

## MEETING THE LEADERS OF NEW AND EMERGING NATIONS

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Maps of the world today become obsolete almost as soon as they are printed, for 25 new nations have been formed since World War II and several more are in the process of formation. This means that approximately 700,000,000 persons are the inhabitants of new countries or one person in every four on our globe.

Recognizing this new wave of nationalism as one of the major trends of our times, I recently spent my sabbatical year visiting the new and emerging nations of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

My primary purpose was to meet the leaders of these newly formed states and to talk with their friends and their critics. Leaders are important everywhere, but they are especially important in the new nations. In fact, it is doubtful if some of these countries would have been formed and would have won their independence so soon had it not been for their leaders. For example, Kwame Nkrumah recently wrote an autobiography entitled Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah. In some parts of the world such a title would be considered blatant conceit. But this is not so in Ghana for nearly everyone agrees that the creation of that country was largely the work of this one man.

One wonders, too, whether Morocco would have won its independence when it did, had it not been for the outstanding leadership of Habib Bourguiba. Similarly, some people doubt if there would have been a country of Pakistan had it not been for the personality of Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

One should not underestimate the importance of the masses in carrying on the struggles for independence in various parts of the world, but without creative leadership these movements would certainly have failed.

On this world tour I took a list of 19 questions which I hoped would evoke clues as to the qualities of these leaders of new nations. The answers to most of these queries were obtained from persons who knew these men intimately, but a few of them came from direct interviews with Nehru, Ben-Gurion, U Nu, Diem, Rahman, Bourguiba, Nkrumah, Mohammed V, and others.

Possibly the most revealing of these questions was "What changes do you hope to see in the next ten years in your country?" Ben-Gurion's reply was the most inclusive and the most specific. It sounded like the outline of a ten-year plan. Starting with millions of trees, he included the establishment of two new ports, the exploitation of the Negev and the Dead Sea, the pumping of water from the Dead Sea, improved transportation, and the development of new sources of revenue. The quickness with which these were enumerated and the urgency revealed in his repeated use of the word "must" were only two of the revelations which came from his reply. Nehru's answer was much less specific and much more philosophical, reflecting his personality and his methods of thinking and working.

A second question which evoked important responses was "What five or six persons have influenced you most?" The King of Morocco dodged this question by saying that there were too many persons to limit the list to five or six -- probably an indication of his fear lest he alienate important persons by failing to mention them. Nehru immediately mentioned his father and Gandhi. Bourguiba referred to his father and his oldest brother, but he also included people from history like Caesar, Napoleon, and Ataturk. He stressed Ataturk as a great reformer in the Moslem world who profoundly changed his country, even though some of the methods he used were not good.

A third question which proved helpful was the query as to what life was like for them when they were 12, 13, or 14 years of age. Perhaps the most interesting reply came from Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria. With a broad smile on his gaunt, black face, he answered, "Life was very interesting and very wonderful then." And he launched into a vivid description of a young lad in northern Nigeria riding ponies, swimming, wrestling, and fighting, adding that life in the country was so much better than life in the city.



Nehru was stumped by this question and hesitated for quite a while before responding, eventually pointing out that he was 14 when his tutor left him and at that point was "at loose ends." The question seemed to remind him of a turning point in his life, and he reminisced about his family and his early education and his preparation at the age of 14 for a new life in England at Harrow.

A fourth query which proved useful was used in most instances to open the interviews with these leaders. It was "What accomplishments are you most proud of in the years since independence?"

Even though Malaya had been independent only a year at the time of my interview with Rahman, he immediately mentioned three accomplishments of which he was most proud. The first was the progress of the war against the guerrilla bands, the second the movement towards better feeling between the Malays, Chinese, and other ethnic groups, and the third the development of economic plans for Malaya.

The fifth question which provoked a good response from everyone was "What suggestions do you have for the education of boys and girls in the United States (or elsewhere) who will probably live to the year 2015 or 2020?"

Probably the most concise answer came from the King of Morocco who replied, "We need a scientific superstructure with a spiritual base and with wings to this educational edifice which stretch out to all parts of the world."

If I had expected these men to be of one type merely because they were leaders of newly formed or emerging nations, that illusion was soon shattered. They have a few traits in common but each is a product of his own country and culture -- or of two countries and cultures in the case of men like Bourguiba, Nehru, and Nkrumah. Each must be viewed against the particular background of his place as well as his time.

With the possible exceptions of Libya and Jordan, each of these men is the leader of a land of promise. Libya may someday become a strong nation, but for the time being it might best be designated as the U. N.

Sandbox for it is woefully underdeveloped in almost every respect. Jordan may also become a strong entity sometime, but at present its economy is not viable, and it is a precarious state composed of one-third refugees, one-third former inhabitants of Palestine whose lands were incorporated into the new Jordan, and one-third citizens of the former country of Trans-Jordan.

As to common characteristics, I was struck repeatedly by the fact that nearly everyone spoke of these leaders as men of integrity and honesty. When one realizes the hazards to honesty in government, especially in lands where access to public funds is new, one can better understand the importance of this quality in leaders.

