Chapter IV

MEANS
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PART I: Towards An Understanding of Nehru

I

The issue of 'Method of change-over', from the exploitative capitalist or feudal system to socialist one is one of the most crucial problems in the socialist thought. It is surprising therefore that no serious attempt appears/have been made to identify the 'Means' which have been suggested or advocated by Nehru for the establishment of a socialist system. Consequently the much-needed scholarly critical assessment which should follow the description on 'Means', is not available. Attempts if at all are at best sketchy.

M.N. Das in the Political Philosophy of Jawahar Lal Nehru, for example barely touches the subject. Das does not clearly indicate whether Nehru was a supporter of a non-violent peaceful method of transition to socialism or whether he considered violence as a necessary tool or whether he was contradictory and lacked clarity of ideas on political issues.

The primary reason for the non-availability of the treatment on 'Means' lies in the style of Nehru. He does not discuss systematically as far as I know the method of change-over from the privileged society and hence a researcher is likely to wind up the study of Nehru with the question -- does Nehru at all envisage a method for the establishment of socialism? And in this context does he not forfeit the claim to be a socialist theorist? Notwithstanding this drawback there is a discussion by him on violence and non-violence. But it is
not related to socialism. It appears, he is discussing in a
general way, the philosophy of non-violence. And a reader
of this discussion gets nowhere near knowing whether Nehru
is advocating a method for the transformation.

What I am suggesting here, is, that there are difficulties
in the understanding of Nehru. The primary difficult arises
from the fact that he discusses the usefulness and drawbacks
of non-violence and violence without indicating whether these
relate to the achievement of Independence or the establishment
of socialism. He does not speak unequivocally because Indian
political situation did not permit him to do so.

Assuming for the present, that his concern for
socialism is as earnest as for independence, the next
difficulty relates to the delineation of the means for the
establishment of socialism. It arises from his failure on two
counts. First, he raises the issue of the means to establish
socialism but stops short at discussing it. Second he
discusses non-violence in general and not in the context
of any particular issue.

In order to overcome these difficulties, a close under-
standing of Nehru is essential. The various preliminary
questions that face us towards the understanding are -- Did
he visualise the need for change in the acquisitive society?
Did he advocate a method for the change-over? If so, what
sort of change did he seek -- a change-over to egalitarianism
welfarism or something else?

In order to tackle these questions, we have to adopt an
historical perspective, with special reference to the Indian
political situation. A close study of the forces at work in
the Indian national movement, is absolutely necessary.

The reference made to the Indian political situation might at first suggest that Nehru has confined his attention to India; that he is primarily concerned with the problem only locally and within a narrow framework; that he does not take up the problem of "Means" (for the establishment of socialism) in a general theoretical way.

Such an inference on close examination would seem to be a hasty one. A deeper look would show that Nehru's concern is not merely with India but with the whole world. His anxiety is the removal of poverty in the whole colonial world. "India's struggle today", he says, "is part of the great struggle, which is going on all over the world for the emancipation of the oppressed". Indeed, he realizes, it is a struggle against imperialism. "I am convinced", he says, "that there is intimate connection between world events and our national problem is but a part of the world problem of capitalist-imperialism".

Continuing he asserts, that, it is a struggle of the "exploited classes", against "their exploiters". It should be noted that 'imperialism' to him "is but an aspect of capitalism", and is essentially exploitative in nature.

To Nehru, then, the foremost enemy of socialism in a colonial country like India is "Imperialism". And what is

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1 Jawaharlal Nehru, India and the world (London, 1936), p. 57.
2 Ibid., pp. 81-82.
3 Loc cit.
4 Jawaharlal Nehru, Eighteen Months in India (Allahabad, 1938), p. 66.
true of India, is, in its fundamentals true of other colonial countries. Imperialism seeks to push back the forces of freedom and socialism. And this it seeks to achieve with force. It is authoritarian and exploitative in character. In order to highlight these features, he likens it, in this regard to Fascism, though he realizes that there are important differences between the two. "Fascism and imperialism", he says, "are blood brothers, marching hand in hand". Perhaps, to stress its opposition to "freedom", he brackets it with Fascism, which is more commonly known to be the enemy of freedom. "All over the world", he says, "they [Imperialism and Fascism], oppose the forces of progress..., they sympathise with and aid each other as against the social urge to freedom and the national struggle for political freedom".

Nehru, then is, opposed to imperialism as a system, which is economically exploitative and socially and politically, the destroyer of freedom. But we have chosen the Indian political situation (in the pre-independence days), and Nehru's reactions to the freedom struggle movement for two reasons. First because these typically represent him, as a protagonist of socialism in a generalized way. "I desire", as he says, "to put an end to imperialism all over the world, and I look forward to the establishment of socialism not only in India but elsewhere also". Second because we can collect, the much

1 Ibid., p. 123.
2 Ibid., pp. 135-6.
3 Ibid., p. 159.
needed relevant material, regarding the method of change-over, though the material lies scattered and unorganised.

II

Ouster of British Imperialism from India was the problem-free aim of Nehru. What however bothered him was, — as to what would follow it; would the "free" India, be a socialist India, free from privileges or would it be an India to be ruled by the privileged. Over this problematic 'aim', Nehru found himself opposed by the vested interests, who held in view the limited objective of securing "independence", from foreign rule. By contrast, Nehru sought, as an ideal, not only an independent India but also a socialist India. The privileged could hardly put up with this, and they were adamant about their stand.

Nehru had two options with him: Should he have an independent non-socialist India, with the hope of elimination of the indigenous vested interests in course of time? Or alternatively should he tolerate a continuous domination of a foreign power? Nehru preferred the former.

To drive out imperialism from a colonial country (like India), was the uncompromising and major objective with Nehru. This mighty force showed no inclination to abdicate, he thought, unless a strong opposition compelled it to do so. The compelling force was that of 'Nationalism'. To him there is a conflict and struggle between an imperialism that dominates and a nationalism (appearing as struggle for freedom) that seeks
deliverance. "The struggle for Indian freedom", he says, "is essentially a part of the world struggle against imperialism for the emancipation of the exploited everywhere and for the establishment of a new social order". More explicitly he says that "The Indian struggle for independence", is, "a part of this world struggle against imperialism and Fascism".

Imperialism had a strong hold over India and was a mighty force. In order to triumph over it, a united front of men of diverse interests and diverse ideas was essential. Unless, they joined their heads together, realized Nehru, -- it would be difficult to put up effective resistance and oust imperialism. He understood that the vested interests in India had a common cause with the foreign British interests. They (Indian vested interests) would ordinarily side with them, in the maintenance of the imperialistic hold. Despite this possible alignment, he thought that by invoking the national sentiment, such Indians could be won over to their side.

Should however, the socialist objective be kept in the forefront and underlined, the indigenous vested interests would get flared up. For, they would feel, thought Nehru, that "socialism" would usher in, at their cost. They would lose their privileges. As such, they would not endorse any plan of egalitarianism, accompanying the exit of imperialism. Elimination of imperialism together with the establishment of socialism, could mean a severe hit to their entrenched position.

Stipulation of socialism, as a well-defined clear-cut aim, Nehru thought would alienate them. He therefore desisted from contemplating the establishment of socialism along with the exit of imperialism. Instead, he confined himself to the political objective -- the attainment of "Independence". As he says,

> It is rightly said, the political issue dominates the scene, and without independence, all talk of socialism or any other radical change in our economic system is moon-shine. Even a discussion about socialism, introduces an element of confusion and divides our ranks. We must concentrate on political independence and that alone. This argument is deserving of consideration, for we may not do anything which weakens us by breaking our joint front against imperialism. 1

It would be premature for us to infer from this that independence, not socialism -- was the main objective of Nehru. The quotation shows instead, how correct was the understanding of Nehru, viz an obstinate insistence on socialism, would weaken the nationalist forces against the cause of 'Independence'. This, he thought would perpetuate the foreign rule. But determined as he was, to terminate it, he insisted on unity among the various nationalist forces. For this, he had to pay a price in the form of a tactical suspension of socialism as an aim. In other words, fearing opposition and apprehending disruption in the resistance movement, Nehru bypassed the composite socialism-independence objective and endorsed instead 'Independence' only.

1 Ibid., p. 29. Emphasis added.

2 Though there were other reasons too, for refraining from holding "Socialism", as the objective; but the opposition of the vested interests was an important one. It would be beyond the scope of this work to discuss other reasons.
Despite this fear, his commitment to socialism remains undiminished. "In the course of my speeches", he says, "I laid stress on poverty and unemployment, and said that a true solution could only come through socialism". Apart from his convictions for socialism, it appears Nehru thought a degree of socialist ideas was still essential for strengthening the struggle for freedom. In this attempt no doubt, he sees a danger of displeasing the vested interests. As a measure of expediency, however, he added that, "there could be no socialism, without independence".

Nehru faced a difficult task. He could not give up his convictions for socialism, nor could he afford to alienate his comrades in the freedom movement. These were the comrades who were prominent Congressmen and yet stubbornly opposed to egalitarianism. So much so that they in a way indicated their resentment to Nehru's socialist views by offering "their resignations from the working Committee" of the Congress. That happened at the meeting of the Committee held in 1936.

Nehru's concern for socialism, and the stern opposition of his colleagues on this count are of great importance. In view of this importance, it is relevant to quote V.K. Krishna Menon, the compiler of the Unity of India. He lays down the attitude of Nehru's colleagues more expressly:

2 Ibid., pp. 99-100.
3 Ibid., p. 100, footnote by V.K. Krishna Menon.
The agrarian programme broadened the basis of the appeal of the Congress and evoked the enthusiasm of peasants and workers. Nehru's socialist speeches had the same effect. The mass awakening thus created, heartened the author but had apparently a different effect on some of his colleagues, who did not share his socialist faith or his views on economic organization or the role of the masses in the national movement. 1

With liquidation of imperialism, as the indispensable aim, Nehru could not afford to ignore the reaction of his colleagues. Hence he overtly spoke of "Independence", as the goal to be achieved. He rightly thought that the term "Independence" appeared psychologically inoffensive, innocent to the rich. Not only that. It was considered patriotic and a matter of pride to work (in any form) for the attainment of independence from the foreign rule. This crucial point must be grasped in the attempt to understand him.

By adopting an anti-imperialistic stance Nehru sought to win over the indigenous privileged sections, with a view to forging a united nationalist front. This inference leads us to the question as to what it means in terms of masses. Does it mean that in a united nationalist front masses do not count? Alternatively, if they do, would not the act of wooing the vested interests alienate the masses?

The privileged, notwithstanding their professions to be well-wishers of the poor were not prepared to go beyond a point in bettering their lot. But the interest of the poor could be rightly served, as Nehru thinks by bringing about a fundamental change in the property relations. That means the

1 Loc cit.
basic change in their condition demanded an attack on special privileges. And one class could be satisfied by earning the displeasure of the other.

A distinction at this stage would be in order and helpful. For a proper understanding of Nehru, the distinction has to be marked between the strategy for the ouster of foreign rule and the intellectual concept of "socialism". He thought, strategy demanded that only political independence should be the objective. At the same time, he holds distinct ideas on "socialism". These ideas seek betterment of the masses. He realizes independence (sheer political freedom), is not the ultimate objective. It is the beginning. The end is socialism. As he says:

Further the socialist outlook stresses that we must stand for the masses and that our struggle should be of the masses. Freedom, should mean the end of the exploitation of the masses. 2

Nehru strives to win over the privileged without alienating the masses. He combines expediency with substance. Without compromising with fundamentals, namely, the establishment of socialism, he seeks to keep the privileged to his side as supporters of the anti-imperialist front. He not only speaks of but also insists on the immediate objective of 'political independence', as a measure of expediency. But so far as the issue of substance namely the issue of the removal of poverty, misery and exploitation is concerned, he thinks that the remedy lies in socialism -- the ownership

1 See supra chapter on 'Democracy and Socialism'.

2 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., p. 36.
of the means of production by the society. He speaks with caution both of Independence and socialism thus:

It is clear that, we must concentrate on the political issue -- the independence of India. That is of fundamental and primary importance, for us and any activity or ideology which blurs that issue is undesirable and not to be encouraged. On that, I take it, there is agreement amongst Congress-men of all ranks. Why then this talk of socialism?

As I understand it, it is not because any socialist imagines that socialism can have any place in India before political freedom has been established. It can only follow independence if India is ripe for it and the great majority of the people desire it. But the socialist outlook helps in the political struggle. It clears the issues before us and makes us realise what the real political content (apart from the social content) of freedom must be. Independence itself has been variously interpreted, but for a socialist, it has only one meaning and that meaning excludes all association with imperialism. Therefore, stress is laid on the anti-imperialist character of our political strength and this gives us a yard measure to judge our various activities.

Readers on a superficial reading may infer that Nehru was no genuine socialist; his interest was in political independence. Socialism was essentially a means, because it "helps in the political struggle". That is not really so. If Nehru were not genuinely concerned with socialism, he could have passed it over, without making any reference to it. But he specifically speaks of it, and at the same time insists on political freedom. Here some readers are likely to feel that Nehru "talks of socialism and in fact strengthens capitalism". This will be a hasty inference. Instead, it has been found that Nehru is against privileges and exploitation. He is an

1 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., pp. 35-36.
unrelenting opponent of capitalism, and is firmly committed to socialism (See chapter 'Democracy and Socialism, especially pp.146- and 173-) There sufficient evidence has been adduced to show that Nehru stands for egalitarianism.)

By speaking of socialism and independence in the same breath, he achieves two things. He dispells the doubts of the privileged elements, and at the same time shows his sense of commitment to socialism. Weighing in the scale of values and importance, he finds that the political problem plays a second fiddle to the real issue of removal of poverty, or egalitarianism.

But in the situation in which he was placed (flanked by vested interests) he was constrained to bring the political problem to the top. At the same time, on occasions he remained tactically vague about socialism. He saw to it that he did not antagonise his colleagues in the national movement by being intractable and emphatic about socialism. There were, however occasions, when he chose fit to ventilate his pent up ideas. He says that Freedom (the answer to the political problem), if it is taken to mean sheer freedom from foreign rule, as it was understood by the vested interests, then it is of little consequence to him. The real issue before him was the removal of poverty. In the face of it, he says, "The political problem (the question of sheer national freedom) which seems to dominate the situation is perhaps the least important of all". It should be marked, rather underlined that, to Nehru, sheer political freedom is "the least

important of all". Yet in view of the refractory attitude of his colleagues, he continues to add, that though least important, "it is the primary problem with us; and it must be disposed of satisfactorily before the real questions are tackled.... "The real question is the removal of inequality", the elimination of the "unchanging basic social order" -- the acquisitive system.

Nehru's concern for the "real questions" should be distinctly marked. With some sort of egalitarian objective in his mind, he ironically hits the vested interests, especially his colleagues, saying that "many of us still believe, it ["the acquisitive, unchanging basic social order"] is the ONLY possible and rightful basis of society".

Thus, what emerges, from the discussion is that Nehru's concern for socialism is paramount; although the compulsion of the situation created by the vested interests and his refractory comrades in the freedom struggle, impelled him to shift a vocal emphasis to Independence. He was essentially concerned with the uplift of the masses, removal of economic inequality, eradication of abject poverty. After careful thinking he came to conclude that "through socialism alone, can we solve our economic problems". But he thought that socialism could and should be achieved after political freedom had been attained. It is the first stage, the first necessary step which might lead

1 Loc cit. Emphasis added.
2 Loc cit. Emphasis added.
3 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., p. 66.
to the removal of poverty and the establishment of "socialism". "For us", Nehru says, "the dominant issue is that of independence to enable us to get rid of poverty and the exploitation of the people".

It is essential to underline in this context that in order to liquidate imperialism, Nehru stipulated, that 'Independence' was an imperative pre-condition preparatory to socialism.

III

We discussed in the preceding section that for a comprehensive understanding, we have to study Nehru in the historical perspective. Placed in the situation, as he was, he chose to lay emphasis on the necessity of securing 'Independence' keeping in tact his intellectual convictions for socialism. In other words, he realized the need for transformation in the privileged acquisitive society. "The necessity for change", he says, "must be recognised and clearly stated". Thus asserting, he holds that, "I look forward to the establishment of a socialist state not only in India but elsewhere also." It is one thing however to realize the need for change and it is quite another to lay down a method for change-over. The pertinent question which arises in this context is whether Nehru enunciates a method.

1 Ibid., p. 147.
3 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., p. 159.
As far as I know, Nehru does not expressly postulate a method for change. This failure may be because of the political situation. If not so, we can say that he is a poor theorist who does not fully realize the importance of pursuing the point to its logical conclusion. Alternatively, it can be argued, that Nehru might be having a method to advocate, but the style in which he presents it, is ambiguous. Whatever the reason, fact remains that he fails to lay down expressly and systematically the "Means" for the change-over.

With a close study and from statements which are more indicative, we can say that Nehru does suggest a method, but in his own way. In order to understand him, we must understand his style, which is ambiguous. The ambiguity arises out of a two-old omission. He either raises the issue, as to 'How' socialism could be set up, but it is not followed by a discussion. Or, there is a discussion revolving round non-violence and at places even a discussion on non-violence vis-a-vis violence. But he omits to place the issue (How socialism is to be brought about), before the argument.

He raises the question, "How a socialist order is to be brought about"; but does not care to pursue the argument further. This he does, not once, but several times. On

1 "Again, I would repeat that I am not at present considering the question of how to effect the change; of how to get rid of the obstacles in the way, by compulsion or conversion, violence or non-violence, I shall deal with this aspect later". (Autobiography, p. 528; emphasis added). It should be noted that despite this promise to deal with the method, explicitly and expressly, he does not handle it as such.
3 e.g. Ibid., p. 528.
raising the issue, he gives the impression that he is tending
to lay down the method of change-over. He starts with express-
ing the desirability of the type of society or socialism he
seeks to bring about. It is a society in which the profit
and the acquisitive motive is reduced to the minimum. But
after saying so, he does not examine in depth as to what
course would be appropriate and feasible for the necessary
transformation. There is however a marginal reference to
"democratic means". But as soon as he stipulates the possi-
bility, he dismisses it. There is hardly any arguing out.
This is indicative of his concern for enunciating the method
of change-over; but the anticipated method proper does not
follow. Nor does he argue out the possible alternative
courses.

Thus there is no discussion chasing the issue, 'as to
how socialism could be set up.

