

I met Professor Sarvepalli Gopal in the New Delhi home of Professor Romila Thapar where he was a frequent and very welcome visitor from Madras, his home. As I stayed in her house whenever I came to India, Gopal and I soon became good friends and I learnt to respect his profound scholarship of Modern Indian History, the subject of his Chair at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. Romila Thapar's chair at the same University was devoted to Ancient Indian History, about which she published extensively and had acquired a world reputation, a Fellowship at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and a Distinguished Visiting Professorship at Cornell University and many other honours. Gopal's special field was that of Nehru himself, having written a three volume biography. Following this, he became the Editor of *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, of which by 1985 16 volumes had been published by the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund.

Gopal was the son of the second President of the Republic of India, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, a great philosopher, a distinguished Sanskrit scholar and for some years at Oxford University before he was elected President. Gopal was also a Fellow at Oxford, at St Anthony's College, which he often visited. I discussed with Gopal his special interest and soon learnt about Nehru and his scientific education in Cambridge and his many actions as Prime Minister of India, furthering science and technology which, together with socialism, were to transform India into a modern State. His philosophy was the Scientific Temper.

It was obvious to me that I should publish an article by Gopal about "Nehru and Science" which after some delay, I received with the sub-title "Aspirations and Achievement." It was a perfect contribution, scholarly and critical, and it firmly established Nehru among the 'illustrious few' who combined statesman and scientist in one interdisciplinary person. I consider Benjamin Franklin as the first, Chaim Weizmann as the second and Nehru as the third. (Neither Margaret Thatcher [FRS sic] nor De Valera, both scientists to some degree, qualify, as their life's work was devoted to politics and not science-inspired).

Nehru was born in 1889 in Allahabad, the son of a prominent lawyer and as usual during the time of the British Raj, he was sent to England for his education. For him it was the public school of Harrow, followed by Trinity College, Cambridge, and the Inner Temple. From 1912 to 1919 he was engaged in legal practice in the Allahabad High Court and from 1919 on, as a Member of the Congress Party, he was active in politics. From December 1921 he was imprisoned by the British in India for four months, followed by six further terms of imprisonments, the last for four years, ending in 1945.