

QUEST

a bi-monthly of arts and ideas

edited by: **NISSIM EZEKIEL**

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REVIEWS EDITOR: MRS. LAEEQ FUTEHALLY
BUSINESS MANAGER: MRS. NAZURA SATTAR

editorial

THE response to the first issue of *Quest* was varied—favourable on the whole, critical at times, and hostile where hostility was expected. The communist *New Age* dismissed it as “The birth of a new baby in the American Lobby.” Well, does not *New Age* now stand for co-existence of American and Russian babies? The time is long past when communist intellectual corruption and bad faith need surprise anybody. Opposition to communism does not place one in the “American Lobby”, except in the eyes of those for whom politics is a temporary substitute for war. *New Age* resents the attack on the peace movement which, it says, stands for the ending of “political excommunication”, among other things. The ex-comrades know what that phrase means.

The Times of India (Delhi) says, “If the first issue is an index, *Quest* has set a high standard for itself”. *The Indian P.E.N.* quoted at length from the editorial. *Thought, Mysindia, Nav Bharat, The Eastern Economist, Loksatta* and a number of other journals were almost wholly laudatory, so I forbear to quote from them. The reviewer of the *Illustrated Weekly of India* was in a class by himself. He was reminded of how *Encounter* when it first appeared “dazzled the eyes...” The rest is easy, and he fell glibly into such obvious traps as “brave attempt” and “to be welcomed.” More serious was the complaint at the shortness of the articles. I’m afraid there is no remedy for this except to increase the size of the journal, which can only be done when...

The *Sunday Standard* got all muddled up towards the close of its review, though it granted *Quest* “a high standard” and the rest of it. “*Quest* could have served this purpose better by going about its job openly instead of masquerading under a cultural garb.” Since I explicitly declared the journal’s political motivations and refused to wear a “cultural garb” this criticism is merely ill-informed.

Taurus of the *Free Press Journal* recommended “a little humility” because he found one statement in the editorial with which he disagreed. Does not the critic need to be humble precisely at the moment when he finds something with which he disagrees? But worse followed. *Taurus* says he does not grudge me the support I have from “big business”. He referred, of course, to the advertising in the first issue. This is a case of sauce for the goose... *Taurus* cannot exist either without the support of “big business”. And then fancy reviewing *Quest* by telling “a neat little story” about “a sadhu who had long meditated...” etc. Moralising is still a substitute for critical opinion, in certain circles.

It remains only to mention some views expressed in letters addressed to me by friends and others. One person felt that only the editorial was of a sufficiently high standard! Another wrote, “Since I am thoroughly dissatisfied with *Quest* I do not intend to subscribe”. Many liked the get-up, some were disconcerted by it. One thought the designing of the journal should have been done by a fine artist, not a commercial artist.

I was delighted the “appearance” of the journal created as much interest as the contents. This was certainly one of my secret intentions in planning the first issue of *Quest*.

NISSIM EZEKIEL

PRABHAKAR PADHYE
G. D. PARIKH

the intellectual in modern asia

two statements

Prabhakar Padhye

THE dominant factor in the Asian—particularly the South East Asian—scene today is the defeat of colonialism. Foreign colonialism is on the defensive and the disappearance of its uneasy remnants is only a matter of time. Most of the people of the area have become free and are faced with the problems of political, economic and even psychological reconstruction.

The intellectuals and their class were responsible for this profound transformation and they are now called upon to lead in the task of reconstruction also. But unfortunately they seem to be spiritually ill-equipped to bear the responsibility.

The explanation of this paradox can be found in the Western education and training which they have received. It must be admitted that the education which the colonial powers provided to the people

created the motive-pattern of the educated middle class which was fired by the ideals of freedom and which created the requisite leadership for these movements. These patriotic intellectuals were perhaps ideally suited for the negative task of driving out the colonial ruler. But the moment they were faced with the fact of independence and all the problems that came in its wake they found their Western education not the sure blessing that it was supposed to be.

To begin with, the philosophy that inspired this system of education was totally at variance with the philosophy and outlook on life of the peoples of the region. The Eastern philosophies of life are based on a peculiar relationship towards Nature. "Progress" to the Asian people does not mean the "conquest of Nature", but rather the realisation of a harmonious relationship of interdependence between Man and

Nature. Their attitude towards Nature is not one of masterfulness, but of gratitude and reverence. They do not look upon Nature as something to be conquered and put to the material use of man, but something to be tended, cultivated and befriended. The people of Asia look upon themselves as a part of Nature. Their aim is to realise a harmony between the human order and the natural order. The Asian art of life consists in living in harmony and understanding with one's fellow-beings and with Nature. Nature, here as elsewhere, creates wonder and awe, but these feelings lead to reverence rather than to fear, to love rather than to opposition.

The reason for this difference (which is one of the fundamental differences between ancient Religion and modern Science) is not hard to find. The Asian—South East Asian—philosophies of life were developed and fashioned when men were being rocked, so to say, in the cradle of Nature. Nature, it should be remembered is bountiful in this region and is very generous to man. Perhaps the opposite is true in the West. Western man has to face the rigours of Nature and to master her for eking out a living. The cold climate of Europe and America has made their people vigorous and hard-working whereas the warm climate of Asia tends to make the people indolent and carefree, to develop an attitude of what the Thais would call *mai ben rai* (never mind).

Asian intellectuals today have been naturally influenced by the philosophies and attitudes that inspire the modern systems of education. One would, of course, expect them to resist this influence because of the long tradition of Asian culture of which they are inheritors. This culture should give them the necessary power of resistance because it is informed by philosophies of profound significance

and is embellished by an art of life of rich and sensitive texture. But these philosophies have been languishing over hundreds of years and the art of life has been losing its living touch. What sustained the social fabric in spite of this deterioration was religious ritual and the hold of social conventions. But modern rational education made nonsense of these conventions and rendered the ritual ridiculous.

THE realities of the Asian situation are not such as to accommodate ultra-modern ideas even if they were to agree fundamentally with the ideals of Eastern culture. Democratic ideals, for instance, are ultimately in harmony with the broad conceptions of Eastern Culture. When independence came to the countries of Asia—South East Asia—they uniformly adopted the pattern of democracy. The attempts to cut through this pattern were defeated. These countries adopted or prepared themselves to adopt democratic constitutions. But they soon discovered that the democratic experiment was not as easy of execution as they had supposed it to be. To begin with, in spite of the broad aims of their culture, democratic institutions were not natural to this region. For centuries, authoritarian rule had prevailed here. The colonial rulers were happy to continue the authoritarian system—and even encouraged local authoritarianism in order to buttress their own rule. It is true that with the spread of modern Western education, democratic ideas had also spread, but they had not seeped into the consciousness of the people, who, in any case, were not educated and enlightened enough to work democratic institutions.

It should also be remembered that democratic constitutions were not adopted with the conviction with which, for instance, the American Bill of Rights was

adopted. The American Constitution and, for that matter, the Soviet Constitution was inspired by a passionate belief in a set of ideas. The leaders of the independence movement in Asia were more interested in the fact of independence than in its nature, and if they adopted democratic constitutions it was mainly because they were accustomed to visualize their freedom in the image of the democratic countries of the West with which they were familiar; with the result that some of these constitutions read like a lawyer's rehash of the democratic constitutions of the West. But these Western constitutions were the product of a natural urge and a natural evolution. They could not adequately work in countries with different cultures and different problems.

More than in democracy these intellectuals were interested in the socio-economic development of the country. They were not professional politicians who loved power for its own sake, and even such politicians soon realized that they could neglect the problems of the material existence of the people at their peril. Nature has been generous to the countries of Asia and for hundreds of years people have lived in comparative prosperity. True, there have been political upheavals, but they were restricted to the adventurous few and the people were left in peace to carry on their daily activities. But the Western imperialists with their modern techniques had systematically looted them and rendered them destitute. They had long been living at a subhuman level and the arousing of the spirit which independence brought made them acutely aware of their degradation.

The economies of these countries could not be built along the classic lines of free enterprise. Planning was long in the air. The reports of the quick build-up in Russia had been circulated and had touched large sectors of consciousness.

Moreover, with the withdrawal of the foreign entrepreneur there were left no private agencies which could have handled the job with quick competence. Governments were faced with the necessity of assuming the responsibility—which meant planning. But democratic constitutions were not exactly suited to planned economic progress in these undeveloped countries in conditions of paucity of resources and knowledge. A good deal of thinking on coordinating planning with freedom has been done in Western countries. But even in those countries with favourable circumstances no satisfactory solution seems to have been found yet. The conception of Mixed Economy to which recourse is generally taken tends, particularly in backward countries, to work in favour of the conservative elements. The intellectual who has become quite impatient owing to his frustration, starts looking upon slow-moving democracy as an obstacle rather than a resolute ideal. His democratic training should have taught him that the dichotomy between bread and freedom raised in certain quarters is false; but they also know that people do not generally think of freedom so long as they are starving and therefore they start asserting this dichotomy in a way that wholly neglects democratic values.

THAT intellectuals with years of democratic education should be callous about democratic values is surprising, but entirely understandable in the context. After all, a few years' study of democratic theory does not instil the values of democracy into the inner being of an individual. Values are imbibed by years of meaningful experience and emotional impact. In the West, democratic values have been finely woven into the life of the people and have processed their mental texture. It is not so in Asia. This is immensely truer about the values of science. The

new Asian intellectual who is so well versed in science and who talks so eloquently about the scientific point of view may not be equally devoted to scientific values.

The Asian intellectual is frustrated because his youthful dreams have cruelly foundered on the rocks of Asian reality. He is woefully disappointed because he realizes that his knowledge and training of which he is legitimately proud, are useless since the Asian situation does not offer much scope for them. He burns with an inner defeat because in spite of his technical training he does not find a suitable vocation and has to engage in trades like running a restaurant or a movie house which gives him a guilty feeling of engaging in an occupation which has but slight relevance to the well-being of the people. And finally his alienation from the people completely disenchant him. The failure to function creatively in society drives him to frustration and anger. This frustration assumes tortuous forms—and some of these intellectuals become professional detractors of their country's efforts and achievements. Mainly, they are cold to the task of reconstruction which their country has to undertake.

Psychologically there is a terrible void inside them. There is no faith and no conviction to sustain them. They suffer from a terrible feeling of alienation and disenchantment, which threatens to make permanent misanthropes of them. The hunger of the spirit threatens to make them permanently sick—sick in mind and sick in heart!

Some striking intellectual phenomena in Asia can be traced to this hunger of the spirit. The growth of revivalism in India and Pakistan, for instance. A mind defeated by contemporary problems tends to take refuge in the glories of the past and that is what is visibly happening in the Indo-Pak continent. The revivalist Islamic tendencies in Indonesia can also

be traced to this. A recrudescence of several religious cults (with surprisingly primitive beliefs and practices) and the growing prestige of these cults even among the educated classes is another instance. Big gatherings and congresses of the devotees of such cults based on magic and spiritism have been held in recent times and have been attended and blessed by well-known scholars and leaders. Booksellers have reported a marked spurt in the sale of religious literature not primarily of the higher philosophical order.

For those who are unable to reconcile their rational beliefs with these cults has come a ready and satisfying substitute, which not only satisfies their inner cravings but also promises ready answers to all the practical problems that have baffled their minds. The substitute is Communism.

COMMUNISM, after all, is a religion which believes in reason and the earth. Its reason is dialectical and the earth is a place to build heaven upon. Dialectical materialism is a kind of religion which assures the triumph of the Cause, whatever the obstacles. It is a doctrine that proclaims Communism as the end-product of the historical process. It is a doctrine of Historical Necessity. It assures its followers that they are on the right side. It is therefore not only a faith, but a Triumphant Faith. It has all the essentials of a satisfying religion. It enables its followers not only to understand the historical process, but also to participate in it. It provides a definite place for every individual in the historical process. This participation not only bestows on him the glory of self-sacrifice but also the opportunity to realize human destiny.

Communism is a philosophy and a technique of political action and human development which satisfies many of the dominant urges of the intellectuals. Western-

educated intellectuals have been influenced by the trine ideals of the French Revolution viz. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. To these, the moderns have added the fourth ideal of planned economic development. The modern intellectuals starved of emotion and imagination have been able to see in the theory and practice of communism a triumph of these ideals, even though in actual fact these ideals have been thoroughly violated. For instance, their frustrated minds have accepted the so called economic liberation as a proper substitute for political liberty, which in any case, according to them is illusory. They are not disturbed by Stalin's dismissal of equality as 'a petty bourgeois ideal' because the hatred of the rich has provided an adequate psychological substitute. The phony nature of the communist fraternity has been exposed by the treatment meted out to one-time comrades, but they are not worried because the bond of party loyalty has the force of the Islamic brotherhood of medieval times. And even if the communist violations of these have sometimes been too blatant to bear, comfort has been found in the rapid strides of economic development in the communist countries. The fact that these countries quickly build their economies is so important to them that they are willing to forget many things. That this economic development is lopsided, that it leans on heavy industry which can be quickly switched on to the needs of war, that it is based on the immoral practice of forced labour and that it has its own crises of over-bureaucratisation does not bother them.

The very fact that economic life is planned and organized, that targets have been overfulfilled and that people have been made to devote their entire energies to the problems of living has an irresistible fascination for them. For their outlook on life is ultimately in conformity with that of communism which, after all, epitomizes

the masterful attitude towards Nature which forms an integral part of their education. It has to be admitted that this attitude has greater relevance to the countries of Asia today when a long era of exploitation has largely undone the benefits of bountiful Nature. But it is not for this that the intellectuals care nothing for the beauties of Oriental philosophies, of integration of Man with Nature and of love between Man and Man.

THE picture of a high power industrialised society appeals to their desperate desire for integration. The example of Russia inspires in them the confidence that they can find their secure and legitimate place in the structure of the planned society which the communists will build. Of course there is integration in democratic societies also; but it is a spiritual kind of integration based on the integrity of every individual. In an economically precarious society this spiritual integration is continuously threatened. Naturally, our modern intellectuals tend to attach more importance to the integration of the Soviet type. But they forget that what they call integration in Soviet society is ultimately pure conformity, against which the heart of every genuine intellectual must legitimately rebel. Intellectual growth is impossible in an atmosphere of total conformity and a mind which is not allowed the delights of independent thinking cannot flower to its full bloom. The Asian intellectuals who tend to ignore the difference between integration and conformity easily fall for the blandishments of communist doctrine and practice.

Our alienated intellectual has been pinning for this feeling of integration. He is intensely unhappy about his isolation from the people. Though outwardly he might like to flaunt his 'cultural' superiority, inwardly he is disturbed by a sense of inferiority. Communism gives him a good op-

portunity to get rid of this feeling. The communist emphasis on modernization and planning places a special value on the talents of the intellectuals who can thus retain their sense of superiority and yet have the feeling of being integrated with the interests and destiny of the people. More than this, they can retain the flair of their white collars and yet go around as revolutionaries, at least as privileged servants of the supreme revolution of the times.

THE dominant problem in Asia today is, of course, the economic problem. The Asian people are passionately yearning for economic development and material well-being. You cannot convince the intellectuals here by denying the achievements of Soviet Russia or by singing the praises of non-material values (although one must emphasise the importance of these values and must also point out that excessive pre-occupation with material development will distort the vision of our people and dehumanise our culture). But it would be possible to convince at least the honest and more considerate intellectuals that the ruthless Soviet methods of centralised high-power industrialisation will not bring about the economic development of Asian countries (as they did in Russia) because the man-resources ratio is extremely adverse here whereas it is supremely favourable in Russia. It should be possible to convince the reasonable intellectuals that the ruthless Soviet methods of high-power industrialisation might give us the steel frame of dictatorship but certainly cannot give us the necessary steel-mills.

It is true that extreme poverty and material degradation tend to make people indifferent to freedom; but it is not true that they cannot be roused to the dangers of dictatorship. People aspire to economic betterment, but they also aspire to a share in power. The urge for power is as real

as the urge for material comfort. It may not be possible, in the undeveloped conditions of Asia, to bestow sizeable material comforts on the people in the immediate future; but it will certainly be possible to satisfy their power urge. Conventional centralized democracy may not be able to do this; but surely it would be possible to think of a variant of democracy which would decentralise power and bring its magnetic touch to large masses of people on various levels. Communist dictatorship, in the first place, does not respect the power urge of the people; and secondly by its very nature it cannot decentralize power. If the Asian intellectuals are persuaded to see the possibility of endowing people with power their natural idealism would welcome it, and this itself would mean the beginning of a revolution in their outlook.

It can be easily demonstrated to the intellectuals that the satisfaction of the power urge of the people can be a means of economic development even as the satisfaction of their property instinct. That is why communists go to the peasants and workers with the slogans of 'land to the peasants' and 'the factories to the workers'. It may not be easy to convince the peasants and workers of the duplicity of the communists here—of the fact that victorious communists would immediately take over the factories and later on the land and hand them over to bureaucrats who would manage them in the name of the people and grow fat and rich in the process. But the intellectuals can see the point and realise that control over the means of production can create the zest of living even as ownership does.

The intellectuals with their heightened imagination and broadened vision should be able to see that the touch of power can galvanise the broad masses of the people, rouse their energies and fill them with the

conviction that they are the masters of their own destiny, that they are participating in a revolution that would shape the destiny of their own selves and that of their fellowbeings. The intellectuals should be able to realise not only the need but also the importance of enfranchising the people (as Bevan said) not only at the ballot box but also in the fields and factories. A decentralisation of this kind would release the forces of a unique democratic dynamo and put the instruments of social, political and economic action into the hands of those who would be affected by it. This would mean a tremendous confidence in the ability of the people and co-operation in their activities. This would give our intellectuals a relationship with them which would be more dynamic, more meaningful and more indicative of the unity between the intellectuals and the people than the mechanical integration made possible by a bureaucratic role in the vast centralised plan of the Soviet pattern. This would make the intellectuals really comrades and not masters of the people. Such a relationship would obviously be emotionally more satisfying and more significant.

MORE than this dynamic relationship between the intellectual and the people it would mean galvanizing the manifold life of the community. It would mean a full-blooded cultural afflorescence which would inspire the life of the people with the magic of creative delight. It would revive the culture of the masses and provide them with the elements of joy which they have been woefully lacking for many years. The culture of a nation always springs from the people. It can never be imposed from above. It is a living example of decentralization in the most delicate and vibrant aspect of human life. Any attempt to encage it in a centralized plan is bound to make it lifeless and

mechanical. A system of organisation which evokes the participation of the people at all levels of life would naturally lead to the expression of folk-culture which is a vital factor in the national culture of all countries, particularly those of South East Asia. Such an awakening of the manifold life is bound to lead to the resurrection of the philosophies of the East which visualise a grand harmony based, to quote Dr. Supomo, president of the University of Indonesia, on "the unity between God and Man, unity between Man and other creatures, and unity between the material world and the spiritual world"—in short, harmony between Man and Nature. Such a consummation will provide the elements of Faith (in the most scientific sense of the term), starved of which our intellectuals have become walking skeletons of frustration and faithlessness!

A philosophy that embraces these elements of decentralised reconstruction of life alone will have the power to defeat the appeal of doctrines like communism and to release our intellectuals from the lure of their kiss of death. Wherever philosophies of this type have arisen communism has been put on the defensive—intellectually at least. I do not mean to say that any particular doctrine like Revolutionary Gandhism or Radical Humanism or Decentralised Socialism or Buddhist Socialism has all the elements of such a philosophy, but they have shown remarkable power to combat totalitarian doctrines. I do not also mean to say that they have embraced whole societies of men or that they have finally triumphed over totalitarianism. But they will, however, before they achieve this success have to be revitalised (as Gandhism is being revitalised by *Bhoodan* and *Jeevan-dan*) in actual practice. They will have to be integrated. They will have to be strengthened. Here is a grand sublime quest for thinkers and philosophers.

G. D. Parikh

THE process of Asia's integration into a free world as an area in which freedom comes to be actually experienced to an increasing measure by ever-growing numbers and expressed through a network of free institutions, can be the common concern of all who cherish cultural freedom as the basic value of human existence. It need not and must not, however, be confused with alignment in the cold war, the logic of which so often clouds the efforts at understanding Asia. Asia to be integrated as a part of the 'free' world must in any case be allowed the freedom to do so. After all a Cause cannot be imposed; it must inspire, be understood and experienced in order to be made one's own.