At other places, we observe a different kind of flaw.
There, he discusses non-violence, without linking it with the
issue, as to how socialism could be set up. In the absence of
the link, we cannot say that he discusses the utility of non-
violence, as a method of transformation of a social order
based on privilege into an egalitarian one. Rather readers
are likely, to suspect that he wants to discuss it; either in
order to achieve Independence, or as a philosophy of life
(Perhaps as an exercise in academics).

Keeping the whole argument in view, adopting a terse
conventional mode of assessment, we might say that Nehru
furnishes no method of change-over. His concern for the
change on the one hand, and the discussion of both non-violence and violence on the other hand to be read separately as they were kept separate by Nehru; do not constitute a sufficient basis for inferring that Nehru formulates a method for transformation.

However going a little beyond the traditional limitation of methodology and reading the two facts together (Nehru's concern for the transformation; and the discussion on non-violence and violence) we can say that Nehru suggests a method for change-over. At places, he indicates even the usefulness of the non-violent method, without saying if it relates to socialism. "We had accepted that method" the non-violent method of resistance, he says, "because of a belief in its effectiveness".

Though Nehru's writings are suggestive of the fact that he has a method of change-over; yet we cannot infer positively that he envisaged one. In order to know with certainty if he postulates a method, we must know his views on the role of non-violence. Still more important to read is his comments on Gandhi's thought.

These comments consist of two parts. On the one hand, he makes an analytical assessment of Gandhi's postulates and approach. On the other hand he pays a tribute, pointing out the unique contribution of Gandhi, made to socialist thought.

Nehru critically examines Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence, in forms like satyagrah, self-suffering, non-

1 Ibid., p. 82.
cooperation mass movement. While thus examining non-violence, he does not specify, whether according to Gandhi, it aimed at, securing independence (from the British) or the establishment of a socialist society. Thus, he says, "We had accepted that method, the non-violent method of resistance." Congress had made that method its own, because of a belief in its effectiveness. Gandhiji placed it before the country not only as the right method but as the most effective one for our purpose."

We thus see that, while critically examining it, Nehru appreciates the efficacy of non-violent method but he does not make it clear, whether this usefulness relates to the attainment of independence or the setting up of a socialist society.

This lapse is perhaps partly atoned for, in a statement, where he admires Gandhi for harnessing the non-violent method for socio-economic change. He says:

sixteen years ago, Gandhiji impressed India with his doctrine of non-violence. Since then, it has dominated the Indian horizon. It has played a major part in our political and social life, and it has also attracted a great deal of attention in the wider world. The doctrine is of course almost as old as human thought but perhaps Gandhiji was the first to apply it on mass scale to political and social movements. Formerly it was an individual affair and was thus essentially religious. It was the restraint of the individual and his attempt to achieve complete disinterestedness and thus to raise himself above the level of worldly conflict and attain a kind of personal freedom and salvation. There was no idea behind it of dealing with the larger social problems and of changing social conditions except very indirectly and remotely. There was almost an acceptance of the existing social fabric, with all its inequality and injustice. Gandhiji tried to make this individual

1 Ibid., p. 82.
ideal into a social group ideal. He was out to change political conditions, as well as social and deliberately, with this end in view, he applied the non-violent method on this wider and wholly different plane. 1

Here Nehru approvingly affirms that Gandhi was the first to apply the doctrine of non-violence on a mass scale to political and social movements. It shows Nehru's concern with the non-violent mass movement as an agency of change-over. This concern becomes clearer still, when with a sense of approval, he says that, Gandhi transformed the character of the doctrine. Previously, it was an individual affair, and remained content with "the acceptance of the existing social fabric, with all its inequality and injustice". Gandhi brought a fundamental change in its character by seeking to change political and social conditions with its help.

Significantly, we find that the tribute-comment and the analytical assessment though lying separated, are not really separable. There is an integral link between the two. The two put together constitute one single whole; a sort of proposition signifying this: "The non-violent method of resistance", "was effective for our purpose", because, "Gandhiji" sought to "change political conditions as well as social". And it was this doctrine of non-violence of Gandhi that Nehru accepted and adopted, albeit with modifications.

It must here be underscored that it was this; Gandhi's method of "non-violent, non-cooperation movement", which offered to Nehru the chief instrument for the goal which he

1 Ibid., p. 537. Emphasis added.
wanted to achieve — "the goal of national freedom and the ending of exploitation of the underdog". He further admires it as "an active, dynamic and forceful method of enforcing the mass will", which desires egalitarianism.

Nehru, then, does have a method of change-over, though as we noted earlier, he does not expressly postulate it. It is further of interest to note that according to him, the 'Means' for the achievement of socialism are basically, not different from those for 'Independence'. This is because the fundamental issue in both the cases is similar. In one case (Independence), the struggle is against the foreign vested interests. In the other case (establishment of socialism), the struggle is against both the foreign and the indigenous vested interests. As he says:

It is quite possible that a solution of the social problem cannot be brought about without violence at some stage, for it seems certain that the privileged classes will not hesitate to use violence to maintain their favoured position. But in theory if it is possible to bring about a great political change by a non-violent technique, why should it not be equally possible to effect a radical social change by this method? If we can get political freedom and the elimination of British imperialism from India non-violently why should we not also solve the problem of the feudal princes and landlords and other social problems in the same way and establish a socialist state? Whether that is possible or not non-violently is not so much the question. The point is that either both of these objectives are possible of attainment non-violently or neither. Surely, it cannot be said that a non-violent method can only be used against a foreign ruler. Prima facie, it

1 Ibid., p. 73.
2 Nehru, Recent Essays, op. cit., p. 35.
should be far easier to use it within a country against indigenous selfish interests and obstructionists, for the psychological effect on them will be greater than elsewhere? 1

We can usefully recall the proposition that while discussing the method of non-violence or violence, Nehru does not specify if it relates to socialism or independence. He speaks only of "Methods of peace", or "those of violence", without clearly indicating if these relate to the establishment of socialism. Now, with the help of this quotation, one thing is certain. If these methods are advocated by Nehru for the achievement of independence, then these are, as well applicable to the establishment of "socialism".

A little elucidation or perhaps a diversion will be in order. Some readers may perhaps believe that the foregoing statement of Nehru (supra p. 253-4) shows that he sought to advocate a "method" for change-over to "socialism". And hence the entire discussion preceding this statement is unnecessary. This is not really so. The point made there (in the statement) is nà doubt important. But what is more important for us to know is, what method, is stipulated by Nehru. Unfortunately neither there, nor elsewhere does he clearly postulate a specific method of change-over. His discussion of violence and non-violence is primarily and by and large discrete. Of course, at places, he speaks of the method of non-violence, which is either left alone (without being associated with socialism);

2 Supra p. 249.
or it is associated with Indian independence. To speak of the usefulness of non-violence, or to speak of its usefulness for achieving independence -- does not mean its usefulness for the establishment of socialism. It is here that the relevance of the discussion, preceding the STATEMENT (supra p. 253-4) can be best appreciated. To say that the statement should ipso facto be considered as applicable to such subsequent hanging citations of Nehru as appear in our later treatment on the method -- is to condone him for his inability to say, what a thinker should say. What is needed is an explicit enunciation of an integral relationship between a specific method (violent or non-violent) and a specific objective (Independence or Socialism). But surprisingly this is absent in Nehru's writings. However, this statement which is a rare one; comes to our help. This, together with our argument which precedes it (pp. 233-52), as well as the argument which follows it -- all together, constitute perhaps a satisfactory substitute for what should have been explicitly postulated by Nehru.

Nehru's argument which follows the crucially important statement, centres round the fact that he attributes non-violence (or sometimes non-violent method) to the name of Gandhi or Congress, and not to himself. This dissociation of his name makes us doubt whether he had anything new to say on non-violence. While, we take up the investigation of this issue in the next section (especially pp. 266-72 and 326-9), we see that the discussion preceding the "statement", has an integral place in this work.
Thus far, we find that Nehru did have a method of change-over and the 'Means' for socialism are basically not different from those of independence. We shall stand on firmer ground if we can know that, he relates the method exclusively to egalitarianism. In this regard, he raises a few pertinent questions: Has the present social or economic system a right to exist if it is unable to improve greatly the condition of the masses? Does any other system give promise of this widespread betterment? How far will a mere political change bring radical improvement? If vested interests come in the way of an eminently desirable change, is it wise or moral to attempt to preserve them at the cost of mass misery and poverty?

These questions show an exclusive concern for a method to "bring radical improvement". Further these questions, I am inclined to think have an integral relationship with the discussion on 'violence' and 'non-violence'. No doubt this discussion lies separated from these questions. But it is not difficult to see an inseparable link between the two.

Thus we find that though Nehru's style suffers from a lack of explicit enunciation of the method of transformation to "egalitarianism", he certainly had one to advocate. What precisely it is, forms the subject matter of a later section.

PART II

Concept of Non-violence

We have argued above that Nehru does not expressly postulate the method of change-over to socialism. Yet his writings relevant to the issue are meaningfully suggestive. Even without an explicit enunciation, we find him as the propounder of the method for the establishment of socialism.

We shall now take up the issue, as to which of the two approaches, violent or non-violent, Nehru considers valid in the last analysis. A journalist such as Frank Moraes finds Nehru to be an advocate of non-violent peaceful transition to socialism. "From the beginning", he says, Nehru "has held that the socialist pattern of society, he envisages, should be achieved, not by coercion but by consent, by a process of free discussion."

Is this then really the case? Does he finally reject the violent method in favour of the non-violent peaceful method -- a method of consent rather than that of coercion or pressure? There is some strength in the view. Nehru after all, was temperamentally of a democratic frame of mind, and as such could be expected to enunciate a peaceful course. And there are a number of passages in his writings which indicate that the observation of writers like these is relevant. "Peaceful", he says, "I should like them to be, for the methods of peace are more desirable and more enduring than those of violence".

As against this, we find that he appreciates the role of violence. "Violence", he says, "has played a great part in the world's history. It is today playing an equally important part and probably, it will continue to do so for a considerable time. Most of the changes in the past have been caused by violence and coercion." Thus, he recognizes the important part played by violence in social transformation.

Nehru appears to adopt a paradoxical attitude, subscribing both to violence and non-violence. This owes to the incongruent sources from which he drew inspiration. On the one hand, Gandhi was an important influence on his life. He acknowledges it thus: "Gandhi, was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths, like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes; like a whirlwind that upset many things." Gandhi drew his attention to the importance of non-violent methods. The other influence working in the same direction came from Fabians.

While Gandhi and Fabians moulded his thought, in the direction of non-violence, Marx, as discussed earlier impressed him for usefulness of violence, as the hand-maid of human history. These two incompatible approaches to which his mind was subjected are likely to produce paradoxical effects.

3 See Chapter on 'Influences'.
Though Nehru, then appears paradoxical, we will investigate, if he is really so; we will examine if he is consistent in his attitude towards non-violence, and what place he assigns to violence.

Non-violence, though enunciated and advocated by many, has been set forth by Gandhi in a consistent manner. He may thus be taken as a typical representative of non-violent and peaceful methods of change. A comparison with him -- as to where Nehru agrees with him and wherein he differs from him -- will bring in clear focus Nehru's views on non-violence.

For making the comparison, we can begin with Nehru's comments on Gandhi. He critically reviews satyagraha and Trusteeship. He examines the various techniques of satyagraha which rely on "self-suffering", as an instrument of influencing the adversary towards abdicating privileges. He realizes its importance. The sight of self-suffering has a deep effect both on society by and large and the adversary. It arouses

1 Nehru, thus quotes Gandhi, "Those who have to bring about radical changes in human conditions and surroundings, he /Gandhi/ has written, "cannot do it except by raising a ferment in society. There are only two methods of doing this, violent and non-violent. Violent pressure is felt on the physical being and it degrades him, who uses it, as it depresses the victim, but non-violent pressure exerted through self-suffering, as by fasting, works in an entirely different way. It touches not the physical body but it touches and strengthens the moral fibre of those against whom it is directed." Autobiography, op. cit., p. 537. Emphasis added.

It is in order, to observe and highlight that Nehru comments on Gandhi who seeks "to bring about radical changes in human conditions and surroundings". That shows Nehru's chief concern with the method of bringing about a just society.
feelings of the people to the point of creating a ferment in society. As for its effect on the opponent, Nehru realizes that "the method" of "self-suffering has powerful psychic reactions on the adversary".

What are these "psychic reactions" to which Nehru makes reference? Does he mean that the adversary is moved in the direction of abdicating privileges or that he is moved to pity, to the point of granting the unprivileged, better conditions of service, or to the extent of making them the sharers of the privileges they possess by releasing some privileges from their possession or hold? or alternatively that "the powerful psychic reactions" are only psychic without having a material content; That is, that the privileged on the spur of moment as the immediate psychic reaction are moved to pity, which is the end-product of their reaction, without going further to improve the condition of the underdog.

It appears, Nehru does not discuss these implications. It may however be safely inferred that according to him, the exploitative adversary being influenced by self-suffering does become soft towards the unprivileged. But to what extent, it is not clear.

Nehru no doubt acknowledges that the "method of self-suffering", "has considerable effect on the opponent", and that "Gandhiji has done a tremendous service in forcing modern thought to consider" it. He goes to the extent of saying that

1 Nehru, Autobiography, op. cit., p. 545.
2 Ibid., pp. 544-5.
3 Ibid., p. 547.
It has a "great future". At the same time, however, he realizes its limitations for converting a group or a class, who it is significant to note really matter for a basic socio-economic change. Whereas Gandhi is hopeful that a group may change its outlook, Nehru is not. He thinks that, it is "impossible to convince a dominant group that its privileges are unjust and that it should give them up".

To Nehru, the mentality of an individual is different from the mentality of a group. That is, the attitude of an individual, as a member of a group is basically different from his attitude as a separate independent individual. Gandhi fails to mark the distinction and he is hopeful that the bulk of a dominant group or class -- the privileged one -- is amenable to the moral force of self-suffering. Nehru, not only marks the distinction but highlights it also. We must appreciate here that to single out the distinction is to constitute a basis for raising crucial questions relevant to the method of change-over. The issues are: Is the suggested method a rational one? Is it capable of bearing scrutiny? Is it suggested after taking into account the objective circumstances (the limiting factors) which are too significant to be passed over? What is the effectiveness of the non-violent method? What is its impact on the holders of privileges? What is the impact on the less privileged or the unprivileged?

1 Loc cit.
Though Nehru does not raise these issues, yet the discussion that goes on, after pointing out the distinction, revolves round these issues. We must spot out the lapse and yet realize that Nehru does not ignore what is of substantive significance: He does envisage the essential analytical discussion.

Apart from this lapse, there is another flaw. His writings relevant to the 'Method', show that he does not discuss consistently and in sequence the method of non-violence. The whole treatment appears jumbled. An effort at understanding him leads us to infer that the key to the understanding of Nehru lies through "class struggles". He acknowledges the benefits of the non-violent 'satyagraha'. But as a skeptic, begins to doubt if "these gains are due to non-violence or to the fact of conflict itself". Recognizing the place of conflict he explicitly affirms:

Class struggles are inherent in the present system and the attempt to change it and bring it in line with modern requirements meets with the fierce opposition of the ruling or owning classes. That is the logic of the conflicts of to-day, and it has nothing to do with the good-will or ill-will of individuals, who might in their individual capacities succeed in rising above their class allegiance. But the class as a whole will hold together and oppose change. 2

A socio-economic system based on privileges is committed to maintain status quo. Interest of the upper classes to perpetuate inequality conflicts with the interest of the lower classes to reduce inequality. This conflict is not

1 Nehru, Autobiography, op. cit., p. 538.
2 Nehru, The Unity of India, op. cit., p. 118.
artificially created by a few agitators, but is inherent in society; asserts Nehru:

Instead of these class struggles being due to misunderstanding or the villainy of agitators, as some people say, they are inherent in society and they actually increase with a better understanding of the conflict of interests. 1

Once, it is understood that, according to Nehru, conflict is inherent in society, the limitation of the non-violent method becomes obvious. Conflict of interests keeps the privileged apart from the unprivileged. And whenever an attempt at equalisation is made, they as a class (or group) oppose the change. They tolerate a change, so long as it does not affect them vitally. As soon as it begins to effect them adversely, they cast aside all pretense of harmony and fraternity. They get ready to fight it out by force. Instead of realizing the fact of "exploitation", they think that what they possess is the "just reward" of their merit. It is their desert. They have a superior differential capacity. And hence they are and must be the legitimate owners of what they hold. Whenever, their special position or privilege is challenged, they as a group forcefully resist it. As he says:

Groups that occupy dominant or privileged position within a nation convince themselves by an amazing self-deception and hypocrisy that their special privileges are a just reward of merit. Anyone who challenges this position seems to them a knave and a scoundrel and an up-setter of settled conditions. It is impossible to convince a dominant group that its privileges are unjust and that it should give them up peacefully. Individuals may sometimes be convinced though rarely but groups never. And so inevitably come clashes and conflicts and revolution and infinite suffering and misery. 2

1 Nehru, Glimpses, op. cit., p. 867.
Nehru, thus thinks that a dominant group stubbornly resists any change in property relations. It does not listen to persuasion for giving up privileges. And he stresses the place of 'CONFLICT' in social relations. This serves him as a yardstick in evaluating the effect of self-suffering on the privileged. With clash of interests at the centre of the situation, he is led to the inference that they would not agree to surrender their privileges. Now this viewpoint of Nehru, in order to establish its validity must contend with the opposite viewpoint, which holds that the privileged are pliable to part with their wealth for the good of the poorer, weaker sections. This notion is based on the assumption that harmony, not conflict determines the mutual relations between the classes in society.

The basic issue before us, then, is — Is it conflict or harmony which is basic to the understanding of socio-economic phenomenon? This is an important question, for much of the discussion in Political Science, on the method of change-over centres round this issue.

