

## THE DEATH OF NEHRU

The death of Nehru May 27 set loose the usual flood of ritualistic verbiage in the bourgeois press about the passing of a "giant" among men.

The eulogies, however, were not without a grain of truth. Nehru was a top success in building a public image that had little in common with the real person behind the mask. And he stood in a class by himself for skill in representing the interests of the capitalist class of India in most difficult circumstances.

Nehru carefully cultivated the appearance of a suave, cultured, democratic, pacifist-minded, socialistically inclined but Western-oriented leader of the "Third World," who, instead of doodling at conferences, preferred to finger a freshly cut rose.

In actuality, he was short-tempered, inclined to authoritarianism, and as calculating a politician as the bourgeoisie has produced anywhere on earth. The fourteen years he spent in prison under the British imperialists did not prevent him, after he came to power, from engaging in mass jailings of political opponents. So much for his democracy.

His pacifism was a reflection of the weakness of the Indian bourgeoisie in relation to the big imperialist powers on the one hand and the rising might of the Soviet Union and China on the other. His "socialism" served two aims. It brought the power and resources of the Indian government to bear in the efforts of the Indian bourgeoisie to reach the point of economic "take off." It offered "pie in the sky" to the Indian masses who sought during World War II to tear their country free from the grip of imperialism and to take it down the path blazed by the Soviet Union.

In neither of these aims did Nehru achieve an outstanding success. Indian capitalism remains weak and rickety for all its rapaciousness. Deep unrest stirs among the Indian masses, for in addition to the example of the Soviet Union, they now have the growth of China as a gauge of what they might achieve if they break out of the capitalist framework. What Nehru did gain was postponement of crucial decisions -- at fearful cost to the Indian people whose standard of living remains one of the most abysmal in the entire world.

Nehru did not impose a dictatorship on India such as Chiang Kai-shek imposed on China. This was not thanks to his own inclina-

tions or to the logic of his policies. It was due to the surging rise of the colonial revolution throughout Asia and beyond which compelled Nehru to give the Indian show window an attractive trim. It was due, also, to the ferment in India and the continued pressure of the class struggle.

As a bourgeois nationalist opponent of imperialism, Nehru, like his mentor Gandhi, became endowed with considerable aura. This was in part due to the policy of the Communist party during the years of struggle for freedom. By supporting British imperialism during the war and defaulting in leading the mass combat for independence -- in accordance with Stalin's prescriptions -- the Communist party forfeited all respect and the Indian capitalist politicians profited from this.

The aura, however, had already greatly faded and in recent years Nehru found it increasingly difficult to contain the class struggle and to win more time for the Indian bourgeoisie. Signs of his "tiredness" were repeatedly observed and commented on. It is a characteristic of the class he represented. The Indian bourgeoisie is already old and tired although he has just appeared in the world scene as an independent -- more or less independent -- force.

What has proved most exhausting to this bourgeoisie and its representatives is the perspective of a great new resumption of the mass movement that broke British political control in India. With Nehru's death, this process may well be speeded up.