Attainment of national independence brought millions of Asians, overnight as it were, face to face with realities and demanded of them profound and far reaching readjustments in their outlook and actions. Their disturbed balance under conditions of alien rule seems to have, however, impaired their capacity of 'facing the world on level terms'. No wonder, therefore, that on becoming independent and thus responsible for shaping his own future, the Asian often appears failing to see the realities of the contemporary situation and the profound cultural and moral issues involved in it. Weak, defenceless and threatened, he pleads for tolerance and understanding of the sources of the threats. Poor, semi-starved and suffering, he looks askance at those who are out to help. External support seems to him to involve the possibilities of revival of the painful past he has just outlived; external help, he fears, may amount to compromising his self-respect. Above all, he is anxious to avoid being drawn into the process of polarisation, which, if completed, would, he rightly apprehends, lead the

world nearer to a holocaust. Incapable as yet of taking up any positive attitudes on the basis of his own inner strength, he may sometimes appear over-sensitive or needlessly offensive and irritating; but that is no reason why his behaviour should be looked upon as an expression of hostility.

It is true that freedom for the moment has increased his insecurity; but such unfortunately is the nature of all freedom and it would be better to let him have it, instead of seeking to help him make it secure. His real problem is to discover within himself the essentially human urge which makes freedom worth cherishing, its experience a great and glorious human achievement. And helping him to solve it can alone lead him to look upon freedom's cause as his own.

It would therefore be essential to bear in mind the warning that "it is not the so-called realism of power politics, which because of its neglect of ideas and values is blind and stupid rather than realistic, but the informed realism of philosophical and cultural understanding which is the key to international relations."¹ The logic of the cold war is prone to ignore the fact that having attained national independence, Asians look forward to not just its preservation but to its expansion into welfare in realms economic, social and spiritual. The polarisation brought about by the cold war often leads to impatience with those who defy political classification. Preoccupation with the cold war is likely to make the cause of freedom degenerate into a sterile, negative attitude full of indiscrimination in choosing advocates or friends. Such friendships are known and admitted to have gone a long way in discrediting the claims of the West to represent the cause of freedom and democracy.

¹ F.S.C. Northrop: *The Meeting of East and West* 1946, P. 428.

The growth and deepening of Asian national movements did not result in giving them a secular rational character. Instead of looking forward to a better and more rational reorganisation of social life, Asian nationalism tended to look backwards. The growth of nationalism was marked by not merely a "revival of interest in native languages, history and archaeology" but also by a "tendency to exalt the native Art and Culture."² "Dependent upon, and opposed to, influences from without, this new nationalism, not rooted in a political and social reality, lacked self-assurance; its inferiority complex was quite often compensated by over-emphasis and over-confidence."³ It built up its ideals closely linked with the past, and adorned them with traits for the realisation of which it had no immediate responsibility, but which "influenced the nascent nation's image of itself and of its 'mission'."

ASIAN nationalism missed the significance of Nietzsche's observations when he wrote, "To be a good German means to de-Germanise oneself—National differences consist far more than has hitherto been observed, only in the differences of various grades of culture, and are only to a very small extent permanent (nor even that in a strict sense). For this reason all arguments based on national character are so little binding on one who aims at the alteration of convictions—in other words, at culture."⁴ It has by and large not been able to appreciate Goethe when he reiterated his respect for France: "How could I, to whom culture and barbarism are alone of importance, hate a nation which is among the most cultivated of the

earth, and to which I owe so great a part of my own cultivation?"⁵ Individualism and Cosmopolitanism have remained alien to it. Political resistance to Western dominance developed under its aegis, on the other hand, into hatred of and hostility to Western civilisation and culture.

This characterisation of Asian nationalism is reinforced by its cultural background. Widespread ignorance, medieval prejudices and the teleological view of life create in Asians an authoritarian mentality—the psychological predisposition to cultivate submission as a virtue, to accept authority as providentially ordained. With the ignorant multitude, this cultural tradition takes the form of fatalism; and "it makes the politically minded minority regard dictatorship or paternalism as more desirable than democracy. And the demagoguery of a wilful minority can sway the submissive masses to accept its dictatorship."⁶ This cultural tradition cements the understanding between nationalism and communism. It makes it again a mistake to identify Asian nationalism with democracy. "Even when it is anti-communist, it is not necessarily democratic. Then it tends towards fascist dictatorship."⁷ Those concerned about the cause of freedom and democracy will have therefore to be careful in avoiding the mistake of relying on nationalism. Even those who see progressive possibilities in national movements have not been able to see these in the movements in Asia and have consequently been compelled to characterise them as reactionary.

The status quo being unbearable, it may be said that there are practically no conservatives in Asia today. Impact of modern technological and Western indus-

² *Nationalism*—A Report by a study group of members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1939. p.146.

³ Hans Kohn: *The Idea of Nationalism*, 1951, p. 30.

⁴ Quoted Ibid. P. 328.

⁵ Quoted Ibid. P. 416.

⁶ M. N. Roy: *Democracy and Nationalism in Asia, The Radical Humanist*, 20th July, 1952, P. 340.

⁷ Idem.

trial methods has been responsible for stimulating an urge to catch up with the West in this respect. But lack of capital and the technical know-how do not constitute the only difficulties of Asia in this respect. With the exception of India, Japan and Pakistan, there is practically no entrepreneurial class in any of the Asiatic countries. Economic development in Asia may, therefore, be expected to take place largely as a result of the initiative and activities of the state. This does not make the perspective of freedom in Asia very bright. For one thing, the states are mostly new. Secondly, many of them do not enjoy any significant stability. The strong influence of communism in Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, the Arab World and Indo-China is well known. Thirdly, there does not exist in most cases an administrative machinery which can measure up to the tasks of development. Given the very low and limited level of education, it would not be easy to build it up in a short time.

Ignorance of the large majority of the people presents formidable difficulties for communication between the rulers and the ruled and impairs effective cooperation of the people in the execution of different state-sponsored schemes. The necessity for the success of such schemes cannot therefore be unduly exaggerated. Their being state-sponsored, on the other hand, is likely to distort the sense of time-perspective of the average citizen and may make him impatient with the result achieved. This type of development is not likely to be conducive to inculcation of a sense of responsibility. People may not be actually driven to despair; but they will still remain disposed to be swept off their feet by the constant display of the technological achievements of other types of states. *It is therefore imperative that Asia discover its own pace and methods of modernisation instead of impatiently seek-*

ing to plant a few modern establishments or factories in a generally backward landscape.

The significance of the aforementioned plea is further reinforced by the fact that state-sponsored development may enormously increase the centralisation of power and eventually prove to be a serious danger to freedom. Even today, many of the Asian governments are in no sense democratic; others are mostly formally so. The cultural background encourages the growth of authoritarianism. There are no significant countervailing forces in Asian economic life like powerful peasant co-operatives or free trade unions or consumers' organisations. Economic development, though successfully achieved, cannot by itself be depended upon to solve the problem of freedom in such a background; there is, on the other hand, a greater likelihood of its being inhibited by cultural backwardness.

Higher education is a close preserve of small, almost microscopic, minorities in most of the Asian countries. Even literacy is confined to minorities; and although the expenditure on education incurred by most of the Asian governments is rapidly increasing, and primary education is spreading, it must take long before we can expect even universal literacy. Health and hygienic standards are also inconceivably low. The number of inhabitants per physician varies between 5800 in Ceylon to 65000 in Indonesia. Consumption of news-print is negligible in most of the Asian countries and books published number only a few hundreds per year in even the more advanced ones among them. There are no standards worth the name in respect of housing. It will therefore be essential for Asia to maintain in the course of its development some balance between capital investments of a productive type and social capital used for furnishing services

and amenities of different kinds to the community.

Given the cultural background of Asia, communism does not produce the sense of horror it does elsewhere; on the other hand, it seems to hold out promises of meeting the two basic needs of Asians—the economic and the spiritual. It holds the promise of rapid economic development which will produce a 'paradise'. And it will mean the preservation of the Asian's self-respect by according him the status of equality. There will be none to call or treat him as a 'native'. The propaganda of the Soviet Union makes the former look plausible and China reinforces the latter. The talk about its dictatorial character does not impress many, with their authoritarian traditions and mentality. Since the communist rule will be the rule of indigenous communists, there is little in it to offend the prevalent nationalist sentiment.

THE strategy of communists in Asian countries seems generally to bring about political disintegration, economic disorganisation and social chaos and to work up the nationalist sentiment, using the authoritarian outlook to achieve its ends. Most of the Asian political units are products of recent movements, which could "unify the population within the framework of an imposed unity and in opposition to the European ruler." Many of them in the form in which they exist do not have any long traditions or historical sanctions. To emphasise the differences, to fan up parochial sentiments, to engineer and work in support of demands for autonomy and self-determination with a view to disorganising the existing states seems to be the communist technique.

The peculiar Asian historical background encourages this technique. Holding out promises of an economic millenium,

Communism tends to undermine the developmental efforts in the economic field. And it can openly suggest the need for ruthlessness and a 'strong hand' for putting down the existent weaknesses like corruption, nepotism and inefficiency which seem to the average Asian to be the main difficulties in the way of his economic wellbeing, and command sympathy. These arguments are often linked up with attacks on colonialism, presentation of independent countries as being still in economic slavery to the West and working up of the nationalist sentiments to a pitch where it appears that the West could be taught a proper lesson only if Asia went communist. There have also been attempts to develop sympathy for the Soviet block, which is pointed out as the block of 'peace'.

The growth of Chinese prestige in the above background involves the possibilities of its success in claiming the leadership of Asia. The Chinese claim that their revolution represents the prototype of revolutions in colonial countries. It thus shows the rest of Asia the way to a new order. And developments since the revolution show that many in Asia have been morally conceding the claim, though there may still be competition for political leadership.

How will Asia meet the threats to her freedom? How can others help her develop the ability to do so? To be answered properly, the question must be framed somewhat differently, for Asia's ability to ward off the threats will largely depend on her ability to cherish freedom as the basic value and to experience it in increasing measure through free institutions built up by her own efforts. It has been made clear so far why reliance cannot be placed in this respect either on nationalism or on state-sponsored developmental activities which lead to centralisation of

power. *The search for solutions must be carried further than the political or the economic fields.* And it is here that two major points of view emerge which demand a careful scrutiny.

One type of formulation poses the question as to "how, with the minimum of repudiation and destruction of one's traditional beliefs and values and attendant institutions, can one, as quickly as possible achieve a strong independent nationalistic state of the Western type?"⁸ Prof. F. S. C. Northrop who poses the problem in this form has argued that "cultures such as Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Hinduism, which are based almost exclusively on a philosophy grounded in the aesthetic component alone, merge quite happily. Those cultures on the other hand, such as medieval Aristotelianism, Lockean Anglo-American democracy, Post-Kantian German voluntarism or idealism and Marxian Communism, which emphasise the theoretic component in knowledge, are in conflict.... To understand these contradictory and conflicting ideologies is to have the clue to the method of resolving the issues of our civilisation which they define." The clue lies "somewhere on the way" where "in passing from the scientific facts and distinctions to the traditional philosophical foundations of modern Western culture a mistake was made."⁹ And the mistake lay in the type of relation between the two components supposed by traditional modern Western Science and Philosophy. It is not possible here to discuss Prof. Northrop's thesis. It may be enough to confine ourselves to some of its significant corollaries.

THE two elements referred to above are complementary; and that furnishes the ground for the meeting of the East and the

West. Both should be fostered so as to achieve "a society for mankind generally in which the higher standard of living of the most scientifically advanced and theoretically guided Western nations is combined with the compassion, the universal sensitivity to the beautiful and the abiding equanimity and calm joy of the spirit which characterise the sages and many of the humblest people of the Orient."¹⁰ His rejection of the "attempts, after the manner of Gandhi, to return to nothing but the traditional past" implies the recognition of the insufficiency of the traditional foundations for any effort of reconstruction in Asia. Neither the Japanese method which combined those with Western technology and industry nor the Chinese solution seem to have much use for him. The question will then arise as to whether it would be feasible to combine the two elements without disturbing the one or abusing the other. The reliance placed by Prof. Northrop on Eastern religions, other than those originating in the near East, in achieving the synthesis will appear to be of doubtful value. They involve love of humanity, sympathy for life. They have no prophets; they are not tribal but international. But the basic apprehension of the world of the senses implicit in them modifies the element of compassion; their negation of *this* world destroys their usefulness for any socio-economic reconstruction.

Asian religions instead of being conducive to socio-economic reconstruction which produces the guarantees against the threats to freedom, may thus actually smother the will to progress, to build up a new civilisation on an ethical basis. Asians concerned about freedom will have to be cautious in putting reliance on them. If being crassly realistic and

⁸ F.S.C. Northrop, op. cit. P. 419.

⁹ Ibid, Pp. 437-40.

¹⁰ Ibid. P. 496.

otherworldly at the same time, its readiness to change sides easily and the anxiety to be always on the winning side are the attributes developed by the religious culture of the orient, it would be better if it is swept off in the interests of the orientals themselves.

This would help to put essentially religion-inspired movements like the Bhoo-dan in India in their proper perspective and make us see them in proper proportions. It would be idle to place any very great reliance on them for meeting the threats to freedom, though their helpful possibilities in that direction need not be denied. But it must not be overlooked that Gandhism which is claimed to be the inspiring philosophy of the movement has had some of its leading advocates recently preaching the Chinese way. The phenomenon of Gandhian communism, witnessed in India, must serve in this respect as a warning.

ONE of the difficulties of the struggle for freedom and democracy in Asia arises from the impression that the West itself does not seem to have its integrity of belief involved in the ideals it upholds. The free institutions it claims to have built up do not after all seem to be very free. In the changing economic environment on the other hand, it also appears to be seeking solutions in halfway houses like socialism, mixed economy or the paternalistic ideas of the welfare state. "If there should take place in the West, a dramatic revival of self-confidence, and if there should be a new outpouring of creative political ideas for rebuilding the free world in the changed economic circumstances of our time," it would certainly go a long way in enthusing the rest of the world. But that at the moment seems to be only a remote possibility. Asians, it appears, will have to hold Asia and endeavour to build it anew

with such intellectual and moral resources as they can command themselves.

The first essential prerequisite is the tilling of the mental soil of Asia. It was the Renaissance and all that went before it which gave the Europeans their earlier advantage over Asia and not the technological superiority which they did not enjoy until the 19th century. And Asia will have to pass through the same process in order to catch up with the rest of the world. Of course it will be a Renaissance of the twentieth century and can therefore be brought about with a much greater advantage in scientific knowledge and technical equipment. Without a historical and critical attitude to its own past Asia cannot be liberated from the supremacy of the dead and build up and develop the living.

This therefore will have to be the crucial function of education in Asia. Conducted in the twentieth century world, reduced to a unit, and in an atmosphere surcharged with emotions, it will have to emphasise the values of cosmopolitan humanism and the rational and scientific spirit. Simultaneously with the process of education will have to proceed the efforts of institution-building from the basic village level, in spheres political, economic, social and cultural, so that the people may effectively participate in the management of public affairs and in shaping the conditions of their social existence. Attempts along these lines can help lay the foundations of free societies in Asia so that the resurgence may not prove to be a passing phase in the periodic cycles of vitality and servility through which this part of the world has been passing until today. These cycles have enabled, it is argued, the ancient communities of Asia to be indestructible. But it is now high time that they learn to live and to live freely.

THE DREAMER TO THE DANCER

Interminable horizons
 Have set your stage,
 O river, O dancer!
 Day and night, those prisons
 Where grief, delight and rage
 Torment the beating heart
 Are your feet, your flashing feet,
 A mere tool of art.

Changeful moons and the cruel
 Inviolable sun,
 O dancer, O river,
 Hit off those sparks from jewel
 And your robes of star and flower
 That we name the insolent,
 Compulsory hour,
 Or the heavy chain of moments
 With Death leashed at its end.

But I, who hew and rack
 Twisted deepdown ore
 Until thought comes to terms
 With the hammering of my craft,
 I claim you to be mine,
 O river, dancer, woman,
 I claim you, utter and stark,
 On the dark, forlorn,
 Cavernous bed of my mind
 That dreams be born.

Adapted from the author's Bengali

BUDDHADEVA BOSE

J. VIJAYATUNGA

pondicherry journal

record of a critical mood

July 27, Year X

Returned from Madras by way of Tindivanam. Pleasant enough. I sat on the front seat (a much-coveted position) by the driver. Up to about five miles from Tindivanam it was agreeable. Then a heavy shower started and all of us passengers got thoroughly drenched. I most, because I sat in front. How the gods never forget to exact their revenge! At Tindivanam, still in the rain, rushed into the other bus, in a mad scramble of pushing and jostling, while clutching the cardboard box in which were the eggs I had bought at the English shop in Madras through a pathetic belief that their eggs came from a clean poultry farm. I reached home at about ten, wet, tired, and hungry—and went to bed hungry because the electric ring plug was out of order, and there was neither charcoal nor firewood.

29th July

Been watching the *mynah* couple feed-

ing their baby. It must be the only one for I can see only one small head popping out from that opening of about one and a half by two and a half inches. I like *mynahs*: and these have built their nest in the crevice of a grey-black wall of a house whose front we cannot see from the terrace of our roof. A few days ago a couple of crows made repeated efforts to build a nest in the fork of the *murunga* tree in the back garden opposite. We can see only the top of the *murunga* tree above the walls that surround it. The wind blew away their nest more than once. At last they gave it up; and, I must say I was glad, because I believe in the general superstition that it is very unlucky to have crows build their nests facing your house. How unloved this bird is! How everything in this world goes by appearances!

30th July

S. was annoyed by my holding up the example of the industrious neighbours

who get up by five in the morning and wash their front door-steps, and bathe and change clothes. Not that I wish her to wash front door-steps. But the Ceylonese in her is too strong. We, Singhala people, are much lazier with regard to baths and untidier in dress than the Hindus.

31st July

Wanting to make a note of the list of recipients of scholarships from the Lady Tata Trust, as published in a magazine which I found in the Reading Room, I turned to a young Bengali and said, "Can you please spare your pen for a minute?" "I am afraid not", he said and turned on his heel, if such an expression could be used for his uncouth movements. (Later I learnt that this young man had lived for some years in Italy. But as the Singhala saying goes, though you may put a dog's tail in a joint of bamboo for a hundred years it will curl up the moment you take it out. In the same way foreign travel and experience do nothing to lessen the boorishness of certain people).

It is true that I am myself chary of lending my pen to all and sundry; but there have been occasions, such as at post-offices and other public places, where I have had to borrow someone's pen or lend my own to a total stranger. But here we are supposed to be *sadhaks* of an Ashram!

I am sure that had some white-skinned person made that request, my Bengali would have obliged with the utmost alacrity. Of course, I have met perfect kindness from some of the residents here, whether they are from Bengal, Gujarat or South India is incidental, but I have also met with the most studied rudeness. They have no social life at all here, and few of them have come here with any wide culture or broadening experience in the outside world; leading the kind of inhibited

lives they do, they are very testy and crochety. Once, it is said, when Sri Aurobindo was told of the shortcomings of his *Sadhaks* he commented. "That is why they are *Sadhaks*, not *Siddhas*" (*Siddha* being one fairly well advanced on the path of Yoga). Well, that does extenuate their *gaucherie* partly, but not wholly.

I used this incident in the course of an article entitled "Slave Mentality" and sent it to the editor of a quarterly who had asked me for an article. He returned it with polite apologies. It was later published in a Bombay weekly.

12th May

This is the anniversary sacred to the Buddha. He is supposed to have been born, and to have attained spiritual illumination, and to have died on the Full Moon Day of the month of Vaisakh according to the Indian calendar.