Now the assumption of Gandhi's concept of trusteeship is obviously harmony. As against this, to Nehru, both the assumption and the concept are out of tune with the behaviour of those who seriously matter (the privileged); Trusteeship, supposed to reduce inequality, adds to it. Aimed at divesting the vested interests, it actually makes them more firmly entrenched. As he says:

Again, I think of the paradox, that is Gandhiji. With all his keen intellect and passion for bettering the down-trodden and oppressed, why does he support a system and a system which is obviously
decaying, which creates this misery and waste? He seeks a way out, it is true, but, is not that way to the past barred and bolted? And meanwhile he blesses all the relics of the old order which stand as obstacles in the way of advance -- the feudal states, the big zamindars and taluqadars, the present capitalist system. Is it reasonable to believe in the theory of trusteeship -- to give unchecked power and wealth to an individual and to expect him to use it entirely for the public good? Are the best of us so perfect as to be trusted in this way? Even Plato's philosopher-kings could hardly have borne this burden worthily. And is it good for the others to have even these benevolent supermen over them? But there are no supermen or philosopher-kings; there are only frail human beings who cannot help thinking that their own personal good or the advancement of their own ideas is identical with the public good. 1

Trusteeship, then to Nehru, is not an agency which can be employed for socialist transformation. Indeed, the trustees are the exploiters. They acquired the privileges through expropriation and are expected to take care of the very people who owe their poverty to the "trustees". Nehru suggests that the so-called benevolent "trustees" are the men, who, through fraud and treachery acquire privileges. The present "zamindars", he sarcastically remarks "are now the trustees for the unhappy people whom they have themselves dispossessed of their lands and are to be expected to devote their income primarily for the welfare of their tenantry." 2

Nehru's argument appears to be weighty. He points out that trusteeship (based on harmony), instead of leading to the goal of egalitarianism takes us in the opposite direction. Trusteeship as he says, really means that "the status quo

1 Nehru, Autobiography, op. cit., p. 528.
2 Ibid., p. 536.
should be maintained". As such he rejects it. He rejects it because it is unscientific and impracticable. Harmony between the working class and the privileged class, which is the basis of trusteeship, he considers romantic idealism. Gandhi's notion that, "socialism and Communism should be based on non-violence and on the harmonious cooperation of labour and capital, landlord and tenant" — on examination, is rejected by Nehru. "The Indian capitalist and landlord", he says, "have ignored far more the interests of their workers and tenants than their western prototypes. There has been practically no attempt on the part of the Indian landlord to interest himself in any social service for the tenants' welfare". Rather the Indian landlords, "are the most rapacious parasites to be found in any contemporary social system".

'Harmony of interest', then, is an unrealistic notion, according to Nehru. Instead "conflict" is central to the society maintaining both the rich and the poor. And its recognition, is essential to the understanding of the social problem. "A vital conflict of interests", he says, "arises between the Haves and Have-Nots". Any solution which ignores the central fact of the conflict, is hardly worth considering.

Self-suffering, then, as a variant of non-violence, with harmony of interest as the underlying assumption, according to

1 Loc cit.
2 Ibid., p. 535.
3 Loc cit.
5 Nehru, Recent Essays, op. cit., p. 5.
Nehru, can never lead to an egalitarian society. Trusteeship which is the logical outcome of harmony of interest would maintain the rich in their present position. On the conceptual level, it "is the pure religious attitude to life and its problems", and is designated as "pure non-violence".

Nehru, it should be observed, though opposed to this variant of non-violence is not rejecting non-violence as such. He is opposed to that variant of it which is emotional in approach and religious in content. He gives it a rational content. He expressly says that non-violence to be meaningful must have an intellectual element in it. To treat it as a "creed or religion" (as is the tendency with some including Gandhiji himself) is against its grain. It should be a dynamic, rational concept related to the problems of life. To speak of it in idealistic, a priori terms would mean nothing. To identify it, with "truth", and "all goodness", as was done by Gandhi, is, Nehru thinks dogmatic. It should instead be considered "philosophically and scientifically".

1 Nehru, Autobiography, op. cit., p. 536.

2 As Nehru affirms, "Unfortunately Gandhiji does not help us much in solving the problem. He has written and spoken on innumerable occasions on the subject of non-violence, but so far as I know, he has never considered in public all its implications philosophically and scientifically. He lays stress on the means being more important than the end of conversion better than coercion and there is a tendency to identify non-violence with truth and all goodness. Indeed, he often uses the terms as if they were synonymous... Those of us who are fortunate enough to have this faith are however troubled with a host of doubts. These doubts, do not relate, so much to immediate necessities but to the mind's desire for some consistent philosophy of action, which is both moral from the individual viewpoint and is at the same time socially effective. Autobiography, op. cit., pp. 538-9.
Nehru who is essentially a practical thinker examines the concept of non-violence from a consideration of its workability. He examines its efficacy from the practical standpoint. The method should either be workable or it should be rejected. Advocacy is related to feasibility.

Non-violence in human society, then, to Nehru, is meaningful, if it is "socially effective". He is not a metaphysician indulging in subtle things removed from real life. He has no use for non-violence as an abstract concept. He does not regard it as an end in itself. It has meaning if it is useful as an instrument of change. Nehru is not interested in non-violence as a ritual or a value. His interest is to show that "non-violence" "could only be a policy and a method promising certain results and by those results, it would have to be finally judged". Non-violence for the sake of non-violence, non-violence as a philosophy of life, true for all times, for all peoples, is not acceptable to him. This distinguishes him from Gandhi who postulates that, "non-violence is the law of our species, as violence is the law of the brute".

Nehru's whole emphasis has been on the "intellectual" consideration of the problem. In approach, it should be rational, and in order that it be worthy of acceptance, it must carry us to the goal of egalitarianism. It is on these conditions that Nehru would accept non-violence as a method of change.

1 Nehru, *Autobiography*, op. cit., p. 84.
2 Ibid., p. 83. Quoted by Nehru from Gandhi's article, "The Doctrine of Sword".
change-over. "Pure non-violence", with its two aspects, 'self-suffering' and 'trusteeship', are found neither rational nor promising in their results. Hence Nehru, keeping the goal in focus suggests that non-violence, in order to gain plausibility must incorporate the element of coercion. The unprivileged masses in order to attain their objective have got to "coerce" and compel the privileged to give up special interests. As he says:

In any event, some form of coercion, seems to be inevitable, for people who hold power and privilege do not give them up till they are forced to do so. 1

The great error in judgement, Nehru thinks arises from viewing 'harmony' as the important social link between people belonging to different economic groups. Not harmony but 'conflict' is the reality. Failure to recognize this fact would not lead us anywhere close to the solution of the problem. "The present conflicts in society, national as well as class conflicts", he says, "can never be resolved except by coercion". 2

Once it is realized that conflict is the basic fact of socio-economic relations, it becomes easy to understand that nothing short of coercion will bring the privileged to senses to give up privileges.

Of the few postulates on which Nehru is categorical, at least one is the element of "coercion". He emphatically affirms that no amount of appeal to reason or good sense will

1 Ibid., p. 551.
2 Loc cit. Emphasis added.
work effectively. The "owners" of "vested interests", have to be given a jolt. They must be made to realize that they cannot as a matter of course retain privileges. They must be compelled to surrender. Unless they are clearly made to realize that the cost of holding special position is greater than the benefit obtained by retaining the privileges -- they will not respond to the psychological appeal of justice. For, "how can you argue", he affirms, "or be sweetly reasonable with cold steel and dead wood". With this line of argument, the only way of expecting result is by the exercise of coercion. As he says:

To think in terms of pure conversion of a class or nation or of the removal of conflict by rational argument and appeal to justice is to delude one-self. It is an illusion to imagine that a dominant imperialist power will give up its domination over a country or that a class will give up its superior position and privileges unless effective pressure amounting to coercion is exercised. 2

Nehru, thus is emphatic about the role of coercion. But an emphatic assertion is not necessarily a scientifically sound proof. To be unrelentingly emphatic is one thing and to be scientifically valid is quite a different thing. Gandhi and Gerald Heard are no less emphatic in their contentions. But they are repudiated by Nehru on the allegation that they are unscientific and irrational. Does then the mere fact of

1 J.S. Bright, India on the March : Statements and Selected quotations from the Writings of Jawaharlal Nehru (Lahore, 1945), p. 283.

2 Nehru, Autobiography, op. cit., p. 544. Emphasis added. In this context Nehru implicitly discards, what he calls the psychological approach (using Gerald Heard's term); which signifies the "attempt to convert others", through science, reason, decency, the spirit of the Age, enlightened self-interest. Nehru, India and the World, op. cit., p. 220.
repudiation establish that Nehru is right and scientifically more sound? While the two approaches are yet contending for superiority and mastery, it would be sheer prejudice or bias to infer that Nehru's is the tenable notion. And we have to answer the question -- Does Nehru put the necessity of "coercion", on a scientific basis?

In a number of Ideas, Nehru generally does not carry the argument to its logical conclusion. He stops short half-way through. However in the present context he does offer the justification.

Before giving the justification, Nehru evolves the argument gradually. He prepares the ground work. Non-violence, he says, must be considered in relation to the existing conditions. That according to him is the rational scientific approach (as opposed to the religious irrational approach). As he says:

If we consider non-violence and all it implies from the religious, dogmatic point of view, there is no room for argument. It reduces itself to the narrow creed of a sect which people may or may not accept. It loses vitality and application to present day problems. But if we are prepared to discuss it in relation to existing conditions, it can help us greatly in our attempts to refashion this world.

It is generally accepted that a scientific consideration of a social problem must take into account objective circumstances. And questions must be raised in concrete

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1 The psychological approach vis-a-vis the approach employing coercion.

2 Justification lies (as we will observe in what follows), in the recalcitrant attitude of the privileged minority group against whom coercion is exercised. Read especially, pp. 272-

relation to those circumstances. Answers must consequently correspond to those questions. Nehru accordingly says:

This consideration *vis à vis* to discuss non-violence in relation to the existing conditions must take into account the nature and weakness of collective man. Any activity on a mass scale and especially activity aiming at radical and revolutionary changes is affected not only by what the leaders think of it but by existing conditions and still more by what the human material they work with thinks about it. 1

The "collective man", in the absence of being defined by Nehru, can be taken to mean more than one thing. It may perhaps mean group psychology. Of course, in this context Nehru is thinking of the privileged group or class.

From the fore-cited quotation it appears, that the attitude of the privileged minority is of crucial importance. In evaluating the success of non-violence, according to Nehru, two factors count -- the potential of the launchers of the non-violent movement, and the intensity and magnitude of the opposition offered by the privileged minority (This is based on the presumption that as a result of class conflict, the privileged would oppose a move towards egalitarianism).

Problem as he conceives, is twofold. How to arouse consciousness, on the one hand and how to meet the opposition of the privileged on the other hand. To arouse consciousness is quite difficult, he realizes. But more problematic than that is the attitude and opposition of the privileged group. As he says:

An intellectual background is not enough to bring socialism. Other forces are necessary. But I do feel that without that background, we

1 Loc cit. Emphasis added.
can never have a grip of the subject or create a powerful movement... Means can no doubt be devised, although it is a difficult task to raise masses of people who have sunk so low. But the real difficulty comes from the interested groups who oppose change. 1

Stubbornly unyielding attitude of the privileged who "oppose change", it will be admitted, needs a strong contending force which can possibly come from the strength of mass consciousness. But the tragedy is that the "masses of people have sunk too low". The only force, then Nehru could think of was 'coercion' which could compel the privileged to surrender privileges. This is one ground on which Nehru justifies coercion.

In order to reinforce the justification, Nehru stresses the importance of facts. The burden of his argument is that facts, more and more facts (like Bryce) must be gathered, before any solution to the unjust acquisitive society could be offered. A solution in terms of one's likes or dislikes is a purely emotional one and would hardly be workable. It must take into account the stark socio-economic reality that the "the whole outlook of the industry [Industry is symbolic of the vested interests] is an early nineteenth century one. They make stupendous profits when they have the chance and workers continue as before, if there is slump, the owners complain, they can carry on without reducing wages".

The fact (according to Nehru) then, is the greedy attitude of the "industry", with little inclination to give concession to the workers. If we fail to take into account this fact, we

1 Ibid., pp. 589-90. Emphasis added.
2 Ibid., p. 589. Emphasis added.
will be proceeding for the solution from a wrong premises. Hence the solution would be far from being workable. And this is precisely the direction in which "pure non-violence" errs, according to Nehru. Pure non-violence remains content, with the passing of a few laws in favour of socialism, in disregard of the fact of the attitude of the vested interests. This is a wishful thinking, and cannot bring about socialism. "The vast changes", Nehru thinks, "that socialism envisages cannot be brought about by sudden passing of a few laws". What instead is needed is the effective, "basic laws", backed by effective power of the masses. It is this, which will lay the foundation for the contemplated socialist society.

Nehru says so, in view of another important fact. This is the "magnificent palaces of the jute millionaires and cotton lords with their ostentatious display of pomp and luxury, on the one hand, and "the wretched novels, where the semi-naked workers live", on the other hand.

He thus portrays, in a graphic way the luxurious way of living of the privileged, and poor condition of the workers; the tendency of the privileged to have more and more profit in disregard of its effect on the masses. This is not in his reckoning a temporary phenomenon but an enduring economic condition. The disparity stands no chance of being narrowed. It rather widens, as a result of the acquisitive attitude of

1 Ibid., p. 588.
2 Loc cit.
3 Ibid., p. 588.
the privileged. This is not merely a fact, but the fact in the situation. The acquisitive privileged would not think of improving the lot of those whom they "exploit*. And obviously, left to themselves, they won't let their privileges be extinguished.

In the entire argument, Nehru stresses one thing: That this condition of grave inequality, depicted in contrast, "should be an education of the most impressive kind", in the method of change-over. But unfortunately, We Nehru means to refer to writers like Gandhi take these contrasts for granted and pass them by unaffected and un-impressed".

It is this neglect which drives some like Gandhi to requisition self-suffering as a mode of influencing the adversary to abdication. It is this passing over, which makes him assume the existence of "harmony of interest", leading to the concept of trusteeship. "Self-suffering" according to Nehru is inadequate; harmony of interest is unrealistic, out of accord with facts of social life and therefore irrational. What, then is rational, actual and significant, in the reckoning of Nehru, is that "a clash of interests seems inevitable. There is no middle path. Each one will have to choose our side". [sic]

In this expression, Nehru, in a clear, emphatic way enunciates the inevitability of conflict. This unequivocal stand gives him a place distinct from that of Gandhi. Realizing

1 Loc cit.
2 Loc cit.
3 Ibid., p. 588. Emphasis added.
that clash of interest is unavoidable, he cautions that we must clearly understand our place in the coming struggle. We have to know on what side our interests lie; choose that side, incline towards it and identify ourselves with it.

Thus underlining the necessity of choosing sides, he continues to add:

Before we can choose, we must know and understand. The emotional appeal of socialism is not enough. This must be supplemented by an intellectual and reasoned appeal based on facts, arguments and detailed criticism. 1

Thus while like Bryce and some of the contemporary empirical theorists, Nehru is anxious to have facts; the one important fact, he picks up out of many, is the uncompromising attitude of the privileged class (or group). This class would never agree to surrender any part of their privileges, unless pressure or coercion is applied against them. As he says:

How are we to change-over to a new system based on cooperation? And how are we to divest the vested interests? We are told by 'The Pioneer' writer and I think rightly that the capitalist will not "tamely submit to be robbed of his wealth or vested interests, tamely submit to be divested". History also shows us that there is no instance of a privileged class or group or nation giving up its special privileges or interests willingly. Individuals have done so often enough but not a group. Always a measure of coercion has been applied; pressure has been brought to bear or conditions have been created which make it impossible for vested interests to carry on. And then the enforced coercion takes place. The methods of this enforcement may be brutal or civilised. 2

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1 Loc cit. Emphasis added.

2 Nehru, Recent Essays, op. cit., p. 34. Emphasis added.
The point we have been trying to make is, that Nehru not merely advocates 'coercion' he even advocates it forcefully. The advocacy is backed by a convincing justification. It is the stiff unyielding attitude of the privileged "group", which makes it necessary to put stern pressure on them. And he brings to bear the force of history on his argument. His finding, in history, is, that the privileged do not give up privileges willingly. They are generally unsympathetic towards the weaker sections of society. Nehru categorically asserts that any attempt to persuade them to give up their privileges, will be futile. "The attempt to convert" he says, "a governing and privileged class into a forsaking power and giving up its unjust privileges has always failed". So sure, is he about the recalcitrant and hostile attitude of the dominant class that he goes to the extent of saying that "there seems to be no reason whatever to hold that it [the attempt to convert ...] will succeed in the future". On the basis of an analysis of history, he draws the conclusion, that while, as an individual man may be altruistic; as a member of a group he behaves more selfishly. This point seems to be quite important to him. And we can well appreciate it, when we come to study the effectiveness of non-violence. In the present context, it is essential to grasp that Nehru realizes that unless some degree of coercion is applied against the privileged, transformation towards the goal of socialism is inconceivable.

2 Loc cit.
So far, we read into Nehru's concept of non-violence. Pure non-violence, as we found is considered by Nehru to be unrealistic. He therefore discards it. According to him, to be worthy of consideration, it must not be based on prejudice against force, but must be intellectually practicable and acceptable.

From a knowledge of the concept of non-violence, the next logical step is to proceed towards a consideration of its effectiveness: we have to know as to what impact, it has on the people at large; the total strength they gain, and the potential they can gain, by employing the technique of non-violence. Further, it is to be found out, as to how this potential (if it is a considerable potential) matches with the power of those who control the sources of economic power.

In an unequal society or in a colonial country or in a newly emerged independent but class-divided country, the masses have suffered "exploitation" and "oppression". Years of subordination have made them docile and submissive. They develop the habit of acquiescence. Realizing all this, Nehru maintains that non-violent movement helps to generate a ferment and a consciousness in society. People's outlook becomes radically different. Mentally they acquire attitudes which are the reverse of what they were, when they had not yet started practising non-violent, non-cooperation movement. The demoralized, degraded masses who had been feeling helpless at the hands of their "exploiters", get new light, develop in them a new potential energy. Nehru highlights the point by contrast thus:
Poverty and long period of autocratic rule with its inevitable atmosphere of fear and coercion had thoroughly demoralized and degraded them. They had hardly any of the virtues that are necessary for citizenship; they were cuffed and bullied by every petty official, tax collector, police-man, landlords agent; they were utterly lacking in courage or the capacity for united action or resistance to oppression; they sneaked and told tales against each other; and when life became too hard, they sought an escape from it in death. It was all very depressing and deplorable and yet one could hardly blame them for it; they were the victims of all-powerful circumstances.

Non-cooperation [the non-violent movement] dragged them out of this mire and gave them self-respect and self-reliance, they developed the habit of cooperative action; they acted courageously and did not submit so easily to unjust oppression; their outlook widened and they began to think a little in terms of India as a whole; they discussed political and economic questions (crudely no doubt), in their bazaars and meeting places [i.e. they developed consciousness].

