomatically or otherwise. We can only watch events for the time being hoping that an opportunity may come when we could use our influence in the interest of peace and mediation.

Nehru's expectation of India playing some role in the Arab-Israel dispute was very nearly fulfilled when as a member of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, in its minority report, this country suggested the creation of a federation in Palestine, with fully autonomous Jewish and Arab units, together with a special

status for Jerusalem. But this was rejected and the majority view of partitioning of Palestine was favoured by the UN.

Nehru's pronounced "pro-Arab" policy and his inclination to view developments in Egypt with deep understanding and empathy, received a minor jolt when Egypt voted against India and in favour of Pakistan in the discussion on the Hyderabad issue which was before the UN. Apparently, in retaliation, India recognised Israel in September 1950, although it did not agree to have diplomatic relations with the Zionist state.

Yet another development which caused a minor irritation in India's relations with Egypt arose in November 1951 when King Farouk of Egypt declared himself, with the approval of the Egyptian Parliament, to be known as the King of Egypt and Sudan. In a letter to the Chief Ministers on November 30, 1951, Nehru said: "The Egyptian Government is apparently insisting on Ambassadors presenting their credentials to the King of Egypt and Sudan. This means a recognition of the new title and thereby Egypt's claims on Sudan." Nehru was not in favour of any such inference being drawn from India's action and, therefore, preferred not to have an Indian Ambassador in Cairo for some time. India was happy when Sudan became free in January 1956.

Nehru paid a visit to Egypt in 1948 when it was under King Farouk. He says: "I found Farouk to be one of the most repellent individuals I had met. All that I could do was not to be rude to him." That, however, did not deter Nehru from developing cordial relations with Egypt. Nehru is on record having appreciated the action of the Egyptian Government giving a state military funeral to the Indian Ambassador in Egypt, Dr Syed Hussain, who died suddenly in Cairo in 1949.

King Farouk's Government was known to be notoriously corrupt. Its continued hobnobbing with the British Government, as also its domination by feudal elements, did not endear it to the people; and the defeat sustained by the Egyptian army in 1948 in its war against Israel, alienated it totally from the army, especially the young officers. A clandestine organisation of Free Officers was formed by members of the armed forces immediately after the signing of the Armistice in 1949. In July 1952, the Free Officers movement, led by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, seized control of Cairo and soon afterwards of the whole country, practically without any bloodshed. This spurred a most important nationalist and revolutionary movement. Farouk was forced to abdicate and the system of monarchy was abolished. General Mohamed Neguib



was appointed provisional President to be later replaced by Nasser. Egyptian Republic was proclaimed on June 18, 1953.

The revolution in Egypt did not have any immediate improvement in Indo-Egyptian relations. Indian Ambassador to Egypt Sardar K.M. Panikkar, in a report to New Delhi on January 27, 1953, felt that the Neguib Government could not be described as any closer to India; though clearly a great improvement on Farouk's Government. It was thought to be a creation of the United States.

It was, however, felt in New Delhi that the new rulers of Egypt would listen to Nehru and this faith was to an extent vindicated when, in July 1953, the leaders of the Egyptian revolution, Nasser and Salah Salem, accepted Nehru's suggestion that they should avoid the use of harsh words when dealing with Britain on the question of asserting Egyptian sovereignty over Suez Canal, even when they were firm in their stand. Nehru was then on a brief visit to Cairo. The then British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, appreciated deeply Nehru's role in smoothening Anglo-Egyptian relations during a delicate stage.

Apparently, Nehru took an immediate liking for the new Egyptian leadership. Within 19 months of his earlier visit, he was in Cairo again in February 1955. Although the Indian leader was not at all impressed with Nasser's "intellectual calibre" after reading his book, *The Philosophy of Revolution*, he records his impressions of the new Egyptian leaders in his letter to the Chief Ministers on February 23, 1955:

On my return from England, I spent two days in Cairo and had long talks with Prime Minister Nasser (who became President in 1956) and other ministers of the Egyptian Government. These talks disclosed a similarity of outlook in many matters. That similarity was no doubt partly the result of the Egyptian reaction to the Turco-Iraq Pact. But it was something more than that. Egypt's leaders had undoubtedly matured since I saw them last, 19 months earlier. Colonel Gamal Nasser, the Prime Minister, creates an impression of integrity and sincerity, as well as of greater maturity. He and his colleagues talked to me much more about planning and economic matters than of politics. That itself shows a certain growth in their thinking as well as greater stability in the country. They were much attracted to our planning in India and the progress we had made, and wanted me to tell them all about it. It is likely that the Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt will visit India soon to study our planning and governmental structure. He was also interested to find out something about our party structure.

Nehru's assessment of Nasser and his new government was fully justified as the new Egyptian Government embarked on a massive

programme for the country's economic development in 1954. There were other events, too, which brought Nehru and Nasser together. Foremost among them was Nasser's refusal to join the pro-West Baghdad Pact. Equally important was his firm stand against the continued presence of the British troops in Suez Canal. Nasser's initiative in promoting closer ties with the Soviet Union also served to underline the fact that on the question of asserting Arab nationalism and rejecting all compromises with Western powers, he had come to symbolise Arab nationalism.

Bandung Conference in 1955 brought Nehru and Nasser together again. Both were aware of the total identity of their views on matters concerning decolonisation and Asian and African cooperation. It was Nehru who introduced two leaders of the African National Congress of South Africa to Nasser at Bandung. Nasser became a fervent anti-racialist. Nehru notes that Nasser who had never left Egypt before (except for a pilgrimage to Mecca) was "excited like a little boy" at Bandung. By this Nehru certainly meant to say that a youthful Nasser was restless with the problems facing Africa and Asia.

All through 1955 the Indian Prime Minister encouraged Nasser to be firm on the question of the continued presence of the British troops in the Suez Canal region. Nehru felt that Nasser was right in insisting that he would resume negotiations with Britain on the future of the Suez Canal, only if Britain recognised Egypt's national rights. When Nehru learnt that Britain intended to convene a conference on the international control of the Canal, he advised Nasser that Egypt might take the initiative to call such a conference, but on the basis of the recognition of the Egyptian sovereignty. V.K. Krishna Menon played a useful role in the matter through his shuttle diplomacy, visiting London and Cairo many times.

A year after Bandung, on July 26, 1956, President Nasser, in a surprise move, announced the Egyptian Government's decision to nationalise the Suez Canal. The provocation was, no doubt, the decision of the United States and Britain to withdraw their offer of financial assistance to build the gigantic Aswan Dam in Egypt. The declared reason for this rebuff was the doubts of the two governments regarding the economic soundness of the Aswan Dam scheme. But world opinion accepted the view that the new US policy was a sequel to the growing accord between Egypt and the Soviet Union. In his speech at Alexandria announcing the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, Nasser made it clear that Egypt would employ the revenue from the Canal in the construction of

the Aswan Dam.

Nehru's initial reaction to Nasser's decision was reported to be one of surprise. He had enough reasons for this. Only a few days before, the emerging trio of the nonaligned movement, President Tito, Prime Minister Nehru and President Nasser, had their meeting at Brioni. Nehru and Nasser had travelled together by air from Brioni to Cairo. Neither at Brioni, nor during the flight to Cairo, did Nasser even give a hint about his desire to take over the Suez. In fact, while on the flight to Cairo, Nasser had shown to Nehru a radio version of John Dulles speech announcing the US withdrawal of its offer for assistance for the Aswan Dam project. Nehru noted that the tone of the speech of the US Secretary of State was "discourteous and almost contemptuous".

At no time did Nehru have any doubt about the inalienable right of the Egyptian Government to nationalise the Suez. But, in a confidential telegram to his sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit in London, a day after the announcement of Nasser's decision, Nehru said the Egyptian Government was "undertaking more than it can manage".

Making a statement in the Indian Parliament on August 8, 1956, however, Nehru left no one in doubt about his support to the nationalisation of the Canal. He said: "The Canal itself is in Egypt and an integral part of Egypt. The sovereignty of Egypt is thus beyond question. This is recognised both in the charter given to the company (Suez Canal Company) in 1856 by the Viceroy of Egypt under the Ottoman Empire and in subsequent agreements and until as late as 1954." Nehru said:

We have great respect and regard for the sovereignty and dignity of Egypt and for our friendly relations with her. The Egyptian nationalisation decision was precipitated by the Aswan Dam decision of the United States Government in which the United Kingdom Government later joined. More than the decision the way it was done hurt Egypt's pride and self-respect and disregarded the people's sentiment.

While India and other Afro-Asian countries were pleading for a negotiated settlement, Nehru playing even a moderator's role, Israel launched a sudden and premeditated attack on Egypt on October 29, 1956, and large concentrations of Israeli troops made deep incursions into Egyptian territory. Two days later, British and French forces commenced aerial bombardment of airfields and military objectives in Cairo and elsewhere in Egypt. This was followed a few days later by landings of airborne troops near Port Said, which resulted in heavy fighting there.

The UN Security Council was able to bring about a ceasefire and the UN General Assembly at an emergency session expressed its disapproval of the tripartite aggression. The peace-loving world deeply resented this aggression as a flagrant violation of Egypt's sovereignty. The tripartite attack on Egypt made Nehru furious. In a communication to the American Secretary of State on October 31, 1956, Nehru said: "I cannot imagine a worse case of aggression. If this aggression continues and succeeds, all faith in international commitments and the United Nations will fade away and the old spectre of colonialism will haunt us again.... The whole future of the relations between Europe and Asia hangs in the balance. There can be no peace, howsoever it might be imposed, if it means conquest by force of arms."

In more forthright terms Nehru told the Indian Parliament on November 16, 1956:

During all the controversies since the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company, Egypt has conducted herself with a large measure of propriety and forbearance. Without the least justification, Egypt was attacked not only by Israel but also by the United Kingdom and France. Whether there was any previous consultations among the aggressor countries, I do not know. But it is obvious that their plans fitted in and the Anglo-French attack helped Israeli aggression and was itself helped by it.

Nehru was not at all happy that while Britain and France had accepted the UN resolution, they had laid down certain conditions which were not consistent with the resolution. In any case, Nehru was very hurt over Israeli insistence that it would not evacuate Gaza, an integral part of Egypt.

Meanwhile, India agreed to send a contingent of army for the UN force in Egypt. Nehru said the main task of the UN international force was to ensure that Israel remained within the demarcation lines set by the old armistice agreement. The Indian force remained in the Gaza Strip of the Egyptian territory. Nehru also kept on insisting that the blocked Suez Canal should be opened to traffic as quickly as possible.

Even if Nehru had some initial reservations about the wisdom of the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, his admiration for Nasser's action became positive after the tripartite aggression on Egypt. Nehru and Nasser had by then become great pals. On November 7, 1956, much after the ceasefire had been enforced, Nehru sent a warmly worded note of encouragement to Nasser. He observed:

Recent developments indicate definitely that the tide has turned in favour of Egypt. I am sure that this process will continue and not only bring relief to Egypt but ultimate removal of all aggression wherever it may come from. I should like to congratulate you on this turn of events and to assure you that we shall stand by the independence of Egypt. World opinion has been largely with you and has undoubtedly helped greatly, but it is essentially your leadership and the determination of the Egyptian people to preserve their freedom that has made the difference. I trust that Egypt will long have your leadership and prosper under it.

One of the significant fall-outs of the Suez crisis was a certain amount of understanding by the United States of Nehru and his foreign policy. Vigorous defence of the Egyptian position had finally convinced the Americans that Nehru was an ardent defender of freedom and peace. For his part, Nehru was pleased that the US did not support the Anglo-French aggression on Egypt.

During the pendency of the Suez crisis, there occurred the despatch of the Soviet troops to Hungary. This event evoked considerable criticism in the West, which urged the nonaligned countries to adopt a virulently anti-Soviet stance. The Hungarian developments saddened Nehru, but he was not prepared to be pushed around by the West. He even suspected that the Western world was highlighting Hungary in order to hide what was happening in Egypt. He told the Indian Parliament on November 19, 1956: "The struggle in Hungary was represented as the basic thing, so as somehow to cover up the misdeeds in Egypt."

Deeply concerned with attack on freedom in Hungary and Egypt and anywhere in the world, Nehru said in Parliament: "Even as we were distressed by the events in Egypt, we viewed with grave concern and distress the events in Hungary. The tragic dramas in Egypt and Hungary which have been enacted almost before our eyes have demonstrated the inherent dangers of a recourse to arms to settle any problem."

Analysts agree that the Suez crisis brought glory to Nehru's statesmanship. He successfully came out of it, with his principles unscathed and his commitment to peace and resistance to aggression considerably deepened.

### *THE CONGO: Martyrdom of Lumumba*

The attainment of independence by the Congo from the Belgian

colonialists on June 30, 1960, should have been a happy event in the troubled history of Africa. But within days of its independence, the Congo became a victim of unprecedented turmoil, complicated by internecine political rivalries, military coup, secession of copper-rich Katanga province, return of the Belgian forces, and the induction of cold war politics. The United Nations, which was for the first time called upon to intervene in an independent country to maintain its integrity, did not come out with flying colours in the beginning, but later, to some extent, succeeded in ending the agony of the country that was later renamed Zaire.

Belgian colonialism in the Congo has been universally characterised as one of the worst. Both when it was a principality of the Belgian King and later as a colony of the Belgian Government, the people of the Congo were the victims of brutal suppression, large-scale massacre and widespread plunder. Domination, exploitation and discrimination of the Congolese were the order of the day. All attempts of the people of the Congo to raise their voice of protest were put down mercilessly.

Allied to this brutal treatment was the utter neglect of the Congolese. The Belgian rulers neglected all forms of education and training of the Congolese, with the result that on the morrow of their liberation, the people of the Congo did not have any trained manpower to take over.

In the final phase of the confrontation between the Congolese national movements and the Belgian rulers, there were attempts to divide them. This was sought to be achieved by creating tribal entities. The Bakongo Association (ABAKO), headed by Joseph Kasavubu, was encouraged to work for the revival of the Bakongo kingdom. The Confederation of Tribal Associations (CONAKAT), led by Moise Tshombe, developed close ties with the white colonialists in Katanga. The National Congolese Movement (MNC), born in 1958 and led by Patrice Lumumba, was the only progressive movement that sought to unite all the people of the Congo for the liberation of the country.

In the fast-moving political developments in the Congo, Belgian King Baudouin signed a new constitution of the territory in May 1960. Subsequently Lumumba's Left-wing MNC emerged as the strongest party in elections to both central and provincial assemblies. The first ever national government had Lumumba as the Prime Minister while his arch political rival, Joseph Kasavubu, was elected Head of the State. On June 30, King Baudouin proclaimed independence in Leopoldville, now Kinshasa.

That the political structure in the Congo did not have firm roots was clear from the fact that in less than two weeks there were revolts in many parts of this large country, equalling the size of Western Europe. There was a sort of a mutiny in the army. Moïse Tshombe, President of Katanga (now Shaba), declared the independence of the province on July 11, and the Belgian forces returned to the Congo to protect Belgian mining interests and nationals.

On July 14, 1960, the UN Security Council acceded to Lumumba's request to send a UN force to the Congo to end the secession of Katanga and to maintain the territorial integrity of the new state. Besides seeking assistance from the United Nations, Lumumba had appealed to both the United States and the Soviet Union for military assistance. Significantly, Left-leaning Lumumba was received warmly when he paid a visit to Washington.

Lumumba's action in approaching both Moscow and Washington was motivated by his desire to keep the Congo out of the cold war. While President Eisenhower dragged his feet because of American sympathies towards the Belgians, the Soviet Union too exhibited some hesitation. The UN Secretary General responded favourably. Dag Hammarskjöld, however, insisted that in terms of the UN Charter, the UN forces would not interfere in the internal political matters of the Congo.

President Kasavubu, fearing that Soviet aid was about to reach Lumumba, dismissed the latter on September 5. In turn, Lumumba charged the President with high treason. However, Lumumba was prevented from harnessing support to his cause by the action of the UN Special Representative, Andrew Cordier, who had ordered the closure of all airports. Reportedly, Egypt, Ghana and Guinea had plans to fly in troops to help Lumumba. The closure of the airports stopped this possible help from reaching the beleaguered Congolese leader. Apart from the three African countries, the Soviet Union was also critical of the decision of Cordier who went so far as to prevent Lumumba from even using the broadcasting facilities of the government.

In this geopolitical confusion, the army leader, Colonel Joseph Mobutu, seized power on September 14 and dismissed both the Prime Minister and the President of the Congo, though he later came to a working agreement with Kasavubu. With the army takeover, the Congolese parliament in which Lumumba had majority support, was not allowed to be convened. On December 1, Lumumba was arrested by Mobutu's forces, and was later

transferred to Katanga. It was announced on February 13, 1961, that Lumumba had been killed during an escape attempt. It was, however common knowledge that he was done to death by Tshombe's forces.

By the end of 1960, the Congo was divided into various rival political regions. Mobutu held authority in Leopoldville, Katanga was independent under Tshombe, and Antoine Gizenga, who was Lumumba's deputy, exercised influence from Stanleyville. Tshombe was in a particularly strong position. Although the official Belgian forces had been withdrawn at the request of the UN, Tshombe had employed a large number of Belgian mercenaries to fight for him.

The developments in the Congo had considerably disturbed India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, but he welcomed the despatch of the UN forces to the Congo because he understood that these troops were authorised only to provide such military and technical assistance as was required till the Congolese security forces were able to function adequately on their own. This support to the UN, according to biographer S. Gopal, was to Nehru a personal act of faith; it was known that even Krishna Menon was "lukewarm". In a statement welcoming the arrival of the UN forces, Nehru said:

When the trouble arose in the Congo, the United Nations was appealed to and the latter responded with speed and efficiency. This particular action, which the United Nations took in the Congo, is unique. In a sense it marked a new phase in the activities of the UN. Taken all in all, I think it is a good and desirable phase and the manner in which the UN has functioned in the Congo has been commendable.

When Nehru saw the danger of the Congo disintegrating, he told Parliament on August 31, 1960, that Indian approach to the question "is that the integrity and sovereignty of the Congo should be maintained".

As a token of its support to the UN mission, India sent non-combatant troops as requested for the distribution of supplies, for signalling duties and for running a hospital. At that point of time, Nehru was certain that the UN could bring a measure of balance into the situation and prevent to some extent the ambitions of outside powers to take advantage of the Congolese crisis.

Although he was not fully satisfied with the functioning of the UN authorities in the Congo, Hammarskjöld's personal assurances to him notwithstanding, Nehru still backed the UN, even at



the risk of opposing the two acknowledged "high priests" of African radicalism, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Sekou Toure of Guinea, who favoured the idea of sending military assistance to Lumumba directly.

In October 1960, when the Congo question was still in the melting pot, Nehru, like many other heads of governments, attended the UN General Assembly. In his speech to the Assembly, he said the UN was generally doing well, he supported the attempts to secure a meeting of the Congolese Parliament, he was critical of Tshombe's role, and was keen to reduce the influence of the Belgians "who had come back to Katanga". It appeared he did not want India to get further involved in the Congo crisis. On the UN's role, Nehru had this to say:

The role of United Nations is a mediatory one to reconcile and help in the proper functioning of the Central Government. Help in the development of the Congo is again a tremendous and long-term problem, ultimately it is the people of the Congo who will have to produce their own leadership, whether it is good or bad. Leadership cannot be imposed and any attempt to do so will lead to conflict. The United Nations obviously cannot act all the time as policemen, nor should any outside power intervene.

Nehru was informed that Lumumba still enjoyed parliamentary sanction. In his UN General Assembly speech Nehru, therefore, pointed out: "There is an elected Parliament in the Congo, though it does not appear to be functioning. It should be the function of the United Nations to help the country's Parliament to meet and function so that out of its deliberations the problem of the Congo may be dealt with by the people themselves. The decisions must be of Parliament as representing the people of the Congo, not of others. The functioning of Parliament may itself lead to the ironing out of internal differences."

Pointing an accusing finger at the Belgians, Nehru said it seemed to him of great importance that every type of military or semi-military personnel of Belgium should leave the Congo. He said:

Disruptive forces have been let loose and have been encouraged by people who do not wish this newly independent Congo well. Some footholds of the old colonialism are still engaged in working to this end. It is an encouragement to the disruption of the state. We must realise that it is essential to maintain the integrity of the Congo, for if there is disintegration of the state, this is bound to lead to internal civil wars on a large scale. There will be no peace in the Congo except on the basis of the integrity of the state. Foreign countries must particularly avoid any interference in its internal affairs or encouragement of one faction against another.

It appears that Nehru relied heavily on the UN Secretary General's Special Representative in the Congo, Rajeshwar Dayal, in understanding the situation in that war-torn country. In a speech in Parliament on November 22, 1960, Nehru commended to the House Rajeshwar Dayal's latest report which, he said, "is an objective survey from a man not only on the spot, but a man responsible for dealing with the situation". The Indian Prime Minister was extremely impressed, although depressed, with Dayal's assertion in the study "Return of the Belgians to the Congo", especially to Katanga, that Belgian influence "is omnipresent". From this Nehru was able to make out that the Belgian authorities in the Congo were supporting disruptive elements.

Many Western countries were supporters of Belgium. They were extremely unhappy with the role of Dayal and accused him of being "rabidly anti-Belgian" and began insisting on his withdrawal from the Congo. Nehru, however, backed Dayal to the hilt, not because he was an Indian civil servant, but because he was doing an excellent job as representative of the UN Secretary General. He even threatened to pull out the Indian troops from Congo if Dayal were to be replaced unceremoniously. But the criticism of Dayal was so persistent that Hammarskjöld had no other option but to yield. In May 1961, with Nehru's prior knowledge, Dayal was removed from the Congo operations. Nehru saw this as victory of the colonialists and their supporters.

Lumumba's arrest by Mobuto's forces and his being despatched to Katanga agitated Nehru's mind. In this move Nehru saw the United Nations becoming less and less effective. In his view, what affected the United Nations' handling of the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Congo was the partisan attitude of Cordier who continued as the Secretary General's principal adviser. Nehru was even mildly critical of Hammarskjöld and his ambivalent attitude. He said: "All we can do is deliberately to try to be impartial. But our own thinking colours our actions. While we may be men of high integrity, we cannot get rid of our own minds in our approach to a question."

Nehru was also aware of Hammarskjöld's inability to communicate with the Soviet side. Even as Nehru continued to recognise the limited importance of the role of the UN Secretary General, so did Hammarskjöld continue to recognise the crucial role Nehru could play in keeping the Afro-Asian group behind the UN operations in the Congo.

A few weeks later, Indian Prime Minister's disenchantment of

the UN role in the Congo found expression in his statement to Parliament in December 1960. He said:

Originally when the Security Council passed its first resolution on Congo ... it was taken for granted that they are sending 20,000 to 22,000 troops there to do something. Now it appears that their chief duty there is to protect themselves, self-defence—an extraordinary position. "Self-defence" is the actual word used. That is to say, they can do peaceful duties, which non-soldiers could have done, but where it is a question of any conflict, they must not indulge in any step in prevention, except in self-defence. Surely, if they are to limit themselves to steps conceived in self-defence alone, they need not have gone there. But they were sent there to help, not to interfere, not to encourage any conflict, but surely, when the need for it arose, to prevent wrong-doing.

He was sad that when Mobutu's army was indulging in great brutalities, the UN forces could only look on, because they were forbidden even to rescue people who were being killed—the strict orders were that they could use force only in self-defence. "This is a very extraordinary position," Nehru remarked.

With the continued weakening of the UN efforts in the Congo, Nehru inevitably apprehended danger to Lumumba's life. The hold of Mobutu and Tshombe supported by Belgians was becoming a stranglehold. A UN Conciliation Committee which had gone to the Congo, had to return without even meeting Lumumba. But, Nehru did not want to get further entangled in the Congo crisis. He even rejected Khrushchev's suggestion for the creation of an African army for the Congo, separate from the UN force. He also kept himself away from Ghana's leader Kwame Nkrumah who, he feared "might be developing his own ambitions in the Congo". Ghana and Guinea were the only two African countries then wanting to send an African force to the Congo, primarily to save Lumumba and to have him rescued. Nehru with all the faith in UN's ability, just did not take any notice of the idea of an African force. Nor did he agree to Nkrumah's second proposal of the despatch of African troops under an Indian command.

The news of Lumumba's death on February 13, 1961, further complicated the Congolese tragedy. A shocked Nehru told an equally shocked Indian Parliament two days later that there was no doubt that Lumumba had been murdered. He had been murdered in a brutal and callous manner, he said. He was murdered by people who, in doing so, defied the whole process of the United Nations and the Conciliation Commission in every way: "It is a picture which naturally angers one and which is going to have and is having in fact very serious and far-reaching consequences."

Nehru ridiculed the explanation of the Katanga authorities that Lumumba had tried to escape, by describing the explanation "so extraordinary and so audacious that it surprises one that any of these people should have the audacity to say things...." Nehru lamented that the Katanga authorities even refused to permit an enquiry. He must have been in great pain when he told Indian Parliament:

They refuse even to indicate where Mr Lumumba was murdered or to indicate where his grave is, lest, as they say, the place should become a place of pilgrimage. It shows what his bitterest enemies thought of Mr Lumumba—that his grave would become a place of pilgrimage for the Congolese people. It would, indeed, have become so because Mr Lumumba, in a sense, was the founder of the national movement. It is not a very old-established movement but he was the founder and there cannot be the shadow of a doubt that whatever his failings or weaknesses may have been, he was by far the most popular figure in the Congo, not only among his own tribe but among others too. The tribal elements conflict with each other but among them he was the most popular figure. And it should be remembered that it was Mr Lumumba who invited the United Nations to come to their help six months ago. It was at his request that the United Nations decided to send their contingent there.

When Nehru spoke at a seminar on the "Problems of the Emergent Africa", organised in New Delhi four days after Lumumba's death, his voice was choked with emotion. He said: "The murder of Lumumba could be a turning point in history, with Lumumba dead infinitely more important than alive." This literally brought tears in the eyes of many in the audience. Nehru meant to simply say that martyrs never died. He perhaps remembered Lumumba's prophetic words: "You will be heroes but not when you are alive."

Nehru was greatly upset, but he was still committed to a united Congo and, therefore, at the pressing request of the UN Secretary General he agreed to send Indian troops to strengthen the hands of the UN. But he put forward three conditions for India's agreement to send its troops. First, they must function as a unit by themselves and not be mixed with others; secondly, they must not come into conflict with the forces of any UN member-country other than the Belgian mercenaries; and thirdly, in no manner must they be used against popular movements. Within this framework, India was able to help in a modest way in the eventual restoration of the independence and integrity of the Congo.

India was satisfied that Indian troops contributed in the liberation of Katanga from the hands of the secessionists. But Nehru discovered that all efforts to overcome the Congolese crisis had to

content with the machinations of the Western powers. In fact, at one stage, Nehru became so exasperated by the British attitude on the Congo that he began to question the relevance of India's continuance in the Commonwealth itself. He was convinced that all the Western powers including Britain, were against the withdrawal of foreign mercenaries from Katanga. Nehru denounced in strong terms the support to Tshombe extended by the British, and when Dag Hammarskjöld's death took place in an air crash on September 16, 1961, while on a flight to Katanga, Nehru wrote to Padmaja Naidu three days later that even though Hammarskjöld might not have been killed by the British, "his death was certainly a consequence of the British policy in Congo".

When Nehru paid his customary visit to the United Nations in 1961, he took the opportunity to pay a tribute to Hammarskjöld in these words: "In the course of this year the organisation which represents the world community has faced many crises. Among these crises has been the tragic death of the late Secretary General, Mr Hammarskjöld, who during the many years of his high office, shaped to some extent the working of this Assembly and enlarged its functions. I would like to pay my tribute and my homage to the memory of Mr Hammarskjöld."

Nehru, it is surprising, dismissed the Congo crisis in his speech at the Belgrade nonaligned summit in September 1961 in just one sentence. But with the help of Nasser and Nkrumah, he was able to get the Congo problem introduced in the final declaration which said:

The participating countries demand that the tragic events in the Congo must not be repeated and they feel that it is the duty of the world community to continue to do everything in its power in order to erase the consequences and to prevent any further intervention in the young African state, and to enable the Congo to embark freely upon the road of its independent development based on respect for its sovereignty, unity and its territorial integrity.

Nehru saw through two years of the Congo crisis with considerable difficulty. Two cardinal principles were deeply involved in his approach—his concern for African liberation and his commitment to strengthen the United Nations and imparting to its role the dynamic element of furthering the process of decolonisation and helping the newly independent countries to stand on their feet. No doubt there were many occasions during the two-year long crisis, when Nehru strongly differed from Hammarskjöld; but he always lent him strong support on the wider issue of the role of the UN,

sometimes distancing himself from his other friendly world leaders like Tito, Nkrumah, Nasser and even Khrushchev.

Nehru's total identification with the interests of the people of Africa had its finest hour during the Congo crisis; for his special love and concern for the peoples of Africa had found expression in his famous remark that the Indians who had only "black hole of Calcutta", the African people had perhaps spent their whole life in a black hole.

The Congo developments also sounded the alarm in Nehru of the danger that could arise from European mercenaries. The Belgian mercenaries, whose nefarious doings in the Congo contributed substantially in complicating the problem, besides resulting in wholly avoidable blood-letting, were really the forerunners of several of their compeers in later years who assisted the retreating colonial powers to fight their rearguard actions against the sweeping tide of decolonisation and liberation.

Nehru was angry when the Western powers sought to discredit India's action in the liberation of Goa as a defiance of the United Nations, while all these very same powers left no stone unturned to emasculate the world body in its operations in the Congo. The manner in which support was being extended to the secessionist forces in Katanga was in reality a monstrous attempt to break up the United Nations. Governments which were guilty of this had the cheek to talk of India defying the UN. "All this piles up in our minds, makes us angry and very angry," he said.

