

Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru: An Analysis

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Abstract: Nehru's philosophy emerged from a wide array of sources and personalities which could be construed that his philosophy emerged from his engagement with the practical world. Nehru not only studied and wrote about but also engaged himself with the philosophy of history, the ontological status of system over individual, civilizational consciousness, science and progress, democracy and its limits, cosmopolitanism, religion, nationalism and anti-imperialism. His engagement with these issues under various rubrics gave rise to patterns, coherence, interconnections and meanings, ultimately resulting into a philosophy that is epistemologically insightful and illuminating for the people of the Third World. It is also emancipatory in nature because Nehru's practical engagement with the wider world and philosophical musings worked for the liberation of the people in the twentieth century.

Introduction

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), the first Prime Minister of modern India, is generally regarded as the founder of modern India. He had been a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and a prominent nationalist leader who fought for India's independence. Nehru had been prime Minister of India for over seventeen years (1947-1964). He was not a traditional politician or a statesman; rather he was a rare statesman of world historical-importance (Brecher, 1959). He was an intellectual par excellence and a prolific writer. In his life, Nehru came into touch with a wide array of great personalities. In a conversation with French journalist Tibor Mende (1956), Nehru said that he was influenced by a galaxy of renowned personalities such as Rabindranath Tagore, India's literary genius and Nobel laureate in literature, Vivekananda, a Hindu mystic and revivalist, Mahatma Gandhi, India's Independence leader and prophet of non-violence, Annie Besant, an Irish theosophist and later Indian freedom fighter, Harold J. Laski, a political scientist and British labor party leader, Mr. F. T. Brooks, a theosophist and tutor, Bertrand Russell, a philosopher and activist, Bernard Shaw, a play-wright and Lord Keynes, one of the most influential economists of the twentieth century. Nehru was influenced by them in a variety of ways. The writings of H. G. Wells, a writer and world historian, Mazzini, the father of Italian nationalism, Karl Marx, one of the foremost philosophers of modern world and Reinhold Niebuhr, an American theologian and realist thinker also left their imprint upon Nehru's intellectual mind. Nehru spent his formative years in Britain, which certainly left imprint on the development of his philosophical

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views about the world by making him familiar with Western and British culture including political culture. Nehru also claimed that the liberal tradition of the 19th century exerted so much influence upon him that it could hardly be ignored. According to Soviet Indologist Orest Martyshin, Nehru rightly claimed that he had become a queer mixture of the East and West; he was out of place everywhere and at home nowhere (Martyshin, 1989). This way Nehru sought to claim a cosmopolitan self attached to no single place in the world.

The Bolshevik Revolution of Russia in 1917 also molded his intellectual insights, though he never attempted to write his own philosophy in a consistent manner. His keen, receptive mind and skepticism appealed to all the ideological currents and thoughts. According to his biographer Michael Brecher, his thoughts are spread throughout his voluminous writings, each reflecting the primacy of one of these strands at a given point in time. Nowhere has there been a systematic effort on Nehru's part to integrate them into a consistent personal political philosophy because he is an eclectic in intellectual matters (Brecher, 1959). Overall, they reflect Nehru's, philosophical bent of mind. Nevertheless, he was a practical politician who sought to implement his ideas in the world of politics, nationally and internationally. Philosopher Martin Heidegger, the most important philosopher of the twentieth century, said that all thought or philosophy arose as a result of the inevitable forms of human practical engagement with the world (Lane, 2003). Nehru was a thinker, visionary and philosopher at one level. On another level, he also engaged himself with the practical world of politics. In this backdrop, we seek to highlight Nehru's philosophy in life.

There is a caveat, however. Since Nehru's philosophy is much broader than the space allowed here can cover, we shall not deal with every aspect of Nehru's philosophy. Rather, we shall focus upon some unfamiliar aspects of his philosophy. Accordingly, much familiar Nehruvian ideas such as socialism and nonalignment will not be covered here. Anyway, unfamiliar aspects of his philosophy covered here are under the rubric of philosophy of history, ontological status of system over individuals, civilizational consciousness, science and progress, democracy and its limits, cosmopolitanism, nationalism and imperialism.

