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a bi-monthly of arts and ideas

edited by: NICK EZEKIEL

august-september 56 vol. II no. I

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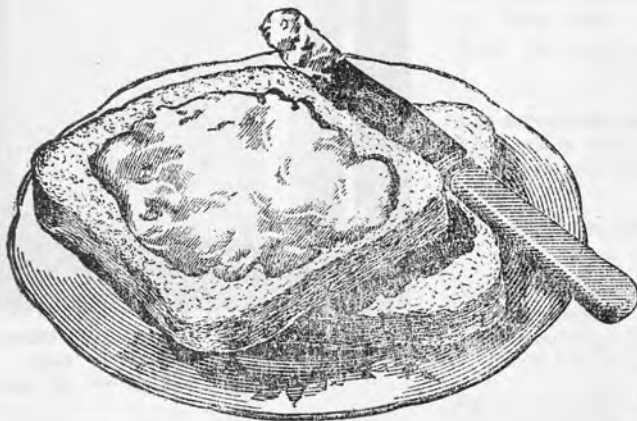
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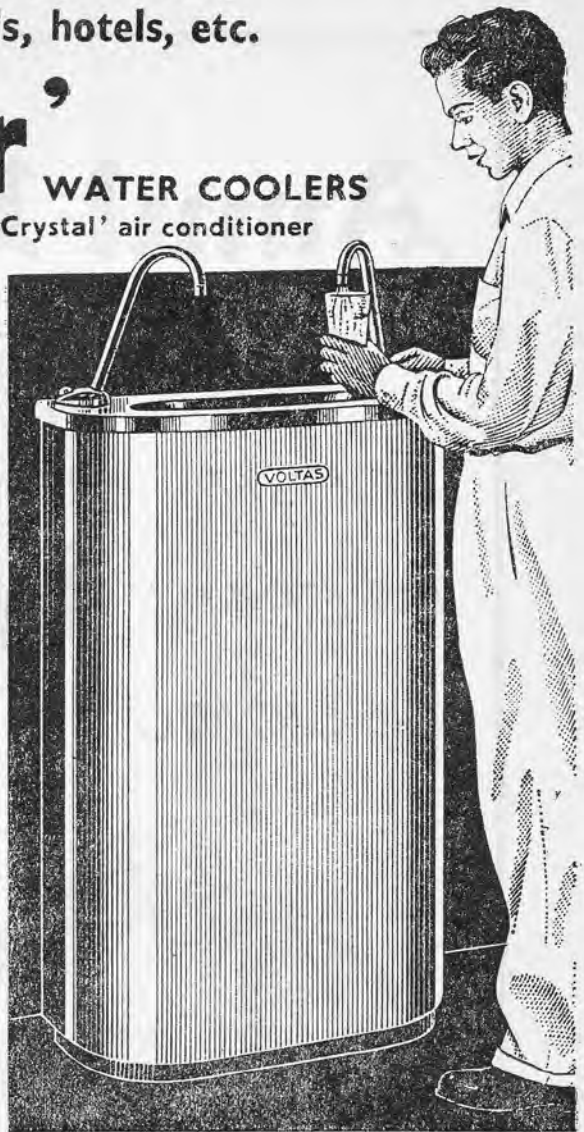
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QUEST

a bi-monthly of arts and ideas

EDITOR: NISSIM EZEKIEL

August - Sept. '56 Vol. II No. I

contents

ARTICLES

SUNIL JANAH	A Photographer's Testament	9
JEAN STEIN	Faulkner Interviewed	13
A. SUBBIAH	A Question of Language	21
K. K. SINHA	State of the Nation	27
RITA RUDRA	The Nagas in Revolt	33
SADHAN KUMAR GHOSH	C. Day Lewis	37
A. K. BHAGWAT & G. P. PRADHAN	Lokamanya Tilak	43

POEMS

R. PARTHASARATHY	Lover's Night Thought	11
NIRENDRANATH CHAKRAVARTI	Waves	26
MONIKA VARMA	Step of Unwisdom	26
ARUN KOLATKAR	Dual	32
DOM MORAES	Song	41

THEATRE etc.

ASHIS BURMAN	Tagore in the Bengali Cinema	49
RENE TAVERNIER	Letter from Paris	50
NISSIM EZEKIEL	Strindberg's <i>The Father</i>	52

BOOKS

K. K. S.	The Torment of Secrecy by E. Shils	55
R. CHOKSI	The Letters of D. H. Lawrence	56
G. C. CHATTERJI	English Thought 1860-1900 by L. E. Elliot-Binns	59
FOY NISSEN	Phoenix Fled by Attia Hosain	61
R. P. MASANI	Vinoba and Bhoodan by J. S. Sharma	63
N. E.	Poetry London edited by Tambimuttu	64

CORRESPONDENCE

JAMES T. FARRELL	Anti-Americanism	65
MARIE SETON	The Film Seminar	66

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3. The last date for submission of manuscripts is January 31, 1957. The judges' verdict will be announced in QUEST of April 1957. The winning entry will be published in QUEST which shall also have first option on any other entries considered suitable for publication at its usual rates.
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All entries should be addressed to the Editor, QUEST, Army & Navy Building, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1, with the envelope clearly marked 'Short Story Competition Entry'.

editorial

THE reaction in India to Krushchev's exposure of Stalin's crimes, in which he and the present Soviet leadership collaborated, has been conditioned and controlled by India's national leadership. A general crisis of conscience has been avoided. A fellow-traveller or two has struck a critical note on the Soviet Union. The sceptics have taken a slightly stronger line. The naive and the uncritical have received a mild shock. But on the whole, as a nation, we Indians who are roused to fury by even an isolated case of colour bar in the U.K., have taken thirty years of mass murder in the Soviet Union comfortably in our stride.

Pandit Nehru, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Mr. Krishna Menon and some of India's diplomats and policy-makers provided the cue. They praised the 'courage' of the 'collective leadership' in repudiating their past, suggested that the denunciation of Stalin, whom Nehru once described as 'a man of peace', was evidence of the new regime's love of peace and repeated its propaganda slogans as holy truths. Thus the phrase 'cult of personality' was accepted as a correct description of what was in reality a cult of totalitarianism.

To *that* cult the present leadership is still attached, but the practice of it is by a so-called 'collective leadership.' Instead of one dictator the Soviet Union has a group of dictators. Is there any reason why we should admire these men? Or is dictatorship now respectable, since we wake to find in our morning papers photographs of Nehru with now one dictator, now another, and sometimes between two of them, all wreathed in smiles?

Democracy as a *sentiment* is not unimportant. If it is corroded away by a cultivated tolerance of those who despise democracy, what remains is a merely boring and lethargic apparatus of government. Communist and other totalitarian states have long demonstrated their ingenious capacity to preserve some parts of the democratic machinery while actual government becomes more and more absolute. Thus in all communist countries periodic elections are held in which 99.9 per cent of the people vote for an approved list of candidates. Why is this farce considered necessary? It is like the tribute vice pays to virtue by simulating its *manners*. The systematic attempt in India to avoid criticism of dictators on the ground that our foreign policy is neutralist is likely to imperceptibly destroy our *feeling* for democracy as a way of life. We may, of course, continue to have a democratic constitution, and may even work it democratically in the formal sense. Nevertheless, morally and spiritually, we shall have abandoned democracy.

Perhaps no one in the whole world went so far as Vice-President Radhakrishnan in trying to whitewash the new Soviet regime. After his recent tour of Russia he actually claimed to find 'freedom of discussion within the party'. To justify Communist atheism and make it palatable to the religious-minded, he attacked Christianity as 'a religion based on incredible dogmas, which divided man from man, which robbed man of his initiative and supported social inequalities and vested interests'. He then pointed out there were people all over the world who rejected Christianity, just as the Communists did, and adopted 'some form of scientific humanism'.

We are constrained to say that these statements are unworthy of the Vice-President's intellectual stature. It is not only Christianity that Communists criticise, but all religions, including the one which Dr. Radhakrishnan has championed all his life. And his attack on Christianity can be turned against Hinduism without altering a comma, particularly from the scientific humanist point of view. Incidentally, the scientific humanists, in so far as they are organised, reject communism just as much as they are opposed to religion.

It is not atheism or criticism of religion properly so named which is an objection against the communist state. It is the use of state power to destroy a human institution by all means, including terror and murder. Dr. Radhakrishnan is not unaware of this. He also knows that the adoption of 'liquidation' as a measure of normal state policy was not used only against religion but was extended against the rights of the individual.

A few days ago Dr. Radhakrishnan approvingly quoted Tilak as saying 'It is cowardice to invite any one to commit murder. But if necessary we should suffer for our convictions'. It is difficult to reconcile this approval with his willingness to condone Soviet dictatorship. Finally, one notices that in Dr. Radhakrishnan's speech admiring the Soviet Union and denouncing Christianity he makes an indignant reference to 'the exclusive clubs' in the 'advanced democracies'. Here is a most striking instance of the double moral standard we adopt towards the Communist Empire and the West. In the latter, even the exclusive club is damnable, in the former an avowed dictatorship, which allows a question to be asked in its house of 'elected representatives' for the first time in thirty years, is praised for showing signs of 'liberalisation'.



*Bhil girls, Rajasthan. BELOW LEFT: Muria couple, Bastar, Madhya Pradesh.
BELOW RIGHT: Mismuri boy from Nizarghat, Assam*

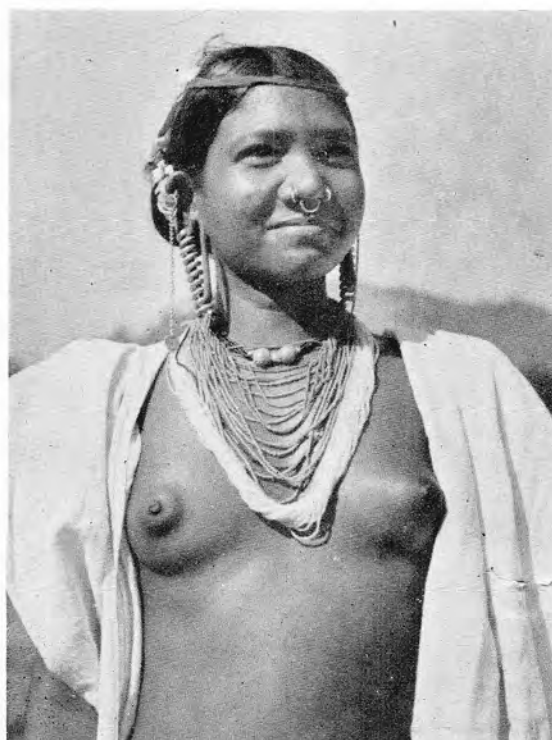




*Muria drummers summoning a village
to the dance. Madhya Pradesh.*

Photographs by
SUNIL JANAH

Saora Tribal girl, Orissa

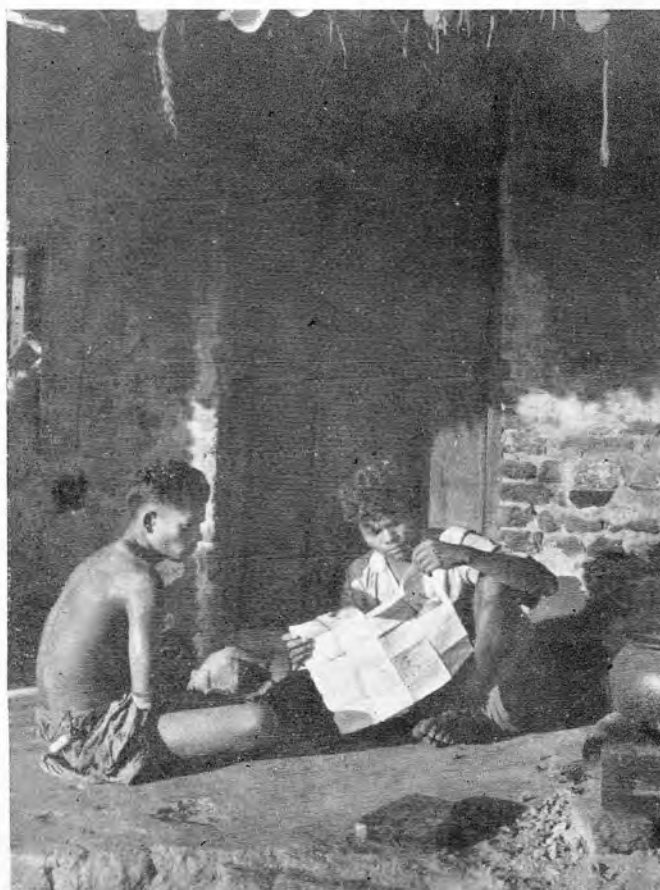




Famine in Rayal Seema, Andhra, 1945.



Grinding corn — Punjab



Miners of Bengal



Chhara youth BY CHATURBHAI P. PATEL

(Photograph on Agfa film)

SUNIL JANAH

a photographer's testament

our people as they really are

A PHOTOGRAPHER finds in India an incredible wealth of material. There is as much diversity in the landscape as there is in the people, and every unvisited corner offers possibilities of new discoveries. There are great mountains and rivers, desert and jungle and sea, monuments, temples and ruins of haunting beauty. One must choose among such abundance and in my case the people crowded out all the rival attractions. Cultures separated by many centuries exist here side by side, and all the races of man have been mixed to make the great mass of Indian humanity. The costumes vary from the fantastic to the rudimentary and probably preserve fashions of all ages. It is therefore impossible to lose by repetition the excitement of being among our people.

I have been photographing the Indian people for many years and the question I have been most frequently asked is: how do you get them to behave so naturally before your camera? Did they not object to your taking such photographs? The implication being that people are not natural, and that they object to many things, incidentally, and perhaps primarily, to the exposure of the female body.

This is a very big country. Railways and roads are inadequate, and when one depends on one's own feet even small distances seem endless. One remembers sun-baked clusters of huts in the vast plains, dust and distance, jungle tracks over hills, fishing villages on the cocoanut bordered sea. Walking wearily over unfamiliar stretches or drifting across a wide river on a boat, with people talking a language quite unlike one's own, one feels a stranger in one's own country.

But there is always this certainty: that one will find hospitality and kindness. We know this of our people. We also know that there is much ignorance and more poverty. But we assume we know a great deal more. It is ridiculous to attribute to so diverse a people common traits in most respects, and this myth has had pernicious consequences. It is a myth in reverse, for it is really the projection of the fantasies of scribes and politicians upon the people. It is supposed that the Indian people share their religiosity, squeamishness and intolerance. Legislators protest against a liberal law, a man is given six months' imprisonment for kissing his wife at a fair in Krishnagar, foreign films are mutilated

beyond recognition by the censors, — all on the assumption of the moral susceptibilities of the Indian people.

I am sure if someone told a peasant from Malabar or a tribal youth from Bastar, or a lowly villager from practically anywhere what our pious ideas are about them, their reaction will be bewilderment for a moment followed by resounding laughter. Hundreds of years of Brahmanical and Moslem domination followed by British rule have led them to simulate a deference to certain puritanical values with which common people, with their gaiety and earthy vitality, cannot find any accord. The veiling and hiding away of women has existed only among the upper castes in Northern India—only in the Gangetic and Indus valleys where Islamic conquest superimposed alien ideals. The concepts of morality which are derived from the abhorrence of the body and the pleasures of the senses are less Hindu than Protestant Anglo-Saxon. The kill-joy aspects of many cultures have been imposed on our kind and genial people.

Most officials and welfare workers are shocked by the immodesty and sinfulness they discover in tribal villages. They proceed to ban the dances and clothe the people. In a few years, the tribe is as respectable as they are, and as dreary. The tribal and the 'lower caste' people in India are not half as small a minority as the woeful Indian middle classes. But we always talk of the 'Indian Mentality', absolutely disregarding the large masses of these happy and humble people who are as genuine as the earth they till and certainly far above this disgusting 'mentality'.

My evidence is forty thousand photographs. For a photographer it is the visual evidence which matters most. He can only record what he sees and can make no lugubrious efforts to penetrate into the soul of a people. Words are surely more deceptive than direct images of reality. I had gone

out to portray, as a member of a political party, the India of many ills and her face of poverty. I saw a great deal of these—famine, floods and riots—but I also found beauty and joy, unquestionably darkened by want, but never rejected. Even the poorest wears a wreath of smiles.

I STOPPED in the villages long enough to make friends. Sometimes it took only a day, sometimes a week. No one minded either me or my cameras. On the contrary, everyone helped. They understood what I wanted with much less explaining than I had to give to the officials. They took me to the wells and the riverbanks, to the houses of the craftsmen they were proud of and to their granaries and homes. They also pointed out the fields with the wilting crops, the huts which were crumbling, the lean cattle and the hungry children. I have walked in and out of their houses, crossing peoples' backyards to shorten my way to the next house, and have made myself quite a pest interfering with everything that is going on in the village in order to get my pictures, but I have rarely met with rudeness. Everywhere I have been offered food, milk, puffed rice, cashew nuts, eggs, whatever they had, and of course, although rather shyly, palm wine, toddy, Mohua, and rice-beer.

It is not true that most people in India do not drink. It is true again only of the upper castes. In the villages, drinking does not 'ruin a man economically, morally and spiritually' as the prohibitionists proclaim. It may be doing that to the city worker, whose living conditions as they are in this country would drive any man to drink and despair. The villagers' drinks are not distilled spirits and cost them very little and gives them not merely pleasure but much needed sustenance. They have suffering in plenty, which they bear with good grace.

It is imbecile cruelty to spoil the fun they are left with. People living in appalling conditions of disease, insanitation and permanent hunger need saviours of an entirely different kind.

The Indian village, to anyone who really wishes to be friendly, has nothing to hide. People are not concerned about what you are thinking about them or the clothes they are wearing or not wearing. In the hot and humid coasts and the forested hills of the tribesmen, clothes are few and shame in the human body necessarily absent. It is not surprising at all therefore that one can photograph them as they are. Even in conservative Rajasthan and among Muslim peasants in Kashmir and Bengal, and the Moplas of Malabar, I found none of the hostility I had been warned against about photographing the women. The poor do not care, anywhere. Sometimes they actually insist that you must photograph a particular girl they regard as a beauty and

make you go a long way over fields to find her.

I have always had a lot of fun among our people—among people as different as Kashmiri peasants from Lolab valley and Miris on the islands on the Brahmaputra, the Bhils of Rajasthan and the Coir workers of Malabar, fishermen from Andhra and Assamese weavers. I remember evenings lit by a blaze of logs and mellowed with Mohua watching the Murias dance or the Santhals preparing for a marriage feast. If I am at all grateful to my people for all the kindness I have had from them, I must protest against some of the glib lies one hears about them.

Can photographs convey the misery and the gaiety, the squalor and the enchantment which is India? Just a few perhaps do no better than a few words, but hundreds may mean much more than so many words. They also record the passing away of ways of life in a country so ready for changes.