Nehru saw in such differing treatments to the events in Goa and Congo by the Western powers a crude attempt to divide the world into white and black. Values and standards, he said, clearly differed and the alarms about the danger to the United Nations obviously emanated from fears of the growing weight of Asian and African opinion. After Goa operations, Nehru was even more determined to support the UN operations in the Congo. It is noteworthy that Nehru went to the extent of permitting the Indian troops to remain in the Congo even at the height of the Chinese aggression on India in 1962.

### *WIND OF CHANGE IN AFRICA*

No one hailed the steady sweep of the decolonisation process over Africa so warmly as did Nehru. In 1955, there were only three

independent African states, Ethiopia, Egypt and Liberia; today there are fifty. The Republic of South Africa is also independent, but in the absence of majority rule, India and other countries do not accept its independence.

The post-1955 period was characterised by the decolonisation of black Africa in a very big way. "The wind of change", in Africa, in the famous words of Harold Macmillan, started with the independence of Sudan, Morocco and Tunisia in 1956, and Ghana in 1957. Some twelve French colonies like Senegal, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Central African Republic and Chad became independent by 1960; Guinea being the first to vote against remaining in Charles de Gaulle's French Community in 1958. Belgium Congo was free in June 1960, Somalia in July 1960, Nigeria October 1960, Sierra Leone April 1961, Tanganyika December 1961, Algeria July 1962, Uganda October 1962, Kenya December 1963, Malawi July 1964, and Zambia October 1964. More countries of Africa joined the comity of nations in the following years.

Nehru was no doubt very happy with these developments and was optimistic of Africa's future. He told Parliament on August 17, 1960, that after a long period of colonial domination, the countries of Africa had suddenly come out from darkness into light of freedom:

In the present state of Africa where we see a whole continent in ferment, doing many right things and doing many wrong things, and where all types of movements and revolutionary changes are taking place, I do not know where such a policy will take them. Anyhow, it is good that Africa is changing and changing fast, because the previous condition in the colonial administration was so bad that nothing could be worse from the human point of view.

Heralding the emerging African personality which Nehru was convinced would play a vital role in the future, he told Indian Parliament: "I am sure this House would wish to send its goodwill to the young nations who are finding their soul and who in the past centuries have suffered more than any other people in the world and have carried their burden of sorrow. It gives us special happiness that they should get rid of these shackles. I should like to congratulate even the colonial powers, who at least, and to some extent, have helped them in the process."

The independence of Ghana in 1957 had a special significance for Nehru. He viewed Ghana as a symbol of resurgent Africa. Speaking at a meeting organised by the African Students' Association (India) in Delhi to mark the independence of Ghana on March

6, 1957, Nehru said:

I am indeed happy to be present here. I would have been happier if I could be present today at Accra, the capital of Ghana. I wanted to go there very much, but unfortunately elections came in the way and it became impossible for me to leave India. But my mind had been full of this great event which we have met to celebrate. The independence of any country is a thing to be celebrated and welcomed, but there is something more distinctive about the independence of Ghana than perhaps of some other countries. It signifies so much for the whole continent of Africa. Africa has had a peculiarly tragic history for hundreds of years. And to see Africa, or an important part of it, turn its face towards dawn after the dark night is, indeed, something exhilarating. There is, therefore, about this event today something of the break of dawn. It moves us not only intellectually but emotionally.

Nehru took this opportunity to testify to the fact that he was himself not aware till very late in his life of the richness of African history, its rich cultural achievements, its political organisation and even its forms of democracy and state socialism. To help the people of India get to know more about Africa, Nehru had helped the establishment of the Department of African Studies in Delhi University.

Expressing his desire to help the countries of Africa, Nehru told the African students that nothing would give India greater pleasure than an opportunity to help and cooperate with the people of Ghana. "But I have become more and more convinced that each country has to find its own feet and do its own thinking. I hope, now that the chance had come to the people of Ghana and, indeed, to other parts of Africa also, they will rediscover their roots and grow."

This is a day of rejoicing certainly, but the fulfilment of a long-sought objective or dream invariably brings greater responsibilities and new problems. I have no doubt that the people of Ghana and their great leader, Dr Nkrumah, will face these responsibilities.... They have to go ahead in economic and other fields and, what is more, they must always be conscious that the eyes of the whole of Africa and of the rest of the world are on them.

Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana was one of the first African leaders to have paid an official visit to India, in December 1958 (Prime Minister Nasser of Egypt and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia had visited India before Nkrumah). Nehru took this opportunity to welcome the initiative taken by Ghana to promote a union with Guinea. In this Nehru saw the beginning of the process of a united Africa.



Speaking at a banquet in honour of Nkrumah, the Indian Prime Minister promised India's full cooperation in Ghana's development. He said: "We have been drawn in particular to the new countries of Africa and I earnestly hope that in the future, these bonds of friendship and cooperation will grow to the advantage of both."

# 3

## South Africa: Affront to Human Dignity

RACISM HAS been variously defined as "hatred or intolerance of another race or other races"; "a doctrine that human abilities are determined by race" and "belief in the superiority of a particular race".

Apartheid, an Afrikaan word, means "aparthood or separateness". Apartheid became the official policy of racial discrimination and segregation of the Nationalist Party, in power in South Africa since 1948.

Apartheid is used to describe the long-term objective of territorial separation of the white minority race and the non-white majority, but its basic tenet has always been the complete domination of the state and society by the privileged white population. The doctrine of apartheid, in reality, is the product of the application of the theory of racism based on the superiority of the white race. Racism thus provides the parentage and its ugly progeny is apartheid.

Racism, as the hateful instrument of domination, had been practised earlier in this century by the German dictator, Adolf Hitler. His Nazi (National Socialist) party was committed to the policy of the superiority of the German race. The master race theory resulted in Hitler's Third Reich unleashing unprecedented horror and brutal torture on millions of innocent men, women and children, because of their racial origin. The ghastly crimes perpetrated by Hitler's Germany could have been avoided if only the world had become aware of the dangers to humanity from the racist scourge.

The racial myth in South Africa dates back to the time of the arrival of the first white (Dutch) in 1652 in Cape Town. The defeat of the Dutch at the hands of Britain and the arrival of the British settlers in 1820, came about at the time of the discovery of gold, diamonds and other valuable minerals. South Africa became a region of high potential and thus of great importance. The sequence of events followed the familiar pattern set by colonial expansion in other continents. There were wars of conquest, forcible uprooting of the indigenous population from their lands and homes and, finally, the total pauperisation of the original inhabitants.

The distinguishing feature in South Africa was the total dispossession of all lands of the blacks by the whites. This exhibited the features of racial superiority of the whites. The political scenario in South Africa became a racist reality when the British imperialists agreed to hand over power to a small minority of whites, the Dutch and the British, in 1910. From then on the whites were united in their objective of maintaining their economic, political and military domination of the blacks. White domination was strengthened with the help of a large number of discriminatory, oppressive and unjust laws, enacted by the white minority government. The year 1948 which brought the Nationalist Party to power, was the culmination of the process of entrenchment of the white minority rule.

The German and the South African versions of racism shared several common features. The major difference was the nature of South Africa's perfidy. South Africa, no doubt, did not copy the Nazi example of gas chambers, concentration camps and brutal killings of innocent people, but Pretoria regime's system of setting up ghettos and so-called reserves, where the overwhelming black majority was herded, was no less sinister in the slow extermination of the blacks. Mass extermination was for the Nazis one short swift stroke of annihilation; while in South Africa attempts were made to curb the growth of black population and encourage the growth of the white population through incentives.

It is an established fact that apartheid has its roots in the same racist and bellicose ideology of Nazi Germany. On the lines of Nazism, apartheid, therefore, presents a grave threat to peace and security in Southern Africa, in particular, and in the world in general. It is rather odd that this inhuman policy is aided and abetted through economic, financial and military assistance to the racist South African regime by some Western countries which were themselves victims of the Nazi aggression in the Second World War.

Nehru, as a humanist, held the firm conviction that the policy of racial discrimination as institutionalised by the Government of South Africa so as to subjugate the black population politically and economically for the benefit of the white minority, was repugnant to the conscience of mankind, violated the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was contrary to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

The spirit of freedom and equality burnt fiercely in Nehru's heart. For people like Nehru who had experienced the ignominy of colonial rule and who had fought bitterly to throw off the imperialist yoke, it was difficult to accept the unjust policy of apartheid. No wonder, he led the world in the struggle to free the black majority in South Africa from the racial burden of apartheid. His struggle against apartheid is an integral part of the wider struggle of the peoples of the world against all forms of oppression, domination, exploitation and discrimination.

India's abhorrence of apartheid had been expressed even before the struggle of its own independence. The Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, had had many unpleasant brushes with racialism during his sojourn in South Africa and this was later to become a factor in his resolve to uproot imperialism from India.

After being called to the Bar from the Inner Temple, Mahatma Gandhi had an occasion to go to South Africa for a law suit. There he was brought face to face with the repulsive virulence of racism. A week after arriving in Durban, in May 1883, Gandhi was attacked and thrown out of a railway carriage reserved for the whites at Maritzburg in South Africa; at Pardeburg, a white policeman beat him up for walking on a footpath reserved for the whites; at Durban, a white mob screamed for his blood outside an official's house where he had been put up, and were it not for his chance escape, the mob would have lynched him, and at Johannesburg, a white official beat him nearly to death.

Gandhi soon started the first campaign of his life against racism in South Africa. He practised there, for the first time, *passive resistance*, a movement he later successfully employed in India's struggle for independence. The government in Transvaal had at that time introduced a European-language test which sought to exclude a number of Asians who wanted to enter Transvaal for the first time. It had also resurrected an old law which required a record of fingerprints as a part of the procedure of registration of Asians. This legislation became the occasion, in 1908, for Gandhi's first campaign for passive resistance. The Asians in South Africa felt

that the taking of fingerprints implied a criminal status. Large numbers of them went to jail for deliberate breaches of the immigration law, and much sympathy was aroused for their cause both in India and in the United Kingdom. The Transvaal Government eventually agreed to enact a law which would be applicable to all immigrants, and to make at the same time administrative regulations which would permit the entry, each year, of a limited number of educated Asians.

Mahatma Gandhi's second and more intensified campaign of civil disobedience was in 1913, when the new Union Government in South Africa enacted a General Immigration Act which laid additional restrictions on Asian immigrants and also curtailed the movement of Indians in that country. The large-scale breaches of immigration restrictions which ensued, resulted in numerous convictions of Asians, and strong feelings were aroused in India by their alleged ill-treatment under detention. The campaign of passive resistance was called off in 1914 when an agreement was reached between General Smuts, the then Prime Minister of South Africa, and Gandhi, as a result of which all further immigration of Indians to South Africa was to be stopped and the £3-tax imposed on Asians was to be withdrawn.

The struggle against racism led by Gandhi being so intimately linked with the struggle for India's independence, it was but natural that this country should later have led the international campaign against racism in South Africa. In March 1946, Gandhi wrote that the course of events had raised to a higher level the question of the policy of the South African Government. This policy held the seeds of world war, he said.

Africans were no doubt in the vanguard of the struggle against apartheid. But the contribution of the people of Indian origin settled in Africa was not inconsiderable, especially of a section of young educated and articulate Indians who were inspired by Gandhi. They were determined to secure full equality. They organised trade unions and led a joint struggle with Africans and other workers. A study group was started by young Indians in cooperation with the Africans and even whites, with the objective of evolving a joint strategy against South African racism. Dr Yusuf Dadoo, a South African of Indian origin, on his return from England in 1936, came to be recognised as leader of the militant movement for securing full equality. At a conference organised in Cape Town on April 25, 1938, an anti-apartheid front was established for "the cooperation of native, Indian and coloured races in

the struggle against colour bar in South Africa".

Support for this united struggle against apartheid from India was somewhat hesitant in the beginning. This was because Gandhiji, who was the undisputed leader of India's freedom struggle, was yet to be convinced about the efficacy of such a joint struggle. Gandhiji's reluctance was due to his fears that any such move by the small Indian community might provoke greater retaliation against them from the white regime. On the other hand, Jawaharlal Nehru fully endorsed the step for a joint struggle against apartheid. In defence of his position Gandhiji observed:

However much one may sympathise with the Bantus, Indians cannot make common cause with them. I doubt if the Bantus themselves will, as a class, countenance any such move. They can only damage and complicate their cause by mixing it up with Indians; as Indians would damage theirs on such mixture. But neither the All India Congress Committee Resolution, nor my advice need deter Indians from forming a non-European front, if they are sure thereby of obtaining their freedom. Indeed, had they thought it beneficial or possible, they would have formed it long ago.

Gandhiji, however, changed his views later. When, in 1946, a delegation of Indians from South Africa met him to seek his support and advice for a mass passive resistance campaign against the Ghetto Act, Gandhiji told them—echoing Nehru—to associate Africans with their struggle. Next year, when Yusuf Dadoo and G.M. Naicker came to India, Gandhiji gave them a message saying that "political cooperation among all exploited races in South Africa can only result in mutual good, if wisely directed".

Gandhiji was a non-conformist in his views on African struggle for liberation of Africa. That was way back in the early 20th century and it would be right to assume that in those early days Nehru, for all his love for Africa, would have concurred with Gandhiji, his political mentor. While in South Africa, Gandhiji was asked why he was fighting the battle of only the Indians settled there and not of the African people as a whole and why only on the racial issue and not on Africa's freedom itself. He replied with great articulation. It was not as if he did not sympathise with the plight of Africans, he said. They had suffered as much through racial discrimination, indeed, even more for they were the children of the land and his heart bled for them. There would be no occasion when he would not stand four-square with them. The campaigns he was conducting would eventually benefit them as much as the Indians. But, he said, he would not presume to lead them. They

must throw up their own leaders who would give them inspiration, guidance and the sinews to wage their struggle. At that moment they would have him by their side. So, too, with the larger cause of liberation. The African liberation struggle must be fought by the Africans themselves at a time and place of their choosing with strategy and methods devised by them according to their own genius. He could only hope that they would elect to use non-violence. When that struggle was launched, India would not be found wanting.

Despite some differences of opinion between Nehru and Gandhiji on the nature and strategy of the struggle in South Africa, many in India were happy to get news of the growing cooperation between the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress, especially when they adopted peaceful methods for the anti-racism campaign.

E.S. Reddy, a former Director of the UN Centre Against Apartheid, is of the view that in 1946 when the strike by African miners and the Indian passive resistance campaign brought large sections of the two communities together, a complaint against South Africa was lodged in the United Nations by the Government of India. At that time, a multi-racial delegation composed of Dr. A. Xuma, President-General of the African National Congress, H.A. Naidoo of the South African Indian Congress, and Senator H. Bassner arrived in New York to seek international support.

Reddy says international support came to the South African cause from a variety of groups, the pacifists, such as the Reverend Michael Scott, the Reverend Canon L. John Collin and the Reverend George Houser; the radicals such as Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, Paul Robeson and Fenner Brockway; and a number of liberals with an international outlook. The Campaign of Defiance against unjust laws in 1952 attracted much wider attention and led to the establishment of support groups and fund-raising in the United Kingdom, the United States, and several other countries. The India League in London also set up a South Africa Committee to promote solidarity with that movement.

The reasonable and balanced programme of the African National Congress was greatly appreciated in the Western world. The African National Congress also paid great attention to obtaining such broad support by laying emphasis on its multi-racial policy. With the signing of the Freedom Charter, which talks of South Africa for all those who live in it, the image of the African National Congress got a big boost. All efforts by the Pretoria regime and its

Western allies to raise the bogey of Communist influence in the African National Congress did not yield much result in influencing the Western opinion adversely, nor did it bring any rift in the ranks of the African National Congress.

At the government level, New Delhi tried for years to persuade the Pretoria regime to put an end to its racial policy, but nothing came of it. This was a major consideration that led India to take the question of disabilities to Indians in South Africa to the United Nations in 1946.

The South African Government not only rejected India's pleas but went on imposing more draconian legislations. In 1943, Natal passed the Pegging Act, restricting the right of the Asians to acquire land. Then came the Asiatic Land Tenure and the Indian Representation Acts to segregate Indians in trade and residence. Those days when the Indian community launched passive resistance campaign, many Indians, men and women, were imprisoned or assaulted by white gangsters.

Failing in its efforts to secure redressal and in response to public pressure in India, the Government of India led by Nehru severed trade connections with South Africa and withdrew its High Commissioner from that country in 1946. This was before any other country had even considered racism an issue deserving to be protested against. The break-off in trade relations meant considerable sacrifice to India; South Africa at that time accounted for five per cent of its total exports. Besides, the decision was taken at a time when as an emergent independent nation, India needed all the resources at its command, especially foreign exchange, to reactivate its economy which had till then been dominated by the colonial rulers.

Jawaharlal Nehru, who had just then become leader of India's Interim Government, said in his broadcast on September 7, 1946: "In South Africa, racism is the state doctrine and our people are putting up a heroic struggle against the tyranny of a racial minority. If this racial doctrine is going to be tolerated, it must inevitably lead to vast conflicts and world disaster."

In the meantime, through his writings and speeches in Indian and international forums Nehru had exerted significant influence on the thought processes of the young militants in South Africa. According to Reddy, Nehru's writings were avidly read by Indians as well as Africans as testified to by "the moving letter", sent by Nelson Mandela from prison, when he was chosen for the Nehru Award for International Understanding. Of Nehru, Mandela says:



Truly Jawaharlal Nehru was an outstanding man. A combination of many men into one: freedom fighter, politician, world statesman, prison graduate, master of the English language, lawyer and historian. As one of the pioneers of the nonaligned movement, he has made a lasting contribution to world peace and the brotherhood of man.

Mandela pays glorious tributes to Nehru when he writes:

In the upsurge of anti-colonial and freedom struggles that swept through Asia and Africa in the post-war period, there could hardly be a liberation movement or national leader who was not influenced in one way or another by the thoughts, activities and example of Pandit Nehru and the All India Congress (Indian National Congress). If I may presume to look back on my own political education and upbringing, I find that my own ideas were influenced by his experience. While at University and engrossed in student politics, I for the first time became familiar with the name of this famous man. In the forties, for the first time I read one of his books: *The Unity of India*. It made an indelible impression on my mind and ever since then, I procured, read and treasured any one of his works that became available. When reading his *Autobiography* or *Glimpses of World History*, one is left with the overwhelming impact of the immense scope of his ideas and breadth of his vision. Even in prison, he refused to succumb to a disproportionate concern with mundane matters or the material hardship of his environment. Instead, he devoted himself to creative activity and produced writings which will remain a legacy to generations of freedom lovers.

Nehru made a passionate plea for Africa at the Asian Relations Conference held in Delhi on April 23, 1947, where he made his famous speech: "We of Asia have a special responsibility to the people of Africa." It was for the first time that a national leader through this historic clarion call expressed solidarity with the people of Africa.

A background paper prepared by India for the Asian Relations Conference, though it did not specifically mention South Africa by name, said that "the concepts of racial superiority and practices of racial discrimination were relentlessly being swept into the dustbin of history" and that the searching review that was being made of them at the United Nations and to a certain degree in this conference "was already fixing their allotted place in the museum of the obsolete".

India's initiative in the UN General Assembly in 1946 against racialism was successful. During that session, the General Assembly, on India's insistence, passed a resolution declaring that "it is in the higher interests of humanity to put an immediate end to racial persecution and discrimination".

Under Nehru's leadership, India took up the issue of racial

discrimination because people of the Indian origin were being discriminated against in South Africa. But, soon, it became Nehru's concern for all non-white races when the South African Government adopted through the Group Areas Act of 1950, racial discrimination as a practical policy to separate communities on the basis of race and deny them equal rights and privileges. At this stage, Prime Minister Nehru came out with the statement saying that India would never submit "to any racialism in any part of the world". The same year the United Nations adopted a resolution requesting the South African Government to stay the enforcement of the Group Areas Act. South Africa, however, paid no heed to the UN resolution, a practice it followed ever since with regard to the world body. The racist regime kept on insisting that it regarded the matter as being outside the competence of the United Nations.

In 1952, along with 12 other member-states of the United Nations, India raised the general question of "race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of apartheid of the Government of the Union of South Africa". At the instance of the Afro-Asian group, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution providing for the appointment of a Commission to study the racial situation in South Africa. The report of this Commission condemned the racist policies of South Africa and thus demonstrated that South Africa could not take shelter under the excuse that it was a matter of domestic jurisdiction and not of international concern.

It must be noted that during this period the United Nations was a small body. Many of the African nations which, as members of the august body, now raise their voice in protest against South Africa's racist policies, could not be heard then, as they were not independent and could not be UN members. And the Western powers, which dominated the world body, stood by the racist policies of the South African regime because of their heavy economic and political stakes in the richest country south of the Sahara. Nehru was aware of this fact and India, thus, was one of the few Afro-Asian countries which advanced the relentless struggle against apartheid in the United Nations.

On the question of discrimination against the people of Indian origin, which continued to figure on the agenda of the United Nations (despite the adoption of resolutions by the organisation that India, Pakistan and South Africa should negotiate on the subject), no agreement could be reached because of the non-cooperative attitude of the Government of South Africa.

Between 1946 and 1962, the UN General Assembly passed 26

resolutions against the racial policies of South Africa. A resolution on the subject was also passed by the Security Council in April 1960. In the discussions held on the resolutions, the representatives of India repeatedly focussed attention on the fact that apartheid was contrary to the principles of the UN Charter, contrary to the sense of human dignity and a violation of the rule of law and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The numerous requests, recommendations, admonitions and condemnations by the United Nations, meanwhile, failed to deter the South African Government from its set course of racism. And so, in 1962, a resolution was moved by 34 member-states, including India, deploring the failure of the South African Government to comply with UN resolutions. The Assembly passed a resolution requesting member-states to take certain diplomatic and economic steps against the Government of South Africa, to goad it into abandoning its racial policies. India had recalled its High Commissioner from South Africa in 1946. The Indian mission was withdrawn in 1954. Until the latest UN resolution, India maintained some contact with Pretoria, through its mission in London, mainly to implement the various UN resolutions urging negotiations between the two countries on the question of treatment of persons of Indian origin in South Africa. In compliance with the provisions of the latest resolution, India broke off even this diplomatic contact.

Nehru instructed the Indian authorities concerned not to allow vessels flying South African flag to touch Indian seaports and to prohibit Indian ships from going to South African ports. The general ban on trade with South Africa, which was in existence since 1946, and had been extended to cover South-West Africa since 1953, had allowed some items of cultural and religious interest to be sent through postal and other channels. Restrictions were now placed on even sending such literature by limiting it to a small number of specified categories. Further, the Government of India informed the International Civil Aviation Organisation that it would not allow aircraft registered in South Africa to land at Indian airports or to overfly India. In New York, India played a leading role in the formation of the Special Committee against Apartheid set up by the General Assembly in 1963 and also made contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund.

Nehru spotlighted at a Press conference on October 4, 1952, the wider implications of the Indian move at the UN General Assembly. He said:

First of all, I may say the great passive resistance movement of Africans and Indians in South Africa is something much bigger than the so-called Indian question in South Africa. Indeed, it includes it in its scope. The old Indian question itself was not confined to the people of Indian descent there, but was symbolic of the racial inequalities and domination that existed in South Africa. Now this question had been raised in a broader and more direct way. Obviously, the question of racial inequality is even more important for the Africans, whose country it is, than even for Indians. I am very glad that in this matter the Africans and Indians are cooperating. The question has become one of vital world significance. No amount of repression can suppress this movement. It may have its ups and downs, but when millions of people are moved, repression cannot put an end to them. It is, therefore, not really a South African issue, but a world issue which will have its repercussions in every continent. I am glad that this is being increasingly recognised everywhere. I cannot say what particular steps the United Nations will take, but to ignore or bypass this issue will not be to the credit of the United Nations. For, this will mean ignoring and bypassing their own Charter and their own reason for existence.

Nehru was particular in making it clear repeatedly that India had no desire at all to get needlessly involved in international affairs; nor had it any desire to become a leader. But his sensitive mind could not but react whether it was the question of Korea or racial discrimination in South Africa. Nehru felt India had to make an humble effort for the preservation of world peace. On South Africa, Nehru warned, in a speech at a public meeting at Lucknow on November 22, 1952, of the world-wide conflagration if the Europeans wanted to dominate the people of Africa. "Racial discrimination in South Africa was a grave threat to world peace and if it was not ended quickly the entire African continent would go up in flames."

Nehru deeply deplored the ambivalent attitude of most Western powers to the question of ending the practice of racialism in South Africa. Giving expression to his disillusionment in this regard, he told the Indian Parliament on March 17, 1953:

I confess at the present moment to a feeling of disillusionment at the way a number of important countries quibble about these matters. They cannot openly support this kind of policy, of course, because practically no reasonable person in the world can support it. All that they can say is to raise some legal argument: "Oh, this is a domestic issue. Let us not interfere. Let us not make matters worse. It will be settled gradually." They may say that as an excuse. They cannot support it. But that is not good enough, because it is a vital matter, not a thing today for the few hundred thousands of Indians who live in South Africa, but for the millions of Africans who have a much greater right to that country than any Indian.

The fifties were the years of intense cold war. The Government of

South Africa was quick to seize the opportunity to present itself and apartheid as a bulwark against international communism. Pretoria regime naturally enjoyed the support of its Western friends on this kind of stand. Nehru was not taken in by this ploy. He said: "This kind of half-hearted attitude of some of the important countries does no credit to them in this matter. It is all very well for some countries to divide up the world into the so-called Western bloc and the Eastern bloc, and the Communist world and the non-Communist world, and try to label everybody by these labels. We have refused to be labelled and what is more, we refuse to consider these questions in terms of these labels, whether it is a racial issue in Africa or whether it is a national issue, a question of national freedom anywhere."

Nehru had no doubt at all that racialism was a blatant assault on human dignity and that its practice anywhere in the world posed a clear danger to the well-being of the human race. Hence, he repeatedly reminded the world of the imminent danger in permitting it to have a foothold anywhere. He told the Indian Parliament on August 17, 1953: "There are certain factors which over-ride national boundaries and which affect the well-being of the human race. Among these factors is this question of racial discrimination and the suppression of one race by another. That is an affront to the men and women of Asia and of Africa, as well as to every sensitive human being."

What appalled Nehru was the way the South African Government was enforcing this policy without any trace of regret or apology. Speaking in the Indian Parliament in an angry tone, he said: "There is this racial discrimination in many places in the world, especially in Africa but more especially in South Africa. In other places it takes place but there is an element of apology about it, but in South Africa, there is no apology. It is blatant. It is shouted out, and no excuse is put forward for it."

Nehru disapproved the attitude of the Western countries in dismissing the issue of racism in South Africa as one which had become "frozen" or "petrified". He warned them that the issue constituted one of the major tests of the world "because there cannot be a shadow of doubt that if that policy of racial discrimination—of a master race dominating over other races, some colonists and settlers from Europe presuming to dominate for ever the population of Asia and Africa—is sought to be justified, then obviously there are forces in this world—not in your or my opinion only but in this world—which will fight that to the end. Because

those days are past when such things were tolerated in theory or in practice”.

In highlighting the distinctive features of racialism as practised in South Africa, Nehru concedes that in other countries, not excluding India, one could come across some traces of racialism still in vogue. He said that in India there was no racial problem in the sense of what was obtaining in South Africa, but something akin to it. People who were called depressed classes and untouchables were being suppressed; but India was fighting it. He said that there existed racial conflicts in the United States also; but, there was a difference. “In the United States of America, efforts have been made with growing success to ease the problem.”

But, in South Africa, the racial problem was more hideous. He made a reference to the nature of this problem as it obtained in South Africa and said in Parliament on April 9, 1958: “In South Africa ... it is the deliberate, acknowledged and loudly proclaimed policy of the Government itself to maintain this segregation and racial discrimination. This makes the South African case unique in the world. It is a policy with which obviously no person and no country which believes in the United Nations Charter can ever compromise.”

Describing the racial policy of South African Government as “the greatest international immorality for a nation to carry on that way”, Nehru again castigated some countries of the world, without naming them, who stood for democratic tradition and voted for the UN Charter and the Human Rights Convention, for not coming out openly against South Africa. These countries expressed themselves moderately or did not express themselves at all about the racial policy of South Africa.

Nehru had no doubt that South Africa’s racial policy “is a violation of everything that the United Nations stand for”. “What we see in South Africa,” he said, “is a survival in the realm of policy and administration of all kinds of atavistic activities. Such emotions and feelings have no place in the world today. They can only lead to utter disaster in Africa and elsewhere.”

Nehru admitted that South Africa had been ignoring the advice and the resolutions of the United Nations; but, he pointed out in Parliament that the only good aspect of it was that progressively, and in spite of all kinds of pressures, the countries in the United Nations, barring a very few, had come round to dissociating themselves in various ways from South Africa’s policy.

Nehru’s advocacy in world forums of the dangers inherent in

South Africa's racial policies found its high watermark at the Bandung Conference. The Asian-African Nations Conference, to give it its full name, held from April 18 to 24, 1955, at Bandung in Indonesia, was organised on the initiative of Indonesia and supported by India, Burma, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. It was attended by 24 other Asian and African countries. The Bandung Conference reflected the dissatisfaction of the sponsors with what they regarded as the reluctance of the Western powers to consult them on matters concerning Asia and Africa. The purpose of the conference was also to mobilise the forces of Asia and Africa to promote peace and freedom.

A little known fact is that it was on Nehru's insistence that the racist regime of South Africa was kept away from the Bandung Conference. Instead of South Africa, two delegates of the African National Congress of South Africa, Moses Kotane and Maulvi Cachalia, attended the conference as observers. These two South African revolutionary leaders approached Nehru for assistance; he offered not only to take them with him but also introduced them to all the leaders of the Conference, including Nasser.