Philosophy of history

Philosophy of history deals with a number of questions such as what history consists of- individual actions, social structures, periods and regions, civilizations, large causal processes, divine intervention; (2) what meaning, structure, or direction, beyond the individual events history possesses; (3) What involves in history are knowing, representing, and explaining history; (4) how human history is constitutive of the human present (Little, 2012). Originally articulated by Greek historians, Herodotus and Thucydides, philosophy of history was elevated to its philosophical status in the writings by Ibn Khaldun, the author of *An Introduction to History*. Modern philosophers who raised a set

of questions about the large direction and meaning of history are Vico, Herder, and Hegel. Of the trio, it is Fredrich Hegel who developed philosophy of history most elegantly and popularized it as a part of philosophical discourse in his *The Philosophy of History* but Hegel's philosophy of history was *Eurocentric*. In fact, it is Johann Gottfried Herder, another German philosopher who discovered a variety of meanings in the philosophy of history from a relativistic worldview in his *Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*. Nehru's worldview had been influenced by philosophy of history. Both as a student as well as scholar, Nehru developed keen interest in exploring the meaning of India as well as age from the standpoint of world history. In fact, he was interested in past not for its own sake but for finding its meaning in the context of the present and the meaning of the present in the context of the past as a whole. Thus Nehru vacillates between the past and the present while seeking to discover the meaning of history.

Nehru had been enormously influenced by H. G. Wells, a historian and writer because the latter introduced a new approach to write world history. Unlike other historians of the era, H. G. Wells went beyond Eurocentrism and accommodated China, India and the Middle East in his writings. While talking about writings of history, Nehru became critical of nationalist historians for their maltreatment of Asia. He was also critical of nationalist historians of India as well. What he sought to press home was that both the nationalist and imperialist approach distorts history, suppressing it. As a nationalist, Nehru himself wrote the history of India in his classic *The Discovery of India*, which sought to glorify the heritage of India, but he wrote in such a way that he overcame the tendencies often associated with parochial nationalism. Praising Nehru's objective approach to Indian history, David Kopf observes that Nehru was proud of the achievements of India in mathematics and science, the arts and literature, philosophy, and religion but sought to see those achievements in terms of India's interdependence with Greece, Iran, China the Islamic World, and Europe. In fact, all these were written in such a way as to preclude the slightest nationalist bigotry and distortion (Kopf, 1991). Moreover, he was critical of the philosophy of history that Oswald Spangler underlined in his classic *The Decline of the West*. Nehru criticized Spangler because he thought that Spangler lost objectivity while seeking to fit it within his own philosophy of history (Nehru, 1989)

Ontological Status of System Over Individual

A corollary of Nehru's philosophy of history had been his idea over the philosophical debate in regard to the ontological status between the individual and the system. A caveat is in order, however. What is ontology? In philosophy, ontology is generally the study of being, or of what applies neutrally to everything that is real. What is real in history, individual or social structure? In other words, who plays a primary role in history, individual or social structure? Karl Marx raised this age old question when he said in his *The Eighteenth Brumaire* that men make their own history, but they do not make it under the circumstances of their own choosing. This way Karl Marx sought to

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accommodate both individual agent and social structure but he ended up giving ontological primacy to the overarching social structure over individual agent.

Likewise, Nehru had always sought to give primacy to the system over the individual in his thought in that he believed that the system is overarching and thus hegemonic and the individual is not an autonomous actor within all-powerful system. From this systemic angle, he held the system and not individuals responsible for the ills of the society such as tyranny or exploitation. In this respect, Marxism had influenced Nehru since he, by taking a cue from Karl Marx, argued the Marxist line of thought (Nehru, 1946). For English imperialism, he blamed not individuals but the system. Continuing this line of argument, Nehru said that we are much inclined to forget this distinction between individuals and system India had been under British imperialism, and Indians fight this imperialism with all their might. But the Englishmen who happened to support this system in India should not be blamed. They were simply cogs in a huge machine powerless to make any difference to its movement and accordingly, the fault had always been ingrained within with the system, not with individuals (Nehru, 1989).

