

QUEST

a bi-monthly of arts and ideas

edited by: **NISSIM EZEKIEL**

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THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM

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AN. 1280

editorial

THE national scene today is composed of co-existing contradictory elements whose resolution is nobody's business. You can be a declared believer in national unity and support sectarian, communal, linguistic or class-obsessed groupings. Ideological commitment to plain living and high thinking imposes no limitations in the pursuit of the world's goods. Faith in non-violence is accompanied by pride in India's growing armed forces. Democratic convictions are the most accommodating of all; love of dictators and their murderous ways does not inhibit their self-righteous rhetoric. Almost any outlook is compatible with socialism. The practice of a commendable if vague liberalism does not prevent fellow-travelling. Westernisation in externals as well as in unconscious attitudes generates chauvinistic cultural nationalism; the sounder inner values of both Eastern and Western civilization are submerged in a mindless struggle for power, prestige and material prosperity.

These contradictions have little relation to the variety which makes for richness. They are more like neurotic conflicts which disintegrate the personality and rob it of the ability to create or construct. On a national scale, their major effect is to *obscure reality*—political, economic and cultural. This reality frequently breaks through the facade of our public life and blackens the image of ourselves in which we most ardently believe. For a nation, as for an individual, a reasonably accurate picture of itself is indispensable for *qualitative* development.

Outbursts of mass violence met by police firing are now almost regular features of the Indian scene. Exposures of corruption in high places followed by a refusal of those in power to take a serious view of it, are equally common. These phenomenon are mentioned not only as symptoms of a national disease, but also as pointing to a basic flaw in our political assumptions. All political effort is directed in favour of or against organised authority, to further the interests of groups or classes, to assert the rights of certain communities (in the widest sense) or to sway the masses according to the varying needs of a strategy for power. In a democracy, a different kind of political effort is constantly necessary, for the creation of a knowledgeable public on all levels of culture. This is where the role of the intellectual comes in, to raise and discuss those fundamental questions which it is the natural function of power to avoid. It might be called disinterested political effort. There is very little of it today in India.

It is time that the task of thinking out our programmes and values is taken more seriously. The confrontation of ideals which will result is bound to do good, in contrast to the present confusion between them.

No recent event has so thoroughly exposed this confusion as the welcome to Marshall Bulganin and Mr. N. Krushchev. The requirements of courtesy or even 'spontaneous' expressions of enthusiasm were deliberately exceeded through adoption of the most despicable techniques of mass manipulation, normally used behind the Iron Curtain. It is astonishing that there are few protests against the exploitation of children and students for political purposes. In this as in other matters, the employment of a double standard in which political expediency overrules ethics goes unchallenged. Students may not participate in politics when politics means opposition to authority. They must participate when it suits the very same authority. As for children's rallies and processions, they make one feel ashamed and humiliated. When politics desecrates the child, it is wholly evil. No expediency can justify it.

Our visitors have, of course, suffered from no bourgeois prejudices in their utterances. From a belated glorification of Gandhiji as India's liberator, to attribution of the second World War to Western aggressiveness, they have stopped short of no propagandist theme. Do we really respect these people? Are they the kind of leaders we admire? Are their moral or intellectual achievements such as to evoke our idol-worship? If tomorrow they are displaced by others, as they displaced Malenkov, would we regret it or kow-tow to the newcomers? Does it not even strike us that our welcome today might have been for Malenkov and Beria instead of for Bulganin and Krushchev, who are, indeed, Beria's murderers?

What is called for here is not suspicion or even scepticism, but simple self-respect. If that is abandoned, as it seems to be on a large scale in our response to the Soviet visit, we shall sooner or later lose the exalted position which we today occupy in international councils. That position, as a matter of fact, gives us a flattering picture of ourselves, from which we deduce vain and idle conclusions about our national stature.

BY accident more than design, *Quest* has so far published attacks on popular national beliefs—against Bhoodan, in criticism of Indian philosophy, and so on. Professor Shah's article in this issue takes a harsh view of religion, and incidentally of Gandhism, by using rationalistic criteria whose great merit is its clarity and rigour. Nothing would be more welcome to me than the opportunity to publish a closely reasoned and well-documented defence of Gandhism. The difficulty is in obtaining an article based on a thorough knowledge of the basic Gandhian texts, from one who is not only deeply versed in them as a scholar but who has experienced the particular problems which their practice creates. "The highest honour one can show to a system of thought," says Schweitzer, "is to test it ruthlessly with a view to discovering how much truth it contains..." Those in India willing to do this honour to our leading as well as other ideologies can expect ready co-operation from *Quest*.

EDWARD SHILS

encounter at Milan

the future of freedom

THE Organizing Committee of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, meeting in Paris during the first half of 1955, planned a Conference on the Future of Freedom to be held in Milan in September. It began with the assumption that the time had come to call a halt to the ideological battle going on for more than a century, between the Left and the Right. It was convinced that nothing was more desirable than to bring together socialists and supporters of capitalism to enable them to explore in a practical way and in the light of recent experience, their traditional differences. It was hoped that the differences between Left and Right would cease to be ideological or doctrinal, that they would cease to be points of conflict between two all-embracing and incompatible views of the world, and would instead be reduced to matter-of-fact technical issues to be resolv-

ed in accordance with considerations of efficiency and practicability.

The Organizing Committee, led by Professors Raymond Aron and Michael Polanyi were convinced that the time had come to consolidate the ideas which had germinated in the world since the Soviet regime had shown that the public ownership of the instruments of production does not necessarily improve the condition of the people or give them liberty. The British Labour Government of 1945-1951 had shown that nationalization is neither a necessary solution to a nation's economic problems nor a necessary 'road to serfdom'. The dependence of the political and cultural liberty of a people on their economic system has increasingly been brought into question by our experiences all over the world in the past twenty-four years, and it was the desire of the Congress for Cultural Freedom to use the Conference at

Milan to promulgate and clarify this gradually dawning insight.

This intention of the Congress was fully realized at Milan through a series of excellent analyses by Mr. Hugh Gaitskell, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the recent Labour Government and the Treasurer of the British Labour Party, Professor Sidney Hook of New York University, Mr. Anthony Grosland, the former Labour M. P. and an Oxford don, and Professor Raymond Aron who combines his professorship in the Sorbonne with the role of Europe's leading political analyst.

The Congress Organizing Committee had however wished to go further. It was not merely content to dissolve doctrinal matter; it wished also to do something more positive. It wished to discern and formulate the conditions under which democracy flourishes. It commissioned and obtained a variety of extremely interesting papers on the non-economic conditions of democracy. Traditional beliefs, enthusiasm and apathy, popular culture, mass communications, fanaticism and xenophobia were examined in their bearing on democracy, but these papers despite their excellence, when they were presented at Milan, called forth little discussion.

THERE were two reasons for this inadequate analysis of the positive factors in the formation and maintenance of democratic sentiments and institutions. For one thing the intellectuals of Western countries having passed through the strenuous time espousing and then divesting themselves of a Marxist outlook, have not yet summoned the courage or mental resources for a more positive effort. They seem for the most part sufficiently satisfied with a truth which consists primarily in the refutation of past errors. They are fearful that if they set about discovering the positive implications of their present rejection of doctrinaire

radicalism, they will find that they are actually more conservative than they would like to believe.

But there was another reason for the failure of the Conference to break new ground in this rocky terrain. The Organizing Committee had no wish to look at things exclusively from the point of view of the industrially advanced Western democracies, with more or less well established traditions of individual liberty and self-government. From the very beginning they had attempted to do justice to the problems of countries only recently emancipated from colonial subjection or in which economic underdevelopment existed side by side with the frailty of democratic institutions. The very agenda showed that the Organizing Committee despite its conviction that the nature of ownership or the range of governmental intervention into the economic system had no simple relationship with the *level* of political and cultural liberty, was also aware that the standard of living and the rate of its improvement does have very much to do with the people's loyalty to political institutions and cultural values. Three sessions out of ten were devoted exclusively to the problems of economic advancement and democratic stability in the economically underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa. Several papers on Japan and on South America in other sessions were further evidence that the organizers of the Conference tried to avoid the temptations of Western European and North American ethnocentrism. At least a quarter of the participants were from Asia and Africa.

Nevertheless this gallant effort to attain a common view point on the Future of Freedom did not succeed. Or rather it succeeded in an unforeseen and undoubtedly more fruitful way than had been provided for in Paris. The Milan Conference on the Future of Liberty was perhaps the first occasion where the leading intellectuals of

Europe, America, Asia and Africa, meeting without the restraints and inhibitions of membership on inter-governmental or United Nations' committees, without the pressures of diplomacy or publicity, could freely speak their minds and hear others freely spoken. There was no excessive or insincere eagerness to agree and men spoke as they believed.

IT is not that the Organizing Committee wished that it should have been otherwise. But the fact of the matter was that the problem of the underdeveloped economies of colonialism and Asiatic and African nationalism, broke upon the conference with a disconcerting vigour. Asiatic distrust of the West, mutual resentment, national particularism ran rampant in the midst of genuine goodwill and a deep desire for understanding and solidarity. There were a few persons like Mr. Max Beloff of Nuffield College, Oxford, and Prof. Abdul Aziz of the University of Malaya, whose eloquent and impassioned rudeness and whose bitter sarcasm were unqualified by the generous sentiments and humble desire to come closer together which characterized most of the disputants. For the most part however, the honesty of intention and the effort, by no means often successful, to overcome the prejudices which each man felt within himself, was very tangible.

There were times however, when emotions soared and tones were harsh. There was much plain speaking of homely truths and in the end good sense, mutual respect, generosity and a true and affectionate striving for comprehension came to the fore. They did so only after tense and embattled debate and the free expression of opinions.

The storm broke on the second day. The first session ran off as scheduled. A clever paper by Prof. Ely Devons of Manchester University traced the gradual disappearance of real points of disagreement be-

tween Left and Right in British public life over the past quarter century, and a ramblingly pointed, many-faceted exposition by Prof. Galbraith of Harvard of the fallacies and weaknesses of intellectuals who, in quest of sure doctrinal consistency eschew the paths of reason and practicality, set the stage for the burial of ideological differences. Prof. Sidney Hook whose own evolution from a Marxist-Leninist to a democrat with an undoctinaire openness towards socialist and capitalist technique where each seems most appropriate to economic efficiency is the best representative of this generation, put forward the proposition that the maintenance of democratic institutions was a function of the traditions permeating politicians, civil servants and the public. Mr. A. D. Gorwala of Bombay, a most eminent Indian Civil Servant, who was to play a decisive role in the Conference, spoke the same thought with reference to Asiatic problems. The rugged simplicity of Mr. Gorwala's bearing, the trenchancy and force of his words heard for the first time in an audience of outstanding Western intellectuals notified the Conference that they were dealing here not with pupils who had to be educated but with equal partners whose intellectual preparation and mental and personal power commanded the respect accorded to senior colleagues.

The second session on the Rate of Growth of the Soviet Economy and its comparison with the economies of the West was intended to develop the issue further. In part the discussion came down to the examination whether the Soviet economy had achieved all that its partisans claimed. Mr. Peter Wiles, a mischievously clever Oxford youth, extremely anti-communist but utterly convinced of the power of the Soviet economy, was opposed by Mr. Colin Clark's paper which was presented in Mr. Clark's absence by Mr. Amlan Dutta of Calcutta and Brussels. M. Bertrand de-

Jouvenell who combines the polish of a 17th century French moralist with the thorough scholarship of an American research worker and adds to it his own originality, while acknowledging the progress of the Soviet economy, argued that it was no model for the underdeveloped countries. (This contention was supported in the afternoon by M. de Jouvenell in a paper of extraordinary scholarliness and originality in which he showed that the Soviet economy since the Revolution has been doing only what the British and American capitalist economy did in their early phases, at the same speed and with at least as much economic hardship for the ordinary people of the Soviet Union as the English people suffered during the Industrial Revolution.

SOME of the disputants hurled themselves on Mr. Wiles' statistics, while others went to the issue which was beginning to emerge with more force than had been expected when the programme was drawn up. Mr. Gorwala, yielding nothing in his anti-communism to any of the critics of Mr. Wiles, said that if Mr. Wiles was not correct, why should anyone be concerned about the Soviet Union. It was obvious to him that the Soviet Union was strong economically and that the example of its economic achievement was bound to have an attraction for the people of the underdeveloped countries, an attraction which could only be offset by vigorous bounties of economic aid from the advanced democratic countries. Mr. Minoo Masani, in a very different way, voiced the same apprehension. The problem was discussed again in the afternoon when the theme was the Economic Progress and Rivalry of the Totalitarian Systems with particular reference to underdeveloped economies. Mr. Eric da Costa argued with his customary felicity, the view which has now become associated with his name, that

India's economic progress in recent years has been as rapid as that of the Soviet Union, intimating that the dangers of India being tempted into the Soviet path were slight as long as India continued to advance at this rate.

The former Chief Justice of India, Mr. Patanjali Sastri contributed to the discussion by trying to follow the conventions of the neutralist line. On the side, he said, India needed no economic aid to rise from the backward condition into which it had been thrust by its foreign rulers. Then he said that India should be aided by the Western Countries. He gently hinted that India must turn towards the communist bloc if no aid were forthcoming. To this Mr. Beloff took exception in terms so strong that after the first shock of his angry assault passed it had a most wholesome effect in a direction opposite what he intended. He charged the Asiatic participants with a sort of moral blackmail in challenging that if they were not aided by the Western powers they might move towards Communism. He denied that the Western powers had any mere obligation to aid the economically less developed. Prof. K. A. Busia, a gentle scholarly anthropologist and political leader from the Gold Coast, himself a product of Oxford, in reply expressed the ambivalence of many of the non-Westerners. He said they wanted aid and that without it they would stumble and perhaps never be able to create a stable democracy and at the same time they feared to take aid, anxious lest it lead to their enslavement. The assault from the West was taken up again by Prof. Seton-Watson of London University, who declared that the intellectuals of the underdeveloped countries, by their exorbitant demands unsettle their countries. Asians and Africans continued to stream to the platform to speak their pieces, some softly, some somberly, some resentfully. The afternoon moved on,

Once more, Mr. Gorwala, in avuncular but sober reproof said that threats and accusations had no place in the discussion of matters as serious as economic development and foreign aid. It was a matter of mutual interest—neither blackmail nor charges of blackmail, neither sanguine overoptimism nor romantic enthusiasm would meet the needs of the present time when hardheaded realism and strenuous exertion were called for. It was now after 5.00 p.m. M. Denis de Rougemont, President of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and Chairman of the session, was about to adjourn the meeting when Mr. Nicolas Nabokov, the Secretary-General who was sitting on the platform behind the chairman passed up a note and asked for the floor. It was granted. Then in his deep resounding voice and with his liqueous Russian-American accents, M. Nabokov said that he wished to state that on this occasion when "our friends from Asia and Africa" have come to discuss with us the future of democracy and to tell us that they needed our aid for its construction, all that we offered them were words, unsympathetic or censorious. The session was adjourned.

ASIANS and Africans felt jubilant that their cause had been vindicated. Europeans and Americans were scattered in their views. Some felt that it was not right for M. Nabokov to speak as he did. After all in the earlier sessions, Mr. Gaitskell, Dr. Tritzsch, M. de Jouvenell and others had spoken in appreciation of the need for aid; others felt that he should not as the Secretary-General have taken a stand on a matter before the Conference; still others felt that the criticisms voiced by Mr. Beloff and Prof. Seton-Watson although too bellicose in tone, were justified in view of the resentful and embittered anti-

Western attitudes of some of the participants from outside the West.

The conflict stewed and simmered at dinner and after Max Beloff's bumptious remarks had had a salutary effect, different from what he had sought when he spoke. Thereafter the problems of democracy outside the West, unclearly perhaps but emphatically, far more emphatically than the Organizing Committee had envisaged were present in the minds of the participants. Asiatics and Africans became a bit more aware of the impressions they created, of their own deficiencies and resentments and what they were up against. Europeans and Americans became more sensitive to their own prejudices, to their own resentment and parochialism. Here again Mr. Gorwala played a central part in interpreting one group to the other, in attempting to overcome resentment, shortsightedness and muddle-headedness.

The Conference returned to its agenda refreshed and purged. There were speakers on both sides who were unchanged. Mr. Sastri, Mr. Beloff, Prof. Aziz were among them. Disagreements persisted. Mr. Masani and Mr. da Costa both continued to stress the need for a coherent set of beliefs, for an outlook which could meet the need for a faith which otherwise Communism might provide, while the Western intellectuals, retreating from several decades of ideological enthusiasm warned against the dangers of ideology. Asiatics and Africans did not desist from their sensitive nationalism, while the Westerners who passed through their struggles for national unity and autonomy long ago were more alert to the irrationalities of nationalist zealotry than to the positive values of the national community which they took for granted.

The Milan Conference on the Future of Liberty was an uncommonly rich experience for most of its one hundred and fifty

participants. Its fifty prepared papers which are now being edited for publication by the Congress for Cultural Freedom were remarkable for their originality of thought and research, for their freshness of view and their lively styles of presentation. The great international scientific congresses of our period are notable for the specialization of their topics of research and for the indifference of most of their participants to most of what goes on there. The diplomatic conferences of this decade are notable for their rigidity and spiritless acumen at worst and their restraint and reserve at best. The Milan Conference was notable for the fact that it had a common focus of attention shared by nearly everyone and that in the end, despite many vicissitudes and disagreements there was a genuine approximation of the members to each other in thought and sentiment. This was not just mere personal friendliness, although there was more of that too—as is natural when men spend almost every waking hour for six days in each others' presence, but a large increment in the sense of affinity, in a feeling of common humanity and mutual intellectual comprehension.

PROF. Polanyi, with the elegance and gentleness which all who know him expect, spoke for the vast majority of the participants, when, in describing at the closing session, how the conference had affected him, said:

'I confess that after this meeting I can hardly recognize myself as the person who entertained these prospects. For I took it for granted at the time that the decisive problems of our time were those raised in Europe by Europeans. That we had only to resist victoriously and finally to overcome the explosive forces of Moscow's Leninism, to regain the peaceful leadership

of the world which had temporarily slipped from our hands.