Nehru here admires non-violence, which infuses fresh energy among the masses. They develop those qualities which give them strength. They become fearless of 'Authority'. They would no more "submit to unjust oppression". Now fearless defiance is a remarkable defence against oppression. People develop awareness of political and economic conditions around them. Consequently they develop awareness of their place and role in society. Above all they learn to be united and cooperative in the common cause.

People acquire all these qualities which according to Nehru, help them in building a counter force against the unjust ruling authorities. But Nehru misses to mention one important thing. He does not say explicitly whether with all these

advantages, the masses would be able effectively to acquire the quantum of strength which would enable them to control the seats of power and bring about an egalitarian society. For awareness is one thing; acquiring power is quite another. And, if a technique cannot bring about results then it is not easy to see its advantage. The awareness of this omission is of crucial importance in the understanding of Nehru.

The omission, as far as I know, has not so far been pointed out, much less explained by any writer on Nehru. The awareness of the omission induces us to explore him still deeper. It appears, it is the result-oriented approach in Nehru which stands at the base of the omission. With a pragmatic approach to non-violence, he seeks results. Non-violence to be meaningful must prove to be effective. With 'Result' as his criterion, he perhaps remains unconvinced that the masses would gain sufficient strength to overcome the might of the establishment. He does not advocate its adoption. He does not entirely discard it either; because it does have the capacity to develop resistance to the powerful machine of the state.

Nehru, then is uncertain of the quantum of strength that non-violence imparts to the people. He therefore remains ambivalent. He does not outright reject non-violence, nor yet advocate it as an agency of change. And the important question is -- why does he remain ambivalent? It is a hard job to find an answer to this difficult question. Any careful examination of Nehru's writings would however suggest that the key to the understanding of his ideas lies in clearly discerning the distinction between the impact of method of
non-violence, on the privileged on the one hand and its effect on the others, on the other hand.

Non-violence, he thinks, hardly softens the attitude of the privileged. They remain unmoved by the non-violent technique in whatever form it is employed. He finds them too adamant to yield. Nehru believes that the privileged are pre-determined to oppose severely the non-violent movement. Perhaps fearing a powerful anti-privilege force in it, they seek to defeat it.

As we observed in the previous section, the unfavourable reaction of the privileged to the non-violent movement owes essentially to the behaviour of the individual in the group. As an individual, he could be pliable to any one of the non-violent approaches to conversion of heart. But as soon as he associates his economic interests with a group, he undergoes a marked change in his attitude. He will not agree to part with any of his 'fortune'. "It is possible to convert individuals", Nehru says, "and even induce them to put up with loss and suffering for a larger cause, but such a conversion is not known to take place in groups and classes as a whole". Far from being converted they strive to thwart the efforts of the launchers of the non-violent method. "Being in the seats of power, they use that advantageous position to influence mass opinion in their favour" and against non-violence, "in a

1 Nehru, Autobiography, op. cit., p. 546.
2 Supra pp. 276-7.
3 Nehru, India and the world, op. cit., p. 221.
Nehru, then is emphatic on the point that the privileged are impervious to the efforts aiming at conversion. So much so that, he even appears to establish it forcefully. That is, he not merely envisages the recalcitrant attitude of the privileged, but strives to explain it also. He unfolds their mental reaction. In so doing, he appears to be a social psychologist. He sharply contrasts the moral, non-violent, heart-touching response of the down-trodden with the callous, stone-hearted attitude of the privileged.

Having for long accustomed itself to the notion that its superior position and privileges were necessary for the good of society, any contrary opinion savours of heresy. Law and order and the maintenance of the status quo become the chief virtue, and attempts to challenge them the chief sin. 2

So far as the opposite group is concerned, the process of conversion does not go far. Indeed sometimes the very mildness and saintliness of their adversary makes them angrier still, for it seems to put them in the wrong; and when a person begins to suspect that he might be in the wrong, his virtuous indignation grows. 3

Nehru thus clearly indicates that in the protection of their interests the privileged are not responsive to moral persuasion. Economic interests override moral susceptibilities. Perhaps like a close observer in a laboratory of human relationships, he says, "It [the non-violent non-cooperation movement] was a very striking example of one's own interest perverting

1 Loc cit.
3 Loc cit.
one's sense of values and suppressing the moral sense.\footnote{1}

As for its impact on the unprivileged poor masses, Nehru thinks it has a profound effect. The effect is so great that it can fight out the docile attitude which 'authoritarianism' had been able to build in them. Unlike its effect on the privileged group, non-violence has a surprisingly remarkable impact on the masses. "The rapid spread", he says, "of non-cooperation and civil disobedience in India, was a demonstration of how a non-violent movement exercises a powerful influence on vast numbers and converts many waverers". Nehru envisions in non-violence, something which infuses fresh energy into them. It is a sort of spark which energises them. It is what may be called a strong electric charge, converting the previously life-less material into a Live Force. He says:

\begin{quote}
It was an active, dynamic, energising drive, which lifted a whole nation out of a morass of demoralisation and helplessness, the inevitable result of a long period of subjection, and removed partially at least the inferiority complex from which it suffered. \footnote{3}
\end{quote}

Non-violence then brings about a profound change in the outlook of the masses. This is no doubt quite important. But still more important for us is to know how relevant it is for egalitarianism. We must in this regard answer a pertinent question. Would this change in outlook in its cumulative effect constitute a matching force to overpower the privileged, and dethrone them from power? Nehru argues that; non-violence

\footnotesize
is capable of transforming the temper of the masses. It gives
"them character, strength and self-reliance". He further
emphatically declares that these are "precious gifts", for the
head-way to socialism. So important does he consider them that
he goes to the extent of saying that it brings about "that
quickening process in the masses that precedes revolutionary
change". In a sense, non-violence produces that climate which
is essential for the development of the consciousness for
change. This probably happens because the suffering of the
non-violent masses is far more effective as a means to create
a powerful "ferment" for change.

Thus arguing, he comes to the crux of the issue, saying,
that "ferment", "is an obvious point in its (non-violence)
favour, but it does not carry us far". Ferment alone cannot
bring about THE revolutionary change to egalitarianism. Why
not? What accounts for this? Once again, Nehru stops short.
He does not care to explain, why the ferment, the consciousness,
which is generally believed to be a strong potential for
change -- would not bring about the change.

The substantive issue then is, why the ferment alone
cannot lead us to egalitarianism. Here we may note that
ferment signifies not merely consciousness but something more

1 Nehru, Autobiography, op. cit., p. 538.
2 Loc cit.
3 Loc cit.
4 Loc cit. Emphasis added.
5 Loc cit. Emphasis added.
than that. It is quite a powerful potential. On this issue, we can understand Nehru, if we discern in his writings the line of demarcation between what we may call the indispensable CONDITION for the radical socio-economic change and the cause of this contemplated change.

To Nehru, consciousness, though, a necessary condition for the change, is not a sufficient condition. What can cause the real change is people imbued with humane considerations. And Nehru had been grappling with the possibility of the “rise of mankind in the mass to a high level of love and goodness”. It is then a distinction between the fermented politically conscious people and men imbued with altruism. In one case, it means a people arisen from a state of drudgery and obedience to a state of awareness of their social existence, out to question the privileged authority. In the other case, it means a people who have inculcated the sense of selfless service. It is selflessness (of course not absolute selflessness) according to Nehru, which can put socialism on a sound, firm footing. With this distinction before us, we find that Nehru not only differs from but is ahead of other advocates of non-violence, concerned with socio-economic change. Thinkers like Gandhi stop short at stipulating the condition for the change-over, neglecting, what can cause a real change to egalitarianism.

If selfless service is what Nehru seeks as a vehicle of change; an important question we face is -- whether society as

1 Ibid., p. 539.
a whole can imbibe the creed of non-violence, which had been found relevant in the case of an individual. "The real question", with Nehru, was: "Can national and social groups as a whole imbibe sufficiently this individual creed of non-violence, for it involved a tremendous rise of mankind in the mass to a high level of love and goodness"? It is vitally relevant to observe that Nehru does not say that "national and social groups" are capable of imbibing and will "imbibe", "the individual creed of non-violence". He only means to say that IF people imbibe it, then the conditions thus created, can cause basic, radical, socio-economic change. 

We should pinpoint here the skepticism of Nehru, which enables us to infer something significant. It is the idea of the POSSIBILITY of effectiveness of the method of non-violence, on the masses. It is of interest and benefit to underline that more important than the substance of what he says is the manner in which he says it. As a skeptic, he raises the question, "can national and social groups imbibe sufficiently this individual creed of non-violence"? While raising the question, he, points out at the same time the difficulty: "It involved a tremendous rise of mankind in the mass to a high level of love and goodness". This difficulty is acute. The question raised above is important; for much of the substance of the debate on non-violence as a method of social change is dependent on the answer to it.

1 Ibid., p. 539.
But Nehru does not give us a definite answer to this difficult issue. He does not categorically state that people as a whole can never rise to that "high level of love and goodness". Nor like Gandhi, is he optimistic, taking for granted that people will rise to this 'high level'. He remains a skeptic, saying "whether that is possible or not even ultimately may be a debatable question".

Nehru is ambivalent. He moves back and forth in arguing out the case. And the question that confronts us, is -- what does Nehru's ambivalence signify? Probably nothing, if we maintain meticulous objectivity. This barren objectivity is neither helpful nor perhaps possible to maintain. For a human being is after all the embodiment of emotions and sentiments together with rationality -- all these contribute towards forming his personality. We have to form and we do form biases and opinions in social activities, however impartial we may feel we are. It would seem that Nehru has a slant against the feasibility of the masses being transformed to that "high level of love and goodness", which would enable them to imbibe the creed of non-violence for social change.

It is, then, the idea of ineffectiveness of non-violence on one section of society (the privileged section) in contrast to the idea of the possibility of effectiveness on others (the unprivileged) which disturbs Nehru, and makes him ambivalent. Though Nehru does not expressly mark the distinction, yet we find that the distinction is latent in his writings. Without discerning this distinction, any claim to an understanding of

1 Loc cit.
Nehru would be pretentious and based on slippery grounds.
It is this distinction which marks him out as a thinker apart from other thinkers on non-violence. He fundamentally differs from other thinkers on non-violence including Gandhi. Gandhi speaks of the effect of non-violence on society as a whole. He fails to realize the necessity of considering the effect on different segments of society. Nehru, by envisaging the difference in its effect, marks himself out as a distinct thinker. And this discriminating effect is the specific contribution of Nehru in the field of non-violent action for change-over.

We observed above that ambivalence about peaceful means was central to Nehru's thinking. It is however yet to be examined as to what Nehru's ambivalent attitude signifies in the context of the establishment of socialism. Does it mean, that Nehru leaves the treatment half-way without clearly enunciating the specific means for the attainment of the objective? Perhaps that would be a hasty inference. And clearly it would be in order, to consider Nehru's attitude towards the violent method before finally drawing any conclusion. As observed earlier, a consideration of the violent means, is of no small value to him. He does pay attention to it and consider it analytically. In this regard Gandhi's observation would not only be relevant but meaningful also. Gandhi points out that though Nehru, "believes in non-violence, would want to

1 Supra pp. 257-8.
have socialism by other means, if it was impossible to have it by non-violence".

We find, that Gandhi's observation is not without justification. Nehru's lack of implicit faith in non-violence unlike Gandhi, and the fact that he refrains from condemning violence, on the score of its compulsion, coercion or even bloodshed seems to be sufficiently suggestive. This indicates that his attitude is not grounded in mere faith in either violence or non-violence. He realizes the importance of violence, both for the holders of privileges as well as for the "exploited" unprivileged. He realizes that the rich want to keep themselves entrenched and they do so by violence at least in the ultimate analysis. The down-trodden, when determined to seek change have to resort to violence for the establishment of a just society. He then visualizes its usefulness both for the privileged and their opponents.

This by no means implies that Nehru advocates violence. It rather means that, as a realist thinker, he tries to find its place in social relations and political history. He thinks that an adequate understanding of historical forces is essential, before an attempt be made to find a solution to the politico-social problems. His conclusion seems to be that a small minority of the holder of privileges keeps themselves in an entrenched position, through force and violence. This according to him is a matter of rule for an acquisitive society.


2 See infra pp. 290-5.
As he says:

There was no lack of violence and suppression in the capitalist world and I realized more and more how the very basis and foundation of our acquisitive society and property was violence. Without violence it could not continue for many days... the violence of the capitalist order seemed inherent in it. 1

Violence then, is inherent in an acquisitive society. The privileged keep themselves in position of authority with the help of force. They do not listen to reason or justice.

Further discussion on this point will involve an overlapping of the material already used. But this repetitious material will be used for a different purpose. Earlier we discussed the place of coercion or force. But that was discussed in order to know Nehru's concept of non-violence. Here our concern is to discuss the role of violence in social relations, according to Nehru. He argues that privileges and superior position develop in the dominant class a peculiar feeling. They start attributing their superior and controlling position to special talent, which must be rewarded -- rewarded perpetually. "Having for long", he says, "accustomed itself to the notion that its superior position and privileges were necessary for the good of society, any contrary opinion savours of heresy." 3

Nehru is so sure of the greedy, tenaciously avaricious behaviour of the privileged that he says that they are "ab initio" hostile to any move to end their privileges. They are

2 supra pp. 257-77.
3 Ibid., p. 545.
4 Ibid., p. 546.
least responsive to reason or considerations of social justice. Nehru does not find the amicable method of persuasion of any use in setting aside the privileges as a step towards equality. As we noted earlier, "sweet reason and argument", with the privileged are unavailing. In expressing grave doubt over the possibility of the possessors of power (economic and political power) being brought round through reformatory methods he emphatically affirms that "Ruling powers and ruling classes have not been known in history to abdicate willingly".

So possessive, then, the privileged are (according to Nehru) that no rational argument works with them. So much attached to money and power they are that they never agree to surrender them ordinarily. This poses the question -- how shall the stubbornly intransigent attitude of the privileged be met by the exploited masses? Would they resort to force, or would they continue to make appeal to good sense in a non-violent peaceful manner? Instead of telling anything about the attitude of the exploited, Nehru affirms the reaction of the privileged. He thinks that, howsoever moving the appeal, and howsoever plausible and weighty the argument, the privileged do not allow themselves to be persuaded. "How can you argue", he says, "or be sweetly reasonable with cold steel and dead wood".

Now what does Nehru imply here, about the response of the exploited masses who have been seeking emancipation? If

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1 Supra pp. 269-70.
2 Nehru, India and the world, op. cit., p. 185.
3 Bright, India on the March, op. cit., p. 250.
their persuasion with the "cold blood" and "dead wood" proves unfruitful, what should they do? Should they resort to violent method? And does Nehru advocate a violent course of action? While tackling this question, we see that a slight repetition is inevitable. It appears that Nehru is not advocating violence. But he certainly condones it and accepts its relevance for the transformation to socialism. He realizes its importance in history. The unyielding attitude of the privileged leaves the poor masses with no alternative but to take resort to bloody revolution. This, according to him, is, what has happened in history. The important point to be observed and underlined is that Nehru does not condemn violence. Rather he stipulates its place with undertones and overtones of softness to it. As he says:

Some people imagine that all this trouble and misery could be avoided if a few sensible persons were in charge of various governments and that it is the folly or knavery of politicians and statesmen that is at the bottom of every thing. They think that if good people would but get together, they could convert the wicked by moral exhortations and pointing out to them the error of their ways. This is a very misleading idea, for the fault lies not with individuals but with a wrong system. So long as that system endures, these individuals must act in the way they do. Groups that occupy dominant or privileged positions either foreign national groups governing another nation or economic groups within a nation, convince themselves by an amazing self-deception and hypocrisy that their special privileges are just reward of merit. Any one who challenges this position seems to them a knave and a scoundrel and an upsetter of settled conditions. It is impossible to convince a dominant group that its privileges are unjust and that it should give them up peacefully. Individuals may sometimes be convinced though rarely but groups never. And so inevitably come clashes and conflicts and revolution and infinite suffering and misery.  1

Thus does Nehru realize that hungry and uncared-for masses are left with no option but to take resort to violent methods, in order to deal with the privileged people. This point he brings out with greater clarity, when he makes an observation on the conditions in France during the period of 1789 revolution. The poor masses, "pay homage, to the terrible Madame Guillotine and take cruel vengeance against those who had crushed them in the past". Continuing he affirms that "these ragged, barefooted people, with improvised arms rush to defend their Revolution on the battlefield."

Here Nehru does not advocate violence. At the same time, he does not condemn it either.

Thus we find that to Nehru, the violent method is effectively serviceable to both the privileged "exploiters", and the unprivileged "sufferers"; to achieve their respective objectives -- of course the objective of one group being diametrically opposed to the objective of the other. As such do not the writers who maintain that Nehru was a near-Marxist, in the earlier period of his writings carry conviction with us? And would it not be appropriate for us to hold, that he is the protagonist of the violent method. It is further instructive on this point to underscore the fact that in his observations on the French revolution Nehru pays tribute to the violent revolutionaries of France. Not only that, he even welcomes the

1 Ibid., p. 873.
2 Loc cit. Emphasis added.
revolution as a symbol of emancipation for the masses. When he says that "these ragged, bare-footed people, rush to defend their Revolution on the battlefield" -- he expresses a sense of relief for the sake of the masses. In continuation, his praise that "they achieve wonders, these people of France" -- is a factor of no small importance, in the analysis of Nehru's ideal. Nehru is not opposed to force and violence, as a matter of faith.

Significantly then, Nehru realizes the importance of violence. But he does not advocate it. We must in this regard mark a distinction between realization and advocacy. Nehru realizes the crucially important place occupied by violence in human history and even subscribes to it. But with a delicate caution, he does not go beyond that to advocate it. He is not inherently against violence. This is best illustrated by his attitude towards the postulates of Marx. On several occasions, in his writings, he gets the opportunity to review Marxism. But he does not condemn or even criticise its use of 'bloody violence'. Yet, it is important to underline that he takes caution not to advocate it for dislodging the privileged from the position of authority. Why?

It will be seen that the use of violence, though considered essential for the dethronement of the vested interests runs counter to individual freedom, which occupies a very high place in Nehru's thought. This has to be kept in mind for an understanding of Nehru's attitude.