LOVER'S NIGHT THOUGHT

Like Christ on the cross
You lie on the bed
Nailed by suffering,
(He suffered for others,
But you for yourself)
Crying:
'O Lord, You have forsaken me!'
Not knowing
The Lord is more merciful
than Love.

R. PARTHASARATHY

INTERNATIONAL MOVE TO FREE DEMOCRATS IN COMMUNIST PRISONS

The crimes of the Stalinist regime have been admitted by Communist spokesmen. The question of obtaining the release of its victims still languishing in Communist prisons has therefore become an urgent one. In the past few months, democrats, socialists and trade unionists in over twenty countries have rallied round a Labour Committee to release Trade Unionists and Democratic Socialists formed in New York under the general secretaryship of Mr. S. M. Lévitass. The committee has from time to time sent lists of outstanding leaders who are either still in prison or have been murdered, to Mr. Bulganin and Mr. Krushchev as well as to the highest authorities of the Russian Communist Party and the Soviet State. It demanded the release of those who are still alive and suitable action to clear the memory of those who perished in freedom's cause.

The committee rightly takes the stand that such action is a necessary step toward removing the barriers dividing workers in Communist states from their brothers in the rest of the world. Individual appeals have been mailed to sixty top Soviet chiefs. The list of prominent persons in Communist camps has been sent to them. It was carefully collated with other lists, such as the one presented by Gaitskell to Krushchev, which was compiled in consultation with European socialist parties and the Socialist International. According to Willy Brandt, Socialist President of the West Berlin House of Representatives, East Germany alone holds over 10,000 political prisoners who have not been properly tried and are being detained indefinitely.

The propaganda barrage from Moscow against the raising of this question accompanied by partial amnesty to a handful of political prisoners behind the Iron Curtain indicates that the present Communist leadership is embarrassed by the revelations being made by the committee and other sources. They are anxious to escape the charge of arbitrary imprisonment. Moral pressure from world opinion will go a long way to obtaining freedom for thousands whose only crime is their opposition to tyranny and dictatorship.

More efforts are required to secure justice and liberty for workers in the Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe and China. *Quest* will be glad to provide further particulars and to aid any project in India on the lines described above.

Faulkner Interviewed

This is the twelfth in a series of interviews on the art of fiction which has appeared in a well known Western periodical. The remarkable interview with William Faulkner is published here by kind courtesy of The Congress for Cultural Freedom, Paris, which acquired the Indian copyright for QUEST. It has been considerably abridged because of space limitations.

This conversation took place in New York City, mid-winter, early 1956:

Interviewer: Mr. Faulkner, you were saying a while ago that you don't like interviews.

Faulkner: The reason I don't like interviews is that I seem to react violently to personal questions. If the questions are about the work, I try to answer them. When they are about me, I may answer or I may not, but even if I do, if the same question is asked tomorrow, the answer may be different

Interviewer: How about yourself as a writer?

Faulkner: If I had not existed, someone else would have written me, Hemingway, Dostoevsky, all of us. Proof of that is that there are about three candidates for the authorship of Shakespeare's plays. But what is important is *Hamlet* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, not who wrote them, but that somebody did. The artist is of no importance. Only what he creates is important, since there is nothing new to be said. Shakespeare, Balzac, Homer have all written about the same things and if they had lived 1,000 or 2,000 years longer, the publishers wouldn't have needed anyone since.

Interviewer: But even if there seems nothing more to be said, isn't perhaps the individuality of the writer important?

Faulkner: Very important to himself. Everybody else should be too busy with the work to care about the individuality.

Interviewer: And your contemporaries?

Faulkner: All of us failed to match our dream of perfection. So I rate us on the basis of our splendid failure to do the impossible. In my opinion, if I could write all my work again, I am convinced that I would do it better, which is the healthiest condition for an artist. That's why he keeps on working, trying again; he believes each time and this time he will do it, bring it off. Of course he won't, which is why this condition is healthy. Once he did it, once he matched the work to the image, the dream, nothing would remain but to cut his throat, jump off the other side of that pinnacle of cut perfection into suicide. I'm a failed poet. Maybe every novelist wants to write poetry first, finds he can't and then tries the short story which is the most demanding form after poetry. And failing at that, only then does he take up novel writing.

Interviewer: Is there any possible formula to follow in order to be a good novelist?

Faulkner: 99% talent... 99% discipline... 99% work. He must never be satisfied with what he does. It never is as good as it can be done. Always dream and shoot higher than you know you can do. Don't bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors. Try to be better than yourself. An artist is a creature driven by demons. He don't know why they choose him and he's usually too busy to wonder why. He is completely amoral in that he will rob, borrow, beg, or steal from anybody and everybody to get the work done.

Interviewer: Do you mean the writer should be completely ruthless?

Faulkner: The writer's only responsibility is to his art. He will be completely ruthless if he is a good one. He has a dream. It anguishes him so much he must get rid of it. He has no peace until then. Everything goes by the board: honour, pride, decency, security, happiness, all, to get the book written. If a writer has to rob his mother, he will not hesitate; the *Ode on a Grecian Urn* is worth any number of old ladies.

Interviewer: Then could the lack of security, happiness, honour, be an important factor in the artist's creativity?

Faulkner: No. They are important only to his peace and contentment, and art has no concern with peace and contentment.

Interviewer: Then what would be the best environment for a writer?

Faulkner: Art is not concerned with environment either; it doesn't care where it is. If you mean me, the best job that was ever offered to me was to become a landlord in a brothel. In my opinion it's the perfect milieu for an artist to work in. It gives him perfect economic freedom; he's free of fear and hunger; he has a roof over his head and nothing whatever to do except keep a few simple accounts and to go once every month and pay off the local police. The place is quiet during the morning hours which is the best time of the day to work. There's enough social life in the evening, if he wishes to participate, to keep him from being bored; it gives him a certain standing in his society; he has nothing to do because the madam keeps the books; all the inmates of the house are females and would defer to him and call him 'Sir'

All the bootleggers in the neighbourhood would call him 'Sir'. And he could call the police by their first names.

So the only environment the artist needs is whatever peace, whatever solitude, and whatever pleasure he can get at not too high a cost. All the wrong environment will do is run his blood-pressure up; he will spend more time being frustrated or outraged. My own experience has been that the tools I need for my trade are paper, tobacco, food and a little whisky.

Interviewer: You mentioned economic freedom. Does the writer need it?

Faulkner: No. The writer doesn't need economic freedom. All he needs is a pencil, and some paper. I've never known anything good in writing to come from having accepted any free gift of money. The good writer never applies to a foundation. He's too busy writing something. If he isn't first rate he fools himself by saying he hasn't got time or economic freedom. Good art can come out of thieves, bootleggers or horse swipes. People really are afraid to find out just how much hardship and poverty they can stand. They are afraid to find out how tough they are. Nothing can destroy the good writer. The only thing that can alter the good writer is death. Good ones don't have time to bother with success or getting rich. Success is feminine and like a woman, if you cringe before her, she will override you. So the way to treat her is to show her the back of your hand. Then maybe she will do the crawling.

Interviewer: Can working for the movies hurt your own writing?

Faulkner: Nothing can injure a man's writing if he's a first rate writer. If a man is not a first rate writer, there's not anything can help it much. The problem does not apply if he is not first rate, because he has already sold his soul for a swimming pool.

Interviewer: Does a writer compromise in writing for the movies?

Faulkner: Always, because a moving picture is by its nature a collaboration and any collaboration is compromise because that is what the word means—to give and to take.

Interviewer: Which actors do you like to work with most?

Faulkner: Humphrey Bogart is the one I've worked with best. He and I worked together in *To Have and to Have Not* and *The Big Sleep*.

Interviewer: Would you like to make another movie?

Faulkner: Yes, I would like to make one of George Orwell's *1984*. I have an idea for an ending which would prove the thesis which I'm always hammering at: that man is indestructible because of his simple will to freedom.

Interviewer: How do you get the best results in working for the movies?

Faulkner: The moving picture work of my own which seemed best to me was done by the actors and the writer throwing the script away and inventing the scene in actual rehearsal just before the camera turned. If I didn't take, or felt I was capable of taking, motion picture work seriously, out of simple honesty to motion pictures and myself too, I would not have tried. But I know now that I will never be a good

motion picture writer; so that work will never have the urgency for me which my medium has.

Interviewer: You say that the writer must compromise in working for the motion pictures. How about his writing? Is he under any obligation to his reader?

Faulkner: His obligation is to get the work done the best he can do it; whatever obligation he has left over after that he can spend any way he likes. I myself am too busy to care about the public. I have no time to wonder who is reading me. I don't care about John Doe's opinion on mine or anyone else's work. Mine is the standard which has to be met, which is when the work makes me feel the way I do when I read *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, or the Old Testament. They make me feel good. So does watching a bird make me feel good... you know that if I were reincarnated, I'd want to come back a buzzard. Nothing hates him or envies him or wants him or needs him. He is never bothered or in danger, and he can eat anything.

Interviewer: What technique do you use to arrive at your standard?

Faulkner: Let the writer take up surgery or bricklaying if he is interested in technique. There is no mechanical way to get the writing done, no short cut. The young writer would be a fool to follow a theory. Teach yourself by your own mistakes; people learn only by error. The good artist believes that nobody is good enough to give him advice. He has supreme vanity. No matter how much he admires the old writer, he wants to beat him.

Interviewer: Then would you deny the validity of technique?

Faulkner: By no means. Sometimes technique charges in and takes command of the dream before the writer himself can get his hands on it. That is *tour de force* and the finished work is simply a matter of fitting bricks neatly together, since the writer knows probably every single word right to the end before he puts the first down. This happened with *As I Lay Dying*. It was not easy. No honest work is. It was simple in that all the material was already at hand. It took me just about six weeks in the spare time from a 12 hour a day job at manual labour. I simply imagined a group of people and subjected them to the simple universal natural catastrophes which are flood and fire with a simple natural motive to give direction to their progress. But then, when technique does not intervene, in another sense writing is easier too. Because with me there is always a point in the book where the characters themselves rise up and take charge and finish the job—say somewhere about page 275. Of course, I don't know what would happen if I finished the book on page 274. The quality an artist must have is objectivity in judging his work, plus the honesty and courage not to kid himself about it. Since none of my work has met my own standards, I must judge it on the basis of that one which caused me the most grief and anguish, as the mother loves the child who became the thief or murderer more than the one who became the priest.

Interviewer: What work is that?

Faulkner: The Sound and the Fury. I wrote it five separate times trying to tell the story, to rid myself of the dream which would continue to anguish me until I did. It is a tragedy of two lost women: Caddy and her daughter. Dilsey is one of my own favourite characters because she is brave, courageous, generous, gentle and honest. She's much more brave and honest and generous than me.

Interviewer: Are there any artistic advantages in casting the novel in the form of an allegory, as the Christian allegory you used in *A Fable*.

Faulkner: Same advantage the carpenter finds in building square corners in order to build a square house. In *A Fable* the Christian allegory was the right allegory to use in that particular story, like an oblong square corner is the right corner with which to build an oblong rectangular house.

Interviewer: Does that mean an artist can use Christianity simply as just another tool, like a carpenter would borrow a hammer?

Faulkner: The carpenter we are speaking of never lacks that hammer. No one is without Christianity, if we agree on what we mean by the word. It is every individual's individual code of behaviour by means of which he makes himself a better human being than his nature wants to be, if he followed his nature only. Whatever its symbol—cross or crescent or whatever—that symbol is man's reminder of his duty inside the human race. Its various allegories are the charts against which he measures himself and learns to know what he is. It cannot teach man to be good as the text book teaches him mathematics. It shows him how to discover himself, evolve for himself a moral code and standard within his capacities and aspirations, by giving him a matchless example of suffering and sacrifice and the promise of hope. Writers have always drawn, and always will, from the allegories of moral consciousness, for the reason that the allegories are matchless—the three men in *Moby Dick*, who represent the trinity of conscience: knowing nothing, knowing but not caring, knowing and caring. The same trinity is represented in *A Fable* by the young Jewish pilot officer who said, 'This is terrible. I refuse to accept it, even if I must refuse life to do so,' the old French Quarter Master General who said, 'This is terrible, but we can weep and bear it,' and the English battalion runner who said, 'This is terrible, I'm going to do something about it.'

Interviewer: How much of your writing is based on personal experience?

Faulkner: I can't say. I never counted up. Because 'how much' is not important. A writer needs three things: experience, observation, imagination, any two of which, at times any one of which, can supply the lack of the others. With me, a story usually begins with a single idea or memory or mental picture. The writing of the story is simply a matter of working up to that moment, to explain why it happened or what it caused to follow. A writer is trying to create believable people in credible moving situations in the most moving way he can. Obviously he must use as one of his tools the environment which he knows. I would say that music is the easiest means in which to express, since it came first in

man's experience and history. But since words are my talent, I must try to express clumsily in words what the pure music would have done better. That is, music would express better and simpler, but I prefer to use words as I prefer to read rather than listen. I prefer silence to sound, and the image produced by words occurs in silence. That is, the thunder and the music of the prose take place in silence.

Interviewer: You mentioned experience, observation and imagination as being important for the writer. Would you include inspiration?

Faulkner: I don't know anything about inspiration because I don't know what inspiration is—I've heard about it, but I never saw it.

Interviewer: Can you say how you started as a writer?

Faulkner: I was living in New Orleans, doing whatever kind of work was necessary to earn a little money now and then. I met Sherwood Anderson. We would walk about the city in the afternoon and talk to people. In the evenings we would meet again and sit over a bottle or two while he talked and I listened. In the forenoon I would never see him. He was secluded, working. The next day we would repeat. I decided that if that was the life of a writer, then becoming a writer was the thing for me. So I began to write my first book. At once I found that writing was fun. I even forgot that I hadn't seen Mr. Anderson for three weeks until he walked in my door, the first time he ever came to see me, and said 'What's wrong? Are you mad at me?' I told him I was writing a book. He said 'My God' and walked out. When I finished the book—it was *Soldier's Pay*—I met Mrs. Anderson on the street. She asked how the book was going and I said I finished it. She said, 'Sherwood says that he will make a trade with you. If he doesn't have to read your manuscript he will tell his publisher to accept it.' I said 'Done' and that's how I became a writer.

Interviewer: What were the kinds of work you were doing to earn that 'little money now and then?'

Faulkner: Whatever came up. I could do a little of almost anything—run boats, paint houses, fly aeroplanes. I never needed much money because living was cheap in New Orleans then, and all I wanted was place to sleep, a little food, tobacco, and whisky. There were many things I could do for two or three days and earn enough money to live on for the rest of the month. By temperament I'm a vagabond and tramp. I don't want money badly enough to work for it. In my opinion it's a shame that there is so much work in the world. One of the saddest things is that the only thing a man can do for eight hours a day, day after day, is work. You can't eat eight hours a day nor drink for eight hours a day nor make love for eight hours—all you can do for eight hours is work. Which is the reason why man makes himself and everybody else so miserable and unhappy.

Interviewer: You must feel indebted to Sherwood Anderson, but how do you regard him as a writer?

Faulkner: He was the father of my generation of American writers and the tradition of American writing which our successors will carry on.

He has never received his proper evaluation. Dreiser is his older brother and Mark Twain the father of them both.

Interviewer: What about the European writers of that period?

Faulkner: The two great men in my time were Mann and Joyce. You should approach Joyce's *Ulysses* as the illiterate Baptist preacher approaches the Old Testament: with faith.

Interviewer: Some people say they can't understand your writing, even after they read it two or three times. What approach would you suggest for them?

Faulkner: Read it four times.

Interviewer: Do you read your contemporaries?

Faulkner: No, the books I read are the ones I knew and loved when I was a young man and to which I return as you do to old friends: the Old Testament, Dickens, Conrad, Cervantes—*Don Quixote*. I read that every year, as some do the Bible. Flaubert, Balzac—he created an intact world of his own, a bloodstream running through twenty books—Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Shakespeare. I read Melville occasionally, and of the poets: Marlowe, Campion, Jonson, Herrick, Donne, Keats and Shelley. I still read Housman. I've read these books so often that I don't always begin page I and read on to the end. I just read one scene, or about one character, just as you'd meet and talk to a friend for a few minutes.

Interviewer: And Freud?

Faulkner: Everybody talked about Freud when I lived in New Orleans, but I have never read him. Neither did Shakespeare. I doubt if Melville did either, and I'm sure Moby Dick didn't.

Interviewer: Do you ever read mystery stories?

Faulkner: I read Simenon because he reminds me something of Chekov.

Interviewer: What about your favourite character?

Faulkner: My favourite characters are Sarah Gamp—a cruel, ruthless woman, a drunkard, opportunist, unreliable, most of her character was bad, but at least it was character; Mrs. Harris, Falstaff, Prince Hal, Don Quixote and Sancho, of course. Lady Macbeth I always admire. And Bottom, Ophelia, and Mercutio—both he and Mrs. Gamp coped with life, didn't ask any favours, never whined. Huck Finn, of course, and Jim. Tom Sawyer I never liked much—an awful prig. And then I like Sut Lovingood from a book written by George Harris about 1840 or '50 in the Tennessee mountains. He had no illusions about himself, did the best he could; at certain times he was a coward and knew it and wasn't ashamed; he never blamed his misfortunes on anyone and never cursed God for them.

Interviewer: Would you comment on the future of the novel?

Faulkner: I imagine as long as people will continue to read novels, people will continue to write them, or vice versa; unless of course the pictorial magazines and comic strips finally atrophy man's capacity to read, and literature really is on its way back to the picture writing in the Neanderthal cave.

Interviewer: And how about the function of the critics?

Faulkner: The artist doesn't have time to listen to the critics. The ones who want to be writers read the reviews, the ones who want to write don't have the time to read reviews. The critic too is trying to say 'Kilroy was here'. His function is not directed towards the artist himself. The artist is a cut above the critic, for the artist is writing something which will move the critic. The critic is writing something which will move everybody but the artist.

Interviewer: So you never feel the need to discuss your work with anyone?

Faulkner: No, I am too busy writing it. It has got to please me and if it does, I don't need to talk about it. If it doesn't please me, talking about it won't improve it, since the only thing to improve it is to work on it some more. I am not a literary man but only a writer. I don't get any pleasure from talking shop.

Interviewer: Could you explain more what you mean by motion in relation to the artist?

Faulkner: The aim of every artist is to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed so that 100 years later when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life. Since man is mortal, the only immortality possible for him is to leave something behind him that is immortal since it will always move. This is the artist's way of scribbling 'Kilroy was here' on the wall of the final and irrevocable oblivion through which he must someday pass.

Interviewer: What happened to you between *Soldier's Pay* and *Sartoris*—that is what caused you to begin the Yoknapatawpha saga?