But this is not what I wanted to set down here. I am so struck by the ludicrousness and incongruity of my pose at this moment. I am seated at my table like a piece of statuary in a temple. I am dressed in khaki shorts, bare above the waist, and below the knees. My right leg is tucked up and rests on the chair and my left foot is tucked up too. My left arm, outstretched, rests on my left knee, which is on a level with my chin. My right elbow rests against the half-opened drawer, the while I fan myself with a continuous but none too vigorous motion of the wrist with a small palm-leaf fan of local make. Even so the amount of energy I produce, though quite immensurate with the amount of air displaced, would be sufficient to drive a small motor.

Already I am pouring with perspiration. My sole activity this morning, apart from the usual morning chores, consisted of correcting twenty-four pages of proofs, and taking them to the Press (a distance of

about a quarter of a mile), and returning home skirting the walls for shade. Then I changed my clothes, made myself a cup of coffee, and having drunk it, pulled out a file of papers and began sorting out some unpublished poems. I found even this effort—of shifting a few pieces of paper—too much, so oppressive is the heat, and I let the papers lie as they are, and having adopted the comparatively comfortable pose described above, begin fanning myself. It was then that I caught sight of the Marie Laurencin print in its frame facing me and I noticed other paraphernalia of a Western education on my table. At this I said to myself, "What a queer combination we products of East and West make!"

On the table in front of me was *The Author* (Journal of the Society of Authors), there were numerous files of manuscripts, notes etc., letters from friends in England, America and elsewhere, on my right there was *The Bookman's Holiday* by Holbrook Jackson, and there were the children's books, including "Mother Goose Rhymes"; on my left, a bottle of Waterman's ink and two tins of cigarettes; Brooke Farrar's small painting of a scene in the south of France (given to me when I stayed with him at St. Germain on Laye on my way to India in 1940) hangs on the wall on my right, and below that a silhouette of mine at the age of 23; on the wall across the room there is a print of *The Lute Player* by Frans Hals and right in front of me, as I said, Laurencin's print of two Parisian women in those frilly dresses she gives them.

Surrounded as I was by all these touches of an Occidental upbringing and outlook here I am sitting like a carving in a temple, and unlike the carving with its Oriental calm, fanning myself with the remnant of a palm-leaf fan. How the mind goes to seed in this atmosphere! At this stage my

ears take notice of the depressing noises (intended to soothe the young papoose) made by the half-caste woman (whom our children have dubbed Black Noggy) in the adjoining house. These Chalk-and-Charcoal with their unwashed skins, who have only adopted the hybrid clothes of the foreigner and the hybrid lingo of the other—how I loathe them!

October 7

Last evening I saw a wisp of smoke on the horizon. This morning there was a cargo steamer in the harbour. It had put into port in the night. And clustered all around it were small and big boats swarming with black figures.... How can we of Asia ever win the respect of Europeans, no matter how vast an ancient wisdom we can boast of, so long as this scene is enacted in a hundred ports from Suva to Bahrein? By their superior engineering skill, but chiefly because of their daring in enterprise, Europeans build sea-worthy ships and cross oceans and call at strange ports, not with trepidation but with every confidence that the black and brown men would in every case look upon them with awe and respect and as suppliants looking up to those from whom they expect succour. The best we can do is to turn up some old tome and say that in 5000 B.C. we did such and such, that today we are the possessors of great spiritual truths, and that we disdain to emulate the West! What balderdash, what cant!

The truth is we are decadent, we are soft, we are weakened, we truckle to the materialistic superiority of the West at every turn, with every breath we breathe. We do not have even a living language in which we could confess that we are cowards, that we are hopelessly decadent. To say these things we must resort to a living Western language. How some of those who owe what vestige of civilised bearing they have to the foreign education

they have secured, speaking in English, go to Moscow or Paris or Oxford or Washington and boast that we are superior beats me.

Such people can claim to be educated simply on the strength of the Western education, such as it was, which they have obtained. They have grown up thanks to the benefits of civilisation as fostered and foisted upon us of the East by Westerners. They travel to other lands in ships or planes built by those people. They eat the food that Westerners have decreed should be eaten. They dress, a curious dress which has neither rhyme nor reason nor geographical nor historical justification for it, in order to win the commendation of the Westerner. Their table manners, if they have any, are what they have borrowed from the West. They hold out obsequious palms for the coin that the Westerner contemptuously throws at them. They are pleased as a child with a new toy for the slightest praise, however equivocal, that *any* Westerner, no matter what his antecedents, showers on them. Their whole ambition is to acquit themselves well in the eyes of those same Westerners. Their ambition for their children is that the latter should grow up on as near a Western pattern as possible. And, YET, they have the temerity to boast that they have a superior civilisation.

Any people who have had a continuity of existence within a particular geographical area would naturally have a particular civilisation. It is simply a process of Nature. Egypt, China, Mesopotamia, India, must necessarily be able to say we have built in such and such a way, we have traded in such and such a commodity, we have worshipped in such and such a manner. Is there any special virtue in that? In the course of fifty centuries a people should have developed something special in the way of architecture, music, worship,

and human relationships. Either a people become extinct or they do these things—as a matter of routine. All this fuss about giving special interpretations and awarding special prizes because someone built a dome or someone else wrote a few hundred lines of poetry or because another uttered half-a-dozen profundities is sheer nonsense. When one compares the achievements of that small country, Greece, within her short existence as a State, with the ponderous claims of certain other civilizations, we see how exaggerated and superfluous is the praise that is expected by, and that is given to us.

Living in India, I am arguing from the point of view of the Indian scene. I have never met with more muddled thinking than I have here. And Europeans, for reasons of their own, like to see us living in a fool's paradise. They have watched us lap up praise as a hungry cat laps up a saucerful of milk. So now the Western technique is to praise the East and praise it again and again. To take India, as an example: India for her size, and considering her antiquity, has not done anything so special. The wisdom of her ancients is very ancient, a wisdom evolved in the first flush of her manhood. India has done nothing since but live on that original output. And that wisdom, being the product of Aryans, was more Western in its vitality and in its will-for-survival than Oriental. The towns that were laid out then, such as Mohenjo-daro (which are coming to light through Western methods of excavation) were "foreign" at that date, rather than "native". A few hundred temples owing their architectural peculiarities to local ingenuity and a few mosques built by the later invaders, are about all that we can talk about. But, I ask, is this enough for a civilisation to glorify or live upon, or borrow upon?

Here is this ship in the harbour. It has

brought cement from Karachi (now a foreign port), tin trays from Czechoslovakia, perfume and wines and brandy from France, and potatoes from Holland. The lowest specimens of our manhood, plying craft that would have been considered primitive even in the days of Cleopatra, swarm around the ship, wait for hours in the broiling sun, then when the pay-masters are pleased to give the order, they unload that stuff and bring it ashore and unload it again, and another set of miserable specimens of India's manhood, conveniently called "coolies", toil and sweat, using their backs and shoulders to cart this stuff about.

There's more dignity in oxen than there is in these coolies as, perpetually half-starved, and with dirty rags barely covering their nakedness, they grapple with loads obviously too heavy for their ill-nourished bodies. These meaner-than-oxen men are of our flesh and blood but we have degraded them to this level. No one thinks that they are a shame to this ancient country. We have glamorous ambassadors at the Court of St. James, we had a philosopher-ambassador at Moscow, and Oxford and Cambridge men at other capitals, and our Prime Minister, we are told in season and out, was at Harrow at the same time that the Duke of Windsor was there, but these coolies who grapple with cement bags covered in cement dust from head to foot are no less a part of India than those highly privileged people at the top. What have they done for these men? They live, by the sweat of their brows, by the grace and help of Catholic priests who come to their assistance in times of dire need, and thanks to the cargo steamers which now and then put in at this port.

When the white men, even the lowest of them such as stokers, see India's manhood first thing early dawn what feelings

must they have for us? There they swarm, their fragile primitive boats which must hug the coast and do no more, bobbing up and down alongside the squat cargo steamer. The white men look overboard and snap out orders and the blacks move like puppets on a string. In the Pacific Islands, in the Malay Archipelago, in Ceylon, at Cochin, at Aden, at Port Said, at all the ports of Asia and Africa this is the scene that is enacted. And still we claim equality with Europeans. Not only equality, but also deference for what our ancestors were supposed to have done.

7th November

I am, at last, (rather we are) in a house that is, in house-agents' language, "desirable", and in my language, satisfactory in every sense. I have a perfect view of the sea from the balcony. The early mornings are fresh with the scent of salt spray and the restful half-light of the sun about to rise. Silhouetted against the horizon I see frail skiffs and canoes and one or two sail-spanned boats. They are the boats of the fishermen. Nearer I can see several boats hurrying to the fishing grounds and being paddled by the men. They paddle like Red Indians, first on the off-side, then on the near-side. On this stretch of sea they are perfectly at home and the sea is to them no more than a lake.

This is the kind of scene that novelists rave about, and to see which people go to Tahiti or the Bahamas. There is nothing absent from this scene, I am sure, which is in any other similar scene. But how is it that I do not catch my breath, that I do not grab pencil and paper to make a sketch of it or that I do not rush to my typewriter to put down my thoughts red-hot. The scene leaves me cold. I have tried by every stretch of the imagination, by every trick of the senses, to feel that over there are fishermen, those romantic people who battle with the elements daily

for the price of a meal, that ahead of me is an unbroken view of the sea in the morning calm, that nearer to me there are some palm fronds, that I am very fortunately placed indeed, that this is the ideal setting for a writer. But my heart remains unstirred, without even trying to flap weakly.

Is it the exotic that man wants? I know of a fishing village in Spain where I was for a few months supremely happy. One lazed through the morning until it was time for aperitifs. One waited for the evenings expectantly. I drank with the fishermen. They were jolly fellows—for drinking with. One greeted their wives and sweethearts with heartiness. And each day one was as buoyed up as on the day before.

So it comes to this. Nature repeats herself. But Geography alone is not sufficient.

It is Man who makes Paradise: and Man who makes Hell. We in the tropics have made of our delectable scenes as near a Hell as we could. The only people who derive any pleasure and enjoy any measure of material comfort here are Europeans and that they do by leading a very artificial life and by making us play the role of serfs, which role, to judge by our acquiescence, seems to suit us to perfection.

I, and my wife and children are, thanks to the "Mother" of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, who has allowed us to live in this house, comfortable; and I am as contented as circumstances allow. But how I wish for a goodly dose of divine discontent! I do not suffer from it now. I have only these lukewarm negative feelings. The Place is important for me, but the People still more important.

SADHAN KUMAR GHOSH

the cold class war

some are more equal than others

RULING classes have been notoriously chary of parting with power. This is specially true of new ruling classes. In India, the Congress, recognised even in the thirties as the potential Tory party, is busy creating new ruling classes and sharpening the cleavage between them and the masses. Every day that passes makes the rift wider. The historian will find it odd that democracy in the middle of this century was threatened not only by international enemies but also by its professed defenders. A democracy is built by democrats, a republic by citizens. A democracy where the ruling classes cling to power and are busy erecting ramparts and barriers results in an authoritarian Government which is bound to hasten a class war.

The comforting opinion that our troubles are describable as normal, the usual features of a period of settling down and

adjustment, is a delusion. These troubles are not a hangover but the first signs of a new disease. The rumblings of a class war can be heard all over the country and it would be folly to ignore them. After partition and the mass-migrations, there was a great weariness and a hope for rest. It is painful to say and still more painful to believe that rest is nowhere in sight and that a class war is already on. Nonetheless, this is the truth and the penalty for denying this truth will be heavy.

Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan once said that the departure of the British was followed by the creation of new elite groups. These groups, apart from the bosses of the ruling party, include the industrialists and the financiers, the high-salaried bureaucrats, and the mercantile executives. There is a conscious attempt to close the ranks of the rulers. The rise of a ruling class depends on its ability to restrict opportunities to

the few and on the subordination of the many to this discipline. And, as Hilferding saw, the more the many resent this discipline the more likely is the ruling class to tighten the screw further.

Odd as it may seem, the most open of these attempts is the propaganda about population. Why do the Indian ruling classes—asks George Floris—on all other issues so sensitive about American interference, gratefully accept the American aid and advice provided by Dr. Stone and others towards the decimation of their future generations? Would any other country consider family planning an answer to unemployment? It can be only explained by the persistent refusal of the ruling classes to recognise that distribution (and *not* production) is the essential problem. Hence the hysteria about birth control.

Although the ruling classes in the country still constitute a miscellaneous lot, they are bound to evolve a common type. This type may, for lack of a better expression, be described as the Westernised Intellectual. He will send his children first to one of the quasi-public or semi-English schools. After a few years spent at one of a small number of colleges—Presidency, St. Xavier's (Calcutta, Bombay), Stephens (Delhi)—they will go abroad. He will generally express a great concern about the mother-tongue and Indian Culture. Such a man is and will be far more removed from the mass of the Indian people than the British civil servants used to be. India's present rulers fear that a rising population and the resultant pressure of their less educated and less privileged countrymen would sooner or later pierce the Western veneer and confront the rulers with a challenge. The 'high-ups' will no more be able to conduct their secluded lives of comfort, splendour and glamour. With the departure of the British, the rulers

have occupied the small European enclaves in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and a few other places. They are nervous lest a revived genuine India—the real India as envisaged by Fenner Brockway and H. N. Brailsford—should knock at the gates and swamp them. A class which owes its privileges to the accidents of history is afraid of a people's revolution.

"Now they wage the most subtle yet most candid class war in history: we witness an elite openly admitting their intention of keeping the masses down numerically" (*George Floris*)

THOUGHTFUL democrats all over the world, most of them friends of India, are deeply disturbed by these trends. Cannot the Indian Government, they ask, find a more inspiring solution to the problem of the teeming millions than the barren and negative one offered by birth control? A country frightened by its own greatness does not inspire confidence. And the elite has created a situation reminiscent of the looking-glass world. For the Congress with the masses behind it, wants to arrest the growth of the population; the communists who have no mass support do not want to reduce the manpower reservoir. They want to exploit it. Professor Gilbert Murray describes the twilight of Hellenic civilisation as an instance of failure of nerve. We are witnessing today a failure of nerve in our own country.

Nor is it possible to miss the lessons of the educational counter-revolution. The counter-revolution must be considered in two stages—the decision to lower the standard of English teaching and eventually to abolish it; and the proposal to restrict university education to a small number of students by abolishing the Intermediate examination altogether. The cumulative effect of these two measures will be that the mass of the Indian

population will not even aspire to anything beyond secondary education. Educational inequality, a cause for class divisions, is sought to be perpetuated. A dispassionate observer will regard this as a political gambit, not an educational reform. An acquisitive society evolves its own methods of mind control, but this would not be the first time in history that education had been 'cornered' to forestall the rise of malcontents. On much the same principle the Catholic church in the Middle Ages restricted the study of the Bible to its priests.

One can see that our elite are enamoured of what Tawney calls the Religion of Inequality. But injustices linger not merely because the rich and the privileged exploit the poor but because, secretly, the poor admire the rich. Leftist and Marxist parties never envisage a social order of a different kind in which money and economic power will no longer be the criterion of achievement, but a social order of the same kind with a new lick of paint, in which money and power are differently distributed. We miss a faith in the possibility of a society in which a higher value will be set on human dignity and a lower value on money when money does not serve human ends.

THERE is, however, no immediate prospect of this, and India is rapidly becoming a social oligarchy. A "new challenge to social conscience" is needed. But the challenge must come from the rulers and not from the people. An impoverished middle class, already deprived of its security, is now threatened with degradation. It watches with dismay the slow creation of vested interests in education and culture, no less than in industry and finance. What social justification is there, it asks, for perpetuating class privileges in

education and reducing the mass to "the smallest possible dimensions compatible with general welfare"? Why is there a simultaneous emphasis on Basic Education and on multiplication of the quasi-public schools? Why is the study of English slowly squeezed out? Why—if Hindi or the regional language be a perfect medium of instruction—are the children of the Vice-Chancellors, Company Directors and Secretariat Bosses being allowed to treat all indigenous education as inferior and to crowd the British Universities? One would not have minded if these young men visited foreign countries in the spirit of eighteenth century English noblemen doing the Grand Tour. What one deplors is that a foreign degree should provide access to careers of distinction and profit.

How a similar situation was averted in England may not be quite to the point, but it is instructive to note Harold Laski's analysis of it. He takes the Barlow Report as a simple illustration. This report examined the manpower position in Great Britain in the light of its bearing on the technological future and emphasised the gap between demand and supply. Laski suggests that the chief cause of the gap was "a fear in the ruling elite that if it were to open wide the gates of educational opportunity to the masses its own authority would presently be jeopardised". Great Britain has refused to adopt "functional education," in spite of the eloquent defence of men like T. S. Eliot. Man's inalienable right to have an insight into art, literature and history is being questioned in India to-day and it is being suggested that all culture should be the private possession of an elite. The "functional education" envisaged in the Second Five Year Plan is an affront to the dignity of Man. Most men are born with no financial and social winds behind them. If they are to make the best of their endowments, they must find scope not

merely for their supposed aptitudes but also for their own preferences.

There is little doubt that the Avadi resolution about the Socialistic Pattern of our society does not envisage equality. Maulana Azad admitted this, though he tried to hedge about it. The Congress President, speaking at Lucknow, was emphatic that neither ownership nor control of the principal means of production was a practicable proposition. "The question of taking over ownership was ruled out for the present." Prime Minister Nehru said on May Day that the main problem was not that of distribution, for there was not enough to distribute, but of more production. A hierarchical society is accustomed to heroics and hysterics. Occasionally, it must be prepared for turnabouts as well. In retrospect, the Avadi resolution will be seen not merely as a decoy operation intended to turn the flanks of the leftists but also to meet the rising temper and the growing demand for a little more equality.

THE principal effect of inequality is psychological. Talk of birth control and family planning taints the atmosphere with defeatism, the educational experiments create distrust of the "herrenvolk". Unemployment is treated as a political not a human problem. Rationalisation has come to stay. One gets the impression that life is not a value supreme. And if life is not a value supreme, the significance of Five Year Plans and development projects is called in question. An outlook is created which promotes not solidarity, but the spirit of the *homo homine lupus*. As the area of frustration grows wider, the crisis in values will grow deeper and more serious. We are moving into a new age of slavery, however cleverly the fact might be disguised.

Tawney has traced a common pattern in the threats and challenges—apart from violence—to democracy. In the U.K., U.S. and France, one notes, this takes two forms. The first has been the attempt of Left or Left-Centre governments to control capitalism, without effecting any fundamental change in the balance of economic power. The second has been the use of economic power by the ruling class to stifle thought and paralyse efforts considered dangerous to the perpetuation of its supremacy. Equality is in full retreat in India because "the right to education is obviously impaired if poverty arrests its use in mid-career; the right to the free choice of an occupation, if the expenses of entering a profession are prohibitive; the right to earn a living if enforced unemployment is recurrent; the right to justice if few men of small means can afford the cost of litigation". And when equality is in retreat, democracy is necessarily on the defensive.

It is sad that in spite of our membership of the Commonwealth we have missed the lessons of the mighty experiment in Great Britain. In Britain, the foundations of the Welfare State have been laid and a radical transformation of society—a silent revolution—is under way. As is well-known, this may be traced to the Beveridge Report of 1942, but the subsequent social legislation has been in many respects more generous than the Beveridge proposals. Since 1944, Secondary Education has become free and the cost of Higher Education has become nominal. The most spectacular of the Social Services is the National Health Service introduced in 1948. This has eliminated the expensive doctor and the drug racket. And culture has not been forgotten. The Arts Council runs about eighty repertory theatre companies, providing dramatic entertainment for the mass of the people.

No social class has been allowed to 'corner' joy and happiness. The British Welfare State has created a new spirit of citizenship and new moral and legal duties. Self-expression and solidarity have become the principal motives of action, not fear of starvation or hopes of great personal wealth and influence. And the old conflict between the individual and the citizen seems to have been dissolved.

THE Railway and the General Budget proposals in India reflect a philosophy of inequality. The middle classes have felt the squeeze most. Our rulers seem to have misread the Parable of the Talents: "For unto every one that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." Our ruling classes do not regard equality or even an impression of equality as an insurance against revolution. One or two families holding prominent positions in commerce and industry are held up as scapegoats. They symbolise impersonal forces and collective guilt much in the same way that the Cliveden set did in the England of the thirties and International Jewry did in the Germany of Hitler. And all the time the real ruling classes (much more complex and numerous than a few families) are swelling their numbers and closing their ranks. Mr. Deshmukh's contention that there are only about one hundred families with an income of over one lakh, even if it had been true, would have left unanswered the number of persons with incomes in the neighbourhood of forty and fifty thousand. The number of such persons has increased enormously while the real income of persons earning between Rupees hundred and two hundred a month is sliding downhill.