It was the presence of these two South African observers, which in many ways focussed attention on the struggle against apartheid. From then on their struggle began receiving more and more support in Asia and Africa. At Bandung, Kotane and Cachalia presented a 32-page memorandum to the Conference in which they appealed to the Asian and African delegates:

To use their good offices internationally to persuade other civilised and freedom-loving nations of the world to prevail on the Government of the Union of South Africa to abandon its unjust and disastrous policy of apartheid and racial discrimination. We are convinced and confident that the Government of South Africa could be forced to reconsider its reactionary and inhuman policy if all the nations who do not approve of policies and practices of racial oppression and discrimination, particularly the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom, would boldly take a firm stand against such practices.

As a seasoned campaigner for Africa's cause and against apartheid, Nehru not only spoke forthrightly on the issue but also helped to draft the final declaration adopted by the Conference. At the concluding session of the Conference Nehru spoke with passion about Africa, and his words are often quoted. He said:

We have passed resolutions about conditions in this or that country. But I think there is nothing more terrible than the infinite tragedy of Africa ever since the days when millions of Africans were carried away as galley slaves to America

and elsewhere, half of them dying in the galley. We must accept responsibility for it, all of us, even though we ourselves were not directly involved. But unfortunately, in a different sense, even now the tragedy of Africa is greater than that of any other continent, whether it is racial or political. It is up to Asia to help Africa to the best of her ability because we are sister continents.

In the final declaration, the Bandung Conference handled the question of racial discrimination under the heading "Human Rights and Self-determination". It said: "The Asian-African Conference deplored the policies of racial segregation and discrimination which form the basis of government and human relations in large regions of Africa and other parts of the world. Such conduct is not only a gross violation of Human Rights, but also a denial of fundamental values of civilisation and the dignity of man."

The Conference extended its warm sympathies and support for the courageous stand taken by the victims of racial discrimination, especially by the peoples of African and Indian and Pakistani origin in South Africa, applauded all those who sustained their cause, reaffirmed the determination of Asian and African peoples to eradicate any trace of racism that might exist in their own countries and pledged to use its full moral influence against the danger of falling victims of the same evil in the struggle to eradicate it.

Even as world opinion against the South African policy of apartheid was gathering momentum, the white minority regime in South Africa bestirred itself to garner support for its obnoxious policy. Its crude attempts received initially some indirect support because of the prevalence of the cold war. South Africa found some allies from the Western world. Its initial success in neutralising the Western world was also facilitated by the inducements it began extending to the industrial tycoons of the United States and Britain. The South African Government became so emboldened by the favourable trends that it went to the extent of establishing the South African Foundation with the specific objective of countering international action against apartheid.

The South African Government was quick to utilise the cold war to obtain international support. It widened its military contacts and made unilateral offers to join the military alliances that were then being forged to contain the Soviet Union. Its targets were Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Great Britain. In August 1949, South African Defence Minister F.C. Erasmus visited the United States to purchase equipment, particularly for the expansion of its air force. In 1950, South Africa contributed a fighter squadron for the Korean war. The United States proposed the inclusion of South



Africa in the Middle East Defence Command in collaboration with Britain, France, Turkey and Australia. This was supposed to be an adjunct to NATO. South Africa was one of the participating countries in a seven-power conference held in Dakar to coordinate the defence arrangements in Africa, south of the Sahara. Although South Africa could not secure association with NATO, it was able to sign the Simonstown Agreement with Britain in July 1955. But all its efforts to secure for itself full-fledged membership of the American-sponsored military alliances failed mainly because of its persistence with racial policies.

Until the Sharpeville massacre of 1960, South Africa was able to prevent the leading Western powers from effectively supporting international action against apartheid. In the post-Sharpeville period the tide began turning against South Africa, so much so that, in 1963, in response to the birth of the Organisation for African Unity, the United States decided to impose arms embargo against South Africa, besides supporting in the United Nations the appeal for releasing political prisoners in South Africa.

The sleeping world was jolted into an awakening on March 21, 1960, when the South African police opened fire on a crowd of African people at Sharpeville near Johannesburg. The demonstrators were protesting peacefully against the racist pass laws, when the police opened fire upon them, killing 69 and wounding 178. Blood was also shed in Langa township of Cape Town and elsewhere.

The reaction in India was one of shock, horror, anger and grief. A public meeting was convened in New Delhi to mourn the Sharpeville victims. Jawaharlal Nehru, who spoke at the meeting, compared the outrage to the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy in pre-independence India in which the British soldiers massacred a peaceful gathering of citizens. Nehru said the way the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy shook the foundations of the British empire in India, he saw in Sharpeville the beginning of the end of the obnoxious and oppressive policy of apartheid.

The Indian Parliament passed a resolution deploring the massacre and extended its sympathy to those who had suffered as a result of this outrage. On March 28, 1960, Nehru himself moved the resolution:

That this House deplores and records its deep sorrow at the tragic incidents which occurred at Sharpeville and in Langa township near Cape Town in South Africa on March 21, 1960, resulting in the death of a large number of Africans

from police firing. It sends its deep sympathy to the Africans who have suffered from this firing, from the policy of racial discrimination and the suppression of the African people in their own homeland.

Nehru pointed out that the resolution had been deliberately worded in a moderate manner. He said that India did not feel moderately about this matter but he thought it would be in keeping with the dignity of the Indian Parliament if it should express itself in a restrained manner. Behind the Sharpeville killings, Nehru said, "lies a certain deliberate policy which the South African Government is pursuing". He added: "In principle and practice, it is the negation of everything which the United Nations stands for and we stand for. It is a negation of what every civilised government today stands for or should stand for."

In graphic detail Nehru described the pathetic conditions in which Africans were condemned to live in South Africa. He said:

I wonder how far Honourable Members are aware of the details of how the Africans have to live, what they have to submit to, and how families are torn asunder, husband from wife, father from son. They cannot move or do anything without special permits and passes ... the practice of that policy casts enormous burden upon the African people. That country, after all, is their homeland. They are not aliens; they do not come from elsewhere. The people of Indian descent in South Africa, as we all know, have had to put up with a great deal of discrimination and suffering, and we have resented that. But we must remember the African people have to put up with something infinitely more and that, therefore, our sympathies must go to them even more than to our kith and kin there.

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom recently visited Africa and, I think, in South Africa itself he referred to what he called the wind of change coming or blowing across the African continent. That was a moderate reference to the ferments and tempests in Africa. It is clear that the policy of the South African Union Government has not taken into consideration these changes, or, realising them, is not going to be affected by them. Let the House think of the system they have introduced of every person having to carry a pass wherever he goes, and being prevented from going to certain areas at all. It is the life of not even a semi-free person but of a prisoner on ticket-leave.

The worldwide concern about the Sharpeville massacre was reflected in the UN Security Council. On April 1, 1960, at the request of 29 member-states, including India, the Security Council adopted a resolution recognising that the situation in South Africa was one that had led to international friction and which, if continued, "might endanger international peace and security". It deplored the policies and actions of the South African Government which gave rise to that situation and asked it "to initiate measures

aimed at bringing about racial harmony based on equality in order to ensure that the present situation does not continue or recur and to abandon its policies of apartheid and racial discrimination."

The United Nations declared March 21, the Sharpeville massacre day, as the "Elimination of Racial Discrimination Day". This day is observed all over the world, including India, and at the United Nations each year.

As was expected, the South African Government did not accept the UN Security Council resolution. Instead, it proceeded with the declaration of the State of Emergency, banning of the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress, and strengthening of the security forces in an effort to bring the situation under control.

By the time the nonaligned countries met for their first summit in Belgrade in September 1961, the international community had become well aware of the repressive policies followed by South Africa. Nehru in his speech at the summit made only a brief reference to apartheid. He said: "In South Africa we have the supreme symbol of racial arrogance, racial discrimination and apartheid which is an intolerable position to be accepted by any of us."

The two liberation movements, which had been banned after Sharpeville tragedy, attended the Belgrade summit as observers and racial discrimination and apartheid was on the agenda of the summit. The Belgrade Declaration stated:

The participants in the conference resolutely condemn the policy of apartheid practised by the Union of South Africa and demand the immediate abandonment of this policy. They further state that the policy of racial discrimination anywhere in the world constitutes a grave violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

After the Sharpeville massacre, the Commonwealth which normally sidesteps all domestic or bilateral issues, had to discuss the racial problem and in that context, even the question of South Africa's continuance in that body. This again was done at Nehru's insistence. At the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference held in May 1960, almost under the shadow of Sharpeville, Prime Minister Nehru said: "I do not think it is possible for any country to follow a racial policy like that. It just cannot be tolerated."

The London Commonwealth summit of 1961 was historic in the sense that South Africa was obliged to withdraw from that body because of its racial policy. South Africa had just held a referendum

on the issue of a republic and, by a small majority, it had been decided to have a republican form of government there. Its membership of the Commonwealth had to be renewed, because of its becoming a republic. At this juncture, Nehru and other African member-countries, forced the issue and brought about South Africa's exit from Commonwealth.

The strategy followed for this was explained by Nehru on his return from the London summit. In his statement in Parliament on March 27, 1961, he said:

The Prime Minister of South Africa made a statement before the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference informing them of the result of the referendum and requesting that the South African Union might continue in the Commonwealth in spite of becoming a republic. We could take no exception to any country becoming a republic; we ourselves are a republic and we approve of the republican form of government everywhere, but because this application was made, the allied question of racial relations in South Africa arose and it was discussed. Even the Prime Minister of South Africa agreed to its being taken up. So, while we had no objection to a republic being taken into the Commonwealth, many of us laid stress on the incompatibility of any country being in the Commonwealth which followed racial policies like the South African Union Government. I would add here that the main thing is that in South Africa this is the official policy; it is not the failure of an official policy. The apartheid policy of suppression, separation and segregation is the official, declared policy of the Government there. This matter was discussed and the incompatibility became quite obvious to all. It became a question, practically speaking, of whether the South African Union Government should continue in the Commonwealth or whether a number of other countries should continue in the Commonwealth. As a result of this, the South African Prime Minister decided to withdraw his application for continuing membership of the Commonwealth and this was agreed to. South Africa will cease to be a member of the Commonwealth as soon as the South African Union becomes a republic, that is, on May 31.

After the banning of the African National Congress, Oliver Tambo, the present President of African National Congress, and Yusuf Dadoo fled from South Africa in 1960, thus escaping certain detention. Nehru was glad to provide them travel documents and transport from Dar-es-Salaam to London. Soon after he met the two nationalist leaders in London, where discussion are said to have centred on racist South Africa's expulsion from the Commonwealth,

Fight against racism had been the constant running theme of Jawaharlal Nehru's endeavours throughout his active life. Even as he was leading India's struggle for independence, he had raised his powerful voice against the barbarous practice of racial discrimination. On becoming the Prime Minister of free India, his

mission to rid the world of this assault on human dignity received considerable thrust from state power and prestige. Nehru went to the United Nations with India's complaint against South Africa in 1946 itself, a year ahead of its own liberation. Later, the scope of India's complaint was widened to cover racial discrimination in South Africa against all races. Both outside and inside the UN, India, as the head of an increasing number of freedom-loving nations, carried on the fight.

Cynics are apt to mock at Nehru's life-long efforts to rid the world of the racist curse. If Nehru's crusade against apartheid had not succeeded to the extent it should have, it is because some powerful governments are still backing South Africa. Powerful multinationals of those countries have vast economic stakes in mineral-rich South Africa. It is for this reason that these governments are still resisting the nearly universal demand to impose economic sanctions as a punitive measure against South Africa. The question of these countries supporting any armed struggle in South Africa does not arise. Another point not to be missed is that public opinion in these Western countries has not been effective enough.

But it is not all a blank slate. Nehru can claim, posthumously, some success in promoting international action against South Africa. In his own life time, he ensured that it left the Commonwealth. All international sporting events are barred for South Africa, because it had injected racialism in sports. Since 1964, it remains expelled from the International Labour Organisation for putting hurdles in the way of rightful trade union activities in South Africa. The United Nations Environment Programme in 1980 overwhelmingly voted in favour of discontinuing all cooperation with the Pretoria regime.

Anti-apartheid organisations and leaders of the nonaligned movement remember with great admiration India's refusal to play South Africa in the Davis Cup final in 1974. The Cup was awarded to South Africa by default, India having sacrificed its chances of winning the coveted Cup. Four years later, India saw to it that South Africa was expelled from the Davis Cup. Such an event would have thrilled Nehru had he been alive then. India followed Nehru's principles steadfastly.

It is largely because of Nehru's initiatives against apartheid that South Africa stands practically isolated today. Oil and arms embargo are gradually beginning to tell, although there have been surreptitious deals. A desperate South Africa has failed to curb the

activities of the nationalist movement inside the country and has to depend increasingly on its military power and repressive machinery.

## Settlers From India: An Emotional Link

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INDIA AND AFRICA are next-shore neighbours. The Indian Ocean, a little lake as some people have described it, rather than divide the peoples of India and Africa, unites them. It is because of this juxtaposition that the peoples of the two continental regions are known to have had close and friendly relations for the past many centuries.

There are many records to prove that Indo-African relations are rooted in hoary past. Ancient seafarers who were quite knowledgeable about the route from the west coast of India to the east coast of Africa, used to sail regularly to conduct trade that was free and flourishing. For over two thousand years India-made boats have been plying in the Indian Ocean from India to Africa and back.

Credit is given to Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese traveller, for discovering the route to India via the Cape of Good Hope. But it is generally forgotten that the gentleman who piloted his ship was a Gujarati from the west coast of India. There is also considered view that the earliest recorded proof of the ancient Indo-African links is to be found in the Puranas. Colonel John Speke, an officer in the Indian Army, who was financed by the Royal Geographical Society, went to Africa in search of the source of the river Nile, from 1859 to 1861, and claimed that he secured help in his explorations from the ancient Hindu scriptures. Such examples, including the writings of Periplus, giving accounts of ancient Indo-African ties, are plenty.

Historians also record that Indians from the west coast had

settled in eastern Africa for over a thousand years. R. Coupland, in his book *East Africa and its Invaders*, writes that some sort of Indian settlement existed around the same time as that of the Arabs in the seventh century.

With the spread of news in India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries about the prosperity of the Indians in East Africa, emigration to Africa increased considerably, so much so that Colonel Rigby wrote in 1860 that nearly all the shops in Zanzibar were kept by the Indians. The Said of Zanzibar encouraged the Indians in East Africa not only by giving them complete religious, social, and economic freedom, but also by using their services in administration and finance. He preferred Indians to Arabs, because the latter in general lacked the required skill and experience. Besides the Indian monopoly in trade and finance, an incidental point is that the Indian rupee and not the sterling was the East African currency till the end of the First World War.

In East Africa, the Indian population comprised mostly of traders up to the close of the nineteenth century. With the start of the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway, over 25,000 technicians and labourers were brought from India. After the completion of the railway in 1907, more than 90 per cent of the labourers returned home on the expiry of their contract. These labourers became the source for spreading the news that East Africa was becoming a land of immense opportunity. Fresh batches of businessmen and professionals—doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers and technicians—from Gujarat and the Punjab entered East Africa in large numbers in the early twentieth century and later. This fact is contrary to the popular belief among the Africans and the Europeans in East Africa that the present Indian population are mostly the descendants of the "coolies" employed during the railway construction.

With the coming of the railway, Indian traders spread along the new railway line into the hinterland. Outstanding among these merchant-traders was Alaadin Visram, perhaps the greatest single figure in the economic history of East Africa. An early advertisement described him as:

Dealer in provisions, beads, piecegoods, copper and iron wares, equipment of caravans, enamelware, etc. Buyer of ivory, rubber, hides and skins and all kinds of East Africa and Uganda produce. Importer of merchandise from Europe, America and India.



Indians also began venturing into Mozambique, mostly from Portuguese Goa, and into neighbouring countries of Central Africa. Indian settlement in Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan, though small, is said to be quite old. There was hardly any Indian settlement in West Africa because of the difficult terrain, distance, and general unfamiliarity.

The Indian immigrants in East Africa, who in later years also comprised skilled and semi-skilled persons, contractors, traders and clerks, assisted the British colonial administration in opening up the countryside and in providing middle-grade administrators. They also established professional firms, schools, temples and mosques.

The colonialists followed a policy of manning skilled and senior administration jobs by their own nationals. Africans were used for jobs in the lowest rung, and the middle-level positions were held by Indians. It was often said that Indians were doing jobs which were above the ability of the Africans and below the dignity of the Europeans. The contribution by the Indian migrants to the development of East Africa has been acknowledged by many authorities, including Winston Churchill.

Though the trading practices of some individual Indian traders in East Africa might have caused occasional frictions, there is no doubt that Asian traders and artisans opened up East Africa for development. The white people only followed the trail blazed by Indians and occupied only the territories where Indians had created decent living conditions. It can be said with certainty that were it not for Asian enterprise and their spirit of adventure, the East African economy would not have attained the level it has today. The economic success of the Asian community in East Africa has been due to their hard work and possession of certain qualities essential for economic development. These qualities, while vitally important for economic development, are essentially "unheroic" and did not always endear their possessors to other communities.

The Asians' virtual monopoly of wholesale and retail trade exposed them to charges of dishonesty and sharp practices. Certainly, not all the Asian businessmen would have been entirely immune to resorting to sharp practice, just like businessmen from any other community. The unfortunate part of the phenomenon in East Africa was that this was seen in racial terms because of the fact that the "dukawalas" belonged to one community.

In all this racial prejudice, the constructive contribution of Asians to Africa's development tends to be forgotten. Lord Hailey

wrote in *An African Survey* (1957):

There can be no doubt of the value of the contribution made by Asians to the development of the economy of Kenya. It was estimated in 1944 that they paid 27.75 per cent of the indirect taxation as compared with 37 per cent by Europeans. But, as was pointed out in the Financial Inquiry made by Lord Moyne in 1932, figures such as these do not suffice to indicate the part which has been played by Asians in the development of the country either as traders, or in marketing native produce, or as artisans and craftsmen. In these directions they have performed a function which Europeans were not prepared and Africans were not qualified to discharge.

On the pattern of the colonial "divide and rule" policy, the white settlers pitted Indians and Africans against each other. They would have succeeded but for the guidance by enlightened Indian leadership of men like Nehru and the diplomatic efforts of men like Apa Saheb Pant, the first Indian Commissioner in East Africa. Pant did try to defend the rights of the Indian community, where it needed to be defended, but his pro-African views were well pronounced. His home was haven to African political leadership from all the countries of the region, including Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Nyasaland (Malawi) and Uganda, and they got a message in the early days of India's independence that New Delhi could be fully depended upon to support the African cause despite the powerful opposition of the colonial masters. The white settlers, however, succeeded in having Pant transferred from Kenya.

Indians in East Africa had a chequered history during the past few decades. In 1948, East African legislatures passed immigration restriction bills, despite the objections of the local Indian communities and the Government of India. New Delhi made it clear that it would not acquiesce in these legislations which would adversely affect the rights and interests of their nationals. The British Government, however, tried to assure Nehru's Government that these legislations were not directed against the Indians.

A further regressive measure passed by the Kenya Legislative Council in 1951 was the provision for separate electoral rolls and separate seats for Indian Muslims and non-Muslims. This was nothing but a replica of the separate electorate in vogue in India before its independence. The East African Indian National Congress and the non-Muslim Indian members of the Legislative Council, as also the African members, voted against this legislation. Nehru was also opposed to this. In his letter to the Chief Ministers

of Indian States on January 7, 1952, Nehru was clear that this step "is meant to weaken various popular elements in East Africa and to make it easier for the European planters to hold on to their special interests and position".

A section of European settlers in Kenya, which had always been critical of Nehru's policy of supporting the African causes, made some unsuccessful attempts to portray India's interest in the affairs of East Africa as part of the design of "Indian imperialism". But African opinion generally was not taken in despite some isolated attacks on Indian lives and properties.

After the dawn of independence in East Africa, the Indian settlers began slowly giving up retail trade (especially in the cities) and small clerical jobs. This to some extent paved the way for African advancement. Many of the Indians took to industries and specialist jobs and professions. But the community's position as such was not happy and the number of Indians had been dwindling. The image of the Indian settlers as unscrupulous traders is still there.

When asked to take up the Kenyan, Tanganyikan or Ugandan nationalities, many Indian settlers in East Africa chose the British nationality, although their plans involved having to stay on in East Africa for decades, awaiting their turn to become British citizens. Such "ugly" Indians became extremely unpopular and unwelcome in the eyes of the African majority. Nehru was also not happy with the conduct of such Indians.

While the migration of Indians to East Africa is ancient, the Indian settlement in South Africa, which is today comparatively large (nearly one million), is of more recent origin. With the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833, the Africans after their liberation were reluctant to work on the white-owned sugar plantations in South Africa. The shortage of labour was about to sound the death-knell of the white man's prosperity. The white settlers in South Africa began to look for labour from India as the only solution to save their vast sugar plantations from total collapse. With the connivance of the then British Government in India, began Indian migration to South Africa. The European colonisers in Natal found certain advantage in employing labour from India, a country which had already supplied labour to Mauritius in 1834 and to British Guyana in 1838 under the indentured system.

The Government of Natal secured the first Indian indentured labourers in 1860, despite some opposition from European settlers other than sugar planters. Immigration was suspended between

1866 and 1874 during the economic depression. But the planters secured its renewal in 1874 and even prevailed upon the Government of Natal to finance the cost of travel and recruitment. Some 30,000 Indian workers entered Natal between 1874 and 1886.

Meanwhile, public opinion in India was dissatisfied with the living and working conditions of Indian labourers in South Africa. British Government was induced to take an interest in the condition of Indians in Africa. Finally, in 1911, the Government of India vetoed further recruitment for the Union of South Africa.

The indentured labourers were recruited by agents in India under agreements to serve on terms approved by the Government of India for a period which was originally three, but was later extended to five years. Thereafter, they resumed their freedom, and they could either enlist for a further term of indentured service, or could avail themselves of a free return passage to India, or remain as settlers in South Africa on a small plot of land which was to be provided by the government.

European opposition to the presence of Asians grew in proportion to the increase in the number of former indentured labourers opting to stay as "free settlers". The Natal Government ceased to make grants of land to "free settlers", and tried in vain to recruit labour on condition of making it compulsory for them to return. Other disabilities put in the way of Indians included a tax of three pounds sterling per annum from "free settlers". This amount was equivalent to six months earnings on the indenture scale. All traders were required to obtain licences from the local authorities. In 1903, an additional tax of £3 was imposed on the children of "free settlers" when they attained the age of majority. Transvaal also imposed a £3 licence fee on Asian traders and authorised the government, "as a sanitary measure", to set aside streets, wards and locations for the habitation of Asians, thus introducing for the first time the principle of residential segregation. Transvaal also imposed a European-language test which in effect excluded a considerable number of Asians seeking entry into the state.

In spite of these measures, the number of Indians was growing in South Africa. In 1904, the total Asian population of Natal, including some 60,000 "free labourers" settled in the colony, numbered 100,918 compared to a European population of 97,109. The hostility of the European settlers to the growing number of Asians had found violent expression in a demonstration at Durban in 1896, when Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, then a little-known Indian lawyer, narrowly escaped with his life. And when, in 1907,

the government made it compulsory for all Asians to register their fingerprints with the administration, it became the occasion in 1908 for Gandhi's first passive resistance campaign. In the years between 1919 and 1925, further legislative restrictions were laid on the acquisition of property by Asians. In 1925, the Union Government introduced the Areas Reservation and Immigration Restriction Bill which, the Minister of the Interior admitted, was specifically aimed against Indians. He said: "The Bill frankly starts from the supposition that the Indian as a race in this country is an alien element in the population, and that no solution of this question will be acceptable to the country, unless it results in a very considerable reduction of the Indian population."

Mahatma Gandhi was the principal source of Nehru's awareness of the plight of Indians overseas, especially in South Africa. Gandhiji had been briefing Nehru on this issue extensively since their first meeting in 1916. Indeed, among the many things that attracted young Nehru to Gandhiji was the heroic role he had played in South Africa, especially the use of the novel method of passive resistance (Satyagraha). In his *Autobiography* Nehru has stated that he admired Gandhiji's role in South Africa in defending the interests of the Indian settlers.

Having thus acquired some knowledge of the pitiable condition of Indians in South Africa, Nehru inferred that the plight of Indians in other parts of Africa would not be very much different. Nehru was not surprised at this; he argued within himself that when India itself was in bondage and Indians at home had no honour of any kind, there was nothing surprising in their being denied any honour abroad. Hence it was that on assuming office in the Interim Government, Nehru said in a broadcast on September 7, 1946, that India would claim equal and honourable treatment for its people wherever they may go and "we cannot accept any discrimination against them".

Another point which was well known to Nehru was that most of the Indian migrants left the shores of India under duress and in conditions of dire poverty, most of them penniless. From many of his statements, it is also clear that he understood that through sheer hard work, they had made good in their countries of domicile. Nehru had also acknowledged the positive contribution made by Indians overseas.

At no time was Nehru opposed to the migration of Indians. In a way he welcomed Indians going overseas. In a speech in the Constituent Assembly on December 4, 1947, soon after India's

independence, Nehru talked of the "romance" of migration— "We spread." He said:

The history of Indian emigration abroad including that of the humblest of those who went from India, reads almost like a romance. How these Indians went abroad—not even citizens of a free country, working under all possible disadvantages, yet they made good wherever they went. They worked hard for themselves and for the country of their adoption.... It is romance and it is something which India can be proud of. May I say that most of those poor indentured labourers who went out under unhappy conditions, through their labour, gradually worked their way up? It is also true that India is a country which, in spite of everything, has abounding vitality and spreads abroad.... We spread. We tend to overwhelm others both by virtue of our numbers and sometimes by virtue of the economic position we might develop there.

Even before Indian independence, Nehru was firm in his conviction that the people of India and the Indian Government must support the rightful interests of the Indians abroad. He had, therefore, advocated in the Congress party that India should boycott purchase of cloves from Zanzibar in 1937 because the white cloves monopolists were coming in the way of Indians in Zanzibar trading in cloves. This was accepted by the Congress and a successful boycott call was made.

Pertinently, the only personal contact Nehru had with Indians settled in Africa was through his meetings with a group of Indian merchants, both Hindus and Muslims, at Massawa in Ethiopia, when his boat berthed there on his way back home from England in 1938. He was pleased with the warm welcome given him by these merchants, some of whom had travelled to Massawa from distant places like Asmara. When he learnt that the Indian merchants were victims of disabilities at the hands of the Italian occupiers of Ethiopia, he advised them to make a representation to the Congress party in India and he promised to do his best.

As far back as 1938 Nehru in his presidential address to the Conference on Peace and Empire held in London said that India did not want any Indian settled abroad to function against the interests of the indigenous population. But a view is held in some circles that many African students who started coming to India for studies soon after Indian independence, especially from Kenya, used to brief Nehru adversely about the role of some Indians there. Their complaint was that Indian traders were indulging in malpractices, especially in rural areas (over-charging, underweighing), that Indians were not investing their savings in the countries of their domicile, and that they were not identifying

themselves with the political urges and aspirations of the African majority. Another view is that the then Indian Commissioner in East Africa, Apa B. Pant, also had briefed Nehru about the role of the Indians on the above lines. This had upset Nehru a great deal.

Nehru's resultant reaction apparently came out at a Press conference in New Delhi on February 6, 1950. To a question by an African journalist regarding Indian policy towards people of Indian origin abroad, Nehru put forth India's position bluntly but without any rancour. He said:

In many parts of Africa—East, West and South—there are considerable numbers of Indians, mostly business people. Our definite instructions to them and to our agents in Africa are that they must always put the interests of the indigenous population first. We want to have no Indian vested interests at the expense of the people of those countries. I do submit that this is a somewhat unusual direction to give for any country to its representatives abroad. We do intend protecting our interests everywhere, but not at the expense of the people of those countries. We want to be friends with them; we want to cooperate with them and help them to advance wherever they are backward. We do not wish to exploit them; we do not wish to encourage in any way any kind of discrimination, racial or otherwise.

Admittedly, Nehru exhibited an astonishing degree of foresight in formulating India's policy towards overseas Indians in this manner. When he talked of the "paramountcy" of African interests in Africa, he could foresee the turn of events in the continent. He was afraid that with the surge of African nationalism, the tide might turn against Indian settlers if they did not cooperate with the Africans.

In a statement on India's foreign policy in Parliament on May 21, 1952, Nehru made the following reference to the problems of Indians in Africa:

I am not talking of South Africa at the moment; I am talking of the whole of the African continent. For the Africans, quite rightly, are becoming politically conscious; they have ambitions which are justifiable; they do not want to be sat upon; they want to grow in their own way. And so, it has been our policy in Africa which we have repeated to all our representatives there and to all the Indians living there that on no account do we want any Indian to have any kind of vested interest against Africans there, that they are there to cooperate with the Africans, to help the Africans to progress in so far as they can, and that they are welcome here if they have no place there. We tried to look ahead a little.

Of all the countries of East Africa, Nehru took a special interest in Indians in Kenya for two reasons: First, the population of Indian settlers in Kenya was large (nearly 70,000 in 1950), next only to

South Africa and, secondly, it was in Kenya that there were the earliest stirrings of African resurgence with the start of the Mau Mau movement. Nehru was greatly perturbed when told that some well-to-do Indians in Kenya were siding with the British imperialists to safeguard their vast economic interests there. He was also unhappy when he learnt that on their own, Indians in Kenya had been demanding the right to own fertile land in Kenya Highlands that were reserved exclusively for the Europeans. Nehru advised the Indians not to ask anything for themselves as against the Africans.