Faulkner: With *Soldier's Pay* I found out writing was fun. But I found out after that not only each book had to have a design but the whole output or sum of an artist's work had to have a design. With *Soldier's Pay* and *Mosquitoes* I wrote for the sake of writing because it was fun. Beginning with *Sartoris* I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about and that I would never live long enough to exhaust it, and by sublimating the actual into apocryphal I would have complete liberty to use whatever talent I might have to its absolute top. It opened up a gold mine of other peoples, so I created a cosmos of my own. I can move these people around like God, not only in space but in time too. The fact that I have moved my characters around in time successfully, at least in my own estimation, proves to me my own theory that time is a fluid condition which has no existence except in the momentary avatars of individual people. There is no such thing as *was*—only *is*. If *was* existed there would be no grief or sorrow. I like to think of the world I created as being a kind of keystone in the Universe; that, as small as that keystone is, if it were ever taken away, the universe itself would collapse. My last book will be the Doomsday Book, the Golden Book, of Yoknapatawpha Country. Then I shall break the pencil and I'll have to stop.

—JEAN STEIN

A. SUBBIAH

a question of language

is Hindi really preferable to English?

IT is no mere accident of history that peoples throughout the world—with but few exceptions—have crystallised into political nationhood on the basis of a common language. This is so because, to quote the words of Kroeber, the eminent anthropologist, 'of the several objective factors which operate to produce nationalities, language is on the whole much the most important. Without the free intercommunication that common speech provides, it is very difficult for the "consciousness of kind", that is the subjective psychological pre-condition of nationality to arise'. Europe, in spite of its common Christian Culture, has nevertheless split up into a number of independent states of unilingual composition, many of them smaller than the states comprised in the Indian Union. People speaking the same language have sometimes constituted themselves into more than one state for non-linguistic reasons, but seldom have people speaking different languages combined to form a single state.

In attempting therefore to maintain 'multilingual' India as a single political nation, it would be foolish to ignore the fact that we are going against normal

trends. Left to ourselves, without the intervention of British rule which—for its own convenience—welded the country into a single administrative unit, India would perhaps still have continued as a sub-continent divided into a number of small independent states. In the context of present day world politics, however, it is clear that small states will not only exercise no influence in world affairs but may become mere playthings of the big powers. It is therefore incumbent upon us, Indians, to preserve *political* unity, the precious legacy left to us by the British. The protracted struggle for independence, providing as it did a common political platform, had one good result: it helped to create and maintain a feeling of political nationalism amongst all classes of Indians, and in this the English language, as a common medium of intercourse amongst the intelligentsia of the country who formed the spearhead of the nationalist movement, was a valuable ally.

But let us frankly recognise that this feeling of political nationalism is as yet superficial, not being based on deep-rooted foundations. Foreign rule which provided the motive power is a thing of the past,

and even the English language—if the anti-English elements in the country have their way—runs the danger of being pushed out. Starting with the initial handicap of not having a common language as the basis of political unity, we have to discover other ways of maintaining and strengthening this unity. Our objective would obviously not be achieved by ignoring popular feeling or popular demand. In other words, democratic processes alone—and not totalitarian methods—will help to strengthen political unity. Totalitarian trends, even if disguised under a democratic garb and even when unaccompanied by force as at present, thanks to the enormous personal prestige and influence which Prime Minister Nehru commands in the country, will result only in alienating popular sympathies, and slowly but surely smothering the feeling of political nationalism, paving the way for eventual disintegration or anarchy.

HOW then is political unity in the country to be preserved and fortified? One thing is certain: it cannot be done by ignoring the feeling of linguistic nationality which a common mother tongue provides. Political 'nationalism' (mark the distinction made here between 'nationalism' and 'nationality'), which is an artificially nurtured sentiment, and linguistic 'nationality' which arises from a natural human instinct, should on no account be allowed to come into conflict. No one who understands linguistic psychology can doubt the result of such a conflict; nationalism will go under, as recent events in India have already demonstrated. The superstructure of nationalism in this country has therefore to be built on the natural foundations of linguistic nationalities, not by demolishing them.

The very demand for linguistic states arose out of the growing disharmony between different linguistic groups in

multilingual states like Madras; to ignore this and to attempt to achieve political unity by just the opposite method of compelling still larger bilingual or multi-lingual groups to live together shows a dangerous type of wishful thinking. It is not without significance that in the recent disturbances arising out of the S.R.C. report, mass feeling was most in evidence in those areas where the final recommendations swerved from this principle of linguistic states, allegedly on grounds of administrative convenience, even though language is easily the most important single factor contributing to administrative convenience.

With political unity within a state achieved on the basis of linguistic nationality, it should be easier to bring about inter-state co-operation and co-operation between the states and the centre on the basis of common interests and a spirit of mutual accommodation. It is imperative that the smaller and more backward states should feel that they have nothing to lose by political association with the bigger and more advanced states. The latter should avoid using their power and resources to dominate over their less fortunate brother states, but instead, assist them and respect their wishes, accommodating themselves to such wishes as far as it is possible to do so. This undoubtedly calls for a high degree of statesmanship on the part of those who enjoy political power, whether at the centre or in the states.

The next important aspect of the language problem is the question of the medium of instruction. The two main schools of thought in this connection are those who advocate the adoption of the mother tongue or the regional language as the medium of instruction at all levels of education and those who advocate the retention of English at least for university education. Educationists throughout the world are agreed that the mother tongue is

the only suitable medium of instruction and the interests of the educational progress of our country require that we should adopt this method, no matter what the transitional difficulties are. Formation of linguistic states would render this course easier, as the present duplication and consequent wastage of money and personnel in providing for instruction in more than one language in each state, will be eliminated.

We would at the same time be wise to recognise the fact that, in the conditions obtaining in the world today, bilingualism has become an unavoidable necessity in most non-English-speaking countries; regional languages are inadequate to meet all present-day needs, particularly in the field of ever-growing modern knowledge, available to a very substantial extent only at the level of an international language like English. Although a knowledge of English will be essential only at the higher levels of education, it is a well-known linguistic experience that childhood is the best age for learning languages. It is therefore desirable that English should be taught as a compulsory second language at as early a stage in the educational curriculum as possible. It would of course cease to be a medium of instruction.

FINALLY we have to deal with the problem of the language of administration. Democracy implies the association of the people with the administration, and this cannot be effectively brought about unless administration is carried on in the language of the people, as is done in all independent countries. Should the reorganisation of the states be dealt with on a linguistic basis, the problem presents no serious difficulty at the state level, although there may be some unavoidable delay during the transitional process of enriching the resources of the state language with suitable administrative terms.

There is not, however, the same unanimity of view in respect of the administrative or official language of the Central Government. In the first flush of independence, when there was an emotional urge to eliminate all traces of British rule in India, the framers of the Indian constitution decided to replace English by Hindi as the Official Language of the Union. The real implications of the proposed change and its probable consequences were perhaps not fully appreciated at the time but doubts existed even then as to the practicability of the step; hence English was allowed to continue for a period of fifteen years, the question to be reviewed at the end of the first and second five years. The first Official Language Commission has already been appointed to enquire and report. The time is now opportune for undertaking a more dispassionate and objective study of the problem.

As we have already seen, bilingualism comprising the mother tongue and English has become an unavoidable necessity in India as in most other countries of the world. This is admittedly a handicap to educationally backward countries like India, where literacy even in one language is deplorably poor. But to make the country *trilingual*, by imposing a third language, is to place an unjustifiable burden on the youth of this country; it should not be resorted to, if there is an alternative method of dealing with the problem without adding to the educational burden.

It would be pertinent to enquire how other multilingual countries have dealt with this problem. With the exception of Russia, which has deliberately eschewed democratic methods, all the other multilingual countries including Switzerland, Canada, Belgium, Pakistan, Malaya and Ceylon have adopted the sensible and simple method of treating all the national languages spoken in the respective states as official languages, with equality of

status and function. This means that a citizen in such countries is in the same linguistic situation as he would have been in a unilingual state, i.e., he can transact all his business in his own mother tongue, which enjoys no inferior—or superior—status in relation to any other language of the state, and he is under no compulsion to learn any other language. It may come as a surprise to many that even the German-speaking peoples of Switzerland, who belong to a race generally considered as aggressively race-conscious, and who constitute a large majority of the Swiss population (72%), have conceded equality of status to the mother tongue of even the small minority of Italians who form only 6% of the population.

Ceylon, it is true, is attempting to wriggle out of the parity status it had earlier conceded to the language of the minority, solely due to the exigencies of power politics prevailing in that island, in which the pressure tactics of the Buddhist monks of the majority community appear to be playing an important part. The repercussions of this ill-conceived step are already seen in the demand for secession on the part of the minority group. Pakistan, on the other hand, withheld equality of status to the language of her eastern wing in the initial stages but better counsels prevailed later, principally as a result of the debacle of the ruling party in the last general elections, and Pakistan has now granted parity to its national languages under the Constitution recently adopted by it.

Can we not then fall in line with other multilingual countries and adopt all our national languages as official languages of the Union? There can be no doubt that this will be the best course to adopt, provided there is no insuperable difficulty in the way of adopting as many as fourteen languages as official languages with equality of function. In the other multilingual

countries, the number of national languages that had to be reckoned with did in no case exceed four (Switzerland and Malaya). The practical difficulties in dealing with fourteen official languages will undoubtedly be far greater than those experienced by other multilingual countries, but they can no doubt be met and overcome eventually.

FORTUNATELY, there is no need for taking an immediate decision in the matter, as neither Hindi nor any Indian language is yet in a position to be adopted forthwith as the official language of the Union in place of English. When the states have been reorganised, the national languages are bound to be adopted as the official languages of the respective states, and perhaps in another twenty or thirty years the extent to which the national languages succeed in adapting themselves to modern administrative needs would be known. That would be a more appropriate time to consider whether English should be replaced by the national languages.

Meantime however the provision in the Constitution to replace English by Hindi should be deleted, as without serving any immediate useful purpose, it adds to our troubles, political and otherwise. Firstly, as we have already seen, the declared intention to impose a third language, when one of the two languages already found to be essential, viz., the mother tongue and English, would equally well, if not better, serve the purpose in view, is bound to be resisted, sooner or later, particularly in states like Madras where the three languages concerned i.e., Tamil, English and Hindi are unrelated to one another. In fact a conference of representatives of various schools of thought in Madras, including Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and leaders of practically all Tamil Nad parties, was held recently when they *unanimously* resolved that English should

continue to be the official language of the Union and should not be replaced by any other language.

Secondly, Hindi is only one of the fourteen national languages of India and to single it out for special recognition means in fact discrimination *in favour* of people speaking Hindi and allied languages and *against* members of other language groups. The argument that Hindi speaking peoples form the largest single language group in India cuts both ways. While it will be readily conceded that, on an issue which will affect all sections of the people equally, the democratic way is to adopt the majority view as the majority do not derive any special benefit thereby, democracy will become a farce if the majority compels a minority to accept a measure which benefits the former and harms the latter, when such a situation can be avoided. In this particular issue for instance, if the majority view was in favour of a minority language, in no way less suitable than Hindi, it would have at least established their democratic bonafides.

Thirdly, there is a mistaken notion that the adoption of Hindi, as the official language of the Union, will benefit larger numbers of people than is the case at present with English. A knowledge of the official language is needed only by those who form the personnel of the central administration and those members of the public who normally deal with it. The number of such persons is, proportionately to the population, necessarily very small and will show little variation, whatever be the official language of the Union. If English continues to be the official language, every language group in the country would be equally placed in regard to it, but if Hindi replaces English, Hindi speaking people would be better placed than the rest; as a consequence, larger numbers of Hindi speaking persons will become eligible for the central administra-

tion, the numbers of other language groups being automatically reduced to that extent, resulting in the concentration of administrative power in the Hindi speaking group. As for the public, fewer and fewer people in non-Hindi speaking areas will deal directly with an administration conducted in Hindi than is now the case with English, as it would be more convenient for them to employ Hindi knowing staff for the purpose than to go through the long and laborious task of learning Hindi themselves, that language being of little practical use to them otherwise.

Lastly there is already a feeling—well founded or not—that Hindi speaking peoples are becoming uncomfortably powerful and aggressive, and the fear of 'Hindi Imperialism' is being referred to even by members of the ruling party. Whether or not this is true today, the development of such a contingency in the future should not be lightly brushed aside, and it will be the path of wisdom to ensure that the scales are not unduly weighted in favour of any one state or group of states. In this view also, the adoption of Hindi as the sole official language of the Indian union is not calculated to help in the consolidation of political unity.

To summarise, reorganisation of the states on a linguistic basis, adoption of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction and of English as a compulsory second language in the educational curriculum, and retention of English as the official language of the union, without any attempt meantime, overt or covert, to replace it by Hindi, appear to be the most rational solutions to the Language issue in our country. To accept these solutions and act on them calls for courageous rethinking on the part of the *de facto* rulers of the country. We can only hope that the worries of the moment have not so dimmed their vision as to make them incapable of seeing clearly into the future.

WAVES

Waves do not reach here, nor love; none knows
 What anguish burns here, nor knows what hurt
 Is wrought by bitter desert winds: none cares
 To come within your reach. Where do they go?

Their faces muffled in hazy splendour, see,
 With what care they gather tinsel, none knows gold.
 Mind is a miser here. Light does not rain,
 Nor waves break—this is no place for me.

Weeds cover the fields where the gold of corn
 Should grow, they know no life shimmer with hue—
 So they do not live; they bar their doors
 To keep aloof. The day slithers. Here gold
 Rains not, nor waves break, the doors are barred.
 Mind is a miser here.— This is no place for me.

NIRENDRANATH CHAKRAVARTI

(Translated from the Bengali by SIBNARAYAN RAY)

STEP OF UNWISDOM

As I stood on the fortieth step of unwisdom
 The surrogate years came crowding around.

The steep sharp step was broadly pleasant
 And the plains lay below bathed in light.

From somewhere a bird call came.
 From somewhere a wild hulloo
 O the hosts of heaven have sharp tipped spears.
 But blunted their skill by my fortieth year.

From somewhere a small child cries,
 From somewhere ahead a man.
 And dogs and horses come leaping the years
 The surrogate years come crowding around.

The leaves drift with glancing ease,
 And the light lies quiet on boles and trees,
 But there's a quickening, a dancing, as of some
 Captured breeze, and the breath of my heart with a
 Piercing peal captures the years with surrogate ease.
 (And there's a haunting, and laughing, amongst the trees.)

On an isle of unwisdom stands my fortieth year,
 And loud is the cry of the surrogate years.

MONIKA VARMA

K. K. SINHA

state of the nation

there's something rotten....

THE function of political leadership is not only to carry the people with it from moment to moment, but also to exercise foresight so that its policies may not have to be changed too quickly. The two tasks are complementary. Unless the leadership is intelligent enough to anticipate the coming pattern of developments it would not be able to guide the people for long in the right direction, and thus, sooner or later, will find itself in a crisis.

In Gandhi's time, he led the Congress and the Congress led the country. Gandhi knew where to go, what were the difficulties that would crop up and he asked the Congress and the people to prepare to meet them in advance. He used to think ahead for the Congress. That is why there were very few occasions when the Congress could not lead the country in definite terms. And those few occasions when it could not, were precisely when Gandhi withdrew from the Congress or the Congress Working Committee did not agree to accept Gandhi's advice.

It would be interesting to-day to take stock of the Congress leadership (which means almost the same as the country's) in the absence of Gandhi. So long as Sardar Patel was alive, the leadership was, in the main, divided between Nehru and Patel. That Sardar Patel knew his own mind in matters of internal administration is well-known. The accomplishment of the difficult task of integrating the Princely States throughout the country without firing a single shot provides an indication of his ability and character. To what extent he actually shared leadership with Nehru in matters of foreign policy or Indo-Pakistan relations is not much known publicly. It would therefore be better to consider the period during which Nehru has been, and still is, supreme in the leadership of the Congress which practically rules the whole country.

Nehru's greatest contribution is said to be in the field of 'external affairs'—the policy of *Panch Shila* or peaceful co-existence and non-involvement of India in the

world struggle between two major power blocs. No doubt India has achieved great prestige in international affairs due to this policy. No doubt also that India's active neutrality has helped considerably in stopping the war in Korea and Indo-China. But it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that the real test of this policy has not yet come, although some shadows of it are even now visible. Except for Burma, no country seems to accept Nehru's stand in actual practice as its own. So that India is slowly and steadily finding itself alone in the midst of this ever-growing world struggle. Nehru's 'peace-area' is proving a mere dream. Realising this more in private than publicly, Nehru has begun to incline a little, as could easily have been anticipated, towards Russia's 'peace-bloc', as Pakistan and other SEADO Powers are getting more powerful.

THE significance of the invitation to Russia's leaders and organising their tumultuous welcome, and more particularly of encouraging them to side openly with India on the issue of Kashmir as against Pakistan, cannot be easily minimised. Till now, India was not considering arming itself in a modern way. But today, with the excuse that Pakistan, its neighbour, is arming itself with the aid of the U.S.A., Nehru will soon give the call for a larger and more improved army for India; and with the Egyptian example to follow, will make an arms deal with either Russia or some other East European country. Thus, India is step by step sliding away from the neutralist path and getting entangled and entrapped in the bear's embrace. All this can go on in the name of *Panch Shila*, and there is our veteran V. K. Krishna Menon to coat this pill with sweet socialist sugar.

Who would say that Nehru really wanted the country to go this way when he

declared several years ago that India should keep out of the power blocs? Nehru really wanted to keep out of it. But circumstances (and his own reactions to them) are leading him to act in a contrary direction and, as he acts, he justifies it in his own inimitable way.

This is not leadership. It is mere drifting—driven by world forces and by one's subconscious urges.

Not that there was no other way. If, for example, Nehru really wanted a 'peace-area' in Asia, he should have patched up his quarrel with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue at the earliest and offered to have a common defence pact between India, Pakistan and Ceylon to start with, to be joined later by Indonesia, Thailand and others. Instead, Kashmir was allowed to develop as a permanent cancer between the two countries. A great chance was thus missed in actually developing a peace area, instead of talking about it. It may be said that Pakistan would not have agreed to it. But the point is: was such a bold step ever conceived, and if so, why was it not attempted as seriously as the latest one of asking the Russian leaders to visit Kashmir and declare that it belongs to India?

The fact is that apart from the good intentions of keeping out of international power politics, Nehru had no concrete ideas as to how he should do it, how to give political shape to his ideas, what would be the political implications of his policy in later years, how his 'neutrality' would be linked up with military, political and economic issues which the country has to face. The only outcome of it was that India has become an active figure on the international stage—a role which peculiarly pleases Nehru psychologically.

In the economic field the Congress has a good record on the whole. The economy is stable, industrial production is on the increase, great enterprises such as river

valley projects, plants for fertilisers, steel, ship-building, ports, locomotives, cables, coaches, etc. have been launched successfully. The First Five Year Plan has been a success, though the targets were modest. The second one is now launched.