Civilization Consciousness

Modern liberal historians have sought to squash civilizational consciousness from history by denying it as a unit of analysis in history in recent times but civilization has until recently been part of historical studies. Max Weber, a German sociologist as well as historian, has privileged civilization while comparing various civilizations, especially the East and the West in his seminal study *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Oswald Spengler, another prominent German historian, focused on civilizational consciousness through which he explored the decadence of the West versus the East in his *The Decline of the West*. However, it is British historian Arnold Toynbee who established both civilization as a unit of analysis in historical studies and civilizational consciousness as an age old spirit of humankind in his twelve volume magnum opus *A Study of History*. However, faced with the challenge of liberal historians in the post-Cold War world order, Samuel P. Huntington, a Harvard political scientist rose to the occasion by refocusing the study of civilizations and privileging civilizational consciousness in place of overarching ideologies such as communism and liberal democracy as a mark of human identity in his authoritative book *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order* in 1996. Nehru's civilizational consciousness, as will be explored later, had been immensely influenced by these world famous historians.

As part of historical thinking, Nehru profusely read Indian history, reflected upon it and made a critical assessment of it. While assessing Indian history, he developed civilization consciousness in the sense that he became highly impressed with the cultural achievements of India. According to Nehru, he read Indian history and her abundant ancient literature and was powerfully impressed by the vigor of the thought, the clarity of the language, and the richness of the

mind that lay behind it. In fact, Nehru took a stock of the Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Greek, the Indian and the Chinese civilizations but what amazed him most is the continuity of Indian and Chinese civilizations.

What impressed Nehru most is the resultant synthetic character of India's culture and rejuvenation, which, Nehru thought, developed because of India's absorptive capacity of foreign elements and a process of continuity irrespective of changes. Undoubtedly, Nehru had been insightful about the absorptive capacity of India's age-old civilization, but it should be admitted that the Sinic civilization had been much more successful in absorbing foreign elements than its Indian counterpart. Nehru had lost sight of it. However, what troubled Nehru most about India's past was her loss of political freedom or lack of political unity or neglect of the striving for achieving it in her history.

Science and Progress

Progress has been the spirit of human history and it is science that has been the motor of historical progress. Max Weber has explored progress in history through modern science between the Oriental and Occidental civilizations in his classic study *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Sociologist Robert Nisbet made a comprehensive study of the idea of progress and showed how progress figured prominently in the history of the Western civilization in his seminal study *History of the Idea of Progress*. Progress as an idea is based on positivistic understanding of both philosophy and science.

Nehru who was a votary of modern science and technology believed in progress though science, though he had been skeptical of it as well. Anyway, Nehru believed that the real value of science lies in widening the spirit of man and thereby bettering humanity at large. Indeed, Nehru, a rationalist thinker, had been optimistic about the fruits of modern science. He regarded the modern epoch as an era of science and technology and thought that many of the problems of the world had been solved by technological development. The only positive result of British rule in India, according to Nehru, was the gift of science and its modern offspring (Nehru, 1949). According to him, the modern industrial age had laid down the basis of material welfare that had made possible cultural and spiritual progress far easier for a large number of people. In this respect, Nehru was highly influenced by the goal of the Enlightenment that made him an optimist of the future in terms of the development strategy that he initiated for India. However, what is interesting here is that Nehru sought to use Western science for the spiritual progress of Eastern people. Nehru believed that India would make a great stride in development once she was free from British colonialism. Nehru was very much optimistic about India in regard to the age-old caste system. Based on this optimistic belief, Nehru thought that the caste system, which had hindered India's progress, would finally fade away, though he acknowledged that the process would be slow (Brecher, 1959). Overall, he was optimistic of India's progress, though he was cautiously optimistic about it. However optimistic Nehru had been about India, he seemed to become