Nehru was all the time exercised by the problem of promoting a closer understanding between Indians and Africans, while affording protection to Indian interests in Kenya. He spoke at length at a public meeting in Delhi on April 13, 1953, on the problems of Africa in general and Kenya in particular. On Indians in Kenya he said:

India's sympathies lay with the people of Kenya. India had already made it clear that no Indian should remain there against the wishes of the African people. No Indian should remain there either to harm the African people or exploit (them). If African people do not like the Indians there, surely we are not going to send our Indian army to Kenya to force the African people to accept Indians. In that case, Indians there will have to return to their homes. We do not want any people to sit on the backs of the African people. The Indian people could help the Africans there in education or in other ways. But they could do so only out of a feeling that they were staying as the guests of the Africans in the land of the Africans.

Prime Minister Nehru was never tired of repeating this theme whenever the occasion arose. Speaking to British journalists in London on June 8, 1953, he said the Indians were there in Africa with the goodwill of the Africans. If the Africans wanted to push them out, they would be pushed out.

Nehru was convinced that this was the best approach for Indians in Africa. They should accept primacy of African interests. He thus told the Indian Parliament on December 17, 1957:

This is not only a policy which I consider right, but the only practical policy, because, if Indians do not do that abroad, they will be ground between the two millstones of the local population and the foreign elements from Europe and elsewhere. Normally, Indians are the only persons in some of those countries who work more or less on the level of the foreign settlers in trade, commerce, etc, the local people not having, generally speaking, reached that standard. Their interests are constantly coming into conflict with the interests of the foreign settlers. Now, if Indians come into conflict with the local people, too, their



position will become very difficult. They simply get crushed and pushed out. So, even from the purely opportunist point of view, that is the only policy they can pursue.

Nehru's use of the curt expressions, "you are the guests of the Africans", and that you could live in Africa only with the "good-will of the Africans", provoked deep resentment in a large section of the well-to-do Indian settlers in East Africa. The extreme view in certain circles was that the well-to-do Indians were "stooges" of the imperialists. These Indians did not take kindly to Nehru's harsh words and they went to the extent of asking him to keep quiet and mind his own business, leaving them to their own fate. But, there were some forward-looking Indians in Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda, who welcomed Nehru's policy and advice.

India, on Nehru's advice, has viewed the problems of Indians in East Africa and of those in South Africa separately and has placed them in two different categories. For, Indians in East Africa were by and large wealthy and in some way enjoyed the protection of the British imperialists, while Indians in South Africa were the victims of racial discrimination as much as the Africans, if not more.

Nehru always kept in his mind this distinction whenever he talked about Indians in Africa. He would say: "I am not talking of Indians in South Africa because they are not Indian nationals but South African nationals." Yet, India was so much concerned about the fate of the Indians in South Africa from the days of Mahatma Gandhi, that even before it formally became free, it took the matter of the disabilities of the Indians to the United Nations. There is no doubt that at the back of Nehru's mind there was the bigger question of racial discrimination which affected all the non-white population in South Africa. Echoing Nehru's wider implications of the racial question, the leader of Indian delegation to the UN General Assembly said in October 1946:

The way this Assembly treats and disposes of this issue (Indians in South Africa) is open to the gaze not only of those gathered here but millions in the world, the progressive peoples of all countries—more particularly non-European peoples of the world — who are an overwhelming section of the human race. The issue we have brought before you is by no means a narrow or local one, nor can we accept any contention that a gross and continuing outrage of this kind against the fundamental principles of the Charter, can be claimed by anyone and least of all by a member-state, to be a matter of no concern to this Assembly of the world's people. The bitter memories of the racial doctrines in the practice of states and governments are still fresh in the minds of all of us. Their evil and

tragic consequences are part of the problems with which we are called upon to deal.

In a foreign policy debate in Parliament on December 6, 1950, Prime Minister Nehru said that the question of Indians in South Africa had raised very vital issues not only for India but for the whole world because it raised the vital issue of racialism:

We are intimately concerned with those people of Indian origin who settled down in South Africa and who have become South African citizens. As South African citizens we have nothing to do with them politically, although culturally we are connected because they went from India. But because it involves not only the self-respect of India and the Indian people but of every people in Asia and for every people in the world, this has become a vital matter.

Nehru felt satisfied when the UN General Assembly passed resolutions which went against the South African policy of racial discrimination against the Indians. He reacted: "As the resolutions go, we welcome this. What it will lead to, I do not know; but, again, one thing is certain. Whether it takes a month or a year or more, we shall not submit to any racialism in any part of the world."

Nehru reverted to this question while talking to journalists in London on June 8, 1953. By then the question of Indians in South Africa had been widened to racial discrimination as such. He said: "In South Africa, the question of Indians, though important to us, we have deliberately allowed to become a secondary issue to the larger question in South Africa of racial discrimination. As you know, the opposition resistance movement there is far more African than Indian; the leadership is African—we want it to be so."

Nehru's insistence on viewing the problems faced by the people of Indian origin in South Africa only in the larger context of the horrors of racialism, affecting both Africans and Indians, naturally led him to deplore deeply an event which tended to drive a wedge between the two. The Durban riots of 1949 was one such in which Africans and Indians were involved. Nehru told the Indian Parliament on March 9, 1949:

It has been a matter of deep grief to us to learn of the racial riots that took place at Durban in South Africa. I do not wish to say much in regard to this except that if racialism is encouraged anywhere it is bound to yield such trouble. But it is a matter of deep grief to us that Indians and Africans should be involved in such rioting. It has been, not today but over years past, our definite instructions to our envoys in Africa and elsewhere that we do not want Indians to have any special interests at the cost of the Africans anywhere. We have impressed

upon them the need for cooperation with Africans in order to gain freedom for these Africans, and we have repeated these instructions. I hope that after the unfortunate experience of Durban, Indians and Africans will come together again.

An extremely disheartened Prime Minister Nehru had told Parliament earlier on February 2, 1949, that among the killed in the Durban riots were 53 Indians, 83 Africans and one European. The number of injured were 768 Indians, 1,085 Africans and 30 Europeans. The riots resulted in the destruction of shops and houses. Nehru saw these riots as a reminder of racialism, nurtured by the white minority regime. It was distressing to him that a conflict of this nature should have occurred between the Africans and the people of Indian origin. Nehru was no doubt sad, but his faith and conviction in the correctness of his policy of promoting friendship and cooperation between Africans and people of Indian origin was so firm and unshakable that he did not construe this as any setback for his policy. On the contrary, he suspected the dark hand of the white racist forces in fomenting the trouble.

The starting point of Nehru's African policy was the understanding that the earliest banner of revolt against the policy of segregation of races was raised by the Indian settlers in Africa, notably under Gandhiji's leadership. Later, it was absorbed into the wider movement covering the Africans and other non-whites. There was logic in his insistence that the future of the people of Indian origin in South Africa was inextricably linked with the future of the Africans. The two had to move together in close cooperation. Nehru had gone to the extent of visualising the evolution of a multi-racial society in Africa, in which besides the Indians and Africans, the Europeans too could live and function cooperatively.

In 1948, a qualitative change took place in the racist scenario of South Africa. The Nationalist Party government came to power on the declared programme of apartheid, which officially institutionalised the programme of racial discrimination and segregation. It was evident to Nehru that the suffering of the Indian settlers along with other nonwhites would correspondingly increase.

The position of the people of Indian origin definitely deteriorated with the promulgation of various regulations for the implementation of the Group Areas Act, which allotted separate residential areas for different races. This meant that the Indian

community would not only be faced with residential segregation but would also face economic ruin, because of their being uprooted from their old trading places and homes. Nehru and the Indian delegates to the UN raised this matter on several occasions condemning the Group Areas Act.

In the meantime, the South African Government refused to accept the UN General Assembly's resolution of December 1950 as the basis of holding negotiations for the settlement of the question of Indian settlers. Pretoria paid no heed to the Government of India's correspondence on the holding of direct negotiations between India, Pakistan and South Africa. Preliminary tripartite talks were held at Cape Town, but nothing came out of them.

The pioneering role of some Indian settlers in South Africa in resisting the policies of racialism had thrown up the Natal Indian Congress and the Transvaal Indian Congress. Mahatma Gandhi was associated with them in their earlier phase of activities. India naturally felt gratified when the Natal Indian Congress and the Transvaal Indian Congress decided to fight the liberation struggle in South Africa on a common platform with the African National Congress. The year 1947 saw the historic alliance of the two Indian Congresses and the African National Congress, popularly known as the "Three Doctors Pact", signed by Dr A.B. Xuma, Dr Yusuf Dadoo and Dr G.M. Naicker. They participated jointly in the Campaign of Defiance in 1952. A number of Indians in South Africa faced treason trials along with Nelson Mandela in the early sixties. Some Indians are involved even today in similar trials faced by the members of the United Democratic Front.

Indians settled in Africa have today come a long way from the days of indentured labour and of Mahatma Gandhi. Countries of Africa, too, have similarly come a long way from their colonial status to becoming independent nations. But India's policy towards Indians in Africa continues to be the same in its broad framework as in the days of Nehru. Its central theme remains as one of encouraging the Indians to cultivate the goodwill of the Africans and to function in close cooperation with them. For, in the final analysis, the success of Indo-African friendship and cooperation would depend largely on the way the people of Indian origin interact with the local population.

The core of Nehru's Africa policy was idealistic. Effortlessly, he could identify himself and his entire orientation with the yearnings of the African people about whose plight he always tended to become highly emotional. At the same time, the spring of his policy

could be found in his passionate advocacy of the inalienable right of the Africans to be completely free and be masters of their own future. Their rights and interests had paramountcy. The future of the Indian settlers had to have their goodwill and friendship. There could be no other rational basis.

But it has to be said that his idealistic policy, especially in regard to Indians in Africa, had no realistic content. He had met a few Indians from Africa and some African leaders coming to India on visits. His information on which he was to formulate his policy was not based on any first-hand knowledge. He spoke at length about Indians in East Africa, but having never visited that part of the world, and thus without any feel of the hard realities of life of the Indian settlers, it is not at all surprising that Nehru came in for sharp criticism at the hands of some Indian settlers and of Indian scholars and commentators with some sound knowledge of East Africa.

Professor Anirudha Gupta of the Jawaharlal Nehru University is one of Nehru's harsh critics. He says in his book *Indians Abroad*:

The Nehru policy was based on the unrealistic hope that within the broad pattern of African and Asian nationalism, the separate identities of Indian immigrants would be forgotten. This did not happen. Instead of Afro-Asianism, several nationalisms emerged. Thus the cries of "Burma for Burmese", or "Kenya for Kenyans" and "Zanzibar for Zanzibaris", and so on.... It was perhaps unfortunate that Nehru did not take a lesson from Asian development and apply them to Africa. As a result, he treated the question of African freedom in abstract. He himself was not clear about the magnitude or the specific nature of the problem of Indian settlements in Africa.

Prem Bhatia, a noted journalist-diplomat, in his book *Indian Ordeal In Africa* views the problems of Asians and Africans with sympathy but is highly critical of Nehru's policy. He feels that India found itself unprepared for the situation which developed in East Africa when the countries in that region became free. India had supported unflinchingly the nationalist movements in all these countries. Nehru felt that there was no need for any kind of special pleadings for safeguarding Indian interests there. As one of the principal architects of the Afro-Asian movement, Nehru allowed himself to be satisfied that the solidarity of this movement would afford adequate protection and guarantee for Indian interests. He had not, therefore, anticipated "the ugly facts of life" as they emerged in independent East Africa. "Independence had come to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and plans were being prepared to upgrade

the Africans socially, politically and economically. The downgrading of the Asians was a parallel undertaking."

In regard to the position of Indians in South Africa, Nehru may be less idealist but was hardly a pragmatist. While India can be happy that the Indians strongly oppose apartheid and have by and large made a common cause with other nonwhites against the common enemy—white minority rule—did it ever occur to Nehru that many Indians in South Africa could be contented with a reasonably comfortable life in racist South Africa? It would be unimaginable to think that many an Indian living in South Africa would support New Delhi's call for economic sanctions against the white minority regime, as this would hurt their own living standards. There is plenty of information to substantiate the view that, despite Group Areas Act, some Indians had developed working relationship with a number of whites, and they might even be reluctant to support any violent upsetting of the apartheid system.

The new constitution of South Africa, which brings into existence tricameral segregated parliaments of the whites, the Indians and the coloureds, and which denies electoral rights to the black majority, however, takes the apartheid machinery to the most ridiculous heights. Had Nehru been alive, he would have shouted hoarse condemning this foolish act of the white minority regime. Nehru would have been happy that his daughter, Indira Gandhi, as Prime Minister of India, condemned this reactionary measure in the strongest terms. She was right in appealing to the Indians settled in South Africa to boycott the segregated racial elections. She was equally right in barring the visit to India of those unwise Indians of South Africa who contested these elections—the direct beneficiaries of the apartheid regime.

## Cooperation : Strengthening Independence

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INDIA'S ECONOMIC and technical cooperation programme with the developing world, notably with the countries of the African continent, has now taken a firm shape, earning worldwide acclaim. It should, however, not be forgotten that Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was the architect of this programme, aware as he was of the similarities obtaining in Indian and African political, social and economic situations.

Circumstances were such that in most African countries the colonial powers, white settler elements and transnationals had squeezed Africa dry in the literal sense of the word. This had kept millions of hapless Africans in unparalleled conditions of illiteracy, poverty and degradation. India had also suffered from the economic onslaughts of colonialism, but in historical perspective, it had a sound rural economic base comprising successful agriculture, cottage industries and elementary skills. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, some Indian entrepreneurs had set up a few medium and large industries, (steel, textiles, sugar, cement and paper, in particular) although borrowing heavily from British technology. Education had also made some headway in pre-independence India. On the eve of its independence, India had about 30 universities, some medical and engineering colleges and thousands of primary, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions all over the country. India was thus in a slightly advantageous position than the countries of Africa.

While India was actively assisting the process of decolonisation

in Africa and was watching with great interest the emergence of new countries in the fifties and the sixties, Nehru kept on emphasising that India's friendly relations with the neighbouring continent of Africa could be and should be strengthened through economic and technical cooperation. Even at that time Nehru realised that economic cooperation among the developing countries was a must for the gigantic effort to overcome poverty, hunger and underdevelopment. He was an advocate of North-South cooperation, but he felt that economic self-reliance, meaning thereby South-South cooperation, was more important for the developing world.

Political independence is no doubt important, but it is well recognised that economic strength is a must to safeguard that independence. Gandhiji and Nehru always emphasised that freedom did not connote mere political independence, but must be accompanied by an economic base. Economic independence was also looked upon as an essential precondition for the success of an independent foreign policy.

Even in his famous speech of September 7, 1946, Nehru took pains to reiterate that India proposed to achieve independence in action both in "our domestic affairs and our foreign relations". He added: "We shall take part in international conferences as a free nation with our own policy and not merely as a satellite of another nation. We hope to develop close and direct contacts with other nations and to cooperate with them in the furtherance of world peace and freedom."

Cooperation in all fields was a favourite exercise with Nehru and this could be possible only among independent nations. In the early years of Indian independence, Nehru was yet to evolve a clear vision of the structure of such cooperation but, he said in a speech in the Constituent Assembly, this could be entirely within the scope of the Charter of the United Nations. Even his note on a "Foreign Policy for India", written in 1927, speaks of the similarities of the problems faced by India and other colonial countries, and suggests that "it must be to the advantage of both of us to know more of each other and to cooperate wherever possible".

At the 1955 Asian-African Bandung Conference, Nehru and other participants took time off from political matters to talk of economic development and cooperation. In his speech, Nehru said:

All of us are passionately eager to advance our countries peacefully. We have been backward. We have been left behind in the race, and now we have a chance



again to make good. We have to make good rapidly because of the compulsion of events. If we do not make good now, we shall fade away not to rise again for a long time to come. We are determined not to fail. We are determined, in this new phase of Asia and Africa, to make good. We are determined not to be dominated in any way by any other country or continent. We are determined to bring happiness and prosperity to our people and to discard the age-old shackles that have tied us not only politically but economically—the shackles of colonialism and other shackles of our own making.

The final communique of the Bandung Conference marked an important milestone in the ongoing movement of fruitful economic cooperation between the developing countries of Asia and Africa. Spelling out the strategy and the policy framework to govern such mutually beneficial cooperation, the document says: "The Asian-African Conference recognised the urgency of promoting economic development in the Asian-African region. There was general desire for economic cooperation among the participating countries on the basis of mutual interest and respect for national sovereignty."

The proposals with regard to economic cooperation within the participating countries did not preclude either the desirability or the need for cooperation with countries outside the region, including the investment of foreign capital. It was further recognised that assistance being received by certain participating countries from outside the region through international or under bilateral arrangements had made a valuable contribution to the implementation of their development programmes. The participating countries also agreed to provide technical assistance to one another to the maximum extent practicable, in the form of exports, trainees, pilot projects and equipment for demonstration purposes, exchange of know-how, and establishment of national and, where possible, regional training and research institutes for imparting technical knowledge and skills in cooperation with the existing international agencies.

The Asian-African Conference recommended: "The early establishment of a special United Nations fund for economic development; the allocation by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development of a greater part of its resources to Asian-African countries; the early establishment of an international finance corporation which should include in its activities the undertaking of equity investment; and encouragement of the promotion of joint ventures among Asian-African countries in so far as this will promote their common interest." The Asian-African Conference recognised the vital need for stabilising commodity trade in the region.

The Asian-African Conference also recommended that collective action be taken by participating countries for stabilising international prices of and demand for primary commodities through bilateral and multilateral arrangements, and that as far as practicable and desirable they should adopt a unified approach on the subject in the United Nations permanent advisory commission on international commodity trade and other international forums.

The Asian-African Conference attached considerable importance to shipping and expressed concern that shipping lines revised from time to time their freight rates, which were often to the detriment of participating countries. It recommended a study of this problem and collective action thereafter to induce the shipping lines to adopt a more reasonable attitude. It was further suggested that a study of railway freight of transit trade may be made.

The first nonaligned summit in Belgrade in 1961 picked up the threads. Although politics continued to dominate the sessions, the anxiety to promote greater economic cooperation among the countries of the developing world received ample expression. Stating that freedom was essential for building up their societies, Nehru wanted the delegates to devote more attention to the problems of economic and social development and sought the cooperation of the developed countries also. "It is right and proper that the affluent countries should help in this process. They have to some extent done so. I think they should do more in this respect but ultimately the burden will lie on the people of the countries themselves."

Nehru was obviously referring to the need for North-South and South-South cooperation concepts which have received greater currency lately. Taking the cue from Nehru, the final declaration of the Belgrade summit spoke of active international cooperation in the field of material and cultural exchanges among peoples as an essential means of strengthening of confidence in the possibility of peaceful coexistence among states with different social systems:

The participants in the conference consider that efforts should be made to remove economic imbalance inherited from colonialism and imperialism. They consider it necessary to close, through accelerated economic, industrial and agricultural development, the ever-widening gap in the standards of living between the few economically advanced countries and the many economically less-developed countries. The participants in the conference recommend the immediate establishment and operation of a United Nations Capital Development Fund. They further agree to demand just terms of trade for the econom-

ically less-developed countries and, in particular, constructive efforts to eliminate the excessive fluctuations in primary commodity trade and the restrictive measures and practices which adversely affect the trade and revenues of the newly developing countries. In general, to demand that the fruits of the scientific and technological revolution be applied in all fields of economic development to hasten the achievement of international social justice.

The participating countries invite all the countries in the course of development to cooperate effectively in the economic and commercial fields so as to face the policies of pressure in the economic sphere, as well as the harmful results which may be created by the economic blocs of the industrial countries. They invite all the countries concerned to consider to convene, as soon as possible, an international conference to discuss their common problems and to reach an agreement on the ways and means of repelling all damages which may hinder their development; and to discuss and agree upon the most effective measures to ensure the realisation of their economic and social development.

The countries participating in the conference declare that the recipient countries must be free to determine the use of the economic and technical assistance which they receive, and to draw up their own plans and assign priorities in accordance with their needs.

The participating countries consider it essential that the General Assembly of the United Nations should, through the revision of the Charter, find a solution to the question of expanding the membership of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council in order to bring the composition and work of these two most important organs of the General Assembly into harmony with the needs of the Organisation and with the expanded membership of the United Nations.

Nehru believed that the movement of the nonaligned countries emerged as an assertion of their independence with the objectives of consolidating unity among themselves as well as pursuing the goal of economic emancipation and development. He had in mind the fact that collective self-reliance among the developing countries would contribute to the establishment of a new economic order.

It was during Nehru's time that the developing countries organised themselves into an operational force for multilateral negotiations on economic issues with the creation of the Group of 77 in 1964. This group expressed strong support for cooperation among the developing countries. It also enhanced their negotiating power with the developed countries. No wonder, in the post-Nehru period, the Group of 77 came to be recognised as the authentic voice of the poor and depressed. They represented three-fourths of world's humanity. Policy guidelines for the reinforcement of collective self-reliance have been concretised by the nonaligned movement since the formation of the Group of 77.

After the attainment of India's independence, while Nehru was helping to hasten the process of decolonisation in Africa, he was

trying to promote in a modest way the economic stability of the continent. With its limited resources, whatever little contribution India could make or is making towards the well-being of Africa, stemmed from Nehru's genuine desire to strengthen the roots of their hard-won independence. In looking at India's economic assistance, Nehru's fundamental approach was that India desired to appear as a friend and ally and not as exploiter. Nehru was eager to share and exchange knowledge and experience. He had no desire to take part in what Julius Nyerere described as "second scramble for Africa".

Both for India and for the other developing countries, especially in Africa, Nehru prescribed the evolution of their own models of economic development. There could be no wholesale import of such models from the West. Each developing country must look into its own national conditions, genius and ethos. He would have unhesitatingly endorsed the latter day observation of Nyerere:

When we ask for technical assistance we are almost always offered very high-powered expert advisers with the very reasonable condition that we should provide a "counterpart" who will absorb the wisdom made available to us. The trouble is that we do not desperately need exceptionally clever people, save in very rare and special cases. What we do need very badly are practical people who know their job and who will come and work with our people while they train them, and who are willing to take executive responsibility under the direction and control of our government where necessary. The world renowned expert is often an embarrassment to us.

It was to encourage this type of "people to people" cooperation that the Nehru Government started sending small numbers of teachers, doctors, engineers and other professionals to Africa. He was against their living in ivory towers and always impressed on them to mix with the people and be part of them.

It was Nehru's foresight that what Africa needed most urgently was trained and educated manpower. He was aware that educational facilities in most African countries were meagre and they would not be able to build a trained, technical and bureaucratic infrastructure with their limited resources and training facilities.

Soon after the independence of India, Jomo Kenyatta, in his role as the leader of his people, approached Nehru with a request for providing facilities for education and technical training to students from Kenya. Nehru had no hesitation in responding to this request. He did not waste a minute in drawing up a schedule of such a training, though in a modest way. African students from Kenya

and later from other countries started coming to India for studies in medicine, engineering, law and liberal arts. Nehru was happy that by mid-fifties India had trained a few dozen African students who, on returning home, began rendering yeoman service. Apart from holding important bureaucratic positions, African graduates who had studied in India, began occupying important political positions. In late fifties, there were as many as seven India-trained scholars who were members of the Kenyan Parliament. Similar was the picture in Ugandan and Tanganyikan parliaments, while at one time five India-trained African "boys" were members of the Hastings Banda Government in Nyasaland (Malawi).

Nehru spoke proudly of this at a Press conference in London in 1953: "We have nearly a hundred Government of India scholars from Africa in India and the number is likely to increase. Their hunger for education is tremendous. Thousands and thousands of schools are being started in East Africa from the pennies of other people. Whether the schools are good or bad is immaterial, but it shows their hunger for education."

It was in Nehru's knowledge that due to racial discrimination, the Indians in South Africa did not get enough facilities for higher education. He, therefore, paid special attention to the educational needs of Indian students coming from South Africa. In East Africa, there were no professional institutions. On Nehru's direction seats were reserved in medical and engineering colleges for students from East Africa, despite heavy pressure from domestic students.

There was one interesting development which clearly showed the deep and abiding interest Nehru evinced in ensuring the welfare of the African students. He desired that African students, especially those joining Indian medical and engineering colleges, did not have to pay heavy capitation fees which was in vogue in a number of Indian States. Nehru also did not relish the idea of the Madras Medical College charging tuition fees at double the normal rates for students from Africa. He wrote a special letter to the Chief Ministers of Indian States on April 4, 1948:

In response to a request made by the Ministry of Commonwealth Relations, your government was good enough to reserve some seats in your medical and engineering colleges for Indian students coming from South and East Africa. This concession has, however, been accompanied by the levy of fairly large sums by way of capitation or enhanced tuition fees from these students. It is true that these are the normal fees charged from all extra-provincial students and are not a peculiar disability on Indian students coming from the African countries only. It seems to me, however, that these students who come to India from far off

countries, principally for cultural and sentimental reasons, do deserve special treatment. Facilities of higher education are denied to them in the countries of their adoption, and they, therefore, naturally and legitimately look to the mother country for assistance. The Ministry of Commonwealth Relations is sending an official letter to your government requesting the waiver of these fees in the case of students coming from South and East Africa, and I trust that the request will receive the sympathetic consideration that it deserves.

Nehru was affectionately attached to the African students in India, whom he often virtually pampered. He held an open house to them at his official residence, thoroughly enjoying their music and dancing. His personal rapport with some of them was such that he was on first name terms. He readily agreed to inaugurate the African Students Association in New Delhi on December 26, 1953.

Jawaharlal Nehru's lasting contribution, not only to India but also to all developing countries in the world, is the instrument of planning for economic development. Indian planning took an overall view of the needs of the country so as to bring about a balanced development, which would ensure a rising national income and a steady improvement in the living standards over a period of time. Since in the early fifties India was importing foodgrains on a large scale and this brought about inflationary pressures on the economy, Nehru accorded the highest priority to food and agriculture, including irrigation and power projects in Indian planning.

Whenever the Indian Prime Minister met any African leader, Nasser, Nkrumah, Emperor Haile Selassie, or even some visiting African ministers and officials, he would lecture them at length on the beneficial aspects of planning. He would suggest to the African leaders to send their experts to India so that they could study Indian planning in detail. He even offered to send Indian planning experts to their countries. Nehru also urged the African leaders to accord the highest priority to agriculture in their respective plans.

Nehru told the visiting Prime Minister of Somalia, Dr Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, on August 12, 1963, the story of India's programme of planned development and his desire to cooperate with the countries of Africa. He said:

Ever since our freedom, we ourselves are engaged in the big adventure of building up a new India. Not wholly new, because we are very old and we value our past and cherish it. Nevertheless, we have to put on a new garb, understand the new world and function in it, the world of science which brings with it opportunities of development, of welfare for all our people, because ultimately freedom means for the people not only political freedom but economic freedom.

We are engaged in this task of developing India and trying to give the fruits of freedom to hundreds of millions of our people. It is a tremendous and very difficult task, but I think we have made good to some extent, laid the foundations for it, and we have every hope and belief that we will go along this path progressively, succeeding in our endeavours. I have every hope and belief also that the countries of Africa too will develop and increase the welfare of their people.... We believe in each country developing according to its own light and genius. But because there are common problems, there can be a great deal of cooperation and help and we believe that this will take place. At any rate, so far as we are concerned, we shall certainly endeavour to the best of our abilities to cooperate with the countries of Africa and your country, Mr Prime Minister, and give it such cooperation and help as may be beneficial to both countries—yours and ours.

Economic cooperation with the developing countries was for Nehru not merely a policy but a firm commitment. It was because of this that India had been playing a prominent role in sponsoring economic cooperation as an integral programme among the non-aligned countries and in the Group of 77. Finding the response from Africa positive, economic cooperation with Africa during the Nehru era became a strong underlying theme with India in its relations with that continent.

In concrete terms, India under Nehru's leadership, conceived economic cooperation with the countries of Africa in a broad three-tier set-up—balanced trade, technical assistance, and joint ventures. Barring a few countries like Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia and Ghana, which became independent before the "wind of change" of the sixties, India's economic cooperation programme could not take a firm shape with the rest of the continent in his life time.

The basis of fruitful cooperation is, of course, exchange of commodities. International trade thus plays a vital role in getting together countries geographically apart and creating in them a sense of belonging.

The mutuality of interests generated by close and increasing trade exchanges tends to influence countries to work in cooperation in other fields as well. For, confining the exchanges between independent countries to the field of trade alone may prove unequal at times. If, however, on this foundation the growing superstructure of technical assistance and joint collaboration is also built up, what results is an integrated pattern of relationship, strong enough to sustain short-term strains, and yet, dynamic enough to propel an ever-widening area of close inter-dependence, a feeling of partnership. That is what India is trying to achieve with the friendly countries of Africa.

Signing of trade agreements with a number of African countries bears testimony to the desire of mutual cooperation. The dimension of commercial exchanges between India and Africa is steadily widening, although it started in a modest way. India started as an exporter of old traditional items; but, in the later years, Africa had been importing from India sophisticated manufactured goods also. Today, India exports to Africa engineering goods, textiles products, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, sports goods and food products. The items India imports from Africa are limited in numbers and quantity and are mainly precious and semi-precious stones, phosphates, copper, raw cashew and edible oil. All these are crucial items and any reduction in their imports is likely to cause a slow-down in India's industrial production. During Nehru's time and even today, India's major trading partners are the English and Arabic-speaking countries of Africa. It is a cause for concern to India that its trade with the Francophone countries is almost negligible. It is rather odd that while Indian ships have been sailing in the Indian Ocean for centuries together, the present shipping facilities between India and Africa are rather inadequate.

All the initiatives taken by Nehru to promote trade exchanges between India and the African countries did result in their gradual increase. A booklet issued in 1960 by the Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi, pointed out that out of the total imports of India in 1960 amounting to Rs 10,000 million, the share of the countries of the Afro-Asian region amounted to Rs 2,795 million, nearly 28 per cent. The percentage share of the African countries was 7.5. As far as India's exports were concerned, of the total value of Rs. 6,370 million in 1960, the offtake of the Afro-Asian countries amounted to Rs 1,731 million, about 27 per cent. The share of the African countries was seven per cent.