But the question is: what is the national pattern that is being woven? The country is not sure of it. Is the leadership sure? We have been offered several slogans: Co-operative Commonwealth, Mixed Economy, Welfare State, Socialistic Pattern, Socialism, Increasing Public Sector etc. And none of these is either well defined or excluded officially by the other slogans. In actual practice, however, socialism and the public sector are swiftly gaining momentum both in the Congress and in the public mind. Nationalisation of existing industries and financial institutions has lately been increasing. New large industries will be started by the State. Control over private industries has been tightened by a new Companies Act.

All these indicate that the economy of the country is steadily being transformed into a socialistic pattern. To what extent this is intended to be carried or what problems such a development would raise and how they can be met, or whether this is the best way for promoting the economic development of our country—these questions are still not raised. Whether the 'socialist' experience in Russia or other countries is encouraging enough for us to take to this line is also not sufficiently debated publicly. Nehru suddenly asked the Congress to accept the Socialistic Pattern as its goal (at the Avadi Session) and it was done. Why the goal of 'Co-operative Commonwealth' was given up, and, if not given up, how it corresponded with 'the socialistic pattern', nobody bothers about and nobody is expected to. What is meant by the socialistic pattern? To all appearances it means more and more of the public sector. How is the public sector to

be managed? 'We will see as the problem arises'—is the attitude. And as these State enterprises are being set up, civil service men and representatives of Indian capitalists are being nominated to run the show on behalf of the State. But the essential trend is that more and more of the Indian economy is being centralised and controlled by the State, and this process will be multiplied at a very fast rate in the next decade.

This is indeed socialism. How far is it from Gandhism? Or the Co-operative Commonwealth? The nett result is the growing accumulation of economic power with the State. Is it the much-vaunted *Indian* way of doing things, is it 'our way' of bringing about 'Indian socialism'?

THE truth is that the Congress leadership has no ideas about a new pattern of economic development, inspite of its tall talk about Gandhism. It has no attitude towards developing the public sector in a new way. It is consciously or unconsciously driven to acquiring more and more economic power in its own hands. It could not visualise the implications of its own goal formulated earlier as 'Co-operative Commonwealth' as a distinct and alternative line of economic development in contrast to capitalism and socialism. In short, it had no economic outlook. It therefore succumbed to 'socialism'. It is also interesting to note that it did so on the eve of the Andhra elections in order to defeat the Communists. This proved that the Congress had no faith in its own ideas and wanted to demonstrate that it also stood for socialism. This ideological defeatism is significant. Congress acceptance of 'socialism' would thus only pave the way for 'scientific socialists'. In the economic field, therefore, the Congress no longer leads; it follows.

The Congress is still the mightiest political organisation in the country. It has

the advantage of being in power and headed by a popular hero. But within its soul putrefaction has set in. Anti-British nationalism has lost its charm. Nationalism on an all-India basis has been weakened by linguistic nationalism in the provinces. The Congress offers no new outlook; either it vegetates, with power, privilege and all its corrupting influences, or it imitates the existing patterns of social development without discrimination and intelligence. The momentum of past associations in the public mind may carry it forward for a few more years. But it is not likely to withstand the strains and crises, internal as well as external, that are developing in the country.

IF nothing *new* emerges in India during the next few years, the perspective is one of slow and protracted *political* stagnation. The programme of rapid industrialisation with emphasis on heavy industries during the coming years will promote general economic discontent which will help to aggravate the political situation, providing ample scope to disintegrating influences. As a reaction to it, there will be attempts at setting up a 'strong government' at the Centre. But if Nehru is still alive, he will be a poor imitation of a dictator. Only a strong-willed Hindu revivalist can be an effective dictator in this country. This possibility is not to be excluded. If such a perspective opens up as a practical possibility, the Communists will try to consolidate their position in one or two of the provinces and to take them out of the Indian Union. If Pakistan becomes more openly associated with the Western Powers, as is very likely, Nehru will become more openly aligned with Russia and China, and thus find for India a place in the Eastern Bloc—a position that will satisfy the vanity of Nehru, which is an important factor in India's foreign policy. In that case, the Indian Commun-

ists will openly join Nehru to support his dictatorial regime with their clever dialectics and help to maintain law and order. And one day the proverbial camel will ask its owner to quit or do its building.

Is there no way out of this nightmarish possibility?

'If nothing new emerges in the coming years', I said earlier. What do I imply by the term 'new'? Another organisation? No. My analysis must have amply indicated that an organisation, howsoever big, is not enough. I mean a new outlook, a fresh approach to problems, new ideas and attitudes. The approaches so far tried have not worked. Their failure is writ large for those who have eyes to see and who are not taken in by the superficial glamour of things. Where the Congress leadership has failed is in terms of ideas. And since it could not offer anything of its own, it adopted the Communist approach as the only one available in the field instead of thinking things out for itself on fresh lines.

New thought does not fall from heaven. It emerges out of a *Samudra-Manthan* (churning of the sea) of human minds. Where is that process to be found? On the one hand, Nehru and the Congress leadership in the Centre and at State level discourage independent thought, encourage sycophancy, coldshoulder courageous critics and shove individual talents into dark corners, suppressing free discussion even within the Congress organisation, as if we are still being ruled by the Moghul dynasty. On the other hand, intellectuals themselves are only too eager to sell their talents to win the favours of the ruling class. Even if better ideas are offered, they do not attract notice, because they are not backed by what may be termed 'nuisance power', whereas whoever can make an effective nuisance of himself publicly is immediately attended to. In such a situation there can be no room for vigor-

ous and independent enquiry. Those who could do something in this respect would either let themselves alone or would give up their independence and try to find out what their bosses want. Thus, it is the bosses or the masses who matter here, not free, thinking, creative individuals.

What I mean by 'new', therefore, is, firstly, the release of the creative thinking individual from mental serfdom and from the present social atmosphere. Second, promotion of an active, virile and widespread intellectual movement to consider our specific as well as general problems *afresh* i.e. free from any kind of traditional authority. If this takes place, it may yet be possible to turn from our present march towards a calamity. New thought may emerge. New men may also take their rightful place in our national life. There will be an increasingly discriminating intellectual climate to consider the merits of given ideas from wherever they come. Democracy will no longer remain merely a form, but will develop a soul.

THE question, then, is: where shall we begin first?

The responsibility for the 'Nehru Phenomenon'—if we may use this phrase to indicate the peculiar kind of confused leadership which he offers India and the world—or the general absence of constructive criticism on concrete questions, belongs not merely to Nehru but also to the intelligentsia in this country. Therefore, the present vicious atmosphere in which Nehru to-day functions, has to be purified primarily by the intelligentsia. The beginning has to be made by individuals.

Take, for instance, the daily press of to-day. It has more or less become the mirror of the party in power. And yet it is run and manned by an important section of the Indian intelligentsia. We read mostly what our Ministers say and do. But there

is very little of the analytical and critical approach to events. The public is not given *at the right time and place* the necessary background information, and is not helped to consider the various alternative lines of thought on a particular problem. There is very little significant participation between the daily paper and its readership. The Press is more an extension of government's publicity efforts than an organ of the people's minds. And all this is not simply because the Government wants it to be so and asks the press directly or indirectly to be so. The main reason for it is the absence of responsibility among the leaders of the Press towards the people. This again is due to not taking one's own ideas and intellectual efforts more seriously. The task of the press is not merely to pronounce its own opinions on the issues of the day but also to help its readership think more and more independently and to share its thoughts intelligently with the community. If this latter task is undertaken by those who to-day man the Press, much of the colourless and uniform attitude of the people towards the popular hero would be replaced by a more intelligent appreciation of the situation, whether the hero likes it or not.

Take yet another field—the academic and the specialist. Much of our academic world is nauseatingly stereotyped and mechanistic. And yet it is the seat of our revered intellectual stalwarts. The country is going through a very exciting period of construction, of economic development, political experience both internal and external, social change, change in the field of education, in the attitudes of community life, etc. But how much of all this is seriously taken note of in academic circles? How many specific issues are studied with a fresh outlook in our universities by our scholars? There is a general attitude of cashing in on one's past academic honours and trying to scale the academic ladder by

group politics and other servile means. The vast field for applied research opened up since political independence remains largely unexplored. Young talent is not adequately guided in its research mostly because the guides are engrossed in problems of an administrative and personal nature. Those who are already known for their original contributions are fast being absorbed in the administrative wings of the Governmental apparatus. Those among them who are more individualistic and less adaptable are left alone to stew in their own juice, as a deterrent to the rest. The only way out of this suffocating intellectual climate is the determined and concerted effort on the part of those individual academicians who are still free from this moulding design. Instead of remaining satisfied with being advisors to the Government, they should consider it their responsibility to make available to the public their special approach to the problems of the day in a language which is easily understandable. This will help, on the one hand, the educated layman to participate in the discussion more intelligently, and to form his own independent opinion, and on the other, will enable the specialist to maintain his independent spirit without feeling lonely, isolated and neglected, as

he does to-day unless he 'toes the line' of the powers that be. This will in course of time enable the vascillating ones to be more self-reliant and self-respecting.

If even a modest beginning were made both with the Press and in academic centres of our country in the spirit suggested by me, a new ferment of ideas will start to initiate the much-needed process of revaluation of one's dearly-held (but not always well-considered) ideas on problems before the country. And when this process becomes mature, thinking individuals will begin to have more faith in and respect for themselves. It is only in this manner that the true foundations of an intelligent and free community will be laid.

P.S. Extract from a speech by Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari, Minister for Industry and Commerce to the Lok Sabha on April 16, 1956.

'It is however true that we have not yet evolved an economic philosophy of our own and such as exists is necessarily ambivalent. We have, perhaps, no clear idea of the entire picture of the economic future that we desire this country to have. We are apt to think in compartments without any attempts at synthesizing the conflicts that thinking in compartments necessarily engenders.'

DUAL

A man and a woman in a radical cage
 Grope and get bruised in an animal light,
 They get their crumbs from amused witnesses—
 The spectacled leopard, the highbrow camel
 And the highheeled deer.
 The discoloured skin of the two, dazzled
 By the alcoholic light, is blunt and smooth
 As the youngest palm of an innocent cactus.
 The two might declare harsh thorns and live
 As insensate as a cactus, piteously bristled
 And opposing the light.

ARUN KOLATKAR

RITA RUDRA

the nagas in revolt

'Indians treat us like dogs'

THE average educated Indian's knowledge of the Nagas was till recently limited to his long-forgotten geography lesson. 'The hills of Assam are not very high, but are thickly wooded, and infested with wild animals, including elephants. Besides these natural barriers for the country, the forests are inhabited by wild men known as the Nagas, who use poisonous arrows and are head-hunters.' That is all. During the Second World War Nagas suddenly came into prominence, and won the admiration of all fighting people. They proved 'loyal subjects', to the pride and amazement of the British, so acknowledged in Christopher von Furor Haimendorf's fascinating book *The Naked Nagas*. With their bravery still fresh in memory, the news that followed soon after Independence was extremely unpalatable to zealous Indian people. That any part of an independent Indian Republic should struggle for independence was beyond comprehension. The natural conclusion drawn from it was that foreign agents had once again been successful in alienating a section of our people. The British rulers and American missionaries are still held wholly responsible for the present struggle in the Naga Hills.

Whatever the basis of this belief, it is certainly far from the whole truth. Glos-

sing over the shortcomings of our own relationship with the Nagas does not exonerate us from our share of the blame. Only rigorous self-criticism can help us to think rightly and accept the responsibility in this matter. The underlying cause of the conflict to my mind is not political or even economic; it is a question of attitudes. The time is long overdue for us to study the attitude of the majority of Indians who come into contact with the Nagas. Only a re-education of our views, and those of the Nagas, can change the prejudices between these two groups. The very violence, the vehemence of the struggle now going on is an indication of the deep rooted hatred of India in the hearts of the majority of the Nagas.

At the very outset, some readers may object to the use of the words 'Indian' and 'Nagas' as though they were two different peoples. If we could resolve just this difference a major part of the conflict would die away. Most of us begin with the premise that the Nagas are Indians and that it is ridiculous for them as a free people to demand freedom. For the intelligentsia, acceptance of a vastly different race of people in this great peninsula as Indians is easy. But we might remind ourselves that though India may be a political union, it

still needs psychological integration as a nation at various levels. This is true for a large section of the more enlightened people of the country. How much more artificial then would be the feeling of 'belonging' in the remoter areas for a people who have been barely aware of India even as a geographical entity.

IN tribal life, where there is no written record of history or literature, the glorious past is recorded only in songs, the impressions so acquired are deep and almost impossible to eradicate. Facts play an imperceptible part in forming such impressions, and not much more in dispelling them. Beliefs die hard. And so, whatever the facts, the Nagas like to believe that they migrated from some distant land—perhaps Indonesia. One must acknowledge that there are striking ethnological affinities with various other Mongolian tribes, and where they migrated from is anyone's guess. Culturally too, they are more akin to their Mongolian neighbours than to the mixed races of India. Physically, however, the plains of Assam are more accessible than other neighbouring countries. There also seems to be some evidence of trade with India in the past. Other fraternal relationships with India have been limited to fighting their common enemy, the Ahom kings from across the border, who came as far as Sibsagar in Assam. Occasionally, not-such-fraternal relationship involved the loss of the head of some poor unsuspecting coolie working in the tea plantations of Assam.

Thus, whether it is acceptable or not to us, the Nagas consider themselves not only as quite distinct, but also independent of India. They have managed their affairs quite happily—since head-hunting and vendettas were 'all in the game' during many centuries, till the British forced themselves rudely but masterfully into their lives. Then changes came, as in a hidden

piece of antique object preserved perfectly until it is exposed to fresh air and sunlight, and then decay set in rapidly. Some anthropologists including Dr. Verrier Elwin would prefer to have the Nagas protected in their original state rather than corrupted by modern progressive civilization. At the other extreme are the zealous reformers and social uplift enthusiasts, who would transform them into modern prototypes overnight if they could. Alien elements such as petty government officials and police, missionaries, traders, teachers and others drifted in and have left their inevitable impact on the people. A reaction against external forces has set in.

THE Nagas realize only too well that they must change, but they want to be free to choose their own pattern of transformation. 'Leave us as you found us,' was the plea to their British conquerors before they withdrew. The plea was unheeded. A very unwilling and unprepared part of a geographical appendage was grafted on to the Indian Union—a mere division in the Province of Assam. Therefore it is that we hear them refer to the Naga Hills as 'Nagaland,' and the 'we' and 'they' mentality was deliberately fostered. Racially, culturally, politically, socially and even geographically, the Nagas maintain that they have never been a part of India, and have no feeling of loyalty to the Republic. They do not consider themselves Indians and do not take kindly to any advances in that direction.

Politically, among other things, their suspicion of India's refusal to grant them freedom springs from the belief that India is using them as a buffer state. All public facilities, such as roads etc., that are being constructed there by Government, at great cost, are looked upon with distrust. The benefits that accrue are immeasurable, and the people are not blind to this fact. Besides, the area is undoubtedly Frontier, and in

her larger interest, India has to mobilize it. For the average Indian the Government is, perhaps, not coping with this need sufficiently. But, despite the inevitability of her strategic position, the people shy at the thought of their homeland being used as a battleground. They fail to realize that a battleground it has been and might be again in the future, and that civic amenities would help to protect her more efficiently than if she were left entirely as she is. Neglect would be criminal on the part of any government. But suspicion is a poison that can ruin most relationships.

On the cultural side there are many minor differences that add up to a much-bruised spirit. Here, more than at any other level, the hiatus is wider and deeper. I maintain that a change of attitude, and a sympathetic study of cultural differences will lead to greater tolerance, although not necessarily to an acceptance of them.

The pattern of tribal life amongst the Nagas is designed to promote community life rather than family ties. This contrasts with the more sophisticated Hindu pattern of society, where the joint family's interest is usually more important than that of the community. The Nagas, like many other tribes, have the dormitory system for their young people. All bachelors reside in the 'morung' till they are 30 years of age or married. Similarly with the girls. Thus a child is weaned from home at an early age, and a spirit of self-reliance and mutual help developed which is most refreshing to witness. There is a healthy mixing of the two sexes and much merry-making. Subject to tribal taboos, a young man is usually free to marry the girl of his own choice. Many Indians who visit the Naga Hills are not able to appreciate this spirit of freedom and self-confidence, specially among the women. The Second World War brought several armies to the Naga territory. It is surprising to hear from the people of the scruples of the Japanese soldier towards

the Naga womenfolk. Unfortunately, the worst reputation was left behind by our own men and there is a deep distrust towards them. The prejudice continues, and the people are most reluctant to allow their daughters to go beyond the Naga Hills for further education and training, and are wary of sending even their sons.

HOSPITALITY plays an important part in Naga life, and is sincerely warm and overwhelmingly generous towards visitors. But hospitality can at times be an uncomfortable factor to contend with. It has been one of the causes of discomfiture for visitors and has led to much unnecessary misunderstanding. The Nagas are a hard-working, sturdy people and eat and drink heartily. They eat almost any kind of meat that is available. Drinking rice-beer or black tea is almost a ritual with them. Cleanliness is not quite in accordance with accepted standards amongst the uneducated Nagas. Yet, conforming to their code of friendship, a guest is offered at least a mug of rice-beer or tea, or meat or betelnut. Refusal to accept this offer would be taken as a sign of enmity.

It is embarrassing for a good Hindu officer to find a cow being slaughtered in token of the highest honour they can bestow upon him. Pork is more commonly eaten as it is cheaper, and it is awkward, to say the least, for those who are forbidden to touch it. The common man from India who happens to find himself in the Naga Hills on duty, and not from choice or any high aspirations of promoting goodwill and brotherhood, does not bother to hide his disgust and is contemptuous of their customs. The Naga is naturally deeply hurt and feels insulted. Further, when the Naga visits the plains of Assam, or any other part of India, he is treated with as little courtesy as an outcaste or untouchable, and his pride is deeply injured

He refuses to accept fraternal relationship at any other level. If a man refuses to break bread with him, he feels he has not been fully accepted, and he has no patience with half-measures in friendship. This has been, in modified ways, the reaction of several Naga students in large cities where the homes of even their teachers have been closed to them. The lack of any warmth towards them, in contrast with their own rich hospitality, has turned them away from us and they feel like foreigners in an unfriendly land. The Nagas fail to understand our caste restrictions, and refuse to accept them. They have too much self-respect to bow down to any other peoples' convenient notion of self-emancipation by virtue of birth.

To sum up: The Nagas have an impression that Indians are a cold, unlovable people. Time and again they have said that Indians treat them 'like dogs.' The unfortunately high-handed and arrogant behaviour of some petty officials has only strengthened this belief. All these bitter experiences have had a very detrimental effect on their faith in a fair deal from India. It is significant to note that many

sympathisers and followers of the 'rebel' party are people who have lived in India and have suffered social discrimination. We have failed to establish a more human approach to the Nagas.