2 Loc cit.
It is to be seen that Nehru (unlike, some others who either omit facts or devalue them in their theory) does not ignore facts in order to justify his non-advocacy of violence. He rather seeks to explore facts. It is a fact of history according to Nehru that the strong, the powerful, the clever come to establish their hegemony in society through force and violence. It is again a fact of history that the entrenched position cannot ordinarily be terminated without the reciprocal method of violence. With that clear understanding, he seeks the establishment of an egalitarian society. But the very violence, which he finds so useful in history appears to him an obstacle in another respect. Violence prevents the enjoyment of individual freedom, which he rates so high. This consideration explains Nehru's dilemma; and may perhaps point to the reason why Nehru refrains from advocating violence, while he appreciates its importance.

Apart from this consideration, Nehru thinks that violence, if employed to acquire state power as a step towards the establishment of a socialist society, is accompanied by hatred. And, it is to this motive of hatred, dislike, revenge, that, he is opposed. Violence does not come to an end with a blow from one side. It rebounds, causes counter violence; "brings unending trail of evil consequences with it". This "unending" process adversely and inevitably affects the very aim of egalitarianism. Violence, because of its repercussions, starts working against the goal in view. Even if it succeeds in the overthrow of the privileged order, it won't suffice.

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Nehru is concerned with durability. Mere overthrow does not ensure a lasting egalitarian system. An order set up in the aftermath of a violent overthrow carries with it bitterness and hatred which weaken its foundation. And hence Nehru disfavours it.

He then seeks to avoid the play of motives of hatred and threat to individual freedom. The two-fold seeking derives from a long range consideration of an enduring society from which the seeds of conflict would be removed. This, in other words is, what the spiritual approach demands. Perhaps the basic reason for refusing advocacy of violence is Nehru's emphasis on spiritualism. As he says: "In considering the method for changing the existing order, we have to weigh the cost of it in material as well as spiritual terms". "Spiritual terms", imply some sort of moral consideration, signifying "ultimate development of human happiness and progress".

Nehru's attitude to the violent method is one of delicate caution. He does not advocate it, nor yet does he rule it out point-blank. At the same time, he doubts if the non-violent method can carry us to the final goal of socialism. No doubt, he concedes that it is useful to a limited extent. What then precisely is Nehru's viewpoint?

The key in the attempt to answer this ticklish question lies in the understanding that Nehru in the ultimate analysis is a moral thinker with a scientific approach. It is this peculiar

1 Ibid., p. 588.
2 Hoc cit.
mix which make it difficult for him to take a clear position. He does not have a purely moral outlook nor does he follow the terse scientific rational logic of Hobbes.

As a realist he undertakes an objective analysis of historical facts. He realizes the necessity of the exercise of force; but proposes a 'qualified' use of it. At the same time, he realizes that the moral urges of the otherwise intransigent privileged can be availed of — rather skilfully availed of — by the down-trodden. Nehru seems to think that the fact of unjust appropriation signifying conflict of interest makes the privileged morally uneasy. As if to console their moral urges, they seek to cover up the reality of the "basic conflicts", and try to show that they did not exist. In this way, they seek a "moral basis" to justify the retention of special privileges.

Nehru thinks that the right course, in order to weaken the adversary (the holder of privileges) is to remove the mask, which covers up their "moral basis". This could be done by non-cooperative, non-violent method. And hence he suggests the non-violent method complemented by the use of force, if need be. In his words:

In order to combat an unjust system, the false premises, on which it is based must be exposed and the reality laid bare. One of the virtues of non-cooperation is that it exposes these false premises and lies by our refusal to submit to them or to cooperate in their furtherance.... Every thing that comes in the way will have to be removed gently if possible, forcibly if necessary. And there seems to be little doubt that coercion will often be necessary. But if force is used, it should not be in the spirit of hatred or cruelty, but with the dispassionate desire to remove obstruction. 2

1 Ibid., pp. 551-2. Emphasis added.
2 Loc cit. Emphasis added.
Nehru thus seems to be a peculiar combination of scientific realism and ethical rationalism. Without expressly advocating 'Force', with a cautious halt, he suggests the use of force. Even while thus suggesting it, he remains anchored to the method of non-violent non-cooperation. This curious attitude, I am inclined to think, really corresponds to the paradoxical attitude of the privileged, as understood by Nehru. It is to his credit that he grasps the twin fact of the intransigence of the privileged to give up privileges and their moral compunction to hold on to them.

This leaves us with the inference that Nehru is neither vacillating nor confused. With a clear conviction, he holds fast to dynamic non-violence, which seeks to pressurise the adversary. As for violence, it is neither disliked by him 'ab initio', nor devalued in its application to the dignified human species. Its crudity as a force to subjugate Mankind as well as its usefulness in the overthrow of the oppressive regime as a fact in social life is appreciated. Should the results in the form of lasting egalitarian system be assured, Nehru has no hesitation in adopting it; he could suggest it as an agency for effecting the contemplated change. However the unending violence following in its wake and its association with hatred and cruelty, prevent him from advocating it. Its kernel -- pressure on the opponent even to the point of coercion -- is retained. This significant fact shows that Nehru is not intrinsically averse to violence as is the case with Gandhi.

It is thus obvious that Nehru differs fundamentally from Gandhi, for whom non-violence (Satyagraha) springs from
inner convictions aiming at converting the opponent and not coercing him. He relies on the psychological effect of non-violence and self-suffering and is confident of results. According to him:

The wrong-doer wearies of wrong-doing, in the absence of resistance.... I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword not by putting up against it a sharp-edged weapon but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering psychological resistance. The resistance of the soul would at first dazzle him and at last compel recognition from him, which recognition would not humiliate him but uplift him. 1

Gandhi here means to say that the oppressor's moral stature is raised as a result of persistent resistance and suffering by the victim. When the oppressor thus acquires a high moral stature he concedes the demand -- the just demand -- of the oppressed. This stands in sharp contrast to the position held by Nehru, who while recognizing the usefulness of self-suffering, realizes its limitations and is led to discard it as an agency of change. He suggests and approves pressure tactics; the wrong-doer is pressurised and coerced into accepting the demands -- the just demands -- of the oppressed who revolting en masse exert a pressure which in intensity and magnitude is so great as to compel the opponent to surrender.

What is central to the understanding of Nehru, in this context, is his recognition that conflict is the reality in this society. He therefore builds his thesis on fact. In Nehru's estimate the trouble with Gandhi is that by basing his entire

argument on the assumption of the possibility of harmonising conflicting interests, he tends to bolster up the status quo.

On balance, then, Nehru though cordial and even respectful to Gandhi, remains basically alien to him, in thought. He was influenced by Gandhi, no doubt, but he does not accept the essence in Gandhi's thought. He deviates, in so far as the Means for the change-over from the privileged regime are concerned. The rebel in Gandhi did influence him but the philosophy of self-suffering behind non-violent satyagraha could not influence him. He is his own self, so far as non-violence goes. He accepts non-violence more as an instrument of coercion rather than of conversion.

**Democratic Method**

Nehru, then, approves the non-violent method embodying an element of pressure or even coercion. However, it remains to be seen, in what precise form he advocates it. This question is all the more significant, in view of the fact that Nehru does not explicitly and systematically, enunciate the concrete method. We have to explore it. In this effort, as already noticed, he rejects the psychological approach of self-suffering. We can then take up for consideration, the other variant, viz the democratic method. The two methods -- the psychological and the democratic -- it should be marked, are basically different.

Distinction between the two lies in this: whereas the psychological approach of Gandhi is largely dependent upon an

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1 *Supra* pp. 259-77.
appeal to emotions and sentiments, good sense and humanity in the privileged (which Nehru considers unrealistic); the democratic method as propounded by Nehru depends upon the self-reliance of the under-privileged. That is, in the former, the unprivileged have to count essentially on an outside agency (viz the holders of privileges) for their emancipation. In the democratic method by contrast, the underlying idea is that the underdog through their own representatives strive to secure enactments favourable to them. This method signifies on the one hand, an attempt at self-effort, and on the other a compulsion (though in a mild form) put on the privileged adversary to concede their demands. In any analysis of Nehru's attitude towards democratic method it has to be seen if the potency of the collective self-effort of the masses at coercing the privileged, can give a successful battle to them (the privileged).

Question, then, that faces us is: What is Nehru's attitude to democracy as a method of change-over? Nehru, no doubt, is a protagonist of democracy in general. But so far as the method of change-over is concerned, there are scholars who maintain that Nehru in the earlier period of his writings thought socialism could not be introduced in a country by democratic method. Smith for example holds that, "Nehru in the earlier period seriously doubted that socialism could ever be introduced in a country by the normal processes of democracy."  

This view is impressive, for according to Nehru, capitalism characterised by class-conflict does not allow democracy to function properly. The capitalist class which occupies a dominating position in society does not allow the true well-wishers of the people to secure representation. If at all they get elected, then the capitalists by virtue of economic and military power do not allow the majority will to prevail.

Smith's argument appears to be weighty. Nehru on occasions questions the efficacy of democracy. "The democratic method", he says, "has many triumphs to its credit; but I do not know that it has yet succeeded in resolving a conflict about the very basic structure of the state or of society. When this question arises the group or class which controls the state-power does not voluntarily give it up because the majority demands it."

Over and above the viewpoint of Smith, we find Nehru himself saying that a persistent effort is made by the adversary to out-do the parliamentary majority in their effort at changes (in case the effort is there). He goes to the extent of saying that even if the people's representatives in the parliament by a majority vote, pass a reformatory measure, divesting the vested interests, it may remain un-implemented. These interests outside parliament would offer stiff resistance. By virtue of occupying commanding position in the military and police establishments, they are capable of undermining its work.

If the parliamentary majority "attacks the vested interests", says Nehru, "the owners of these interests may repudiate parliament itself and even courage revolt against its decision". Failure of parliament in this context means failure of democracy.

This observation of Nehru, about the role of vested interests outside parliament, is not of universal applicability. There are countries like the contemporary India, where vested interests do not occupy a commanding position in the armed forces. Despite the partial truth, then, that Nehru's observation contains, we can say that Smith's remark is not prima facie irrelevant. Would it then be justifiable for us to conclude finally that democracy is too weak to be of service in casting aside the privileged regime as a step towards egalitarianism? On the face of it, we can answer it in the positive, because Nehru believes that "democracy fails when vital issues such as economic conflicts between the Haves and the Have-nots ... have to be faced". In other words it means the failure of democracy in the establishment of egalitarianism.

A close look however seems necessary. The real problem for us, is to examine, what exactly Nehru means by the 'failure of democracy'. To imagine that it signifies one and only one thing and accordingly to infer that it is absolutely impossible for the democratic method to establish egalitarianism would be an over-simplification.

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1 Nehru, Glimpses, op. cit., p. 1474.
2 Ibid., p. 1473. See also chapter on 'Democracy and Socialism', pp. 141-2.
What does it mean then? Does it mean that democracy does not have the intrinsic potential to achieve the goal of economic and social justice? Or alternatively does it mean defeat of democracy in the trial of strength between capitalist forces and forces of democracy.

In this context, we must distinctly understand that it is one thing to say that democracy is intrinsically weak. It is quite a different thing to say that it gets defeated. To say that it is intrinsically weak means that the people who comprise democracy are inherently incapable of making a headway towards egalitarianism. They do not have the courage to challenge or fight its enemy namely capitalism, which insists on perpetuating inequalities. The people remain docile and submissive amidst the capitalist environment.

To say that democracy gets defeated, means that, it has the fighting potential. But in the trial of strength, it loses to capitalism. By virtue of a greater strength, capitalism disallows democratic forces to make progress. It is in a position to snub and suppress democracy.

Thus in order to interpret Nehru adequately we have to mark a distinction between the intrinsic weakness of democracy and the fighting potential of democracy. Apart from this distinction we have to grasp another point. Nehru speaks barely of failure of democracy. He does not specify whether the failure relates to the past only or it is applicable to the future as well. This omission makes room for interpretation, which term signifies a subjective way of understanding or a subjective way
of filling the gap left by the thinker. I am inclined to think that the statement implies that democracy has failed in the past only. This interpretation is reinforced in view of the fact that Nehru never says that it will fail in future as well. This aspect is very significant in determining the real character of democracy, in the context of 'Means' for the establishment of an egalitarian society.

This omission on the part of Nehru makes it necessary for us to evaluate the intrinsic potentialities of democracy. If it has not succeeded in the past, it may succeed in future. We have to assess its strength to set aside capitalism.

While exploring the potentialities of democracy, and the prospects of its success (or perhaps failure), we find one thing important. It is the awareness of Nehru to a danger of which socialists in the post-twenties period had become aware, i.e., the danger of capitalism becoming authoritarian in the name of Fascism. If he is equivocal as to the usefulness of democracy, as an instrument of change, he at least suggests one thing important -- that democracy can prevent the further deterioration of capitalism into Fascism. Fascism, if it raises its head, would be a serious setback to the cause of "socialism".

While tackling the problem of casting aside 'capitalism', Nehru shows his concern for the prospect of its becoming stronger vis-a-vis forces of socialism. It becomes stronger and furious when it goes Fascist. As he says:

Within each state, the conflict between classes, between the workers and the capitalist owning class which controls the government is becoming acute.... As these conditions worsen, a last desperate attempt is made by the owning classes
to crush the rising workers. This takes the form of Fascism. Fascism appears where the conflict between the classes has become acute and the owning class is in danger of losing its privileged position. 1

Nehru here appears to have been influenced by the then prevalent socialist mood of the thirties, which clearly saw the fascist danger in Europe. What then upsets Nehru the most is that the capitalist class meets the challenge of egalitarianism with Fascist methods, "with a definite technique of violence and terrorism". Capitalism is unrelenting in its efforts to maintain inequality. Any attempt at eliminating it or even reducing it provokes, "the owning and ruling class". "It [capitalism] tries to "put down the workers by using the police and army". If this fails, "then it adopts the fascist methods" ... "it destroys the worker's organisations and terrorizes all opponents". Indeed capitalists become Fascists. And the "chief function" of "Fascists", "was to attack, whenever an opportunity arose, socialists and radicals and their institutions".

This is a critical situation in the fight between the forces of capitalism and those of socialism. As it happens in any warfare, the enemy strives to hit the fountain-head of power. The owners of privileges hit democracy, which to them

1 Nehru, Glimpses, op. cit., p. 1075.
2 Ibid., p. 1279.
3 Ibid., p. 1292.
4 Loc cit.
5 Ibid., p. 1275.
6 Loc cit.
is the nerve-centre of socialism. "Fascists", says Nehru, "curse democracy with all the vigour at their command". So as to further loosen its hold on mass mind and thus to weaken it, they name it as a "putrefying corpse". The protagonists of socialism seek to defend democracy -- which to them is their fortress of strength -- against the attacks of fascism. Nehru shows a serious concern for shielding it when he says, "How is this the rise of Fascism to be avoided"? Indeed, he seeks to avoid the rise of Fascism, so that the imminent attack be "avoided", and democracy, the citadel of socialism be kept in tact and safe.

After raising the question, Nehru stops short. He does not answer the question. However, with a closer look, we find that he tackles the question. While making an endeavour to know his position, we find, that according to him fascism fights the battle of capitalism against socialism. (But it seeks to destroy democracy, which is viewed as its stronghold.) "The upper bourgeoisie generally", he says, "began to patronise and finance these 'fighting groups' the Fascists in their fight against labour and socialism. Even the government representing the acquisitive system was indulgent towards them." He further pin-pointedly remarks, "First and foremost", "the fascists, were the enemies of socialism".

1 Ibid., p. 1299.
2 Loc cit.
3 Nehru, India and the World, op. cit., p. 182.
4 Nehru, Glimpses, op. cit., p. 1275.
5 Ibid., p. 1277.
Fascism, then, had undertaken, to fight out socialism out of existence. It strikes at the roots, makes a determined bid to destroy democracy which it views as the stronghold of socialism. In an illustrative way, Nehru says, "the struggle in Spain is between democracy and cruel military Fascism". In this situation, Nehru thinks that the rise of Fascism can be checked by strengthening democracy. For socialism, the ammunition, the fighting force is democracy, which consists of mass strength. Fascism in contrast fights with guns creating violence and terror. The two forces are ranged against each other.

Of the two forces, Fascism, of course backed by "military" power is furiously strong. This mighty force has to contend with the democratic force, which it appears, has at least a matching potential. This is obvious when Nehru says: "So in the world today, these two great forces strive for mastery -- those who labour for democratic and social freedom and those who wish to crush this freedom under imperialism and fascism". What then can give a matching battle to Fascism is democracy. And the answer to the question raised by Nehru is that the rise of Fascism can be avoided by the democratic forces. During the thirties, countries like Britain, which had had a strong tradition of democracy, could effectively meet the challenge of Fascism. Others where democracy had not yet struck deep roots were overrun by Fascism.

1 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., p. 135.
2 Ibid., pp. 73-74. Read also Nehru, say "fascism faces democracy and forces of socialism". Glimpses, op. cit., p. 1076.
The value of democracy, then lies among other things — in what it can prevent. It can prevent the capitalist system from slipping into a fascist one. This was a serious threat to the 'socialist society' of Nehru's vision. The capitalist regime, instead of heading towards it, is likely to recede away from it. The possible deterioration into an authoritarian system, signifies a great setback to the cause of socialism. What can save it from this undesirable eventuality is democracy. In other words, masses with a sense of awakening serve as a check against this tendency.

This viewpoint has a parallel in John Strachey. With Strachey as with Nehru, democracy disallows capitalism to move away from the socialist objective. However, they differ with regard to the points emphasised. Nehru's emphasis is on the point that democracy prevents capitalism from becoming more authoritarian in the name of Fascism. Strachey stresses the point that democracy prevents capitalism from becoming more exploitative. "Democracy" "has prevented", he says, "the innate tendencies of the capitalist system from working themselves out in the ever increasing misery of the wage-earners".

Democracy, then according to Nehru, puts a barrier to capitalism become more authoritarian. Not only that. It achieves another thing. It keeps the idea of socialism alive in society, so that at times, when there is a favourable climate and a stir for socialism, democracy may help in the transition to socialism.

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It is easy to see sense in Nehru's plea that capitalism has anti-people authoritarian tendencies and that democracy serves as a check against it. But the subtle way, in which it can fight out the exploitative tendencies, in a pattern of nationalisation is interesting. For to see "exploitation" even within the scheme of nationalisation, is a penetrating task. Thus, Nehru says:

Even a complete nationalisation of industry unaccompanied by political democracy, will lead only to a different kind of exploitation. For while industry will then belong to the state, the state itself will not belong to the people. 1

Thus, Nehru finds democracy useful against the exploitative trends also. To him, it is democracy which can and which will fight out exploitative tendencies. In maintaining this position he is against the generally held belief, that when, control over the means of production is transferred from private to public hands exploitation comes to an end and process of mass welfare and equalitarianism sets in. Holders of this belief think that the new managers of industry who have no personal stake and are not imbued by profit motive, would act from a consideration of social responsibility.