In this context it is difficult to consider the Kalelkar report as the great challenge it sets out to be. It will rather be considered a voice from the past, emphasising disabilities which have become either meaningless or unreal in to-day's setting, and averting its gaze from the real handicaps which cramp and cripple life everywhere. The Kalelkar Commission set up under Art. 340 of the Constitution was authorised to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes and the difficulties under which they labour. It is said to have made the startling discovery that the backward classes number 200 million and to have foisted the responsibility for this on the "upper classes".

What the Commission failed to observe was that the backward—or rather the retrograde—classes number much more than 200 million and comprise practically the whole of India's population minus of course the elite at the top. There is no longer any excuse for treating only a barber's son as belonging to the backward classes and a school teacher's son as belonging to the forward classes. They have both been passed over and both of them are out of it. Neither of them will ever enjoy the opportunities enjoyed as a matter of course by the son of the Provincial Home Secretary or the Vice-Chancellor. The Commission does not seem to have been disturbed by the greatest of all difficulties the backward classes (comprising the supposed middle classes and the farmers and the artisans) have to encounter—the lengthening shadow of inequality. And for this reason in spite of the undoubtedly lofty motives of the President who set it up and the composition of the body, the Commission may be seen in retrospect as a diversionary move the unintended effect of which was to distract attention from the new elite, their new citadels and bastions.

It is sometimes said that the middle classes may become the beneficiaries of the Managerial Revolution that is under way. The expression "Managerial Revolution" is associated with James Burnham but it has been more plausibly argued by Christopher Hollis. The theory is that technicians and organisers are to-day indispensable and may in certain circumstances enjoy great power and large incomes. Hollis argues that by a process of absorption and dying out the middle classes are destined to become increasingly Managerial. This could never happen in India. For one thing the middle classes would never get the opportunities which are being restricted in every way, and, for another, even if they did succeed, they would join the new elite; indeed, this happens everywhere. "If the group ('privileged technicians') becomes merely a group of organisers it will have ceased to have much relation to the middle classes as we all know them." (Roy Lewis and Angus Maude).

That is why the Avadi resolution or the Second Five Year Plan or even the Fourth Amendment have not inspired the average man. A nation dreams of high destinies

when it has attained security and approximate equality. A nation does not dream of levelling up if it is convinced that levelling down should have high priority. It is only when the philosophy of a ruling class makes its dominant ideals seem universally acceptable that a society can avoid the danger of breakdown through conflict, argues Harold Laski. The shop-soiled philosophy of our elite is contributing to the sense of countrywide frustration which the Communist so readily exploits. Acharya Kripalani has recently reminded us of Gandhiji's regret—that learning, wealth and political power should be confined to one class—"the Capitalists and their bureaucratic allies in industry and administration who sometimes interchange roles". A civilisation based on technology and not on humanity is destroying the conviction that life is worth while and spoiling the ardour for great adventure. But the glories of the House of Life cannot long remain the monopoly of a privileged class; nor can they be shut off by ramparts and catchphrases; and still less can they be preserved within a *sanctum sanctorum*.

philosophy east and west

differences in method and results

SWAMI AGEHANANDA

WHEN an occidental sets about studying Indian thought, he is nearly always persuaded that Indian philosophy is uncritical. When compared with what at least the academic occident professes as philosophy, there is no doubt that this is so. It is by now a truism that India in her philosophy is basically tradition-bound; here, philosophy is either the *ancilla theologiae* or it is not even recognized as a separate pursuit. There has been considerable and not always pleasant eloquence on both sides; the quarrel between the pundit and the critical philosopher haunts the scene of Indian Thought.

I have criticized the popularizers of philosophical and theological problems at many places; there are some of the kind in the West as well, but they do not usually command more than the respect given to good reporters or journalists. Here in India, however, these popularizers have been objects of greater praise. The time is just about over when Swami Vivekananda's books were texts at universities; yet the wishful thought still lingers that arm-

ing oneself with the knowledge of his and other popularizers' works entitles one to choose between the pundit and the critical philosopher.

My comparative survey, which can necessarily touch upon just a few main features, must begin with a most treacherous linguistic error. It is this error which has spread hatred between the pundit and the critical philosopher. It was Prof. Max Muller, punned into *moksha-mula*¹ by a fun-loving friend, who did the mischief, though quite unintentionally or, rather, due to his lack of information. He was no field-worker, for as against the notion falsely held by many scholars here, Muller never set foot in India; had he done so he might have revised his lexicographical mistake: the mistake of translating "philosophy" by *darshana-shastra*. When a pundit thunders against philosophy, he does so because he thinks it to be *darshana*, and as it is anything but that, it lacks the criteria of a *darshana-shastra* as a matter of course.

1. The root of salvation.

As it is, neither etymology nor usage warrants any such translation. *Darshan* derives from the root *drsh*, to see, to perceive, and it means precisely what occidental scholars call theology and mysticism. I must stress "and", because the two in India are not different things—they are mutual proofs, whereas in the West—which includes Christianity and Islam—the two were very much separate and viewed each other with suspicion and contempt. Philosophy, on the contrary, at least in the connotation it has gained by now, is the very opposite of these—it defies traditional lore as proof for anything, and it tries to keep out mysticism at least consciously, though there are exceptions to the latter clause in Continental thought.

It might then be asked whether there is anything at all in the Indian tradition that would correspond to philosophy. The answer is yes, but with the restriction that what so corresponds has not any of the importance philosophy has in the cultural history of the West. Philosophy is well translated by the technical term *anvikshiki*; we find this word sporadically in many texts, but it is best compressed for our purpose in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (the classical work of Hindu Polity and Economics, written in the 3rd or 2nd century B. C.). Kautilya enumerates the sciences that fall under *anvikshiki-vidya*, and these roughly correspond to what at some time or other the West meant by philosophy. The etymology of the word is clear: those objects that can be directly perceived (*pratyaksha*) and those that can be inferred by the syllogistic or other methods (*anumana*), are *anvikshiki* (*anu-* the prefix indicating correspondence, the Greek *anaplu* *iksh-* root for seeing, beholding.)

PHILOSOPHY is a Greek and entirely European word, *darshana* is a uniquely Indian word. We should then not be too

surprised to find that philosophy is found in any shastra *except* in *darshana*, and where it does come in at times in *darshana* literature, its ancillary position is assumed. We do find philosophy in the *shastras* that belong to various different disciplines of learning: in economics and polity (*artha-shastra*), in poetics (*kavya-shastra*), in the art of disputation (*tarka-shastra*), in mathematics and astronomy (*ganita-shastra*) and last but not least in erotics (*kama-shastra*), which proudly belongs to the Scriptures as any other of the enumerated *shastras* do. It is only in the India of today where the missionary of Christendom has surreptitiously created all kinds of complexes in the mind of the Hindu, who has had a truly humanistic attitude to this important discipline, that the *kama-literature* is frowned at or even hushed up.

The methodical distinction between *darshana* and philosophy is not difficult to find. In the West, something like this distinction would work in assigning topics to philosophy and theology respectively. *Darshana* believes in three tests of truth: in direct perception (*pratyaksha*), inference (*anumana*), and canonical testimony (*shabda* or *aptavachana*, i.e. "the word" or "the statement of the reliable," i.e. the adepts). This has been the classical trifolium throughout almost the entire history of Brahminical *darshana*; only in very recent times, in the Bengali-cum-Mithila School of the New Logic (Navya-Nyaya) *shabda* had come to mean something more accurate and certainly more sophisticated—we cannot deal with it here. It can easily be understood that these three epistemological proofs (*pramanas*) or validations apply to any kind of theology, even where there is no "theos", no God, as in Buddhism or Jainism. Not so in philosophy: roughly spoken, philosophy, and the *anvikshiki*-sciences in India, accept only the first two proofs and dispense with the third. Somewhat superciliously it can be

said that philosophy is *darshana*, or theology without the third *pramana*. Against this, it may be argued that the Buddhists denied *shabda* as a *pramana*, and so did the Jains.

However, theirs was, I think, a kind of courtesy denial—in concordance with their comparatively *Freigeist* views, they had to deny final validating power to their Scripture *mutatis mutandis*, after having denied the Vedic Word to be *pramana*. In reality their canon is about as binding to them in the theological sphere as the Brahmins' canon is to the Brahmin. The assumption that Buddhism and Jainism are closer to the western analyst than Brahmanical doctrine is vague and probably erroneous; analysis in the sense that applies to western philosophy today is entirely alien to the Indian scene, again with the exception of the recent *Navya-Nyaya*, which though it does pay the traditional lip-service to the Vedic authority is, to most pundits of the traditional brand, something uncanny; also, it is localized—you find hardly as much as its name in South India.

To the Indian philosopher, certain *pramanas* are unquestionable; hence, the Indian philosopher is chiefly a metaphysician. I would call him a metaphysician who builds his philosophy on certain axioms which he just accepts as unanalysable. Most definitely, western philosophy tends to find a method where such axioms are eschewed or at least diminished to a minimum. In India, all philosophy hitherto taught was axiomatic philosophy, i.e. metaphysics, and this includes the twice-mentioned *Navya-Nyaya*; there was but one magnificent exception, more impressive than other achievements because of its great age: the *madhyamika* or *shunya-vada* philosophy of Nagarjuna and his followers. It is the only method in Indian thought which does not make any propositions, and declares the final non-validity of any assertion.

In India, however, Nagarjuna is only a name in the history of thought. His teaching spread into Tibet and China, where it was no doubt faithfully preserved in the Tanjur and Kanjur collections, but there it remained a kind of fossil. It has not found any traditional adherents in India, nor even in the surrounding Buddhist countries that follow the Hinayana tradition. If there is any notion akin to Russell's 'logical fictions' it is to be found in Nagarjuna's *Karikas* and in Chandrakirti's commentary. So on the whole it can be said that Indian philosophy explicitly or implicitly accepts the word of the scripture as *pramana*; the Brahmins the Vedic *shruti*, the Jains the *Niganthas*, and the Buddhists—with the reservations made before—their *Tripitaka*.

WHAT I have written so far is itself a piece of metaphysics, if we accept Collingwood's description of this science as a historical discipline: a metaphysician is a scholar who tells you what basic, axiomatic assumptions have been made by certain people at a certain time. The Indian assumptions of this axiomatic kind are but two, counter to the usual view that western philosophy of even the traditional kind has believed in fewer axioms than her Indian sister. For whereas the Aristotelian tradition (this is roughly spoken of as the Western tradition and includes, of course, the Stagirite's critics as well) leans on a formidable list of axioms and categories, Indian tradition has ultimately but two: the axiom of a moral nexus, i.e. a law of retribution more or less impersonally conceived, with the notion of rebirth following in its wake; and the acceptance of the canon as philosophical evidence (*pramana*).

In the West, the theological chair was separated from the philosophical with a pledge of mutual non-encroachment in the

13th or 14th century through an ordinance of the Sorbonne at Paris; on the whole, the ordinance has been implemented in the centuries to follow. Henceforth, the philosopher professed to concern himself with knowable knowledge only, leaving the unknowable to the theologian.

In India, there is a hint at a similar procedure, though again once only. Jaimini Acharya, the propounder of the *Purva Mimamsa* philosophy, teaches expressly that everything said in the Scripture has to be understood in a spiritual sense—i.e. in a sense that does not pertain to a universe which can be understood by discursive means. Even if there be mention of a tree in the Veda, that must not be a tree of this world, because this world's trees can be scrutinized by other means—by botany. Here is the unique case where the theologian himself inaugurates the separation of the two chairs—in the West, it was the dissatisfied philosopher who rebelled. Jaimini, however, does not have many professed followers today, and there has never been any such separation as he perhaps visualized.

IS there any philosophy in India which is not chiefly theology? Hardly; and this fact cannot be disputed if we accept the distinctive criteria for philosophy and theology given here. There was of course Charvaka and the Lokayatas but we know virtually nothing about him, except that his name was Brihaspati, and that he preached the wisdom of the world and denied individual immortality. Six verses ascribed to him or his school are extant all in all, and whatever is being construed upon them seems to me highly fanciful. Then there was indeed a modern Charvaka—the late M. N. Roy. He wrote his own philosophy. About these two we can definitely say that they accepted no text as *pramana* and chose only conclusions which were, or seemed to them, logi-

cally sound. Now if a teacher of philosophy in India today teaches any of his own ideas, he is automatically dubbed a 'westerner', i.e. a philosopher who philosophizes in the occidental manner. In the case of M. N. Roy his predilection for the philosophical attainments of the West was known and he made no secret of it; but there are others, who certainly prefer the Indian tradition, and would yet like to express their own thoughts independently: they are not expected to do that if they want to retain the title of Indian thinkers. The Indian thinker has been and is still expected to be an exegete and nothing but an exegete—new thoughts are suspicious, heretic, unwelcome—in short, they are "western".

So far we have only been juxtaposing historical patterns of Indian and Western philosophy and one might feel no real difference has yet been worked out. There is, however, such a real difference, though none of the differences usually enumerated are really radical and some of them are purely imaginary, as the famous "materialist" and "spiritual" attitudes discussed by me elsewhere. The real difference seems to be in the different approaches to philosophical matters: India has all along been basically enthusiastic, the West has usually preferred being discursive and critical. Now this is not a hard and fast demarcation. It would be a tiresome though interesting job to show where the West has been enthusiastic in its thought. This distinction is in my own terminology and I have often written and spoken about it. The philosophical opposite of a critical attitude is not the uncritical but the enthusiastic attitude. What do these two words mean? The root-stem of "critic" is the Greek stem *krin*, the verb is *krinein*, and means to separate, originally to separate the chaff from the wheat. Critical thought, therefore, is thought that 'separates' from an accumulation of data, from

a bulk of knowledge, what is derived from sources extraneous to the individual that undertakes this 'separating'. Enthusiastic comes from the Greek *en-thous-iazo*, and the official etymology is "to be filled with a deity;" (theos), similar to the German phrase "*des Gottes voll*". However, with some philological ingenuousness the root "*thyo*" could be brought into connection with it. "*Thy ein*" means to be strongly shaken, moved; then its other meaning became to sacrifice—the deity is moved by the sacrifice, or compelled to accede to the priest's or the sacrificer's will. The Greek root *thy* is of course the Sanskrit root *hu*, as in *juhomi*, *hotar*—where it always meant to sacrifice. The enthusiastic mind is the mind that is strongly affected and affected by extraneous forces; or, with more metaphor and less linguistic, it is the mind that has sacrificed the right of its own jurisdiction and relies on testimony of either a preceptor or a tradition, or of its own mystical vision.

We now recall the fundamental distinction between the Indian and the Western approach, though we should not press it too much. For well over 1,500 years, the West taught enthusiastic thought, but these years are called the dark ages. There were no critical phases in Indian Thought, though there were several critical schools (the Madhyamikas and other Mahayanist schools among the Buddhists, a part of the Vedantic tradition, and the recent *Navya-Nyaya* all of which earn the admiration of the most radically modern in the West.)

Most Indians are familiar with the Gita and the Upanishads, and some are acquainted with more than these texts of the Indian tradition. Bengalis especially have the rich additional *Shakta* and *Vaishnava* traditions with their genuine philosophies, albeit enthusiastic philosophies. Most educated Indians have read some piece or other written by Western thinkers.

What strikes one most when one compares the two styles? The Gita, the Upanishads, etc., all bring the most inspiring and edifying teachings and have tremendous appeal to our sentiments, but there are few descriptive or analytical propositions in them. There were few descriptive or analytical propositions in Greek literature that was contemporary with and even later than those writings, but then things have changed in the West, they have not in India.

TAKE the scholastic commentators on the *Prasthanatraya*, (i.e. the Gita, Upanishads, and the Brahma Sutras) the Vedantic Acharyas and their disciples, and on to our present-day pundits who write in the tradition: the language has become more and more technical, less and less edifying and beautiful, but what they write is essentially non-descriptive. If we analyse all this vast bulk of scholastic and exegetical literature, we shall find that it is only the style that has changed considerably since the time when the canonical scriptures themselves were codified over 2,500 years ago. There is no critical analysis of the texts, but reiteration and reformulation. *Navya-Nyaya* again seems to stand somewhat outside the orthodox exegetical trend, and this is one more reason why it is held suspect by many of the orthodox. I recently heard a very learned monk dismiss *Navya-Nyaya* with the remark that all that system cares for is definition and technical terminology (*paribhasha*). Now this is incidentally precisely what modern philosophy in the West mainly cares for!

What the learned Indian philosopher today dislikes in Western philosophy as far as he has heard about it, is that it does not deal with "Truth". By Truth, thus capitalised, the orthodox Indian means the highest entity conceived in his particular tradition. For the Vedantin (most

Hindus of learning are Vedantins of some form today) it is *Brahman* or *Ishvara*, for the Buddhist, *Nirvana* or *Shunya*.

Now from what I have said till now you can easily see the hitch in it: what the Indian philosopher wants is exactly what the West has handed over to the theological chair in the middle ages, and he is careful not to tackle theological problems except as a historian or a psychologist, or as a linguist in the case of some contemporary thinkers, especially of the Oxford school and the people who write for and read *Mind*. In my contribution to the American Volume on Prof. Radhakrishnan (Tudor, New York 1952) I criticized Sir Sarvapalli on this very count: that he seems to favour the perpetuation of scholasticism in Indian Thought viz. of a science that comprises theology and philosophy in one Chair. In his reply at the end of the book, Dr. Radhakrishnan very acutely analyzes this criticism and argues his case for such a perpetuation. It is entirely acceptable to me, but still I believe the risk of an intellectual stalemate is great unless criticism can be extended to *shruti*: as it is, it cannot be thus extended, for the *shruti* is not of human origin (*apaurusheya*) and must therefore not be criticized at all.

With the mystery-shrouded exception of Charvaka, then, all Indian thinkers had to fit their logic into the redemptive frame. Many of them had immense logical talent and learning, yet they had to renounce it at every moment, with the quasi-apologetic note "*iti shruteh*"—(such says the Text).

Every Indian philosopher, if he wishes to be counted among the orthodox in his tradition, must insist that all philosophical argument is null and void before the claim that salvation—variously styled *mukti*, *moksha*, *apavarga*, *nibbana*, *kaivalya*, *turiya* a.o.—is the sole concern of Man eventually, and all logic and epistemology

but ancillary to that. There were philosophers who were most probably not interested in salvation—Gautama and Kanada seem to have been among them—yet they had to pay lip-service to the rule, and it often sounds highly unconvincing and charmingly naive. It is this naivete which prevents me from brandishing such literature as intellectual dishonesty; today, however, it cannot be got away with, and I believe intellectual hypocrisy should be overtly opposed on the academical rostrum, in spite of the risk that many notions revered by their age will have to be challenged; what is old is not necessarily good.

THERE can be no doubt that the theological method is common to the West and India. Ethics, as long as it is bound up with religion, must needs become a theological discipline and has then no place in philosophy where it ought to have its home. C. D. Broad distinguishes between deontological and teleological ethics: those who call a life morally good in which actions and attitudes are for some ulterior purpose, are teleological moralists, regardless of whether the ulterior purpose is the achievement of a saturated bank-account or *mukti*, or the *visio beatifica*, its Christian counterpart. Those who do good deeds without any such ulterior motives, because they hold these deeds to be morally fitting in themselves, are deontologists in morals. Quite evidently, all theological morals are teleological, and here more than through any other approach do we feel how purely theological Indian thought is: no action is good in itself, because the goodness of an action or an attitude can be gauged solely with ultimate reference to *mukti*. If abstinence leads to *mukti*, abstemious actions are good; if indulgence leads there, indulgent actions are good.

The Indian theologian, then, like every theologian, has never been interested in

good actions for their own sake; now could he be, when good deeds done for their own sake are rivals to the cause of theology? If the theological doctrine assumes the irrefragable right to singular moral legislation and jurisdiction, then no intruders who claim similar rights can be welcome.