I refuse to discuss the importance of the role of foreign agents because it is all too simple for us to make a scapegoat of anyone in that position, and then sit back smugly. It is better for the majority and mightier party to be erred against, for it can survive the wrong. But it should take warning and tread cautiously, or else it is easy enough to crush a tiny minority of people.

We have already lost innumerable opportunities of making a valuable friendship. We would have to seek new ways of making amends now, if it is not too late already. It is in protest against non-acceptance that these courageous people are rebelling. We ought to be proud of such a spirit, and spare no pains to ultimately win their goodwill. Our national life would be greatly enriched by their friendship and loyalty, once they freely pledge themselves citizens of this country.

PREUVES

a monthly magazine

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SADHAN KUMAR GHOSH

cecil day lewis

the evolution of a poet

THE poetry of Cecil Day Lewis illustrates, to a certain extent, the victory of tradition over experiment. His first published poetry was a turning-point in English Literature. He was one of the *New Signatures* Group who published their joint anthology in 1932. The Thirties was a decade of troubled conscience and collective guilt. The *New Signatures* poets felt that society was breaking down and had a dim notion that the only hope was Marx. It was the decade dominated by Victor Gollancz's Left Book Club. There was a general feeling that Fascism was growing and must be resisted. The intellectual and emotional background of the time has been summed up by Herbert Read:

'These pages will make sufficiently clear that I consider the no-man's-years between the wars as largely futile, spent unprofitably by me and all my kind. I do not pretend to know how we could have made them more positive: the forces against us were not human but satanic—blind forces of economic drift with the walls of faith

and reason turning to air behind us.' (*Annals of Innocence and Experience*)

It is safe to say that the *New Signatures* was a near Communist group, though so percipient a person as W. B. Yeats could write in 1936: 'Many of these poets have called themselves Communists, though I find in their work no trace of the recognised Communist Philosophy and the practising Communist rejects them'. But he conceded that Communism was their *Deus ex Machina* and their Santa Claus. Now that Auden is recognised as an American Episcopalian, Spender has publicly debunked the god that failed, and Macneice is considered an old-fashioned individualist, it is necessary also to remember that in those days Day Lewis was the poet nearest to the orthodox Communist position.

Stephen Spender, writing in *Britain Today* disapproves of the popular habit of lumping himself Auden and Day Lewis into a group. In the Thirties, he points out, they were never at any time together and the first time the three met was at the

P.E.N. Conference in 1949 in Venice. Still, there was a family resemblance and there was some point in grouping them in relation to the time. Apart from social compassion, which was common to them, was there any other link? Yes, these poets were perturbed by a world of apparent safety and real drift; perturbed by appeasement, pogroms and Concentration Camps. They turned naturally from this drift and inaction to images of danger and of conscious human purpose. G. S. Fraser has summed up their common purposes and attitudes: 'They felt a certain deadness in the England around them. They wanted to make men more and more alive to the tensions and dangers of the time, to the possible power and purpose and beauty of the time also. Thus the image of machinery with its controlled power fascinated them: and Spender wrote about pylons and railway engines lyrically as older poets might write of clouds and roses. Machinery signified energy and what a weak and drifting decade needed was energy more than anything else. "Drink here of energy, and only energy": from some points of view that phrase of Spender's might be taken to sum up the attitudes of the whole group.'

CECIL DAY LEWIS' first book was an eclogue, *The Beechen Vigil*. It was right and appropriate that the future translator of *Virgil's Georgics* and *Eclogues* should thus begin his poetic career. At Oxford he fell under the mercurial glamour of Auden, who was a contemporary. I am convinced that the influence was not healthy for Day Lewis. For a while the two poets developed something like a private idiom. It is noteworthy that even in this undergraduate poetry there is little obscurity.

Then came the *New Signatures* phase. But even in the *Transitional Poem* (1929), the poet broods lovingly over the bluebells

and primroses, the little lark veining the sky with song, the litanies of leaves from the tormented wood. The combustion engines which occur occasionally are not in true keeping and seem to have been vamped up to produce an effect of modernism. Whitman is the most clearly discernible influence, apart of course, from Auden.

Whitman's influence is apparent also in *From Feathers to Iron* (1931). The first poem has been rightly acclaimed as a great one:

*Suppose that we tomorrow or the next day
Came to an end in storm the shafting
broken,*

*Or a mistaken signal the flange lifting —
Would that be premature, a text for sorrow?*

*Say what endurance gives or death denies
us,*

*Love is proved in its creation, not eternity.
Like leaf or linnet the true heart's affection
Is born, dies later, asks no reassurance.*

This is the manifesto of a lover of life and of one who is not perturbed by the flux of things. The student of literary history may recall the case of Wordsworth who tried to be a political poet without success. Professor Garrod cites the case of *Descriptive Sketches*, a poem written in 'full faith of the French Revolution' and a complete failure. It is only fair to mention that Wordsworth, the lost leader, wrote equally arid poems in condemnation of the Revolution and Bonaparte. But his mind had become a mansion for lovely forms, and the inland murmur of the Wye had inoculated him against the frustrations and disappointments of politics.

Something similar happened to Day Lewis quite early. He was profoundly uneasy during the Thirties. The cult of violence and power was growing and at any time the 'absolute dictators' might plunge Europe into total war. The dawn of his dreams might be postponed indefinitely. A few poems of this period are frankly

Housmanish—no one, incidentally, has mentioned the influence of A. E. Housman on Cecil Day Lewis—and have the same elegiac quality. Like Housman, he was haunted by the thought that the phoenix hour comes only once and cannot be recalled. But his more resilient temper always enabled him to draw comfort and consolation from the pageant of Nature. When he tried the modernist idiom and talked of beauty's end being in sight, he spoke from a brief and was unconvincing. When he sang of the glory of living in the best Whitman tradition, and of beauty breaking ground in strange places, he spoke from and straight to the heart.

What did it matter if the fascists were round the corner and the green flags of summer were all taken? The full-throated daffodils, 'trumpeters in gold', the almond tree turning pink, the willow herb growing on abandoned slapheaps, promised eternal and unfading summers—summers which are imperishable because they are built of man's hopes and dreams.

The Magnetic Mountain (1953) is the one book, that may, with some justification, be called near-Communist. There are frequent references to his friends, Wystan (W. H. Auden) and Rex (Rex Warner) and the poet seems intent, not indeed on creating a private world but a group world. Despite all his protests, this is the constant aim of the Communist worker when he cannot have his way. Day Lewis' favourite image, that of the flying airman, 'the hoverer in wind' his 'kestrel joy', comes up again and again in almost every poem. It would seem that the poet was seeking some sort of emotional release through this kestrel joy. All his anger is directed against those who are 'getters not begetters', 'the yellow yes-men', 'boneless wonders' unburstable bouncers'. (Ramsay Macdonald?)

'On the immediate surface', claims Scarfe, 'the Mountain is Communism and the

Communist State. And whether by coincidence or design, the Mountain recalls the image of La Montagne which was the first name of the great revolutionary mass of Jacobins during the French Revolution.' Nonetheless it would be unfair to suggest that even the Magnetic Mountain represented a complete surrender to Communism. The Mountain was a symbol of his Shangri-la, his House Beautiful. And when the poet claims:

*Magnetic Mountain is not far
Across no gulf or Continent
Not where you think but what you are*
he is a mystic rather than a Communist.

These three poems—*Transitional Poem*, *Feathers to Iron*, and *The Magnetic Mountain*—derived much of their impetus from the pamphleteering urge which characterised the Thirties.

Malcolm Muggeridge in *The Thirties* gives a harrowing account of the religious desire to reform the world which possessed the decade. The poetry of the Thirties is essentially a poetry of programmes.

THE idea of coming conflict or struggle which naturally became an obsession with Day Lewis for a while colours also his next poem, *Time to Dance* (1935). John Strachey singled out his *Conflict* as a symbolic poem of the class-struggle. The poet was convinced that neutrality was a sham and that in a class-struggle one must take sides:

*Move then with new desires
For where we used to build and love
Is no man's land and only ghosts can live
Between two fires.*

The difference between this and the earlier non-political proletarian poetry of the century may be seen by comparing Day Lewis' *Losers* with Masfield's *Consecration*. Day Lewis sheds no tears for those whom life has deprived of their dues.

A poem like *In Me Two Worlds*

indicates that there was a struggle within the poet's soul apart from the class struggle he was envisaging. The poet seems to be a tragic character, almost one from Shakespeare's pages. But the dominant note is not one of gloom or sadness. For it is a time to dance, to celebrate the coming life; the sunlit fields will provide the floor; the wood larks supply the music. Out of the nettles, the poet plucks a flower.

It has been argued that Day Lewis' poetry begins to change its texture, temper and starting-point from *Overtures to Death* (1938). That this should be so is surely remarkable. Not only does the year of publication coincide with that of Munich but the longest of the poems, *Nabarra*, is about the Spanish Civil War. The Spanish Civil War produced the same emotional impact on the *New Signatures* poets as the First World War produced on an earlier generation. There is little doubt, though, about the change. From now on, the principal influence is W. B. Yeats. His Irish blood made him susceptible to another Irish influence—Thomas Moore. Other important influences are Thomas Hardy and Emily Bronte.

A FEW of the poems will survive the contemporary excitement and be remembered for a curious 'prophetic' quality. 'Prophetic' in the sense that Isaiah's *Mountain of God* is prophetic. A sonnet *When they have lost* is comparable to Spender's better-known poem *After they have tired of the brilliance of cities*. This is the poetry of promised lands, inspired by the Pisgah feeling all political poets know.

Then, of course, there are the *Word over All* (1943), *Poems* (1943-47) and *An Italian Visit* (1953). Day Lewis was aware of a sense of release and liberation. He knew that the second war would produce less memorable poetry than the first, for those who lived by honest dreams were merely

defending 'the bad against the worse'. 'Popular' poetry gave way to reflective poems and poems of self-exploration. The new freedom is visible in all these poems and was aided by his translations from Virgil and Paul Valéry. He had always been rather ill at ease with the shock tactics which suited Auden better. He had returned to the English tradition of pastoral poetry.

One of the most significant aspects of the change is his stress on the abiding things. Like Blake and Wordsworth he openly advocates simplicity and sincerity and praises the many moods of a child. A sustained tribute to childhood is paid in *O dreams, O destinations*, a series of nine rich and compact sonnets. 'There the thought is no longer explicit but involved in a continuous stream of images. The sequence follows the order of man's transformation from childhood to old age, from dreams to destinations. Lewis' return to the theme of childhood and to the past is a sign of his desire to go back to the source of inner experience.' (*Raymond Tschumi*)

His evident desire to fall in line with English tradition may be seen also in his tributes to Emily Bronte, Thomas Hardy and Walter De La Mare. All these are poets unaffected by the strange disease of modern life. He salutes Hardy reverentially:

*Yet you abide
In the shadow and sheen
All the mellowing traits of a countryside
That nursed your tragi-comical scene.*

He acknowledges that man will always need magic and elfin poetry, the poetry of De La Mare.

*Pass, friend, you bear
Gifts that, although men commonly flout
them,
Being hardened, or born to live without
them,
Are none the less rare.*

He admits that in the Thirties they had been too much in earnest. In *An Italian Visit*, he is inclined to ridicule the horizon-addicts and future-fans. The theme of this poem is indicated by a quotation from Jasper More: '*An Italian Visit* is a voyage of discovery not only of scenes and cities, but also of the latent faculties of the traveller's heart and mind.'

Now that Jonathan Cape have published his collected poems it is possible to form an overall estimate of Cecil Day Lewis. Clifford Dymont describes him as the poet of our modern ambivalence. 'He is a private poet whose private vision gives clarity to his public view; a public poet whose public view enlarges his private vision.' He will, however, be remembered for the intermittent magic of his 'early' poems and the more consistent magic of his

mature ones. No poet is remembered solely for his philosophy or his message. Philosophy and humanity, it has been said, are reserve forces to be brought up when the poet's youth is going. Day Lewis remains the poet of youth, the poet of eldritch lights and phoenix hours. He will be remembered for his emphasis on the abiding things of life: remembered as a poet of returning illusions, the vista drowned in gold-dust haze, the succory holding a gem of halcyon ray; remembered as a poet who made one devoted gesture of permanence on the spray of shaken stars and autumns; a poet of rose-gold evenings in Florence, the goldfinches in flight, the olives and vines flagging from hill to hill; a poet of the unforgettable here and immemorial now; a poet of rediscovered Edens and a larger destiny.

SONG

The gross sun squats above
A valley full of shadows.
The wizard plays his flute
And lizards in green meadows
And archers in pursuit
Of unicorn and dove
Grow dumb and cannot move.

Now dancers, stones for eyes,
And meadowgrass for hair,
To whom the four winds kneel,
Wheel in unspoken prayer.
Only this prayer seems real.
Lightly the flute sighs:
No living voice replies.

But breezes talk to trees
While seasons come and go
And in frail winter light
Pale feathers of the snow
Will flutter and alight
Bearing a branch of peace
And dance and flute will cease.

DOM MORAES

THE POZNAN RIOTS

Two Statements

'When workers can no longer endure the conditions under which they live, they resort to the strike, and their right to strike is recognised in all free countries. It is the absence of this right in the Soviet Empire—the USSR and its satellites—which has brought about in Poznan the intervention of troops and tanks against protesting workers who are accused as criminals liable to capital punishment.

The undersigned declare their complete solidarity with the victims of this bloody and terrible repression. They demand that no further executions take place and that there be public trials in the presence of witnesses who have the confidence of the democratic West. They protest against the transparent and contemptible manoeuvre by which workers demanding their right to live are represented as foreign agents.

They demand, moreover, that an international inquiry be organised so that the Western world can be informed of the most pressing needs of the Polish working class and can bring relief to the workers as quickly as possible.

And, in particular, they urge democratic workers' organisations to make international arrangements for a vast collection of funds so that these organisations can demonstrate, with deeds as well as with words, their solidarity with the workers of Poland.'

(Signed)

Albert Camus,
Karl Jaspers,
Jeanne Hersch,
Arthur Koestler,
Francois Mauriac,
Jean Rounault,
Andre Philip,
Ignazio Silone,
Stephen Spender,
Manes Sperber,
Alexandre Weissberg-Cybulski.

The Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom is circulating the following statement to prominent Indian writers, thinkers and public men. It will be issued to the press when a sufficient number of signatures have been obtained.

'The tragic events which took place in the industrial city of Poznan have once again focussed attention on the denial of ordinary human rights in countries behind the Iron Curtain. Ordinarily, when workers are dissatisfied with their conditions of life and work they resort to strikes in order to express their protest and voice their demands. But when, as in communist-dominated countries, the right to strike is denied, the workers' protest readily takes the form of a revolt against the regime.

The revolt of the workers of Poznan has now been crushed with guns and tanks. Thousands of workers have been arrested and a few have been reported to be executed. Savage repression has now been let loose against workers and their friends. It is now clear from the little information that is available that the workers of Poland were long dissatisfied with their conditions of life and work. And it is this dissatisfaction which found expression in the riots of Poznan.

Keenly interested as we are in the struggles of toiling masses for bread and freedom, we declare our solidarity with the workers of Poznan. We demand that the repression that has started against the leaders of the workers be halted and that nobody be punished or otherwise dealt with except after a public judicial trial. We protest against the use of troops and tanks to put down what was originally an ordinary demonstration of workers. We demand justice and fair play for the workers of Poznan, who have by their brave protest thrown some revealing light on the real conditions of workers in communist-dominated countries.'

G. P. PRADHAN &
A. K. BHAGWAT

Lokamanya Tilak

the politician and the reformer

TO-DAY, a century after his birth and thirty-six years after his death, it requires a special imaginative effort to transport ourselves to the times in which Tilak lived and worked. Even though the impressive record of his political activity is still fresh in our minds, the whirligig of time has brought its own revenges. 'Mr. Tilak's principles of work have been accepted, the ideas which he had so much trouble to enforce have become the commonplaces and truisms of our political thoughts. The only question that remains is the rapidity of a now inevitable evolution,' wrote Aurobindo even during Tilak's life-time, while hailing him as 'a leader of all India.'

Today, the 'inevitable evolution' too is a truism. Most of the ideas for which he worked during a public life of forty years have become as common as the air we breathe; so that it is difficult to realize in how many of these he was a pioneer. Cutting out a new path in public life by devoting himself wholly to the cause of education, turning a news-

paper into a views paper with definite editorial policy; bringing politics and political ideas from the platform oratory of the stilted Victorian kind to the hearths and homes of the masses, organizing a political party with mass organization and mass basis; courting imprisonment for one's ideas; these are undoubtedly impressive achievements. In a free India our task is to purge many of these ideas and institutions from the evils that have crept into them. It is a different set-up, politically and psychologically, and yet there is one sphere in which there has been little change. Indian society still shows the same basic conflicts and divergent views. Communalism and casteism, superstition and irrationalism still hold sway. This stagnant state shows that the present is inextricably linked with the past and the future is only the present repeating itself. To glance in these times at the achievements and shortcomings of a giant of the past is both interesting and instructive.

This article is not intended to be an

exhaustive account of Tilak's achievements in all the fields in which he worked. We leave his politics alone while gratefully acknowledging the part he played in awakening a dormant nation to its political duty. It is intended in the first place to place his ideas against the background of the Indian Renaissance movement. In the second place, an attempt will be made to compare his views with those of his friend and compeer Agarkar, and lastly it would be seen how in the latter phases of his career he became aware of the limitations of his own social philosophy and in the practical field of politics had to concede to the necessity of a wider synthesis.

The urges which found expression in India's struggle for freedom were not just material urges; they were an outcome of India's cultural traditions and part of her Renaissance movement.

The Indian Renaissance began with Raja Ram Mohun Roy. He saw the need of modernising Indian culture and of bringing it to the level of Western culture. He believed that the basis for Indian Renaissance could be found in the ancient Vedantic doctrines. This Vedanta, according to him, had the universal elements of religion to be found in Indian Culture. Ram Mohan Roy believed that humanity will have to evolve a universal religion and for that purpose all religions in the world would have to discard idolatry and superstitious growths in order to purify themselves. He also realised that Hindu Culture would have to undergo a social and religious transformation and to establish social equality between man and woman and between the various castes and communities of India. He, therefore, made efforts to remove superstitious religious practices like idolatry and inhuman religious practices like 'Sati'. There were two trends in Ram Mohan Roy's thought with regard to the immediate tasks of an Indian reformer. The first was to revive the Vedanta doct-

rine in its pure form, and the other was to westernise Indian Culture to some extent, by absorbing the progressive principles which the Western nations were adopting for the transformation of their social structure. He was particularly influenced by the ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. These two trends in his thoughts may be called the national and the universal elements. The subsequent development of this phase of the Renaissance movement was not able to successfully synthesize the two elements and within forty years, in Bengal, it was split up into two or three sects, and lost its hold.