'But the interventions made at this meeting by Asiatic, African and South American delegates have made me realise that this perspective was altogether distorted. The proud people of the ancient lands who are now coming into their own in Asia and Africa, are not waiting the decision of our European conflicts. They have started their political life as independent nations on premises of their own for which there is no precedent in Europe. We shall not begin to understand them until we accept the fact that in these new nations, born of the most ancient soil of the human race, we are facing our partners in the shaping of man's destiny on this planet. They are of course equal partners already by virtue of their statehood in the Counsels of the United Nations. But their interventions at this Congress have revealed the power of their political thought which on a number of occasions has commanded not merely intellectual appreciation, but the respect due to true greatness of mind.

'I confess that it was for the first time that the exhilarating perspective was opened up to me of this immense area of new companionship. It is a refreshing prospect which promises to give us the joy of belonging to a larger humanity.

'Yet for all that, this encounter has brought us new cares. We were brought up against the poverty of the areas held by the new Asiatic and African nations, and the instability of their public life. And having pondered these immense problems, the Conference could do little more than pass on in silence. The only result was to give us a new sense of proportion, in which our European conflicts could be seen as a fragment, rather than as a whole of the contemporary scene. This I believe will have a lasting effect on the future strategy of freedom in this Congress for Cultural Freedom.'

K. GURU DUTT

is India a cultural vacuum?

the rebuttal of a thesis

SUCH is the question posed by Nirad C. Chaudhuri (author of *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*) in a very plausible article which appeared under that caption in a popular Indian weekly some time ago. He proceeds to answer his question in the affirmative by contrasting the cultural condition of the country today with what he believes it was at the turn of the century, a period which for him is the norm, and of which he writes with an acute nostalgia.

This is how he puts it. During the nineteenth century there was a cultural void in India, but the civilization of Europe blew in to fertilize anew a vast area which was on the point of becoming culturally arid. The result was the 'Indian Renaissance,' distinguished by its cult of *litterae humaniores* in letters, monotheism in religion, and Liberalism in politics and social life. It established a pattern of culture which

lasted well into the twenties of the present century, but has totally disappeared after the death of Tagore. If today a few like Nehru and Radhakrishnan continue to speak its language, they are only cultural survivals from a bygone age whose ideology is no longer alive.

Once again a cultural depression has set in, as evidenced by the winds which are blowing in from outside. But this time they, that is, the 'cinematographic cyclone' and the 'rising gale' of Communist cultural influence, bode no good. There is no sign of any countervailing forces at work in the country. Our political independence from which so much was hoped for, has proved completely irrelevant to all our cultural activities; and the present ruling order is afflicted by a nerveless eclecticism which renders it wholly incapable of giving any lead to culture.

On the other hand, the country is wit-

nessing an ominous putting back of the hands of the clock in the shape of a resurgence of Hindu traditionalism of unprecedented strength, and it looks as if levers pulled by immensely strong springs are slipping from the exhausted hands that had held them back for so long, and are falling into their ancient bearings. This is the thesis which the author tries to develop in the course of his article.

If true, it is indeed a bleak outlook. But is it based on facts? On closer scrutiny, the article itself furnishes ample material for meeting its arguments. But it may be conceded at the outset that the poor quality of our films coupled with the growing vogue of the cinema is a matter for grave concern. The problem is not peculiar to India, and has world dimensions. Over thirty years ago, René Clair, a well-known producer, artist and critic wrote, 'The cinema is indeed a highly dangerous invention.... If I were in the shoes of a sensible, respectable citizen, I would give it some thought. Soon it will be too late.' In his recent book—*Reflections on the Cinema*—he describes the moribund state which the cinema has reached, but points out that if a producer is to succeed at all, he has inevitably to appeal to a very low level of intelligence. The book leaves an impression that although its author has enjoyed the making of films all these years, still if the cinema were to disappear altogether, he would not much regret the loss. It is against such a background that we shall have to view our Indian problem, and not *in vacuo*.

NOW what are the specific charges which Mr. Chaudhuri levels against the Indian film industry? First, he is unhappy that the cinema should attract the better sort of writers and artists into its vortex by the lure of high pay. If true, it should cause neither surprise nor regret. As the Irish

author and playwright, Sean O'Casey, points out in the larger context, the main problem is to give the writer and artist as safe a living as the living of a butcher, baker and candlestick maker, so that he may keep fear and anxiety out of his work, and bring hope into it. This holds with all the greater force in India. It may be questioned whether any real literary or artistic talent is being absorbed by the cinema to the detriment of literature and the fine arts. If it were, the cultural level of films would have shown distinct improvement: a consummation most devoutly to be desired.

Then Mr. Chaudhuri blames Indian producers for their partiality for religious and mythological subjects. But if that is what the public insists upon, it would be idle to take the producers to task on this score. It would be more profitable to try to understand with some sympathy the grounds for this insistent preference. As Pandit Nehru has stressed on more than one occasion, no one can claim to understand India if he is unable to appreciate the hold which the stories in the great epics have over the Indian mind, and the peculiar virtue which resides in them. Even when these time-honoured motifs are not directly in evidence, it is interesting to note to what an extent the traditional outlook dominates even plots with a modern social setting.

This is used as an argument, we may note in passing, in a recent study of the concept of *Maya* by a Christian scholar (P. D. Devanandan) who cites the popular Tamil film *The Two Brothers* as illustrating the degree to which the Indian consciousness is still swayed by the ancient doctrines of *Maya* and *Karma*. It is also no small triumph that traditional sentiment has succeeded so far in keeping out of films those disgusting amatory exhibitions which are the bane of foreign films. It is curious to watch Mr. Chaudhuri, who passes over this point in silence, expressing disgust at

the forbidding crudity of the Indian attempts to produce gods out of the machine in a literal sense. Yet in the same breath, he calmly asserts, 'The Indian cinema is still held in its foreign leading strings, and is totally unrelated to any tradition of Indian culture, old or new.' So much for the cinema.

Now let us see how far Communism has infected the cultural organism. Mr. Chaudhuri thinks that the Liberal Humanism which coloured Indian thought half a century ago is completely exhausted, and that Democracy is but an empty catchword which is being exploited by politicians for their own purposes. It is from this situation that Communistic thinking is drawing much of its strength; from the forbidding stagnation and barrenness of the ideas which are opposed to it, rather than from any inherent appeal. He says also that Communism has no rival in the technological concepts under the influence of which a material revolution is now being attempted in India; and draws the inference that to the extent such a revolution is accomplished, it will create an environment favourable to the spread of Communism as a mode of social and cultural behaviour in India. Already he sees it seeping into our cultural expression.

Mr. Chaudhuri is not alone in his dislike of Communism; and it would be unwise to under-estimate the potentialities of the Communist menace. But he gives away his own case when he admits that technological progress is not necessarily bound up with acceptance of the Communist ideology; and that the advance made by Soviet Russia is really an example of 'Americanization.' He goes on to depict Communism as a purely negative creed out of which no culture can arise; and he finds it difficult to accept contemporary Russian culture as a proof of the cultural power of Communism. If that is so in Russia, it is not inevitable that even the

spread of Communism should affect the culture of India. In any case, the fear that Communism has already infiltrated into our literature, art and scholarship with deleterious results, appears to be greatly exaggerated.

IF Democracy is a mere catchword in the hands of politicians there is no good ground for holding that Communism is anything more than a slogan and a banner of discontent with certain vulnerable sections of the body politic. Mr. Chaudhuri is aware of this, and also of the reason for it. If Communism has failed to secure a firm foothold in the country it is due to Hinduism. He says, 'Hinduism is the only thing in this country from which Communism has anything to fear, and the chances are that Communism will be beaten by Hinduism.'

But then Mr. Chaudhuri seems to think that the remedy is worse than the disease. Much as he dislikes Communism, he likes Hinduism even less. He therefore views with apprehension the Hindu resurgence of immense strength which he imagines as being in progress all over the country. He stigmatizes it as wholly traditional, negative and retrogressive, and which can never be adequately interpreted in the 'contemporary intellectual idiom', whatever that may mean. The onset of this threatening tide, we are told, is marked by the rapidity with which Western concepts of life and civilization are disappearing from this country.

What are the specific characteristics of this so-called revival? First, it differs, and to its own disadvantage, from the nineteenth century movements led by Ram-mohun Roy and others. According to Mr. Chaudhuri, the older movement was a genuine religious reformation, inspired by a new spiritual and ethical awareness. Besides, it was based both on criticism and

historical awareness. But the present one is merely a recrudescence of the age-old Hindu tendency to exaggerate the importance of external forms, to which it would appear, even Swami Vivekananda lent his support.

Mr. Chaudhuri's enthusiasm for the ideals of his boyhood associated with Brahmoism in Bengal are understandable. But we altogether fail to see on what data he bases his conclusion that attachment to external forms is on the increase. An impartial and objective survey of the past thirty years would demonstrate, on the contrary, a phenomenal weakening of the old conservatism and orthodoxy everywhere even in the South, which for long was its stronghold. This is noticeable not only in matters of religion but in all departments of social and cultural activity. No one can say that the influence of the Ramakrishna Mission has been in the direction of emphasizing forms and distinctions. Above all, we have to take account of Gandhism, which has beyond question been the dominant ideology during the period. Gandhiji was an uncompromising critic of the meaningless excrescences which had come to be associated with Hinduism, whether in the shape of untouchability or otherwise. His whole life was one long struggle to retain essences while shedding outworn forms and beliefs. It is strange that Mr. Chaudhuri's cultural analysis fails even to mention Gandhiji's name!

MR. Chaudhuri is quite right when he says that a culture has to be judged by noting whether it is diffused among the people and is a force among them, or whether it is confined to esoteric circles. Judged by his own criterion, the movements of the nineteenth century will be found wanting. They were mostly confined to small groups of people in the upper strata. Their roots did not reach

down into the soil. That is why they withered. It is the prime distinction of the Gandhian movement that it is broad based and has nothing esoteric about it. Not that we need accept Mr. Chaudhuri's dictum about groups and circles; for it is seen that all significant movements and innovations whether in religion, art or literature have had their origin in small groups. Now, it is not only Gandhism which is distinctive in its disregard for outworn forms. It would equally apply to smaller religious and other coteries scattered all over the country, like those centering round the names of Sri Aurobindo, Ramana Maharshi, Sai Baba, Swami Ramdas and others too numerous to mention.

So, judged by any standards, there are no signs of any Hindu revival in the country, characterized by the feature which Mr. Chaudhuri singles out for notice. But is there any sort of revival at all? If we are to take his description of Hinduism seriously, it is incredible that there should be any possibility of a revival. According to him, Hinduism although at one time it did canalize a living civilization, had lost its creative urge and become a habit and inert tradition even before the Muslim conquest. Its grooves of thinking, feeling and acting ... had become dead matrices. If that was really the case, how are we to account for this astounding resurrection of something which was already dead a thousand years ago, and since then has only been putrifying? No course is left open to us except to disown the obituary notice, or in the alternative, to deny the resurrection. In any event, Mr. Chaudhuri's diagnosis falls to the ground.

It looks as if he has conjured up bogeys which he is now unable to lay. Such sensational reporting will not cover the situation. Admittedly, we are passing through a difficult transition period. There have been crises when it appeared as if our very survival was at stake. Somehow, we have

struggled and managed to keep our head above water. Even in the most favourable conditions, cultural renaissances do not happen overnight; time must be allowed to work its magic. Perhaps culture is one of the few things which refuses to become amenable to a Five-Year Plan. Impatience and culture are antithetical. Mr. Chaudhuri himself generously concedes that more tangible expressions of culture, namely literature and the fine arts, are not dead. What about the intangible expressions?

Culture has an ethical core; essentially it is Dharma. Manu said that; and for centuries the country held Manu's words to be true. Charles Darwin, without knowledge of Manu, was merely echoing his dictum when he said, 'The highest stage in moral culture is when we recognize that we ought to control our thoughts'. That is the quintessence of Gandhiji's teaching. Whatever the effects of a puritanical cult on the progress of the arts, and whatever the shortcomings of Gandhism in practice, it has to be judged by its ideals. And these ideals are in

keeping with the highest traditions of our past, and unexceptionable from any standard of valuation. Its external technique has energized a revolution unique in history which has given India an honourable place among the independent nations of the world. Its cultural implications stand urgently in need of assessment. No cultural survey of the recent past can afford to ignore it. But that is precisely what Mr. Chaudhuri's thesis does.

We are now in a position to answer Mr. Chaudhuri categorically: there is no evidence of any cultural vacuum in the country. The so-called foreign influences are factors which have to be normally reckoned with. The cinematographic whirlwind will settle down as a steady trade-wind, which, by tacking, has to be harnessed to our cultural ends; and the rising gale of Communism may yet prove to be nothing more than a storm in a tea-cup, so far as its effects on culture are concerned. Above all, the alleged uprising of Hindu reaction will be recognized as a fantastic nightmare in the broad daylight of waking realities.

THE SERPENT MAIDEN

Two great eyes outlined in black—
 A long sleek black body—
 Across her bodice a twisted braid winds down.
 She bears on her head a basket of snakes.

Two great eyes outlined in black—
 Girl, do you make your serpents dance?
 Does a snake swing in the braid across your breast?
 Does it sway across your body?

A serpent is tattooed on your arm.
 Blue glass bracelets are on your wrists.
 Does your serpent take blue kisses from your lips?
 Will you open the hamper for me?

A cold black snake is on your breast,
 A long sleek body—
 I see the lifted hoods of serpents dancing in your eyes
 And snakes are at play in your heart.

A WINTER NIGHT

The old-woman village, wrapped in a quilt,
 Sleeps soundly in the straw smoke.
 She snores with her head tucked down.
 The roads are wooden with sleep. There is no sound.
 Trees sleep, standing on one leg.
 Jackals are quiet in the bushes.
 Dew drops softly.
 There is no scratching of mice or bats.
 On one side lies the crop-cut field.
 A baby vulture cries out in a banyan;
 Its mother stirs and slaps it with a wing.
 Alone in the mist of the winter night
 The one-eyed moon, holding a broken lantern,
 Turns its steps towards Adampur.

ASOKE VIJAY RAHA

(Translated from the Bengali by Lila Ray)

SAMAREN ROY

nineteenth century Bengal

reason and reaction

AWARENESS of limitations makes a man endeavour to attain what he lacks, in personal and social life. It is only when he feels that he should have the freedom to do certain things or act in a certain way in order to fulfil his desires or ambitions that he strives to win that freedom. Unless one is aware of the limitations circumscribing him one does not feel the need to break away and strive for a new pattern. If that necessity is not felt by most members of a society the lack of awareness exists in that particular society as a 'socially patterned defect'. In such societies where some or many restrictions exist because of the absence of any protest against them, individuals are not discontented, and even feel genuinely happy fitting themselves into a restrictive society. As a matter of fact, these restrictions are raised to the level of virtue.

The backwardness of Indian society is

exactly this lack of awareness of the restrictions under which individuals live and the injustices imposed upon their aspirations. That Indian society has been lagging behind in the march of human progress and had laws and customs repugnant to human sensibility was first felt by a few, soon after the advent of the British in India, in the nineteenth century. The horrifying rites of *suttee*, the utter degradation of womanhood evident in 'kulinism,' the prevention of widows from remarrying, the inability of the individual to act on his own judgment, all consequences of the absolute rule by the family head in a rigid patriarchal-clan society, were viewed by these few as not only repugnant compared to contemporary European society but also on their own merits. Centuries of tradition imposing the injunctions of the brahmanic social order reduced an entire people to such a state of morbidity that it

not only did not feel the absense of freedom but rather believed that obeying those injunctions was a virtue.

India's contact with the western world in the eighteenth century, when her social and intellectual life was at its lowest ebb, opened up a new chapter in her history and evoked the hope of a resurrection. Europe had undergone a vast revolution in life and thought by the time her people came to India. The Renaissance had resurrected man in Europe from the bondage of god and religion and given a new definition of man who was no longer a creature of fate but had become his own master, and was capable of remaking himself. Once resurrected, man attempted to remake the society he lived in, closer to his desires and aspirations, until the French revolution established by law the rights of man based on equality and liberty, and ushered in industrial civilisation. The latter opened up a new horizon for the development of man's potentialities and new hopes of progress. It was the need of this industrial civilisation which brought the western world in closer contact with India in the process of seeking new worlds in search of raw materials.

The impact of the West was not, however, felt in India until the beginning of the nineteenth century when English education was introduced here. A few men, of whom Raja Rammohun Roy may be regarded as the foremost, saw and felt the limitations and backwardness of Indian society compared to the greater possibilities of individual development and prospects of social progress in western society. He noted the respect it showed to individuals; and hence he first welcomed the advent of the English as well as the impact of their culture and civilisation on India. Rammohun exposed the ills of Hindu society and tried to reform it after centuries of cultural stagnation. He was like a giant among men of his time and gave rude

shocks to Hinduism by exposing its terrible rites and false concepts of human values miscalled spiritualism. He demanded with all his powers that its wrongs should be righted and truths about it frankly told. He, for the first time, condemned the idolatry of the Hindus, demanded the abolition of the *suttee* and of the caste system, the removal of the utter degradation of woman and the establishment of the right of the individual to live and act according to his own judgment. The Brahmo Samaj which he established offered hope for the achievement of his ideals. And it was he who tried to unearth the lost philosophical tradition of ancient India, the meaning of the *vedas*, the *upanishads* and the positive sciences, forgotten even by its own spiritual preceptors, the priesthood. As a consequence, he had to leave his parental home twice for about eight years, and could not be in the forefront when the Hindu College was inaugurated, although its main architect, because that would have invoked the antagonism of the entire Hindu population. In general, he brought upon himself the wrath of the entire Hindu society.