The Christian and Mohammedan theologian posits a final state of beatitude as well—though it would seem to me that at least their orthodox statements about the constitution of that beatitude are cruder than the Indian counterparts; rather, their conception of a *visio beatifica* or a dwelling with the Lord is just one of the possibilities offered to the devotee by the Indian eschatologist. It roughly corresponds to the *salokya* form of *mukti*, so eminently mentioned in the Vaishnava and Shivite theologies.

But apart from Christianity, the West has had a truly ethical tradition—why, ethics is so thoroughly a western term that it is impossible to translate it into non-European languages, though there is no lack of attempts to give such renderings; we hear *nitishastra*, *achara-vijnam* and many more, but they just do not connote ethics. The ethicist tries to develop an autonomous doctrine of values and the moral good.

The second (and last) basic distinction between the West and India is that the West has mainly cherished a collectivistic tradition in its thoughts, whereas India has been radically individualistic throughout its philosophical history. As to the West there were great exceptions: there were great individualists in Greece and later, and the best thinkers of today are thorough individualists, though they profess otherwise to belong to mutually opposed schools. The analytic philosopher is an individualist because he is a better logician than the Aristotelian was, and the other extreme

in contemporary Western thought, existentialism, is individualistic because it has intuited the hollowness and meanness and depravity of any form of collectivism.

In India, there was hitherto no exception to her rule: there was not a single collectivist thinker, and that is the reason why I believe that at least as an academical thesis, among the scholastics of India, communism will not in the long run become naturalized. This natural poise, as it were, of Indian individualism is a result of the suzerainty of *sadhana*, compared to which all scholastic argument and doctrine has been of secondary importance. *Sadhana* is something inalienably individualistic, for the simple reason that only the individual can perform it; and as I have understood religion to be synonymous with *sadhana*, religion is an individualistic enterprise. Salvation, in whatever form it may be conceived, can be won by the individual and for the individual only. There is no such thing as universal salvation, for religion is the enemy of congregation; where there is congregation, religion can be present in name only.

Now our pseudo pundits often opine that certain forms of Indian thought and *sadhana* are not individualistic. They are wrong—all forms of Indian thought and *sadhana* are. Our friends will frequently contrast Hinayana with Mahayana Buddhism. In the former, older school, the aspirant works out his own *nibbana* (salvation) and is satisfied with it. In the Mahayana, the adept will not enter salvation without helping mankind to attain it before him; in fact this saying is ascribed to the Buddha himself. Now the fallacy is again a linguistic one and even here in India I have come to the conclusion that there is nothing so interesting as language.

The mistake lies in the notion of “mankind”—indeed, this word has many equiva-

lents in Indian languages. "Mankind" is not a thing, but a name; only "man" and "men" are things. Only a man, two men, many men, each man, can (perhaps) attain salvation, and the true adept may well will to help each man to attain it before he himself does: but there is no salvation for "mankind", nor for the "universe", for there are no such things. There is no mankind to serve, no humanity to sacrifice for, no motherland to die for—there are only individuals for whom these things can be done. Why then are these words (mankind, motherland, nation, humanity, etc.) so frequent and why do we wax so very eloquent about them? That is because apart from being collective names of a certain grammatical and logical form, they have a strong emotive value; and as most people in this world are susceptible to verbal inebriation, and pious people most of all, it is these words that are preferred in use to serve "mankind". That is all right so long as one is aware that it is nothing but such an abbreviation.

WHAT happens to the enthusiast is that he thinks he intuitively something in "mankind" which is more than "as many men as are given to my care"; this is dangerous, for over "mankind" we tend to forget men, and translated into the language of political and theocratic power, this very same "mankind" changes from an innocuous collective name into the heinous golem.

Now on the whole, India has been spared this transition from a name to a ghost—at least traditional India has been spared that. I don't know what the future development is to be; if India ever gets enamoured with collectivism of any form—an ideology which is strange to her tradition—then of course those crises and debacles the West has had are likely to be ahead for this country as well.

The West has had an unbroken line of collectivist thinkers, beginning with or before Plato, the Philosopher King, and still continuing. So preponderant is the collectivist tendency in western thought, that I was tempted to write in a paper recently published, that there is an Anti-Humanist Tradition in the West. To a large extent, I identify humanism with individualism. I have explained elsewhere what individualism is.

Some years ago, I also made the distinction between "inspiration" and "information", and you can see what goes with that. I do not think I am wrong when I say that there is far too much "inspiration" in India, and far too little information; the eight volumes of the writings and talks of Swami Vivekananda are eight volumes of inspiration. It is impossible to learn about Hinduism from them, because that requires far more information than inspiration, though naturally inspiration is a part of it, the commencing part, the stimulus to learn about it. I am not against such literature—but it must be read at the right age, i.e. before 20. I read it until about 18, and part of my decision to become a monk was due to the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature.

I don't think either the West or India can contribute anything that is entirely unique to each—but they can help each other through what is prevalent in their respective traditions. Even if they will render such mutual contribution, we should not expect the millennium because of it; for thinking of what Nestroy said: *"Überhaupt hat der Fortschritt das an sich, daß er viel grober ausschaut, als er in Wirklichkeit ist"*. It means more or less that this is the commendable side of progress, that it looks far bigger than it actually is. Wittgenstein knew why he put his countryman's words at the beginning of his book, and Anscombe knew why he did not try to translate it into English.

RENE TAVERNIER

letter from france

politics art literature

IN this summer of 1955, France is no longer the France of a year ago, a country that at first was humiliated, dispirited and embittered by the defeat at Dien Bien Phu and then over-excited by the so-called "Mendes-France experiment". The easing of international tension is matched by an easing of inner tension as well. The important thing, however, is to know whether either of these states will last. There are reasonable grounds for doubt.

The Geneva Conference is only one of the more spectacular manifestations of the new Soviet policy that might well be called a policy of appeasement or even of hypnotism rather than of rapprochement. Geneva is a duel of propaganda, which, at present, is being carried out in a friendly key. Therein may lie the only difference. The danger of this *détente*—the result, perhaps, of very shrewd tactics on the part of the Moscow strategists—

would be countered if the communists found themselves confronted not with individual countries or countries imperfectly bound together by the North Atlantic Treaty, but by a free and united Europe.

As we know, France has very wisely refrained from manufacturing atom bombs herself. But a European federation that pooled its civil and military resources might be able to work out an autonomous atomic policy, which is the only valid condition for establishing a free and effective foreign policy.

Unfortunately, the European idea has lost ground in France since the rejection of the E.D.C., despite the ratification of the Paris agreements. The most obvious manifestation of this is M. Jean Monnet's departure from Luxemburg.

At his press conference recently, General de Gaulle set forth his latest views. The General, whose public appearances

have become very infrequent, still enjoys immense prestige. His retirement to the village of Colombey-les-deux-Eglises in Lorraine has made him a legendary figure in his own lifetime. The publication of the first volume of his *Memoirs* has revealed to a wide public that this singular man, this proud and powerful spirit, is also a writer in the best French classical tradition of the seventeenth century. There is unquestionably a certain grandeur in this solitude, this refusal to compromise. It is based on the General's refusal to break faith with the idea of France to which he has dedicated himself. And the authority of this man, who holds no office and has no official power, derives from his deep integrity.

It should, however, be pointed out as cause for regret that year after year General de Gaulle's thinking becomes increasingly tinged with the most traditional kind of nationalism. The anti-Americanism which he displays in occasional outbursts and his firm opposition to any practical European conception are evidently shared by far too large a part of the population. At times, there has been a kind of tacit alliance between Gaullists and communists—the former acting in the name of the France of Louis XIV and Napoleon, and the latter in that of a Moscow-inspired France—which has thwarted federalistic attempts.

In his statements recently, the General reaffirmed his ideas by showing clearly that he wished to see his country play the role of arbiter between the East and the West. This is a highly attractive, but, unfortunately chimerical conception, for it fails to take into account the relationship between these forces.

In the field of domestic policy, General de Gaulle has repeated his condemnation of the present regime, the "party regime",

the impotence of which is recognized today even by those who benefit from it. In this area, the General's statements and warnings since the adoption of the present constitution have been prophetically penetrating and have all too often been confirmed by a regime whose life has been a constant series of crises. Indeed, the calmness and stability of French politics are all too often a deceptive torpor, a state of precarious balance or, to put it more accurately, a state of immobility resulting from the mutual neutralization of competing forces.

THE General gave particular attention to the country's major problem, that of North Africa. He said: "I maintain that a policy that does not aim at substituting association for domination in French North Africa can be neither valid nor worthy of France." This means that the General is not opposed to the Franco-Tunisian agreements, a preliminary experiment the results of which may demonstrate decisively whether such an association can exist.

The agreement outlined by M. Mendès-France is due, in fact, to the exceptional intelligence and suppleness of Prime Minister Edgar Faure and, it must be acknowledged, to the equally broad comprehension of the Tunisian spokesmen, particularly Mr. Habib Bourguiba, whose moral leadership may, in the months to come, exceed the narrow limits of Tunisia. In any event, the success of the agreements depends upon Tunisian wisdom and moderation, which will have to beware of Egyptian propaganda as well as of the good intentions of the French. Though, thanks to the brilliant young Governor-General, Soustelle, the agitation in Algeria seems to be growing calm and a bold policy of reform has been launched, the Moroccan problem is as thorny as ever,

and though it is absurd to reduce it to the so-called "dynastic" question, the fact remains that relations between France and Morocco are at an impasse.

In concluding his survey, General de Gaulle expressed the wish that, after the failure of the war in Indo-China and the impossibility of finding in South Vietnam a regime with which France could work, the expeditionary corps be withdrawn and Mr. Diem be left to solve his problems. The General described the present policy as "a drifting with events." May it not be said that almost all Frenchmen share this opinion?

The senatorial elections have shown that the electoral body was not in a mood for basic reconversions. It is therefore unlikely that a formula of the popular-front type (Radical Socialists and Communists) will prevail in the forthcoming general elections of 1956.

From the economic point of view, France is in the process of moderate expansion. In a period of one year, salaries have risen 8%, though owing to government action this increase has taken place chiefly in the lowest salaries. Moreover, this expansion would not conceal the great disparities among the various economic sectors, some of which are backward and even completely stagnant, while others are in full progress.

French economic progress is still suffering from an unbalanced agricultural situation—too much wine, too much beet alcohol, privileged categories receiving excessive subsidies—and from an industrial policy directed by an employers group whose aim is all too often one of short-term autarky and who are unwilling to accept the basic conditions of a modern capitalistic economy, such as free competition and frank relations with the general public. The creation of a genuine Euro-

pean and African market should oblige manufacturers to reorganize their structures and the French administrative services to revise their methods. The experience of the European Coal and Steel Community shows that large French firms are determined to compete freely with their foreign rivals, do so successfully and thereby attain international stature.

A FEW years ago, French communist circles were crying up their great official painter, Fougeron who, after a promising start, began painting in the worst tradition of objective art in order to follow the line of Stalinist Realism. (Portrait of Maurice Thorez' Mother). In the clash between himself and Aragon, who defended Picasso, Fougeron fell into what may prove to be definitive disfavour. The new shift in Russian policy coincides with the rise of Bernard Buffet, a young artist who is very highly thought of by certain connoisseurs, or at least who is being much discussed. The monumental canvasses on "the horrors of war" which the young painter has shown at the Drouant-David Gallery cannot stand comparison with the striking precision of Jacques Callot nor with the fiery sketches of Goya nor with Picasso's "Guernica". When Buffet reveals himself in more ambitious work, his lean art manifests his essential poverty, which leads him to over emphasis, and his deep-seated melancholy, which he pushes to the point of morbidity.

The season's high-spot in painting has been the sensational exhibition at the Museum of Decorative Arts of the work of the septuagenarian and ever youthful Pablo Picasso. In the more than fifty years of activity since the slight young Spaniard arrived in Paris in October 1900, the world has witnessed his incessant commentary on existence, his never-ending self-criticism and his untiring metamorphosis.

Picasso stands head and shoulders above the School of Paris, to which, despite his foreign birth, he certainly belongs. But his influence seems to me to be questionable, for his adventure is intellectual rather than plastic. It is *thought* through before being painted. It is also an utterly solitary adventure and thereby inimitable.

What is its meaning? Gaeton Picon, the distinguished French essayist, asks: "Is it beauty? Has Picasso ever sought beauty? Never. Obviously, because he is too restless in regard to living things, to life itself." Picon continues: "What is Picasso's art? The slow birth of a plastic universe. It is an assertion of faith in his daimon, in short, entire confidence in the life that is in everything, everywhere and always." Picasso revealed to his century its true nature. He invented the century's style, the twentieth-century baroque, though Matisse was to find another highly expressive, though classic style. It is an abrupt style, sparkling and explosive. The seventeenth-century baroque was the love of the stormy sky for the thick sculptured volute. Our baroque shatters the volute to splinters. It is the storm, the wild lightning, the unleashed thunderbolt. Even when Picasso plays at being classical—which is another way of spoofing the spectator and duping himself—he models heavy forms which are more ponderous than truly classical forms ought to be. Behind Picasso one must always look for the baroque spirit. Picasso is an embodiment of that spirit. That is why he is not to be judged by any given painting. His entire work is one long masterpiece.

"Is it a call to the unknown future? A sadistic negation of the past? A mysterious echo behind the brazen door? Picasso is in quest of the unknown masterpiece." The current exhibition justifies these various definitions, though there are relatively few examples of the artist's earlier periods

—the naturalistic manner, the blue and pink periods, the Harlequin phase. Mention should be made of the famous portrait of Miss Stein on loan from the New York Museum of Modern Art.

What emerges from the variety and abundance of this splendid exhibition is a feeling of indomitable youth which seems to be forever raising basic issues. The ferocity and, at times, the mischievousness of Picasso, the fearful way in which he treats the human face (let us not forget that his work manifests a morbid delight in suffering and death, which is specifically Spanish) are the authentic expression of a life that is always eager to outstrip itself. Picasso is not a charmer. He makes us uneasy and thereby compels us to open our eyes.

THREE recently published studies are among the most important books to have appeared since the war. They are: Herbert Luthy's *A l'Heure de son Clocher* (The Age of Parish-pump Politics), Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Les Aventures de la Dialectique* (The Adventures of the Dialectic) and Raymond Aron's remarkable *L'Opium des Intellectuels* (The Opium of the Intellectuals).

Herbert Luthy has sub-titled his book "an essay on France." The work is a very penetrating and objective analysis of the history of France since its liberation in 1944. The author is unsparing in his criticism of the political system and the men who govern the country. He explains the failure of the E.D.C. and shows that only the European idea can pull France out of the state of stagnation to which it has been doomed by the Machiavelism of the communists and the nationalists' lack of realism. The book ends on a questioning note, for Luthy is fully aware that though the nation has suffered for a long time

from a sense of impotence, it has unexpected reserves of power.

But the country's intellectual elite must not sacrifice to the same uncouth idols that are worshipped in political circles. It is this thesis that makes Raymond Aron's essay, which is a pamphlet in the classical sense of the word, both a crucial demonstration and an admirable exposition of the attitude of the intellectuals.

The intellectuals have, up to now, been seduced by the glamour of certain words and ideas. M. Aron has attempted to disenchant them. The alternative of right and left no longer has any meaning. Neither the myth of the revolution nor that of the proletariat can stand up to an objective examination. The author attacks vigorously the idolizing of History, the pseudo-religion in the name of which so many crimes are committed, and he shows the guilty naivety of the intellectuals and their ideologies.

By a remarkable coincidence, Raymond Aron's book appeared just before the publication of that of the existentialist philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In *The Adventures of the Dialectic*, the latter parts company with his travelling-companion Jean-Paul Sartre, whom he accuses of ultra-bolshevism, and returns determinedly to the ideas expressed a few years ago in his *Humanism and Terror*.

Merleau-Ponty's break with communism is justified in philosophic terms. Confronted with Aron's affirmation that "the fashionable concepts of left, revolution and proletariat are the belated rejoinders of the great myths that formerly inspired political optimism, namely, progress, reason and the people," Merleau-Ponty declares "that there is no dialectic without opposition and without freedom." For him, "a non-communist left is no more tied up with free enterprise than with the dictator-

ship of the proletariat." He concludes by taking a reformist position, which is no less rare among intellectuals (though his observations are not without candour) than the merciless lucidity of Aron.

Two important works have appeared in the field of criticism. In *Les Oeuvres et les Lumières* (Works and Luminaries), André and Jean Brincourt attempt to derive an aesthetic from the works of Bergson, Proust and particularly Malraux, who seem to them the most characteristic writers of our country.

Also very interesting is Robert Mallet's *Une Mort Ambigue* (An Ambiguous Death) in which this brilliant young writer sets down his recollections of the men whose correspondence he has edited and whom he interviewed on the radio, namely Gide, Claudel and Léautaud. The death of the first two seem to him to be of a piece with the truth that each of these great men championed. Claudel's "yes", uttered with a steadfastness that excluded all discussion, is contrasted with the "no" of Léautaud, the cynical philosopher who loves animals and despises men. The apex of the triangle is the "perhaps" of Gide, who allowed himself to be buried by a minister at his wife's side and beneath the folds of a French flag, in a ceremony that symbolized the deep and moving ambiguity of Gide's thought. Robert Mallet's book is thus a meditation on the work of three men, one of them a man of faith, the other a man divided between fervour and doubt, and the third a crusty man of letters.

THE charm of Jacques Prevert's poems lay in their humour and amiability. The picturesque cataloguing of persons and things, the sly whimsy, the moments of simple and comradely tenderness, the inimitable mixture of surrealist fancy and imagination adapted to the taste of the

day, are hardly to be found in the poet's recently published third volume, *La Pluie et le Beau Temps* (Foul Weather and Fair). In their stead are a kind of rasping banter, an anti-militarism and anticlericalism of an outmoded kind. The poet has broken his lyre. In fact, poetry appears to have less vitality than any of the other literary genres. Since the disappearance of Robert Desnos, who died in deportation, of Paul Eluard, and of the great ancestors Valéry and Claudel, only Henri Michaux, whose most significant works date from the 1940's, and, to a lesser degree, Pierre-Jean Jouve and Jules Supervielle, still keep alive an art that was so dynamic in the days of surrealism.

LOVE, that classic subject of French novels, has been rather roughly treated by the existentialists. In the work of Sartre, even more than in that of Simone de Beauvoir, passion is, for the most part, caricatured. This perhaps explains the reaction of certain writers who have been dealing with the forbidden forms of love, and the appearance of an erotic literature of high quality. Love, in its most dramatic and fatal intensity, a love far removed from the insipid embraces of dull and colourless creatures, is the subject of *Mario*, the excellent first novel of André Perrin. It describes the feeling of a young man of bourgeois background for a corrupt and secretive, though charming boy. This passion, which isolates the hero and causes his ruin, has been analyzed by the author with remarkable tact and intelligence.

The great problem of young French writers is how to renew the vitality of the novel at the sources of instinct and sensibility. We need books that do not try to prove anything, that are not witheringly abstract, books animated by the sole pleasure of telling a tale.

APART from the International Drama Festival, the highlights of which were the performances of the English, Italian and Irish troupes, the interpretation of classical tragedy by Greek authors, and the Peking Opera Company, which was a great revelation to Parisian audiences, the only new theatrical event of the season was Jean-Paul Sartre's *Nekrassov*.

This play, which was clearly written to counterbalance *Dirty Hands* and to reaffirm the author's alliance with the communists, was so obviously a slap-dash job that it created immense disappointment. The satire on the modern press, yellow journalism and anti-communism was meant to be farcical. But the humour was so heavy-handed that its effects fell flat, and the author had great difficulty winding up an incoherent plot that seemed to have escaped his control.