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pessimistic about human future in the 1950s, especially in the shadow of the nuclear bomb that was developed as part of the East-West Cold War politics in the post-World War II international system. What was disconcerting to him was the pervasive effect of the atomic bomb that had already cast shadow over the future of humans

Perhaps, Nehru should not have been so pessimistic about the misuse of science by men because he loved science and believed in the scientific future of humankind. Interestingly, Nehru had also been introspective about the limitations of science because both science and man's mastering of science, Nehru thought, had become purposeless. Nehru also thought about the limitations of science in the domains of art, poetry, emotion and the inner goodness of man.

Thus Nehru seemed to be both critical of the positivistic understanding of both life and science and the limitations that these views had been fraught with. In other words, Nehru seems to go beyond the positivistic understanding of both life and science and enters the domains of art, culture and aesthetic areas where science necessarily experiences limitations in understanding the meaning of life characterized by the recognition of the inner goodness of man. Based on this understanding of the inter-relations between science and humanism, Nehru finally sought to transcend both science and humanism and believed in scientific humanism that he was profoundly influenced by the ideas of Einstein, Spinoza, Sir James Jeans and ancient Hindu scripture, the Upanishads.

Democracy and its Limits

Nehru has been regarded as an apostle of democracy in India (Joseph, Mark and Joel, 1996) and it is widely recognized that he contributed most successfully to the development of India as a "stellar" (Palmer, 1970) democracy in the Third World based on liberal values and system of government. It is an undeniable fact that India's democracy owes a lot to individual like Nehru (Magstadt, 1991). However, it is difficult to trace the origin of Nehru's democratic ideals to any specific sources; rather, Nehru claimed that he was reared in the liberal humanist tradition of the nineteenth century (Mende, 1956). Thus Nehru's democratic thought is more a product of this broad tradition, the humanist liberal tradition. (Smith, 1958). It is right that Nehru believed in liberal democracy but his idea of democracy was more action-oriented, though peaceful in nature. Nehru said that democracy meant to him an attempt at the solution of problems by peaceful means.

While appreciating the ideas of democracy and individual freedom, he did not lose sight of the limitations that democracy had experienced when it was divorced from equality. For example, he appreciated the right to vote, a fundamental right in a democratic polity but at the same time he had been aware of the limitation that mere right to vote had caused in the absence of economic equality.

The notion of democracy that Nehru had was thus broader than the democracy advocated by classical liberalism of Adam Smith because the latter had been found deficient in meeting the needs of people. Here Nehru's idea of democracy is more commensurate with the philosophy of Thomas Hill Green (Roskin, 2000) who postulated that the government should step in to maintain an adequate standard of living for everyone. Thus Nehru's idea of democracy is similar to Green's idea of positive freedom that ensures an egalitarian society in a democracy. Nehru thus sought to oppose what he called "bourgeoisie democracy." From the standpoint of positive freedom as advocated by Thomas Hill Green, Nehru has been fiercely critical of the parliamentary government and bourgeoisie democracy

Nehru's criticism of bourgeoisie and parliamentary democracy is pertinent because parliamentary democracy is more procedural than substantive in the sense that it entitles the citizenry with voting rights but not with either employment or education. As a result, democracy loses its meaning to the citizenry (Mcpherson, 1977). However, Nehru had been very inconsistent in his thinking about democracy because the same Nehru who had been critical of bourgeoisie and parliamentary democracy in his early years turned out to be the most important exponent as well as defender of both in India. Indeed, Nehru defended India's parliamentary democracy in a speech to the parliament. The underlying meaning of this somersault by Nehru is that his preference for political equality, which he came to think of as the basis for realizing other rights, is a modification of his philosophy of democracy.