THE establishment of the Hindu College in 1817 made English education available to Indians and thus furthered the movement for reform which he had initiated. New men emerged, having access to wider reaches of knowledge through English education, and thus a growing section of the people felt the limitations and backwardness of Hindu society. They endeavoured to carry on the movement for the liberation of Indians from the bondage of traditionalism and the hidebound restrictions of the existing order.

Freedom of the individual to act according to the dictates of his own reason could never be tolerated in the Indian patriarchal social order, where the head of the family

has always been its undisputed master. Besides, he was guided by the injunctions of rigid social laws and by its spiritual preceptors, the priesthood. (Even today that is the dominant feature of Hindu society and the cause of its growing revivalist tendencies.) Orthodox beliefs in the greatness of the spiritualist Hindu culture actually contribute to its stagnation. That explains why when a handful of Englishmen established their rule over this country the common people were absolutely callous about it, being reduced to mere cogs in the wheel of the transcendental life cycle of Hindu social conceptions. They were unconcerned about changes in the government. *The most destructive force in life is man's contempt for himself.* The spiritualism of Hindu culture reduced man to that state of helplessness and morbidity. Only when man is convinced about his utter helplessness does a society slide into a cycle of poverty, ignorance and static despotism.

The concept of freedom once born continued to grow in the face of powerful opposition from Hindu orthodoxy, also because the rebels had an alternative mode of living not dependent upon their own social system. That was made possible by the new channels of employment and security offered by the British invaders.

After Rammohun, Derozio, a teacher of the Hindu College (1829-31) and his student associates followed up his work, and soon set up new standards in life and thought, completely breaking away from any traditional limitations. They advocated a thoroughly critical approach and a rational outlook towards everything. This group, later known as 'philosophical rebels' founded the 'Academic Association'. They drew their inspiration from the revolutionary tradition of France and the 'Encyclopaedists'; they too soon brought upon themselves the wrath of Hindu society. Derozio was removed from the teachership of the Hindu College after a campaign mainly conducted by a Brahmin named Brindaban Ghoshal, on charges of spreading atheistic anti-religious and anti-Hindu ideas. The growth of their movement can be understood by the simple fact that when Paine's *Age of Reason* came out it was sold in Calcutta at a prohibitive price, and a Calcutta book-seller could not cope with the demand for it.

AT this time the conflict between the rebels and orthodoxy rose to a point of climax. Raja Radha Kanta Deb, the famous compiler of the Sanskrit dictionary '*Sabda-kalpa-druma*', and the great philanthropist Mati Lall Seal took up the leadership of Hindu orthodoxy and started *dharma sabhas* (religious meetings) in Calcutta. Vigorous preaching of Hindu spiritualism was started by one Bhabani Charan Banerjee through a journal named *Chandrika*. The Academic Association group took up the challenge and started a journal named *Inquirer*, condemning the aggressiveness of Hindu orthodoxy. Krishna Mohun Banerjee, who later became a Christian, Dakshinaraman Mukhopadhyaya and many others had to face terrible persecution and were compelled to leave their homes.

When Rammohun Roy died in England, the only Indian speaker who spoke at his memorial meeting held in the Town Hall, Calcutta, in 1834, was Rasik Kr. Mullick, one of the editors of *Inquirer* and known as the crest-gem of the 'philosophical rebels'. In 1838, they brought out a Bengali monthly journal called *Jnananvesan* as the organ of a new group sponsored by them, 'Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge'. The life and intellectual activities of these pioneers of modernism in Bengal initiated that awareness in the Indian youth which opened a new chapter in Indian life.

The establishment of the Brahmo Samaj

by Rammohun in 1828 created a new society working for individual freedom out of the bondage of caste and religious superstition. In 1829, after a relentless struggle by Rammohun, Bentinck abolished *suttee* by decree. (In Calcutta alone, where some statistics could be obtained, the number of *suttees* varied between 300 and 1000 per year.) And finally, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's movement for widow remarriage became law in 1856. Memoranda signed by over 50,000 people were sent to the Governor General against this last enactment. The strange thing is that when the Sepoy mutiny broke out in 1857, it was described in Calcutta as a calamity caused by this enactment of widow remarriage.

Rammohun's was the first revolt in the entire history of India to liberate man from the authoritarianism of a rigid social order. Brihaspati and the whole host of Charvakists had preached their revolt against Brahmanic ideas in forests, donning ascetic robes. Buddha's revolt had been confined to his monasteries until, after Buddha's death, his teachings came to be regarded as a philosophy of world negation, sacrificing the richness of life for the attainment of *nirvana*, which eventually came to signify a mystical entity, and was later merged in the orthodox belief of life after death. The Charvakists and the Buddhists did not concern themselves with the establishment of the rights of the individual in social life. Rammohun was concerned with life as it existed in society and his revolt was to liberate the social individual, distinct from the recluse, so that ordinary people could live as they wanted to. His values were concerned with the individual in his present life and not in '*hairagya*' or renunciation; and thus he marked a total departure from the Hindu tradition which has demanded total subordination of the individual to authority and tradition ever since the Indus civilisa-

tion. The foundation of the Brahmo Samaj signified a change in which a free and moral life could be lived in the ordinary course of *grihasthya* life.

The price of liberty, however, is eternal vigilance. The orthodox reaction that began in 1830 and culminated in the Sepoy mutiny of 1857 completely changed the situation. Orthodox opinion throughout the country was in a ferment ever since the introduction of English education and subsequent enactments abolishing *suttee* and permitting the remarriage of widows. Railways, the telegraph, the printing press—all the benefits of modern science that reached this country looked entirely foreign and denationalising. The government itself at last yielded to this growing reaction and preferred to rule rather than to liberate. A striking comparison may be made in this regard with another Asian country Japan, which accepted modernism, abolished feudalism and made tremendous progress in scientific achievements, while India chose to deny the impact of modern science and civilisation.

THE vigilance that characterised the earlier rebels disappeared, and the subsequent English-educated intelligentsia lacked vigour, quality and sincerity necessary for the struggle against this orthodox upsurge. The Brahmo Samaj, torn by internal strife, lost its libertarian significance. Those who took up Christianity as an alternative way of life cut themselves adrift from Hindu society and lost their challenging purpose, and thus the orthodox upsurge gained strength. The publication of Bankim Chandra's *Banga Darsana* in 1872 marks the beginning of the new outlook when the swing towards orthodox Hinduism was complete. His satire against western civilisation and culture gave expression to this revivalist psychology of the times. Bankim Chandra gave up his

earlier rationalism which he developed through the medium of English education, especially influenced by J. S. Mill, and began to preach the ideal of duty towards society as advocated by the Gita, against the inculcation of the spirit of revolt and the establishment of rights advocated earlier by him. Duty towards society based on *dharma*, as expressed in the Gita became the supremely desirable end of life.

Individual freedom and the critical outlook demand that every person think and act for himself. Such a declaration of independence was abhorrent to a mind born and brought up in a tradition of resignation and dependence. The lofty spiritualism of the Gita which has always guided Hindu life and thought was essentially one of denial of the rights and aspirations of individual life, and was based on the belief in a teleologically determined world process by which the present life was reduced to a mere sequence in the chain of transmigrations.

The awareness and realisation of this

denial and frustration of life was the essential precondition for any progress towards a rational and free life-in-society. The history of Bengal during the first half of the nineteenth century had raised hopes for a fulfilment of that ideal and ushered in a consciousness of freedom; but the movement lost its vigour towards the close of that very century and ultimately succumbed to the growing nationalist upsurge. That inhibited social awareness confronts us even today. The so-called educated society of today has come to respect traditionalism with greater zeal as the symbol of the spiritual heritage of India. *But spiritualism has no significance if it stultifies the development of the individual.*

If only the Indian mind could realise that the present life-in-society has a significance and meaning for every individual and that it is an end-in-itself, only then would it want to develop and not to resign itself to fate. The resurrection of Indian manhood still depends on this realisation, and on breaking away from the tradition of world negation and resignation.

OLD RAIN

Am I you lost past?
 For heaven's sake stop
 Treating me like a child —
 The golden boy
 You all were once
 As if when I am your age
 I will be you or you or you
 To fit me into the pattern
 Of growth or decay
 That others fitted for you before
 So that you can say,
 Was a time when I knew him, or
 I knew it had to come to this.

You wait
 Soon I'll be forty
 And I'll blow the candles
 And I'll say
 (But what an incomplete triumph
 That you my mockers will all be dead)

"Well, here now, I'm forty
 And I haven't seen or known
 What you'd have me see and know.
 And yet these eyes have seen, these
 Lips have hungered, this body has thrilled
 Or suffered alternately
 Night has filled my body
 And I have filled my weight on the day
 I have known the thousand treacheries
 I have felt the death of the heart
 In short, I have gone through all."

And before me will be a circle of eyes
 As ours are before you now;
 Then will I pick the bluest eye of all
 And will I say to her,
 (Sadly, wistfully, though
 That is the only way to revoke desire
 Your past face from the present face)
 Then will I say to her,
 "You my dear are far too young to know
 Wait till you are as old as me."

Is it fair to tell her
 Of the roots that will harden within
 Or the blood that will flow slower, with reason
 Of the thousand desires that will invade
 Her mind and her body
 To make her into the present crumble that you are?

And yet there is a manner of growing old
 A manner much like trees
 That pass from day to night
 Clocking the seasons, breeding
 New desires for the inquiring eye
 Themselves transitionless
 In grief or green, and still.

Not shedding like a tree
 In age its gaudy acquisitions
 Not shooting the sap but containing it
 An even yellow manner of
 Growing old.

SRINIVAS RAYAPROL

THE FLOOD

There is a flood of din and noise on the road.
 The world like a dry leaf is tossed along.

Everywhere,
 Moving wheels of cabs and carriages,
 Rattle by.

Caravans of painful dreams,
 With lean lions heavily girded,
 Head towards the 'goal'.

I am one of them, and so are you;
 The whole world is in them—
 Silence and songs;
 Tears and blood;
 People with eyes fixed on the skies,
 And those with heads bent low.

Time is a storm
 That whets this flood.

BALRAJ KOMAL
(Translated from the Urdu)

BIRD

Sage and unwinking, with the steady eye turnless on the horizon
 He waits wrist bound as rock. Do not mistake
 The fluff of twitched wing-feathers, the peregrine
 Patience in the sun, as he waits
 With the dropped signal of his tail.

Born unerringly to flight, the terrible beak
 Honed on the anvil of some cosmic lust,
 There is in him
 A swift magnificence of elemental
 And unvicious savagery, that men
 Have lost with the gift of wings.

K. D. KATRAK

LANDSCAPE

There's nothing I think has not been told
 in jasmine-rest and shade
 and sparkling dust late afternoon.

There's only the proper fear of cold
 unmeaning charts so lightly made
 by river and land on the face of the moon.

And yet there is in the hands I hold,
 and the words in which I trade,
 a river and land and face and moon
 and sparkling dust late afternoon.

D. V. KUMAR

A. B. SHAH

religion and Indian democracy

the strategy of freedom

THE statements on the Intellectual in Modern Asia by Prabhakar Padhye and G. D. Parikh (*Quest*, October 1955) contain two assertions on religion which cancel each other. Mr. Padhye apparently believes that Gandhism or Buddhism, if revitalized in actual practice, will provide an effective answer to totalitarianism. 'Whenever,' he says, 'philosophies of this type have arisen, communism has been put on the defensive—intellectually at least; ... they have shown remarkable power to combat totalitarian doctrines, (p.9) Professor Parikh, on the contrary, points out that 'Gandhism, which is claimed to be the inspiring philosophy of the (Bhoodan) movement has had some of its leading advocates preaching the Chinese way. (p. 15) Earlier, referring to Professor Northrop's remarks on Eastern religions, 'Their negation of *this* world destroys their usefulness for any socio-economic reconstruction.... Asian religions ... may thus

actually smother the will to progress, to build up a new civilization on an ethical basis'. (p. 14)

I agree with Professor Parikh. However, the question raised in these contradictory assertions needs to be examined in greater detail. For, as Mr. Padhye himself admits, we are witnessing a recrudescence of several religious cults (having surprisingly primitive beliefs and practices) with growing prestige even among the educated classes. (p.6) He could have added that engineers, doctors, lawyers and even High Court judges are to be found among the devotees of the late Sai Baba or other miracle-mongering saints. At a slightly higher level—and herein lies the tragedy of the situation—many professed intellectuals derive inspiration from the high-brow mumbo-jumbo of Hindu metaphysics as reflected in the religious-social movements of the post-war years. One cannot predict where this religious

revival will lead. But one must examine critically whether in the interests of freedom such a phenomenon should be encouraged for the sake of a temporary advantage over communism.

When a democrat characterizes communism as destructive of the freedom and dignity of the individual, his criticism springs from a loathing for totalitarianism in all its forms. He is aware that in the contemporary world, communism is the most dangerous form of totalitarianism. However, a rejection of communism does not, for him, automatically mean the acceptance of a religious metaphysical form of life. Indeed, one of the main reasons for rejecting it is that communism is itself a religion with its own mystique, its own Church, and its own Holy Trinity and a host of lesser deities.

It is not merely because the Russian experiment has turned out to be a sad fraud, but also, and primarily, because such 'aberrations' are inherent in communism that a democrat rejects the Marxian remedy as worse than the disease. The defect lies not in the men who work out the system, but in the system itself. Logically worked out, communism, like any other social theory based on a supra-human cosmology, must lead to the sacrifice of the living individual at the altar of an *a priori* metaphysical principle. And structurally, the religious outlook is similar to the philosophies explicitly recognized as totalitarian.

TO elucidate this point, it is necessary to be clear as to what one means by a *philosophy of life*. A philosophy of life generally performs a two-fold task. Its speculative part gives man an integrated picture of the universe and Man's place in it. Its normative part is concerned with laying down how man should behave in relation to himself and to his fellow-men. Non-

scientific philosophies, including totalitarian ones, have this characteristic in common: they derive their normative part from their speculative part. In such philosophies metaphysics determine ethics, and cosmology is the source of sociology. They aim at showing that all phenomena in nature and in human society are manifestations of the working of a single universal principle. With Hegel, for example, it is the evolution of the Absolute Idea, and with Marx the laws of dialectics, which alone offer the key to an understanding of reality, and indicate the way in which the individual should act.

In either case, human affairs are intelligible only in the context of a metaphysics of the universe, and human conduct is judged by standards derived from that metaphysics. The danger implicit in all such philosophies is that, practised conscientiously, they must sanctify the total control of the life of the individual by the agency—State, Church or Party—which claims to possess a complete understanding of their metaphysics.

The religious view of life is structurally similar to that of Plato, Hegel and Marx. The difference lies in the ultimates of reference. The religious view of life is distinguished by (i) a belief in the existence of the soul and often of a divine Providence; and (ii) a belief, grounded in (i) above, that the proper end of all human endeavour is to secure the release of the soul from the fetters of the senses and the bonds of Karma. In religions which assert the existence of a Divine Being, merging in the Godhead would be the supreme end.

The values of such a view of life are those of a humanitarian asceticism. It is not possible to subsume under it some of the most cherished values of modern civilization. Such, for example, are the values of economic and social equality, expanding freedom for the creative powers of the individual, and the values of art centred in

man rather than in some supra-human element. It is true that some of those who find hope in *Bhoodan*—which, according to Mr. Padhye, is revitalized Gandhism—also cherish these values. That would, however, only mean that not all democrats are given to examining critically the implications of what they admire. Lest there should be some lingering doubt on this score, let us see what Gandhiji and Vinoba feel about it.

'The reason why the four-caste system appeals to me is its naturalness and its *Dharma*. Those alone are my parents to whom I am born. How can I say I do not approve of them? The vocation of the parents naturally belongs to the son. A special feature of the four-caste system is that, unless it is immoral, one has to continue in, and carry on, the same vocation as has been pursued by one's forbears... Each of us is born in a certain stream, in a certain environment, and hence to each of us has been assigned a duty in accordance with his *Dharma*. However simple, however unsatisfying it may be, this pre-ordained duty alone is good for me, that alone is beautiful to me.' (Vinoba Bhawe *Lectures on the Gita*, 3rd ed., 1954; pp. 183-184)

No comment is necessary, except perhaps to point out that even social mobility is frowned upon by Vinoba.

Again, 'Let me explain what I mean by religion... It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find expression and which leaves the soul restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.' (Gandhiji—*Young India*, 1921). To anyone with a slight acquaintance with the findings of modern science, especially of psychology, this statement would appear at best as an expression of the mystic strain in the mental make-up of the Mahatma. The mystic's experience is

incapable of communication. To make it the basis of the good life is to mortgage the growth of a rational ethics to the whims, hallucinations and vanity, maybe of a spiritual type, of men who, by definition, are abnormal. Besides, how can a feeling which inhibits the operations of consciousness be termed liberating? Man cannot be human unless he is free not only politically and socially but also from the shackles of the superhuman.

Admirers of 'revolutionary Gandhism' or 'Buddhist socialism' forget that freedom is something more than economic well-being and social equality. Well-fed cows in a wild pasture are not free in the sense in which the citizen of Periclean Athens was free. In the last analysis, the consciousness of freedom is the consciousness of one's creative powers and the knowledge that the socio-economic milieu in which one functions gives one the fullest possible opportunity for the exercise of those powers.

THE material and institutional aspects of freedom—economic and social equality, parliamentary institutions, etc.—are a necessity, but by no means a sufficient, condition for the growth of freedom. Prometheus did not defy the authority of the Olympian gods to ensure the economic welfare of the mortals on earth. Nor for nothing did Natchiketa reject the splendours of the three worlds offered to him by the god of Death. To both of them knowledge was the supreme good, for ignorance buttresses evil even if it may not always beget it. Freedom cannot flourish, nor can it be complete, in the midst of ignorance and superstition.

Religion by its nature is an enemy of enlightenment. Even if, as in the case of *Bhoodan*, a movement based on religion works for a juster social order, it can do so only by confirming man's slavery to an

authority external to himself. And if material well-being and social justice are the only concern, why complain against total planning with an egalitarian bias? Why bring in the question of freedom at all?

