

PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES

THE ARCHITECT OF MODERN INDIA: THE LEGACY OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

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One of the most influential figures in independent India was its first Prime Minister, a follower of Mahatma Gandhi – Jawaharlal Nehru. He was born on November 14, 1889 in Allahabad (present-day Uttar Pradesh) in the family of a wealthy lawyer and politician Motilal Nehru. His mother, Swarup Rani, came from an influential Bragman family. Nehru got education in the United Kingdom: he studied at Harrow School, and then at the University of Cambridge, where he received a degree in natural sciences. He later studied law in London and became a lawyer. After returning to India and joining the struggle for independence, he quickly became one of the leading figures in the Indian National Congress (INC). He was arrested several times for participating in nationalist campaigns, such as the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Quit India Movement. However, his political career was successful and continued until his death in 1964 [4].

Nehru's views on building a new India were based on the ideas of secularism and laicity, as well as the principles of democratic socialism. In particular, he emphasized that the state should not have an official religion. He sought to create India where all religions would have equal rights, and national politics would be separated from the influence of religion. The principle of religion equality is very important both for then and present-day India. Nehru regarded religion as a private matter of each citizen. He believed that the state should not grant preferences to any religion or interfere with religious practices. This made it possible to avoid the dominance of one religion, in particular Hinduism, in the country where Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and representatives of other confessions lived.

Religious conflicts are one of the reasons for the internal separation of India, as well as one of the reasons for the war with Pakistan. According to Nehru, it was rooted in the British colonial policy. In its radical form, religious fanaticism was an instrument of colonial rule that divided Indian society [3]. For Nehru,

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secularism was a way to counter the religious divisions laid down by colonial administrations.

In his policy, Nehru sought to ensure that no religion was used as a basis for discrimination or privilege. He supported constitutional provisions that ensured freedom of religion, as well as prohibited religious discrimination.

Under Nehru's leadership, the Constitution of India of 1950 enshrined the principle of secularism. Here is a list of articles related to religious freedom and the protection of minorities:

- Equality before the law «The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India» [2, Article 14];

- Prohibition of discrimination based on religion, race, caste, gender or place of birth. Moreover, the article includes a fairly wide range of issues: restrictions on staying in different territories, access to public places, use of municipal wells, roads, etc. [2, Article 15].

- Freedom of conscience and freedom to manifest the religion, freely perform religious rites, and spread religion. At the same time, the article establishes the right of the state to facilitate, for example, construction of religious buildings and temples [2, Article 25].

- Protection of the interests of minorities. «(1) Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same. (2) No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them» [2, Article 29].

- The right of minorities to establish and manage educational institutions «(1) All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. (2) The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language» [2, Article 30].

Thus, Nehru managed to consolidate the principle of secularism constitutionally, which became the main tool for preserving the unity of multicultural India, where representatives of very different religious denominations live side by side on the same territory.

Nehru's economic policy was defined by him as democratic socialism. The key points of the policy are as follows:

1. Five-year plans. Introduction of centralized planning based on socialist principles.

2. Industrialization. Creation of the public sector of heavy industry, in particular, in power industry, mechanical engineering and steel sector.

3. Agriculture. Focus on agrarian reform, including land redistribution.
4. Social equality. Priority of economic justice over profitability.

Jawaharlal Nehru's economic policies integrated democratic socialism and sought to balance the state industrialization and the involvement of private entrepreneurship within a “mixed economy”. To increase the country's potential, Nehru limited opportunities for foreign investment. The state financed large-scale infrastructure projects, i.e., the construction of hydroelectric power plants.

Having analysed in detail the political and economic transformation of India during the first three decades after independence, Frank Frenkel has come to the following conclusions. Nehru sought to separate the spheres of influence of the public and private sectors. The first one was given a key role, and the private sector had a local significance. However, this was done because of the desire to balance economic development and social equality, using the state tools to combat inequality and provide basic social services.

The researcher highlights the following difficulties faced by the Nehru government: bureaucracy, high levels of poverty, inefficiency of previous social policies, and uneven distribution of resources. These problems were solved through a “gradual revolution”. In other words, Nehru's democratic socialism is a search for a balance between the state intervention and private initiatives [1].

The assessment of Nehru's policy is ambiguous. Criticism is related to such issues as slow economic growth, too high role of the state in the economy, aggravation of the conflict with Pakistan over Kashmir.

Nevertheless, the contribution to the development of both Indian statehood and the formation of a new national identity is significant. As the Prime Minister, Nehru continued Gandhi's course, seeking to unite Indian society. His main goal was to unite India as a multinational, multilingual and multireligious country, but without defining one religion or language as dominant. Nehru laid the foundations of modern India as a secular and democratic state, where unity is based on mutual recognition of cultural and religious diversity. His ideas about “unity in diversity” became the principle that defined Indian national identity.

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