The table on next page gives the figures of India's trade, both imports and exports, in 1960 with ten of its leading trade partners in the African continent.

While trade is recognised as an important link in the economic cooperation programme, India also recognises the need for cooperation with the friendly countries in the matter of setting up joint ventures and sponsoring of mutual collaboration. During Nehru's time, the policy framework and scope for such ventures had been formalised; but, most of the joint ventures in Africa, now numbering over a hundred, came up during the post-Nehru period.



	In '000		
	Imports	Exports	Balance of Trade
U.A.R	170,500	148,700	- 21,800
Kenya	141,100	44,900	- 96,200
Rhodesia and Nyasaland	148,100	13,900	- 134,200
Sudan	95,257	82,692	- 12,565
Tanganyika	57,500	22,600	- 34,900
Mozambique	55,223	9,057	- 46,166
Nigeria	5,054	50,500	+ 45,446
Ethiopia	300	23,300	+ 23,000
Ghana	5,796	17,100	+ 11,304
Zanzibar	23,100	3,532	- 19,568

(figures in rupees)

The most prominent joint venture that came up during his time was a textile mill in Addis Ababa in 1959. It was a collaboration between the Birla group and the Ethiopian Government. The Ethiopian Government owned 51 per cent of the shares, while the remainder went to the Birlas and to some private Ethiopian citizens. The textile mill made sound contribution towards the needs of the Ethiopian masses, but after the downfall of the Emperor in a military coup in 1974, the socialist government nationalised it.

A look at the terms and conditions on which the collaboration arrangements have been finalised will convince one that the dominant motive is only to share the knowledge which India possessed in the sphere of industrial technology. Nehru stipulated that Indian partners in these collaboration projects would normally not have majority participation, they would be mainly minority partners. Indian contribution to equity capital should be in terms of supply of capital equipment and knowhow. The basic idea of the terms of these agreements is that the collaborations should not smack of anything even remotely suggestive of any kind of exploitation. The management of these projects from the beginning or at least at a later stage, will be in the hands of local African partners. Training of local labour is an essential part of the agreements.

Undoubtedly, joint ventures have played a major role in stepping up two way cooperation; thus, to some extent, paving the way for the much desired self-reliant industrial development. Africans are now beginning to realise and accept that economic

and technical cooperation among developing countries (ECDC and TCDC) is an extremely beneficial way of boosting economic development, for it provides an opportunity of transfer and assimilation of modern technology best suited to the needs and genius of the developing countries.

In the ultimate analysis, India is largely motivated by the desire to share its experience of development. Significantly, therefore, the scope for overseas ventures is slowly but steadily expanding. Some of these projects are even on turnkey basis.

As early as in 1948, when India was still feeling the birth pangs of freedom, it instituted a modest programme of scholarships for African boys and girls to study in India. Since then thousands have come and gone and are still pursuing studies in India's centres of higher learning.

The need for Indian technical and professional personnel in Africa and to train African personnel in India led to the establishment of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme with a view to sharing India's technical experience with the developing countries. The thrust of this programme has been in the African continent.

The main forms of technical assistance are providing training in India, deploying experts abroad for short or long-term period, undertaking feasibility and techno-economic studies, organising technical workshops and supply of equipment. The field of cooperation is extensive.

Training facilities have been provided in such diverse fields as development of water resources, foreign trade promotion, rural development, small-scale industries, standardisation, journalism, veterinary science, railways, constitutional and parliamentary studies, etc. The Indian experts have been in the field of medicine, civil engineering, architecture, geology, agriculture, transportation, animal husbandry and telecommunication. Equipment supplied has been mainly in the areas of scientific laboratories, agriculture and engineering. Assistance in setting up of industrial estates and technical training institutes has been warmly welcomed by many an African country, especially Tanzania, Kenya and Mauritius.

The ITEC programme is multi-dimensional and covers a large number of countries. It is a major programme today, constituting a considerable portion of what has come to be known as India's economic diplomacy. It has been observed that lately assistance to Africa in the field of food and agriculture occupies a lot of attention of the Indian authorities handling ITEC programmes. This is what

Nehru wanted it to be and what Africa needs.

The spectacular growth of small-scale industries in India has attracted worldwide attention. The expertise India has developed is being sought by African countries where the growth of small industries is crucial. National Small Industries Corporation of India is, therefore, playing a stellar role in many African countries. The work of RITES and IRCON in developing African railways is a post-Nehru phase. India is also cooperating with the UN Economic Commission for Africa and African Development Bank in promoting the continent's growth.

Besides the ITEC programme, India also participates in other programmes of cooperation such as the Colombo Plan and the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan. Under the Colombo Plan, India has so far provided technical assistance by way of training places and making available the services of experts to various member-countries, a number of them from Africa.

The Commonwealth African Plan, in the formation of which Nehru took a keen interest, was inaugurated in 1963. It provides for training places and deputation of experts to Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Mauritius.

India also introduced a General Cultural Scholarship Scheme in 1949, under which more than 400 scholarships have been awarded annually to nationals of African countries, including those from South Africa and Namibia, for post-matriculation studies in arts, humanities and sciences. There is hardly any field of study in which African students are not to be found.

Thousands of African students also pay their way for education in India's places of learning, because they find education in India economical, while being eminently suited to the needs of their respective countries. A number of African governments also provide scholarships to their nationals for studies in India. An estimated 25,000 African students are in colleges and universities all over India, the bulk of them coming from Mauritius, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Ethiopia, Sudan and Nigeria. New Delhi, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Aligarh, Pune, Bombay, Calcutta, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Madras are Indian cities preferred by self-financing African students. It is common knowledge that many students from Africa have to return home disappointed because they fail to get placement.

In the early fifties, when India's programme for economic cooperation was taking shape under Nehru's guidance, there were

just about three independent African countries, namely, Egypt, Ethiopia and Liberia. In view of India's old friendly ties with Ethiopia and Egypt, it was but natural that these two countries received greater attention under this programme.

Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, who always acknowledged India's support for the freedom of Ethiopia from Italian colonial rule, had great regard and respect for Jawaharlal Nehru. A very little known fact is that in 1951 the Ethiopian Emperor sent to India an aid of 500 tonnes of wheat, when India was facing acute food shortage. It is somewhat tragic that this one time donor of food to India, Ethiopia, had to receive large food aid from India during the worst famine of its history in the eighties.

Among the Indian settlers in various African countries, it was those in Ethiopia who were the first to respond to Nehru's advice that they should identify themselves with the interests of the people of the lands of their domicile. Nehru was very happy to learn that the Indian community in Addis Ababa had raised about Rs 350,000 for the setting up of a hospital in the Ethiopian capital. While the Indian mission laid the foundation stone of this building, the Government of India also made a token grant towards this project.

The Ethiopian monarch was keen to cooperate with India in as many fields as possible, one such was in the field of agriculture. Under a scheme formulated by the Ethiopian Government for the permanent settlement of Indian agriculturists in Ethiopia, the first batch of eight Indian peasant families reached Ethiopia in October 1953. The Ethiopian Government had allotted about 96 acres of land per family and also gave them some facilities. Some more farmers followed, but not much was heard of the scheme in later years.

A team of seven Indian experts were sent to Ethiopia to help the country in implementing its community development scheme that was akin to India's. Ethiopian officers also came to India in 1960 to be trained in this field.

The State visit of the Ethiopian Emperor to India in October 1956 brought the two countries closer to each other. In a joint statement Emperor Haile Selassie and Prime Minister Nehru reaffirmed their opposition to colonialism and racialism. They expressed the resolve of the two countries to strengthen their friendship by promoting economic and cultural ties. During his visit to India the Emperor made several donations to Indian institutions and funds including the Prime Minister's Flood Relief

Fund. The Emperor expressed his desire to recruit Indian technical personnel and more teachers for Ethiopian schools. Indian teachers in the rural areas of Ethiopia are loved and respected even today.

A major offshoot of the Emperor's visit was closer collaboration between the two countries in the field of defence. Ethiopia had sought India's assistance in the establishment of a military academy in Harar. A party of senior military instructors and civilian teachers went to Ethiopia for this purpose. An Indian was made the commandant of the Academy in 1957. A silver pillar was presented by the armed forces of India to the Ethiopian Military Academy when the Emperor inaugurated it in October 1958. India's Chief of Army Staff General K.S. Thimayya was a special invitee at the first graduation ceremony of the Academy in October 1960. Meanwhile, Ethiopian police officers and naval cadets started coming to India for training. From 1957 onwards a number of Ethiopian defence service delegations came to India for an on-the-spot study of the various training establishments.

Ancient Indo-Egyptian ties, Egypt's pre-eminent position in the Arab world, and Jawaharlal Nehru's special feelings for that country had all contributed to make India's relations with Egypt of special importance. Cairo was one of the first few capitals where India opened its embassy. As early as June 1948, India sent a trade mission to Cairo to negotiate the purchase of long-staple cotton. A bilateral air agreement between the two countries was negotiated in 1949-50. A trade agreement with Egypt was also signed.

With the overthrow of monarchy by the Free Officers in July 1952, Indo-Egyptian relations acquired greater depth. Economic cooperation between the two countries figured prominently in Prime Minister Nehru's discussions with the revolutionary leaders during his visit to Cairo in 1953.

The new Egyptian military leadership was keen on cooperating with India in various fields; but it attached special importance to cooperation in military training. At India's invitation, an Egyptian military mission paid visits to important Indian training establishments and military installations in January 1954.

Prime Minister Gamal Abdul Nasser's visit to India in 1955 and two visits by Nehru to Egypt around that time, paved the way for closer relations between the two countries. A Treaty of Friendship was signed at Cairo on April 6, 1955. The Treaty inter alia provided for the conduct of commercial and industrial relations as well as those pertaining to customs, navigation, civil aviation, and cultural

affairs. There was emphasis on cooperation in industrial and agricultural fields. An officer of the Planning Commission of Egypt visited India and studied the working of the Planning Commission and the implementation of India's five year plans. Students from Egypt started coming to Indian educational institutions.

A cultural agreement was signed between India and the United Arab Republic (merger of Syria and Egypt) in September 1958. This envisaged exchange of teachers, award of scholarships and training of each other's nationals in scientific, technical and industrial institutions.

India maintained a contingent of the UN Emergency Force in Gaza for many years. Later, General P.S. Gyani of India was appointed Commander of the UN Force in Gaza. Nehru paid a visit to Gaza in 1960 and met the Indian contingent.

The exchange of military delegations between the two countries led to India participating in the military training programmes in Egypt. A team of Indian Air Force officers was training Egyptian officers and cadets in their Air Force Academy in the late fifties.

An agreement for collaboration in the manufacture of supersonic Mach II combat aircraft was signed in 1964. UAR was to assist in developing the engine, while India had been developing the airframe. The agreement aimed at "marrying the two into an advanced fighting machine".

There had been exchange of visits by nuclear scientists of the two countries. In September 1962, India and UAR concluded an agreement for cooperation in the development of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. The agreement covered exchange of unclassified information and documents, exchange of scientists, extension of facilities for the purchase of nuclear material and equipment required by either country, and the training of UAR scientists in India.

Economic cooperation between India and the Sudan had a promising start during Jawaharlal Nehru's life time. Of all the African countries, the Sudan had perhaps the maximum number of Indian experts working in different departments in the initial phase of post-independent Sudan's history.

As the Sudan was nearing its independence, an Anglo-Egyptian agreement provided for the establishment of an international election commission of seven members with an Indian chairman. At the invitation of the British and Egyptian Governments, India's Chief Election Commissioner Sukumar Sen was sent in 1953 to head the Commission. The work of the Commission came in for

commendation from all shades of opinion in the Sudan.

As a self-governing territory, the Sudan sought in 1954 the services of Indian judicial and other officers to assist the government. The Indian community in the Sudan offered two scholarships to Sudanese students for study in India.

With the Sudan becoming a sovereign republic on January 1, 1956, and with the conclusion of Prime Minister Ismail El Azhari's visit to India, the programme of economic cooperation between the two countries got a further boost. Several officials came to India for talks on cooperation as well as to recruit a number of technical and judicial personnel and teachers for service in the Sudan. Eight Sudanese students joined the Aligarh Muslim University.

Sudan was one of the three African countries ever visited by Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister of India, the other two being Egypt and Nigeria. This visit in 1957 and the discussions Nehru had with the Sudanese leaders helped to strengthen the economic ties with the Sudan.

India's top irrigation engineer Dr A.N. Khosla, who was then the Vice-Chancellor of Roorkee University, was sent to Sudan to advise the government on the proper utilisation of the waters of the Nile. The Deputy Prime Minister of the Sudan, Mirghani Hamza, was one of the distinguished invitees at the inauguration of the Atomic Reactor in Trombay by Nehru.

India offered a credit of Rs 50 million to the Sudan to help buy Indian engineering goods, industrial machinery, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, and other products. During the state visit of President Farik Ibrahim Abboud to India in May 1964, Nehru told the visiting Sudanese leader that India would be happy to give the Sudan technical aid to start new industries and referred to the possibilities of India buying more Sudanese cotton.

Ghana became independent nearly a year after the Sudan. It became the first African member of the Commonwealth. Nehru hailed it as an event of great significance in resurgent Africa.

From the birth of Ghana, India took upon itself the responsibility to provide it economic and technical cooperation. An Indian financial expert helped Ghana in connection with its negotiations with the British Government regarding the Volta River Project. Two students from Ghana were admitted to the civil engineering course at the University of Roorkee. An exhibition of Indian industries was held in Accra in April 1956. An adviser on industrial development was sent to Ghana, while a number of Ghanaian Ministers came to India in its first year of independence.

Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah paid an official visit to India in December 1958. This helped further strengthen the close and friendly relations between the two countries. In 1958, Ghana approached India to assist in securing the services of engineers, doctors, architects, geologists, agricultural experts, materials engineers, works superintendents and science teachers. Twenty of such professionals were sent to Ghana in 1959.

Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960. India sent a high-powered delegation led by the then Law Minister, A.K. Sen, to participate in the celebrations. India's economic cooperation programme with this important country of Africa started even before it became free. India's assistance in technical field was considerably expanded in the post-independence era with the loan of services of a large number of trained personnel from India. Cooperation was also extended in the military field.

A Nigerian economic mission led by the country's Minister of Finance visited India in June 1961 to benefit from India's experience in planning and also to seek increased trade with India. After visiting industrial establishments and research institutions in India, the mission identified a number of fields where it needed India's help in training the necessary manpower. Oil was on the top of its agenda, because Nigeria had just then struck rich deposits of oil. Agriculture, including irrigation, and railways were the other fields in which Nigeria wanted to benefit from India's experience.

From 1962 onwards India helped to streamline Nigerian Airways. An Indian was made its General Manager. Six captains, six senior pilots, one chief planning engineer and one chief inspector were recruited from India on a three-year contract to train Nigerians to man their airways.

Indo-Nigerian cooperation in the sphere of defence took shape during Nehru's time. India helped to set up its Defence Academy by loaning the services of eight senior officers. Fourteen Indian naval officers belonging to different branches were also sent to Nigeria to assist in the development of the Nigerian Navy. Some Nigerian naval officers came for training at Cochin.

Prime Minister Nehru's visit to Nigeria in September 1962 could be taken as the high watermark of the growing Indo-Nigerian cooperation. The discussions brought out the desire of the two countries to further expand cooperation between them. It was then proposed in Lagos that about 500 Indian defence services personnel would be employed in the service of Nigeria for reorganising



Nigerian defence services. A majority of them would be engaged in creating a nucleus of the Nigerian Air Force and the remainder would serve the navy and army. Nigeria also needed Indian technical experts in the field of economic planning and education.

With the East African countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, India has had flourishing exchanges from very early times. Apart from trade, this included professionals from India going to these countries to assist them, and students from these countries coming to India for higher studies. After the independence of these countries in early sixties, economic cooperation with India received a boost. Indian assistance in the reorganisation of the East African Airways was notable.

Prime Minister encouraged a high-powered Indian industrialists' delegation to visit Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia, the Sudan, Tanganyika and Uganda. Nehru's hope in the utility of such a visit was fully vindicated in the report submitted by the delegation to the Government of India in November 1954. The report enthusiastically noted that Indian businessmen could "purposefully collaborate and cooperate" in setting up joint industrial ventures in Africa. Emphasising that the setting up of industries in Africa could be regarded as one of the tests of our domestic economic strength, the delegation suggested the creation of an appropriate agency for coordinating the various programmes of collaboration and cooperation with African countries. The report referred to the possibility of setting up joint industrial ventures in different countries in such fields as cotton textiles, sugar, cement, jute, and light engineering products. The report stressed: "The general investment climate (in Africa) is favourable and the facilities offered are reasonable." But it suggested that the Indian efforts that had to be made must match with the offers being received by these countries from other sources. "Indian machinery and capital equipment which is the main basis of our capital participation, has to be supplied on a competitive basis."

The report was appreciated by the Government of India and, as a result, the future years saw the establishment of a large number of joint ventures in a number of African countries in the teeth of the virulent "Hate India", "Reject India" campaigns by countries like Pakistan and China. Today there are over hundred joint ventures in production, and several more on the anvil. The important countries which have cooperated with India in this field are Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia.

India's programme of economic and technical cooperation with the African countries is undoubtedly Nehru's brainchild. It certainly is a modest one. And, yet, as Nehru was never tired of pointing out, it has vast scope for expansion. Given the fact that tremendous amount of political goodwill and understanding exists between the peoples and governments of India and Africa, it is but natural that the ideas of cooperation among developing countries and collective self-reliance, as ordained by nonalignment, are gaining firm ground. At the same time, denied adequate economic and financial backing by the developed countries, the developing countries are left with no option but to inculcate the spirit of partnership among themselves.

African countries are now getting to know the fact of India's experience in developing its own resources. The idea of sharing this experience has, in fact, become a two-way traffic. Sharing of experience in reality means pooling together of resources, know-how, production methods and markets. The complementarity in the economies of India and the countries of Africa assumes a great relevance in this context.

It is well understood that this self-reliant approach is bound to open up a promising vista for the bulk of humanity living in Africa and India. This might not happen overnight, but constraints and bottlenecks disappear when there is a will on both sides to cooperate.

It is now axiomatic that interdependence is an economic compulsion and that for it to be acceptable, it has to be based on equality and free will. The UN Economic Commission for Africa had rightly pointed out: "South-South cooperation is being undertaken in a spirit of understanding and dignity, wholesomely devoid of the traditional dependence of the donor and recipient psychology of colonial relationship."

Nehru was a tireless advocate of economic cooperation on terms of equality between nations. His critics, particularly from the Western countries, had sought to dub his efforts of promoting international cooperation as veiled forms of Indian imperialism. Fortunately, no African country was taken in by this. Constituting one-half of the nonaligned world, the African countries committed to promote cooperation among developing countries, do not see anything adverse in grasping the hand of mutual cooperation extended by India.

# 6

## Vision of A New Africa

NEHRU VIEWED the African renaissance as perhaps a major event in the post-war world. He expressed satisfaction that by 1963 a greater part of Africa had attained freedom. But what appears to have pleased him the most was the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) at an African summit in Addis Ababa on May 25, 1963. At a banquet given on August 12, 1963, in honour of the visiting Prime Minister of Somalia, Nehru observed: "We think this awakening of Africa is of historic importance not only for Africa itself, but for the whole world. We were happy some time ago when a conference of African Heads of State was held in Addis Ababa and the remarkable success of that conference was most pleasing and heartening. It indicated the way African nations could cooperate and pull together and help each other. So I do feel that among all the great and big things—good and bad—that are happening, this change coming over Africa is of the greatest importance."

But apparently Nehru failed to note an important element of the OAU, the fact that its Charter, along with basic principles like sovereign equality, non-interference, respect for territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes and eradication of all forms of colonialism, included an affirmation of a policy of "international nonalignment" (Article III). All independent African countries are thus members of the nonaligned movement, while a number of Asian countries like China, Japan, South Korea and the Philippines are excluded. Nehru was no more when the second NAM summit was held in Cairo in September 1964. Out of the 47 countries attending

that summit, 28 were African, all members of the OAU. It was evident that Africa gave prestige and numerical strength to the NAM.

A point to be noted is that following the inaugural NAM summit in Belgrade, the next three (Cairo in 1964, Lusaka in 1970 and Algiers in 1973) were consecutively held in the African continent. Nehru would not have failed to notice that Africa had begun to exert its influence on the NAM, just the way Nehru said in 1963 that the Africans had begun to "pull together".

With the birth of the OAU in 1963, Nehru also knew that the Africans would impart a strong anti-colonial and anti-racist content to the deliberations of the United Nations and, indeed, of the nonaligned movement. At the same time, Nehru firmly pleaded that the United Nations and the nonaligned movement must fully support the aspirations of the Africans and their Organisation of African Unity. Priority must be given by the UN and the NAM, Nehru felt, to the total emancipation of Africa, the ending of racial discrimination, and to international cooperation for the economic and social development of Africa. He maintained that Africa, with the largest number of least-developed countries, must be a special concern for the international community.

With parliamentary democracy well entrenched in the Indian polity, Nehru, as an elder statesman, always advised African leaders, whenever and wherever he met them, the advantages of the people's participation in running the affairs of their respective countries. He was extremely unhappy to find some first generation African nationalist leaders tending to become dictatorial and despotic. He was not at all happy with military coups and with soldiers and army officers in Africa not respecting the elected political authorities. (Nehru's support to Nasser's military coup in Egypt in 1952 is another matter.) Nehru was also watching the emerging drama of one-party states in Africa with anxiety. He had not spoken on this subject, but all analysts, who knew his mind, had no hesitation in saying that Nehru's preference always was for multi-party democracy.

As to dictatorial trends appearing on the African horizon, Nehru, after welcoming Ghana's independence in 1957 in glowing terms and showering praises on Kwame Nkrumah's political acumen, did not like the latter's style of functioning. Nehru was disturbed to see curbs on human rights and Press censorship coming up in Ghana. He scornfully smiled when told that Nkrumah's face was appearing on the Ghanaian postage stamps and that he was thinking of setting up his statues in Ghana during his lifetime.

Nehru met Nkrumah for the first time in 1958. He was blunt and sharp in rebuking the Ghanaian leader for "promoting a personality cult in Ghana". Nehru, as an elder brother but with a touch of arrogance, asked Nkrumah: "What the hell do you mean by putting your head on a stamp?" Nehru had ignored protocol and this did disturb and annoy an equally arrogant Nkrumah. W. Scott Thompson in his book, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, writes: "It is said that Nkrumah never forgave Nehru this snub."

Nehru was in Nigeria on a state visit in September 1962. He was to have paid an official visit to Ghana after that, but the proposed visit was cancelled due to the promulgation of the state of emergency in that country. He then extended his visit to Nigeria by a day. It was later officially announced that Nehru had "postponed" his visit to Ghana at the request of Nkrumah's government.

Nehru saw the shape the unpleasant events were taking in Ghana. He was not disturbed when told that there were a couple of serious attempts on Nkrumah's life and that the latter was even in conflict with the judiciary and with some army generals. Nehru watched with dismay Ghana becoming a one-party state after curbing the activities of the opposition parties. The Indian leader was gone in 1964, but he would not have been surprised that Nkrumah was overthrown in a military coup in 1966 when he was out of the country. There was rejoicing in Ghana when the military rulers announced the disbanding of the single ruling party. Nkrumah's statue in Accra was the first victim of the wrath of the people.

Nigerians attached a lot of importance to Nehru's 1962 visit. The Nigerian Press published articles praising his efforts for the resurgence of Africa. The *Daily Times* of Lagos described him as the "colossus of the 20th century". Another daily, *West African Pilot*, said in an editorial: "The visit of Mr Nehru to Nigeria is one of the greatest events in our life time." The *Morning Post* called Nehru a "great world statesman".

During his stay in Nigeria, Nehru held discussions with Governor General Dr Nnamdi Azikwe and Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Replying to a welcome speech by Sir Abubakar, Nehru said he was happy that "Africa is rising again" and assured the Nigerian leader of India's fullest cooperation in Nigeria's development. Nehru's address to a joint sitting of the both Houses of the Nigerian Parliament is praised even by the present-day military rulers of Nigeria.

He said at the state banquet in his honour that he was excited over his visit to Nigeria—"real Africa". Nehru was obviously referring to Nigeria as the most populous country in Africa, with plenty of political articulation. Sir Abubakar said: "We have a lot of inspiration from you and the Indian people and we will be always grateful to you." The Nigerian leader was, of course, referring to the fact that the Nigerian nationalists had borrowed the non-violent methods from Nehru's India.

For all his love and affection for Africa, analysts find it strange that Nehru, during his life time, found time to visit only three African countries. But the explanation is Nehru did not live long after the wind of change in Africa of the early sixties.

He was in Egypt many times, before independence and after independence; meeting his friend Nasser became almost an annual ritual. Nigeria was the second country that Nehru chose to visit, and the third country of Africa he visited was the Sudan. On way back home after attending the Commonwealth summit in London in July 1957, Nehru spent two days in the Sudan. During his stay, he held talks with the Sudanese leaders Abdella Khalil, Ismail Al-Azhari and Mirghani Hamza (the last two leaders had paid visits to India earlier). Nehru was eager to strengthen Indo-Sudanese ties of cooperation in economic and cultural fields.

During Nehru's time, Indo-African relations were equally enriched each year with a number of political level exchanges at the official and ministerial levels on both sides. Since India and Africa share common values of freedom, peace and progress, there has generally been an identity of views on international issues that used to create East-West tension. On questions like apartheid in South Africa, Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, Arab-Israel dispute, disarmament and cooperation among developing countries, India and the countries of Africa have been on a similar political wavelength.

Pertinently, Nehru was opposed to secessionist movements in Africa, particularly in Katanga and Ethiopia that raised their ugly heads during his time. On the lines of the OAU, he rightly felt that the existing borders of Africa, howsoever arbitrary and artificially drawn, should not be disturbed. He would have liked African solutions to African problems of all conflict situations, without outside interference.

As a matter of foreign policy initiative, Nehru saw to it that the United Nations became the most important venue where India and Africa could work closely on all matters of common interest and

on issues relating to freedom and peace. This Indo-African front, which later became an Afro-Asian bloc and Group of 77, brought much discomfort to the Western countries. It was also a matter of gratification that on all matters of decolonisation and racialism, Africa group at the UN showed remarkable unity. Nehru, in fact, viewed African unity as the acid test of the success of international efforts towards equality, human dignity and justice.

India's respect for the political leaders of Africa is evident from the fact that four worthy sons of Africa have been honoured with the coveted Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding. They are President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, South African freedom fighter Nelson Mandela and President Leopold Senghor of Senegal. The award was instituted by the Government of India in 1965 as a tribute to the memory of Jawaharlal Nehru for his life-long dedication to the cause of peace and international understanding.

Receiving the award on January 25, 1975, President Kaunda called upon the Third World countries to work more closely to meet the international economic crisis and to further the aims and objectives of sovereignty and freedom of nations in a genuinely interdependent and peaceful world. "The grave crisis of our times requires the vision, wisdom, courage and determination of a Jawaharlal Nehru," he said.

Expressing his deep sense of honour at receiving the award, the Zambian leader spoke with feeling and reverence of the path of nonalignment shown by Nehru and his followers. The path of a new social and political order had a major role in averting a third world war as tensions raged in those days of cold war. Nehru, Nasser and Tito could have chosen the easy way out by accepting one nuclear umbrella or the other, but they braved hostility and evolved their own policy which gave accent to peace, freedom, nonalignment and sovereignty of free nations, he said.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi read out a citation which hailed Kenneth Kaunda as a freedom fighter and a compassionate human being who became a tireless champion of African unity and freedom and lent moral and material support to the liberation movements of Africa. The citation read: "In the life of every nation, there are occasions when its ethos is identified with one man who rises above oppression, degradation and wages a struggle against them, and by his sufferings and sacrifices inspires his fellowmen to liberate themselves. Such a man is Kenneth Kaunda, the founder of modern Zambia."

The citation noted that Dr Kaunda rose above the indignities he suffered at the hands of the colonial rulers. It spoke of his relentless fight for the freedom of his people and adherence to non-violence and universal freedom. "Society, as Dr Kaunda sees it, should be man-oriented without prejudice of colour, creed or religion. Not tensions and confrontation but cooperation and understanding among different peoples must form the basis of the new society envisioned by Dr Kaunda. President Kaunda's path will ensure peace and build bridges of understanding and tolerance among different peoples."

The citation said Dr Kaunda's "humanism transcends parochial and racial boundaries embracing all mankind". The Zambian President was hailed as a "man of vision, an internationalist of great stature, a humanist in whom Jawaharlal Nehru saw a kindred spirit". "In honouring him today, we recognise that like Jawaharlal Nehru, Kenneth Kaunda is committed to the same beliefs and ideals which will prevail for generations to come," the citation said.

President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed who presented the award to the Zambian President, paid tributes to his indomitable spirit, his love for his people and his fight for all subjugated mankind. President Ahmed said both Kaunda and Nehru were men of intense compassion. They envisaged a world without war, a world without want and a world of universal brotherhood, where mankind could live in peace and harmony.

The President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, was presented the 1973 Nehru Award at a glittering function in New Delhi on January 17, 1976. The presentation had been delayed by three years as it had not been possible for Nyerere to visit the Indian capital earlier. The Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, in a brief address before delivering the citation, said that Julius Nyerere had played a part in the formation of her own personality as she had known him as a friend, a friend of her father and as one whose understanding of world problems was a lesson to all. In the citation, she described Dr Nyerere as a man of vision, a man of action and a man of compassion who would like to light a candle on top of Mount Kilimanjaro to bring hope and faith to those in despair. In honouring him, the people had dedicated themselves to the ideals of Jawaharlal Nehru once again.