It would seem that the issue is clouded by two factors: a confusion between the ethical and the metaphysical content of religion, and a confusion between the short and the long-term strategy of freedom. In a world dominated by greed and injustice on the material plane and/or by a ruthless autocracy on the cultural plane, it is easy for the bewildered individual to fall back on ideas which appear to have worked quite well in the past. If Buddha and Mahavira could win over the ruling classes of their day to a life of charity and kindness, why, the argument runs, should it not be possible for Vinoba or Jayaprakash to awaken the latent good in the heart of the landlord and the capitalist in the modern world?

The snag lies in a misconception about the role of these two religions. What Buddhism and Jainism accomplished was primarily a cultural reformation, not a social revolution. Secondly, it should be remembered in this context that orthodox Brahminism staged a come-back and, after a brief interlude, Hindu society continued to sink to still greater depths of vulgarity in superstition and social injustice.

IT is not necessary to go here into a casual analysis of this retrogression. It is enough to observe that the Buddha's was a grand experiment, which almost succeeded in convincing Indian humanity that the salvation of man lay in his own hands. He almost succeeded in founding an ethics independent of God and metaphysics. The fact that soon after his death his followers developed a metaphysics and mythology very similar to those of Hinduism would

show that the time was not ripe for the rise of a religion without theology.

Even in modern times, 'it is a matter of experience that all attempts . . . to spread non-Theistic religion (Positivism, Ethicism, etc.,) have had little success, and that the Churches with the least theological element (Unitarianism etc.,) remain the smallest'. (*A Rationalist Encyclopaedia*—Joseph McCabe, p. 489).

One of the chief causes of the failure of such experiments seems to be their inability to meet the average individual's need for belonging and for emotional security in a universe which he does not understand and over which he has no control. Religion, with its paraphernalia of gods in heaven and ritual on earth, could do it before the emergence of the nation-state and of modern science. It cannot do it now for the simple reason that the entire world-view of man has been changed beyond recognition by science during the last three hundred years.

That the religion of Gandhiji and Vinoba is devoid of the colour and drama associated with it in the past merely makes their experiment a pseudo-intellectual one, which can appeal neither to the intelligentsia nor the masses. For what moves the people is not the rarefied concepts of the philosopher, but the image of these concepts in reality as they understand it. This is particularly true in those aspects of life which touch the abiding instincts and impulses of mankind. As anthropology has shown, the instinctive basis of religion is, contrary to Gandhiji's belief, not the urge to know one's Maker, but man's fear of the unknown and his desire for self and race-preservation.

It is not for nothing that the hold of religion has steadily weakened with the growth of science. And this being so, it is not possible to rehabilitate religion any more than astrology and alchemy. Any attempt to do so can only succeed by en-

trenching superstition all the more firmly in the minds of our countrymen.

A democratic outlook on life, which takes into account the findings of modern science, and which incorporates a rational ethics with the freedom and dignity of the individual as its central values, is yet to take root in Indian soil. Religion, even if sterilized and rendered hygienic, is not conducive to the growth of such an outlook. There are no short cuts in the life of the spirit.

Perhaps the attribution of revolutionary potentialities to revitalized Gandhism or Buddhism results from a failure to distinguish between the principles of freedom and the exigencies of the immediate situation. Active workers in the cause of democracy are apt to lose heart over the slow process of educating the common man in a new philosophy of life. The obvious advantage both in tactics and in appeal, that totalitarians enjoy over the votaries of freedom makes the struggle look desperate enough to lend a friendly hue to every anti-communist.

It is easy, under such circumstances, to interpret a negative agreement on the nature of the enemy as an identity of ideals among the different groups that constitute the opposition to communism. But in a war of ideas, contrasted to a war of arms, one cannot be too vigilant in keeping one's ideal immune to corrosion by the requirements of diplomatic protocol. It would be ironic indeed if, while combating communism, democratic intellectuals in India were to help revitalize an authoritarian doctrine of indigenous make.

Before the Indian Intellectual can make a significant contribution to the growth of democracy in his country, he will have to transcend the limitations of 'the colonial mind'. Unlike their counterparts in Western Europe, the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie in India came into being and

grew up, not in a struggle against a decayed social and spiritual order, but under the aegis of a quasi-liberal foreign rule. The cultural superiority of the British very naturally developed among our intellectuals an attitude of admiring disciples and grateful proteges vis-a-vis the imperial rulers.

EVEN the late Tilak, the Father of Indian Unrest, was more concerned with exposing the gulf between the Englishman's practice here and at home than with challenging the fundamental values of Western civilization. In the context of an authoritarian native culture, this was fortunate, no doubt. However, an undesirable result of this process was that Indian intellectuals, with the exception of a small heroic section in Bengal and Maharashtra, neither developed any particular passion for the values, nor did they live up to the historical role of their class. Some of the most talented among them faithfully served the British Raj, some found fulfilment in the service of the princely states, while others confined themselves to the seclusion of academic life.

Even the liberals, who counted among themselves some brilliant minds, never went beyond passing pious resolutions at Christmas gatherings. With the appearance of Gandhiji on the Indian political scene, the intellectual withdrew still further into his shell. His isolation from the throbbing life around him was completed by the anti-intellectual, feudal-cum-religious ideas of the Mahatma and the civil disobedience movements that the Congress launched under his leadership.

This short account should explain the three major vices—in an intellectual, they are vices—of the Indian intellectual. In order of importance, they are: (i) hypocrisy and spinelessness, (ii) inability to meet the world on what Prof. Parikh

called 'level terms', and (iii) intellectual chauvinism, perhaps as a compensation for (ii).

An interesting development since Independence is the almost overnight transformation of yesterday's liberals into full-blown fellow-travellers. Men who used to pooh-pooh all talk of planning for the common man, suddenly began predicting that the future belonged to the left. A little easing of the cold war tension, and the Prime Minister's associating a few economists and scientists with the work of the Planning Commission, convinced them of the possibilities of co-existence abroad and mixed economy at home. Bhoodan, which was reactionary, uneconomic and incapable of solving our agricultural problem, now makes them wonder whether we are not wrong in copying the West without sufficient regard for the values embodied in the Indian tradition.

The performance of the intellectual is equally nauseating on the academic plane. I am not referring here to the poverty of thought, for which perhaps he can produce a plausible alibi. Worse, however, than

the poverty of thought, has been his lack of integrity and for that there can be no excuse. Frustrated in the larger life outside, he has developed a perfect technique of sophistry and jockeying for position in his own profession. He justifies and perpetuates privilege, grabs power and wins and distributes patronage—all in the name of better teaching and better research. Even ethical scruples, whose absence in politicians is so often deplored by him, are brushed aside as the fads of a few cranks who do not have to shoulder the responsibility of running a college or a university.

The inferiority complex and its reverse, the intellectual chauvinism, of the Indian intellectual need no special mention. The verbose and superficial panegyrics of what others have achieved, and the determined attempt to find, in a germinal form at least, the most recent developments of political philosophy in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, are evidence of an unfulfilled obligation of the Indian intellectual: he has yet to deserve the name under which he parades.

AAMIR ALI

I see a bull fight

barbaric spectacle or mystic cult

IT is impossible to visit Spain and not see a bull fight—or almost impossible. In Madrid they have bull fights every Sunday evening, but during the week we were there they had them every day, as it was a festival week. So one day we went along to the booking office, only to be told that all the tickets had been sold out for that evening. I was secretly much relieved, for I had strong doubts about my capacity to stomach what I felt would be a bloody spectacle. But as we emerged from the booking office, we were accosted by two genteel black marketeers who sold us tickets at twice their original value.

The fights—the *corrida*, as the Spanish say—begin at 6 p.m. and end at 8. Each fight takes twenty minutes, and so this provides for six fights in an evening. A Madrid friend who accompanied us said that this was the only thing in Spain that kept to its time table.

Half the seats were in the shade—the more expensive ones—while the other half were in the strong afternoon sun. Our seats were on the sunny side, among the proletariat who appreciated bull fighting in a hearty and vocal way, being as ready to boo and hiss as to applaud when the occasion warranted it. The man sitting next to us was particularly interesting. It was obvious that he lived through every minute of the fight, and at the end of the evening he must have been as exhausted as the matadors themselves. He kept talking either to himself or to us, blowing a deal of garlic-scented breath over us. Whenever the matador was making a particularly daring gesture, or took a specially close pass, our friend would put his hands over his eyes, shouting, '*No puede mirar! No puede mirar!*' (I can't bear to look.) He would of course be peeping energetically through his fingers and not miss a

trick. Then he would take a long pull from his *bota*, or leather wine bottle, and resume his commentary on the fight.

Promptly at 6 p.m. the proceedings began with the formal entry of the three matadors who were going to fight that evening (two bulls each) and their assistants. The matadors were dressed in the traditional silk and satin breeches and shirts with gold frills, while their assistants were only slightly less ornately attired. The matadors bowed to the president of the evening's entertainment, and then the arena was cleared in preparation for the first fight.

THE bull is kept for twenty-four hours in a dark room without food or drink, we were told. He comes charging into the arena, and is dazzled by the sudden sunlight and the crowds. He gallops furiously from one end of the arena to the other, lured by the matador's assistants. This gives an opportunity to the spectators—and to the matador—to size up the bull and study his form. At this time he is a splendid sight, in contrast to the gory and bewildered state to which he will be reduced later on.

After the bull has had a few runs, the *picador* comes in for the most unpleasant part of the proceedings. He is mounted on a rather old and wobbly horse, no doubt a direct descendant of Rozinante. It is obvious that only expendable horses are used for this part of the game. The animal is blindfolded, and protected on one side by a thick leather apron. The man is armed with a lance. There is a line running round the arena about 10 yards from the outer fence, and the *picador* is not allowed to cross this. Therefore the bull is enticed out from the inner circle. After having made vain charges at the coloured capes of the matador's assistants, he decides to have a go at the queer looking horse.

The bull charges the horse and hits the leather apron with a loud smack. While the feeble old horse staggers from the vigorous thrusts of the bull, the *picador* thrusts his lance into the bull's neck. Often the horse is knocked over and sometimes he is badly gored. I was told that the horse's vocal chords are cut so that he cannot scream.

If the *picador* oversteps the inner circle, or appears to be doing too much damage to the bull, the crowd begins to boo in a manner that no *picador* can dare to disregard. A trumpet sounds and the *banderilleros* come on. The *banderillero* carries two short spears in his hands. These are gaily coloured and beribboned. Holding them in either hand by their very ends, the *banderillero* advances delicately towards the bull, waving the little spears up and down to attract the animal. The bull charges, the *banderillero* leans over and plants the spears neatly in the neck of the bull. This is repeated four times. Not all the spears remain in the poor animal, for he manages to shake off some of them. But perhaps three or four do remain and continue to aggravate the wound every time the animal moves.

The *banderilleros* withdraw and the great moment has come. The matador steps into the arena with his red *muleta* or cape. He carries his sword with the slightly curved tip under the cape until the time for the last act—the moment of truth—has arrived.

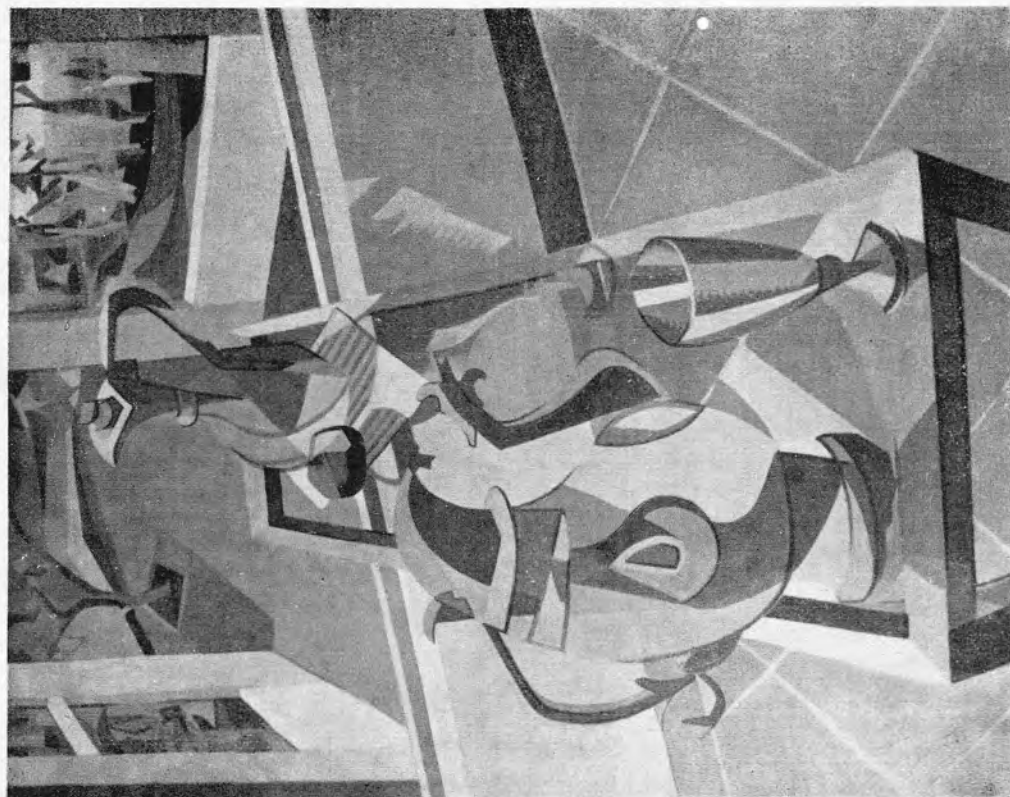
THE matador dedicates the bull to some distinguished lady among the spectators, then the real play begins. He goes towards the bull, and if the animal, somewhat numbed by the treatment he has hitherto received, does not seem inclined to charge, he hurls insults at it. The bull charges. Imperceptibly the matador's feet move, his body sways slightly, his arm



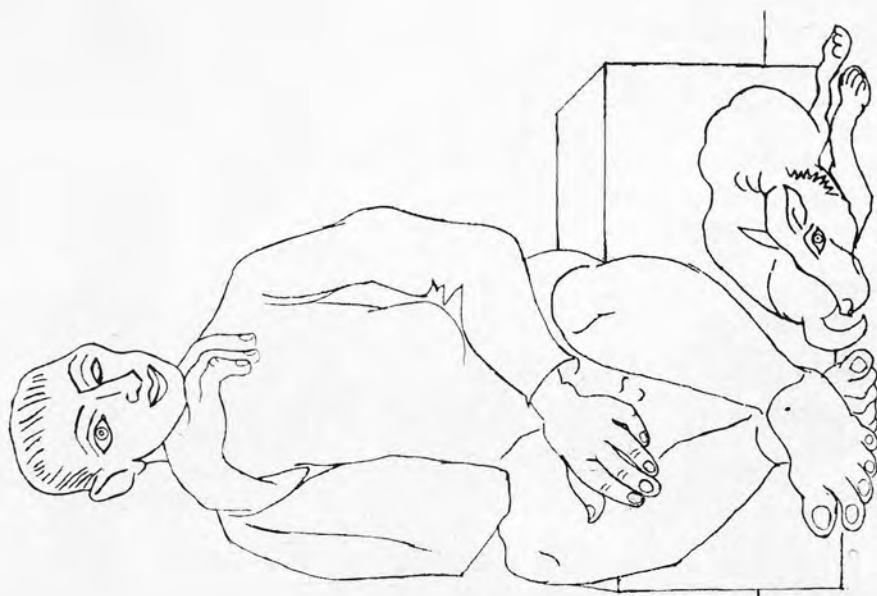
A scene from Thornton Wilder's *A Place in the Sun*, as performed at Edinburgh



The Azuma Kabuki dancers at the Edinburgh Festival (see page 43)



Still Life by Jehangir Sabavala



An etching by Francis Newton Souza

with the cape draws the bull past him. There is skill, intelligence and daring in his gesture. At the next rush the matador plays the bull close so that the animal brushes past him, and the horns miss him by inches. Then perhaps in the next pass the matador leads the bull round in a close circle so that the bull seems to turn right round the matador, his body touching him all the time.

Olé! Olé! calls the crowd in excitement, applauding wildly. Incidentally, the shout Olé! is a remnant of the Moors, for it is a direct descendant of Allah! The matador bows slightly, almost contemptuously to the crowd, ignoring the panting bull for a few moments. The bull appears grateful for the short respite from his labours.

Sometimes the matador will get so close to the bull that he can hold his horns while swinging him round after the cape; sometimes he puts the cape behind him and stands right in front of the bull, daring him to charge. Once the matador turned his back on the bull and held the cape in front of him. The crowd went wild with admiration, while our friend with garlic breath screamed louder and peeped harder than ever.

The bull is tired and befuddled. His neck is a gory mess, his sides heave with his heavy panting. The time for the kill has arrived. The matador draws his sword, rests the blade on the left arm and sights along it as if aiming a gun. The bull stands with his front feet together and head bowed, as if begging to be killed and put out of his misery.

The matador runs at the bull and thrusts the sword down. If his aim is true, the sword goes right in up to the hilt and the fight is over. If he misses the exact spot, the sword goes in only a few inches and the bull shakes it off. Then the matador must try again while the crowd boos.

After the sword has gone home, the bull

stands for a while turning his head heavily from one side to another. Then he staggers round and round and sinks to his knees. His eyes are glazed and his mouth bleeding. Sometimes, if he is a *torro bravo*, he makes a final effort and staggers up as if to renew the fight. But it is too late, and he sinks down once more. Then a last humane gesture: one of the matador's assistants comes up with a dagger and cuts the spinal cord. It is all over.

Three mules with jingling harness are galloped in. A rope is tied to the dead bull's horns, and the mules gallop out, with the dead bull trailing ignominiously after them.

The trumpets sound, another black bull comes bounding into the arena: twenty minutes later he will make the same undignified exit.