Cosmopolitan internationalism

Another plank, perhaps the most important one in Nehru's political philosophy, is his lofty notion of cosmopolitan internationalism. It should bear mentioning here that cosmopolitanism as a philosophy was first propagated by the stoic philosophers in ancient Greece and Rome. The same tradition also existed in ancient Hindu, Buddhist and Confucian religions. Cosmopolitanism stands for one world and regards people as the citizens of the world. In modern parlance, cosmopolitanism means duties and justice beyond border. Cosmopolitanism received a boost with the publication of Immanuel Kant's *Idea for A Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent*. But Kant's cosmopolitan vision was never realized; rather, the world evolved based on nation states and internecine warfare among them. Both the World War I and World War II and the resultant man slaughters including the Holocaust totally dashed to the ground any hope of cosmopolitan thinking. Nevertheless, philosophers like Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers, having been disappointed with the Holocaust, pioneered cosmopolitan thinking in the second half of the twentieth century. Steve Biko, a leader of Black Consciousness in South Africa, also developed cosmopolitan idea called universal humanism based on black consciousness. Among statesman, Nehru occupies an honored position for his cosmopolitan vision on world affairs because he sought to transcend the nation states based international system and make an integrated world based on an international body like the UN.

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Nehru's cosmopolitan internationalism has been influenced by both liberal humanism and Indian culture and traditions. It reflected the thinking of Swami Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi. Nehru combined their ideas with his own assessment of ground realities in terms of removal of imperialism, social injustice and economic dependence. (Kaushik, 2000). Nehru, a cosmopolitan internationalist, could not think of India's independence as an isolated affair from the wider world, rather, he saw it as part of the world community. Moreover, Nehru justified internationalism from the standpoint of India's history, especially from the standpoint of the achievements of India's illustrious forefathers (Nehru, 1946).

Moreover, Nehru did not find any meaning in the old type of total national independence marked by isolation. Rather, he sought to constrain India's independence in agreement with other nations within the context of some mutually agreed upon international framework. Finally, he envisioned India's independence within the constraint of internationalism, ushering in an era of world cooperation among nations. Thus Nehru cautiously conceives of the cosmopolitan role of both India and Indians but at another level, he proudly acknowledges the cosmopolitan role that India had already played in international sphere. He argued that India, for all her intense nationalist fervor, had gone further than many other nations in her acceptance of real internationalism and the coordination and even to some extent the subordination of the independent nation state to a world organization.

No doubt, Nehru was a nationalist leader and a product of the Anti-Colonial Nationalist Revolution of the twentieth century, but he is a rare leader who sought to transcend nationalism. Mahatma Gandhi himself paid tribute to Nehru's cosmopolitan thought as he said, "Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is an Indian to the core but, being also an internationalist, he made us accustomed to looking at everything in the internationalist light, instead of the parochial" (Gandhi quoted in Brecher, 1959).

Nehru's sense of cosmopolitan internationalism became pronounced in his commitment to international organizations like the UN because when the very existence of the UN became a tug war in the East-West Cold War politics that marked world affairs in the Post-World War II period, Nehru not only expressed his commitment to the UN but also made it clear that had there been no organization like the UN, it would be an imperative for the whole world to create a world body like the UN.

Religion

Nehru had not been a religious man because it had no appeal for him. As a man with scientific mind, he also found religion dogmatic. He said that religion did not attract him because it was not scientific, rather, it was dogmatic. Nevertheless, Nehru had to deal with religion in almost in every possible aspect of active life because the land in which he was born and played an important role had always been dominated by religious way of life (Braudel, 1994). In his early

life, he was influenced by the theosophy of his teacher and secular attitude of his father (Nehru, 1949). Nehru's view about religion had been ambivalent because while recognizing its positive role in negotiating with the uncharted regions of human experience, that is, by the scientific positive knowledge of the day (Nehru, 1946).