This line of argument it appears is not acceptable to Nehru, who thinks that the organisers of the public sector are not so philanthropic as to take care of public good. Implicit in Nehru's plea is the distinction between nationalisation and socialisation. In a scheme of nationalisation, the means of

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1 Jawaharlal Nehru, The Discovery of India (Calcutta, 1946), p. 611.
production are no doubt brought under public control, but the public officials seldom exhibit in the performance of their duties an over-riding concern for the inarticulate masses. Socialisation, on the other hand, envisages a mass-oriented public management.

What probably explains the distinction between the two is that in 'nationalisation', the public management runs the economy on the principle of market economy, whereas in socialisation, a consideration of mass welfare, is the governing principle.

Nehru, then rejects nationalisation — that scheme of nationalisation, which is not founded on mass support or political democracy. While rejecting it, he retains democracy. But the question remains -- Does he retain it as an instrument of change-over? This, we will take up in the next section.

Democracy, we thus find serves as a check against capitalism becoming more exploitative and authoritarian.

In the process of ascertaining the potentialities of democracy then to set aside capitalism and establish egalitarianism, we find one thing: That democracy does have the strength at least to give battle to capitalism -- the capitalism which may in its fascist orientation make a desperate attempt to annihilate its enemy socialism. It seeks to annihilate socialism by striving to destroy the weapon of democracy. But the weapon of democracy proves strong enough to meet its challenge and prevent it from acquiring the fascist teeth. In other words, democracy can fight out the authoritarian, exploitative tendencies.
In the attempt to understand the meaning of the term 'failure of democracy', we sought to know the potentialities of democracy. We sought to know the strength of democratic forces against the strength of capitalist forces. We found that the democratic force has the capacity to withstand the challenge of capitalism. But it is of benefit and interest to grasp that Nehru's concept of democracy is not the western parliamentary model. In the western parliamentary practice, democracy is not an independent force, it is rather the handmaid of capitalism. "It was in itself a very limited kind of democracy and did not interfere much with the growth of monopoly and power concentration". It does not allow the truly democratic minded people to find a place in the legislature. This 'political parliamentary democracy', the product of capitalism Nehru rejects. "The biggest majority in a legislature", he says, "will be of little use to us, if we have not got this mass movement behind us and a majority built on compromises with reactionary groups or individuals will defeat the very purpose of the Congress", "the very purpose", we stand for.

What then Nehru rejects is democratic majority (as an instrument of change), backed by reactionary groups, concerned with the protection of their privileges and the maintenance of status quo. But democracy based on mass strength does have the capacity to grow into egalitarianism. But capitalism obstructs; it not only stands in its way, but also makes express efforts to undo what 'democracy' seeks to achieve.

What then, Nehru does is, that instead of discarding democracy, he seeks to strengthen it, vis-a-vis capitalism, so as to meet the challenges posed by the latter. In this way, he thinks that the establishment of socialism, can become a feasible proposition. "It is possible", he says, "to establish socialism by democratic means provided the full democratic process is available".

So, the real problem for Nehru, is not whether socialism can be established by democratic means but rather, how genuine democracy involving "full democratic process" can be established.

The real problem with democracy, according to Nehru consists in keeping the vested interests from misleading the masses. The one method which Nehru thinks is useful, is to approach the masses, specially during election days. The very elections which are employed as a hand-maid by the vested interests are utilized for their (that of masses) cause. "Elections", to Nehru, "were an essential and inseparable part of the democratic process". During election campaigns, a country-wide atmosphere in favour of freedom and equality is created. Attention of the people is drawn to the necessity of ending their poverty and misery, which owe to exploitation. The basic fact of "conflict of interest" is highlighted to them. It is to be impressed on them that, "poverty" of the masses, "was the basic problem of India"; and that was a

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2 For details see Chapter on 'Democracy and Socialism'.
3 Nehru, *Discovery*, op. cit., p. 60.
4 Ibid., pp. 60-62.
matter of concern for the political leaders. What an importance, Nehru attaches to these democratised elections, may best be gathered, when he says, that the "election", "was a pilgrimage for them to vote for the ending of the new constitution, for the establishment of Panchayat Raj when they would themselves, have the power to liquidate the poverty that consumed them".

Result of all this according to Nehru is remarkable. The very ease with which the masses were misled by the vested interests; with the same ease they can be made, politically conscious. They come to understand the reality of, "conflict of interests" (between the have and the have-nots); the reality that they owe their poverty not to any rational causes but to man-made "exploitation". Having been treated to hard facts such as these, they become immune to canvassing and propaganda of the vested interests, who can no longer influence and mislead them. The vested interests get an irrecoverable and sharp setback to their designs. Thus says Nehru:

How carefully and lovingly the government had nursed the great vested interests of India, encouraged the big land-lords and communists, helped them to organise themselves to oppose us and looked confidently for success in its evil venture! where are they now, these pillars of imperialism in India and exploiters of the Indian people? Sunk almost without trace, overwhelmed by the sea of Indian humanity, swept away by the big broom of masses from the political scene. Like a house of cards, they have fallen at the touch of reality. 2

1 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., p. 110.
Thus, according to Nehru, the vested interests kept from influencing the masses. Rather, they are incapacitated for executing their designs. Here a characteristic feature of the elections must be observed. They are meant, not to push up a particular candidate. Instead, they are employed as an agency to create "consciousness" among the masses. Result is that, "masses have triumphed, despite all the pressure and threat, and violence and inducements that were offered to them".

In this way are eliminated the serious election evils which consist in 'confusing' or side-tracking the credulous voter, who falls an easy prey to the "rough and ready methods". It is evils like these which account for the failure of the democratic method. But with masses energised and having attained consciousness, scales are turned. People's involvement in the elections, brighten the prospects of the real aim of democracy. The 'conflicts' between the two opposing economic groupings are likely to be resolved. "The only known method of resolving these conflicts", says Nehru, "other than that of force and coercion is the democratic method".

The democratic method has the potential not only to give a matching fight to capitalism, but even to defeat it. Masses, representing the democratic force won even though, says Nehru, "the pressure of an autocratic and entrenched government was exercised against us, and behind it were ranged all the

1 Ibid., p. 101.
2 Nehru, Discovery, op. cit., p. 60.
3 Nehru, The Unity of India, op. cit., p. 383.
reactionaries and obscurantists. Yet we von in resounding manner,*

Nehru thus introduces a new concept of elections, which are conducted not with a view to victory for the candidates, nor for securing a mere majority in the legislature. These serve a different purpose altogether. From being an agency of registering the "unthoughtful", "manipulated" will of the masses, they are "lifted to a higher and more elemental level of great nation's fight for freedom". Freedom to Nehru signifies, more than mere political freedom; it includes economic freedom also. It means on the one hand freedom from want and hunger; and on the other hand, freedom to end poverty and exploitation. It is in this context that elections acquire a new meaning. They are "lifted to a higher level of fight", because they seek to create "consciousness" among the masses. And it is because of having attained consciousness that they "triumphed", despite "all the pressure and inducements". And it is with these politically conscious people at the back, "that the democratic method" was able to resolve "these conflicts".

This, according to Nehru, is "full democracy". And he says, "I believe in full democracy, political and economic. For the moment, I work for political democracy, but I hope that this will enlarge itself into social democracy also."

1 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., p. 106.
2 Nehru, Discovery, op. cit., p. 62.
3 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., p. 15; supra pp. 302-4 and Bunch of Old Letters, op. cit., p. 141.
This is a viewpoint of crucial importance in the science of politics, on the theoretical plane, and of great practical significance to societies seeking emancipation from the privileged. It has a special relevance for underdeveloped countries struggling for real economic democracy. It offers a strong practicable alternative to the violent overthrow of the vested interests.

Though important, this viewpoint of Nehru may perhaps appear paradoxical. The earlier position of his that democracy fails to resolve the basic conflicts -- comes into contradiction with it. In this regard, an overall comprehensive view is necessary. A closer study, would show that there is no real contradiction. Democracy "fails", when capitalist vested interests are in a position to overwhelm and prevail upon the sentiments of the masses who are kept in the dark. Contrariwise, it can succeed, when masses are made to realize the fact of conflict and exploitation conspicuously. With the establishment of genuine democracy involving full democratic process a heading can be made towards a just, egalitarian society. "Any real democracy", Nehru says, "is likely to lead to far-reaching social revolution".

Genuine democracy according to Nehru is inextricably bound up with mass consciousness. It is political consciousness in the masses which can elevate democracy from being the close preserve of vested interests to its own self.

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Convinced of its usefulness and potentialities, then, Nehru, does not discard democracy as an instrument of change-over.

It would be obvious to an informed student of Nehru's ideas that my interpretation of Nehru is different from that of Smith. It will be recalled that according to Smith's interpretation of Nehru, socialism could not be introduced by the democratic method; that democracy is intrinsically powerless. I am inclined to think that Nehru considers the 'failure of democracy' to mean something else; that it only temporarily failed to bring about economic democracy; and it failed because viewed in its parliamentary perspective it was overpowered by capitalism; but viewed in the sense of mass mobilized democracy it can succeed.

The viewpoint of writers like Smith that the democratic method has no chance of success in bringing about egalitarianism is hardly valid. This is to read an organic defect for a functional disorder in democracy. There is no inherent weakness in democracy for causing a change to egalitarianism. It fails to function no doubt in certain situations. This failure owes to the capitalist forces which by endeavouring to dehumanize man seek to weaken the foundations of democracy.

Nehru, thus seeks to disentangle democracy from being the hand-maid of capitalism in order to become a strong independent force to meet effectively the oppressive might of capitalism. That is, he sees democracy as an instrument for the overthrow of economically dominant sections. At the same time, he seeks to lay a strong foundation for egalitarianism, after the
privileged regime has been set aside.

We discussed in the foregoing that Nehru believes in democracy as an instrument of change. It is not however the limited parliamentary democracy that he believes in but rather "full democracy". The new mode of elections which seek to infuse consciousness among the masses is one form of "full democracy", where the influence of the vested interests has been eliminated. To get the true representatives, however, is only a part of the purpose of these elections. This aspect is no doubt important in itself. But still more important is the notion that elections serve as a 'means' to rally round the masses to "press forward mass struggle", for the "conquest of power". The object of conquest of power is to make the masses truly independent and self-reliant. Having wrested power from the adversary, through "mass struggle", the people will themselves be able to improve their lot.

It is of interest to underline that Nehru insists on "mass struggle" as an aspect of democracy for acquiring real freedom and for recasting property relations. Election results however satisfactory are not adequate. However, truly representing the masses; however truly working within the legislature for their cause; the efforts of the

1 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., p. 15.
2 Ibid., p. 80.
3 Ibid., p. 114.
representatives are not viewed sufficient. "It is not by mere votes in the legislature that freedom (also signifying removal of poverty) will come, but by the mobilisation of mass strength, and the coordination of our struggle in the legislatures, with our struggle outside". This view of Nehru comes close to that of Lenin. In saying all this, what Nehru seeks is self-reliance and self-confidence. "Essentially", he adds, "we aim at the conquest of power, power for the Indian people to shape their destiny, and that power will only come through our strength and will to achieve".

The object is to "wrest" power and the legislative majority will not prove equal to this task. Even after victory at the elections, "we must", says Nehru, "keep our intimate contacts with the masses and seek to serve them and mobilize them for the great tasks ahead". The "great tasks ahead" are no other than working for the termination of the condition of inequality, the primary step for which is the "conquest of power", or to wrench power. "We have bigger decisions to make", says Nehru. "They require the masses in intelligent and organised movement for mass ideals and mass welfare".

Nehru advocates mass movement as the agency for the conquest of power and change-over which he seeks to achieve on

1 Loc cit.
2 Loc cit. Emphasis added.
3 Ibid., p. 115.
4 Ibid., p. 114.
arousing consciousness. "Any great movement for liberation today", he says, "must necessarily be a mass movement". Mass movement and the election process (the new mode), then, are the two aspects of "Full Democracy". Indeed, in advocating mass movement, he extends the principle of representation of the people to the active participation of the people themselves.

In the mass movement, with unrelenting struggle as the weapon; people offer a stubborn resistance. They give a tough battle to the privileged, fighting with arms, in order to preserve their privileged position. This is a battle in successful self-defence. And to give a successful defensive battle with a determined resistance, as its weapon is no small achievement. The mass movement makes a still bigger achievement. It prepares the people for an offensive as well. The struggle brings the people enlightenment. It instills freshness. It is a therapeutic which wipes off the habit of obedience to authority, and makes them mentally alert and adopt an offensive attitude.

It is interesting to know that the offensive attitude appears the moment the "real position" of enmity so far hidden from people's view, is exposed through class struggle. The real position emerges with conspicuous brightness, when the real question of political and economic freedom, comes to the surface. What brings the real question to the surface is mass struggle. Nehru asserts that "when mass struggle comes

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1 Nehru, India and the World, op. cit., p. 33.
or in time of revolution observe the significance of putting them together, real position, stands out clearly, as if lit by lightening*. Being enlightened, people start raising questions of release from economic, political and social bondage. In this atmosphere when people are in a challenging mood, "truth will out". The exploiter-rulers can no longer hide their real feelings or character*. Cat is out of the bag. What had been kept hidden is exposed.

It can be seen that what had made the people acquiescent and obedient was IGNORANCE. As soon as the "truth" of exploitation, suppression and oppression is revealed to the masses, they begin to retaliate with anguish. The knowledge of having been exploited, now appears disgraceful to them. Unable to bear the insult, they are full of "courage, endurance and selflessness". They develop the spirit of a wounded lion, unable to put up with the indignity. They are now, in an offensive mood, determined to carry the struggle to the bitter end.

The relevance and importance of all this lies in: that the offensive mentality develops under conditions appropriate to transformation to the new contemplated egalitarian system.

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1 Loc cit. Emphasis added. Significance of putting together mass struggle and revolution lies in this. Nehru as far as I think, means to say that they produce the same effect. In passing, mark Nehru's appreciation of the achievement of revolution (violent revolution).

2 Ibid., pp. 1151-2.

3 Loc cit.

4 Loc cit.
The whole atmosphere around has undergone a change. At this juncture, when the 'real question' has come to the top, and the 'truth' of expropriation has been revealed, the atmosphere becomes surcharged with emotions for change.

This is the time which Nehru calls as the "moment of crisis". It is the time when the real character of the expropriators is exposed. "In such moments of crisis", he says, "groups or classes or individuals, cannot hide their real feelings or character". The very situation which has now developed, speaks of the reality.

In a flush of enthusiasm, Nehru identifies this 'moment of crisis' as the time of revolution. And says that, "not only is a time of revolution a test of character, of courage, endurance and selflessness, it also brings out the real conflicts between different classes and groups which had so far been covered up by fine and vague phrases".

Nehru's use of the expression the "time of revolution" is an invitation for deep analysis. Being however beyond the scope of the current 'point' at issue, we cannot take up the question, whether it is really a revolutionary situation, ripe for the vital hit at the adversary. We are concerned presently with Nehru's advocacy of mass movement. People then, in the process of struggle come to know of the "real conflicts", which arise out of divergent interests. These conflicts are not a transient phenomenon, but "inherent" in a class-divided society.

1 Loc cit.
2 Loc cit.
This knowledge is a watershed in the attitude and thinking of the masses. They used to harbour, up till this moment an erroneous belief, driven essentially by their privileged adversary -- the belief of harmony of interest. This belief is shattered by the high voltage of the struggle, they are in. They now find that 'conflict of interest', is the reality and 'harmony of interest' was the myth. At this point of argument Nehru affirms: "But now that this rule is seriously challenged by a great popular movement, its real character appears in all its crudity and nakedness, and even the half-witted can see the reality of this imperialist exploitation resting on the bayonet."  

By this time, we should be in no doubt that in Nehru's thinking 'conflict of interest', is the supreme reality, and "class struggles are inherent in the present system" (the present acquisitive system). He speaks of it, not here or there, not on one or two occasions but quite often. The idea pervades almost all his works, especially the major works. At various places, he speak of 'clash of interests', or 'conflict of interests', between the privileged and the down-trodden as the unquestionable 'fact' of life.

The mass struggle then, which the people have launched; like a churning process, brings the cream of socio-economic relations to the full public view. The cream, the real thing, the stark reality; as Nehru thinks, is the "clash of interests". This reality, the people see for themselves. They see it

portrayed before their eyes when the "bayonet" is in full operation. The slightest attempt at change "meets with the
1 fierce opposition of the ruling or owning classes". They are
out to crush the down-trodden resisters. This response of
enmity fills them with rage, brings them a realization, that
they have nothing in common with the "owing classes". Their
proclamations and professions that they are their well-wishers,
are now correctly interpreted as a big farce. This realization
unites the down-trodden and gives them strength. And cumulative
strength employed in mass struggle is the force on which Nehru
counts as an instrument for change-over.

Thus mass struggle as an aspect of democratic method,
is the agency to which Nehru looks for the emancipation of
masses. The failure of democracy to which we referred earlier,
is the failure of capitalist parliamentary democracy. We can
best appreciate Nehru's viewpoint of the efficacy of mass
movement, which is the real, the genuine democracy, by placing
it in juxtaposition with the capitalist parliamentary democracy.
Perhaps, in order to emphasize this point, he himself portrays
the effect of each in a contrasting manner. In his words:

Ordinary peace time political activity such as elections in democratic countries / capitalist parliamentary democracies/, often confuses the average person. There is a deluge of oratory, and 
every candidate promises all manner of fine things, and the poor voter or man in the field or factory or shop is confused. There are no very clear lines of cleavage for him between one group and another. 2

1 Loc cit.
2 Nehru, Glimpses, op. cit., p. 1161.
These elections, instead of bringing enlightenment and awareness, by driving in the fact of "exploitation resting on bayonet"; "confuse the average person". As against this, Nehru continues to say:

But when mass struggle comes or in time of revolution, the real position stands out clearly as if lit by lightning. In such moments of crisis, groups or classes or individuals can not hide their real feelings or character. Truth will out. Truth is the fact of exploitation and oppression. Not only is a time of revolution a test of character, of courage, endurance and selflessness, it also brings out the real conflicts between different classes and groups. This is the TRUTH, which had so far been covered by fine and vague phrases.