IN two of the fights we saw, the matador was tossed by the bull, but in both cases he continued the fight. We were told that his career would have been finished if he hadn't. In the last fight, the matador was tossed at the very beginning of the fight. He appeared to be fairly badly hurt, and there was a scarlet patch on his tunic, under his arm. For a while he stood disconsolate in a corner, looking quite crestfallen, while his assistants entertained the bull. Then he waved them away and went on with the fight. To make good his initial ignominy, he was more daring than ever. He played the bull close, he grasped its horns, he turned his back on it and dared it to charge him. The crowd was delirious with delight. Unfortunately he spoilt the ending for himself by requiring three attempts before getting his sword home.

However, the crowd gave him loud applause and waved their handkerchiefs, so that all the stands were beflowered with waving bouquets. This has a special sig-

nificance. The highest honour a matador can receive is the ear of the bull he has killed: an honour granted only after an exceptional fight. The waving of the handkerchiefs indicates that the crowd thinks he deserved this mark of acclaim. In this case however, the judge disagreed with the crowd and the matador was denied this highest honour.

The next best thing for him is to be asked to make a round of the arena, thus giving every section of the spectators a chance to applaud him. This he did, and the crowd threw down anything they could get hold of as a sign of their appreciation: flowers, handkerchiefs, bags, purses. One man even threw his empty camera case. One of the assistants picked up these votive offerings and returned them to the owners.

There is a story told about a famous bull fighter of some years ago named Ortega. After a successful fight he was making his round of the arena when one of the girls threw down her shoes. Ortega picked these up and called loudly, 'If you want these back, you will have to come to my house to fetch them yourself.' Evidently she did so, and they were married and lived happily ever after. This story had a particular interest for us because our Madrid friends were actually staying in Ortega's apartment, which they had rented.

Much has been written about bull fighting, both for and against. To some it is merely a barbaric spectacle, catering to the lowest in human nature. Thus H.V. Morton writing of a recent visit to Spain, concludes his account of a visit to a bull fight by saying, 'The crowd departs, exhausted with emotion, to sit in the cafes and bars and discuss every moment in the greatest detail, recounting beauties which no one but a Spaniard can ever hope to see.' To others, bull fighting is a mystic and exalted cult. It certainly has elements of both.

I found the spectacle rather too gruesome for my taste, and had I not been so hemmed in by the crush of spectators, I would certainly have made my escape during the very first fight. I am told that many foreigners feel the same way the first time they see a fight, but later get over this initial squeamishness.

Though I am not a personal admirer of bull fighting, I can well understand the appeal that it has, with its ritual, its colour, its spectacle of skill and daring. Every young Spaniard wants to be a matador, and a successful matador receives the same sort of adulation (and income) that in other countries is reserved for film stars.

The excitement of a bull fight can work on the emotions of the spectators to a great, and even alarming, degree. During one of the fights we saw in Madrid, just after the bull had come into the arena and before it had been damaged in any way, one of the spectators was evidently overpowered by his emotion. He dashed down the steps and grabbing a *muleta*, leapt into the arena. He ran to the centre of the ring and began playing the bull with a wild daring. The matador's assistants tried to draw off the animal from this unheeded interruption, but the man chased after the bull and played him again and again. The crowd was delighted and cheered this unknown and daring interloper. After a while the man withdrew and was promptly taken into custody by the police. As he was led out past the stands, the audience stood up and cheered him. His gesture, reckless and pointless, was just what most appealed to them.

There is also no doubt that the matador's trade is a dangerous one, and occasionally proves fatal. The great Manolete himself, the greatest matador of them all and the idol of the masses, was killed not so very long ago.

PREMA ANAND

dress and decency

experiment or legislation?

MOST of us feel that our clothes are to a great extent an expression of our own personalities, but few of us realise that in fact the average man is far more conventional and imitative about what he wears than about any other aspect of his daily life. He may defy convention in his talk, in what he eats or in the hours he keeps, but very rarely will he dress differently from his neighbour. In fact, the aim of modern man is to appear as non-descript and inconspicuous as possible. The mark of good taste in dress is self-effacement for a man and elegant understatement for a woman.

Ideas of modesty are even more strongly influenced by convention. A Chinese woman used to think it extremely indecent to expose her artificially compressed feet. In Sumatra bare knees are considered immodest. Here in India, convention accepts the bared midriff which in Western society is always covered except on the

beach. On the other hand, bared shoulders are taboo in India whereas they represent the height of elegance in European countries.

In this context, change in dress comes about sometimes as a result of adaptation to changing conditions but more often by imitation of fashions set by the upper strata of society which gradually percolate through to all levels. Alternatively, change in dress can come about by dictation from the party in power, where convenience and not fashion is the criterion. This has occurred in China where the navy blue coat and trousers have been adopted as standard uniform for men and women.

In India we have a wide variety of cultural patterns. Though these have the advantage of giving richness and variety to this country, they do not make for homogeneity. In dress, we find men wearing the *dhoti* in Bengal, the *Pyjama-*

kurta in Uttar Pradesh, the straight wrapped *dhoti* in Madras, and so on. Office workers wear suit and tie. In the face of this sartorial hotch potch, the Union Government once issued certain recommendations regarding the clothes of Government servants. Faced with what they considered a problem and unable to make the recommendations apply to the population as a whole, they picked on Government servants as the only vulnerable group just as this same group had been selected to enforce the law against bigamy. These recommendations advised the use of *achkan* and *sherwani* for men in specified sober colours, and plain borderless *saris* or *salwar kamiz* for women, also in sober colours, grey, black or white. The recommendation went so far as to say: 'the blouse piece should be of adequate length', and discouraged the use of 'bright colours, gay or floral designs.'

THERE is something basically wrong about a Government in a democracy recommending a particular type of garment for either its servants or the public. In other democratic countries, it has not been found necessary either in Government offices or in private firms to prescribe forms of dress. Civilized communities have their own methods of dealing with 'bright colours, gay or floral designs.' The criticism implied or spoken of one's fellow workers is usually quite sufficient to act as a deterrent to the wearing of any outrageous costume. It is certainly a healthier method than to have restraint imposed from above. Furthermore, it hardly befits the dignity of Government to prescribe the length of a *choli* or skirt.

It would be understandable if one were required to wear a particular type of dress on formal occasions. This practice prevails in many countries. Also, certain

occupations, such as nursing, demand a uniform in the interests of efficiency. The Government would have shown a better understanding of the contemporary situation if they had urged a functional and inventive approach to dress to suit our present-day requirements.

Today in India we have turned a corner. We are travelling in a certain new direction but we are hampered by leftovers from a previous pattern. It is difficult to know how much of that previous pattern can and should be brought forward to our new way of thinking. This problem influences many aspects of the life of this country, but my discussion of it will be restricted to its implications for dress. The culture and modes that were suited to a feudal society, and which were later added to by an imperialistic power, cannot basically be suited to a country on the march which has, as its aim, the betterment of the living conditions of its hungry millions. Feudal and imperialistic societies presuppose and accept inequality between man and man, whereas democracy postulates that all men have equal rights. The man who beats his servants is as much an anachronism in today's India as Rajahs and Ranis.

The conditions of living have also changed. The bus and the train, the aeroplane and the bicycle have replaced the mule, the horse and the camel. Applied to dress these changes mean that the clothes that were suited to a past manner of living are not necessarily equally suited to the Indian man or woman of today. Because we have achieved our independence very recently, our leaders are suspicious of 'foreign' influences and tend to hark back to our past culture without considering sufficiently whether it is valid today. Though these men would not dispute that a car is more functional than a bullock cart, they would not easily concede that the *sari* is, in its own way, as

out of date as the bullock cart. The high-collared tight *achkan* and *sherwani* was a fine dress for potentates and zamindars whose way of life did not call for great exertion. The *dhoti* was never intended for jumping on to crowded trains and buses. The *sari* was suitable for women who stayed at home or worked at sedentary occupations. It is glamorous but hardly practical. It is not suited to women engineers who have to be out in the field, to doctors or nurses, to women bus conductors or women working in industrial plants. What is more ludicrous than an air-hostess in a *sari*?

The *sari* and, to a lesser extent, the *chuni* of the *salwar kamiz* require constant attention and flicking into position. Because of their length they are neither hygienic nor practical. The five and a half yard *sari* if it is to be clean must, in the hot weather, be washed every day, thus pre-supposing that the wearer has either

an hour to spare for washing and ironing it or can afford to have a servant to do so for her. The *salwar kamiz* also take up a lot of material and are difficult to wash. Both dresses are hot, sticky and uncomfortable. The Japanese faced with a similar problem have taken a practical way out. For work they have adopted Western dress for men and women, but for formal and social occasions they have retained their own costume. Europe discarded trailing skirts and elaborate flounces as it took up the cause of the emancipation of women. In America the bush shirt for the hot weather is replacing the lounge suit. Why should we in India who are trying to go forward choke ourselves at the outset by the assumption that the Indian dresses of the past are necessarily the best for us today? With sanity, and not sentiment, we should try to look for the forms that will best suit our figures, our climate and our needs.

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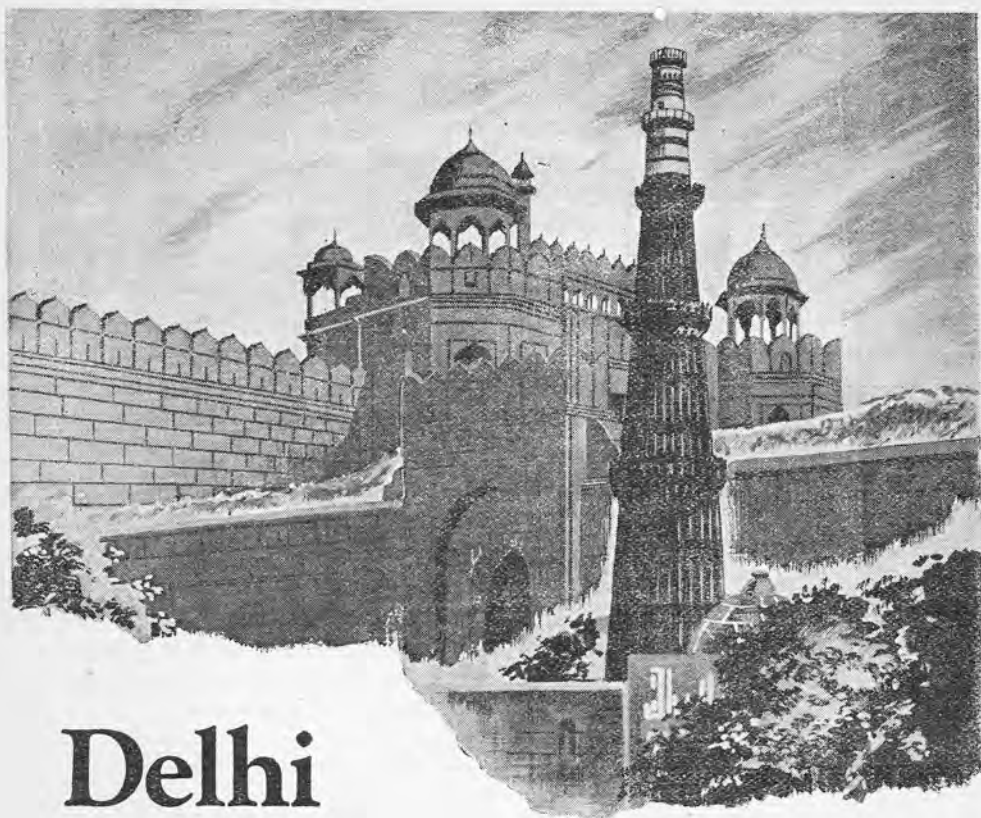
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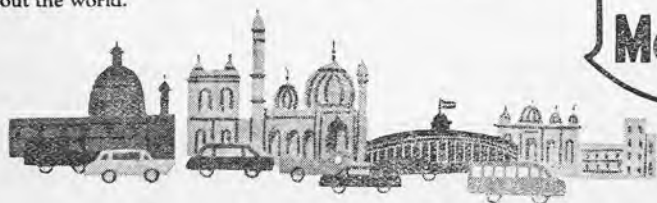
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Delhi

RICH in the history of two vividly different eras, Old and New Delhi provide a wonderful contrast between past and present. Moghul civilization is perpetuated in the splendour of the Kutub Minar, Jama Masjid and the Red Fort; while the Central Secretariat, Parliament House and Rashtrapati Bhavan reflect the graceful simplicity of modern architecture.

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variety

theatre

cinema

dance

Notes from Paris

THE only avant garde plays to be seen at the moment are two works by Eugene Ionesco. Ionesco, along with Samuel Beckett and Arthur Adamov, is the idol of the exponents of a young theatre who seem hardly to realise that this young theatre has, for the most part, been repeating the most outmoded devices of thirty years ago. The essence of Ionesco's work, as of Beckett's (*Waiting for Godot*) is an attempt to destroy language and to call reality into question. The friends of Tristan Tzara, Breton and Desnos long ago familiarized us with this sort of thing—and with far more talent.

The same can be said for the cinema, where an attempt has been made to boost Alexandre Astruc's *Bad Company*. This film, which was presented at the Venice Festival, was very justly criticised by the Italian press, which pointed out its outmoded aestheticism, slowness and artificiality, the whole borrowed from the heyday of realism and the style of M. Jean Cocteau. Is it not significant that some people still regard as the outpost of pro-

gress an art that was consecrated by the French Academy when the latter admitted to membership on October 20th the former *enfant terrible* of post-World War I literature? M. Cocteau's entrance into the Academy reveals strikingly that the great adventure in which he invited the youth of the period to join him was merely a succession of graceful pirouettes. Behind the charming mask of the poet can be seen the great fashion-designer of Parisian wit. He has proved to be not a new Rimbaud nor another Apollinaire, but rather the companion of Paul Poiret, Mlle. Chanel and Schiaparelli.

On the literary scene, where all was quiet during the summer months, the usual fever that precedes the awarding of the great literary prizes has begun to mount. The race for fame and large printings is on in full force among publishers, authors and juries, though this rivalry does not always serve the cause of true literature.

The most singular phenomenon in this domain is the invasion of the field by women, inspired, no doubt, by the world-

wide (and, in my opinion, excessive) success of Mlle. Françoise Sagan's novel *Bonjour, Tristesse*.

To be sure, France has always had women writers of great talent. Since the death of Mme. Colette, we have had the rightly celebrated Simone de Beauvoir and Marguerite Yourcenar (author of the admirable *Memoirs of Adrian*), not to mention the extraordinary philosopher Simone Weil, who died during the war and whose posthumous works have been exerting great influence in circles concerned with religious and social problems.

But now a troop of young women has been overrunning the field, flooding it with novels both acidulous and cynical. The achievement of Louise de Vilmorin in *Madame de* and *Les Belles Amours*, exquisite and most artfully composed tales, has been imitated with lesser success by a number of young novelists. Perhaps the most typical of these novels is Nicole's *The Lions Are Loose*, which relates the adventures in Paris of a girl from the provinces who wants to live her own life. The work is a kind of handbook of libertinage, and though it is not without wit, it is hardly substantial.

There is much more force, originality and promise in the work of French-speaking writers from Morocco (Driss Chraïbi: *The Goats*) and Egypt (Albert Cossery: *The Beggars* and *The Proud*). These novelists like the young Algerian writers, Mohammed Dib and Mouloud Mammeri express passionately a revolt that they feel in their very depths. They depict not only their people's rebellion against poverty but their struggle to reconcile western civilisation with their origins. The rise of this new school of Arab writers indicates the permanent vitality of French literature.

More traditional, though without ceasing to be utterly sincere and very personal, is the autobiography of M. Michel Leiris. This intimate confession, published under

the odd title of *Stuff*, depicts the anxieties of a man confronted with daily living. Leiris, who was once a surrealist, talks about himself in order to get rid of this anguish so that he may learn how to live, and perhaps to die.

Valéry Larbaud's *Journal*, on the other hand, bears witness not to the presence of death but to a taste for life, to a refined and alert mind concerned with international culture that has been thoroughly assimilated and richly enjoyed. The 74-year-old Larbaud, who has been ill for many years, is perhaps the last of the great cosmopolitan writers and not merely the last survivor of the great generation of Gide, Claudel and Paul Valéry. This tireless reader (one of his last critical works was entitled *Reading, the Unpunished Vice*), who revealed and translated so many foreign works to the French public—has always been a model of discretion. It should not be forgotten that the author of *Barnabooth*, *Childish Things*, *Lovers Happy Lovers* and *Fermina Marquez* is one of the rarest spirits of our time. The journal of miscellanies part of which was written directly in English (Larbaud has also written in Spanish and Italian) that has just been published enables us to recapture Larbaud's tone, his irony and capacity for sympathy, his indulgent but disillusioned understanding of human beings. Here, indeed, is a truly great writer, one who should put to shame the host of charlatans now flitting about the Literary Marketplace.

RENE TAVERNIER

The Edinburgh Festival

IN puritanical Edinburgh the idea of a 'festival' may seem odd: a festival is an occasion for gaiety and the Scots are a dour race! But a visitor to the Edinburgh Festival of Arts quickly realises that these

are mere conventional notions, and superficial. He discovers that the Scots are a friendly and hospitable people, and furthermore, that a festival does not have to be 'gay' to be enjoyable. There is, I am told, a proverbial phrase in Italy which speaks of Scottish hospitality (*ospitalita scozzese*). It did not take me long in Scotland to be convinced that this Mediterranean saying holds more truth than all the stories about the Scots current south of the Tweed.

The friendliness of the Scot is mixed with a certain seriousness, which is reflected in the character of Edinburgh as a whole. It is a quiet and elegant city, has no night life or any of the gaudy attractions of some other Western cities. This quiet seriousness is also a feature of the Festival. It is devoted purely to culture and there is no glitter or merriment accompanying it. And the thousands who come from all parts of the world seem to like it that way. In the nine years since the first Festival it has grown into probably the biggest occasion of its kind anywhere. Over eighty thousand people from some fifty countries are believed to have attended the Festival this year. It should reassure those who think that there has been a lowering of public taste for the arts to know that the serious cultural pleasures of Edinburgh can attract so many from so far afield.