The Paris theatrical season has ended with the coming of summer. Summer is the season of the great chateaux. Versailles, Fontainebleau, Compiègne, Chenonceaux, Chabard and others rise up in all their glory beneath the floodlights, as voices and music bring to life the splendours of French history. The chateaux are the seats of music festivals, the finest of which is that of Aix-en-Provence, where the latest work of Pierre Boulez was performed. Boulez has succeeded Olivier Messiaen (whom he in no way resembles) as head of the new musical avant-garde, which is being violently attacked in certain quarters. Feelings about the arts run high in France, and there is always a public more excited by new developments in music or painting or literature than by the political problems of the day. This is certainly not a sign of superficiality, but rather the manifestation of deep devotion to a culture that is the very soul of the country. That this culture is constantly being challenged is a proof of its incomparable greatness.

A. SUBBIAH

cultural conflicts in tamil nad

a reply to T. R. Ramiah's 'Fever in the South'

THE article *Fever in the South* in the first issue, although not wholly in conformity with *Quest's* policy to deal specifically with cultural questions and "with politics by implication", is undoubtedly an answer to the Editor's prayer for "vigorously written articles of a provocative nature." And at least one reader of *Quest* wishes to contribute his quota towards the achievement of the Editor's consequential hope that "some of those who are provoked will help to start and sustain the intellectual debate which is necessary to correct our extravagances and castigate our timidities."

It was heartening to find Mr. Ramiah, presumably a Tamil Brahmin, coming out in the open and expressing his views frankly on the "political programme of the Dravida Kazhagam and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam", two parties who have made no secret of their hatred of the Brahmin domination in Tamil Nad. The object of

this article is not to deal with the political objectives of these parties, much less to defend their programme, but to trace the causes of the more deep rooted cultural conflicts which have been in existence in Tamil Nad for many centuries and of which the movement represented by parties like the D.K. and the D.M.K. is symptomatic of a particular aspect.

Mr. Ramiah remarks with refreshing candour that "hostility towards the Brahmins is not a new development; it is not a mere corollary of a race theory; it is the natural outcome of certain historical facts. Political and economic domination by Brahmins was a hard reality until recently; and even now it cannot be said to have entirely disappeared."

But this statement is historically inadequate, and, therefore, incorrect. There is substantial reason to believe, as this article

will go to show, that the real causes of this "fever" are far more deep-seated. Looking further back over the centuries, we observe that the "political and economic domination by Brahmins" is in fact a relatively recent development, as before the advent of the British rule, the Brahmin domination—so far at any rate as Tamil Nad is concerned—was only in the field of religion and priestcraft and the Brahmin community exercised little direct influence in the political or economic spheres. The Brahmins were notoriously poor and the ruling classes were always drawn from the non-Brahmin communities.

What then were the causes of the Brahmin-Non-Brahmin conflict in the earlier centuries?

Firstly, it is—to use the words of Mr. Ramiah—the "linguistic patriotism of" the Tamilian. Mr. Ramiah would have us believe that: "Members and sympathisers of the Dravida Kazhagam and the D.M.K. believe that Tamil has been corrupted by the borrowings from Sanskrit. They affect a *stilted* 'pure' Tamil whose vocabulary is free from Sanskrit." (*Italics ours*)

This is a travesty of facts. Mr. Ramiah doubtless believes in what he says but he errs—like most of his co-caste men—in looking at it too subjectively. Nearly a century ago, when the D.K. and D.M.K. movements were not in existence, Dr. Caldwell, the well known philologist who after thirty seven years of a serious study of Tamil wrote the *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages*, remarked: "Tamil, however, the most highly cultivated *ab intra* of all Dravidian idioms, can dispense with its Sanskrit altogether, if need be, and not only stand alone, but flourish without its aid. . . ."

"A Tamil poetical composition is regarded as in accordance with good taste and worthy of being called classical, not in proportion to the amount of Sanskrit it con-

tains, but in proportion to its freedom from Sanskrit."¹

Again, he says: "Generally it is not through any real necessity, but from choice and the fashion of the age, that it makes use of Sanskrit."²

Fashions change. The "more learned Tamilians" no longer resort to the artificial use of Sanskrit derivatives but, in tune with the urges which the democratic forces of today have released, use both in speech and writing, the more elegant native derivatives which sound pleasant to the average Tamilian ear but appear 'stilted' to the Brahmin, who in the meantime has swung to the other side. The Brahmin speaks a dialect which Professor Murray Fowler calls "the Sanskritized literary Tamil spoken in Madras by those whose vernacular is Tamil and whose fluent knowledge of Sanskrit is due to their heritage and upbringing." Prof. Fowler further remarks "this variety of the language is distinct on the one hand from the geographically determined dialects and on the other from Tanittamil, 'pure Tamil', which, free (at least in intention) of all Indo-Aryan influences, has records possibly two thousand years old and is in use today by certain people in the Tamil area."³

The attitude of the Brahmin community towards Tamil has for centuries been a major cause of conflict.⁴ In fact we have here in Tamil Nad the unique spectacle—

1. Bishop Caldwell, 'A Comparative grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian family of Languages', Third Edition (revised), 1913, p. 45. Mr. Ramiah would doubtless concede the existence of other Tamil-speaking people, holding views similar to those of Bishop Caldwell, who need not necessarily be branded as "sympathizers" of the D.K. and D.M.K. movements.

2. *ibid* p. 47

3. 'The Segmental phonemes of Sanskritized Tamil' *Language, Journal of the Linguistic Society of America*, Baltimore, Vol. 30, No. 3 (July-September 1954), p. 360.

4. In fairness it must be observed that there are many Brahmins who do not fully share the views of their community in this regard, just as there have always been a few amongst the non-Brahmin communities who find it suits them to side with the more influential community.

for which history offers no parallel—of a community adopting an almost hostile attitude towards the status of its own mother tongue. The reasons are partly social or racial and partly religious.

There is a strongly held but anthropologically untenable view that they—the members of the Brahmin community—are descendants of Sanskrit-speaking Aryan tribes who migrated to the South and are distinct racially from members of the Tamil speaking Dravidians. According to the Brahmins, all the non-Brahmin communities of Tamil Nad constitute the *Sudra* caste of the Aryan system. Tamil was therefore in effect the language of the *Sudras*, which the Brahmins had perforce to adopt for their mundane intercourse with the *Sudras* amongst whom they lived. It is not that the Brahmins are so crude as to broadcast such views openly but this is the subtle but unmistakable assumption which underlies their attitude towards the Tamils and their language.

Socially, their proficiency in Sanskrit language and literature—to which access was denied to the *Sudras*—enabled them to maintain their exclusiveness in the caste hierarchy. On the religious side, by ascribing a divine origin to Sanskrit which they would not concede to Tamil, they succeeded in displacing Tamil as the language of liturgy. In fact their aversion to Tamil has been so pronounced that until recently the devotional songs of even the great Tamil saints of the 6th and 7th centuries could be sung in Saivite temples only after the Brahmins had finished their worship and left. The Vaishnavite Brahmins are more tolerant in this regard but the story goes that the large majority of them were members of non-Brahmin communities who were taken into the Brahmin fold by Ramanuja, the founder of the Vaishnavite philosophy.

There is now a strong move to restore Tamil to its legitimate place as the language

of liturgy in Tamil temples and it is yet to be seen how soon this will succeed against opposition from vested interests. This move has been initiated by non-Brahmin religious heads and others who cannot certainly be accused of being 'sympathisers' of the D.K. and D.M.K. movements, which are attacked by Mr. Ramiah for propagating atheism.

THIS attitude of extra-territorial loyalty to Sanskrit and covert hostility to Tamil has taken various forms over the centuries. Concerted efforts to Sanskritise the vocabulary and grammar of Tamil, deliberate attempts at belittling the antiquity of the Tamil language and its literature, exaggeration of the influence of the Sanskrit language and culture, underrating the influence of the latter on the former and determined opposition on specious grounds to movements started with the purpose of encouraging the singing of Tamil songs in musical concerts in Tamil Nad, are some of the methods which were and are still being freely resorted to.

Mr. Ramiah writes: "The basis of their programme is a race theory. South India according to them is the land of the Dravidians, and North India that of the Aryans. . . . It is to be observed that all the inhabitants of South India are not regarded as Dravidians; and Brahmins are really Aryans who came and settled down in the South, and imposed their religion, their customs, their caste-system, their Sanskrit learning—in fact their whole way of life—on the Dravidians."

The theory that Brahmins are Aryans was certainly not invented by the D.K. or D.M.K. or by their "sympathisers." The very term "Brahmin," by which this community chose to designate itself, indicates the sources of this theory, which has been actively canvassed by the Brahmin community for centuries now. Dr. S. Krishna-

swami Aiyangar, a well known Vaishnava Brahmin historian, in the Readership Lectures delivered at the Calcutta University early in 1920, opened with the following observations on the beginnings of South Indian History: "History begins for India with the coming of the Aryans into the country. It may be said with almost equal truth that the history of South India, of the Krishna-Tungabhadra frontier, begins with the coming of the Aryans into the South. In this particular context *the term Aryan seems to stand for the Brahmin.*"⁵ (Italics ours).

In an attempt to date Tholkappiam, the earliest extant Tamil grammar, as a post-Aryan work, Prof. Sesha Iyengar, another Vaishnava Brahmin, wrote: "The Tholkappiam undoubtedly shows a medley of Dravidian and Aryan institutions. It shows distinct traces of the influence of Aryan immigrants. It should therefore have been composed at a time *when the Aryan Brahmins had already come to South India and had even introduced their ceremonies and institutions.*"⁶ (Italics ours)

Prof. Sesha Iyengar had however the frankness to make the following admission: the influence of the Dravidians on the culture of India has been ignored, because the literature, which records the development of the Hindu religion in India, was the work of *a hostile priesthood whose only object was to magnify its own pretensions, and decry everything Dravidian.* But the truth is that the Dravidians had already developed a civilization of their own, long before the Aryan civilization was transplanted into their midst.⁷

A third source of conflict is the difference in approach towards religion. Although this conflict is not very much in

evidence on the surface, particularly since religion does not now play as active and vital a part in everyday life as it used to in the past, it forms nevertheless a deep under-current which cannot altogether be ignored. To the Brahmin, religion meant in practice primarily an unending series of ceremonies and rituals, to be performed in person or by proxy from the time of birth to the time of death and often even beyond. Ethics or good conduct played if at all a secondary part and Dharma Shastras like Manu's based on exploitation of caste by caste, dulled his sense of justice, compassion and regard for fellow human beings.

The ancient Tamilian on the other hand did not divorce ethics from religion and, if anything, placed greater emphasis on good conduct than on religion. If we go back to the early Sangam literature in Tamil, we find that it deals primarily with love, with heroism in battle and with ethics; purely religious literature as such is not in evidence till the days of the Alvars and the Nayanmars of the 6th and 7th centuries.

In fact, of the works of the third Tamil Academy which flourished from many centuries before the Christian era up to the 2nd century A.D., available in the form of three anthologies, viz. *Ettuthogai*, *Pathupattu* and *Pathinen Kilkanakku*, the last consists of eighteen works, all dealing with ethics. The latter includes the well known *Kural*, referring to which Dr. Albert Schweitzer—the Nobel Peace Prize winner and one of the greatest individuals of this age—wrote thus: With sure strokes the *Kural* draws the idea of *simple ethical humanity*. On the most varied questions concerning *the conduct of man to himself and to the world* its utterances are characterised by nobility and good sense. *There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom.* (Italics ours). (Indian

5. Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, *Some Contributions of South India to Indian Culture*, University of Calcutta, 1942, p. 1.

6. T. R. Sesha Iyengar—*The Ancient Dravidians*, Madras, 1925, p. 99.

7. *Ibid.* p. 55

Thought and its Development, London 1936, p. 200-205.)

And Dr. Pope remarked nearly a century ago:

I have felt sometimes as if there must be a blessing for a people that delight so utterly in compositions thus remarkably expressive of a *hunger and thirst after righteousness*.⁸ (Italics ours)

In fact most Tamils treat *Kural* as the Tamil Bible and disclaim allegiance to the Vedas and other sacred literature from which Brahminism derives its inspiration and authority. Significantly, the author of *Kural* was a weaver by profession.

Even after the advent of the devotional or Bhakthi era in the sixth century, religious literature in Tamil Nad continued to lay stress on ethics, while the Puranas and Dharma Shastras of Aryan origin—like Manu's—were not infrequently referred to with derision and ridicule. The religious from all classes including the so called Saints of Tamil Nad were in fact drawn from all classes including the so-called Harijans.

CAN these conflicts—which seem to be as old as the entry of Brahmins into Tamil Nad, if in fact such an entry took place—be resolved, and can Brahmins and non-Brahmins co-exist in Tamil Nad? The answer can only be “yes” but it is an “yes” subject to the condition that there should be a genuine will to resolve the conflicts which have plagued this part of the country for many centuries now. It will not be solved by fathering upon the D.K. or some other body the theories and legends which the Brahmins had themselves originated and sedulously given currency to. It will not be solved by the foolish method which some medical men are prone to adopt, viz. the method of administering palliatives designed to smother some of the

more obvious symptoms—the main disease continuing to worsen all the while for want of a careful diagnosis and prognosis. It will not be solved either by a counsel of despair or a wholesale denunciation, born out of a profound depression as appears to have taken hold of Mr. Ramiah, when he remarks: “people who can admire and love a leader of the intellectual calibre of Annadurai—he is known affectionately as ‘Anna’ (Elder Brother)—would seem to be beyond redemption.”

The D.K. and D.M.K. parties are nothing more than symptoms of a deep rooted malady in the body politic of Tamil Nad. This malady is directly traceable to “the perverse logic and history and race-theory” (and, of course, their consequences in social intercourse) which the Brahmins themselves had so sedulously fostered in the past for their own aggrandizement and glorification. These theories have so poisoned the minds of men that it is difficult today to distinguish truth from fantasy, and far more difficult indeed to break through the toxic and crippling hangover of this priest-ridden past.

It is for the members of the Brahmin community, who constitute 3% of the population, to ponder whether there is need any longer for them to remain a perpetual minority haunted by fears of neglect and persecution at the hands of the majority. It should not be difficult for the Brahmins to discard their outmoded theories, if it were really true as Mr. Ramiah would appear to claim—that they do not (at any rate now) believe in the “irrational, obscurantist theories” which were in vogue in the past.

But of one thing there can be no doubt: the Brahmin community must renounce these strange and fantastic theories that pronounce them a superior caste and divide them so deeply from the people amongst whom they live. Mere verbal

8. Preface to Winslov's *Tamil English Dictionary*, Madras, 1864

professions to the contrary will not suffice; what is needed is a change of heart which alone will initiate the necessary adjustments. Should they not, by identifying themselves at least now with the natural and reasonable yearnings and aspirations of the Tamilians, who are justifiably proud of their language, their religion and their way of life, take full share in contributing to—and enjoying the fruits of—the progress of Tamil Nad?

In the long run, the interests of the Brahmin community are bound up inseparably with the interests of the Tamilians as a whole; and, placed as they are, outside interference, which Mr. Ramiah rightly deprecates, will do them little good. To the extent therefore, that the leaders of the

community are prepared to “jump out of their Brahmin skins” (to quote Mr. Ramiah) and to take, in their own enlightened self-interest, a long, rational and statesmanlike view of the situation, the problems facing Tamil Nad will be nearer solution; And to the extent that the problems of Tamil Nad are solved from within, the overall problem of the unity of India will have less obstacles to overcome.

Will the Brahmin community—whose intelligence is unquestioned—rise to the occasion and save themselves, save Tamil Nad and save India from the debilitating effects of a two thousand year old malady, or will they remain puzzled, bewildered and frustrated, leaving the “fever” to do its worst?

MAN OF THE HILLS

From far away I have seen
 Haflong mountain, a form of smoke,
 Offspring of a mighty giant,
 Leap half up the sky,
 With jungle wrapped about his waist
 And the sun a jewel in his ear.
 In the distance is lifted his spear.

Going close of an evening
 I have also heard his flute
 By the light of the moon!
 For an instant the playing stops
 While, whistling,
 A train passes like an unseen storm.
 The woods quieten once more,
 The waters of the Melang wind down
 Into the far away.
 Fringing the night
 In the light of the moon
 The mountain flute
 Of the Naga plays again!

ASOKE VIJAY RAHA

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor, *Quest*, Bombay.

Sir,

I am one of those thousands of young men who are proud to be members of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (Dravidian Progressive Federation) which Mr. T. R. Ramiah has discussed in his article "Fever in the South", in the first issue of *Quest*. I am convinced that Mr. Ramiah has not given a correct picture of the situation, and it is possible to repudiate many of his arguments. Perhaps he is wrongly informed about the D.M.K. as many in the North are.

Mr. Ramiah tries hard to prove that our "movement is not strong in the sense of impressive membership or of success in elections." This is based on false information, as in a case filed by the Government of Madras recently, one of its witnesses, an officer of high rank, stated in Court that the D.M.K. is the biggest political party in the South next to the Congress, and that its membership exceeds a lakh, its branches being not less than a thousand. *Blitz* magazine of Bombay in its issue dated 21-5-1955 published an article by Mr. M. P. Radhakrishnan who reported that we have 2,50,000 members all over Tamil Nad.

Mr. Ramiah says that the "basis of the programme is a race theory". This may be true of the Dravida Kazhagam. But the D.M.K. has unequivocally declared many times that it has no belief in the doctrine of a pure Dravidian race. We borrow the name Dravidam or Dravida from history just to identify collectively the Big Four members of the South Indian Family, namely the Andhras, the Malayalis, the Kannadigas and the Tamils. If we get Dravida Nadu as a first measure we will not drive Brahmins out of our land. All we say is that the element of Brahminism

—not individual Brahmins—must go. And to understand what Brahminism connotes may be perplexing to people living beyond the Vindhya. The social exploitation we have endured for so many decades and the decay of our culture and literature due to this force is responsible for our attitude. Not only does Brahminism result in casteism; it has kept us for many a century on the lower rungs of the social ladder. That is why we say that the poisonous teeth of the Brahmin snake must be taken out. And to drag the issue of a "race theory" into this context is to confuse the whole matter.

Mr. Ramiah writes: "Nehru was certainly right in calling the movement 'childish nonsense'". Why does he agree with Nehru? Has he given any concrete explanation of his view? No. It is here that he throws away the garb of an impartial critic and proceeds to offer a frankly prejudiced account of a popular movement.

In another place the author assumes the role of a dictator and says that our clamour for separation "will be put down in a matter of hours". This evokes only laughter amongst us, for is it this so-called trivial movement, which can be suppressed "within a matter of hours" to which the author devotes five pages in so worthy a magazine as *Quest*?

I wish to echo the opinion of the South, that this is not the right tradition to which *Quest* should belong. I have expressed the same view in a criticism of Mr. Ramiah's article in *Murasoli*, the popular Tamil weekly published to further the ideals of the D.M.K. I hope you will correct the author's "extravagance" and give hereafter a correct picture of the Dravidian movement.

S. NEDUMARAN
Asst. Editor, *Murasoli*

Mysore

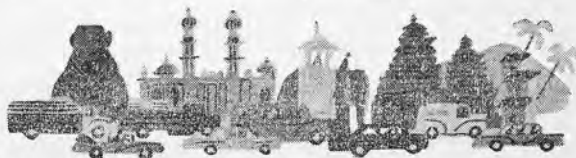
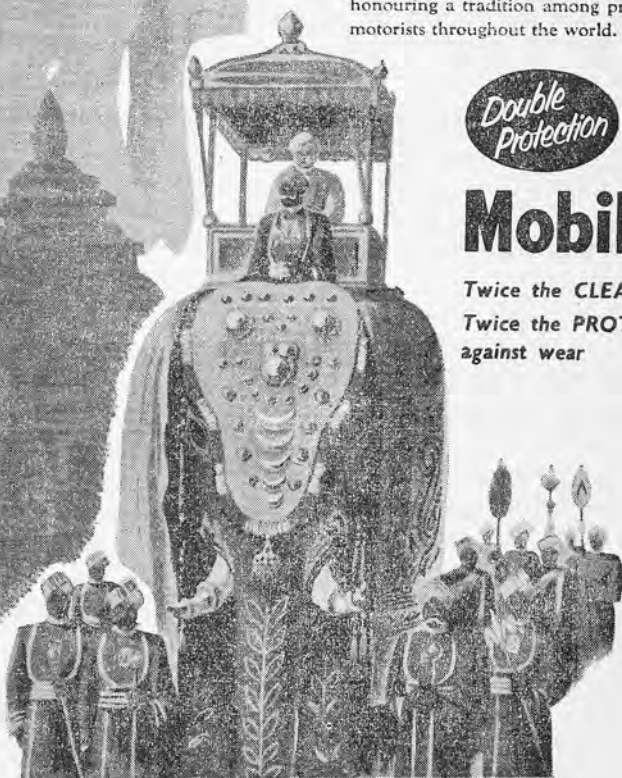
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Sense and Sentiment

MINA GURJARI, performed by the Nat Mandal of Ahmedabad, has had an astonishing success not only in Gujarat—where that would be understandable—but elsewhere in India too. It has the ingredients—action, sentiment (religious, national and erotic), slapstick, music, dance and song—that make for easy popularity. Its claim to be a new dramatic form is, however, questionable.