In the traditional democratic elections then, the people's minds are confused, and the general atmosphere is one of darkness. Darkness of mind, instead of uniting and strengthening the masses, keeps them scattered, separated and weak. This leaves them unfit; both for electing the true representatives; and for attaining awareness of their 'true' relation, with the privileged owners of the means of production. As against this, the mass movement serves as an instrument of consciousness. It opens the people's eyes to the fleecing behaviour of the privileged. This enlightening effect further brings them together for a determined fight aimed at the capture of power.

We thus find that Nehru looks to 'Democracy', as a method of casting aside the privileged regime, with a view to establishing an egalitarian system.

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1 Loc cit. Emphasis added.
Before going ahead with our analysis of Nehru's attitude to mass movement, a question allied to his advocacy of mass struggle claims our prior attention. Despite being an advocate of mass movements, within the democratic framework he has not been seen in that light by most researchers on Nehru. Why it is so -- is something, we have to explore.

To be fair to my predecessors, it is to be noted that quite often, in his writings, Nehru does not identify the idea of mass movement with his own name. By and large, he associates the mass movement with the name of Gandhi or both Congress and Gandhi. It will be instructive to point out that even the quotation we cited in the immediately preceding section does not show if the mass movement, he admires, is the original idea of Nehru. That he realizes its usefulness is true, beyond doubt. But we cannot say that he is its author.

That Nehru associates mass movement with the name of Gandhi gives the impression that Nehru is only admiring, appreciating or at best endorsing what Gandhi enunciates without himself being the advocate of mass movement. If we have the patience to go deeper into Nehru's works, we would find that he is not really endorsing Gandhi; he propounds his own viewpoint. This inference is based on the fact not so far brought out; much less highlighted. The fact is that the mass movement that he appreciates is radically different from the one enunciated by Gandhi. With one, it is the agency of conversion; with the other, it is the agency of coercion.

"It seems to me a fact", says Nehru, "that cannot be disputed

1 Supra p. 326.
or challenged that a non-violent mass struggle coerces and is meant to coerce the other party".

Since, mass movement as the agency of change-over is a significant contribution of Nehru, it must be comprehensively discussed, even at the risk of some inevitable repetition.

Nehru associates non-violent mass movement, with the name of Gandhi perhaps in order to show that he owes this idea to him. Nehru was groping in the dark, in search of an appropriate technique (suiting a country like India), for the removal of the privileged regime. In this state of mind he comes across Gandhi's idea of non-violent non-cooperation. He receives it, with a sense of relief and satisfaction.

Nehru then accepts and adopts the non-violent, non-cooperation mass movement. And with all intellectual honesty, he acknowledges Gandhi's debt. Though he takes the idea from Gandhi, but develops it according to his own predilections. This position of Nehru is like that of Bentham who got the idea of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" from Hutcheson through Priestley; but gave it his own orientation.

Nehru then, acknowledges Gandhi's debt and associates the notion of mass movement with the name either of Congress or of both Congress and Gandhi. But it would be an error to assume that he accepts Gandhi's concept of mass movement

1 Nehru, Recent Essays, op. cit., p. 35.
3 C.L. Wypar, Political Thought (London, 1954), p. 84.
without modifications. It would also be wrong to infer that Nehru just borrows from Gandhi and follows him. Having accepted the non-cooperation mass movement as the agency for change, he refuses to accept the notion that it is useful for conversion. Instead he gives it an orientation which makes it something qualitatively different from that of Gandhi. To him, it is an agency of coercion. Its object is to pressurize the privileged into submission to the compelling demands of the launchers of the mass movement. To Gandhi, by contrast, mass movement is an agency of conversion. Through self-suffering, the privileged are sought to be converted.

Nehru thus thinks differently. So sure is he of his position regarding the place of coercion that he goes to the extent of correcting Gandhi. Correcting Gandhi, he says, that though he calls his method as a method of conversion, actually it is a means of coercion. "Gandhi obviously wants"; he says "to apply that pressure though he does not call it coercion". In a way coercion is inherent in mass movement, and so should Gandhi realize it, thinks Nehru. To make a fundamental correction in a notion like Gandhi's is tantamount to the enunciation of a new idea.

Nehru, then, quite often associates mass movement, in form, with the name of Gandhi and Congress. In content it carries the mark of his own personality. It is distinctly his original idea, central to his postulate being the element

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1 Supra pp. 257-77.
It must be asserted that the difference between the two approaches is not just one of degree but of kind. This changes the essence of each. What keeps one apart and distinct from the other is what may be called the Impacting Element. This is self-suffering according to Gandhi and coercion according to Nehru. This imparts to Nehru's mass movement a character which gives it the mark of uniqueness. And he basically differs from Gandhi.

To Nehru non-violent, non-cooperation mass movement far from being an agency of conversion through self-suffering, came to be a pressurising instrument. He points out, "I have no doubt that coercion or pressure is necessary to bring about political and social change in India". Without naming Gandhi and without perhaps meaning to hit him, he repudiates Gandhi’s idea saying "Indeed our non-violent mass movements of the past thirteen years have been powerful weapons to exercise this pressure". No doubt Nehru concedes that "the non-violent mass movements ... convert stray individuals from the opposing group and partly weaken the resistance of that group by removing the moral justification for domination and repression". But, "essentially they are processes to coerce the opposing nation or group".

1 Nehru, Recent Essays, op. cit., pp. 34-35.
2 Loc cit.
3 Loc cit.
4 Loc cit. Emphasis added.
Nehru aims at the upliftment of the masses. To achieve it he seeks abolition of privileges on the one hand and conquest of power by the masses on the other hand. Two options were open to him -- a violent class struggle or a non-violent mass struggle. He well appreciates the place of class struggle in history and also acknowledges the role of violence in the overthrow of privileges. Realization of the usefulness of violence, as seen earlier as against the dynamism of 'non-violence' put him in a predicament.

While making a choice, he has various considerations with him. Of these, the one over-riding others, is the maintenance of an enduring unshakable egalitarian system. With this consideration at the centre of things he finds that the non-violent method is superior to the violent. He maintains this position notwithstanding the fact that in terms of the central objective of the dislodgement of the privileged from ascendancy, he believes that violent action is useful. But mere dislodgement is not the objective of Nehru. He seeks dislodgement together with durability in the new order. The violent method fails to promise this. And hence it is that Nehru looks with favour towards the non-violent method. This method while retaining the benefits of the successful violent 'Means', avoids its drawbacks (like bloodshed, hatred and retaliatory measures). "It does offer", he says, "a moral equivalent for violent warfare". More than that, the method of non-violent mass movement, is a source of strength to the

1 Nehru, Recent Essays, op. cit., p. 35.
masses, which is wanting in the violent activity. On repudiating the notion that the "violent mentality increases the militancy of the masses", he maintains that "strength comes not from occasional exhibitions of individual or group violence but from mass organisation and the capacity for mass action".

While discussing the method of change-over, Nehru's emphasis lies on the point that masses must gain inner strength. The underlying idea in insisting on the strength of the people is to see them self-reliant. It is a firm conviction of Nehru that the personal strength of the very emancipation seekers is qualitatively superior to the impersonal outside gun force, howsoever strong otherwise. With this line of argument he says, "I am convinced that strength can only come to us from the masses". But it should be noted that by masses he means not merely a numerically huge number, but rather their cumulative inward potential, "the reserves of power", as he calls it. This power is like a "volcano, which has long seemed extinct", because of oppressive rule.

The "mass action" and "the reserves of power", within, we must note, are responsible for recharging the dormant potential for fighting out the privileged. The "reserves of

1 Nehru, Unity of India, op. cit., p. 120.
2 Loc cit.
3 Ibid., p. 134.
4 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., p. 42.
5 Loc cit. Emphasis added.
"power", is the inner vitality of the masses, the intrinsic strength, which had been suppressed. This inner vitality which to Nehru is the "inner fire", is a force to be reckoned with, being more powerful than "arms and ammunition".

This vital "inner fire", need however to be kindled, by the "schooling of big events". The one big event, that Nehru has in mind is the "mass struggle", corresponding to Marx's "class struggle". To Nehru, this mode of fighting the privileged is superior to the Marxian method, especially so, when viewed in the context of the compelling circumstances. The compelling circumstance for a country like India was the non-availability of gun power. "The mass struggle", then according to Nehru, "has one great advantage. It is the best and swiftest method of giving political education to the masses". The "schooling" in "political education", significantly is a part of the "bigger decisions". "These decisions and that action require the masses in intelligent and organised movement", whose chief aim is the achievement of the "mass ideals and mass welfare".

It is not difficult to see, what these "mass ideals" are: of course, as Nehru hastens to add, "mass welfare". This concept of 'welfare' should not however be confused with, what

1 Loc cit.
2 Nehru, Glimpses, op. cit., p. 1151.
3 Loc cit.
4 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., p. 114.
5 Loc cit.
6 Loc cit.
the capitalist states want to convey. To leave no doubt about Nehru's viewpoint, it would be appropriate to quote him directly. Bracketing the mass ideals and mass welfare together for their achievement he asserts that, there is "a powerful though partly unconscious desire on their part to do something to get rid of many burdens which have become quite unbearable".

From mass movement, which is "the school of events" for the masses, they have learnt two things, both equally important. One of these is, "to do something". The other one is "to get rid of many burdens". It is both pertinent and of interest to bear in mind, that both the lessons learnt from the school of events are the consequence of the masses having shaken off the condition of docility. Consciousness which they attain as a result of mass struggle, induces and inspires them to "do something", "to get rid of many burdens".

The much sought-after relief from 'burdens' is the relief from poverty. Now masses have gained so high a degree of awareness, that these burdens have "become unbearable". It is of interest to observe that what they previously tolerated quietly without a voice being raised, has become irksome to them. They have now become conscious of their degraded condition of poverty, and are provoked to "do something", to "get rid of", what has become a burden to them. It is not only a physical burden in the form of bearing a condition of

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1 Ibid., p. 222.
2 Nehru, India and the world, op. cit., p. 60.
hardship. The masses begin to feel that it is a sort of mental torture to live as unequals with those who are economically better off.

They are now in a challenging mood, ready to revolt against the established order to "get rid of", their physical and mental "burdens".

The revolting spirit to improve their living condition, it is obvious enough, from this discussion owes to the mass movement. Yet in order to highlight its importance for the build-up of the docile, servile man, into an electrified force, Nehru affirms that: "Fundamentally this is due to economic conditions, but also there is the fact of political movement" that "made them resent many things which they used to bear like dumb beasts".

Economic poverty, Nehru realizes, is a necessary condition for consciousness. But equally important is the push provided by the mass movement which causes the consciousness; and makes the people question and even challenge the authoritarian autocratic rule.

The mass movement, signifying 'disciplined struggle' against the privileged system, gives political education and reinforces the intrinsic inward strength of the people. Both (struggle and political education) together arouse consciousness, and impart self-confidence. Thus, "non-violent, non-cooperation, mass movement, was an active, dynamic and energising drive". It strongly charged them, and "lifted

a whole nation out of a morass of demoralisation and helplessness".

How it is easy for the masses to feel the pinch of poverty. But the pinch by itself and alone may not cause awareness. Masses may not become conscious of the fact that poverty is man-made and brought about by the exploitation of the upper classes. Instead they are likely to accept this condition of poverty as natural and become docile. The mental attitude of docility instead of inducing consciousness retards it. Mass movement achieves this difficult task. Its role is, to teach and embolden. Masses "learn their politics from great movements", like, "the civil disobedience movement", which "has taught the masses many a lesson which they will never forget". The one lesson which the movement's "suffering" and "struggle" have taught them is militant defiance. Now militant defiance is a profound quality in the individuality of Man. It is this quality which really imparts dignity to Man. It is the condition for the maintenance of a spirit of freedom. It is a strong counter-poise in reserve to pose a challenge to any one who may try to subvert freedom; or indulge in oppression, suppression or exploitation. In nature, magnitude and intensity, it is so powerful that it "shook the fabric of British rule in India", which had taken the shape of "fierce

1 Loc cit.
2 Ibid., p. 60.
3 Loc cit.
4 Loc cit.
5 Ibid., p. 205.
repression of the typical fascist kind").

It is then the self-confidence, the fighting potential, the realization of their role and place in society as something (all the gifts of mass struggle) which have given the masses the power to challenge the 'fascist' ferocity of an entrenched empire. This amazing achievement has been made possible, without the fire arms, without any chemical explosive. Explosives of course they do possess, but, it is the explosive of intrinsic, energised vitality.

Mass movement, then, as an agency of struggle, with unique results, has an important place in Nehru's thought. It gives energy to the people to shake the mighty ruling authority which derives its power from guns. It builds up a "pressure" which the exploiter rulers cannot withstand. More important than the pressure according to Nehru is the internal strength, which the movement imparts to the people. Indeed, it is the cumulative internal strength which enables the masses to build up an irresistible pressure. The pressure, capable of shaking the mighty "ruthless", "fascist" empire is the manifestation of self-reliance gained from the mass struggle.

Nehru's emphasis, thus on masses and mass movement, is understandable in the context of the build-up of the inward strength, which is a great psychological gain and is of enduring value. It has important role to play in the establishment and maintenance of an egalitarian society. Realizing this Nehru highlights the significance and the

1 Ibid., p. 206.
achievement of the psychological gain by contrast. He compares the attitude of the people before the mass movement with their attitude after the movement. They gain the capacity to resist oppression. As he says:

People discuss the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements in terms of constitutional action or otherwise. I have referred to this aspect earlier. May I put to you, how they have always impressed themselves on me? Of course these movements exercised tremendous pressure on the British government and shook government machinery. But their importance to my mind lay in the effect they had on our own people and especially the village masses. Poverty and long period of autocratic rule with its inevitable atmosphere of fear and coercion had thoroughly demoralized and degraded them. They had hardly any of the virtues that are necessary for citizenship; they were cuffed and bullied by every petty official, tax collector, policeman, landlord’s agent; they were utterly lacking in courage or the capacity for united action or resistance to oppression; they sneaked and told tails against each other; and when life became too hard, they sought an escape from it in death. It was all very depressing and deploring and yet one could hardly blame them for it; they were the victims of all-powerful circumstances. Non-cooperation dragged them out of this mire and gave them self-respect and self-reliance; they developed the habit of cooperative action; they acted courageously and did not submit so easily to unjust oppression; their outlook widened and they began to think a little in terms of India as a whole; they discussed political and economic questions (crudely no doubt) in their bazars and meeting places. It was a remarkable transformation. It was something far more important than constitutions and the structure of government. It was the foundation on which only a stable structure or constitution could be built up. 1

Here, Nehru is full of admiration for mass movement, which is capable of building up a New Man, by emergising the

internal strength. Our's will however be a partial understanding of Nehru if we complacently believe that it is just mass struggle which has created rebels out of the servile, submissive masses.

Broadly speaking Man becomes what he is, both by nurture and nature. The environmental factor like the mass struggle plays an important role in moulding man. It brings awareness to the suppressed masses. But to concentrate on the mass movement as the factor for reshaping man, to the exclusion of any other factor, is to miss an important point in Nehru's socialist philosophy. we must note that no less important in transforming man is the spirit, the inner vitality. "This unquenchable spirit of", the masses, says Nehru, "shines brightly through all their torment and suffering. That spirit will conquer, I have no doubt".

We can discover that in Nehru's system of Ideas, mass struggle as an external agent reacts with the 'inner vitality', the 'spirit' which is the natural endowment. When both combine, we have the rebels against autocracy and authoritarianism. While mass struggle imparts consciousness, the spark of 'spirit', which continues to give hope of rejuvenation. It can withstand the autocratic ways of rulers. "Not all the repression and suppression that", people "had to put up with" has damped "their spirit", "or made them waver in their passion for freedom". It can not only hold its own against

1 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., p. 62.
2 Loc cit.
the oppressive and repressive measures; it can even outmanoeuvre the autocratic designs. While it keeps giving hope to Man in his endeavour to overwhelmed the exploiter-ruler, the mass struggle reinforces the self-reliant spirit.

Mental degradation, which is the consequence of political overlordship and economic exploitation, constitutes to Nehru the real problem. And he wants to strike at this root cause of people's misery. A feeling of servility has to be overcome, fear is to be eradicated, suppressed spirit is to be awakened. Enlightened spirit and mass struggle gives the people "irresistible power". They gain consciousness. The "demoralized back-ward and broken up people suddenly straightened their backs and lifted their heads". Condition of docility and submissiveness, the handi-work of capitalism-imperialism, is shaken off. People gain new energy with a strong potential.

These gifts are the result of the build-up of morale and fearlessness. This build-up is the manifestation of a new Man with a militant spirit. He is the rebellious mind with strength to give an out-witting fight to the armed adversary.

This, then is the outstanding achievement of the mass struggle -- a new man with a rebellious mind.

Thus does Nehru count on the great psychological gain and put reliance on non-violent, non-cooperation mass movement

1 Nehru, Autobiography, op. cit., p. 76.
2 Loc cit.
for winning political freedom and laying a strong foundation for socialist society. Further, he thinks that for the establishment of egalitarianism, political power must be passed on to the masses. That is, they must have an effective control over the state machinery. It is to this mass power that we now turn.

**Power to the Masses**

The worth and potential of an idea depends on the fact as to how crucial is the issue raised by a thinker. Clarity in treatment, precision, logically sound treatment -- are important in their own way. By themselves only, they signify procedural nicety, without a claim, to be attacking the fundamentals of the problem. One of the most fundamental questions in the field of 'political science', and in the annals of socialist thought is, as to who would wield power in a country seeking to establish egalitarian society. Nehru thinks that they who need relief must themselves have the political power to work for the improvement of their lot. Power as such must go to them. As he says:

> In whose hands will power come when political freedom is achieved? For social change will depend on this and if we want social change, we must see that those who desire such change, have the power to bring it about. If this is not what we are aiming at, then it means that all our struggle is meant to make India safe for vested interests who desire no change. 1

Nehru is distinct and unwaveringly emphatic on the point that in case masses do not get power, result would be

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"inequality". Nothing approximating to socialism can come out of a system which denies effective power to the people at large.