The artists too—the best of them—come from all parts of the world. Whole orchestras came this year from Berlin, New York, the Netherlands, Italy, London and Wales as well as Scotland itself. There were theatrical and ballet companies from London, Denmark, France and Japan. The film festival had entries from thirty-eight nations including India, China, Ceylon, Malaya and Japan, to mention the Asian countries, Soviet Russia and several Eastern European countries, as well as a few new entrants to the film world like Morocco, the Gold Coast and Israel. I do

not think any other festival brings together artists and visitors from so many countries. And it was refreshing to see them taking part in it with a complete lack of racial or political self-consciousness.

I shall discuss in this article only two of the main attractions at the Festival: the Azuma Kabuki dancers from Japan and the play by Thornton Wilder, *A Life in the Sun*.

The Kabuki dancers came to Edinburgh (and afterwards to the London Covent Garden) with more advance publicity than any other group of artists. They had already been a tremendous success in New York and besides the occasion had the uniqueness of being the first introduction to Western audiences of this three-hundred-year-old traditional art of Japan.

But no amount of knowledge about the history and the conventions of this art that might have been picked up earlier from the newspapers could have been sufficient preparation for the audiences at the Empire Theatre to meet something so strange and remote. The first reaction of most people must have been as if they had seen an art form from another planet. This was my own reaction although I was already familiar with various other dances of the Orient. But in some mysterious way, after the first few minutes I found myself being slowly absorbed into this fantastic world—it was as if I was beginning to see everything natural on a supernatural plane.

To the uninitiated, the primary appeal is visual, although music plays an important part. (Kabuki literally means 'Song and dance skill.') Although the rarest sounds come from the accompanying bamboo flute, the drums and the three-stringed guitar-like samisen, it is by their colour and movement that the dances will be

remembered. The costumes themselves, in rich heavy silks and massive brocades, are an important aid to the visual glory of the Kabuki; though the loose robes tend to hide some of the physical grace of the dancers. But most of the subtlety and the refinement of acting, as in the Indian Kathakali, are to be noticed in the facial expressions and the delicate and expressive movements of the hands.

The traditional Kabuki, like Kathakali, consists of whole plays; these would be difficult to appreciate without some knowledge of the language. But the Azuma Kabuki that came to Edinburgh consisted not of complete plays, but of short mimed pieces and dance interludes. These pieces were not specially devised for the purpose of being taken abroad, but were chosen from different schools now current in Japan. They were a representative selection from the repertoire of the Azuma Company, which, though firmly grounded in the classical tradition, has introduced original elements and developed a style of its own. The Azuma is run by Miss Tokuho Azuma, who is the daughter of the late Uzaemon XV, one of the most famous dancer actors of his day and a member of a family which traces its beginnings to the early days of the Kabuki.

The two most spectacular and possibly the most popular pieces were the 'Dance of the Lion,' and the 'Dance of the Spider.' Both these are conventional dances. There are no lions in Japan, but in Kabuki the lion represents the duality of human emotions: 'calm among the peonies, ferocious when teased by butterflies.' The Spider's is a symbolic dance, the insect representing Evil. This dance is performed by Masaya Fujima. He is the demon who wants to spread his web over all Japan. By some secret stage device the complicated web shoots from his hand and settles over everything. One notices that the dancer's eyes never blink as he main-

tains his fierce countenance throughout the dance.

THE Wilder play was perhaps even more talked about than the Kabuki. This play was specially commissioned for the Edinburgh Festival. As in some of his previous works, Wilder has drawn his inspiration for *A Life in the Sun* from classical sources. The play has its origins in Euripides' *Alcestis*. When Admetus, King of Thessaly, was mortally ill, a message came from Apollo saying that he would live if someone volunteered to die in his stead. His wife Alcestis assumed the sacrifice and died. This is the basis of the play, but Wilder has added other elements to it, giving it a philosophical aspect. While critics complained about the vagueness of its philosophy, Wilder himself admitted there were different levels to the play and that he might later discover new and perhaps deeper levels.

In a sense the production of the play was more significant than its theme. The idea for the play first came to the author when he saw at the 1954 Festival the Old Vic's production of *Macbeth* on the Elizabethan 'apron stage'. The dramatic possibilities he then saw in such a stage (where the audience sits in a horse-shoe formation around the players) inspired him to write the new play specifically for it. *A Life in the Sun* was thus a serious experiment in this traditional theatre technique which now seems to be having a revival, and the results were keenly watched by producers and theatre enthusiasts. Even the critics who attacked the play conceded that the production was excellent. And many of them felt that the apron stage had a great deal to do with the impressiveness of the production.

Recent experiments on the open stage in America and in England and the discus-

sions on the subject among producers and theatre architects have brought out the view, which seems to be widely held, that for plays of a classical nature, Shakespeare and the Greek classics, for instance—in general for plays that do not require naturalistic presentation, the apron stage has distinct advantages over the 'picture-frame' stage. Apart from the greater intimacy that it creates between the players and the audience—in the manner of the old 'community theatre'—the open stage puts the actor in relief and gives him a kind of presence that is seldom achieved on the enclosed stage.

In general it is noticed that the most ardent advocates of the open stage are the anti-realists, who believe that drama has to be liberated from the naturalistic detail beneath which it is now being smothered. They feel that just as the imagination itself is abstract and limitless, the stage too ought to be limitless, not enclosed, and if possible, even bare. Then the imagination is allowed greater play, whether it is the playwright's imagination, or the spectator's or the player's.

An interesting fact that emerges from the recent discussions is the belief of a large number of producers that the open stage is likely to be a powerful influence on the art of playwriting. It is felt that as the number of plays suitable for the open stage is comparatively small, theatre directors will be compelled to seek and encourage authors to write for these new stages and thus a new form of drama may be born.

Whether the present interest in the stage is the beginning of a new trend, whether it means a genuine revolt against illusion, as Mr. Tyrone Guthrie, one of the pioneers of open staging in England and in Canada, has put it, or only a passing fashion, no one at present can say with assurance.

A. M. ABRAHAM

Calcutta Letter

WITH no intention of flattering, a literary enthusiast is said to have told Sarat Chandra Chatterjee that while one often failed to understand Tagore, there was never any doubt about the meaning of Sarat Chandra's writings. The novelist replied, 'No wonder, since I write for the likes of you whereas he writes for me and the likes of me.' And yet, at a drawing room discussion recently, when a question was raised about Tagore's contribution to Bengali culture, it was admitted that he above all, created and improved Bengal's literary taste. Because of his writing, more people in Bengal are culture-conscious than would otherwise have been the case. The cult of Tagore (whose influence ranges from home furnishing to social attitudes) with its feet firm on the soil of Bengal's villages, breathes the international atmosphere of sophistication.

But if literary aspirants of the post First World War era acknowledged Tagore as a model, others found him an obstacle to the acceptance of their idea. And after the frenzied debates and freakish outpourings of these lesser geniuses, the attitude to Tagore has become stabilised. He is today seen in proper perspective by those who once tried to revolt against his comprehensive visions. In their own way, of course, the later contributions of these rebels of the past to Bengali literature paved the way for the achievements of the post-Tagorean period which is yet to take any discernible form or grandeur.

Today, while the creative and critical tide runs high, talent and taste, except perhaps in poetry and journalism, have not made any advances in such fields as drama, music, painting, fiction and the cinema. Yet, enterprise is not lacking. In fact, a future historian of this decade may not be out of sympathy with it even if he does not credit

us with much tangible achievement. Being enterprising, we will be redeemed.

Recent experiment has shown that if writers of reasonably good poetry are brought together, even in Calcutta and suburbs alone, and recite their own poems, one apiece, they could hold the field for ten hours. Their listeners would clamour for more. If poets with vision are lacking, there are plenty with a will to express feeling in words and capable of conscious artistry in their craft. Big wonders through small utterances—the Chinese touch—is in great vogue, and no poet worth his salt will unblushingly confess unacquaintance with Eliot, Rimbaud, Rilke and Baudelaire. Quite a few poetry periodicals are being enthusiastically edited and sold, literary journals regularly publish poetry, and not as tail pieces either. There is no dearth of handsome anthologies of modern verse and translations. Among the veterans of the time the late Jibananda Das grew up absorbing the influence of Tagore and developing into a poet of tragic romanticism. Sudhindranath Dutt introduced a phonetic grandeur in his poetry from Sanskrit and Latin. Premendra Mitra and Budhadev Bose are remembered for the lyricism and explosiveness of their contributions. Amiya Chakravorthy who lives in America conveys to us from time to time his appreciation of life as it is lived there. Samar Sen made a brief but notable journey through urban boredom and agony. Sanjoy Bhattacharya indulges in humour of an orthodox brand. He sees woman through the eyes of Vaishnava poets.

Little reviews have played a big part in widening Bengal's cultural horizons. The admirers of Tagore during his later career contributed mainly to a journal named *Sabuj Patra* which used to contain valuable studies in literary criticism. The younger writers who found Tagore sentimental rallied round *Kollol* which was the only protagonist of *avant-gardeism* in Bengali litera-

ture. There were also a host of other magazines, with no commercial aims (or achievements!) at least five of which attained a high standard.

In the field of drama though we are proud of the fact that the professional Indian theatre functions today only in Calcutta, the writing of plays in recent years has not scored significantly. Hack writers often try to appeal to middle class taste and succeed but the lack of leadership and a sense of direction remains a problem. To the enterprising amateurs, Tagore is still a principal stock in trade or Shakespeare, Shaw, Ibsen and at times Christopher Fry. The fantasy of some of Tagore's dance dramas still command an audience. In the absence of new writing for the stage attempts are sometimes made to dramatise novels and short stories of Tagore, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee and even a few contemporary writers but on the whole drama is a sparsely cultivated field.

Unlike other parts of India, Bengal has no tradition of music in the classical sense of the term, even though some eminent exponents of Indian music today are Bengalis. On the other hand, poetry and music have always gone hand in hand. From the folk-singers—the Bauls—who are also craftsmen of letters—to Kirtan, Bhatiali and Ram Prosad's songs, the predominant character of Bengali music is mystical and folkish. It was Tagore who first consciously experimented with different schools of music and evolved his own which is both traditional and novel. Since Tagore, Bengali music has achieved nothing. In the meantime, at night-long sessions of the annual classical music conferences held every winter, the unlucky multitudes squat on the footpath to hear their favourites. And these same multitudes patronise variety entertainments organised in the name of charities, in which the programme consists of a weird assortment of hybrid tunes interpolated with comic skits.

This review would not be complete without a few words on the Film and on the rather unorthodox subject of book publishing. In the history of Indian cinema the role of Bengal will be appreciatively mentioned. Not till recently was it clear what a few stray amateurs with good taste and judgement could do in this field. A filmic rendering of a minor Bengali classic entitled *Pather Panchali* by the late Bibhutibhusan Banerjee currently being seen here will rank high among the masterpieces of world cinema. Inspired by De Sica's neo-realistic films and the company of Jean Renoir (when Renoir came here to film *The River*, the *Pather Panchali* artistes associated themselves with him) this film creates almost a new norm for the Indian cinema. It was financed by the West Bengal Government and directed by Satyajit Roy who is primarily a book-cover designer of great originality. One of the principal book-publishers of Calcutta, the Signet Press, has brought about a revolution in the design and sale of books. Satyajit Roy's obvious talent helped it to become a success.

SAILESH KUMAR ROY

The Penetrating Eye

MISS Marie Seton's Film Seminar in Bombay was the first of several that she is to conduct throughout the country, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. The Seminar comprised seven incisive lectures, and Miss Seton's well chosen words, clear cut phrases and crisp analyses acted both as a spur and a challenge towards less woolly film appreciation.

The term 'film appreciation', though much used is not fully understood here. Miss Seton explained how one can develop it by studying various aspects of the cinema—its history, the lives of pioneering directors, different film techniques, and now the

special social and political implications of films of various countries. This last, in her opinion, seems to be the basis of film appreciation in Italy, where in spite of so many innovations, new methods and techniques are given secondary importance.

Today, the cinema in its finest form no longer has one simple function—to entertain the masses. A film can not only tell a story, but carry a message, point a moral, open vast new horizons in the audio-visual field. A film can be art. Just as books, music and paintings from other lands move and haunt us, so too films—however strongly representative of the countries in which they were made—possess a powerful universal appeal, because art is universal. Many of the extracts from films shown by Miss Seton during the Seminar, though not meant to be cosmopolitan, had some special bearing on Indian interests and problems, because they possessed this powerful appeal.

Chaplin's *The Refugee* and Pabst's *Kameradschaft* are two such films. *The Refugee* was made in 1917, when panic stricken families were fleeing from Russia and Poland. The luckier ones travelled steerage to the United States, and this is what Chaplin portrayed as only he could. Comic, ludicrous, yet with tragic undertones, the plight of Chaplin's 'little man' arouses tears and laughter—reactions common to every human being. *Kameradschaft*, one of the finest pre-Hitler German films, showed how deep-rooted Franco-German animosities were overcome in the face of a mining disaster. Linguistic fanatics in India might pick up a few pointers from that one.

Miss Seton showed two extracts from *Children of Hiroshima*, a recent Japanese film. Her opinion that it is a great film must be echoed by all who see even these small extracts. Gentle and natural—excellent camera work, direction and acting contributed to this—the film also impressed by

its complete absence of hysteria and bitterness. *Children of Hiroshima's* dominant feeling was hope, with touches of quiet humour.

A study of the modern Japanese cinema would benefit our producers greatly. Not only has it incorporated the technical perfection of Hollywood with traditional themes and atmosphere, it has managed to keep Japanese films authentically Japanese. Yet they possess that magic universal appeal of great art—even without understanding a word, we can still be moved deeply.

Miss Seton devoted much of the time at her disposal to Eisenstein. Although a major figure in the history of the cinema, Eisenstein made comparatively few films. Each of his films, however, was an experiment in technique and subject, and must rank with such pioneering efforts as *Birth of a Nation*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Intolerance*. Miss Seton impressed on us that Eisenstein was not interested in making the 'perfect film', but in taking forward steps towards his conception of cinema becoming the synthesis of all arts—literature, painting, drama and music. In his books *Film Sense* and *Film Form*, he analysed his work and they rank among the finest technical books ever written on cinematography.

Miss Seton showed the brutal, stark Odessa Stairs scene from Eisenstein's famous *Battleship Potemkin*. The impact of this film when first shown was tremendous. It has lost none of its powerful effect even today, and considering that *Potemkin* was made in 1925, Eisenstein's dramatic and unique style of cross-editing is well nigh miraculous. One wonders what the Russian post-revolutionary school of directors would have done with themes based on Jalianwala Bagh or the Dandi salt march.

The extract from Eisenstein's *October* had the same gripping, eloquent quality. Like Greek tragedies, it inspired pity and

terror. We also saw the Cream Separator scene from *The General Line*, and the magnificent, richly-detailed Coronation scene from *Ivan the Terrible*. The extracts not only aroused our admiration, but filled us with regret that we could not see each film in its entirety. There is no doubt that each, in its own way, has become a film classic.

It was good—and surprising—news that our government has bought Miss Seton's film *Time in the Sun* based on Eisenstein's incomplete project *Que Viva Mexico*. Miss Seton mentioned later in a personal interview that various other films have been purchased, among them *Storm over Asia* and *Brief Encounter*. This augurs well for Indian film societies, who have been lately reduced to a state of despair.

Que Viva Mexico seems to have had a strange history. Although Eisenstein shot 200,000 feet of film for it in Mexico as well as directed, the scheme was financed by Upton Sinclair. Subsequently, it was neither edited nor finished by Eisenstein. We can only conjecture on the masterpiece that this might have been, for his concept of the film was, as usual, absolutely new and challenging. With the help of scenes shot throughout the country—in its forests and on its rivers, beside ancient Mayan temples and carvings, in Spanish-type haciendas where descendants of Aztec warriors worked as peons, and in busy towns, Eisenstein hoped to depict the history of Mexico from its earliest times. Through a scene showing three peons being put to death by the Spanish owner of a large hacienda by being trampled on by galloping horses, Eisenstein perhaps intended to sum up the tyranny of foreign rule, and how the people of the country withstood and finally overthrew it. He also skilfully chose material to convey the present-day way of life in Mexico—a strange mixture of Christian tradition generously salted with pre-Colombian customs and superstitions.

MISS Seton's version is, as she readily states, but a skeleton of the original undertaking—and though not exactly a skeleton in one piece, a vigorous and lively one all the same. *Time in the Sun* is worth seeing and studying—it blazes a trail for the treatment of both Indian documentaries and fiction films.

Miss Seton's talk on film societies was the first of its kind ever delivered in India. The first film society was organised in London, and designed to present art films to a selected audience. Its founders included well known literary critics like Jack Isaacs. Film Societies are now tremendously popular in the U. K. and are sponsored throughout England and Scotland by Municipal co-operative bodies, through whom films are shown either at the Town Hall or large theatre, and are not censored. Thus a high standard of entertainment is maintained, and liberal and intelligent points of view encouraged. Interesting discussions often follow film showings.

Miss Seton visited Holland, France and Italy with the express purpose of studying the film society movement in those countries. She found that in France alone there are 150 societies sponsored by the Ministry of Education, besides many private ones. In Italy, societies are sponsored by three large federations; membership is huge, and art films are shown in even remote mountain villages. The Cine Clubs meet regularly on Sunday mornings, and many people travel three to four hours to attend a showing. Dutch Film Societies were equally numerous and enthusiastic, though in America this was not the case. Miss Seton found that the war and post-war years acted as powerful stimuli towards the increase of film societies in European countries.

The extracts from art films as well as the cartoon films shown by Miss Seton, ranged from the experimental to near-documentaries and were made in various countries.

Most striking was the Italian *Drama of Christ*, based on Giotto's famous frescoes, the technique of which could be adapted for using our sculpture and painting towards production of beautiful and instructive films.

Among the cartoons, *Fiddle-dee-dee* made a strong impression by its colour and design interpretations of the warm, lively violin music obviously played by a virtuoso. The same principle was applied in Disney's 'Fantasia', particularly in the Bach fugue. An interesting film that could be termed a cartoon-art film was Berthold Bartosch's *L'Idee*, a Franco-German work based on the anti-war wood cuts of Franz Nazreel, and painstakingly made with black and white cutouts. The animation of the cutouts and Honegger's musical score were quite remarkable.