All, or nearly all, of these men are endowed with tremendous physical energy and drive. Most of them work from 14 to 18 hours a day -- and have done so for years. The fact that they have a real sense of purpose and are in jobs which they relish helps, but the drain on their physical energy is continuous and tremendous. This is especially true of Nehru, who has worked harder and longer than any of the men in this group of leaders unless it be Ben-Gurion.

Almost all of these leaders also have a definite sense of purpose or a single-mindedness of aim. Their passion for independence and their devotion to the creation of new countries is impressive and has made it possible for them to endure hardships and pressures to which ordinary men are seldom exposed. For instance, nearly all of these figures have spent years in prison or exile, with King Idris of Libya, Mohammed V of Morocco, Nehru of India, and Diem of Viet-Nam holding the records in this respect.

Nearly all of these leaders are good speakers. That was almost essential in arousing the people to struggle and fight for independence. Their style of speaking varies from the bombastic oratory of Nkrumah of Ghana or Nyerere of Tanganyika to the quiet, conversational delivery of Nehru, but each has a hold on the people through his speaking ability. Bourguiba is the only one of the leaders of new nations who speaks to his people regularly. Every Friday at noon he speaks to the people of Tunisia over the radio in a North African version of Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Fireside Chats."

Most of these men are also lonely persons. The nature of their job probably accounts for this in part, but it may also be that they were lonely children who channelled their energies into leadership and have never attained the art of cultivating close friends. One of the exceptions to this generalization is Rhaman of Malaya, a gregarious type whose finesse in human relations has enabled him to weld together the Malays, Chinese, Indians, Pakistanis, and others in a country torn by minority problems.

Many of these men are poor administrators. They came to power because they were leaders of independence movements and the qualities demanded of them for such leadership are not the same as they need to administer their countries after independence. Some are making the transition from one type of job to the other remarkably well. Others are finding the adjustment difficult. Perhaps Sukarno of Indonesia is one of the obvious examples of a man better adapted to leading an independence movement than to organizing and administering the affairs of a new nation.

Several of these leaders have a real flair for the dramatic. Ben-Gurion has this quality, dramatizing his interest in the settlement of the Negev desert by living there during the short periods of his retirement or going there on his vacations. Bourguiba displays this trait in his ability to pantomime while speaking to large crowds or small groups.

Closely linked with this is the sense of timing of some of these men. Bourguiba probably exemplifies this characteristic best. Without it the independence of Tunisia might have been postponed or never attained. He seemed to sense when to strike, and his timing has been superb.

These leaders vary in their emphasis upon speed in attaining their objectives, with the men trained in the United States the most insistent on rapid change. Thus Nkrumah said to me when I asked him if I should come back in 10 years or wait for 15 years in order to see great changes, "Don't wait 15 years. Don't wait 10 years. Come back in 5 years, and we will have plenty to show you."

But nearly all of them know that they are racing



against time. Their people are a part of the revolution of rising expectations and are demanding results -- now. As Diem of Viet-Nam said, "Asian leaders are not permitted the luxury of plenty of time to study problems, debate about or carry on experiments to find the best solutions. They will not be able to work out the evolutionary solutions as American leaders could in the past. Time is a luxury which Asian peoples cannot afford."

All of them are proud of their past and determined to preserve the best parts of their culture as they try to bring about changes. Typical of their feelings on this subject was the comment of U Nu of Burma. Sitting one Sunday afternoon on the porch of a teachers college in Moulmein, he said, "We had a great and flourishing civilization in Burma at the time when William the Conqueror was crossing the English Channel. We do not claim that our way of life is better than that of other people. We merely say that it is different, that it suits us better, and that we cannot be induced to give it up in exchange for some other way of life -- be that the Communist Way, the Western European Way, the American Way, or any other Way."

Intensely interested in how these men developed into leaders, I probed as much as I could with the men themselves and supplemented my findings by interviews with many other persons.

Several of these leaders had been sensitive, introspective, bookish children. In most cases there was an obvious explanation. For example, Ben-Gurion's mother died when he was ten, and he belonged to an oppressed minority in the little town of Plonsk, Poland. In the case of Bourguiba, he was the last child in the family, born seven years after the others. His father was already an old man when Habib was born. His mother also died when he was ten, and he was reared largely by his older brother and his brother's wife. Nehru led a very sheltered life as the only son in a rich family and with only one sister as a playmate, that sister being several years younger than he. Most of the men who rose as common leaders of the people seem to have been of this type.

On the other hand, the men who came to power as a result of being members of a royal family were generally "hell raisers" as boys. This is true of Mohammed V, Hussein of Jordan, and the Prince of Cambodia. In the cases of Hussein and Mohammed V there was no reason to think that they would be rulers at all or at least for many years. Hussein came to power very early in his life because of the assassination of his grandfather and the mental illness of his father. Mohammed V was selected instead of older brothers because the French thought that he would be more pliable.