Nehru became critical of religion for its being used for political purposes. From this perspective, he became terribly hostile to religion because he regarded it as "obscurationist" force in history. He attacked communalism which he regarded as the work of British imperialism and of the creation of ambitious Hindu and Muslim politicians. He insisted that communalism between Hindu and Muslim was more a fight between classes and not faiths, between poor peasants and rich landlords, workers and capitalists (Edwardes, 1971).

He dismissed Hinduism, but again, he laid faith in Hindu theory of karma and reincarnation, which ended up justifying more an environmental factor influencing his worldview. Nehru was critical of Gandhi because of his overemphasis on Hindu religion in his theory of non-violent non-cooperation but again, he came somewhat nearer to a religious frame of mind as a result of Gandhi's influence upon him (Brown, 2003). This explains why there took place a discernible change in his outlook toward religion since the mid 1950's because he was drawn to Buddhism. He told his old friend and biographer Michael Brecher that no orthodox religion attracted him but if he would have to choose, he would definitely choose Buddhism (Brecher, 1959). Nehru had also been positive about the birth, spread and influence of Islam which, according to him, not only developed a high culture and civilization but also turned out to be one of the wonders of history. He regarded Islam as a new force or idea which woke up the Arabs and filled them up with self-confidence and energy, inspiring and enabling Arab people who had hitherto been inconsequential in history to conquer half of the known world (Nehru, 1989).

Nationalism

Nehru had been a great nationalist leader and he became an articulate voice of Third World nationalism. He successfully led the Anti-Colonial Nationalist Revolution against the West. Many nationalist leaders, including Kwame Nkrumah, had been influenced by Nehru. This, however, does not mean that Nehru propounded any theory of nationalism; rather, what we find in Nehru's writings and speeches is his profound belief in nationalism as a force against colonialism and imperialism. His initial writings underpin his nationalist philosophy. While dealing with the 1857 uprising that has been dubbed as the "War of Independence" in nationalist discourse in India, Nehru revealed his nationalist philosophy by bemoaning the lot of an India subdued by the British

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for so long. Since the nationalism in him stirred, he preferred some kind of resistance to the subjugation that India had to endure (Nehru, 1946).

Nevertheless, Nehru had some romantic views about nationalism which had been evident from his writings on India. He discovered a fundamental unity of India despite diversities. As a romantic thinker, he accepted the emotional aspect of nationalism but went against the religious approaches toward nationalism as propounded by Dayananda Sawarswati, Vivekananda, Bipan Pal and Aurobindo Ghose (Varma, 1967). In fact, he stood strongly against religious nationalism advocated by both Hindus and the Muslims and propounded a syncretic and secular nationalism that the Congress Party came to preach and uphold and finally sought to apply it in the constitution of independent India following the end of British rule. To Nehru, nationalism is a force of self-expression and a linkage between the past and the nation (Nehru, 1946).

Nehru had been an ardent supporter of the concept of national self-determination. Here we find similarities between the thought of Nehru and American President Woodrow Wilson, USA in the early twentieth century. However, Nehru could not think of the right to national self-determination of Indians alone; rather, he stood for the same rights of all peoples, including those of China, which was threatened by foreign powers for the last century. In a speech to the international Congress against imperialism held at Brussels in 1927, he stood for the national rights of peoples colonized by the West.

Anti-Imperialism

A corollary of Nehru's nationalist philosophy had been his uncompromising stance against imperialism because all his life, he stood vehemently against imperialism of any kind. In fact, Nehru as a pre-eminent nationalist leader was opposed to imperialism. While opposing imperialism, he developed his own view about imperialism. At one level, Nehru thought that religion played an important role in the spread of imperialism in the ancient world. He wrote that enough religion has served as a handmaiden to politics and imperialism (Nehru, 1989). He dissected ancient Roman imperialism and found how the Roman imperialism exploited people by keeping them superstitious. However, Nehru later refined his view about imperialism and held systemic forces and not individuals responsible for the growth of British imperialism (Nehru, 1989). Nehru said that we are much inclined to forget this distinction between individuals and system. India had been under British imperialism, and Indians fight this imperialism with all their might. But the Englishmen who happened to support this system in India should not be blamed. They were cogs in a huge machine powerless to make any difference to its movement and accordingly, the fault had always been associated with the system, not with individuals (Nehru, 1989).