Presenting the award, President Ahmed said that Nyerere was one of the outstanding leaders of resurgent Africa and one of the foremost champions of human rights. It was fitting that this eminent fighter against racialism and colonialism and staunch



champion of Afro-Asian unity and cooperation should be honoured with an award instituted in the name of a great emancipator of mankind.

Addressing the gathering after receiving the award, the Tanzanian leader called for the establishment of a new world economic order based on international justice which, he said, was the only way towards greater equality of mankind. Stressing the basic unity of mankind, Nyerere said the working of the economic systems created by man had caused exploitation of some by others. This had led to gross inequalities in the world, economic, political and social, which had to be fought. The first necessity for this was a deliberate transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor nations and a series of changes in the world finance and exchange system. This had to be coupled with the development of respect for the humanity of the individual, both nationally and internationally, Nyerere added. He said the first responsibility of the poor nations was to arouse and channel the power of their people to further their own development and not the profit of the few.

Condemning racialism in all its forms, President Nyerere said that the only way to root it out from the minds of men was to challenge its organised state expression. The nations of the world had to unite to take positive action to defeat this tyranny.

The unity of mankind could no longer be denied, he added, and this was perhaps the greatest achievement of man today. Even in societies where economic inequalities existed, this situation was not regarded with pride. Only in one country did they pretend that the species of homo sapiens was divided into men and sub-men. Colonialism must be totally rejected as a system of political organisation, he said. The Tanzanian President received a standing ovation from his audience as he concluded his hour-long speech with the words: "Our path lies ... through the development of all human beings regardless of race, colour, culture or creed."

The Nehru Award for the year 1979 was conferred on Nelson Mandela in recognition of his fight against oppression and racial prejudice. The year 1979 had been designated by the UN as "Anti-Apartheid Year" and thus Mandela was the right choice for the Nehru Award. India was hoping that Nelson Mandela would be released so that he could come to New Delhi to receive the award, failing which New Delhi was keen to welcome his wife Winnie. But because of the non-cooperation of the authorities in Pretoria, ANC President Oliver Tambo travelled to India to take part in the award giving ceremony on November 14, 1980. (Mandela's letter

on Nehru is published as Appendix II in this book.)

Presenting the award, President Sanjeeva Reddy of India said: "The conferment of the award is a reiteration of India's unflinching support to the African people in their fight against apartheid, racialism and colonialism." Tambo opened his speech at the ceremony with the observation that "the vast majority of the people of South Africa regard this day in New Delhi as a national occasion for them". In a moving speech on the occasion, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said: "Mandela is with us in spirit as is my father."

India's President Zail Singh conferred the 1982 Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding on Leopold Sedar Senghor, former President of Senegal, on December 12, 1984. At a function held in New Delhi with a distinguished gathering present, the President recalled the rich contribution made by Senghor to international understanding and world peace. He was a poet, teacher, philosopher, statesman and an ardent promoter of universal brotherhood. "A great supporter of national independence and international cooperation based on mutual respect and tolerance, he has spoken consistently and in an unwavering voice, for freedom, racial equality, African unity, world peace, and international cooperation.

Receiving the award, Senghor said: "The jury of the Jawaharlal Nehru Award had honoured me by bestowing on me this coveted award. I have appreciated this all the more because my teacher at Sorbonne had taught me to admire Indian civilisation when I was a student." The citation honouring Senghor at the award ceremony said:

The world community owes a special debt of gratitude to Senghor. He has enriched our lives with the magic of his words, the enchantment of his images, the acuity of his insights and the magnitude of his visions. No one would have been prouder today to find his name linked with that of Leopold Sedar Senghor than Jawaharlal Nehru for whom the emancipation of Africa, as that of all nations subjected to colonial domination, marked the most significant development in the troubled history of this century.

During Nehru's time, the Press in South Africa, in Rhodesia and in Britain often levelled charges of India having imperialist designs over Africa. The racist Press in South Africa said many times that Nehru wanted India's teeming millions to be settled in Africa. During Lumumba's time in the Congo, South African Press and Belgian imperialists started spreading a canard that there was an

agreement between Nehru and Lumumba to settle two million Indians in the Congo. Nehru never cared about such meaningless charges. He did not even care to defend his position.

As to the charge of Indian hegemony in Africa through the Indian settlers, any sane person can have a look at Nehru's dozens of unequivocal statements telling the Indian settlers that they cannot have vested interests in the countries of their domicile in Africa; the interests of the indigenous African population must be paramount. He told them bluntly that they were the guests of the Africans and they should not expect any support from the Indian Government in any claim they may advance against the Africans. Can any charge of Indian hegemony hold ground?

Present-day historians and commentators are now acknowledging that Nehru's major contribution in contemporary world politics is the struggle for freedom in Africa. Indeed, nothing will move Nehru, rather agonise him, more than the subject of racism and slavery which he, on many occasions, described as the two greatest tragedies of Africa. Nehru, therefore, perceived and articulated a vision of liberty with justice and freedom with equality for the people of Africa, indeed, for the entire suffering humanity.

# 7

## India-China Conflict: The Fall-out

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THE CHINESE aggression on India in 1962, using as a pretext the unresolved border disputes between the two countries, was a traumatic experience for Jawaharlal Nehru. The entire gamut of his foreign policy of peace, friendship and Asian solidarity was reduced to a shambles. His personal image in India lay shattered. He was branded as a weakling by his political adversaries.

Any objective assessment of India's foreign policy under Nehru's stewardship would lead to the conclusion that its sheet anchor was truth, based as it was on the essence of Gandhian value of means governing the ends. A disillusioned Nehru never anticipated that China would be so deceitful as to stab India in the back, especially when he in person and India as such had done so much to secure for China its legitimate place in the comity of nations.

S. Gopal in Nehru's biography (Volume 3) writes: "These developments drove Nehru to question himself and his policies, to wonder whether he had placed too much faith in the goodwill of nations and in the intrinsic superiority of the ways of peace. He now conceded, in words which have often been quoted by his critics, that 'we were getting out of touch with reality in the modern world and we were living in an artificial atmosphere of our own creation.'"

While a large majority of countries expressed sympathy for India, because the Chinese dragon was the aggressor, there was also a lot of misunderstanding about India. Nehru himself must

have asked this question many times: Is there anything wrong in being truthful? Did truth mean weakness? Saying "no" to these questions, Nehru decided that the only course open to India was to fight the Chinese aggressors and effectively counter China's anti-India propaganda abroad.

Soon after the Chinese aggression, India saw an unholy alliance between Pakistan and China taking shape. China began to cast deep shadows over Indo-Pak relations also. Nehru was shocked when he learnt, in 1963, that Pakistan's then Foreign Secretary, S.K. Dehlavi, had embarked upon a tour of some European states to explain to them that it was just a border dispute and no aggression on the part of China. He undertook the trip to dissuade them from providing military aid to India.

As one who had relentlessly pleaded the case of the African nations in all world forums, sometimes even subordinating the interests of his own people, Nehru was understandably keen to know the reactions of the African governments and peoples about the Chinese perfidy. He was alive to the fact that China was also trying to "penetrate" into Africa through aid and trade.

Nehru was, however, greatly heartened by the spontaneous and overwhelming support to India by almost all the African countries. A report from Nairobi in the *New York Times* said that the massive attack on India "stirred African criticism, brought disillusionment with Peking's talk of brotherhood, and led to a new awareness of Africa's role in the divided world".

The Congo, Ethiopia, the United Arab Republic, Tunisia, Kenya, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria, Somalia, Uganda and many former French colonies declared their support for India. One African diplomat remarked: "It looks as if Africa's policy of positive neutrality is beginning to give way to positive action."

In Nairobi, 190 persons volunteered to fight for India. They comprised 110 Africans, 79 Indians from Kenya's large Asian community, and a former British major who once served in India. Three African nurses wished to go to the fighting zone.

Dr J.G. Kiano, Parliamentary Secretary to Kenya's Minister for Constitutional Affairs, said: "China is going to lose whatever sympathetic feeling she might have gained among the African countries. How do we know China will not do the same to us in East Africa?"

Uganda's Prime Minister Milton Obote asked the United Nations to tell Peking that Uganda would not support Communist China's admission to the world organisation until the "shooting stops".

As a result of China's aggression, eight former French colonies in Africa voted "no" for the first time when Peking's admission came to a vote again in 1962. Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia called the Chinese "aggressors" in the dispute and said they had "unlawfully held" Indian territory.

Nigeria's Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa said: "China's theory of 'might is right' cannot be tenable and any country that embraces it should be condemned." Mali expressed "great sorrow and anxiety" at the Communist attack. The Pan-African Freedom Movement of eastern, central and southern Africa said Peking's "wanton attack has shocked the conscience of the world".

As the Chinese continued to expand the scope and complexion of the conflict, crossing deeper into the NEFA and Ladakh areas of India, on October 17, President Tubman of Liberia sent telegrams to Prime Minister Nehru and Premier Chou En-lai appealing to them to call a halt to the border fighting until the member-states of the Bandung conference group and other Afro-Asian states could get together and decide what action to take.

Nehru replied to Tubman's appeal, and after giving an historical outline of the dispute, laid down two conditions for stopping hostilities: (a) That the Chinese withdraw to their own territory on the north of the Thagla Ridge; and (b) that the differences on the boundary dispute be settled by peaceful negotiations.

Nehru reiterated that the massive aggression by the Chinese in NEFA must be terminated before talks or discussions could take place. He pointed out that the Chinese had committed a fresh act of aggression after India had made repeated proposals for talks and discussions to ease tension in the western sector. It was not consistent with the dignity and self-respect of a country to submit to an aggressor who had no desire for a peaceful settlement.

President Nasser of the UAR sent a personal message to Nehru on October 21 regarding the fighting. He regretted the conflict and suggested mediation by nonaligned nations to resolve it. Nehru sent a personal reply to President Nasser. He said India's basic position had been made clear in reply to Tubman's suggestion for a conference of Asian and African nations to settle the conflict.

President Nasser wrote to India and China again on October 26. A statement issued by the Presidential Council in Cairo said that President Nasser had told the Council he had proposed a four-point plan to Nehru and Chou En-lai. They were the following: Fighting should cease at once; both sides should retreat to positions

held before the clashes; a demilitarised zone should be established, and negotiations opened.

Nasser communicated to the heads of some African and Asian governments inviting them to cooperate to "dissipate the shadow of war". The countries were Afghanistan, Indonesia, Algeria, Sudan, Morocco, Ceylon, Guinea, Cambodia and Mali.

A small, crucial difference between the wording of the official English and Arabic texts of President Nasser's "mediation offer" caused confusion. In the vital operative clause the proposal, in English, was that the two sides should withdraw to the line before the fighting on October 20, "that is to say, the line that each occupied on September 8". This version gave the impression that the Egyptians were unaware that the two lines were not the same. In Arabic, however, the proposal was for a return to the October 20 line "or" to the September 8 positions. This meant that the two sides were being asked to make a choice.

It was learned in Cairo that China had rejected, and Nehru had accepted Nasser's proposals. The Communist leader informed the President that Chinese forces would not withdraw to their positions of September 8.

Cairo newspapers labelled China an aggressor. Leading Arabic paper *Al Gumhoureya* said in an editorial: "Undoubtedly China in her war with India is an aggressor. China claims she does not recognise the McMahon Line as a demarcation line between her and India and bases her claim on historical and geographical arguments more than a century-old. On this pretext, her troops began to march to seize a number of Indian posts." *Al Gumhoureya* pointed out that the disputed border line was originally between India and Tibet. "Then the Chinese attacked Tibet and occupied it. Thus the Chinese aggression on India began from positions unwarrantedly usurped by China. If China claims that Tibet has become part of her territory according to status quo and time, then similarly, this means that the territory which China wants to usurp from India is part of Indian territory according to status quo and time," the paper said. It suggested that India should desist from supporting the move for seating China in UN as a measure to discourage aggression.

Cairo weekly *Rosal Youssef* questioned the Soviet Union's reported intentions in banning arms supplies to India. "Why does not Russia ban weapons being supplied also to China?" the journal asked.

Meanwhile, eight of the 10 Afro-Asian countries which Nasser

had contacted urged the President to continue his efforts to find a solution acceptable to both the parties. Nasser was believed to have categorically rejected Peking's contention that India was violating the Bandung spirit by taking arms from the USA and other Western countries. He sent a new note to Ceylon's Prime Minister Bandaranaike drawing her attention to his earlier suggestion that Afro-Asian countries should act as mediators to end the conflict.

On November 19, the New China News Agency made public a summary of the correspondence exchanged between Chou En-lai and the leaders of the United Arab Republic, Tanganyika and Guinea. The summary showed that China had rejected the proposals made by Tanganyika, but accepted a Guinean formula which contained an ambiguous reference to the "natural border" between India and China. The exchange of views between Nkrumah and Chou was not released, but it was announced earlier that Peking had rejected the Ghanaian proposals.

The proposals of President Sckou Toure of Guinea, which found favour with Peking, were: (1) An immediate ceasefire; (2) Withdrawal of the forces on both sides 20 kilometres from the "natural boundary"; (3) An immediate meeting of the two governments with a view to settling their dispute by peaceful negotiations; and (4) Outright condemnation of all foreign intervention. The proposals did not explain what was meant by the "natural boundary", nor was any clarification to be found in the summary of Chou's letter accepting them. In his reply to Toure, the Chinese Premier accused the USA of intervening in the Sino-Indian dispute. "At the present time, the US Government is overtly sending military aid to India and would station a big supply mission in India," he said. "This intervention would enlarge the border conflict to the detriment of the Chinese and Indian peoples, and the Afro-Asian people."

China accepted two of the proposals made by Tanganyika, but chose to express the view that India was certain to reject them. They were: (1) Chinese troops should move behind the line which India claims to be the McMahon Line in the eastern sector and the "customary line" in the other sector of the border; (2) Indian troops should move behind the line which China claims to be the traditional line. Other measures proposed by Tanganyika were: (1) Establishment of a commission to keep watch over the entire border, with on the spot inspection, if necessary; (2) Setting up of a commission of three countries, one each to be chosen by India and China and the third to be agreed upon by both, to study and



report on the historical facts relating to the traditional, customary and McMahon lines, with the report serving as the basis for direct negotiations between India and China to settle the dispute, and in rejecting these points Chou said that the India-China border question must be settled between the two sides. Third parties could only help promote direct negotiations. The publication of the correspondence followed a big new attack by Chinese forces on NEFA.

On October 31, President Nkrumah of Ghana said in a letter to British Prime Minister Macmillan that he was "gravely distressed and saddened to hear the report of your statement in the House of Commons that the British Government will give India every support in her fight against China". Nkrumah said that "whatever the rights and wrongs of the present struggle between India and China", he was sure the cause of peace could best be served if everyone refrained from any action "that may aggravate the unfortunate situation". He said he had been in touch with Chou En-lai and Nehru "in an effort to find a basis acceptable to both sides for terminating the present conflict".

In his reply, the British Prime Minister said: "I find it difficult to understand your objection. When the territory of a Commonwealth people is invaded, it is surely only right and natural that we should express to them our sympathy and support in their anxiety and danger." Nkrumah said in a second letter: "I am sorry that you should suggest that I am objecting to the expression of British sympathy towards another Commonwealth country. What distressed me was your statement that the British Government would give India every support. This appeared to me to be dangerously prejudging the issue and shutting the door in the face of any possible mediation or negotiation. In my view, a particular responsibility devolves on those countries who have diplomatic relations with both India and the Chinese People's Republic. Britain is one of the most important powers which recognises both sides, and she could, in my view, play an important role in securing a solution which is agreeable to both India and China. I myself am doing what I can in this matter, but obviously any effort which I can make would be most powerfully assisted if a group of nations determined not to prejudge the issue were to come forward and offer their good offices in seeking a settlement."

On November 10, Nkrumah made a proposal to Chou En-lai, very much similar to that made by President Nasser, for the termination of hostilities. The proposal was also communicated to

the Government of India and a reply sent from New Delhi.

In a bid to match the Chinese diplomatic and propaganda offensive started since the outbreak of fighting on India's borders, N.V. Rao, India's Charge d'Affaires, personally met key Asian and African envoys in Cairo in the first week of November.

An Indian military mission, led by Brig Purshotam Chopra, also arrived in Cairo to tour UAR military installations and academies. The mission studied the system of military training and also examined the possibility of buying surplus arms. The mission was invited by Field Marshal Hakim Amer, Deputy Supreme Commander of UAR forces. The UAR Government was understood to have offered many types of non-Soviet equipment to Government of India.

On November 3, the Prime Minister of the Nigerian Federation, Sir Abubaker Tafawa Balewa, assured the Prime Minister of India of Nigeria's sympathy in the border dispute. He said: "Since the first Chinese aggression on Ladakh five years ago, I have watched with great admiration and respect the role which you have played entirely on your own to use persuasion in place of retaliation to contain the aggressive tendencies of China. I also knew that having regard to the implications for world peace and order of an open clash between India and China, you would have preferred to deal with the matter in your own way of peace and tolerance. But the intransigence which China has constantly displayed leads me to think that all friends of India should now speak out in defence of what is right and in the cause of world peace and concord. I would like to assure you that Nigeria's sympathy lies with India. We cannot view the border dispute in isolation and we consider that its peaceful solution is very important for the preservation of world peace. India has shown no aggressive intentions towards any of her neighbours since she became independent in 1947. Indeed, your magnanimity in supporting China's claims to admission to UN has won for you deep respect in the world community. Although she is not represented in UN every pressure will be brought to bear upon China to withdraw her forces along the border and at least to return to the status quo prior to September 8, 1962. I agree entirely with your assessment that the issue involved is not merely that of territorial adjustments but of principles and standards of behaviour to be followed in international intercourse if world peace and civilisation is to endure. The Chinese theory of 'might is right' cannot be tenable and any country that embraces it should stand condemned."

On November 12, Nehru wrote to Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba that India was fundamentally attached to the ideals of peace and friendly settlement of differences. But, he said, India could only resist aggression committed on its soil. Nehru was replying to a message sent to him earlier in which Bourguiba expressed concern about the fighting. Bourguiba said he believed all problems, including frontier problems, should be solved by direct negotiation or mediation.

In his reply Nehru said:

"India is traditionally and fundamentally attached to the ideals of peace and friendly settlement of differences and we share your concern about finding a peaceful solution to this problem. You have certainly appreciated that whilst India has never claimed an inch of territory belonging to another country, in order to preserve its national integrity and to maintain respect for international rules of conduct it can only resist the aggression committed on its own soil."

Morocco also declared its support to India in the first week of November. Morocco supported the UAR's formula to find a peaceful solution to the conflict, and "sympathised with India in the defence of her legitimate interests", according to a Foreign Ministry spokesman.

On October 28, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia suggested in a cable to Nehru that the border conflict be referred to UN or that the Afro-Asian nations contribute to the easing of tension and a speedy solution. The cable, in reply to a message from Nehru, said the Emperor was profoundly shocked at the developments in the conflict and extended Ethiopia's assurances of sympathy. Ethiopian Prime Minister Makilu Habtewoid also cabled to Nehru saying he was gravely concerned with the hostilities and added that force had never been an answer to international disputes. "Ethiopia fully supports Sino-Indian negotiations prefaced by the withdrawal of the aggressors" from territory unlawfully held. The Indian community in Addis Ababa, at a meeting on November 2, collected nearly Rs 200,000 for the National Defence Fund.

Three Kenya Government Ministers were among the speakers at a mass rally held on October 30 in Nairobi to protest against Chinese aggression. Minister of Tourism Arvind Jamidar, Agriculture Minister Wilfred Havelock and Commerce Minister M. Muliro, warned the people of the dangers of communism both to India and Africa. The meeting approved a resolution moved by Muliro, condemning the "treacherous and unprovoked attacks on democratic and freedom-loving India".

After the Ministers had addressed the crowd, donations totalling more than £2,500 were made towards India's war effort. Men also offered to donate blood for the wounded Indian troops, while women agreed to a suggestion from Kenya Indian Congress President S.G. Amin that they should knit warm clothes for Indian soldiers "fighting for liberty in the frozen heights of the Himalayas".

Jomo Kenyatta, President of KANU, said on November 2 that his party would follow a policy of "positive neutrality" and would not have the Sino-Indian border fighting used to "lure us into the Western or Eastern camps".

In a statement clarifying the KANU's attitude, Kenyatta said: "The KANU believes in peace and feels that our task is to help re-establish peace where there is conflict rather than indulge in warmongering. Secondly, KANU believes that aggression should be exposed and condemned regardless of who is involved. Here we do not condemn a country just because it is a Communist country or a Western country but for what it has done."

KADU Secretary-General Martin Shikuku volunteered to fight the Chinese invaders on India's frontiers and in a Press statement accused Kenyatta of being equivocal. Instead of condemning the Chinese aggression, Mr Kenyatta had tried to exploit the situation for political propaganda, he said. The Kenya Indian Congress launched a "Help India Fund". It was described by S.G. Amin as "an opportunity for Indians in this part of Africa to help India in her critical hour". Diwali celebrations throughout East Africa were subdued. The central Sikh Council called on Sikhs "all over East Africa to observe Diwali with restraint without showing joy and without extravagance" and "to resolve to resist the Chinese aggressors". Felicitating Nehru on his 73rd birthday, the people of Kenya contributed £36,500 to the National Defence Fund. The donations were handed over to the Indian Commissioner in Nairobi. A nine year-old girl, Nayana Patel, of Nairobi sent £5 for her "Mummy's motherland" to a Nairobi newspaper.

Prime Minister Nehru told Indian Parliament on January 21 that 26 Afro-Asian countries had conveyed their full support to India in its dispute with China, apart from messages of sympathy. Nehru named the Congo, Liberia, Ethiopia and the UAR among these countries. He added that there was no country among these Afro-Asian powers which had been so consistently supporting India as the UAR. "The UAR has supported us throughout very strongly more than any other country," he said.

Earlier, Lakshmi Menon, Minister of State for External Affairs, told the House that messages were sent to 60 Afro-Asian countries, a majority of whom had communicated their reaction. Twenty-six had conveyed support to India. Seven had sent messages expressing concern and suggesting peaceful settlement of the border conflict. Nine countries expressed sympathy and concern, while three others sent messages which were non-committal.

On January 19, the six-nation nonaligned Colombo conference released its proposals for ending the Sino-Indian border dispute. Two African countries, Ghana and the UAR, were members of the six-nation panel. According to the proposals, the Chinese Government was to withdraw its military posts by 20 kilometre in the western sector of the India-China border and that the line of actual control in the eastern sector could serve as the ceasefire line. Regarding the middle sector, the conference suggested resort to peaceful means, instead of force, for a solution. The conference made it clear that a positive response to its proposals from India and China would not prejudice the position of either country as regards the final alignment of the boundaries. The conference hoped that the proposals which aimed at bringing the two parties to the negotiation table, could help in consolidating the ceasefire, once implemented, and pave the way for discussions between representatives of both parties for the purpose of solving problems entailed in the cease-fire positions. On January 12, representatives of the UAR and Ghana joined the talks in New Delhi between Nehru and Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the Ceylon Premier, after her return from Peking where she had gone to explain the proposals to the Chinese and secure their acceptance. At the discussions, the Colombo proposals concerning disengagement of Indian and Chinese forces were delineated on maps. The crucial difference between these proposals and the Indian demand for restoration of the pre-September 8 position were understood to have been worked out by Indian experts in detail.

On November 27, Cairo became a centre for discussion on the Sino-Indian dispute in which President Nasser over the past weeks had been active as a potential mediator by suggesting the basis for negotiations between the Indians and Chinese. R.K. Nehru, Secretary-General of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, arrived in Cairo on November 27 from New Delhi, bringing a personal message from Prime Minister Nehru to President Nasser and was soon conferring with UAR Foreign Minister Mahmoud Fawzi. R.K. Nehru was joined the next day by A.K. Sen, the Indian

Minister of Law. Sen said on November 29 that solution of the Sino-Indian border dispute required patience, and the problem should not be dealt with hurriedly. Questioned at a Press conference about Ceylon's proposal for a six-nation meeting, he remarked that it could happen that a few friends might meet to discuss the matter generally and reach conclusions in a general way, but the problem was such that it could not be met in a general way. It was a specific problem requiring specific remedies, a great deal of discussion, a great deal of understanding of the respective positions, and also a great deal of patient effort. Sen and R.K. Nehru later left for Rome on their way to Accra to explain India's position to President Nkrumah of Ghana.

Informed sources in Cairo said that China was losing ground in Africa and Asia in its propaganda offensive that the dispute was a mere border clash. The sources said that there was growing awareness of the deliberate and premeditated aggression on India by China and of the possible danger to other Asian countries if China continued its aggressive policies.

R.K. Nehru said in Accra on December 3 that the talks he and A.K. Sen had with President Nkrumah had resulted in a greater Ghanaian understanding of India's position in the Sino-Indian border conflict. He said that Ghana was one of the two African countries invited to the conference of six nonaligned countries meeting in Colombo on December 10 to explore ways and means to help solve the Sino-Indian border question peacefully. "I can say that our visit has led to a greater understanding of our attitude by President Nkrumah," he said. "Naturally he has made no commitments. But my impression is that the visit has been worthwhile." The two Indian envoys later left Accra for Lagos, Nigeria, for an overnight stop on their way back to Delhi via Rome. Sen and R.K. Nehru arrived again in Cairo on December 4 on their way to Delhi. They had talks with President Nasser on December 5. In a statement at the Cairo airport, Sen said they were carrying with them a reply from President Nkrumah to Nehru's latest letter.

Sen said he had very friendly and frank talks at Lagos and Accra and had given all the information on the border dispute. "We explained our views, particularly as regards the implications of the so-called Chinese proposals. We had talks with President Nkrumah and the Nigerian Premier, Alhaji Abubaker Tafawa Balewa, and explained to them how the latest Chinese proposals involved the continuance of Chinese aggression," he said.

On his return to New Delhi, Sen told a news conference on

December 6 that India's case on the border conflict with China was understood and appreciated better than ever before in the entire Afro-Asian world. Answering questions, he said he did not think the countries which he had visited had any doubts about India's stand. They only sought some clarifications from him. Sen made a special mention of the keen interest shown by President Nasser in understanding India's case. He described how the President had, during one of the meetings, spent nearly three hours with him even skipping his lunch. Sen said he was amazed by the knowledge of President Nasser about names of places in Ladakh and NEFA. The President seemed to have learnt these names by heart. He showed full understanding of the Indian case, Sen said. When asked whether he encountered any Chinese propaganda in the countries he had visited, Sen said: "I am sure they are trying to do their best, but I have no doubt that they will fail."

In another mission to explain India's stand on the border dispute, External Affairs Minister Lakshmi Menon flew into the Tanganyikan capital of Dar-es-Salaam. After hearing her on December 3, President Julius Nyerere was reported to have confessed that it was for the first time he had realised that fighting had taken place on Indian territory and that he had been under the illusion that the Chinese were fighting on territory belonging to them. Mrs Menon met President Nyerere and Vice-President Rashidi Kawawa for one hour, showing them maps and giving a detailed explanation of India's case. Nyerere was reported to have remarked: "I now have much clearer idea of India's case." He also expressed surprise at the massive nature of the conflict along India's frontiers.

Earlier in the week, Uganda's Prime Minister Milton Obote, at a meeting with Mrs Menon in Kampala, expressed a most sympathetic understanding of India's case. She later left for Ethiopia to call on Emperor Haile Selassie and Ethiopian Ministers to put India's case before them. After returning to Nairobi, where she had discussions with Kenya leaders, she left for India on December 20. She was greatly heartened by the response she got from Ethiopia where she spent three days. Ethiopia was one of the few and first African countries which expressed unqualified and wholehearted support for India "because she is in the right". The Ethiopian Press was unequivocal in its condemnation of the Chinese attitude. *The Ethiopian Herald*, published from Addis Ababa, said editorially a few days before Mrs Menon's arrival that China's attitude "poses a grave danger to the peace of the world".

This was one point which she pressed wherever she went in

East Africa—Uganda, Kenya or Tanganyika. The Chinese aggression represented a threat, she said, which if allowed to continue, would pose a danger to the whole world. There was a tinge of regret, not openly expressed, in whatever she said, that Pakistan did not realise this danger. She, however, created a deep impression on the critics of India's nonalignment policy by telling them that if Pakistan was attacked, India would automatically go to its aid. Although they did not appreciate the details of the Sino-Indian conflict, the African leaders she met realised that what was happening to India could happen to them as well.

But Mrs Menon was not impressed by the attitude of the Kenya politicians, notably those belonging to the Kenya African National Union. Due to the pro-China group in the party, it had been difficult for the KANU to condemn the Chinese aggression openly, though some of their top leaders were prepared to do so privately or even indirectly, as Tom Mboya did at a dinner. Mboya referred to the anti-Chinese sentiments which had been expressed at the same gathering by Peter Koinange, General Secretary of the Pan-African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa. By her presence in countries she visited, Mrs Menon created the impression among the Africans that China was not far away and that in order to gain its expansionist objectives it was prepared to stoop to any tactics. On this score alone, Mrs Menon's trip was not in vain.

The stand of two African states—Guinea and Tanganyika—appeared to be somewhat ambivalent. Indeed, it was felt in certain sections in India that the two countries appeared to be leaning towards China. When he got to know of this, Nehru merely shrugged his shoulders, asking his diplomats in these countries to explain India's position a little more convincingly.