The heavy responsibilities of office have sobered them greatly, however. This is especially true of Hussein who has lived through more tragedy than any of the leaders of new nations and has learned to live above such disasters.

U Nu is an example of a boy with a poor start who later made good. At the age of twelve he was banished from his home for drunkenness, but later he was able to conquer this habit and rise to great heights as a religious as well as political leader in Burma.

Because of the nature of the societies in which they have lived, most of these men seem to have been influenced more by their fathers than by their mothers. Nehru's father, for example, was an outstanding person. He was a Brahmin from Kashmir, a banker, and a member of a prominent family. Nehru says, "I admired father tremendously. He seemed to me the embodiment of strength and courage and cleverness, far above all the other men I saw ...." Diem's father was a tutor in the royal palace in Viet-Nam and a leader in political movements there. Ben-Gurion's father was a leading Zionist in Poland in whose home political leaders of his day gathered.

In only one case did one of these leaders stress the influence of his mother and that was Rahman, who emphasized the fact that his mother was half Burmese and half Siamese. Others said that some of his interest in minority groups in Malaya came from this background.

For several of these leaders, their education abroad was a potent influence. It helped to broaden their background and give them rich experiences on which to draw as leaders. And it has aided them with their followers who respect them for their educational attainments and their foreign experiences. Nehru's years in England, Nkrumah's years in the United States, and Bourguiba's years in France were extremely important to them and to the development of independence movements in their countries. To a lesser extent this could be said about some of the others.

It is interesting and important to know how the idea of independence was planted in the minds of these men. With some it came through reading about earlier independence movements; with others primarily through personal contact with leaders of such groups. Reference has already been made to the fact that Bourguiba was tremendously impressed as a child with the story of Ataturk. Nehru was early associated with Gandhi and the non-violent resistance movement in India. Jinnah of Pakistan was moulded in part by the great Indian leader Gokhale.

Mboya of Kenya and Nyerere of Tanganyika both mentioned to me the American revolution and the fight for independence in the Gold Coast under Nkrumah.

Nkrumah was affected most by the great African educator, James K. Aggrey, vice-principal of Achimote College near Accra and also by Azikiwe, the present Premier of Eastern Nigeria.

The thinking of Ben-Gurion and Bourguiba has been influenced profoundly by philosophers and writers. Ben-Gurion said that the Bible, several Hebrew and Russian writers, Plato, and Thucydides had influenced him, but he added that the "rough, rugged life in Palestine as a young man" had been the most influential factor in his thinking.

Bourguiba has long been an ardent admirer of the French philosophers and is able to quote them at length. The King of Morocco said that the Koran had been the greatest single influence in his life. Diem of Viet-Nam is another of the men with a strong philosophical bent of mind.



None of these men has rejected the religion of his childhood or of his culture, but many of them would fit more easily into the pattern of humanists than of strong believers in Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, or Christianity. Thus Nehru is culturally a Hindu but primarily a humanist. Nkrumah calls himself a "non-denominational Christian and a Marxist socialist." Although he is steeped in Jewish history and folklore and is an authority on the Bible, Ben-Gurion is not an orthodox Jew, a fact which causes considerable dismay to certain groups in Israel.

U Nu is probably the one man in the group whose interest in organized religion is outstanding. He has taken an active role in the renaissance of Buddhism and primarily for personal rather than political reasons. The King of Morocco is the head of the Moslems in his country but is not a great authority on Islam. Diem presents the interesting figure of a Catholic president of a Buddhist country ---- with two of his chief advisers American Jews of Russian background.

To what extent these men have risen to positions of power and prestige because of their physical appearance is a problem worthy of further investigation by persons better qualified to comment on this than I am. Dr. Chester Hunt, for example, has written about Magsaysay of the Philippines that "Physically he is perfectly cast for the Filipino version of the father image. He has the light brown skin and broad facial features which distinguish the comparatively pure-blooded Filipino from the mestizo, but his size and height make him tower above most of his countrymen. Thus, he is more like them than politicians of strong mestizo background ---- and at the same time he has the build which Filipinos associate with Westerners. To the peasant, he is one who looks like themselves -- only bigger and stronger ...."

Space does not permit a lengthy discussion of the problems which each of these men is facing or has faced, but it may be worthwhile merely to mention the outstanding problems of new nations. A few of these apply only to some of the countries, but most of them apply to all of these new and emerging nations. These include the problem of internal security, better transportation, federalism versus regionalism, language, health, education, agriculture, capital for improvements, industrialization, unity, social erosion, and foreign relations.

All of these men who are leaders of new and emerging nations are not great men, but several of them will undoubtedly go down in history as outstanding figures in this period. The road to the top has been rough and long, and only men of patience, persistence, and purpose have survived in most of these new nations. Also, there seems to be a curious release of energy in a new country and these men have become bigger because of the demands put on them.

These men are the leaders of new nationalisms, anxious to polevault into the international community of our day, but anxious to retain much that is good in their own cultures. Otherwise they could not be the leaders which time has proved them to be.

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