A Movement cannot grow in an uninterrupted manner and society is swayed by diverse forces giving rise to different movements. In England 'the Renaissance' was followed by 'the Reformation'. In the India of modern times, the movement of cultural renaissance was followed by the revivalist movement which was fundamentally different from the former, because the urges which promoted it were different. This phase in India's cultural life may be said to have begun in the times of Ramkrishna Paramhansa and it reached its zenith in the triumphal tours of Vivekananda in America and England. During this phase the Indian Vedanta doctrine was revived and given a new orientation. It was linked up with Indian nationalism and the superiority of Indian culture over western European began to be stressed.

Tilak and his contemporary nationalist political leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal also took up this Vedantic outlook as the basis of their nationalism. Simultaneously with this change of attitude in India, a similar change was taking place in Western European philosophy. It had begun to move in the direction of idealism and nationalism as against the rationalism and humanism of the liberals. The pragmatic philosophy of

William James had a religious slant and he accepted the potentiality of Vedanta to evolve a science of religious experience. In England, Hegelian idealistic thought grew in influence at the end of the 19th Century. In France, Bergson began to preach the doctrine of intuition and questioned the self-sufficiency of reason and materialist determinism. All this confirmed the Indian nationalists in their faith that the spiritual outlook of Indian Culture was once again going to prevail in the world and that a new turn would be given to human culture by the Resurgent Asiatic Nations.

THIS self-confidence of the Indian nationalists with regard to India's ancient culture, continued to grow during the first twenty years of the 20th century and they looked upon the First World War as the destined end of European supremacy and an opportunity for Asiatic nations to come to the forefront and to inaugurate a new epoch of human culture. Tilak made a very great contribution to this phase of India's cultural life through his work both in the academic and in the political spheres.

It would be unjust to say merely that Tilak contributed to this phase. It is necessary to state his position in metaphysics, ethics and sociology.

Comte stated that the human mind in its evolution has passed through three stages: (i) Theological (ii) Metaphysical and (iii) Positive. Of these stages, according to Comte, the positive stage was the final and the most evolved. Tilak disagreed with Comte and maintained that the Metaphysical stage was the final stage, as in it there is a realisation that thought has the power to go beyond experience and to form certain conceptions; but while insisting on the necessity of metaphysics, Tilak admitted that it was imperfect. Here he followed Spencer. But whereas Spencer took an agnostic position, Tilak acknowledged the validity of mystic experience.

While discussing ethical problems, Tilak, like Comte, mentioned the three different attitudes viz. (i) Materialist (ii) Theological and (iii) Spiritual. Tilak discarded the materialist approach, because he believed that mechanical determinism was the final phase of Materialism and he argued that mechanical determinism was thoroughly inconsistent with any ethics. Tilak pointed out that Mill, who was a Utilitarian, had to admit that there was a qualitative distinction between different kinds of happiness. Tilak accepted the social aspect of ethics as pointed out by Mill and fervently advocated the idea of 'Lokasangraha' in Gita-Rahasya. At the same time, he emphasized the need of discarding egotism and laid stress on 'disinterested action'. He pointed out that in Hindu philosophy the emphasis was laid on salvation and in Western philosophy promoting social good, and further declared that the Bhagavadgita was a higher synthesis as it advocated the ideal of Lokasangraha by Sthitaprajnas (action for social good by those who have attained philosophic calm owing to their unattached attitude). Tilak admitted that disinterested service of humanity was the future form of religion. His attitude may therefore be summed up as 'spiritual humanism' and if he had divorced metaphysics from ethics, his attitude would have been termed as 'rational humanism.'

In respect of sociology, he accepted as a basis the ethical and metaphysical ideas which he advocated. He therefore held that society should be based on social duty and that all have equal dignity and equal reward, i.e. salvation. He accepted material inequality in society on the ground that most people with their attachment to life needed incentives. Tilak pointed out that the Vedanta advocated the concept of equality, but the metaphysical ideal could not be a reality in society because the selfishness of the

average individual could not be eradicated. Tilak argued that a sociologist had to be a realist and justified the concept of the four Varnas in the Smritis. In support of his view he made a reference to the opinion of Comte that society's structure in future will require a four-estates system of which the first position would be occupied by the scientists and by those who guide industry. This class would be further substitutes for the priestly order of the middle ages. The Smritikars, thus, could not practise the ideals preached in the Upanishads. Tilak also defended the Mahayana Sect in Buddhism which, according to him, was more realistic than Buddhism or Jainism, which emphasized equality. He similarly approved of the realistic approach of St. Paul. It is apparent that in his sociological ideals he was a pragmatist and argued that ideals would have to be modified in the light of experience. This attitude was in sharp contrast with that of Agarkar, who always said to Tilak: 'You are a Mimamsaka.' The obvious implication was that Tilak had not the making of a prophet.

AN understanding of the development of Tilak's views is not possible without considering his relations with Agarkar. They were together in the impressionable period of their life, worked together in the educational and journalistic sphere, disagreed and parted company. Agarkar at first acted as an inspiration, and it seems almost certain that it was through him that Tilak reconciled his original views of renunciation in the religious sense with the western ideal of service to humanity. In the first year of the *Kesari* when Agarkar proudly proclaimed that the *Kesari* was a dweller in the midland between absolute faith and disbelief, Tilak was not very much in disagreement. On one occasion he had crossed swords with the great Ranade, saying that the humanitarianism of a Mill

and Spencer was superior to the teachings of any ancient religion.

Upto 1885 Tilak seems to have shared Agarkar's views about dormant orthodoxy in Hindu society, though he did not always approve of the defiant and iconoclastic attitude of Agarkar. Growing experience of public life however widened the rift between them.

Agarkar, taking his stand on individual liberty and thoughtful rational humanitarianism as the future and higher form of religion, condemned the caste system for its inequalities. For this principle or stability he wanted the principle of change. Tilak thought that it was because of caste that India had held its own through the centuries. The contact between the West and the East was to him a contact between the spiritualist and the materialist, between a system based on determinism and one based on free-will. The Western system led to inequalities of income and made human relations a form of contract. No system, argued Tilak, was without its defects, and on this ground he was ready to condone the faults of the caste system. He hoped that it could be used as a tie to keep together the divergent elements in society, an integrating principle, giving support to the individual and inculcating in him the high principles of morality, dignity and self-respect. As a social and secular organization for the preservation of hereditary occupations and for the purposes of mutual help and co-operation, it was to him like the Trade Guilds in Europe during the middle ages.

Tilak, as was rightly pointed out by Agarkar, mixed up social and economic issues. The determination of a person's occupation according to birth had nothing to do with the inequalities of Western society. Caste could not be good because class was bad. The four-class structure advocated by Comte which Tilak used

in support of his argument was essentially different from the Hindu Varna System. It had a place in Comte's new religion of humanity and this was in essentials different from orthodox Hinduism. In this, as in other instances, Tilak showed himself a Mimamsaka who would comment on existing texts and authorities alone, never going beyond them.

Agarkar with his wider study of history could go much beyond any authority. Thus when Tilak opposed an increase in the salary of the life-members of the Deccan Education Society, pointing out that it was opposed to Jesuitical principles, Agarkar insisted that he was not sure if the Jesuitical Society had done more harm than good in history and that it did not allow freedom of thought, on which the members of the Fergusson College prided themselves.

Tilak's advocacy of the line of least resistance in the social sphere had a strategic advantage. He could thus use the energies of the socially orthodox for political work. It was true that the same individual, as he said, could not accomplish all tasks, and some compartmentalizing was necessary. The method of revivalism that he used through the Ganpati and Shivaji festivals enabled him to win the confidence of the masses as the liberal politicians could never do. He also succeeded in modernizing the masses to a certain extent by touching their hearts when he established contact with traditional mass psychology. His intention was to revive the creative spirit of the old times and not the form of the old institutions or religion. The tragedy however was that in the hands of his followers and to the uneducated who took part in these festivals the form was more important than the spirit. So long as the masses were not conscious of their rights, revivalism was an important instrument of mass education, but once awakened it became a drag on them, retarding progress. It thus proved to be a good ser-

vant but a bad master. When the masses were awakened Tilak could at least have expressed his approval of the work of reformers without actively taking part in it. Instead, he took sides and was definitely hostile towards reformers. In making common cause with the socially reactionary elements, Tilak had placed his foot on a sliding precipice, the inevitable result of which was that he became indistinguishable from the most orthodox.

THIS orthodox stand of Tilak had again a local background. Neither Lala Lajpat Rai nor Bipin Chandra Pal in a later day was a social reactionary, even though each held a radical position in politics. In the all-India context, therefore, nationalism was not co-existent with orthodoxy. In Maharashtra, with memories of the rule of the Peshwas still fresh in the minds of the people, there was a smouldering discontent, giving rise to a deep-seated political antagonism to British rule. Maharashtra could not react to the liberal values of life in the same way as Bengal did. The Prarthana Samaj could never take roots in Maharashtra as the Brahmo movement did in Bengal or the Arya Samaj in the Punjab.

Tilak's making common cause with socially reactionary forces is often justified on the ground that a hero shares the limitations of his time and of his followers. This is only a partial truth. For a hero may not fight on all fronts, but in fighting one kind of evil, he can at least make people conscious of evils in other fields. Tilak could not have started a crusade against reactionary tendencies, but he could certainly have expressed his disapproval. Instead, he sided with them but went farther than any orthodox person in criticising them. Malabari, the social reformer of his days, made a similar mistake. He condemned the political worker, and deserved the following rebuke of the veteran Dadabhai.

'In the present number of the *Indian Spectator*, you have three times hit the political reformers, who are always for equality between themselves and the English Now my dear fellow, what an amount of unnecessary mischief you are doing. By all means fight for the merits of your cause, but why unnecessarily discredit and discourage other movements?'

Tilak too deserved such a rebuke, but with the death of Agarkar nobody could give it to him effectively. Social reformers of a later day were lukewarm in politics, and Tilak could afford to pooh-pooh their ideas and neglect them utterly, with his growing confidence in his own capacity of arousing people for political action. Agarkar's death was thus the end of an epoch. He was the last of the Radical Liberals. Henceforth in Maharashtra, liberalism was always on the defensive, and had ultimately to retire to the backwaters of politics.

By 1916 the need of a wider synthesis in the political sphere became patent, and Tilak strained every nerve to bring about the Lucknow Pact, with the Muslims. The non-Brahmin classes, however, still stood aloof. They constituted a separate group, and when the Home Rule memorandum was sent to Mr. Montague they declared themselves independent of the demands of the more advanced classes. Tilak, writing on them in 1917, shows a new attitude. He welcomes their self-confidence, rightly points out that it was more a question of the differences between the educated and the uneducated, and hopes that if they could prove to the non-Brahmins by example that they were not opposed to their demands their present agitation based on social inequality would merge into the wider struggle of political independence. This attitude of Tilak shows his attempt at evaluating the new forces in a realistic manner, and yet his analysis is undoubtedly one of political expediency. As a practi-

cal politician Tilak could see that the resurgent and newly awakened backward classes could no longer be ignored and were a force to reckon with. He went even further and was ready to give an assurance that the advanced classes would do their best to help their less fortunate brethren.

Old prejudices die hard and it is also difficult to cut oneself away from one's past. On the eve of his departure for England in 1918, Tilak attended a conference of untouchables organized by Vithal Ramji Shinde. This he did at the persistent requests of Shinde, but he did not forget to remind Shinde that he was doing this in his individual capacity as Tilak and not as the editor of the *Kesari*! In his speech at the conference Tilak went so far as to declare, 'If a God were to tolerate untouchability, I would not recognize him as a God at all'. Noble and sincere words were these, but the conference had a curious sequel. Shinde brought out a memorandum for the removal of untouchability and collected signatures of members of all castes and communities. The Lokamanya was on the point of signing it, but at the last moment declined.

In theory, therefore, while Tilak had to see the necessity of going beyond his narrow orthodox stand in social matters, his past and his environment still clung to him and he had to think twice before he took any stand which could be construed as reformist and progressive. The lack of an integrated outlook in the nationalist ideology was now only too apparent, and it was only after the emergence of a Gandhi on the political horizon, with a programme of reform on all fronts, that prejudices vanished and national leadership could, to a large extent, win the confidence of the backward communities. In theory at any rate Tilak eventually veered round to the position of Agarkar. Only what was *a priori* with the prophet Agarkar was *a posteriori* with the politician Tilak.

variety

theatre

cinema

dance

Tagore in the Bengali Cinema

THE influence of Rabindranath Tagore on Modern Bengal's cultural life is too pronounced to escape notice. It has been noticed even by the otherwise culturally indifferent people of the film-world. Producers and directors of Indian films are as a rule delightfully uninterested in the broader artistic movements of our country, about the different forms of aesthetic creation—including the history of and recent trends in their own sphere of activity, namely, film making, the world over.

Nevertheless, Tagore being too powerful and living a factor in Bengal's creative life—from poetry and painting to the novel and the stage—the producer too have sporadically attempted to take advantage of his literary works for the film medium. The results have been, till today—with one feeble exception perhaps—not even promising; on the contrary, most of the films have been unimaginative, merely tinkering with literary works of great significance and charm.

The first 'talkie' film-rendering of Tagore's

work, *Natir Puja*, was done by New Theatres Ltd., in Bengali. *Natir Puja* is an original form of composition with a blending of music, song, dance and highly stylised dialogue, operatic in a way but with its own distinct flavour. The film based on this rather complex composition was released in 1932 and directed by Dinendranath Tagore, nephew of Rabindranath, the students of Santiniketan portraying different roles. The whole artistic cast of the film as well as the director was non-professional. That year again, to the credit of the same concern, another film was made out of Tagore's *Chira Kumar Sabha*, a farcical comedy. *Chira Kumar Sabha* was directed by Premankur Atarathi. Yet another venture by New Theatres a few years later was Tagore's comedy *Sodh Bodh*. Unfortunately, it was not successful. Other producers and directors too made desultory moves to tackle Tagore's novels. Notable examples were: *Chokher Bali*, *Gora*, *Naukadubi* (*Milan* in Hindi), *Sesh Raksha*, *Bow Thakuranir Hat*, and *Zalzala*. The last named film in Hindi, directed by Paul Zils, one has to record, was, or, to be more precise still, is, the most vulgarized

and atrocious film adaptation of any Tagore work. Director Nitin Basu's *Naukadubi*, produced by Bombay Talkies Ltd. in both Hindi and Bengali, though failing at a number of points, in its turn, betrayed glimmers of competence and a fleeting filmsense. The first Tagore 'talkie,' on the other hand, *Natir Puja*, directed by Dinendranath Tagore, despite poor photography and an amateurish handling of the film technique, was uncompromising so far as commercial demands are concerned, and hence without conventional artifices and falsity. In spite of its failure as a film, due mainly to Dinendranath's lack of filmsense and the subject's complexity, *Natir Puja* had an obvious purity of approach; still, it must be admitted that it was more in the operatic-cum-theatrical style than in that of authentic cinema.

The basic shortcoming of all the films named so far was, to a greater or lesser degree, as is the case in all Indian Movies, in fact, the absence of filmform. The films were, to put it in another way, essentially treated as stage plays or, in an operatic-cum-theatrical style, a style which is foreign to the cinema. Most of our films were, and unfortunately still are, bodily shifted, so to speak, without proper adaptation of the content and style, straight from the stage to the screen. Not only were the technique of shot-taking and composition of certain frames of Tagore films akin to the theatre, but also the acting, the delivery of the artists and their physical movements. To crown it all, inevitably, there were long dialogue sequences, essential to drama and at times to the novel, but boring in film. Verbosity along with the songs, killing the pace and rhythm of the artform, weakened the dynamic quality of the medium (its deeply visual character) changing it instead to a dull, stagey, almost static show of dialogue, and parade of songs and dances.

The plastic quality of the film springs

directly from subtle but significant visual details, a sudden flutter of the eyes, a shaded strain of charged emotion on the face, agitated fingers, the bearing of a person, a given posture, and much other silent human eloquence, in harmony with the mood and atmosphere of the theme. The atmosphere or mood of the theme should be conveyed by visual images, sharpened, if necessary, by music. Indian films, barring a very few conspicuous exceptions, generally lack this innate visual quality. And this absence of the filmic essence is evident even in the recently remade and released *Chitra Kumar Sabha* of Tagore. After a lapse of many years—in the midst of tremendous artistic and technical advances in the cinema all over the world—director Devaki Bose's new Tagore film, though slightly improved, does not really impress one as filmically praiseworthy. It has all the conventional artifices of the Indian cinema under the ubiquitous shadow of the stage. Films, to be powerful and aesthetically moving, have to evolve their own form and technique, a lesson which has still to be learned in India.

ASHIS BURMAN

Letter from Paris

THE Paris theatre season this year has not been marked by any striking novelties. Such prominent dramatists as Jean Anouilh, Marcel Aymé and André Roussin have offered work which, though competent and engaging, is utterly lacking in sparkle. Their plays are cleverly contrived, but are no better — and no less vulgar — than those of the late Henri Bernstein: the flawless and monotonous mechanism of their drama produces results that do not compare favourably with the great plays of Feydeau.

In fact, it is not the boulevard theatres that have given us the greatest delight or

revealed fresh springs of inspiration and original trends. For that, we have had to go back and discover old plays whose richness has been illuminated by ingenious direction, or to turn to the few avant-garde theatres where the dramaturgy of tomorrow is perhaps in the making.

The 350th anniversary of the birth of Pierre Corneille, celebrated by a remarkable series of performances at the Comédie Française, has made possible a rediscovery of works of exquisite poetic freshness, such as *Psyche*, tragedies composed in the poet's old age, plays full of the most vigorous verse, such as *Surena*, and also that sprightly comedy of character, *The Liar*. It is as if our age, in rediscovering a writer who dwelt upon the human will's struggle against destiny had, to its great joy, found a poet whose work corresponded to our needs and nostalgia. Corneille not only opposed duty to pleasure and love but, above all, exalted those virtues that enable the individual to shape his life. In this sense, Pierre Corneille, whose work is diametrically opposed to that of Racine, the poet of the instinctive forces, appears as the forerunner of existentialism.

In the incomparable setting of the square court of the Louvre, three hundred actors have just performed for the first time Victor Hugo's *Cromwell*, a mammoth drama that could not have been performed elsewhere than in an open-air theatre. Deliberately Shakespearean in tone, with a mixture of grandeur and buffoonery, gigantic in its beauties and weaknesses alike, *Cromwell* which, in the nineteenth century, marked the break with the classical theatre, has an element of parody that contributes to its success.