In subsequent years Nehru further refined his view of imperialism and provided a materialistic interpretation, sounding more Marxist-Leninist in nature. In other words, Nehru had been influenced by the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the

phenomenon of imperialism that had been the dominant school of thought in analyzing both the causality and effect of imperialism the world over in the first half of the twentieth century.

According to Nehru, the Industrial Revolution had led to capitalism and capitalism led to imperialism. He regarded the nineteenth century as the "new imperial age." (Nehru, 1989). However, Nehru thought that the new imperial age was different from that of the early period because the new empire was hungry for raw material and markets. Thus Nehru equated modern imperialism with trade since trade followed the flag. Dissecting the nature of imperial rivalry among the capitalist powers, Nehru further said, that since competition between the industrial powers grew in the second half of the nineteenth century, they looked farther a field for market and raw material. As a result, there was a fierce scramble for market all over the world (Nehru, 1989). Thus Nehru gave a materialist interpretation of the causes and nature of imperialism, which definitely echo the Leninist interpretation of imperialism.

However, Nehru went further and dissected the nature of modern imperialism, which he regarded as "invisible empire" He argued that the territorial nature of imperialism had been changed into a non- territorial type of empire in which the imperial powers exerted control over people and territory and exploited them without governing and repressing them directly.

The novelty in Nehru's idea of imperialism is that he thought that imperial domination would continue even if colonized people had received political independence from former colonial powers like Britain. He also regarded this type of invisible imperialism as "economic imperialism" which is, according to him, the least troublesome form of domination for the imperial power. He argued that people did not resent this type of imperialism because many people do not notice it. Nehru explored the nature of American economic domination in Latin America and showed how the US corporations had been exploiting the newly independent countries in this hemisphere. In fact, Nehru illustrated the case of invisible imperialism by exploring the economic relations between the USA and the Latin American countries.

Conclusion

Nehru's philosophy emerged from its engagement with the mundane and practical world in which he lived. Herein lies the relevance of his philosophy in our life and time. Studying his philosophy is important as well because such study provides us with knowledge which comes, as Hans-George Gadamer thinks, from the enlarged and altered horizons achieved by the encounter with a past text (1975). Nehru had developed his own philosophy of history which is marked by linearity, though he believed in the continuity of civilizations. Nehru was critical of Spengler's view about history. Like Karl Marx, he believed that overarching social structure had ontological privilege over individual agent in history. Informed by the past, Nehru also developed civilizational consciousness that poised him to regard both Indian and Chinese civilizations as different from

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the rest. He had profound faith in the idea of progress, though he had been ambivalent about it at the same time. To Nehru, parliamentary democracy was preferable but its limits had also been clear in his worldview. Nehru has critical about religion for its dogmatism but unconsciously had been drawn to religions like Hinduism, Buddhism. He was positive about Islam as a force in history. A true nationalist, Nehru had been positive about nationalism but he was a serious critique of nationalism as a force in history informed by religion. As a nationalist Nehru turned out to be an anti-imperialist but his anti-imperialism appealed all the subjugated people of the world. Taking a cue from Marxism-Leninism, he developed the idea of invisible imperialism as a force in world history. One may not agree with everything that Nehru wrote but his writings are illuminating and insightful from the standpoint of the epistemology, i. e., the study of knowledge about and by people of the Third World at the same time and their tortured interactions with the imperial West. His philosophy had also its emancipatory goal for the Third World people. It is almost impossible to do justice to the philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru in a short paper like this but the author is hopeful of exploring his philosophy comprehensively in a different format in future.

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