In the theatre, a theme must discover its appropriate form. The form is not a mould into which an idea is poured, though in times when the theatre is alive and flourishing (like the Greek and the Elizabethan) the search for form is not so desperate, the theme managing somehow to settle into the form within broad, well-established conventions. In India, today, those who grope for a new theatrical form to carry their themes, grope in vain. They

search in the dark to no purpose. They seek the form before they have measured the dimensions of their themes.

Today our main preoccupation, in all the arts, is with matters of form. What new form does one seek to carry the burden of song, dance and dramatic dialogue? These were the self-same ingredients of Sanskrit drama, of Greek tragedy, and are those also of the contemporary Indian film. Sanskrit drama, rich in its poetry, is weak in its formal dramatic elements as we understand that term today. The Indian film has rarely concerned itself with these considerations. The Greek drama, on the other hand, (however unpopular such an opinion may seem in our present self-conscious nationalism) presents a form which offers the greatest aesthetic satisfaction—in terms of action, characterisation and poetry, and particu-

larly in terms of structure. *Mina Gurjari* possesses the same ingredients I have mentioned before, but its producers bewail the absence of an appropriate appellation to label it by. Call it opera if you must. But the mere choice of a label will not solve the problem of form.

I am not proposing a blind imitation of Greek drama. It is obvious that apart from its themes, taken from myth and legend, the Greek drama had a strong element of ritual which affected the form. And it is precisely in these matters that it offers striking parallels which can be studied to advantage.

Mina Gurjari, after whom the play is named, is a Gujarati Joan of Arc, a village maiden who, falling into the hands of a Moghul Chieftain, repulses his advances, wins his admiration, and is instrumental in rallying the people of Gujarat against the Moghul army which is then defeated in battle. On her return home, however, she finds herself spurned by her people who suspect her of having lost her honour to the Moghul ruler. Grieved, she ascends into heaven, a saint.

This is a story of the dimensions of a Greek tragedy or a Shavian *tour de force*. In production it was reduced to a country-fair *natak* with sentiments and action too transparent and obvious to sustain any serious interest but popular enough to pluck the feeble heartstrings of nostalgic housewives and raise an occasional cheer from the groundlings. The play should have been tough, resilient, profoundly moving. It was weak and watery. Sentimentalism is a plague that has ravaged every form of artistic expression in this country.

The *drama* of this play is not in the shouts in the wings, nor is it in the comic capers of the Priest, or in the swirl of skirts of the rustic dancers. All these may have served the drama, had they been used in

proportion to their precise relation to the main theme. In this production the central theme itself was lost, through lack of emphasis, in the extraneous folkish elements which were introduced to provide local colour, or to add an invidious charm, or to make up for the weaknesses of dramatic construction.

In this story we are interested in the journey of Mina Gurjari—not in Gujarati folk-lore *per se*. We are concerned with the transformation of a simple, vivacious village maiden into a national symbol and finally into a saint. The significance of her fate is universal. The over emphasis of regional and jingoistic elements reduces the stature of Mina as a human being of heroic proportions.

Is it not a little ironical that produced as it was from a narrow, parochial point of view, the play shows up the people of Gujarat and not the Moghul ruler, as the real villain of the piece? Is it not to the credit of the Moghul that despite his power over Mina he does nothing to sully her honour? Is this to be construed as weakness or ingrained nobility?

This tragic story of an honoured saint is really an indictment of the Gujarati people.

D. C.

New Themes and Old Ways

THREE young Kathak dancers—Brij Mohan, Gopi Krishen and Roshan Kumari—have been seen in Bombay during the past year or so. They are the best known of the youngest generation of Kathak dancers and a discussion of their performances offers a useful jumping ground for some thoughts on the future of Kathak.

Of the three, Brij Mohan has far and away the best technique. His movements are more finished, even those ending in a

fast piece of dancing under complete control, and his *abhinaya* is more sophisticated. He gives much more the impression of carrying on a great tradition in the balance of his programme and in the absence of any device to dazzle with speed or athleticism which is normally evident in the performances of the other two dancers.

But in spite of his superiority of technique, the other two dancers gave me, at least, more delight. Though all the dancers are well worth seeing, this declaration of preference is made only because it is heretical.

Brij Mohan is unfortunate in that it is *abhinaya* in which he excels; of the other two dancers, Roshan Kumari is inexpressive and Gopi Krishen over-emphatic; his increasing coarseness, which may be derived from his cinema experience, being encouraged by the appreciation of his audience. *Abhinaya* is the weakest part of a Kathak performance because it suffers the most from repetition. The footwork and the whirls of Kathak are almost endlessly exciting. The feet are the most vital part of a Kathak dancer's body, now slithering along the ground like angry snakes, now slapping the floor with a noise as sharp as a whipcrack. And though there may be a limit to the amount of whirling an audience can appreciate in one evening, the excitement it arouses, as most people who have seen Roshan's *Chakardar Parans* will agree, diminishes very little with repetition.

On the other hand, there is a limit to the number of times one can watch with pleasure the representation of a *gopi* shyly looking through her veil. There are, after all, only so many ways in which *gopis* can look through veils. The gesture is not only insignificant in itself but, when done by a man, is as unpleasant to watch as most other forms of female impersonation.

Those other, virtually universal, themes for the snatches of mime known as *satbhav*—a *gopi* drawing water from a well, or a man rowing a boat—are equally trifling and unvarying. Kathak dancers should deny themselves these subjects for at least ten years, and of the following they should limit themselves to at most two per performance: Krishna stealing butter, Krishna breaking the pot of curds on Radha's head, Krishna playing the flute and Krishna and the *gopis* playing Holi.

This self-denial need not compel them to adopt secular themes, nor does it demand great inventiveness. There are all the Puranas, the Mahabharat and the Ramayana to quarry. Kathak has a much greater need for variety than Bharat Natyam or Kathakali because it denies itself the extension of scope and depth given by music, poetry and physical symbols. The eternal reiteration of a single phrase by the *sarangi* or harmonium heightens the tension of purely rhythmic dancing—just as it does in the Tillana—but it adds nothing to the dancer's evocation of mood or emotion. Brij Mohan suffers particularly from the family tradition which holds that it is impious to dance with the feet while a verse to a god is being recited or sung.

The verses, in addition to *bhajans*, etc., to which other dancers perform, are onomatopoeic couplets of considerable charm, generally in Braj Bhasha which is intelligible to most Indian audiences. I quote two, of which the first can be freely translated,

"The moon, Shiva's lamp, is shining,
The Ganges laughs as Shankar dances."

"Chandrabhanakar arati Sivaki

Jhunjhunkata,

Hulahula Ganga Khilakatta nachata

Sankar,

Dharana, Dharana, Kitataka, Kitataka,
thun thun dha, thun thun dha, thun
thun dha"

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The second is almost pure onomatopoeia, the only words with meaning being "the drum sounds" and "he dances".

"Mrdanga Bhaje tirakita dhun,
Tirakita dhun, dhadha
Vachaka Chumchum
Tathai, Tathai tata cham cham
chanana cham cham chanana
Krandha Kranda Kranda"

It ought to be possible to use Hindi poetry and music with greater effect than is now being done. It is of course dangerous to suggest any change in classical forms when one reflects on the banality of the products of nearly all living Indian choreographers. Whether the great new choreographer we all pray for is to be encouraged more by feeble experimentation or by the preservation of those fragments of tradition that remain is a question that I am unable to answer. But in Kathak at least it seems that if an audience of any vitality is to sustain its interest, and if the dancers themselves are to be preserved from the boredom which drives some of them to learn other styles, some changes in the traditional programme must be made.

R. RAMASWAMY

Russian Salesmanship?

THE cameraman who was detailed to take moving pictures of Mr. Nehru in Russia was given a very bumpy car. In this he followed the Prime Minister with camera trained so faithfully that we, the audience, never lose sight of him for one minute. We plunge zig-zag downhill, keeping the tail of the Pandit's car grimly in view; we drive shakily behind him as he passes under a barrage of flowers, and we tear along a *kutch*a country road still pursuing the great man's car, now dimly seen through a cloud of dust. All this to such good purpose that thirty minutes be-

fore the film ended I had to retire with a splitting headache.

This fact entitles me to discuss the film minus the last half-hour. Since, however, all that part of the film which we did see was to a very great extent variations or rather repetitions on the one theme, i.e. cheering crowds and an affable Prime Minister, I think I will assume that nothing very startling happened in the last few minutes and that, for all practical purposes, I can presume to talk about the film as a whole.

The tone of the above paragraph will have prepared the reader for my reaction. I was disappointed in the film on two counts. Technically it seemed to me about as good as any amateur with a movie camera and a spool of colour film could have produced; while the subject matter was presented with a singular lack of wit and imagination. The Russians were selling back to us our own Prime Minister. Used imaginatively, the occasion was a wonderful chance for selling to us, packaged with the Prime Minister and his daughter, a little of their own culture, their technology, their scenery, or whatever else they have to sell. Instead, they made us spend two hours in treading on the toes and breathing in the face of the man that looks at us from the newspapers every morning. In truth it is the most beloved and respected face; but we did not need the Russians to work so hard to show it to us.

The one other Russian film which I have seen was a third-rate production about the Tundra and how it became fertile due to Stalin. The only thing which made it memorable was its colours. They were the most unusual and exotic colours I have ever seen. There was an indescribable mellowness in their tone; it was as if a moist brownness overlay all the colours. It was like looking at rich deep colours through brown tinted glasses, and

the effect was unforgettable. American Technicolour films seemed cheap and garish by comparison. If, then, the Russians can produce these superb colours, the colours which can change a nonentity of a film into something to remember—why not use them for this Nehru film? In this film where the action, such as it was, could so easily become monotonous, the use of these unusual colours might have helped to hold the attention of the audience.

THE real interest of the film derived from the incident glimpses of the background, those glimpses which—so wrongly—made us think that we were being allowed to see what went on behind the *pardah* of the Iron Curtain. We saw Russian streets, Russian buildings and Russian people. These glimpses were very few and those few were quickly withdrawn, but such as they were I snatched at them. To anyone interested it was easy to come to a few random, albeit superficial conclusions about Russia. To begin with, it was obvious that a great deal of preliminary propaganda about India in general and Mr. Nehru in particular must have been done as spadework before the great visit. It is said that for days before the visit, Radio Moscow started broadcasting Indian music in order to let the people get the “feel” of India. The massed choir which sang *jana gana mana* was very pleasing although they sang from the stomach, Western fashion, and not from the head, Indian fashion.

The brief shots of the streets and buildings in the cities gave us a chance to form our opinion about modern architecture in Russia. It seemed to be uninspiring to a degree. Incomprehensibly, the stations of the Underground railway in Moscow were as elaborate as a Maharaja's gilded palace.

(One has heard, from other sources, that these gilded palaces contain no wash-rooms). Most of the other buildings, however, looked as if they had been designed by engineers rather than by architects and craftsmen. Even the gardens were laid out with the minimum thought for beauty. The one in the Crimea is a good example of a wonderful site used to make a park which is nothing more than a series of low walls and railings on the hillside. Even Bombay, with no tradition of making gardens, could produce something better than that. The one beautiful shot in the whole film was a scene of some of the ruins of Samarkand. These were utterly and completely lovely but lasted only about ten seconds.

One cannot help feeling, a little smugly, that if a great man's tour of this country was made into a film, the background would be so exciting, so various, so completely enchanting that it would steal the thunder from the great man. The crowd who gaped at a foreign celebrity might not be well-behaved enough to smilingly pelt him with flowers all the time, but they would certainly not be uniform or colourless. All the women would be jangling with ornaments and the colours of their dresses would light up the whole countryside. They might be dirty and half-starved, and they would certainly be unruly and uncontrolled, but they would not be drab. Are the Russian women drab because everyone tends to dress more drably in colder countries than they do in hotter climates? Or is it the effect, on our jaded visual palates, of seeing European women completely without make-up. One has always, until now, deplored the excessive use of cosmetics in Western countries. After seeing the women of Russia one has come to the conclusion that a little effort to rectify the omissions of nature is not to be discouraged.

LAEEQ FUTEHALLY

Film and Civilisation

CIVILISATION is partly the story of unusual things becoming usual or new experiences becoming common. The cinema, which some three quarters of a century ago was a scientific romance, is now a reality which provides the world's entertainment. It is a Twentieth Century art, an art almost everyone loves. Its tremendous possibilities have been demonstrated all over the world by men like Griffith, Chaplin, Pudovkin, Eisenstein, Lang, Rotha, and Capra. Today experiments are being carried out to open up new vistas before it, new techniques are being devised to replace old ones, new depths of human experience are being explored for more poignant expression, and all these dynamic qualities show that it is developing, progressing, pulsating with life. Now one may reasonably ask, granting all these things, whether the cinema can be called an art at all.

I think it can be, because like any other art form it provides a source for the satisfaction of human emotion on various levels. It is at the same time unique since it offers its services on an international scale, whereas the other art forms are as a rule concerned with the specialised needs of definite groups of people—I mean the people who can buy a masterpiece or have the leisure to learn its appreciation. There is another point that marks off the cinema from other expressions of art and that is the co-operative artistic effort which goes into the making of a film. Unless the efforts of a number of artists are harmonised in one direction there are chances that it will fall short of genuine artistic expression. This feature it shares with drama or 'legitimate theatre'.

The film has many points of similarity with other forms of art like music and painting. All these involve a compulsive human experience in the artist which

demands expression, and so forces the artist to undertake an experiment in his medium in order that he may convey his feelings to others. The film, in spite of its origin in the studio factory, is as capable as any medium of achieving a standard of artistic perfection. It is of all arts widest in range because it can call the architect, the painter, the musician to its aid and thus can blend sight and sound in its own image.

So much about the intrinsic qualities of film, which will perhaps suffice to indicate its potentialities as a medium of artistic expression. Let us now assess how far these have been realised by film makers in India. The Indian film is passing through a phase which the American film did at one time. Aimed at the lower levels of quick emotional satisfaction, it deals mainly with violence, sex, and crude exhibition of wealth and vulgarity. Many in their hurried and incompetent search for realism fill the picture with irrelevant details. The debased practise of so powerful a medium has considerably weakened our culture. Asked the reason why, our film makers will say that since the majority of human beings are culturally under-privileged, their emotions are easily roused by the more simple emotional reflexes whereas the culturally privileged demand a more complex satisfaction. They point out that the money aspect of the thing cannot be ignored and it is always wiser to produce films which will find a market.

We know that films are expensive even when economically made. We recognise the place of the box-office. But let us look at small countries like Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, or Holland. Although made for commercial exhibition, their films are often part of their national artistic expression. The enormous strides taken by these countries during recent years prove that there is no inherent conflict between

the two aspects of the film. The real obstacle to the development of film in India as a medium of artistic expression is the utter lack of artistic sensibilities among those privileged few who actually monopolise the resources of film making. We hardly come across a film maker in our country who can combine an honest story with honest craftsmanship and honest entertainment value.

It is about time that our film makers become aware of one truth: the routine dope, the standard measure of romance, crime, sex and sadism leads to ever

diminishing public appreciation. Today, only quality and originality can save our film industry from a slow process of self-extinction. It is the responsibility of film producers to raise public taste from this dead level of consumption towards finer emotional discrimination and more spiritually exciting demands. We are waiting for the day when our cinema will draw its lifeblood and in the end its biggest market from creations which have something spiritual and aesthetic to give, something which is genuine dramatic entertainment.

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book reviews

OLD FRIENDS AND NEW MUSIC

by Nicolas Nabokov

FLAUBERT'S DICTIONARY OF ACCEPTED IDEAS

by Jacques Barzun

NO FLIES IN CHINA

by G. S. Gale

NOT HONOUR MORE

by Joyce Cary

DILEMMAS

by Gilbert Ryle

OLD FRIENDS AND NEW MUSIC by Nicolas Nabokov. Hamish Hamilton. 12s.

THERE is an unfortunate tendency in India to speak of "European" music. By this is meant the work of composers who may be natives of England or Manchuria, the United States or Japan, Germany or Korea. If it were merely a matter of nomenclature for a certain idea it would be of no consequence. Unfortunately, there is a prejudice which goes with the term "European". This prejudice has had far-reaching and regrettable effects on the appreciation of what I prefer to call "international" music in our country.

Admitted that each country's music has its own special characteristics. The music of Spain is without doubt different from that of Russia—but the fact remains that wherever "international" music is performed, there is a warm welcome awaiting the

works of any composer of worth—whatever his nationality.

Cut off—to a large extent because of this prejudice—from the main stream of "international" music, Indians generally have little knowledge of those who compose or perform it. It is only during the last four or five years that, consequent on the visit of some internationally known musicians, the works of certain composers have been performed in India for the first time. Still, it would be idle to claim that international music has at last gained a footing in India merely on the ground that Arrau, Stern, Menuhin and Cassado have given concerts in our country.

It is against this background that my estimate of Nicolas Nabokov's book is made. I confess I have not heard any of his music. I go further and admit I had not even heard of him until a year or two ago: BUT....

Old Friends and New Music is technically an autobiography. It is written by a musician—a genus not often partial to self-expression through words. Further, the title would lead one to expect extensive propaganda in favour of contemporary music. But what do we get? Imagine a modern Montaigne, endow him with a good dollop of humour and a partiality for music and those who have to do with music—and you have a Nabokov.

The book has comparatively little to say about the author himself. But within its excellently bound covers is a fascinating world. Mr. Nabokov with enviable deftness introduces us to many of the greatest personalities in the world of music and Russian ballet. There are notable pen-portraits of Igor Stravinsky and Prokofiev. There is, like a more contemplative movement in a symphony, a very restrained, objective but strangely moving chapter on the contemporary Soviet composer Shostakovich, whose *Stalingrad* symphony was so widely performed in the 1940's. Linked to this are quiet but pertinent observations on the status of a creative artist in that country.

There is a touching account of the author's contact with that great dancer Nijinsky—tragically high-lighted by the fact that Nijinsky was by then insane, and was taken by Nabokov to see another great Russian dancer—Lifar—perform.

By way of contrast there is Mr. Nabokov's "ball by ball" report of his experiences as a "cultural officer". Mr. Nabokov, attached to the U.S. Army, had to see what could be done about regenerating musical life in Berlin during the Allied Occupation. Here he had to work with the Soviet authorities.

All through the book there towers one personality—the flamboyant Diaghilev. Creator of Russian Ballet as we know it today, this great genius influenced cultural

life in Europe to such an extent in the early years of this century, that the effects of that impact can still be seen in the fabric of contemporary music and ballet.

Before you decide that this book is likely to be of interest only to those interested in international music and Russian ballet, allow me to quote: "All Russian bureaucrats are divided into a caviare hierarchy: on top are the fresh caviare Russians, below them the pressed caviare Russians, next the red caviare Russians and last the great mass of non-caviare Russians." And again: "...Hollywood, where a true eccentric looks like a sedate Baltic burgher and anarchy is a form of matrimony."

The samples quoted are meant to serve a purpose. And that purpose is to underline my statement that *Old Friends and New Music* is one of the most entertaining books that I have read for a long while. There is quiet wisdom in its pages, there is much wit. There is also a warm kindness.

It is not necessary for one to be interested in music and ballet to enjoy reading this book. Nabokov introduces us to a fascinating world and to an author who writes with facility and felicity.