Of a different kind of parody, one with philosophical pretensions, is Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, which has been as successful in London as it was in Paris. The humour of this author who, though he now writes in French, has not lost his

Irish imagination, is harsh and striking. The symbolic significance of the play is clear enough; two down-and-out characters, both of them tramps, spend their time at the foot of a tree waiting for Godot, that is, waiting for a change in their existence, for happiness, for certainty. Godot, a mythical personage who never turns up, but whose arrival one is forever expecting, is obviously God, but he is also the affirmation of a person reconciled with himself and with the world. In the last analysis, this 'message' is rather simple, but the value of Samuel Beckett's work springs primarily from its language, its unquestionable verbal power, which lies not in a rich flowering of images but rather in the precipitation, as it were, of words in their repetition, and the consequent hypnosis that they induce.

AS I was leaving the first performance given by the Moscow ballet of the 'Stanislavski and Nemirovitch-Dantchenko National Lyric Theatre' one of my friends cried out, 'Diaghilev need never have lived!' Though the Soviet ballet charms the spectator by the remarkable technical virtuosity of the troupe, particularly the female dancers, the same cannot be said for its choreography, which is quite outdated. The same phenomenon is taking place in the Soviet dance as in the country's painting and, to a certain extent, its literature. Wilfully ignoring the bold experiments and adventures of the twentieth century, it remains academic. That is why Russia is the country where aesthetic creation is the most reactionary in the world. The 'land of the revolution' is that of the most barren conservatism in the arts.

In striking contrast with the congealed perfection of the Soviet ballet are the incomparable technique and brio of Jean Babilée and his troupe (Violette Verdy, Claire Sombert, Alexandre Kalioujany,

Yovanka Biegovitch). His programme is composed of *Sands* (music by the young composer Maurice Le Roux), *The Three-cornered Scales* (Jean-Michel Damase) and *Cameleopard* (Henri Saugeut). Babilée's choreography is breathtaking in its deliberate abstractness and taut intellectualism. His compositions are excellent exercises rather than strictly aesthetic performances.

THE French cinema can pride itself this year on three strikingly original films: *The World of Silence*, *The Picasso Mystery*, *Night and Fog*. It is notable that all three are documentaries. The public's taste in films, as in its reading matter, seems to be moving more and more towards 'true life,' towards the discovery of the real gold. It is as if people wished to take life by surprise, to catch it, as it were, on the wing.

In *The Picasso Mystery*, Henri Clouzot has demonstrated his usual mastery, though at the same time the film reveals the vulgar striving for effect that at times mars his work. In a sensational display, he shows the Spanish master of the School of Paris at his alchemy, composing and decomposing persons and things, dividing his effort between a destruction of the universe, a zealous and passionate criticism of forms, and the equally deep, though more rarely satisfied need to construct, to defy death. Picasso's art is a constant provocation, a dangerous wizardry, wherein the artist, after subjecting reality to a merciless examination, is no longer able to carry through his venture. It is this disparity that gives his painting the dramatic quality that, for all its technical prowess, it would otherwise lack. Clouzot has ably, though somewhat superficially, demonstrated this phenomenon.

The World of Silence, though far less

wily and artful, is a beautiful film whose value lies in the honesty with which it depicts the discovery of deep-sea life by the famous Captain Cousteau and the divers of the vessel *Calypso*.

Alain Resnais' *Night and Fog*, though the shortest of these documentaries, is nevertheless the most striking. Owing to its realism and violence—and to diplomatic reasons as well—it was unjustly barred from the Cannes Film Festival. The film is a strict documentary dealing with the German concentration camps. Nothing is invented, nothing is forced. The accompanying text of the novelist Jean Cyrol, himself a former prisoner of the camps, is a sober commentary on the overwhelming and even unbearable images that are projected on the screen. Painful though it is, the film should be seen, not only because of its authenticity but because of its continuing lesson, which is more timely than ever.

RENE TAVERNIER

Strindberg's 'The Father'

THEATRE Unit's latest production of Strindberg's *The Father* is substantial dramatic fare, well-proportioned and vigorously executed even though far from being flawless. Mr. Ebrahim Alkazi's direction matches the play's sombre tragic intensity in everything except the sets and the music. The latter he chooses wisely but uses meagrely, as in almost all his productions. (*Murder in the Cathedral* is one of the exceptions.) No other element of his creations does he treat so cavalierly, as a thin almost unnecessary, embellishment. In the other constituents there is clearly a principle of integration, even if, as in this case with the sets, it often fails.

Mr. Alkazi's setting is abstract-modernistic, but he is consistent enough to realise that period furniture could not be made to

accompany it. So he gives us amateurish cut-outs from a self-conscious 'workshop'. As the play proceeds one simply ceases to notice the sets, their utter irrelevance being patent from the start. Except in one or two instances, the action takes place on a bare stage, denuded not only of space but of time. Is this what the director aimed at perhaps? If so, the effort could not succeed, for the characters belong too completely to a segment of historical consciousness; they are individuated personalities in the agony of a blood-relationship, sharpened by provincial puritanism.

If the sets were all wrong, the costumes were perfect. Everything was stiff and hard and sinister. The play opens with a spectacle of military reds and priestly blacks, a contrast suited to the anguished question which is its verbal counterpart, a question about unacknowledged paternity. Strindberg subtly transfers the question from the original squalor of kitchens and barracks into the respectable home of the Captain.

Who is the father of the maid's child—is the Captain the real father of his child? This may be regarded as a mere gambit, and the tragic humour wrung from it as cynicism. From the purely dramatic point of view, it serves to focus a conflict between husband and wife, a conflict whose ramifications and history the playwright expounds with classic economy and thoroughness.

The marriage started with love, which both remember in the tenderer moments of the play. But not even a nostalgia for it remains. What remains is merely the will to power in a struggle which the woman wins. She wins because she knows the contours of her own strength and the precise weaknesses of her 'enemy'. To make the situation even more concrete, they are struggling for the soul of their child. She is a religious conformist, he is an atheist.

Nergis Cowasji portrayed Laura with the full resources of her power, a power

which remained untapped in *Arms and the Man*, which went strangely astray even in her greatest opportunity, *Oedipus*. Here it was thoroughly plumbed. She did much by her purely physical presence and this is a sign of the good actor. When she stands still, facing the person to whom she addresses herself, we observe a massive *confrontation*. This gives one of the keenest pleasures that the art of acting can provide.

It is not in the passionate moments only that Nergis Cowasji demonstrated her power. When her implacable will is relaxed, the transition is lucidly achieved. There is a masterly moment when a husband-wife quarrel about to end violently, is interrupted by the nurse's 'Supper is ready'. The thread of common life is resumed. The drama of overwrought emotions is temporarily suspended. The woman yields. She goes up to him in the tranquillity of one who has nothing to lose by surrendering to convention. That is the secret of her strength. 'Come to the table,' she says, 'they will ask questions,' or words to that effect. Her face now wears the composure of the domestic tyrant, the female ferocity is substituted by a tough reasonableness. Both phases of her temperament are naturally put across, made credible and human.

Bomi Kapadia played his part in wondrous fashion—there is no other word for it. A man can rarely weep on the stage or off it and retain the unembarrassed sympathy of witnesses. That Kapadia does this reveals the extent to which he creates the role in the image of its creator. He is for all the world a picture of the Captain cracks a joke which he finds too deadly to swallow when it turns against him.

In this predicament he is ripened for destruction. A weak and helpless nurse whose words bring him solace eventually puts the strait-jacket on him. Mr. Kapadia raves and pleads and moans in self pity at the requisite pitch of near in-

sanity. That he avoids both exaggeration and monotony is not the least of his achievements.

Strindberg's plays are meticulously constructed. For all their apparent morbidity and hysteria, they are upheld by social and psychological insights. These are of astonishing comprehensiveness and clarity. If one takes his situations *literally*, it is easy to miss the point altogether. *Othello* has been regarded as a farce about a lost handkerchief. A local critic distinguished himself by describing *The Father* as juvenile theatre concerning a man who threw a lamp at his wife and had the strait-jacket put on him. Bravo! As a possible antidote to such literalist interpretations of Strindberg, I strongly recommend a reading of his lengthy introduction to *Lady Julie*; every motivation in that 'morbid' play is analysed in a cool and careful prose.

Around the central characters, Strind-

berg provides only the absolutely essential human environment. In production therefore, his plays put a heavy burden on the supporting cast. In *The Father* this burden was borne competently by Roshan Alkazi as the Captain's daughter and Hilla Cooper as the nurse. The latter's big scene is when she beguiles the Captain into the strait-jacket; she rises to it with an unmistakable touch of greatness. Mrs. Alkazi, in her most ambitious role so far, indicated her fitness for whatever is put her way. Next to the nurse, hers was the best of the minor portrayals. Minoo Chhoy was a trifle stagey as the Doctor and tended to parody the role. He was convincing only in his indignation, the rational indignation of the man of science who catches out the self-deception of the protagonists.

The audience was responsive and appreciative.

NISSIM EZEKIEL

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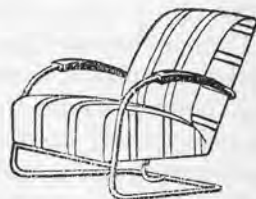
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VINOBA AND BHOODAN

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POETRY LONDON - NEW YORK

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THE TORMENT OF SECRECY by Edward A. Shils, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, U.S.A., pp. 238.

THE author is a brilliant sociologist of the Chicago University. He is already personally known to many in this country, since he spent a year in India studying Indian intellectual attitudes and behaviour.

The book which has just been published is the result of the author's study of what is known as McCarthyism. It is of great interest to note that the author has not taken the usual over-simplified line of either condemning the phenomena or of justifying it, although his own attitude is never in doubt. Instead, he has first tried to set the problem of secrecy in the proper social and political setting of the country, i.e. in relation to the needs of privacy and publicity. He has then indicated that what is needed in a modern

large-scale civil society is a proper balance between all these three elements.

Although the book's theme is secrecy, which is a current political controversy both in the U.S.A. and outside, the major contribution that it makes is to a study of the pattern and inter-relationship of the present complex political, intellectual and social motivations and traditions of the American people, both among themselves as well as between them and the rest of the world. It is this exposition of the historical roots and delineations of thought and practice that provides a clear insight into so many of America's peculiar political and intellectual attitudes, otherwise inexplicable to most non-Americans. Of the various historical trends and cultural traits that have gone into the making of the present-day moods and temper of the American people, the author chiefly deals with Hyper-patriotism, Xenophobia, Isolationism,

Fundamentalism, Fear of Revolution and Populism.

Another important aspect that the author deals with, one which has relevance to the politics in countries like ours, is the 'strain of politics'. The American political system is constituency-oriented rather than party-oriented, according to the author. As a consequence, the elected representative is 'hypersensitive to the faintest whisper of the constituent's voice.' Add to this the contributions made by the strong 'tradition of populism' (akin to the mass agitations in our country) and the 'luxuriating publicity' in the press. These will partly explain some of the excessive demands for investigations by the sub-committees of the Congress. The American politician is, in addition, largely anti-intellectual and anti-bureaucracy for various historical reasons, and he expresses distrust and animosity against them quite frequently. On the other hand, the intellectuals have developed a large strain of 'alienation' against politics and politicians, also due to historical reasons. Thus America has woven a peculiar and characteristic texture of political and intellectual life which contains within itself the seeds of its stresses and strains as also of its poise and balance. Both can be understood in the context of the background provided briefly and yet brilliantly in this book.

The author's great merit consists in the fact that he does not only analyse the problem and describe its social and historical setting. He suggests a positive and constructive approach to politics in general and American politics in particular. He champions the pluralistic concept of politics and society where spheres of interest are more or less separate, and yet where there is a sense of affinity and cooperation between the different spheres. He says:

'By pluralism we mean the firm attachment and simultaneous and intermittent loyalty to a plurality of corporate and pri-

mordial bodies; to family, profession, professional association, regiment, church, chapel, club and football team, political party, friends and nation. Pluralism entails the more or less simultaneous exercise of attachments to these diverse objects and the maintenance of a balance among them so that none is continuously predominant.... It does not permit such a degree of absorption into any one of the groups that members would be blind to the claims and values of the others.' (p.53)

He condemns 'extremism' (essentially as an attitude of mind) both of the 'right' and of the 'left' as the source of much trouble and upholds the 'rule of law', emphasizing the need to underline the 'sense of affinity' between various groups as well as viewpoints in a 'civil society' of 'live and let live', of tradition as well as change.

Prof. Shils' book is an excellent introduction to the undercurrents and motivating urges of American politics, its temper and tone; at the same time it puts the reader into a reflective state of mind, in search of solutions to some of the basic political problems of the mid-twentieth century—problems that are not limited to the American society alone.

K.K.S.

THE LETTERS OF D. H. LAWRENCE.
Edited & with an introduction by Aldous Huxley. William Heinemann Ltd., London. 30s.

A FIRE burned in him, and it burnt itself out in twenty-one years of manhood. The letters span those years, from 1910 to 1930; 850 pages of them in this reprint of the volume edited by Aldous Huxley and first published in 1932. It was said of Lawrence that he put the whole of himself into what he wrote, and in the letters we find him present unreservedly.

'My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds,

But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle. What do I care about knowledge? All I want is to answer to my blood, direct, without fribbling intervention of mind, or moral, or what-not. I conceive a man's body as a kind of flame, like a candle flame, forever upright and yet flowing; and the intellect is just the light that is shed on to the things around A flame isn't a flame because it lights up two, or twenty objects on a table. It's a flame because it is itself And we have forgotten ourselves. We are Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. We cannot *be*.'

Whatever Lawrence failed in he did not fail to *be*. People who insist on *being* themselves often cause a lot of trouble to themselves, and to others; and they go on being talked about. We haven't made up our minds finally about the man Lawrence or his work. For every pro-Lawrence there appears to be an anti-Lawrence. It would perhaps be well, therefore, if we approach this collection, shedding or forgetting all knowledge and pre-conceptions of Lawrence—if that were possible. Not so difficult when one's reading of him goes back to the twenties and the early thirties—and even then it was limited to three novels, some of the stories and poems. These letters I missed when they came out in

1932, not being a devotee. Much of the Lawrence controversy passed by, alternately deifying and slaying him, till last year we had a fair and dispassionate study in Harry Moore's *The Intelligent Heart*.

I begin on the Letters then with a mind stripped fairly clean. Within the first hundred pages two things are certain, that here is a wonderfully gifted writer to whom words come at call, who writes because he must; secondly, that this could not be a man who would be easy to live with, not indeed a *pleasing* person. He has at least that negative mark of genius, that he is difficult. As we proceed the effect is cumulative; the number of trivial letters, which at first reading seem to call for omission, are helping to fashion a restless, intense personality, egocentric, compelling, who will not accept life as it is or the standards of the world and who will not let his friends accept them. He is a man with a message, intolerant of those who cannot feel the urgent need for a new world, feel it in their blood and bones. We have indeed a temperament in revolt. It is not environment or bitter experience that made Lawrence what he was. In one of his letters he writes: 'There is deep inside one a revolt against the fixed thing, fixed society, fixed money, fixed homes, even fixed love.'

All through these letters that strain per-

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sists; and a nobler strain persists, an eager desire to help the world with the truth that was in him. 'I think I have inside me a sort of answer to the *want* of today: to the real, deep want of the English people, not to just what they fancy they want.' Indeed he sought at one time in a vague yet eager kind of way 'to initiate, if possible, a new movement for real life and real freedom.'

But Lawrence was finally unacceptable to the English people or to any people, for he was too uncompromising and at times wrong-headed. That was his tragedy. But even had he been accepted I do not think that the element of the tragic would have been absent from his life. He was one born to take life hard, to agonize, to make life difficult for himself and others. There is manifold evidence in the letters.

I find my sympathies fluctuating as I read. The letters during the war years 1914 to 1918, when they record his troubled soul, the intensity of his feeling for a world gone mad and his desire to live in the knowledge of God, win you to his side; but later during the same period when he is bitter and self-concerned he seems futile and peevish in his attacks on all authority. At another time the energy and warm humanity of his friendship with men and women strike an answering chord; and in a few moments he is back to the irritable, insistent, demanding, discontented writer of genius who lacks understanding of other points of view because he lacks tolerance and charity.

It is natural that at this distance the subject of sex on which he expresses himself forcefully but infrequently in the letters seems to be of less significance than it was in the novels in Lawrence's own day. His passionate sincerity in these matters has borne fruit and part of his message is accepted doctrine. The influence it had on all his thinking is discernible, and Aldous Huxley's able Introduction will instruct the uninitiated. His views on social

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and political questions, his likes and dislikes have often a certain originality and force; and it is chiefly the impress of an unusual being that sustains interest in a collection that cannot be judged first-rate in terms of the art of letter-writing. We miss that gift of communication that reveals both writer and recipient to the reader, that establishes *communion*. Here is too much of the white heat of indignation, too much assertiveness; whereas an atmosphere of sympathy, urbanity and wisdom marks the best in letter-writing. As with many modern collections it is our interest in the writer for other reasons, his novels and his poems, that gives meaning to the collection. In themselves the letters have less enduring value.

Yet deep is the impression that his brilliant play of mind makes upon one. The bewildering variety of moods and enthusiasms, the instinctive response to Nature in her many ways of loveliness, and the eager restlessness of his spirit, that sent him unsatisfied from place to place, are all set down with graphic unconscious power. The light of genius flashes through these pages and they remain the authentic source book for a true picture of Lawrence.

R. CHOKSI

ENGLISH THOUGHT 1860-1900, THE THEOLOGICAL ASPECT by L. E. Elliot-Binns. (Longmans - 28s.)

THE charm of the title of this important book is somewhat dampened by the further elucidation that the treatment will be confined to the theological aspect. We trust however that this will not put off many readers, because Dr. Binns does not take a narrow and confined view of theology. He holds not merely that there is a close and inevitable connection between theology and religion, but further, that both are influenced by and in turn exercise an influence on the entire current of thought.

This is not a concession which all theologians whether christian or non-christian are prepared to make. According to many of them, religious truth is revealed once for all. Human reason can neither add to it nor detract from it. All that it can attempt to do is to expound and interpret it, and of course defend it against the onslaught of rationalists or believers in rival faiths. It is in this wider outlook on Christian theology, evaluating the impact of modern thought upon life, that the value of this book lies.

Dr. Binns rightly begins with a discussion of what is meant by *development* in theology. Unfortunately his treatment of this all important point is not only scrappy but also unenlightening. Speaking of *development*, he says, 'The term will be employed without any technical connotation, as a convenient way of describing the unfolding of ideas, both old and new, disregarding any distinction between those which were developments in the stricter sense of the term and those which were of freer growth.' (pp.1-2). This really amounts to dodging the issue. For the fundamental question to be faced by Theology is, whether truth is revealed and given once for all, or something which grows as science grows, through rejection of

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The fact is that during the Victorian Age, and it is of this age that Dr. Binns writes, though religious doubt began to invade the inner spirit of many of the finest minds of the period, outwardly at least they continued to conform to religious practices. In this list may be included such names as those of T. A. Froude, Matthew Arnold, Leslie Stephen, John Morley, and Henry Sidgwick.