Miss Seton has seen many productions of our Films Division, and she quite rightly inferred that our documentaries have been strongly influenced by the British school. Obviously, the reason for this is that we hardly get a chance of seeing documentary or other films made in countries other than England and the United States.

MISS Seton showed brief extracts from pioneering documentaries made by Cavalcanti, John Crierson, Harry Watt, Edger Anstey and Victor Turin—historic names in the documentary film field. We also saw part of a pleasingly natural, technically excellent Australian film—*Back of Beyond*, and the igloo-building scene from Flaherty's fine *Nanook of the North*. Sensitive, simple and appealing, *Nanook* was the joint effort of Mr. and Mrs. Flaherty; the scene shown employed no dialogue, and unobtrusive background music.

During my interview with Miss Seton, I could hardly help asking her opinion of Indian films. She replied that judging by

the few she has seen, she finds it difficult to understand why our producers try to go in for artificial extravaganzas with unreal themes, when there is such a choice of scenery, folk lore, tradition and stirring history to base films on. There has hardly been a single Indian film that presents the true face of India, or one of its thousand true faces. One hears glowing reports of the complete lack of pretentiousness and quiet reality of Satyajit Roy's *Pather Panchali*. Perhaps this film is the precursor of a renaissance in the Indian film industry.

Miss Seton very kindly wrote a little message* to be used with this article, and added that she hoped that the scope and demand for film societies in India would be met, and receive government co-operation. For in our modern times, the penetrating eye of the camera which sees so much and tells so much, has made Cinema the finest medium of education, entertainment and inspiration yet devised by Man's ingenuity.

ARATI MUKERJI

* *The power of the cinema is so recognised that Bertrand Russell in his desire to spread the gospel of Survival through peace wrote and spoke the commentary for a trailer promoting the film Children of Hiroshima. This is one of the films from which I have brought an extract to India in an attempt to show what has and can be said in terms of film. The important function of the cinema and film criticism, is to reveal the culture pattern of different nations in the past, present and future. This can be done through story films, documentaries and even through the cartoon and puppet film.*

MARIE SETON

Shri 420

Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baaje

THESE two films are obviously meant for export. They should be thoroughly checked before they leave our ports. They incorporate certain common features of Indian prestige productions: an idiotic story, intolerable length and a message. In *Shri 420*, the story is actually about a likeable idiot. *Jhanak Jhanak* spends half its length in telling a tale of terpsichorean torment. Both the films carry their morals through patently aphoristic dialogue, of which there is quite a mouthful.

Raj Kapoor starts his film with an *Awara*-type adaptation of the early Chaplin. Suddenly it dawns on you that you have seen his celluloid tricks before. There is a little of Rene Clair's fast-motion mimic imagery, a little from De Sica's journalistic view of slums, great chunks of pathetic love-making hewn out of the later Chaplin along with sprinklings of Danny Kaye and Walter Slezak making faces in *The Inspector General*. This picture thus manages to present simultaneously the Platonic view of art and love. Exhausted by his capers, Raj, the hero, sings in the rain (there goes another plagiarism!) in the company of the heroine. For obvious reasons, he merely suggests a kiss under the umbrella.

The second part of the film presents a different Raj. The idiot turns smart crook *malgré lui*. You see some really restrained tragic acting here, and wonder why so much histrionic talent should be wasted over a grossly melodramatic treatment of Bombay's underworld. Nargis acts the angelic heroine with believable sweetness. She seems to have matured into an Indian prototype of Norma Shearer; her eyes and teeth are magnificent in close-up. The temptress is put over hysterically by Nadira, dressed like a sleek, cigarette-

holding Venus. The villain of the piece is a capitalist (Mr. K. A. Abbas's trademark as a script-writer) who involves Raj in a bogus town-planning scheme. A fantastic, but well-played out, denouement shows us the hero rising from the dead to hand over his mentor to the police. The police are played in the well-known Mack Sennett style, although their uniform is genuinely Indian.

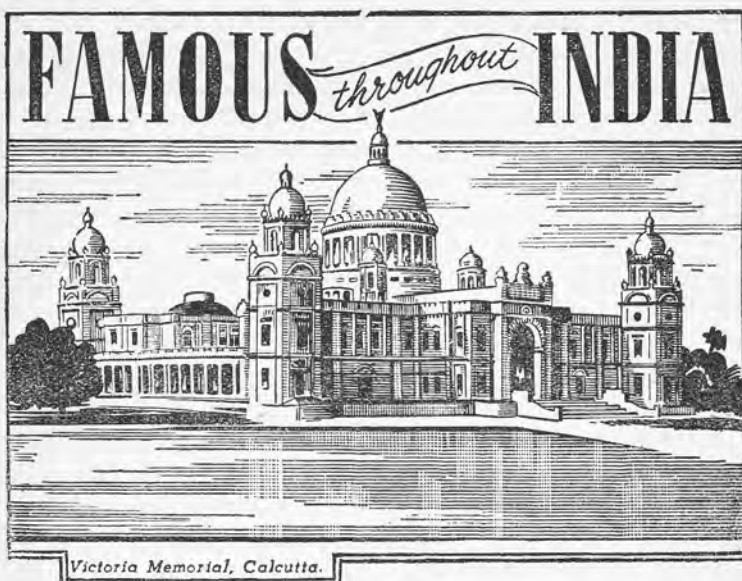
Jhanak Jhanak starts with a bang, and ends in another, bigger bang. After the first ten minutes of introductory dancing, Keshavrao Date, acting a bearded patriarch, ushers in a series of elaborate ballets devoted to mythological themes. A few of these ballets are staged across well-known beauty spots, thus enhancing the already predominant tourist appeal of this picture. The great Pudovkin experimented in filmic space and filmic time; V. Shantaram, director of *Jhanak Jhanak*, proves that Indians can do it too. His film shows a total lack of topographical or chronological perspective. In fact, while pretending to present a purified version of Indian culture, *Jhanak Jhanak* dispenses with the simplest laws of consistency.

To come back to the dancing. Both Gopi Krishan and Sandhya have acquitted themselves creditably—in fact, one wishes this were a straightforward documentary exploiting their verve and their youth. Instead, Sandhya is rigged out in all sorts of vulgar costumes (bless our censors!) and made to dance a Salome, while Gopi is literally painted blue for a pretty Radha-Krishna. Purists will complain of the hybrid composition of the dances, but they need not forget that, after all, this film portrays the Indian art of dancing no worse than Uday Shankar's *Kalpana*. (This is an inevitable comparison, if only in crudity of approach under the guise of popularising an esoteric cult.)

Recent Indian films have often provided much consolation on the side so significantly called 'behind the screen'. Radhu Karmakar's photography, for instance, gives *Shri 420* a texture and a tone that ring equally true in sun-lit exteriors and glossy interiors. M. R. Achrekar made some realistic sets that show a sense of dimensions in natural perspective. Planning seems to be so crazy in *Jhanak Jhanak*, however, that Shantaram does not bother to preserve any continuity in lighting while cutting from exterior long shot to studio close. Kanu Desai's decor in this film is the most erratic he has ever invented. (He was good enough under Vijay Bhat; why had he to introduce a spotted version of *Caligari* fittings in this film?) The way Shantaram clutters his sets with moth-eaten furniture is typical of his want of proportion.

Jhanak Jhanak has been trumped as the first Technicolour film to be made entirely by Indian hands. That this should be said with some pride after the Japanese had shocked Hollywood with their advances in the field of Eastman colour is surprising. A critic need not be concerned with how a film is made; after all are paid and gone home after the day's work, what remains is the significant image which speaks for itself. A few intelligent Indian film directors, like Bimal Roy or Vishram Bedekar, have proved that there is no excuse for compromises even in a film industry that is the fattest in Asia. If the Japanese can make films that match purity of content with fidelity of technique, there is no reason why we should stake our reputation on what is neither filmic nor Indian. As for the songs, the playbackers can inaugurate an era of their own; it is they that draw the audiences.

D. G. NADKARNI



Citizens of Calcutta are familiar with the **Victoria Memorial** as one of the leading land-marks of their fine city. They are also familiar with the name 'West End' when it comes to buying a fine watch.

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book reviews

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REASON, ROMANTICISM AND REVOLUTION By M. N. Roy. (Renaissance Publishers, Calcutta) 2 Volumes; pages 307-330. Rs. 10-8 and Rs. 12.

MN. ROY died on 25th January, 1954. He had been a leader of the nationalist movement in India during its anarchist phase. He left the country and went to Russia where he came to be a prominent member of the Communist International. Returning to India in 1930, he was arrested and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. An account of his life and reflections in jail is contained in the three volumes of his very readable *Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary*. After his release, he occupied himself till his death with propaganda for ideas on which he believed that a free society should be evolved. He founded and directed the Indian Renaissance Institute at Dehra Dun, and also edited a quarterly, *The Humanist Way*,

and a weekly, *The Radical Humanist*. His works include historical and sociological studies like *Materialism, Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*, and *The Russian Revolution*.

The present work is a comprehensive exposition of his philosophy, based on a survey of modern European thought and civilisation. The first volume covers the period from the Renaissance to the French Revolution. The second, published posthumously, deals with developments up to date. Together, they are of interest as a criticism of the Marxist ideology by an Indian intellectual who at one time was in the front ranks of the Communist *avant garde*.

The title of the book is tell-tale, and provides the key to the author's outlook, displaying its range as well as its limitations. Primarily, he is an individualist, a rationalist and a monist. According to him,

only the classical mechanical materialism can supply a firm foundation for monism; and monistic idealism like that of Spinoza or Hegel is only an inverted form of materialism. All other forms of modern idealism are tainted by dualism, and are objectionable as leading to religion, which for the author is only a synonym for irrationalism.

He interprets recent trends in European thought as a "philosophical reaction heralded by the Reformation, unwittingly helped by British empiricism, and finally ushered in by Rousseau," which reached its apotheosis in Schopenhauer, and has been carried on by Bergson and Sorel in Europe and William James and Dewey in America. He depicts Fascism and Communism as twins born of this drift towards irrationalism.

At the same time, he has little sympathy for Western democracy in its actual working. He discusses the origins of Liberalism and devotes a whole chapter to its fallacies. The Romanticist attitude as exemplified in Rousseau is presented by him as subjective, and essentially as a revolt against the objectivity of rationalism. It is revolutionary, as against rationalism which is determinist and evolutionary. Yet the author thinks that they can somehow be reconciled with each other. He says, "Romanticism tempered with reason, and rationalism enlivened by the romantic spirit of adventure, pave the road to successful revolutions."

Roy thinks that Marxism itself was an attempted synthesis between the two apparently antithetical views of life. He however suggests that Marx himself was not aware of the full implications of his philosophy, as a result of which it embodied fallacies which could only be explained (or explained away) by dogmatic interpretations and spurious interpolations. In particular, he insists that Marxism as

equated with economic determinism is untenable, and that ideas have a dynamic role in human history and cannot be treated as mere incidents of the economic *milieu*.

The author views the implications of modern science also with suspicion as leading to a kind of neo-mysticism. This type of thought, whether coming from scientists like Eddington or Jeans (he does not name them), or from "religious revivalists" like Sorokin, Berdyaev, or Maritain, favouring "a discriminating association with rationalism and scientific knowledge," is summarily dismissed by our author as a remedy worse than the disease. In the result, there is very little ground left for standing upon. In the vacuum he has created, the New Humanism which he proposes as the only way out sounds hollow and unconvincing.

Judged as criticism, the book exhibits inconsistencies and over-lapping. But its lacunae are more serious. It is strange that in a serious work claiming to put forward a synthetic philosophy there should be a complete black-out of Eastern thought and civilisation. About 500 names are listed in the Index, but barring half a dozen medieval Arab scholars, there is not a single Asian name, not even Gandhi or Tagore or Aurobindo.

Even as regards Western thought, the author shows little acquaintance with recent psychological investigations which have revolutionised all our conceptions of human nature and its workings. Nor is there any examination of the results of modern scientific advances in the field of physics or biology, apart from the adverse reference to the challenge offered to the old mechanistic cosmology by the new "ultra-empiricists." We are left with a thin doctrinaire rationalism not far removed from that of the eighteenth century French Enlightenment, coupled with a

plea for the preservation of moral values in a wholly secular world pictured on over simplified and out-of-date lines. It has all the pathos of a lone cry in the wilderness. But as a solution of world problems, it must be pronounced a failure.

K. GURU DUTT.

MORALS AND MEDICINE, by J. Fletcher. V. Gollancz Ltd., London 1955, 15s. Pp. XVII/243.

THIS is the first positive approach made by a clergyman to problems which no one in this century can bypass without meriting the charge of foolishness. Karl Menninger, a leading psychiatrist, prefaces the book with a sincere eulogy, and says Fletcher has "succeeded in formulating a philosophy for the practical guidance of the physician". We believe it is more than that, if philosophy means the totum of prescriptive values; but it is less than that, if philosophy is the totum of rules of the thumb for the professional physician and the patient. Whatever it be, it is an excellent and important book and, above all, a pioneer work.

The problems are of the kind that concern all of us unless we want to play the ostrich: the incurable patient's right to know the (medical) truth about his state, and the doctor's correlative duty to tell it; contraception, and birth-control in general; artificial insemination; sterilization; and euthanasia at the end, where it belongs.

The Rev. Fletcher is a radical on all counts: he believes the patient must have the truth and the doctor must tell it—the ethicist as conceived by Fletcher cannot get away with the pious lie. He believes that contraception must be practised, where human happiness would suffer without it. The Roman Catholic view has

been a laconic *non-licet* throughout, but Fletcher criticizes and disproves their moral as well as their theological justification; for the Testament tells us little about sexual morality, and nothing about the intentions of God or nature with reference to human procreation. Clarence Senior of Puerto Rico summed up the case when he said, "presumably, God gave men both sexual organs and intelligence. The latter should be used at least as often as the former" (pg. 99).

Apart from this, Fletcher's biological argument—novel in this context—is sound: from the waste in Nature in the pursuit of procreation one might just as rightly infer that she does *not* intend procreation and that the latter is comparatively accidental. But the moralist is satisfied with the obvious doctrine propounded by the author (held, though, by others including Bertrand Russell before him) that with contraception available parenthood has become a human responsibility: theologically put, what was in the hands of God formerly (it just couldn't be helped, and was therefore God's will,) has now been passed into the hands of man.

If Contraception is negative control, artificial insemination is its positive counterpart. The two kinds of insemination, A.I.H (through the husband's seed artificially grafted on the ovum), and A.I.D. (artificial insemination through a donor) have been viewed with very mixed thoughts of radical disparity. A.I.H. is declared permissible even by religious authorities, A.I.D. is frequently held and treated as adultery even by secular ones. The one impression that stands out for the lay reader is the amazing pedantry and the consequent unscrupulousness perpetrated by the Catholic moral theologian on all the issues: for instance the main objection of some of their fold against A.I.H. which is theoretically permissible in cases of physi-

cal obstruction (A.I.D. is always forbidden by them) is that the involvement of onanism is a grave sin *quales curae eorum!*

Sterilization ethically presupposes the individual's right to foreclose parenthood on considerations of health and happiness. Here, too, the Churches have objected with the "divine right" of parenthood; to Fletcher, the "divine right" of the child to be born free from disease and defect (pg. 143) is as important. He discusses sterilization for therapeutic, eugenic, and punitive reasons, and the trivial pedantry of theological taboo, couched in didactic and sophisticated terms makes us feel the opaque immorality of moral theology; also, the frequent admission of the "double effect" by church-authorities does not add to our reverence for its propounders. I think Fletcher is entirely right when he calls much of this theocratically sponsored attitude a "sophisticated version of primitive animism" (pg. 160)—a sequel to the primitive idea that nature is inexorable and must remain so.

The chapter on the choice of death when life has become a burden at once hopeless, unproductive, and demoralizing, is the best written in the whole work, and the most pathetic. Sacerdotal taboo—the notion that the end is not in our hands—has been virulent against all of it: the legal courts have been influenced to an amazing extent, and many legislators declare that euthanasia (and some of them, abortion when the mother's life is threatened) is murder. But Fletcher is an ethicist in the main, courageous and optimistic; he argues that when suffering becomes agony devoid of hope, it forfeits all its moral purpose: for then, matter and the body become rulers over the mind—the one state all ethics and all theology must forswear.

Apart from Roman Catholic Moral Theology, which has created a substantial literature on these problems—albeit litera-

ture which the secular moralist can hardly accept as binding—neither secular moral philosophy nor religious doctrine have done much in the line: Father Fletcher has given us an instrument.

SWAMI AGEHANANDA

LEAP THROUGH THE CURTAIN by George Mikes, Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 12s.6d.

"You just leap in the air, and stay there," said the famous Nijinsky, when he was questioned about his amazing *tours en air*.

ISTVAN Rabovsky and his wife, Nora Kovach, were ballet dancers who were admired throughout the Iron Curtain countries for the way that they too could leap in the air. And neither their fellow Hungarians nor the Free World expected them to "Leap through the Curtain," for they were the leading dancers of the Budapest Ballet. They had received scholarships to Leningrad and enjoyed tuition from Vaganova—revered instructress of such ballet "greats" as Ulanova and Danilova. Their engrossing story, told to and movingly written by George Mikes, ends with their breathless escape from the East to West Berlin.

Why did they run away? They were the pampered darlings of their metropolis. Their salaries were higher than those of Ministers. They owned a villa on the Bala-bile. They had not only received the Kosuth Prize (the Hungarian equivalent of the Stalin Prize), but were the youngest people to be so favoured. Yet, as early as 1950, during their first visit to Berlin, they seriously considered leaving everything behind and running away to the West Zone. For, as Istvan explains, even though they were not actually in prison, they lived in prison precincts, and at any time they could have been moved into a cell. The

great risk they took in escaping was worth while— "I used to live in the darkness," Istvan states, "and now I live in the light."