Following an appeal by Prime Minister Nehru in 1963 to the nations of the world after the Chinese aggression, African and Arab countries generally voiced their sympathies for India. Nehru was happy that two countries of the region—the United Arab Republic and Ghana—joined with some Asian countries to formulate the Colombo proposals for resolving the deadlock arising out of the Chinese aggression. In view of the Chinese diplomatic offensive, Nehru also asked his Foreign Office to step up its diplomatic activity, especially in the countries of Africa and West Asia. A number of diplomatic missions were sent abroad to explain the dangers arising out of the Chinese aggression. During his official visit to Nigeria in 1962, Nehru spent a lot of time briefing the Nigerian leaders on the implications of the Chinese attack.



A conference of the heads of Indian missions in Africa and West Asia was held in New Delhi in November 1963. The conference discussed various subjects concerning India's interests in the countries of these regions. Among other things, the conference, which was also addressed by Nehru, decided to take vigorous action to counteract Chinese and Pakistani anti-Indian activities in these areas.

# 8

## Africa Mourns Nehru

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JAWAHARLAL NEHRU had reached the age of 73 years when China attacked India in 1962. His biographers and political commentators all agree that this Chinese perfidy affected him both psychologically and physically. Since then he started keeping indifferent health. Only a few days before Nehru's death, Indira Gandhi took him to Dehra Dun for a short rest and vacation. When he returned to Delhi, he looked hale and hearty. Resuming his official duties, he suffered a massive stroke on the morning of May 27, 1964, collapsed and was no more.

The sudden and unexpected death of Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, was widely mourned in Africa as in other parts of the world. African leaders paid glowing tributes to Nehru's support to the freedom struggle in Africa and his unceasing fight for the cause of world peace. A number of African countries also sent special envoys to the Indian capital to either participate in Nehru's funeral or offer condolences to the Indian Government and Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi. The following were some of the reactions:

UAR: The news was received with profound shock in the United Arab Republic (Egypt). President Gamal Abdel Nasser ordered one week's national mourning. President Nasser, who regarded Nehru as a close personal friend and an ally in the policy of nonalignment, said his death was a "great loss to humanity". Nasser's statement said: "I saw him as leader, thinker, statesman and human being. He was a flame lighting the way for India, Asia and humanity.

With his death his work has ended but the flame will continue to burn brilliantly.”

UAR newspapers devoted several pages to the late Prime Minister's life and work and praised his espousal of Arab causes and nonalignment. The last message sent abroad by Nehru was addressed to President Nasser, the Egyptian weekly *Rose el Youssef* reported on June 1. The weekly said the message concerned the visit which Nehru was to have made to Cairo on his return from the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London. It said the document reached Cairo after Nehru's death.

Yousef el-Sebai, Secretary-General of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation, said Nehru would always shine throughout history for Afro-Asian people and for all humanity as a great man and valiant leader. Hussein Shefae, UAR Vice-President, who flew to Delhi to represent President Nasser at the funeral, said the Arabs had seldom been so grieved as they were on Nehru's passing away. President Nasser's first impulsive decision on hearing the news had been to decide to come to New Delhi to pay homage to his personal friend, but he was running high fever.

**KENYA:** The news of Nehru's sudden death came as a deep shock to the people of East Africa where his name had been a household word for decades. It was regarded as the passing of an era in the annals of the freedom fight in Asia and Africa. All flags in East Africa were flown at half mast and the Indian shops were closed. The Hindustani service of the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, which started playing mourning tunes, was inundated with calls from all parts of Kenya and individuals and associations wanting to announce their condolences.

The English section of the KBC played the Indian National anthem after flashing the news of the death. The *Daily Nation* of Nairobi brought out a special mid-day edition, a most unusual thing for it to do to pay its tribute to the great world leader. Its offices were surrounded by thousands of Indians and Africans awaiting the full news. On behalf of its readers, the editor of the *East African Standard* sent a telegram of condolences to President S. Radhakrishnan.

Kenya Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta, on May 28, led his entire team of Ministers in procession to the Indian High Commission where they signed the book of condolences on Nehru's death. Before doing so they observed a minute's silence in the Prime Minister's Office. At a public meeting, Governor-General Malcolm

Macdonald reflected the feelings of the assembly when he said: "The whole world sees the flame of Jawaharlal Nehru's life extinguished."

Paying his tribute to Nehru, Kenyatta said:

Seldom is it given to one man to bear the burden carried so ably and so patiently as by this great patriot, and his name will be remembered for ever throughout the world. He was the only man who could have steered his country through all the perils arising after independence and led it triumphantly to its present proud place among the foremost nations of the world. He always laboured unceasingly for his people with no thought of self, and yet he found time to help other nations less fortunate than his own. Those of us who were fortunate enough to have known him personally will always carry with us the imperishable memory of a great statesman and a very human man, the friend of all who needed him and true follower in the footsteps of an immortal Gandhi.

**UGANDA:** The Uganda National Assembly adjourned on May 27 as a mark of respect to Nehru after the members of Government and Opposition parties had paid glowing tributes to him. Prime Minister Milton Obote asked the members to stand in silence for two minutes in memory of "a great statesman who had been a great believer in the parliamentary and constitutional system". Flags were flown at half-mast. May 28 was declared a day of national mourning and all government offices were closed. Obote appealed to federal and district governments and private firms to follow the Central Government's lead. On behalf of the Opposition, Gaspare Oda said that Nehru's death was a loss not only to India but to the whole world. He was a devoted nationalist who fought for the emancipation and freedom of all subject nations. "His name will shine with golden letters as a great statesman who was working not only for India but for the cause of the whole world," he said.

**NYASALAND (MALAWI):** Dr Hastings Banda, the Prime Minister of Nyasaland, said in Zomba on May 29 that the independence movements in Africa and Asia were there only because of Nehru and Gandhi. In a tribute to Nehru, he said in the National Assembly: "All of us know what Pandit Nehru did. His passing away removes from the political scene, both nationally in India and internationally, a great figure."

**TANGANYIKA (TANZANIA):** In Dar es Salaam, flags flew at half-mast on all government buildings. There was a stream of callers at the Indian High Commission to offer condolences, including Prime Minister Julius Nyerere.

**GHANA:** In a broadcast, President Kwame Nkrumah said:

Rarely have the qualities of wisdom, courage, humanity and great learning found such perfect fusion and expression in one individual as they did in Pandit Nehru. Soft of speech but forthright in expression, his voice was heard in the councils of the world in defence of freedom and the dignity of man. He will long be remembered for his championship of the Afro-Asian cause and his support for the ideals of freedom, unity and world peace.

His sympathy and understanding of the problems of Africa was a great source of encouragement to all of us who have been engaged in the struggle for the liberation and unity of Africa.

By Mr Nehru's death the Commonwealth has lost a Prime Minister of outstanding courage and calibre. The people of India have lost a great and illustrious leader and the world an eminent statesman.

A six-man Ghana delegation headed by K.A Ofori-Atta, Ghana's Minister of Justice, arrived in New Delhi on June 5 to convey President Nkrumah's messages of condolence to the Indian President, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and to Indira Gandhi. ETHIOPIA: Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia in a telegram to Indira Gandhi expressed "deep grief at the passing away of an illustrious father and our close friend". "His leadership and statesmanship would long be remembered," he added. Ethiopian Prime Minister Aklilou Habtewold and acting Foreign Minister Ketema Yifru also sent telegrams of condolences. It was later stated in Addis Ababa that the Emperor had deputed his Prime Minister to attend Nehru's funeral but he could not do so because of shortage of time.

TUNISIA: The National Assembly observed a minute's silence on May 27. *Al Amal*, official organ of Tunisia's ruling Neo Destour Party, said in an editorial: "Tunisia did not share all views of Nehru. But what was beyond any doubt was that he was a political genius, a man faithful to his principles, profoundly and sincerely attached to freedom, peace and peaceful coexistence among human beings regardless of their race, their religion, their language, and their civilisation. For the whole of mankind, his death is a loss." Tunisia sent its Foreign Minister Mongi Slim to attend the funeral.

SENEGAL: President Leopold Senghor said the death of Prime Minister Nehru had been strongly felt in Senegal where the deceased had been regarded as one of the great champions of the two countries' common struggle for peace and liberty.

NIGERIA: The Nigerian Prime Minister, Sir Abubaker Tafawa Balewa, in a telegram to President Radhakrishnan, recalled Nehru's visit to Nigeria in 1962. He said Nigerians would always remember his "shining qualities of wisdom, simplicity and

humility as well as his deep understanding of human problems". "We shall miss his wise counsel in the comity of nations and especially in the Commonwealth," he said. In Kaduna, Northern Nigeria, Regional Premie, Sir Ahmadu Bello said that in the death of Nehru "India has lost a father". In a telegram sent to President Radhakrishnan, Sir Ahmadu said the Commonwealth had lost one of its able and renowned democratic leaders and the world a champion of human liberty.

UPPER VOLTA: President Yameogo of Upper Volta expressed his country's "deep sense of stupor" at the death of Nehru. He said Nehru personified "the hero of national liberation and had created the myth of an Indian symbol of peace".

SOUTH AFRICA: The sudden death of Nehru came as a shock to the 600,000 Indians in South Africa. Indian traders closed their shops to mourn his death. Indian women were seen weeping in the streets in Johannesburg. In Durban, Dr Monty Naicker, President of the South African Indian Congress, founded by Mahatma Gandhi, sent a message of condolence to Indira Gandhi. Dr Naicker said the democratic world had "lost one of the greatest torchbearers of freedom of our time". Mrs Manilal Gandhi, daughter-in-law of Mahatma Gandhi, said at Phoenix, that she and Nehru "were very very great friends. I shall be praying for him today".

In Cape Town, South African papers paid tribute to Nehru in their editorials. *The Rand Daily Mail* said: "Pandit Nehru was one of the great men of modern Asia—a man of practical idealism." *The Cape Times* stressed: "Jawaharlal Nehru was ... a statesman with a wide view, a deep sense of history. He was to show ... that moral influence can be powerful even where a country has no atom bombs." *The Natal Mercury* wrote: "His death removes from the international scene a controversial but nonetheless stupendous figure." Cape Town's Afrikaans-language *Die Burger* said: "He had a powerful influence on the history of the modern world."

At a public meeting held in New Delhi to mourn Nehru's death, a number of visiting African leaders paid their tribute to the departed Indian statesman. UAR Vice-President Shafae said Nehru was intimately identified "with all that is best in modern India and all that is representative of it". In international affairs, Nehru's was the voice of sanity, morality and hope, he said. Shafae said men of Nehru's calibre were rarely born in the world. The sea of humanity that had turned up to pay its homage to him at the funeral was indicative of the affection in which Nehru was held by the Indian people.

The Foreign Minister of Tunisia, Mongi Slim, said his people considered Nehru their elder brother and Nehru had inspired them in the difficult task of shaping and building the nation. The death of Gandhiji gave to Nehru and India strength to overcome communal passions. "Let Mr Nehru's death give strength to those who have to shoulder the tremendous responsibility of building a nation devoted to peace and brotherhood," he said.

Kalule Settal, Uganda Minister, said the news of Nehru's death was received in East Africa with great shock. The Uganda Prime Minister had described Nehru's passing away as a personal loss. He said Nehru was the torchbearer of freedom of all nations which had newly achieved self-government and which were struggling for freedom.

L. Brahimi, Algerian envoy, said the Algerian people shared the grief of the Indian people who suffered a terrible blow in the death of Nehru. He offered "sincerest condolence and sympathy" on behalf of President Ben Bella and the people of Algeria. He said Nehru was "as much ours as he was yours. We have the greatest admiration and love for him. We wish India should continue to be a great nation in the world and continue to play a leading role as was done under the leadership of Mr Nehru".

Moving tributes were paid to Nehru as a world statesman and for his contribution to peace and freedom of colonial peoples at a meeting of the Afro-Asian group at the UN Headquarters in New York on May 29. Orhan Erlap of Turkey was in the chair. Speaker after speaker spoke glowingly of Nehru as a humanitarian, idealist, man of action and fighter for the cause of freedom and justice.

The entire Afro-Asian group stood up for a moment in silence in homage to the departed statesman and asked the chairman to convey to Indira Gandhi, the Government of India, and the people the deepest sorrow and condolences of the Afro-Asian group.

Jawaharlal Nehru's "courageous" advocacy of a free Namibia and criticism of Western powers shielding racist South Africa were remembered on November 14, 1988, by United Nations delegates—still debating South-West Africa's independence 41 years later. References to Nehru's campaign against the apartheid regime came as the 159 nation UN General Assembly considered the issue of Namibia's independence, as it had done almost ever since the world body came into being. Noting that India was currently marking the 100th birth anniversary of its first Prime Minister, several nonaligned and other delegates quoted him. President of UN Council for Namibia Peter Zuze called Nehru a

"great statesman and a foe of apartheid, minority rule, colonialism and racism". "As the assembly takes up this important item it is fitting that we pay special tributes to the man and recognise the courage with which he spoke out against oppression and injustice," Mr Zuze said. In his key note address, permanent observer of South-West African People's Organisation Helmut Angoula recited Nehru's warning: "The capacity of the Government of South Africa to persist in error is quite remarkable. But if a country, as an individual, persists long enough in error, retribution comes." Egyptian envoy Abdel Halim Badawi said Nehru was not only the leader of Indian people but of all developing countries, and the commemoration of his birth anniversary was a legitimate source of pride. Badawi recalled the "profound faith" with which Egypt had counted on Nehru's wisdom and support for its own struggle. Polish envoy Eugeniusz Nowortya called Nehru "an outstanding politician", who saw South Africa as "the greatest international immorality" and who did not spare countries with "democratic tradition" which advised "moderation" in dealing with the apartheid regime. Colombian envoy Julian McClean said the era of decolonisation had begun with India's independence, which owed in great measure to Nehru's vision, and still inspired those struggling for freedom.

Indian delegate Khursheed Alam Khan underscored Nehru's belief in "international goodwill". Khan cited Nehru's very first letter to Chief Ministers of India's States in which he stressed that "we were dependent for many things on international goodwill". He said that India had been fortunate to receive this goodwill in abundant measure and was determined that such goodwill reach people everywhere.



## Appendix I

# Nelson Mandela On Nehru

NELSON MANDELA was chosen as the recipient of India's prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding for 1979. In that connection, he wrote a letter from the Robben Island prison on August 3, 1980, to (Mrs) Manorama Bhalla, Secretary of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi, which administers the award. The letter was held up by prison authorities. It was smuggled out of prison and later circulated by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, a year later on August 26, 1981. This letter is reproduced here.

The South African regime refused permission for (Mrs) Winnie Mandela to receive the award on behalf of her husband. It was received in November 1980, by Oliver Tambo, President of the African National Congress, on behalf of Mandela at an impressive ceremony in New Delhi.

Dear Mrs Bhalla,

I am writing to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Indian Council for Cultural Relations for honouring me with the 1979 "Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding". Although I have been singled out for this award, I am mindful that I am the mere medium for an honour that rightly belongs to the people of our country.

Our people cannot but feel humble, at the same time proud that one of their number has been selected to join the distinguished men and women who have been similarly honoured in the past.

I recall these names because to my mind they symbolise not only the scope and nature of the award, but they in turn constitute a fitting tribute to the great man after whom it has been named — Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The lives and varied contribution of each one of them reflect in some measure the rich and many-sided life of Panditji: selfless humanitarian Mother Teresa, international statesman Josip Broz Tito, notable political leaders, Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda, medical benefactor Jonas Salk, and civil rights leader Martin Luther King.

Truly, Jawaharlal Nehru was an outstanding man. A combination of many men into one—freedom fighter, politician, world

statesman, prison graduate, master of the English language, lawyer and historian. As one of the pioneers of the nonaligned movement, he has made a lasting contribution to world peace and the brotherhood of man.

In the upsurge of anti-colonial and freedom struggles that swept through Asia and Africa in the post-war period, there could hardly be a liberation movement or national leader who was not influenced in one way or another by the thoughts, activities and example of Pandit Nehru and the All India Congress [Indian National Congress—HSC]. If I may presume to look back on my own political education and upbringing, I find that my own ideas were influenced by his experience.

While at university and engrossed in student politics, I, for the first time, became familiar with the name of this famous man. In the forties, for the first time I read one of his books, *The Unity of India*. It made an indelible impression on my mind and ever since then, I procured, read and treasured any one of his works that became available.

When reading his *Autobiography* or *Glimpses of World History*, one is left with the overwhelming impact of the immense scope of his ideas and breadth of his vision. Even in prison, he refused to succumb to a disproportionate concern with mundane matters or the material hardships of his environment. Instead, he devoted himself to creative activity and produced writings which will remain a legacy to generations of freedom lovers.

"Walls are dangerous companions," he wrote, "they may occasionally protect from outside evil and keep out an unwelcome intruder. But they also make you a prisoner and a slave, and you purchase your so-called purity and immunity at the cost of freedom. And the most terrible of walls are the walls that grow up in the mind, which prevent you from discarding an evil tradition simply because it is old, and from accepting a new thought because it is novel."

Like most young men in circumstances similar to ours, the politically inclined youth of my generation too were drawn together by feelings of an intense, but narrow form of nationalism. However, with experience, coupled with the unfurling of events at home and abroad, we acquired new perspectives and, as the horizon broadened, we began to appreciate the inadequacy of some youthful ideas. Time was to teach us, as Panditji says, that: ... nationalism is good in its place, but is an unreliable friend and an unsafe historian. It blinds us to many happenings and sometimes

distorts the truth, especially when it concerns us and our country.

In a world in which breathtaking advances in technology and communication have shortened the space between the erstwhile prohibitively distant lands, where outdated beliefs and imaginary differences among the people were being rapidly eradicated, where exclusiveness was giving way to cooperation and inter-dependence, we too found ourselves obliged to shed our narrow outlook and adjust to fresh realities.

Like the All-India Congress, one of the premier national liberation movements of the colonial world, we too began to assess our situation in a global context. We quickly learned the admonition of a great political thinker and teacher that no people in one part of the world could really be free while their brothers in other parts were still under foreign rule.

Our people admired the solidarity the All-India Congress displayed with the people of Ethiopia whose country was being ravaged by Fascist Italy. We observed that undeterred by labels, the All-India Congress courageously expressed its sympathy with Republican Spain. We were inspired when we learned of the Congress Medical Mission to China in 1938. We noted that while the imperialist powers were hoping and even actively conniving to thrust the barbarous forces of Nazism against the Soviet Union, Panditji publicly spurned a pressing invitation to visit Mussolini, and two years later he again refused an invitation to Nazi Germany. Instead, he chose to go to Czechoslovakia, a country betrayed and dismembered by the infamous Munich deal.

In noting the internationalism of the All-India Congress and its leadership, we recalled the profound explanation of Mahatma Gandhi, when he said:

There is no limit to extending our service to our neighbours across state-made frontiers. God never made these frontiers.

It would be a grave omission on our part if we failed to mention the close bonds that have existed between our people and the people of India, and to acknowledge the encouragement, the inspiration and the practical assistance we have received as a result of the international outlook of the All-India Congress.

The oldest existing political organisation in South Africa, the Natal Indian Congress, was founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1894. He became its first secretary and in 21 years of his stay in South Africa, we were to witness the birth of ideas and methods of

struggle that have exerted an incalculable influence on the history of the peoples of India and South Africa. Indeed it was on South African soil that Mahatmaji founded and embraced the philosophy of Satyagraha.

After his return to India, Mahatmaji's South African endeavours were to become the cause of the All-India Congress and the people of India as a whole. On the eve of India's independence Pandit Nehru said:

Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny and now the time comes when we should redeem our pledge..... At the stroke of the midnight hour when the world sleeps India will awaken to life and freedom..... It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take a pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.

Our people did not have to wait long to witness how uppermost our cause was in Panditji's mind when he made this pledge. The determination with which his gifted sister, Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit as free India's Ambassador to the United Nations, won universal solidarity with our plight, and made her the beloved spokesman of the voiceless masses not only of our country and Namibia but of people like ours throughout the world. We were gratified to see that the pronouncements and efforts of the Congress during the independence struggle were now being actively pursued as the policy of the Government of India.

At the Asian People's Conference in Bombay in 1947, at Bandung in 1955, at the Commonwealth deliberations, in the non-aligned movement, everywhere and at all times, Panditji and free India espoused our cause consistently.

Today, we are deeply inspired to witness his equally illustrious daughter, Mrs Indira Gandhi, continue along the same path with undiminished vitality and determination. Her activities, her interest, her pronouncements, remain for us a constant source of hope and encouragement.

India's championing of our cause assumes all the more significance, when we consider that ours is but one of the 153 countries which constitute the family of nations, and our over 21 million people, a mere fraction of the world's population. Moreover, our hardships, though great, become small in the context of a turbulent world enveloped by conflict, wars, famine, malnutrition, disease, poverty, illiteracy and hatred.

However, it is precisely India's exemplary role in world affairs that also serves to remind us that our problems, acute as they are,

are part of humanity's problems and no part of the world can dare consider itself free of them unless and until the day the last vestige of man-made suffering is eradicated from every corner of the world.

This knowledge of shared suffering, though formidable in dimension, at the same time keeps alive in us our oneness with mankind and our own global responsibilities that accrue therefrom. It also helps to strengthen our faith and belief in our future. To invoke once more the words of Panditji:

In a world which is full of conflict and hatred and violence, it becomes more necessary than at any other time to have faith in human destiny. If the future we work for is full of hope for humanity, then the ills of the present do not matter much and we have justification for working for that future.

In this knowledge we forge ahead firm in our beliefs, strengthened by the devotion and solidarity of our friends; above all, by an underlying faith in our own resources and determination, and in the invincibility of our cause. We join with you, the people of India, and with people all over the world in our striving towards a new tomorrow, tomorrow making a reality for all mankind the sort of universe that the great Rabindranath Tagore dreamed of in *Gitanjali*:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,  
where knowledge is free;  
where the world has not been broken into  
fragments by narrow domestic walls;  
where words come out from the depths of truth;  
where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;  
where the clear stream of reason has not lost  
its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;  
where the mind is led forward by these into  
ever widening thought and action  
into that heaven of Freedom, My Father, let my country awake.

Yours sincerely  
(Signed) NELSON MANDELA

August 3, 1982  
Mrs Manorama Bhalla  
Secretary  
Indian Council for Cultural Relations  
Indraprastha Estate  
New Delhi  
Republic of India

P.S. As will be seen from the above date, the letter was given to the Officer Commanding Robben Island on the 3rd August 1980 for despatch to you by mail. I added that the matter should be treated urgently. Since then I have repeatedly enquired from the Department of Prisons as to whether the letter had been forwarded to you. Only during the last week in December was I told that I "could thank the Indian Council for Cultural Relations but not in the words used in the letter". For this reason I decided to use my own channels of reaching you.

## Appendix II

# Nehru Speaks To African Students

*The following is a report of Prime Minister Nehru's inaugural address to the African Students Congress in Delhi on December 26, 1953*

FOR SOME time past I have been feeling more and more that among the problems of the next few years, the problem of Africa is going to be one of the most important in the world.

Asia has undergone and is still undergoing great changes. In Africa, too, such changes have been taking place. When I think of Africa, I am conscious of great historic processes which affected mighty continents, and which led to great movements taking place. Such movements affect humanity very much. A variety of reasons prevent the people of Africa from attaining certain educational standards. Education is not so advanced as in other countries and the little opportunities that are present are confined to a very few in number. India has been able to give as much opportunity as she can to a few students from Africa. But it is for those students who have benefited from education to go back to their country and, instead of putting that education for self-advancement, should direct it in a manner which will make masses of their continent to march ahead.

I confess that I do not know much of past history of Africa. I know, of course, the history of colonialism in Africa which is quite a different thing from the history of the African continent. I would like to know the African history, life in the past and the background of the continent. I am, therefore, very glad to know that it is proposed to start an institute of African studies in Delhi University. I hope that it will be possible through that institute to know more about people of Africa, their culture, their background, etc.

One of major events of age was the continuation and the expansion of colonial revolution. In Asia it started earlier. It had gone far and achieved success in many ways. In Africa it is in the very beginning stages. I cannot say how long it will take in Africa to complete this process. The process of colonial revolution is well known to India because of its own freedom struggle. Indian leaders, including myself, have spent their lifetime in that struggle in various capacities. It is because of this that I talk in a friendly

and comradely way to African students, whenever I meet them, about the Indian experience. Though I am hesitant to tell the African people as to what they should or should not do, nevertheless, I feel that I can easily point out the means and methods which India employed. I would leave the Africans to draw their own conclusions. Telling you my own experience of freedom movement, and sharing with you my inner feelings, I think, is a better way of helping you than merely reciting copy-book maxims of advice to you.

India itself is a vast territory with a tremendous amount of diversity. But as one who had the privilege of travelling from one end of the country to the other, I can see that despite the great diversity of religion, language and species of men, there lies underneath a common unity. Throughout the long period of her history, India has been going on through the experiment of social adjustments. Sometimes, she succeeded and sometimes she failed. What was good some hundred of years ago is not good at the present moment. But, still, process of social adjustment is going on.

You should be ready to take up responsibility when you return to your country and should retain your individuality. You should have a pride in Africa. Stand by your people and your country. Each country has something substantial to contribute to world's culture. Africa, though an old continent, is still capable of giving a feeling of youth and vitality to its children, which are very precious for any race or individual.

Probably no part of the earth's surface had suffered more in the last two or three hundred years from the incursions of outsiders than Africa. However, it is far better to look at the present, and even more so at the future, than to go back to the past all the time.

It was our high privilege to work under a very great man, and however small we might be, something of the shadow of greatness comes when one comes near greatness. So we profited and we learnt a great deal from what Gandhiji taught us, and what India is bears the impress of Gandhiji, although many of us forget him often enough. There is in India a tremendous variety. There is also a very real unity. India's experiments in the long past in social adjustments succeeded in a great measure and failed occasionally. Sometimes, the very success became a failure later, because in such matters there can be nothing static and something what was good at a certain time in social adjustments becomes out of tune some-time later, unless it can be adapted to the new conditions. This



problem of social adjustments comes to me when I go to the tribal areas, in the north-east, for instance. There are a variety of people, many of them extraordinarily fine, not only physically but given a chance, they make good intellectually. Yet, a superficial survey would seem to indicate that they are somewhat backward because they have had no chance.

I would not say that people of India are better than other people. Many people in the course of our struggle were, no doubt, full of dislike and bitterness against the British who were ruling us. Because of Gandhiji's insistence and example all the time, an Englishman could walk through an Indian crowd without anybody touching him. That was part of the discipline and habits of mind we inculcated. I do not think you will find an example anywhere else of a national movement or any like movement being conducted with so little animus—there was animus but so little of it—as in India. What was still more remarkable, when fortunately the time came for us to come to an agreement between India and England, we parted peacefully and no trail of bitterness was left behind. That is the virtue of doing things in the right way. Gandhiji always said that means are more important than ends. You may aim at something very good and very noble, but if you employ ignoble means and methods, then as a matter of fact you do not reach the noble end.

The British realised that certain forces were at work in India and it was both the path of wisdom and practical politics to leave. The people of India realised that it was no good merely shouting a number of slogans, but it was far better to come to terms, according to which in the first phase they got Dominion Status and then a completely independent country.

I should like you to think of this because I am frightened at the prospect of Africa going through a welter of blood and thereby losing, I do not know, a generation or two generations of lives in this business before it starts on its constructive and creative career.

It is difficult for me to suggest anything because conditions differ in Africa and there are many things in Africa which I dislike intensely and some things happening which I like, and all this bundle of movements all over a vast continent cannot be described in a phrase. But of one thing I am convinced in my mind, and that is that even as these peaceful methods were right and proper and exceedingly practical for India, far more so are they practical and useful and should yield results in Africa, and any course of violence is likely to lead to grave difficulties. We see there mounting

violence competing with each other but how can anybody compete with a state's violence today? When you challenge the state in a peaceful way, then the strength of the people comes out, and that is where with restraint and discipline and many other qualities one might succeed. Even an attempt to do so does one good thing; in the process of one's peaceful struggle one is building up one's own people. That is a very great thing because when the time comes for the change-over, you are built up or largely built up.

Otherwise, when the time for change-over comes, suppose, it takes place, there is again the danger of violence. Even revolutions eat up their own children. So, morally and practically, it would be wrong, it would be foolish to try to achieve national ends through violence. I think this is applicable to Africa very much, all the more when what one is aiming at is the larger unity of Africa, constructiveness and creativeness. That cannot be achieved unless one adopts methods which will help to unite and not separate.

## Appendix III

# India's Struggle Against Apartheid

*The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, issued the following Press Note in New Delhi on July 13, 1963:*

THE STRUGGLE of the people of India against the racial policies of South Africa covers a period of over half a century. Well before India became independent, Mahatma Gandhi reacted strongly against policies of racial discrimination practised in South Africa and, in the early years of this century, waged one of the most significant struggles in history—the passive resistance movement—for asserting human equality and dignity. Long before the representatives of the United Nations framed their Charter, Mahatma Gandhi led the peoples' nonviolent movement "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person (and) in the equal rights of men and women", "without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion".

The Government of India raised the question of racial discrimination in South Africa from the very inception of the United Nations and from that time onwards, the Government of South Africa began its history of disregard of the resolutions of the United Nations. Subsequently, at the Seventh Session of the General Assembly in 1952, India, along with 12 other member-states of the United Nations, raised the general question of "race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of apartheid of the Government of the Union of South Africa". Between 1946 and 1962, the UN General Assembly passed 20 resolutions against the racial policies of South Africa. The Security Council also passed a resolution on the subject in April 1960. There have been a number of other resolutions on the policies of apartheid in the territory of South-West Africa. The Government of South Africa not only refused to comply with the provision of these resolutions but also persistently violated the principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration of Human Rights.