This viewpoint of Nehru can be best appreciated when we keep it in juxtaposition with that of neo-capitalists. Their position is that without transferring power to the masses the character of the unequal society can be radically changed. According to them the altruistic role of the newly emerged professional managers, coupled with the social welfare activities of the state -- have basically transformed the acquisitive society. A digest of their ideas would perhaps give us a clear contrast with and a better perception of Nehru's ideas. According to them:

Capitalism in the twentieth century has transformed its character to the advantage of the hitherto unprivileged. In advanced capitalist countries though private property has not been legally abolished, its earlier nineteenth century character has been radically changed. Individual owners of private enterprise have merged themselves into firms, joint stock companies, corporations or cartels.

These companies are managed by the professional managers. They are no longer under the overlordship or control of the private owners. As such, protection of the interests of the capitalists who are legal owners, is no longer their primary concern. They are led not so much by a consideration of profit motive. Instead they are motivated in the performance of their duties by a sense of social responsibility. Result is that the otherwise 'evil effects' of capitalism are considerably reduced.

Apart from this argument, the neo-capitalists maintain that the state has come to assume a new role. Through economic planning, introduction of public sector and welfare services, the traditional angularities of private property have been much reduced.

These two approaches, working together, claim, the neo-capitalists, provide a sound alternative to the traditional account of socialism. Important question, however, for us is — what is the validity of these arguments? A word of caution must be interposed here. It is not the purpose of the present writer to assess, for its own sake, the validity of the claims of neo-capitalism. That is likely to be dismissed as a biased treatment. It is sought to explore in depth the real achievements of neo-capitalism. It would, then be possible to compare and assess as to how sound is Nehru's viewpoint.

The analysers of neo-capitalism point out that the conduct of professional managers is no different from those of owner-managers in its essentials. They are primarily led by a consideration of market economy rather than by a sense of social responsibility. Further the objective of the extension of public sector and the redistribution of national income, has not been fulfilled in spirit. The critique persuasively argues the point that, "the primary role of public industries in a capitalist economy is in fact socialisation of losses". What explains this crucially important phenomenon, according

1 Loc cit.
2 Ibid., p. 232.
to it, is that the power continues to be lodged in a small minority. The critique points out:

The naivete of this vision of power structure of advanced capitalism is obvious.... In Great Britain, the structure of power amounts to the permanent hegemony of one social bloc over another. 1

Here it would be necessary to utter a word of caution lest our meaning should be misunderstood. It is not our purpose to highlight the critique of neo-capitalism. Our intention is to lay down our findings: that Nehru presages the critique of neo-capitalism. According to Nehru capitalist economy characterised by private ownership of the means of production cannot be reformed into an egalitarian system. So long as one class or one group of people holds effective power in society, any move towards egalitarianism is inconceivable. The very idea of private ownership, no matter, how the private enterprise is managed, is antithetic to any basic reform aiming at egalitarianism. In the words of Nehru:

The idea is that individuals should not be allowed to exploit any of these methods or institutions or the labour of others to their own personal advantage. Today most of these are privately owned and exploited with the result that some people prosper and grow rich while society as a whole suffers greatly and masses remain poor. 2

The solution (of poverty and exploitation), according to him lies in this; "production and distribution should be largely socialised or controlled by the state, that is by the people as

1 Ibid., p. 235.
2 Supra Chapter on 'Democracy and Socialism'.
a whole". The basic idea is that power over the means of production and distribution must be exercised by the people as a whole and not by a small privileged minority. A small privileged group, if it possesses power in society, will not allow reforms of a fundamental nature. It would be obvious that this basic idea of Nehru runs through the critique of neo-capitalism.

Nehru thinks that so long as power remains vested in a privileged minority, no reform in the acquisitive, privileged society can bring about a basic change. This has been confirmed by the critique of neo-capitalism, which came years after the enunciation of Nehru. And herein lies the strength of Nehru's idea. According to him effective power must be in the hands of people at large, for a basic change towards social justice. Extension of public sector (a socialist or semi-socialist measure, according to some thinkers), will hardly produce the desired result, unless the relationship of power is changed. Mere extension of the public sector while keeping the power of the privileged in tact, would not bring about any primary change in the economic condition of the masses. This would be as good or as bad as state capitalism. As Nehru says:

This acquisitive economy, this policy of individual grab must go. In its place some form of planned socialist economy or cooperative economy must be established. This does not mean necessarily the victory of the working class, for a state may be organised on semi-socialist lines for the benefit of owning classes / as is the viewpoint of the critique of neo-capitalism as well/. A state socialism and state capitalism are much the same thing; the real

1 Ibid., p. 882.
question is, who is in command in the state, and who profits by it, the whole community or a particular possessing class. 1

An egalitarian society, according to Nehru is possible, only when power is transferred to the "hands of the masses", and when class hegemony and class rule is abolished. The possessing class should not only be deprived of power (both economic and political), but should also be eliminated. In this context, we may usefully read his article, "Whither India". It typically represents his viewpoint, that in the present day society of free private enterprise, class rule is inevitable. Divergent interests or conflict of interests are peculiar to it, and maintenance of class-structure is of the essence of "capitalism". By eliminating one, we can, at the same time eliminate the other. He therefore advocates its abolition. As he says:

History has never offered a more amazing paradox. It seems clear enough that the capitalist system of industry whatever its services in the past may have been, is no longer suited to the present methods of production. Technical advance has gone far ahead of the existing social structure and as in the past this hiatus causes most of our present day disorders. Till that lag is made up and a new system in keeping with the new technique is adopted, the disorders are likely to continue. 3

A little later he maintains:

It was not in the nature of capitalist system to deal satisfactorily with distribution, and production alone makes the world top heavy and unbalanced. To find a solution for distributing wealth and purchasing power evenly is to put an

1 Ibid., pp. 1470-1.
3 Ibid., pp. 49-50.
end to the basic inequalities of the capitalist system and to replace capitalism itself by a more scientific system. 1

Abolition of capitalism is not the end but a step towards socialism. As he says:

Whither India? Surely to the great human goal of social and economic equality, to the end of all exploitation of nation by nation and class by class; to national freedom, within the framework of an international co-operative socialist world federation. 2

With the objective, then, of egalitarianism, Nehru seeks independence from foreign control, naming it as nationalism. In this context, he makes a distinction between, what may be called narrow nationalism and true nationalism.

In narrow nationalism, the country seeks freedom from foreign rule. True nationalism aims at freedom from exploitation (foreign or indigenous). In narrow nationalism after the ouster of the foreign rule, effective power is acquired by the indigenous vested interests who try to hoodwink the people, cover up the real issue of resolving the conflicting interests of the privileged and the unprivileged. As Nehru says:

Again whose freedom are we particularly arriving for, for nationalism covers many conflicting elements? There is the feudal India.... There are the interests of foreign capital -- and home services. The nationalist answer /of the vested interests/ is to prefer home interests to foreign interests.... It tries to avoid disturbing the class divisions or the social status quo.... Various interests will somehow be accommodated, when the country is free. 3

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1 Ibid., p. 53.
2 Ibid., p. 63.
3 Ibid., p. 41. Emphasis added.
He further maintains:

If an indigenous government took the place of the foreign government and kept all the vested interests intact, this would not even be the shadow of freedom. 1

The indigenous vested interests, Nehru thinks seek mere political freedom from foreign rule. And in this objective, the privileged can carry with them the poor masses by ascribing their poverty to the foreign rule and their exploitation. Nehru thinks that the masses should understand the reality: First that the foreign capitalist-imperialist interests exploit the people of India. Second that, even the vested interests within India take advantage of the weak position of the masses and exploit them. It is easier for people to feel that foreigners are certainly apart from them. They are a different people. The impression and knowledge that they are foreigners easily drives into their head the fact that they (the foreigners) are responsible for their poverty. They offer friendly postures and gestures. They are "continually declaring before high heaven", says Nehru, "that they are trustees for our masses and India and England have common interests and can march hand in hand to a common destiny". But the masses are not misled, "because nationalism makes" them "realize the inherent conflict between the two national interests". However Nehru very significantly remarks: "But nationalism does not make us realize the equally inherent

1 Nehru, India and the World, op. cit., p. 58.
2 Ibid., pp. 42-43.
3 Icc cit.
and fundamental conflict between economic interests within the nation'.

The findings, then, of Nehru are that the attitude and behaviour of the indigenous vested interests are no different from those of the foreign vested interests. However, they "hide vested interests under cover of communalism or even nationalism". To confound the confusion, says Nehru, "there are the usual accompaniments of a growing nationalism -- an idealism, a mysticism, a feeling of exaltation, a belief in the mission of one's country, and something of the nature of religious revivalism."

In presenting this analysis of the socio-economic conditions Nehru seeks to highlight the fact that the possessing and non-possessing classes pursue different ends. The former pursue personal aggrandisement in disregard of or even at the cost of the latter. This conflict stands at the base of the present social system. Idealistic and mystical pronouncements, made by the vested interests in order to confuse and befog the mind should be analysed and correctly understood. We must, Nehru says, strive, "to comprehend the essential nature of social, economic and political reality". And the reality, as he comprehends is that:

1 Ibid., p. 43.
2 Ibid., p. 40.
3 Loc cit.
4 Ibid., p. 39.
A vital conflict of interests arises between these possessing classes as a whole and the others, between the Haves and Have-Not. All this is obvious enough but every effort is made to confuse the real issue by the holders of power, whether political or economic. 

Nehru realizes and enunciates that 'conflict' is a pre-eminent feature of the present day society. And the conflict itself owes to exploitation. The 'Haves' according to him are really concerned with, "the protection and perpetuation of the numerous vested interests that exploit the Indian masses". Highlighting the fact of exploitation, he focusses his attention on what he calls "the real issue" which consists in seeking "freedom from exploitation", carried on by the owners of special privileges.

Freedom from exploitation, then, is the key objective with Nehru. And, he seeks to achieve it (in a country like India) through True nationalism. This nationalism, according to him, has a connotation different from what the privileged indigenous interests take it to mean. With him, it means relief from the ill effects of exploitation. As he says:

India's immediate goal True nationalism, can therefore only be considered in terms of the ending of the exploitation of her people. Politically, it must mean independence and severance of British connection which means imperialist domination; economically and socially, it must mean the ending of all special class privileges and vested interests.

With social justice, egalitarianism or socialism as the ultimate objective, he rules out the possibility that owners of

1 Ibid., p. 42. Emphasis added.
2 Ibid., p. 53.
3 Ibid., p. 60.
private enterprise, who develop a vested interest, should be retained as possessors of political power. As he says:

This brings us to a consideration of the kind of Swaraj we are aiming at. Dr. Bhagvan Das with a most commendable persistence has been demanding for many years that Swaraj should be defined. I do not agree with him in some of his views but I do agree with him that we cannot go on talking vaguely about Swaraj without indicating however roughly what kind of Swaraj we are aiming at. Are the present owners of vested interests to be the successors of the British in the governance of the country? Obviously that cannot be the Congress policy for we have often declared that we are against the exploitation of the people. 1

Thus Nehru clearly maintains that the indigenous vested interests cannot be relied upon for rulership. They are bound to exploit. He further thinks that exploitation generates clash of interests. And in the existing class-divided society, a socialist cannot sit quiet and maintain neutrality. He must take sides. Nehru sides with the masses. In his words:

We cannot escape having to answer the question now or later, for the freedom of which class or classes in India are we especially striving? Do we place the masses, the peasantry and workers first or some other small class at the head of our list? Let us give the benefits of freedom to as many groups and classes, as possible but essentially whom do we stand for, and when a conflict arises whose side must we take? To say that we shall not answer that question now, is itself an answer and taking of sides, for it means that we stand by the existing order, the status quo. 2

In the fore-cited quotation, though Nehru does not explicitly answer the question he has raised, his mental approach is obvious. It follows from what he says that in the conflict,

1 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., pp. 36-37. Emphasis added.
2 Nehru, India and the World, op. cit., pp. 43-44.
the down-trodden, unprivileged are to be preferred. Their good
must be looked after. Their interests must be protected. This
according to him can be achieved only if the unprivileged masses
themselves have the power. As he says:

Essentially we aim at the conquest of power, power
for the Indian people to shape their destiny, and
that power will only come through our own strength
and will to achieve.  

Not only here he gives vent to this important idea on a
number of other occasions. This shows a strong conviction, he
has, has for this idea. "So inevitably", he says, "we must
aim at strengthening the masses so that they may effectively
hold power when imperialism fades away from India".

Power to the masses and removal of poverty, we must
observe are inextricably bound up, in Nehru's thinking. The
chief purpose of getting power, is to utilize it for the
establishment of an egalitarian society. In nutshell we can
say that according to Nehru, Freedom and Equality are
inextricably linked. Political freedom has no meaning if it
is not accompanied by economic and social equality. To bring
about economic equality and maintain it, power must effectively
lie with the people at large. As he says:

I analysed that freedom and what it should
mean to the hundreds of million of our
people. We wanted no change of masters from
white to brown, but a real people's rule by
the people, and for the people and an ending
of our poverty and misery.  

1 Nehru, Eighteen Months, op. cit., p. 120.
2 Ibid., p. 37.
3 Nehru, Discovery, op. cit., p. 62.
Keeping the entire argument in view, we find that mass movement, according to Nehru, is the agency for setting aside the privileges. This viewpoint is fundamentally different from the understanding of M.N. Das. "Nehru realized", he maintains, "that the concept of power through the electorate and socialism through the state, was to be his main formula". This seems a contradiction in terms. State with Nehru, as we argued earlier (in the sub-chapter "STATE"), has been a "status quo" organization, all through history. It is the agency through which the dominant class maintains its superior position, both economic and political. To expect the state to introduce "socialism", means only to misinterpret Nehru's ideas.

To return to the argument -- once the privileged are driven out, power must be held by the masses. It is then only that a strong foundation for socialism can be laid down. Otherwise the alternative would be class domination and perpetuation of inequality.

Power to the masses -- is a profound idea and a great ideal. Once the masses effectively hold power, a remarkable change, no doubt can be effected in society. Nehru optimistically hopes that a new, 'People's Civilisation with relief to man' in marked contrast to the centuries old money civilisation -- will emerge. What, however, he omits is to give a convincing method for the masses to hold power. The method involves the all-important issue as to how the masses

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can acquire sufficient strength to overpower and defeat the vested interests?

Masses so far have not been known in history to have acquired power. Some day they may! Despite their having courage and daring around the revolutionary period of 1789 — the masses could not hold power. The famous, "oath of the Tennis Court", remains only a symbolic expression of the daring of the people, without their having acquired power. So was the fate of the Paris Commune of 1871. More striking in this regard, is the condition of the people in the Soviet Union and China. Notwithstanding the fact that there is a strong institutional framework in favour of the masses, the mechanics of power have so operated that the people have not so far been able to hold power. Crowning all these historical experiences, where masses have not so far been able to acquire power — is the contemporary Indian situation. Our democracy professes to be based on the "power of the masses", though democracy has failed to give "power to the masses". The very political rulers who are supposed to work for making this ideal a reality (by making them more and more conscious of their potentialities and rights), indeed hinder this development. Instead we see an implicit struggle between the 'Power of the political rulers' and other elite who seek power under the slogan of 'Power to the masses'.

The irony of the Indian situation is, that while the people's representatives have a vested interest in the ignorance of the masses; the masses unconscious of their rights, do not realize this. Their latent power however, is an
undeniable fact. This was conspicuously exhibited in the 1977 general elections. It was their power which overthrew the coercive rule of the emergency period. But the new rulers who were brought to power did not serve the masses any better.

If the masses can not themselves exercise power then power can be wielded only as a fiduciary trust as Locke believed. 'Power in trust' means that it can not only be taken back, it will also be used in a manner which will be responsive to the people's hopes and aspirations. Crushed by years of injustice the masses seek relief from these burdens. They have the power (latent, of course), but not the skill to use this power, to throw off the burdens. They employ an agent (choose a representative) to properly wield this power. But unfortunately in this process of giving him the "power in trust" -- the agent becomes the master. He deceives the people.

Power to the masses remains therefore, a myth! As against this, Nehru has nowhere tried to prove that the masses can become strong enough to hold power, "when imperialism fades away", from a colonial country like India.

Nehru's argument is weak on another score as well. He fails to show convincingly, how masses with individual attitudes, can be organised into a well-knit body, at least for the purpose of giving battle to the vested interests. In this regard a comparison with Lenin will be instructive. Lenin shows a crucial concern for preparing the masses to give fight to the privileged opponent. In *What is to be Done*, he discusses the role of leadership in organising the amorphous
masses into a FORCE. According to him, it is the 'Intellectual professional revolutionaries', well conversant with the "Laws of Development of Society", who are fit for leadership. Their primary function is to infuse consciousness. And it is under their leadership that masses can cultivate the necessary revolutionary fervour, and gain strength and give a matching fight. With knowledge and organisational skill, they thus play an indispensable role.

But unlike Lenin, Nehru fails to provide for the specific method to organise the masses into a fighting force. He also fails to show, how the objective of "Power of the masses", can be realized. Of course, he suggests certain things. But his suggestions in this regard are inadequate. One relates to the education value of the elections; the other relates to the role of election candidate. As for the first, no doubt during election days people get political education. In order, however to make it an effective instrument for power and change, the political education must be a regular feature. It must become a way of life with the masses. As for the second suggestion -- the election candidate, is supposed to infuse consciousness among the masses, expose people's minds to the reality of exploitation embodied in the contemporary system. Though good it does not appear to be a realizable practical ideal. A Nehru may undertake the job of bringing awareness to the people at large. But Nehrus are rare.

This two-fold failure then suggests that Nehru is perhaps giving us an unrealistic romantic ideal, of 'Power of the masses'. However, it is not a sheer 'a priori' notion,
Future of socialism lies with the effective "Power to the masses". This alone can prevent the danger the twentieth century has witnessed. Both the developed and the developing countries (or under-developed countries) face the danger of dictatorship -- whether it appears in the form of Fascism, open military dictatorship or any other form. Mass consciousness, or effective power of the masses, alone, can save mankind from the possible menace of arbitrary rule.

Nehru's method for bringing about real social justice in society is different from that of Fabians and the neo-capitalists. Fabians primarily put reliance on Parliament as the agency of social change. This has been found inadequate by Nehru. Neo-capitalists argue that the professional managers, not essentially concerned with the interests of the legal owners proceed from a consideration of social justice. They act with a sense of social responsibility and hence try to remove inequality. Nehru's solution to inequality is different. While disagreeing with the neo-capitalists, he presages the critique.