Both admit that "Freedom" is a relative concept. But in Hungary they lacked freedom in more senses than one. They were, in the field of ballet, imprisoned by provinciality. They hungered for wider competition, wider experience. Their exalted positions in Budapest gave them no real satisfaction.

Then, there was the grimmer aspect to their feeling of imprisonment. Less sensitive spirits would not have been bothered, but Istvan and Nora were haunted by recent memories. All over Hungary, the innocent had suffered and were still being persecuted. In 1951, large numbers of people were suddenly rounded up and brutally dragged away from their homes to unknown destinations. "The cold breath of horror" hung over Budapest.

Istvan and Nora felt it was better to forego their privileged existence in the midst of uncertainty and cruelty, and face uncertainty and hard work in the West. They might have to start all over again; they might be poor and unknown. But they would be free.

In 1944, they lived through gruesome happenings. Hungary was a battle ground between the Russians and the Germans; there was no food, no law, no regard for human life. But they were very young, and when some order was restored, they immediately went back to their dancing. Ulanova's visit in 1949 was a decisive event in their lives, for she was so impressed with Istvan's performance that she telephoned to Moscow about further training for him. Because Istvan refused to go without Nora, Ulanova watched Nora perform and deemed her fit to receive a scholarship too, to the finest ballet school in the Soviet Union.

They never looked back after that. Young as they were, their outstanding talent and industry fitted them for becoming the "premiere" dancers of the Budapest Ballet when they returned. They achieved fame and wealth, and one of Istvan's first actions was to provide the mother, who had neglected him in every way possible, with all the comforts of life.

The young couple's position as dancers has not been lowered in the West. It had been their lifelong dream to dance in the great capitals of Western Europe, particularly Paris. When they did, they were wholeheartedly acclaimed. At present, they are touring the United States and Canada with Anton Dolin's company.

ARATI MUKERJI

HISTORICAL INEVITABILITY. Auguste Comte Memorial Lecture No. I. By Isaiah Berlin, Oxford University Press, London. 6s.

The wise, thought Heraclitus, never take sides; they stand aside in their wisdom as spectators of human folly. With two centuries of enlightenment behind us this would appear a particularly inhuman philosophy. But, as the French say, *autre temps, autre folie*. Mr. Berlin's little book, *Historical Inevitability*, is an extremely salutary attempt to focus the sinister implications of a notion which has for us some of the fascination fate had for the ancients.

There is, according to Berlin, a cluster of views which hold that all explanations in terms of human intentions rest on a mixture of vanity and stubborn ignorance. This is followed in the next sentence by the weaker statement that these views make the assumption that the behaviour of men is in fact made what it is by factors *largely* beyond the control of individuals (*italics mine*). The purist might

attribute this discrepancy to careless writing. I am inclined to think that his subject engages the author so strongly, he does not observe the distinction between what may be *attributed* to a theory and what it might be regarded to *entail*, a failure particularly noticeable in his remarks on determinism. He rejects the classical dissolution of the problem of freedom by the British empiricists and goes so far as to put determinism ethically on a par with fatalism. It is a kind of prison from which there is no escape except in terms of a theory which posits an area of undetermined choice. Though no attempt is made to meet the objections that may be raised against it, this view occupies a key position in the book.

There is a group of very live philosophical issues whose relation to the traditional problem of freedom is still obscure. This relation can be investigated at a number of levels. Mr. Berlin's blanket rejection of determinism leads him to all but ignore this complexity. These issues do not concern the practising historian. But the student of social science is bogged down by a whole host of stultifying concepts and must sooner or later tackle them. Mr. Berlin's book will be of little assistance to him.

Of recent writers, Berlin is most under debt to two pioneers of the now visibly strong trend against apocalyptic social philosophy. Popper has advocated the view that the attempt at large-scale predictions of human affairs stems from an Aristotelian belief in essences, a view Mr. Berlin shares. But in his idea of what he calls humane studies he is far closer to Hayek than to Popper. Hayek calls the attempt to eliminate subjective and evaluative terms from historical and social studies 'scientism', a form of pseudo-scientific theory based on a slavish imitation of the methods of the natural sciences. For

him the deductive method provides the basis for the development of social science, and models constitute the prerequisite for the understanding of social phenomena; consequently economics is the paradigm for a group of disciplines still in their swaddling clothes.

While he agrees with Hayek that the categories of social science must remain subjective, and while insisting on the need for a terminology with a minimal element of ethical evaluation, he would refuse to endorse this Cartesian predilection for mathematical reasoning. He seems here in sympathy with the followers of Wittgenstein in assigning only a limited value to formal systems and models. Like them he upholds good sense and intelligence as ultimately more important than the devising of mechanical techniques to overcome the imperfections of ordinary language. This is not only reassuring when the specialists prefer their hot-house of exclusive vocabularies to the common air: it is a deeply sane vindication of the dignity of the traditional humanities.

Mr. Berlin's principal argument against the view that history obeys laws is that this is to accept a hypothesis which treats human beings on a level with inanimate objects. Now there are two very different types of argument which could be used to persuade us that the search for such laws is misguided. It might be said, as it often is, that no such laws have hitherto been discovered nor can we hope to discover such laws. To explain even a single major event in the past, so many complicated and only partially known factors have to be taken into account that we can never feel absolutely certain that a particular explanation which looks plausible today may not be upset by the discovery of further material later. A law only deserves to be called a law if it has predictive power.

The kind of historical laws which philosophers of history claim to have discovered, like Comte's law of three stages, are only a kind of Procrustean framework, obsessive patterns, to use Mr. Berlin's phrase, which though they may occasionally help us in opening up new fields of enquiry, have nothing law-like about them. Though Mr. Berlin would endorse this, he would not consider it adequate: he feels the need for a different kind of argument. He feels that he must go to the root of the trouble, and this for him is determinism. He says: If determinism were a valid theory of human behaviour, these distinctions (i.e. the distinction in history between what could be prevented and what could not and the distinction between appraisal words like good and bad, honest and opportunist, and the like) would be as inappropriate as the attribution of moral responsibility to the planetary system or the tissues of a living cell. He is at great pains to point out that ordinary language is completely at variance with determinism and could be 'adapted' to it only by a process of emasculation which we can scarcely visualise. The fact is, however, that ordinary language is slowly being influenced by the contraction of the area in which moral predicates are applied, though there is no reason to think that the categories of praise and blame can ever become pointless. Not even philosophers make moral judgments in a vacuum.

There are good reasons for dissatisfaction with the dissolutionist thesis, which claims to dissolve a problem by showing that there is no real dispute, when in fact it is all the time trying to show that the determinist is after all right. There is room, no doubt, for better formulations. Yet, in the end it cannot wholly succeed, as it never wholly succeeds, against the metaphysician. In the case of the free-will problem, the metaphysician's case shows a persistent vitality, which is no

mean justification for a fresh plea for an open attitude in philosophy.

YOGENDRA CHOPRA

MUGHAL MINIATURES, Text and Notes by Rai Krishnadasa. Introduction by Humayun Kabir, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, Rs. 8/12/-.

THE Lalit Kala Akademi is one of the institutions established at the instance of the Ministry of Education. 'Mughal Miniatures' is the first of a series of brochures to be published by it. Two more books, one on 'Mewar Painting' by Dr. Motichandra and another on the 'Krishna Legend in Pahari Painting', are to be published shortly in the same series.

'Mughal Miniatures' contains reproductions in colour of ten paintings. These range from the reign of Akbar to that of Shah Alam, and bring out well the various transformations which the school underwent through its three centuries of existence. It may be said that the style of this school changed remarkably little over the long period of three hundred years, when compared to the changes in other schools in India and in other parts of the world. Nevertheless changes there were, and they were distinctive of the spirit of the court which patronised them, and of the vigour or decline of the culture of which they formed a part.

Humayun reigned only a few days after he recovered the throne and brought back with him from his wanderings the two Persians, Mir Sayyid Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad, who were the first masters of the school, and Akbar must be deemed to be the real creator of Mughal painting. Akbar took up the matter, not only with imagination but with energy. Napoleon is reported to have said, "I hear there is no poetry in France. What is the Minister for Internal Affairs

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doing about it?" Akbar's attitude to all things including the arts was rather similar. The systematic way in which artists were brought together, trained, set tasks and made to complete them, has been described by Abul Fazl. It is not astonishing that the school of Mughal Painting had a flying start under Akbar, and that the production was immense and of a very high quality. Again, because of the directive influence of Akbar, the illustration of books was the most prominent feature of this period of Mughal painting, though portraiture was also practised.

Three illustrations from books made for Akbar have been reproduced in 'Mughal Painting', one from the famous dismembered Amir Hamza, and two from the Babur Namah in the National Museum at New Delhi. The example from the Hamza is characteristic of one facet of the style and spirit of the school of Akbar and undoubtedly deserves to be reproduced here; but why do two paintings from the same Babur Namah find place in this small collection? It cannot be denied that both the paintings from the Babur Namah are very beautiful and of a high technical skill, and that both depict scenes of great interest. Nevertheless if only three paintings are to be chosen from the vast mass of productions during Akbar's reign, one would have liked each to represent a distinctive facet of his school.

We then come to Jehangir's reign, which is represented by two pictures, one a falcon by Mansur and the other a camel fight from the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay. This was the time when Mughal painting reached its zenith, and one must confess it difficult to understand why these two paintings are chosen as characteristic of the paintings of the time of Jehangir, though they undoubtedly represent one important section of those paintings. We would have liked one of the famous court

scenes, with the amazing portraits of his nobles which make them known to us better than we know many of our own contemporaries, or one of Jehangir's hunting scenes.

From the reign of Shah Jehan who was more interested in architecture than in miniatures, the emperor's shift of interest is reflected not merely in the lower technical quality of the pictures of his reign, but in generally poorer artistic value. Shah Jehan gets three paintings. The last two paintings are from the reigns of the Later Mughals, one from the first and the other from the third quarter of the eighteenth century. These are good and characteristic.

The short general introduction to the paintings and the descriptions of the individual plates are adequate, but they contain a number of loose statements which should not be passed unchallenged. For instance it is stated that Behzad brought about 'a synthesis in Persian painting'. If the word synthesis is given its ordinary meaning the statement is not correct or even intelligible. Then it is stated 'It is, however, certain that till the time of Humayun (1530-1556) the Mughal Court had no school of Painting'. Since the Mughal dynasty started only four years before with the capture of Delhi by Babur, this statement, though literally true, is misleading. Referring to the pupils of Humayun's chief artists, Mir Sayyid Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad, Rai Krishnadasa writes that they 'soon mastered the finesse and technical excellence of Persian painting, both of *line* and varied lovely colour'. Perhaps by finesse, fineness is meant and why is *line* in italics? Is some technical jargon of the art critic being used, not understandable by the common reader? If the latter is the explanation, then the answer is that the introduction is meant for the common reader. Again, it is said

that the 'arabesque of Persian art resolved itself into a *line* of different quality and tempo'. Those who know the difference between Persian painting and Mughal painting, and for whom this introduction would therefore be unnecessary, may perhaps follow what the writer means, but others will find it difficult to understand how an 'arabesque' can resolve itself into a '*line*', and how any line can have a 'tempo', which is merely a technical word in music meaning time.

Writers on art are inclined to use this kind of language, which is not only loose, but if the meaning of the words used is closely examined, unintelligible. It is something to be avoided particularly in a short introduction of this kind intended for the general reader. This type of looseness and even inaccuracy is to be found in the comments on the individual pictures also. Thus on the plate from the Hamza it is stated, 'Akbar loved the Hamza stories so much that he recounted them in his palace like a professional story teller'. If this is anything more than high imagery, the author will find it difficult to quote authority for a statement of something so out of keeping with Akbar's character.

So much for the choice of the pictures and the commentary, but in a book of art the technical reproduction is at least as important as the choosing of the pictures, and probably much more important than written descriptions on them. In this respect 'Moghul Miniatures' is excellent. The high quality of the plates appears as well in the reproduction of the slightly damaged and sober coloured picture of the Hamza as in the brilliant and jewel like picture from the Babur Namah.

The printing too is in keeping with the standard of the reproductions. It is, however, a matter of regret that the reverse of the title page should have been devoted to

advertising this series of brochures, and the names of the painters and the colour block makers and the price of the brochure should have been given an ugly prominence on the same page. But these are

small matters, and the Lalit Kala Akademi is to be congratulated on this production, and we look forward to the further brochures promised in this series.

SAIF TYABJI

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CORRESPONDENCE

To The Editor, QUEST.

Sir,

I have read Mr. Subbiah's reply to my article with pleasure and interest. He has found my account of brahmin-non-brahmin relations 'inadequate and therefore incorrect'; would it surprise him to know that I am in substantial agreement with what he has to say on the subject? If my account was inadequate it was because brahmin-non-brahmin relations were not really the main theme of my article; I dealt with them only in so far as they are among the root-causes of the hold which parties like the D.K. and the D.M.K. have obtained over a good number of people in Tamil Nad. I agree with Mr. Subbiah that these parties are only the symptoms of a deep-rooted disease, and that it is dangerous to suppress the symptoms for then you will not be able to diagnose the malady. My point is that there is no *necessary* connection between a hatred of brahminism and, for instance, agitation against the alleged 'exploitation by the North'. Is it not possible for one to be bitterly opposed to caste-distinctions without clamouring for separation from the Indian Union?

I must confess I am somewhat surprised to find that the major cause of conflict in Tamil Nad according to Mr. Subbiah, is 'hostility to Tamil'. To his remarks on this subject, my reply is threefold. First, it was not my intention to suggest that devotion to one's language is bad. I admire Sanskritised Tamil as little as Mr. Subbiah does; I am aware that Tamil does not stand in need of extensive borrowings from Sanskrit. What I had in mind when I used the word 'stilted' is the attempt made now and then by members and sympathisers of the D.K. and the D.M.K. to eschew even common words which have a long history in Tamil, merely because they

are of Sanskrit origin. Secondly, I should have thought that hostility to Tamil, if it exists, would be the effect and not the cause of a conflict between the brahmins and the non-brahmins. If, as Mr. Subbiah suggests—and I should be glad to think that he is right—the theory of the brahmins being the descendants of Aryan immigrants is anthropologically untenable, then are we to imagine that the brahmins (Tamil-speaking natives of South India) *first* conceived a hostility to Tamil, and then invented a race-theory to justify it? Thirdly, I should like to ask: does this hostility in fact exist? I am not concerned to dispute that it existed in the past but only to ask whether it exists today. I might mention the names of Subramanya Bharati, Kalki, Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer and ever so many others. However, citing names is not really to the point; and Mr. Subbiah will doubtless contend that they are covered by his generous footnote (f.n. 4 to p. 44). What I should like to assert most emphatically is that the pride in Tamil is not confined to any class or community.

I invite Mr. Subbiah to consider all the writers young and old, known and obscure, who are flooding the numerous Tamil periodicals today with articles, stories and poems, good, bad and indifferent; are there not literally hundreds of brahmins handling Tamil with pride? Brahmins have been and are guilty of many sins not the least of which is spiritual arrogance; it is odd that Mr. Subbiah should find it necessary to bring forward against them not these, but the weakest of charges—hostility to Tamil. The devotion of the Tamil brahmins of today to their mother-tongue (I am not talking of the past) is in fact their one redeeming virtue; it is the one bond which binds brahmin and non-brahmin together.

With the last five or six paragraphs of Mr. Subbiah's article I am in almost complete agreement. I would make only one

qualification. The brahmins must certainly undergo a change of heart; but that is important mainly from their own point of view: they should change if their welfare is to be ensured. But the non-brahmins need not wait for this to happen in order to reject the D.K. and D.M.K. The rejection would be in their own interest. About the present or the future of the brahmins, I am not deeply worried; whatever may happen, they will have only themselves to blame or thank. But I am worried about the future of Tamil Nad. Not the brahmins but non-brahmins must be saved from the D.K. and the D.M.K. What some of the ideas of these parties involve, though this may not always be explicit, is a repudiation of the concept of India as one country. It is possible that the race-theory and the identification of brahmins with the Aryans from the North were the work of brahmins; but to allow oneself to be influenced by this, and to let one's resentment at the brahmins' claim of superiority lead one to reject the whole of the Northern heritage, which surely belongs as much to the South as to the North—surely this is not worthy of an intelligent mature people. I must regret that Mr. Subbiah, while making his own points with force and clarity, has not clearly indicated the pernicious nature of the ideas of the D.K. and the D.M.K.

Mr. Nedumaran's letter is a familiar mixture of heroics and irrelevance. I have not tried hard to *prove* that the movement does not have an impressive membership, but have merely remarked that the strength of the movement is not to be judged by its membership. If it is true that the D.M.K. has over a lakh of members, so much the worse for Tamil Nad. I am glad to know that the D.M.K. does not believe in a pure Dravidian race. That was not the impression I gained from a perusal of the D.M.K.'s pamphlets and booklets. If indeed the race-theory has

been disowned, that is an important point gained.

I regret I am unable to extend my impartiality to cover the D.K. and the D.M.K. I must reiterate my firm conviction that these parties render only disservice to the non-brahmins. Mr. Nedumaran wants to know why I have not given any concrete explanation of my views. It was my fond belief that that was exactly what I had taken up five pages of *QUEST* in doing. As for my 'assuming the role of a dictator,' I assure Mr. Nedumaran that nothing was farther from my intention: I merely expressed my belief that the movement for separation, if it becomes anything like an insurrection, will be easily put down. Whether this be right or wrong, I do not wish to discuss the terrible possibility any further. Only the insane could wish for such a trial of strength. *Absit omen* to the people of Tamil Nad.

T. R. RAMIAH.

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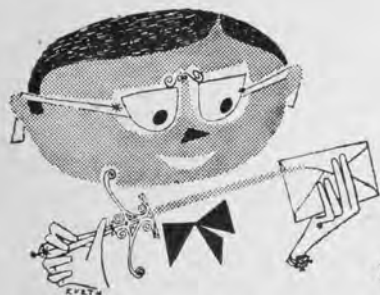
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