### *UN Resolution*

As the Government of South Africa continued to ignore repeated requests, recommendations, admonitions and condemna-

tions of the world organisation, 34 member-states of the United Nations, including India, moved a resolution in the 17th Session of the General Assembly in 1962, deploring the failure of the South Africa Government to comply with its earlier resolutions and deprecating that Government's racial policies and measures. The Resolution which was adopted by an overwhelming majority requested member-states to take certain diplomatic and economic steps against the Government of South Africa to bring about the abandonment of the racial policies of that Government [1761 (XVII)]. Operative paragraph 4 of the Resolution requested member-states to take the following measures:

- (a) Breaking off diplomatic relations with the Government of the Republic of South Africa or refraining from establishing such relations;
- (b) Closing their ports to all vessels flying the South African flag;
- (c) Enacting legislation prohibiting their ships from entering South African ports;
- (d) Boycotting all South African goods and refraining from exporting goods, including all arms and ammunition, to South Africa;
- (e) Refusing landing and passage facilities to all aircraft belonging to the Government and companies registered under the laws of South Africa.

### *India's Boycott*

India was the first country to take diplomatic and economic sanctions against the South African Government. Even before its independence, it had withdrawn its High Commissioner from the Union of South Africa and prohibited trade with that country. That was in 1946. Since the passing of Resolution 1761 (XVII) by the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Government of India has reviewed the position and taken necessary action in full compliance with the Resolution:

- (a) Breaking off diplomatic relations with the Government of the Republic of South Africa or refraining from establishing such relations.

The High Commissioner for India in the Union of South Africa was recalled in 1946. The Mission itself was withdrawn in 1954. Thus, there have been no formal diplomatic contacts between India and South Africa since 1954. However, some contact was maintained between the two governments through their Missions in London mainly in order to implement the various resolutions of the UN General Assembly urging negotiations between them on the question of treatment of persons of Indian origin in South

Africa. The Government of South Africa, however, persistently refused to negotiate in terms of these resolutions. This contact has accordingly now been broken off.

(b) Closing of ports to all vessels flying the South Africa flag.

In implementation of Resolution 1761 (XVII), the Government of India has instructed the authorities concerned not to allow vessels flying the South African flag to touch Indian sea ports.

(c) Enacting legislation prohibiting their (Indian) ships from entering South Africa.

Indian ships do not call at South African ports. However, instructions have been issued to the authorities concerned to prohibit Indian ships from going to South African ports. The Government of India has adequate powers for this purpose under the existing laws and it is not necessary to enact fresh legislation.

(d) Boycotting all South African goods and refraining from exporting goods, including all arms and ammunition, to South Africa.

There has been a general ban to trade between India and South Africa since 1946. Since 1953, the mandated territory of South-West Africa which is being administered by South Africa, has also been covered under ban. The movement of some items mainly of cultural and religious interest was, however, being allowed through postal and other channels on humanitarian grounds. The Government of India has examined this matter again and issued instructions that, apart from bonafide personal effects of travellers, post cards, letters, aerograms and telegrams, only the following items will be allowed for movement between India and South Africa through postal and other channels:

(i) books and periodical publications (magazines) and newspapers;

(ii) literature for the blind;

(iii) free unsolicited gifts from relations and friends, including family and personal photographs if paid for at letter postage rates or printed matter rates, if admissible. These cannot be sent through parcel post. The value of such a gift should not exceed Rs 200;

(iv) packets containing sweetmeats and blessing for the Muslim devotees by the Durgah Committee, Ajmer, provided that no packet

exceeds one lb in weight and that the packets are accompanied by certificates from the Nazim of the Durgah showing that they are bonafide offerings by devotees; and

(v) pictorial representations with religious and social background.

(e) Refusing landing and passage facilities to all aircraft belonging to the Government and companies registered under the laws of South Africa.

There is no traffic between India and South Africa by Indian or South African Airlines. However, under the relevant international conventions, aircraft registered in South Africa can be permitted to overfly India while operating scheduled international air services, to land at Indian airports for non-traffic purposes and to make non-scheduled flights to, through and over India. In view of the Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations specifically forbidding these facilities, the Government of India has informed the International Civil Aviation Organisation that it will not allow aircraft registered in South Africa to land at Indian airports or to overfly India.

The Government of India has fully implemented the terms of the UN General Assembly Resolution 1761 (XVII). It hopes that all other member-states of the United Nations and, indeed, all countries of the world will do everything in their power to bring about the abandonment of the cruel and inhuman racial policies of the Government of South Africa.

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## INDEX

- Abboud, Faik Ibrahim 117  
Abyssinia 7, 9, 12  
Accra 12, 62, 140  
Achimota College 12  
Addis Ababa 13, 111  
Afghanistan 7, 133  
African National Congress 8, 41, 48,  
69, 70, 82, 98  
African Students 61, 62, 92, 106-108  
Afro-Asian Movement 49, 99, 134, 137  
Ahmed, Fakhruddin Ali 126  
Alexandria 48  
Algeria 22, 28-33, 61, 133, 149  
Al Gumhoureya 133  
Aligarh 113  
Aligarh Muslim University 117  
Allahabad Municipality 4  
All India Congress Committee 17,  
117, 124  
Amin, S.G. 138  
Amer, Hakim 136  
Andhra Province 26  
Anglo Iranian Oil Company 13  
Angola 22, 33, 36-39  
Angoula, Helmut 150  
Arab-Asian Group 31  
Arab League 45  
Areas Reservation Immigration,  
Restriction 91  
Asia 2, 20, 71, 74, 75, 77, 140  
Asian-African Nations Conference 77,  
78, 103, 104  
Asian Relation Conference 19, 20, 71  
Asiatic Tenure 70  
Asmara 92  
Aswan Dam 48, 49  
Attlee, Clement 45  
*Autobiography* 3, 4, 5, 71, 91  
Azikwe, Dr Nnamdi 123
- Badawi, Halim 150  
Baghdad Pact 48  
Bakango Association (ABAKO) 52  
Bankipur Congress 3  
Balewa, Abubakar Tafawa 123, 132, 136
- Bandung 29, 48, 77, 134  
Bandung Conference 48, 78, 102, 103  
Bangalore 113  
Banda, Hastings 146  
Barbusse, Henri 5  
Bassuer, H. 69  
Baudouin (King) 52  
Banderanaiké, Sirimavo 134, 139  
Belgium 51, 52, 55, 56  
Belgrade 32, 44, 81, 104, 122  
Belgrade Declaration 81  
Bella, Ben 149  
Bello, Ahmadu 148  
Bhatia, Prem 99  
Bombay 113  
Bourguiba, Habib 137  
Brahimi, L. 149  
Brazil 43  
Britain 6, 78, 79  
British Commonwealth 9  
British Government 17, 25, 26, 27, 28,  
51, 59, 89, 90, 117  
British Labour Party 14  
Brockway, Fenner 6, 69  
Brussels 2, 6  
Brussels Congress 6, 7  
Burma 7, 77, 99
- Cachalia, Moulvi 77  
Cairo 15, 16, 44, 46-48, 115, 121, 122,  
134, 139, 140, 145  
Calcutta 60, 113  
Calcutta Congress 10  
Cambodia 133  
Cambridge 3  
Canada 9  
Cape of Good Hope 85  
Cape Town 65, 67, 79, 98, 149  
Central African Federation 39-41  
Ceylon 133, 139, 140  
Chad 61  
Chandigarh 113  
Chandranagore 28, 29  
China 3, 6, 7, 9, 14, 119, 121, 130-144  
Chopra, Purshotam 136

- Churchill, Winston 25, 47, 87  
 Cobrain, D. 6  
 Cochin 118  
 Collin, Rev Canon L. 69  
 Colombo 139, 140  
 Colombo Plan 113  
 Commonwealth 59, 81, 82, 135  
 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference 81  
 Conference on Peace and Empire 92  
 Confederation of Tribal Association (CONAKAT) 52  
 Congo 22, 51-60, 128, 129, 131  
 Congress Party 2, 4, 13, 92  
 Congress Session 15  
 Cordier, Andrew 53, 56  
 Coupland, R. 86
- Dadoo, Dr Yusuf 67, 82, 98  
 Dakar 79  
 Daman 28, 33  
 Dark Continent 22  
 Dar-es-Salaam 82, 141  
 Davis Cup 83  
 Dayal, Rajeshwar 56  
 Dehlavi, S.K. 131  
 Delhi University 62  
 Department of African Studies 62  
 Diu 28, 33  
 Du Bois, Dr W.E.B. 69  
 Dulles, John 49  
 Durban 90, 94-97, 148
- East Africa 11, 18, 24, 87-89, 93, 99, 107, 138, 145  
*East Africa and its Invaders* 86  
 East African Indian Congress 88  
 Egypt 2, 6, 9, 11, 14, 16, 44-51, 53, 61, 109, 114, 116, 124, 150  
 Egyptian Government 47, 49  
 Egyptian National Party 8  
 Eisenhower (President) 53  
 England 9, 16  
 Erlap, Orhan 149  
 Ethiopia 3, 16, 61, 87, 92, 100, 114, 119, 131, 138  
 Ethiopian Government 111  
 Exchange Bank of India 23
- Farouk (King) 46, 47  
 Faud (King) 16  
 Fawzi, Mahmoud 139  
 France 13, 29-33, 50, 79  
 Fraser, A.G. 12  
 French Government 29-33
- Gabon 61  
 Gama, Vasco da 85  
 Gambia 113  
 Gandhi, Indira 28, 100, 125, 126, 128, 144, 148, 149  
 Gandhi, Mahatma (Mohandas Karamchand) 2-5, 11, 12, 66-69, 90, 91, 97, 98, 102, 148  
 Gandhi, Manilal (Mrs) 148  
 Gaulle, Charles de 32, 61  
 Gaza 116  
 Gaza Strip 50  
 General Immigration Act 67  
 Georgia 7  
 Ghana 22, 53, 55, 57, 61, 63, 109, 113, 117, 119, 122, 123, 142  
 Ghetto Act 68  
 Gizenga, Antoine 54  
*Glimpses of World History* 13, 14, 18, 71  
 Goa 28, 29, 33-37, 60, 87  
 Gokhale, C.K. 3  
 Gold Coast 22  
 Gopal, S. 2, 3, 54, 130  
 Government of India 3, 17, 39, 90, 119, 136, 148  
 Great Britain 78  
 Group Areas Act 72, 97  
 Guinea 53, 57, 61, 133, 134, 142  
 Gumede, Josiah 6  
 Gupta, Anirudha 99  
 Gyani, P.S. (General) 116
- Habtewold, Makilu 137, 147  
 Hailey, Lord 87  
 Hammarskjöld, Dag 53-56, 59  
 Hamza, Mirghani 117, 124  
 Harrow 3  
 Hasting Banda Government 107  
 Hatta, Mohamed 6  
 Havelock, Wilfred 137  
 Hitler, Adolf 13, 64

- Houser, Rev George 69  
 Human Rights Convention 76  
 Hungary 51  
 Hussain, Dr Syed 46  
 Hyderabad 113
- India 1-6, 10, 14-18, 21-23, 29, 33, 39,  
 46, 58, 77, 92, 101, 102, 117, 136  
 Indian National Congress 3, 6, 7, 71  
 Indian Ocean 124  
 Indian Technical and Economic  
 Cooperation (ITEC) 112, 113  
 Indochina 6  
 International Civil Aviation Organisa-  
 tion 73  
 International Conference on Peace and  
 Empire 14  
 International Congress Against  
 Colonial Oppression 5  
 International Labour Organisation 83  
 Israel 45, 46, 49, 50  
 Iraq 3  
 Icon 113  
 Ivory Coast 61
- Japan 121  
 Jallianwala Bagh 79  
 Jawaharlal Nehru University 99  
 Johannesburg 66, 148
- KADU 138  
 Kiano, Dr J.G. 131  
 Kampala 141  
 KANU 138, 142  
 Kapila, Achru 26  
 Kasavuba, Joseph 52, 53  
 Katanga 52, 53, 55, 56, 58-60, 124  
 Kaunda, Kenneth 125, 126  
 Kawawa, Rashidi 141  
 Kennedy, John (President) 38  
 Kenya 18, 23-28, 61, 92, 94, 95, 99, 112,  
 113, 119, 131, 137, 138, 141, 142,  
 145  
 Kenya African Union 24  
 Kenya Broadcasting Corporation 145  
 Kenya Indian Congress 138  
 Kenya Legislative Council 88, 105
- Kenya-Uganda Railway 86  
 Kenyatta, Jomo 26-28, 106, 145, 146  
 Kilimanjaro, Mt 126  
 Kinshasa 52  
 Khan, Khursheed Alam 150  
 Khalil, Abdella 124  
 Khedda, Ben 32  
 Khosla, Dr A.N. 117  
 Khrushchev 57, 60  
 Koinange, Dr Peter Mbiyu 24, 142  
 Korea 74  
 Korean War 78  
 Kotane, Moses 77
- Ladakh 141  
 Laguma, J.A. 6  
 Lahore Congress 10  
 Lal, Dewan Chaman 26  
 Lansbury, George 6  
 League Against Imperialism 6  
 League of Nations 42, 44  
 Leopoldville 53, 54  
 Liberia 114, 131  
 Lisbon 34, 35  
 London 3, 11, 14, 48  
 London Commonwealth Summit 81,  
 82, 124, 145  
 London Federation of Peace Councils  
 14  
 Lourenco Marques 35  
 Lucknow 113  
 Lucknow Congress 4  
 Lumumba, Patrice 52-58, 128, 129  
 Lusanne 12  
 Lyttleton, Oliver 25
- Macdonald, Malcolm 146  
 Macmillan 135  
 McMahon Line 133, 134  
 Madras 113  
 Madras Medical College 107  
 Mahe 28  
 Malawi 41, 61, 88, 107, 113, 119  
 Mandela, Nelson 70, 71, 125, 127, 128  
 Massawa 17, 92  
 Mau Mau Movement 24-27, 92  
 Mauritius 89, 112, 113  
 Mboya, Tom 28, 142

- Menon, Lakshmi 139, 141, 142  
 Menon, V.K. Krishna 12, 14, 31, 48, 54  
 Mesopotamia 7, 9  
 Mobutu, Joseph 53, 54, 56, 57  
 Morocco 29, 30, 31  
 Moscow 53  
 Moynein, Lord 88  
 Mozambique 22, 33-35, 37, 38, 87  
 Mugabe, Robert 42  
 Mussolini 12, 13
- Naicker, G.M. 68, 98, 148  
 Naidu, H.A. 69  
 Naidu, Padmaja 59  
 Nairobi 27, 41, 138, 145  
 NAM 121, 122  
 Namibia 42-44, 113, 149  
 Nasser, Gamal Abdel 46, 47-50, 59, 60, 62, 108, 115, 122, 124, 132, 134, 135, 139-141, 144, 145  
 Natal 70, 89, 90  
 Natal Indian Congress 98  
 National Congolese Movement (MNC) 52  
 National Defence Fund 138  
 National Front for Liberation (FLN) 30, 31  
 Nationalist Party Government 97  
 National Small Industries Corporation 113  
 NATO 34, 35, 37, 38, 79  
 Nazi Germany 65  
 NEFA 132, 135, 141  
 Neguib, Mohamed 46, 47  
 Nehru, Kamala 2, 3, 4  
 Nehru, R.K. 139, 140  
 Nehru Award 126-128  
 Neo Destour Party 147  
 New Delhi 20, 24, 35, 36, 39, 47, 58, 70, 88, 100, 108, 110, 113, 126-128, 136, 139, 140, 143, 145  
 Nigeria 22, 61, 113, 117, 120, 123, 124, 140, 142  
 Nigerian Navy 118  
 Nigerian Parliament 123  
 Nkrumah, Kwame 14, 55, 57, 59, 62, 63, 66, 108, 118, 122, 123, 134, 134, 137, 140, 146, 147  
 Non-aligned Summit 32, 37, 59, 104
- North Africa 6  
 North-South Cooperation 104  
 Northern Rhodesia 39, 40, 88  
 Norway 38  
 Nowortya, Eugeniusz 150  
 Nyerere, Julius 106, 126, 127, 141, 142, 146  
 Nyasaland 39, 41, 88, 107, 146
- Obote, Milton 131, 141, 146  
 Oda, Gaspara 146  
 Ofori, Atta K.A. 147  
 Organisation of African Unity 22, 38, 42, 121, 122, 124
- Padmore, George 14  
 Pakistan 119, 131  
 Pal, Bipin Chandra 3  
 Palestine 3, 6, 45, 46  
 Pan African Freedom Movement 132  
 Pande, B.N. 3, 36  
 Pandit, Vijayalakshmi 49  
 Panikkar, Sardar K.M. 47  
 Pant, Apa B. 24, 26, 88, 93  
 Pasha, Arabi 16  
 Pasha, Nahas 14, 15, 44  
 Pasha, Zughlul 15  
 Patel, Nayana 138  
 Pegging Act 79  
 Peking 134, 136  
 Persian Gulf 7, 9  
 Philippines 121  
 Planning Commission (Egypt) 116  
 Planning Commission (India) 116  
 Pollitt, Harry 6  
 Pondicherry 28, 29  
 Portugal 33-38, 78  
 Portuguese Government 34, 35, 37, 39  
 Provisional Government of Algeria in Exile (GPRA) 30-32
- Radhakrishnan, Dr S. 2, 41, 147, 148  
 Rai, Lajpat 3  
 Rao, N.V. 136  
 Reddy, E.S. 69, 70  
 Reddy, Sanjeeva (President) 128  
 Representation Act, 70

- Rhodesia 22, 39-41, 128  
 Rigby, (Col) 86  
 RITES 113  
 Robeson, Paul 69  
 Rome 12, 140  
 Round Table Conference 15
- Sahara 32  
 Salah, Salem 47  
 Salazar Government 35  
 Salisbury 41  
 Scott, Michael 43, 69  
 Sebei, Youseff el 145  
 Selassie, Haile (Emperor) 62, 108, 132, 137, 147  
 Sen, A.K. 139, 140, 141  
 Sen, Sukumar 116  
 Senegal 61, 125  
 Senghor, Leopold 125, 128, 147, 149  
 Settal, Kalule 149  
 Shafae, Hussein 145, 148  
 Sharpeville 79, 80, 81  
 Shastri, Lal Bahadur 147  
 Shikuku, Martin 138  
 Shermarke, Dr Abdirashid Ali 108  
 Sierra Leone 61, 113  
 Singh, Zail (President) 128  
 Slim, Mongi 147, 149  
 Smith, Ian 41, 42  
 Smuts (General) 67  
 Speke, John (Col) 85  
 Somalia 16, 61, 87, 108, 121, 131  
 South Africa 3, 4, 6, 8, 12, 18, 43, 44, 65-70, 74-83, 89, 91, 94, 95-98, 100, 107, 148  
 South African Committee 69  
 South African Government 72, 73, 75, 78, 80-82, 128  
 South African Trade Union Congress 8  
 South-South Cooperation 102, 104  
 South-West Africa 42-44  
 South-West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO) 44  
 Soviet Union 48, 51, 53, 56  
 Spain 3, 78  
 Sri Lanka 77  
 Sudan, 45, 61, 87, 109, 113, 117, 119, 124  
 Suez Canal 15, 22, 44, 47-49
- Swinton, Lord 25  
 Syria 3, 6
- Tambo, Oliver 127  
 Tanganyika 22, 61, 107, 119, 134, 142, 146  
 Tanzania 99, 112, 113, 125-127, 146  
*The Unity of India* 71  
 Thimayya, K.S. (General) 115  
 Thompson, W. Scott 123  
 Tibet 3, 9  
 Tito (President) 49, 60  
 Toure, Sekou 55, 134  
 Transvaal Indian Congress 98  
 Treaty of Versailles 13  
 Trinity College 3  
 Tshombe, Moise 52, 53, 54  
 Tubman (President) 132  
 Tunisia 30, 61, 131, 149  
 Turkey 3, 79, 149
- Uganda 61, 88, 90, 107, 131, 149  
 Unilateral Declaration of Independence 42  
 United Arab Republic 116, 131, 132, 134, 136, 139, 142, 144, 145, 148  
 United Nations (UN) 21, 31, 37, 42, 43, 50, 52-60, 71, 72, 81, 83, 85, 95, 102, 105, 122  
 United Nations Centre Against Apartheid 69  
 United Nations Charter 53, 73, 76  
 United Nations Conciliation Committee 57  
 United Nations Emergency Force 116  
 United Nations Environment Programme 83  
 United Nations Fact Finding Mission 43  
 United Nations General Assembly 31, 37, 38, 42, 43, 50, 55, 71-73, 95, 96, 98, 105, 149, 150  
 United Nations Security Council 50, 53, 73, 80, 81, 105  
 United Nations Trusteeship Committee 43  
 United Nations Trusteeship Council 38

United Provinces South African Committee 3

United States (US) 49, 51, 69, 76, 78, 134

US Government 134

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 66, 67

University of Roorkee 117, 119

Upper Volta 148

Visram, Alaadin 86

Volta River Project 117

Wafd party 15, 16, 45

*West African Pilot* 123

Wilkinson, Ellen 6

World War I and II 2, 5, 16, 17, 42, 45

Xuma, Dr A. 69, 98

Yamango (President) 148

Yanam 28

Zambia 36, 41, 61, 88, 113, 119, 125, 126

Zanzibar 18, 86, 92, 99

Zimbabwe 18, 42, 113

Zughlul, Saad 16

Zuze, Peter 149, 150



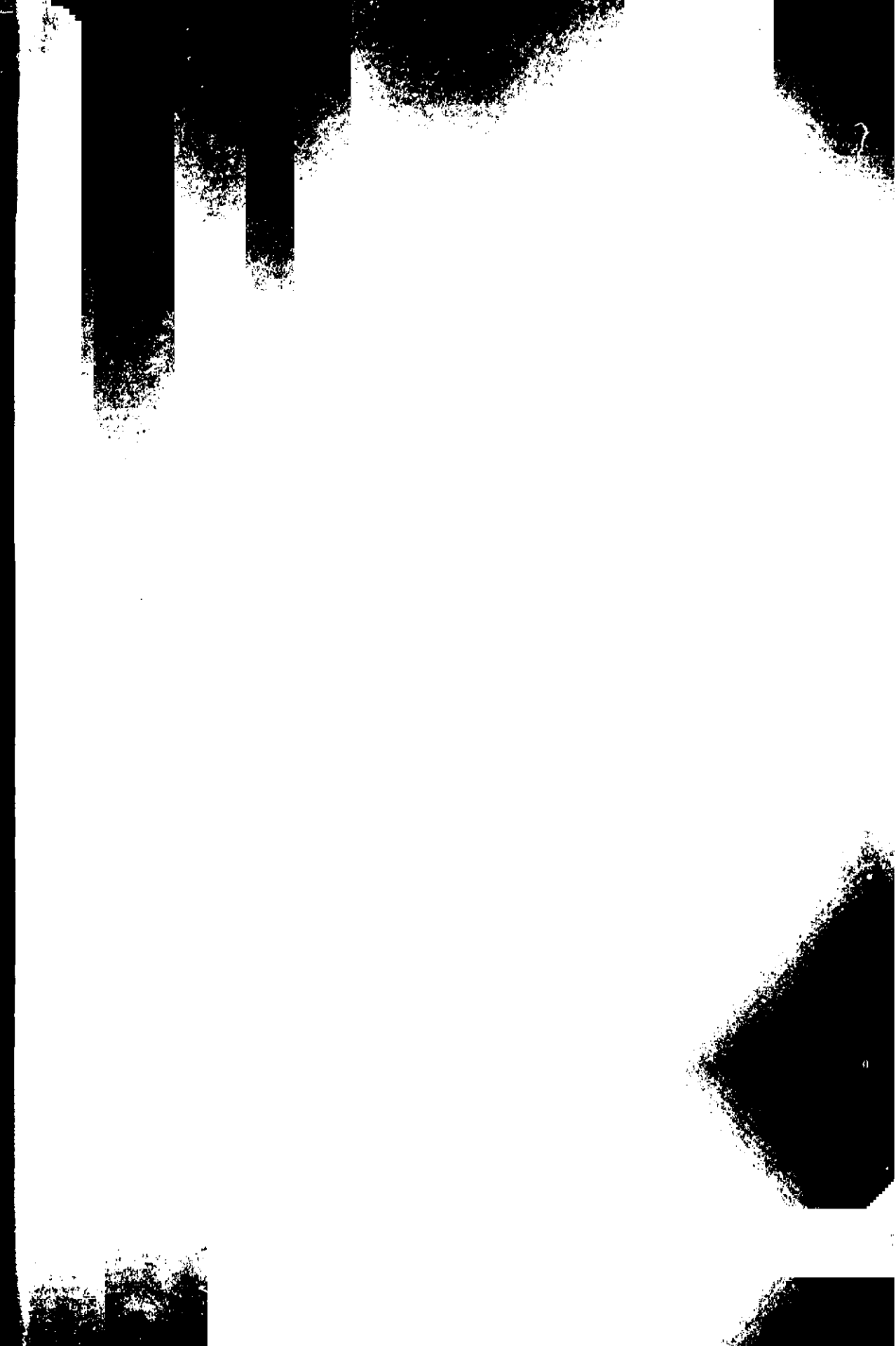




Hari Sharan Chhabra, founder-editor, *Africa Diary* and *World Focus*, has been involved in the study of African affairs for more than three decades. Has written extensively on African political and socio-economic developments for various Indian and foreign newspapers, magazines and research journals, besides contributing chapter-articles for a number of books. He is a regular commentator, moderator and interviewer for All India Radio and Doordarshan (Indian Television).

Widely travelled, he has participated in dozens of seminars, conferences, workshops and journalists' encounters connected with Africa in the United States, West Europe, Africa, the Soviet Union, China, Japan and India. Was closely associated with some UN conferences on Namibia and apartheid in New York, Paris and Geneva.

Chhabra has been covering a number of summits of the Organisation of African Unity and the nonaligned movement for various newspapers. Having undertaken some 20 safaris to Africa—east, west, south and north—he possesses first-hand knowledge of the post-independence developments in the African continent.



the movement for the freedom of India was not confined to any part of India. Its objective was the freedom of the entire country from every kind of foreign domination. That process of liberation would not be complete till the remaining small pockets of territory were also freed from foreign control. Despite this firm conviction, Nehru did not favour precipitate violent methods in liberating the Portuguese territories. He was prepared to be patient, willing to negotiate, use every method of conciliation, and always exercised the maximum restraint.

Another article of faith with him was that the principal motive force for throwing off the Portuguese yoke should come from the people of Goa itself. The people of India and the Government would certainly help and facilitate the process, but there ought to be a strong liberation movement of the people of Goa. All these elements of Nehru's approach to the ending of vestiges of Portuguese colonialism in India were also present in his approach and dealings with the Portuguese colonies in Africa.

Nehru was an inveterate enemy of all colonial powers; but from his experience of Goa and from the information reaching him about the developments in Angola and Mozambique, he considered Portuguese colonialism as the most primitive, uncivilised and barbarous. In his letter to the Chief Ministers of Indian States on March 1, 1950, he said: "The Portuguese Government still lives in some medieval age and appears to be ignorant of the changes that have taken place in the world." He told the Indian Parliament on September 17, 1955, that the continued Portuguese domination of Goa "has become an affront to civilised humanity, more especially after the brutal and uncivilised behaviour of the Portuguese authorities there".

Despite his strong views against Portuguese imperialism, Nehru preferred negotiations with the Government in Lisbon which, on another occasion, he had described as "exceedingly stupid and sticky". Nehru felt that Portugal had become more obstinate and intransigent after it became a member of the NATO military alliance. He ridiculed the other Western powers that while, on the one hand, they encouraged the liberation of their colonies, on the other, they put up obstructions in the way of the liberation by supporting countries like Portugal.

Jawaharlal Nehru had information way back in 1954 that the Portuguese Government in Goa was busy with all kinds of warlike arrangements. Portuguese troops were being reinforced and a virulent anti-India propaganda was being carried on not only in

Goa but also in Portugal itself and in Portuguese African possessions. There were violent anti-India demonstrations in Lisbon and in Lourenco Marques, name of the capital of Mozambique then, in July 1954. Intelligence reports reaching New Delhi said that troops were arriving in Goa as late as 1961. Portugal's naval ships were also reportedly berthed in Goan port.

New Delhi was by then convinced that peaceful methods of satyagraha and non-cooperation would have no effect on the brutal rulers in Goa. When Portuguese troops started firing on peaceful demonstrators, Nehru's patience was exhausted and he had no option but to order the Indian troops to march into Goa in December 1961. The use of force to liberate Goa, even though minimal, was not exactly in keeping with the Gandhian ideology, but the Nehru Government made it clear that it handled every situation on its own merit.

On October 20, 1961, just three months before the liberation of Goa, Prime Minister Nehru inaugurating in New Delhi the International Seminar on Portuguese Colonies, reaffirmed India's right to military intervention in Goa. India, he said, could not tolerate a foreign bridgehead on India's coast and a foreign base. Goa was a threat to India's security. Nehru regretted that India's efforts to persuade the Salazar Government to settle the Goa question peacefully had borne no fruit. He spoke at length of the "larger complex" of the Portuguese and other colonial structures in the African continent. Nehru told the seminar:

In a sense, Goa had become and has been a part of the larger problems of Portuguese possessions. Today, as we all know, the most vital struggle against Portuguese colonialism is taking place in Angola and in Mozambique. The story of Angola has been one of extreme tragedy... When this supreme tragedy is being enacted in Angola, it seems to us very odd, indeed, that any country should pat the Portuguese Government on the back.

Nehru was obviously referring to the support enjoyed by Portugal from its NATO allies. Paying a tribute to the freedom fighters in Angola and Mozambique, Nehru said theirs was a vital struggle against Portuguese colonialism. It was a tragedy that they should suffer from terrible repressive measures and it was a special tragedy that some big powers should help the Portuguese for cold war reasons. In a forthright assurance of support to the African peoples, he said: "So far as India is concerned, our thinking and emotions are with you, and in so far as we can help we shall help you in the task of coming out of the morass of colonial domination."