VICTOR PARANJOTI

FLAUBERT'S DICTIONARY OF ACCEPTED IDEAS translated with an introduction and notes by Jacques Barzun. Reinhardt, 10s.6d.

MR. BARZUN isolates the peculiar quality of 'accepted' ideas when he notes that they are the only thing ever said on a subject by the middling sensual man; that their form, imagery and intention are immediately recognised as approved before they begin; and that they are inevitable in given situations. When, in dismissal of a foreign film set in London a British daily snaps, "This is a story about a French wolf come to seduce our girls," a

social fixity attains typical expression. Mr. Barzun diagnoses this fixity as lust for order through convention.

Flaubert's proposed *Dictionnaire des Idées Reçues* doubtless gained considerable momentum from his private satisfaction ("to dissect is to revenge"), but he was more concerned with what he recognised to be philosophical clues of human transformation under machine capitalism. Messrs. Bouvard and Pecuchet, Everymen of democracy, epitomise the sensibility of the time in the round of dulled emotion; the dictionary advances the disembodiment of the received idea by focussing the monotonous stupidity of its stock emotional responses upon itself and by unveiling the misinformation for which it is frequently a vehicle. The entry **FEUDALISM** combines these two themes at their basest level: No need to have one single precise notion about it: thunder against.

The varied selection of verbal currency which Flaubert includes in his scheme should not be approached as mere tabulation. From the inane brevity of: "FEAR. Grows wings," his framework expands to: "YOUNG LADY. Utter these words with diffidence. All young ladies are pale, frail, and always pure. Prohibit, for their own good, every kind of reading, all visits to museums, theatres, and especially to the monkey house at the zoo." An array of devices—invariables, contradictions, negatives, imperatives—twists Flaubert's clichés in directions which invest them with particular local point, formulating at the same time a morphological orientation evocative of their social context. Its unobtrusiveness is the measure of Flaubert's skill (and incidentally Mr. Barzun's, as translator) at a level where the artist is his work, felt everywhere but not seen.

The dictionary is of course articulated cumulatively, the entries resting upon and sustaining one another as entities and as

interweaving detail, some of which might strike Indian readers as more than universally relevant: "ARTISTS. All charlatans. Praise their disinterestedness (old fashioned). Express surprise that they dress like everyone else (old fashioned). They earn huge sums of money and squander them. Often asked to dine out. Woman artist necessarily a whore. What artists do cannot be called work."

BUYING AND SELLING. The goal of life. **CHEATING (THE CUSTOMS).** Is not dishonest; rather a proof of cleverness and political independence.

WEALTH. Substitute for everything, including reputation.

The translation is a result of Mr. Barzun's leisure-hours over the years and the virtue of work allowed its own time emerges in the immediacy of the satire and culminates in the concise relevance of his introduction.

FOY NISSEN

NO FLIES IN CHINA by G. S. Gale. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 14s.

G. S. GALE, representative of the *Manchester Guardian*, accompanied the delegation of the British Labour Party to China in August last year. He admits frankly that his visit of just three weeks was too short to enable him to attempt a complete picture of the new China. It is rather, as he suggests, a cartoon; but like a good cartoon it draws attention to the more important features of the subject which is being portrayed.

There has been a lot of controversy about economic conditions in China since the Peoples' Republic was established in 1949. The author, in an interview with the Vice Secretary General of the State Planning Committee, tried to get at the facts. But instead of being able to ask questions, he was made to listen to a peroration by

the official concerned which lasted for an hour and a half. He was told: In 1949 the grain production was 25% less than the average of grain production under the Kuomintang. The output of light industry was 30% less and of heavy industry 70% less than the highest reached before. The most serious problem was the high price of commodities. In order to change this miserable state of affairs, the Government adopted the unified management of national finance. Result: By the end of 1952 the output of modern industry was 2.6 times that of 1949.

After the speech one of the journalists enquired about the procedure involved in the transformation of private industry into socialist industry. The reply will interest Indian industrialists who now live under the cloud of the Socialist Pattern of Society. "We transform private capitalism by various forms, step by step. The first step is to make it state capitalism. In other words we modify the ownership of private capitalism gradually through the operation of state capitalism. A private enterprise will go through the stage of joint operation between its private owners and the state. As to the transformation of handicraft production, we organise these into cooperatives. In other words we organise individual handicraft men into cooperatives, of course on a voluntary basis. Eventually the ownership of each business becomes cooperative. The ownership of private capitalism is first jointly shared between the private individual and the state and then it becomes state owned. As to the capitalists themselves, those who are able to work as administrative officials will be allowed and welcomed to work whenever there is a change of ownership. In this way we shall gradually eliminate the exploiting ownership of the capitalists."

There is every reason to believe that China has advanced very greatly in a

material sense since the Liberation. Pandit Nehru after his visit said that China had achieved a great deal under the new regime but he stressed that India would continue to advance by methods which were more in keeping with the traditions of this country. The methods employed by China have been severe, and of these the author got ample insight when he visited the coal mine at Mukden, and when he visited the jail where counter-revolutionaries were given their course of political education. The bogey of the Kuomintang agent was present everywhere, and this appears to be an excellent tool in the hands of the Government. A worker who slackens on his machine may be a counter-revolutionary as he does not have the true welfare of his motherland at heart. Let him be re-educated in jail.

In China as in all Communist countries, only the boss is allowed to think. The author had continually the exasperating experience of not being able to discuss matters on their merits with any of the Chinese. Their minds had been made up for them by the High Priests of the Republic. The conversation went like this:

Can you criticise the Government?

Of course we can. The Press in China is quite free.

Do you?

Oh, we frequently draw attention to some inefficiency of a bureaucrat or make some recommendation that might be carried out.

Criticising a bureaucrat is not criticising the Government.

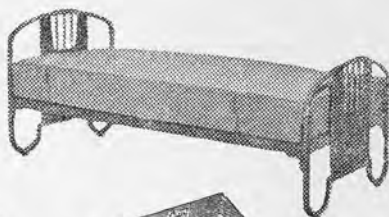
He is part of the Government, and if he does not do his job properly then it is our duty to criticise him.

But are you able to criticise the Government's policy? The major items that it lays down, I mean, not an individual bureaucrat?



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I have said, we are free to do so.
Do you?

You do not understand. The programme has been laid down, the common programme. It is the peoples' choice.... etc. etc.

In the first flush of their successes at home and abroad, the Chinese Government, and the people as well, feel that they are infallible. They refuse to believe that their methods could be altered to advantage. It was only Bevan among the delegation who had the courage to stand up for liberal Democracy and attack the Communist State. "We regard it as infantile and sterile to dismiss political democracy as though it is not a political force in its own right. In the opinion of British Socialists it is this failure to recognise the challenging character of parliamentary institutions which has been responsible for much of the political sterility of people who regard themselves as revolutionary."

ZAFAR FUTEHALLY

NOT HONOUR MORE—a novel by Joyce Cary. Michael Joseph. London 1955. 12sh. 6d.

THIS is the concluding volume of Joyce Cary's second trilogy of which the earlier volumes are *Prisoner of Grace* (1952) and *Except the Lord* (1953). Technically it is a considerable improvement on the first trilogy. The central character, Chester Nimmo, a radical evangelical politician, of a type to which, as the author says, such men as Bevan, Lloyd George, Roosevelt and Billy Graham belong, is always sharply in focus.

The middle volume is a statement by Nimmo of his early religious upbringing in Devonshire in the seventies of the last century, which lays the foundation of that prayerful hypocrisy and histrionic oratory by which he is later to make his mark as

a left-wing politician. The first book is a statement by his wife Nina of his rise, during the first two decades of the present century, as a scheming but always sanctimonious rabble-rousing politician who very nearly succeeds in becoming the prime minister of the country. In the last volume the narrator is Jim Latter, Nina's cousin and second husband, who tells of the General Strike of 1926, Nimmo's treacherous role in it, and his ignominious death. Whether the narrator is Nina or Jim it is Nimmo who always occupies the centre of the stage, while at the same time we see all the characters as they see themselves and as they are seen by each other. This is a feat Joyce Cary could not quite bring off in his first trilogy.

Nimmo is a dynamic creation, the political counterpart of the artist Gulley Gimson in *The Horse's Mouth*. He is a demagogue, artist in words, an artist in his unscrupulous management of other people. His is the restless, creative imagination working in politics, sinister because the role the mob orator, the melodramatic actor, plays in a democracy is sinister. The skill of the characterisation lies in the fact that it is impossible to say at what point in his career Nimmo ceases to be a God-besotted idealist and becomes a power-crazy maniac. Religion and politics are inextricably bound up in him, and his sex is coloured by both: even in his bed he is a politician and God's Minister.

Nimmo's genius as a politician is that he knows a lie does not succeed in politics unless there is a germ of truth in it, and that he has the imagination to seize on the partial truth and make it seem total to himself and others. Yet he believes himself to be, and is most of the time, in a state of grace, and Nina, the prisoner of grace, has to let herself be murdered by Jim before she can escape from Nimmo's grip. Nimmo himself ends his life not in a

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seat of power but in a lavatory seat, though there is, I think, no tidy moral here. What we get in this trilogy is not an indictment of democracy, but a study of the political imagination, the myth-making power of the solitary mind, its ecstasy, the explosive forms it clothes itself in, the destruction it causes.

The muddle and squalor of democracy are here, but so are its exaltation and poetry. Cary celebrates democracy because only in democracy is the creative spirit free. Jim, the outraged conscience of democracy, and Nimmo, the representative of democracy in action, eventually destroy each other, but that is how it should be, for out of their mutual self destruction alone can new creative forms emerge.

This is not to say that the trilogy is entirely successful. It's garrulous, and there is much idle virtuosity in it, especially in the last volume. The narrative pace is terrific, unreflecting, and finally self-defeating. One is aware, when one pauses to think, that Nimmo's creator is a much more exhausted man than Jimson's, that the characters he spawns with such apparent prodigality are really all alike. They are frenziedly creative or they have lost the creative impulse or have never had it.

The creative female characters are natural mistresses, wise in the ways of love and never devoid, in old age, of sexual allure. The old men are lecherous apes, promiscuous, vital, preternaturally agile and reckless: it is not that they have ceased to be moral but that the elements of their moral being have undergone a startling rearrangement in the interests of the uninhibited release of the prophetic spirit in them. Cary has a fine feeling for the solidarity of the family, its complicated cruelty, its secrecy and tenacity. There is much social and political history of Britain in these pages, and although the re-

search worker in Cary and the artist do not quite fuse, the attempt to show characters in action in a wide setting was well worth making.

KRISHNANATH

DILEMMAS by Gilbert Ryle. Cambridge University Press, 10sh. 6d.

STUDENTS of philosophy who associate the Tarner Lectures with such technical and difficult works as *The Concept of Nature* and *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, will be agreeably surprised at the latest series to appear in print—*Dilemmas* by Prof. Gilbert Ryle. Prof. Ryle has excused himself from the task of discussing the relation or want of relation between the sciences (which is the purpose of the Tarner Lectures) on the ground that he has little acquaintance, even at second remove, with any of them. He proposes to discuss instead, in the concrete, conflicting theories or litigations which have arisen in respect of certain philosophical issues.

The object of the discussion is to clarify some general concepts which are used by specialists in all branches of investigation and to bring to light the logical trickiness which may lead to confused thinking on any particular subject. In this way some reflected light may illumine the inter-science disputes which are the concern of middle-of-the-way Tarner Lecturers! The fundamental problem of Prof. Ryle's book is thus to explain the essential nature of philosophical disputes and to show by example how we can set about resolving them. The result is a book which can be read with pleasure by any one who is interested in knowing how present-day philosophers spend their time. The argument throughout is illustrated by simple and suggestive examples; it is provocative, amusing and racily expressed. From the

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point of view of style, Ryle comes next only to the great William James.

Why in the first place, we may ask, is a philosophical problem like a dilemma? Ryle replies that the rival answers to a philosophical problem are, or at any rate appear to be, incompatible. Thus if you accept one solution you are compelled to reject the other. On the other hand you find it very difficult to do so. Truth seems to demand embracing both horns of the dilemma and logic tells you this is impossible. In a similar predicament Hegel had argued that every answer was but partly true, that these partly true answers were capable of subsumption in answers more nearly true, with the Absolute Idea at the top of the series which alone was the complete truth. The Neo-Wittgensteinians, and Ryle is one of their leaders, tell us that the problem itself is a pseudo-problem, it arises from confused thinking or more specially as a result of a linguistic muddle. If this is the correct analysis, in general, of philosophical disputes, the resolution of particular puzzles will consist in showing what is the verbal confusion or ambiguity in each case. This is what Ryle has set himself to do about the particular puzzles which he discusses in this book.

Apart from the first chapter which is of an introductory nature, the book may be divided into two unequal halves. The first part consists of two chapters which deal with what may be described as the fatalist issue and the Zeno issue. Ryle is at his best in his treatment of the latter. If the tortoise is moving at one mile an hour and has a start of one mile over Achilles who is running at eleven miles an hour, we know that Achilles will catch the tortoise in six minutes. On the other hand Zeno tells us that Achilles will never catch the tortoise—for before Achilles is able to cover the full distance dividing them, he

will have to cover half of it and in this duration the tortoise will have moved on a little and before he can cover this whole distance etc. *ad infinitum*. Achilles gets nearer and nearer the tortoise but never catches up with him. The resolution of this puzzle is illustrated by means of an example. We can for instance cut a cake into four equal parts. In that case the whole cake is made up of the four quarters. On the other hand we can decide that we shall cut the cake in such a way that each slice will be half of what is on the plate. The first slice will be half the cake, the second a quarter, the third an eighth and so on. Provided the cake is infinitely divisible (and Ryle somehow forgets this important qualification) the process will go on indefinitely. On this basis we shall never be able to say, "these are all the parts which made up this cake." There would always be one part which remains to be cut.

The second lot of dilemmas which Ryle takes up are those involved in the concept of Pleasure, the World of Science and the Everyday World, Technical and Untechnical concepts, Perception, Formal and Informal logic. These litigations, he tells us, are more complex than the earlier two discussed by him. Here the dilemma does not have just two horns but several horns and what we can expect from him is not a final solution but rather an indication of how some of the difficulties involved in these puzzles can be removed.

Ryle tells us in one of his concluding remarks that to diagnose a conceptional dilemma is to be half way out of it. Half way out—yes, but what stands in the way of Ryle and his followers from trying to get you all the way out? This, at any rate, is to admit that the task of philosophy does not end in linguistic analysis.

contributors to this issue

Prabhakar Padhye is well known as a short story writer in Marathi and a contributor in English to Indian and foreign periodicals. He is the Secretary for Asian Affairs of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

G. D. Parikh is professor of Politics and Economics, Ruia College, Bombay University. He is associated with *Nav Bharat*, a Marathi monthly devoted to inquiry and learning.

J. Vijayatunga is a journalist and belle-lettrist. He writes a weekly column for *Thought* (Delhi).

Swami Agehananda is an Austrian by birth who has turned a Hindu *Sadhu*. He has lectured in philosophy at Delhi and Banaras.

Sadhan Kumar Ghosh is professor of English Literature at Asutosh College, Calcutta.

Buddhadeva Bose edits *Kavita*, a magazine of Bengali verse. He writes poetry both in English and in Bengali and has also published a number of short stories.

A. Subbiah is a Vice President of the Academy of Tamil Culture.

Rene Tavernier edited *Confluences*, a journal of literature and art, from 1941 to 1947. Contributor to several French periodicals, including *Arts*, *Preuves*, *Carrefour* and *Franc-Tireur*.

Krishnanath reviews books regularly for *Thought*.

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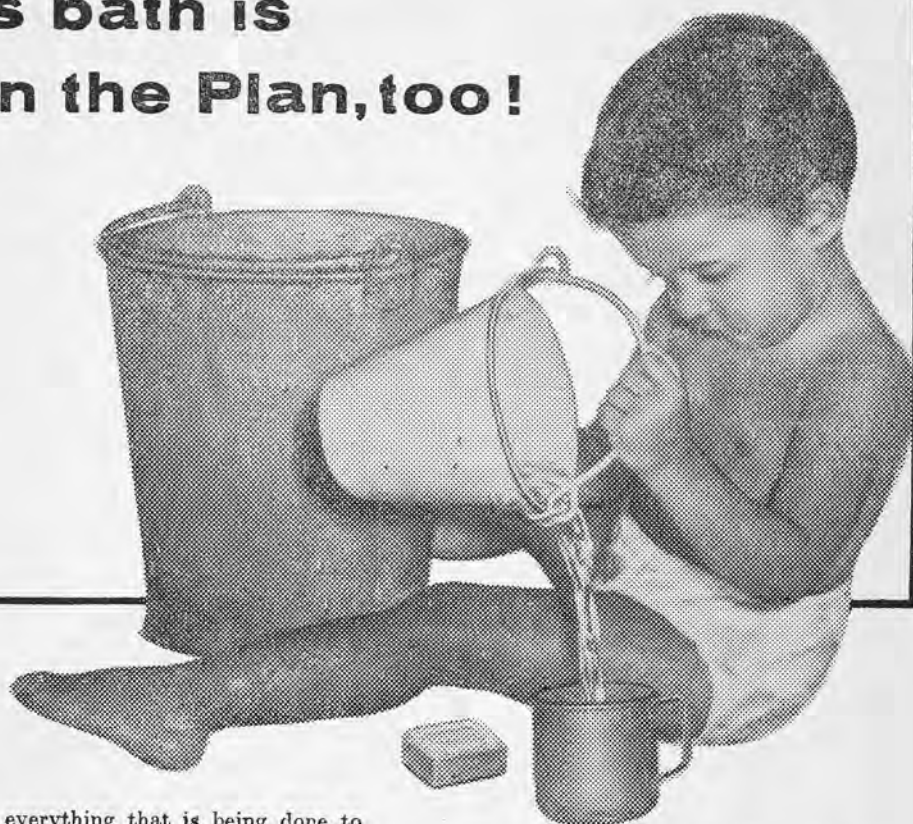
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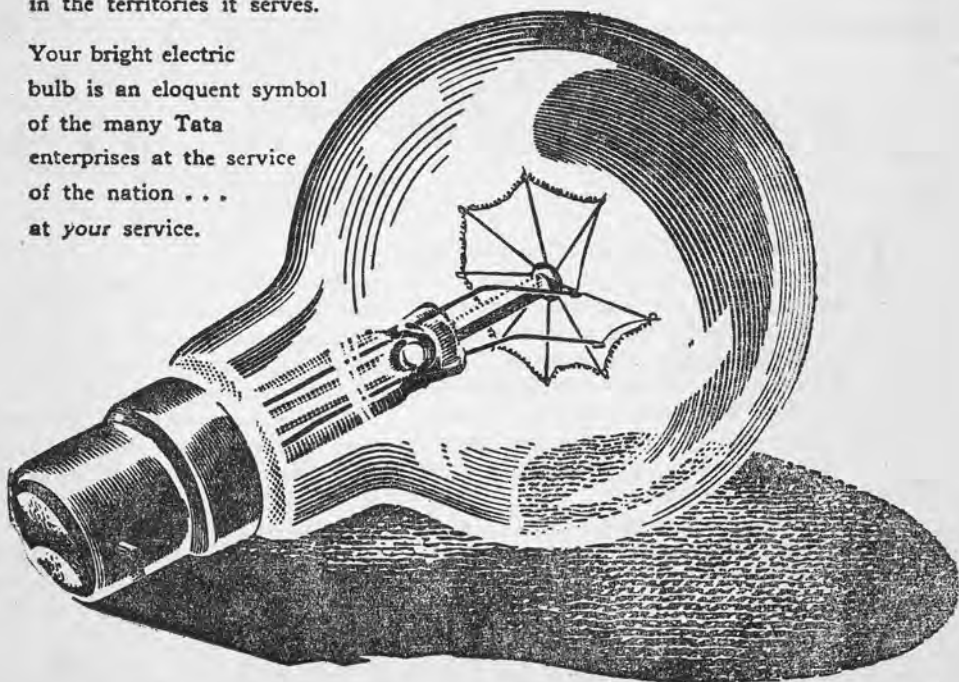
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