Dr. Binns' is a historical not a philosophical treatise. What he portrays for us in a vivid and attractive fashion is the changing approach of the 19th century to problems of Christian theology as the result of the influence of science, the new historical approach to events recorded in the scriptures, the study of comparative religion, the inroads of philosophy, and of economic and political forces, which all required a reorientation of the Christian outlook. To this task he brings not only a rich and erudite scholarship, a sense of style and beauty of diction, but also sympathy and understanding of the problems and dilemmas of the common man.

It is a pity that Dr. Binns set himself a deadline, i.e., the close of the 19th century. It is in the first half of the 20th century that Christianity or indeed religion as a whole, has had to withstand its bitterest trials.

After the harrowing experiences of two World Wars and the Cold War between political ideologies, which one may justly call equally Godless, there are some who think that the world will witness a new religious revival. 'The lamb will lie down with the lion,' and peace and understanding will prevail amongst mankind. It is on this optimistic hope that Dr. Binns ends his treatise. But it is difficult to support his dictum that: 'The frustration of merely human efforts is a call to a deeper reliance on what is super-human, and a closer union with the divine'. (p. 376). One is tempted to ask: if the divine purpose was always there, why did the struggle ever have to

old generalisations and discovery of new or more comprehensive ones.

Nor are we any better off when the author comes to deal with the term 'Theology'. He rejects the notion that the task of Christian Theology is to set forth in a systematic and connected fashion the contents of the Bible. 'Theology', he says 'is not merely academic pursuit, but is closely linked with everyday life.' He proposes to illustrate in the chapters which follow, how in the later nineteenth century theologians had grudgingly to make concessions to the wider influences of the times. But he advises caution in this respect, and admiringly quotes Dean Inge who wrote, 'If you marry the Spirit of your generation, you will be a widow in the next.'

I venture to comment that it is better to be married than to remain a spinster for life, and if you are left a widow, you can always take a second husband at least where the Christian Code is concerned.

begin, and even if some shadow of a reason can be found for it, why should the travail of mankind be so prolonged?

It is this kind of doubt which led our Indian philosophers to proclaim that conflict, suffering, and evil are all illusions. They are merely manifestations of 'Lila' or a joke perpetrated by the Absolute. Such an escape is not open to the Christian theologian, whose cardinal doctrine of faith is that God himself is incarnated in human shape and partakes of the suffering of humanity. But if this be so, then the eventual triumph of good over evil becomes not a rational belief but merely an emotional attitude generated by individual temperament.

To the temper of the modern generation neither the Hindu idea of 'Maya', nor the Christian conception of teleology can bring any consolation. Today with the weapons of modern science and the aid of Economics, Psychology and Sociology, man seems to be engaged in two opposite tasks: the betterment of his own condition, and the total annihilation of the human race. Can religion help to tilt the balance in favour of the first alternative. To this all-important question of our own day, Dr. Binns is unable to give any convincing answer.

G. C. CHATTERJI

PHOENIX FLED, by Attia Hosain. Chatto and Windus, 10s. 6d.

AN Indian novelist writing about India in English incurs the responsibility of translation from one discrete tradition into the idiom of another, and the means of doing this are relative to the modes of feeling consciously or unconsciously emphasised. Such modes of feeling when systematised through use might become a literary tradition. Few Indian writers have confronted this technical commonplace within the ambit of English, and whatever the sentiments for or

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against national articulation through English, sensibility need not rely upon a single medium for development, to the benefit of both readers and writers.

Although it might be objected that English used in India has developed an idiom of its own, this turns out in reality to be a time-lag responsible for failure to assimilate a developing language. The resultant local idiom in the educated use of English is a residue of cliché, an example of which comes from K. Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*:

'Ira was seven when my first son was born, and she took a great interest in the newcomer. Poor child, it must have been lonely for her all those years. Kali's and Janaki's children were much older, and as for Kunthi, she preferred to keep aloof. Her son was a sturdy youngster and would have been a good playmate for my child; but, as the years went by, her visits to our house grew less and less frequent until at

last we were meeting as strangers.' These thoughts are purportedly a South Indian village woman's, but in terms of realised artistic expression the writing in *Nectar in a Sieve* amounts on paper to inexperience, not of what village life is, but of a novelist's participation in it. Details of 'atmosphere' are catalogued rather than creatively manipulated and the presentation of personal implications is offset only by sentiment.

The passage quoted above wilts before a direct translation of a village woman's speech:^a

'You can only live ... where there is a smell of liquor. That is your real home—the out-still—there is your bed and hearth; you have no home here. What will you do if I die? Who will feed you and look after the children? If you won't work, I will leave you and take away my children. You wander all day like a goat and all night like a thief. There is no salt in the house, there are no chillies; suppose the landlord comes and asks for some, or suppose a constable comes and wants food, what shall we do? If visitors come, what food can we give them?' The immediacy of idiom here reflects the immediacy of the problems of living. In contrast to the literary phrases of the first passage, words like "out-still", "salt", "goat" and "constable" are sufficiently focussed to express personality in a situation where sentiment finds its proper place.

If the 'art of comedy is a distancing art', one might profit from the perspectives afforded through the language of a competent observer:

'Ought we not to start? The elephants must be waiting.'

'There is no necessity. Elephants sometimes wait for hours.'

'But the Temple is far.'

'Oh no, there are thirty of them.'

'Thirty temples! Are they far?'

'No, no, no, not at all—fifteen really, but much jungle; fifteen to come and fifteen to go.'

'Fifteen of what?'

'Fifteen all.'

A facility for comedy is here seen in play commanding its own resources as a linguistic process to express divergent mental attitudes. 'The indistinctness and repetitiveness, exasperating to a Western mind, are beautifully captured at the beginning of a notice that in 1919 Forster wrote for the *Athenaeum*', E. K. Brown comments when quoting these lines.

Forster's solution to the problem of writing about India points a way to the excellence of Attia Hosain's collection of short stories of North Indian life, *Phoenix Fled*. The opening lines of *This was all the Harvest* make their own impact:

"The young man's voice pitched a semitone higher when he levered his sagging anxiety with self-assertion.

'I've waited hours. You did give him the note?'

'You saw me take it in; and it's barely half an hour since you've been here,' said the chaprassi.

Uncertain pique flickered in the young man's deep eyes as he tried to disentangle the rebuke implicit in the words from their wrapping of jocular affability."

Sympathy of psychological insight invests this prose with the authority of experience, and the stories maintain an even standard. This sympathy makes itself most felt in *The First Party*, about the emotional confusion of a young bride suddenly marooned in an alien social atmosphere, and in the sensitive presentation of Bibi, a victim of the stresses of Partition in *After the Storm*. The framework of symbols in the latter is admirably manoeuvred to provoke the reader's sympathy, and the same symbolic insight controls the narrative in *The Daughter-in-Law*, about a problem child. In *Gossamer Thread* Miss

^aA woman from Pali village, as quoted by Verrier Elwin.

Hosain's probings trace out the fault-lines of cleavage, during a national emergency, in a man refined beyond capacity abroad and an immature woman 'decorative enough and submissive enough to increase his self-confidence'.

Miss Hosain extends her perception more widely in her longest story, *The Street of the Moon*, which, despite the impressionistic patina of its narrative precision is centred through an exposition of the dimension of hateful experience; the framework for imaginative re-enactment is complete. Her writing and sensibility emerge on the English side of literary tradition as instruments to the validity of her Indian subject-matter, a creditable adaptation from which there is much to learn.

FOY NISSEN

VINOBA AND BHOODAN. A selected descriptive Bibliography by Jagdish Saran Sharma (Indian National Congress, New Delhi; 92 pages; Rs. 2.)

THIS is a very helpful, selective and descriptive Bibliography of the daily growing literature in Hindi, English and regional languages of India on the subject of Acharya Vinoba Bhave's eventful life—one of the noblest and most creative in history—and his Bhoodan movement. Dr. Sharma has brought great ability and discernment to this laborious task skilfully accomplished and deftly presented in three parts. Each part is sub-divided into sections to facilitate reference to any topic or source of information. Not a mere bibliography, it is also a luminous study and commentary. The erudite compiler might well have dubbed it 'A Comprehensive Study of a Unique Revolution Launched by Vinoba.' By the addition of the volume to the National Bibliographical series both the compiler and the sponsors of the Bibliography, the Indian National Congress, have laid the reading public under a great obligation.

Part I is divided into two main sections. Under section one are listed alphabetically 19 works which form the basis of the literature. Section two includes 56 biographical studies. Part II consists of 562 annotated entries arranged under 59 sub-headings which reveal at a glance how Bhoodan is revolutionising the life of Rural India. The most remarkable change is witnessed in the reorientation of thought and the concept of values conducive to the realization of the ideal of Sarvodaya and the evolution of a socialist pattern of society. Bhoodan as a revolution is classified under the following heads: Agrarian, Cultural, Economic, Political, Social, indicating the basic ideas underlying the philosophy of Bhoodan and Sampattidan. Thus emerges, in addition to the three revolutionaries of this age—Lenin, Sun Yat-Sen and Gandhi—a fourth, who, if he touches politics, it is only to spiritualise it. Part III has two main sections. Under section one, publications in Indian languages, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Oriya and Urdu are given. Most of them are translations from the original in Hindi or English. Under section two are given the sources consulted, including books, periodicals and newspapers, Indian and foreign. The key to the entire study is a carefully compiled index.

Next to Vinobaji's, Jayaprakash Narayan's stirring speeches and writings loom large in the Bibliography. By Nature an idealist, he figures in this book as a practical, level-headed constructive worker and supporter of Baba in his phenomenal spiritual crusade. Next to the two great crusaders, Dada Dharmadhikari, Shankarrao Deo and Suresh Ramabhai figure prominently amongst the contributors to the literature that is growing daily round Vinobaji's superb endeavour. The ideal behind Gandhiji's scheme of a classless society was trusteeship of wealth. Vinobaji's concept of Bhoodan and Sampattidan takes him a

step ahead of his master's ideology. It embraces not only the voluntary distribution of one's wealth but also the dedication of one's mental and spiritual resources, one's talents, energy and strength, one's soul-force, to the crusade to bring about a revolution in the minds of the people and conversion of their hearts, so as to hasten the day for the inauguration of the ideal social order of their dream. No wonder it has arrested the attention of the thinkers and writers of the East as well as the West and this Bibliography bears eloquent testimony to the enthusiasm with which they have all hailed Vinobaji's mission as a marvelous phenomenon of the post-independence transitional period in the history of India. A further proof of such wide-spread interest and appreciation was furnished recently by the appeal for funds publicly made to support the movement by seven eminent Britons.

Of the writers and speakers mentioned in the Bibliography hardly one or two per cent fail to see any philosophy behind Bhoodan, or have misgivings regarding its success, or raise positive objections to the system of redistribution such as fragmentation of land. Answers to all such misgivings or objections given either by Vinobaji and his colleagues or by other champions of his mission are also embodied in the Bibliography. Whatever substance there may be in the comments of friendly or unfriendly critics, the hour for stocktaking has arrived. What are the prospects of securing 50 million acres of land by the end of 1957? The prospects of reaching the goal in time may not seem bright, but the all-round revolution aimed at by the revered evangelist of the Gospel of Social Health has been certainly steadily and swiftly bringing about and will continue to bring about a remarkable conversion of the hearts of the people for a total change in human relationship and the transformation of unjust systems.

R. P. MASANI

POETRY LONDON-NEW YORK edited by Tambimuttu, No. 1. March-April 1956 75 cents.

IN the English-speaking world, Tambimuttu has a unique reputation as editor and sponsor of literary projects. After abandoning *Poetry London* which published for the first time a large number of poets now established, he expanded the scope of his interests by making trans-Atlantic contacts on a big scale. For some time one heard reports of his association with one magazine or other in the United States, generally as advisor on Indian contributions. *Poetry London-New York* is the happy culmination of this activity or rather, its fruition. For the first issue includes work by a formidable galaxy of English and American poets. Among them are Auden, Barker, Campbell, Cummings, Empson, Graves, Spender and a sprinkling of lesser known poets. Three Indian poems are published at the end of the poetry section, one by Amrita Pritam translated from the Punjabi, and two translated from the Bengali of Buddhadeva Bose and Jibanananda Das.

The Editor's Introduction is a short and precise statement of policy. 'The old magazine'... Tambimuttu says, 'was chiefly concerned with keeping a level point of view in the face of lop-sided movements, vested interests and political coteries. In Britain, we survived Objective Reporting, The New Apocalypse, The New Romanticism... our policy was to throw our weight on the side which would restore a balanced view, and would be the most beneficial to the reception of modern verse.'

One cannot find this statement anything but admirable. Judging from the contents of the first issue and the advance announcement of poems and articles in the second, there is no doubt that *Poetry London-New York* is going to play an important role in the literary history of the next decade or two.

N.E.

correspondence

Anti-Americanism

To The Editor, QUEST.

Sir,

Anti-Americanism is not a myth. Almost anywhere you go you meet with instances of it. And anti-Americanism has not been caused solely by the Moscow Hate-America campaign, which has been conducted with varying degrees of intensity according to the needs of Soviet foreign policy. This campaign stimulated emotions and feelings which were already latent, especially among the intellectuals in Western Europe. In some instances an attitude against a country is mainly concentrated against the government and the foreign policy of that country. This is legitimate. No reasonable man can object to disagreement or to criticism. Were anti-Americanism merely a form of criticism of American foreign policies, many Americans would not object. The number of Americans who criticise the foreign policy of the United States is significant. But anti-Americanism goes much further.

One of the manifestations which anti-Americanism takes is the charge or notion that Americans are barbarians and that there is no culture in the United States. This notion actually goes back to the first days of the American Republic. English publicists and writers poured out an angry and frustrated scorn upon the colonials who had fought to win their own independence. Since America was a new world, language as spoken and written there began to vary from the usage of English in the British Isles. In consequence, it was decided that Americans were vulgarizing the English language. The writings of Thomas Jefferson and of other Americans who played a major role in the founding of the American Republic was a subject for abuse. A cliché was established and this

cliché has never been completely eradicated. It is widely held in Europe today, and many Asians, especially those who have received a European education, cling to it.

It may be true that we Americans are either barbarian, or at the minimum, less cultivated than European intellectuals or Asian intellectuals who have received their education in Europe. But what are we going to do about it? As a phrase goes in America, shall we 'cry into our beer?' Some of us do the best we can, and probably we just do not have the capacities of many who have gone to Oxford, Cambridge or the Sorbonne. In the case of some of the intellectuals who apparently extract such joy out of their conviction of cultural superiority, they identify themselves with their country as its spokesmen and representatives. In America we are more inclined to identify ourselves with the people, and to see ourselves as part of the people. The elite view of the intellectual has less scope in America than in European countries.

Another factor in anti-Americanism is that of the concern with American civil liberties which is shown by what I would term the Foreign Friends of American Civil Liberties. Whenever there is any case of injustice in the United States—and there are such—this is world-wide news, and our foreign friends make ready ammunition out of it. If we win in any of our struggles to extend civil liberties in America, this is not news of the same world-wide value. In the last few years, the power, influence and political importance of Senator Joseph McCarthy has declined. But while abroad, I have gained the distinct impression that our foreign friends are disappointed. If I were more concerned with them than I am with our own future, I should inaugurate a movement for the renovation of Senator McCarthy. I am sure that this would please our friends.

And Americans are charged with being materialistic, a term of abuse. I have been in many countries, and I have learned that many of our critics who call Americans materialistic live as well or better than I do. Many of them have the household appliances, automobiles and other commodities which are cited as instances of American materialism. Further, this charge of materialism has, at its roots, the old aristocratic disdain of material things and of work. The new aristocracy is the intellectual elite, so-called, and it has borrowed the prejudices of an older aristocracy.

I could cite other examples of anti-Americanism but these are sufficient for my purposes here. There is no doubt in my mind that many criticisms can be made of conditions, attitudes and policies in the United States. I have been making such criticisms myself for many years. Other peoples and nations may be better than we are. Perhaps the Russians are, for all I know. But we can only try to do our best. That many of us are doing, and we are gaining the distinct impression that many of our critics and our would-be friends do not wish us well.

One of the hopes which many of us entertained was that common bonds of feeling would exist between the people of America and of other lands. This hope appears to be fading. The American people, in increasing numbers, are becoming disillusioned, and even angry. It is they, and not Wall Street, who pay the bills in heavy taxes. And their minds are changing. There was hope and idealism at the time when the Marshall Plan was initiated. This hope and idealism is turning into disillusionment. If the disillusionment deepens, the consequences on American foreign policy will be felt. And if this happens, I wonder if our anti-American friends will be satisfied. Is this what they want? Briefly, do they want the American people to turn isolationist? Because

this can happen. We have not as yet fought out our last struggle on isolationism in America, and the tides of anti-Americanism in the world today may well revive isolationism.

The American worker, rising at five and six a.m. daily to earn his bread and giving a few weeks of his labour in taxes is not going to react well and in good temper when he learns that some of his foreign friends refer to America as Uncle Shylock and Uncle Sucker. And this is the way some of our friends regard us. There is a worsening world climate as far as America is concerned. This concerns me. It has already been reflected in America in reductions which Congress has written cutting the foreign aid bill, and it is reflected in the changing attitudes of the man in the streets of America. And that man is not without either feelings or a voice.

I wonder what the foreign well-wishers of America would like me to tell him, the American man in the street, when I return home this summer.

Yours etc.

Sydney, Australia. JAMES T. FARRELL

The Film Seminar

To The Editor, QUEST.

Sir,

I regret that I have not read Smt. Arati Mukerji's report of my Bombay Film Seminar given last November. But I have read S. P. Sethna's objections and references to my 'shifty' interviews.

First, I think I recall saying to an *individual* film critic that I thought *his* condemnation of this film too severe. On no occasion have I *ever* said publicly or privately 'that Indian critics are too severe to appreciate...' My comment on Raj Kapur's work is that I enjoyed *Shree 420* and found it a much better scripted film than *Awara*. I also said I enjoyed the mixture of reality and fantasy, pointing out that this was an element in the excellent Italian film

Miracle in Milan. My 'shifty', contradictory statement in Calcutta is, however, quoted substantially correctly.

Second, perhaps I should point out that S. P. Sethna's attack on the social and political implications of films, as particularly ascribed to my interpretation, is an attack on what is a very generally recognized aspect of Film Appreciation, both in lectures and published criticism. It is so well established that the British Film Institute, the quasi-Government Institute for whom I lecture, puts out pamphlets for the films and film extracts held in the National Film Archives, and gives an analysis of the social and political conditions pertaining at the time each film was produced, provided it has any bearing on the film.

Third, in regard to the 'messages' contained in films. The extract I showed of Pabst's film *Kamaradschaft* is recommended by the British Film Institute for use in secondary schools because it stresses the human decency of the German miners towards the French, despite the historic antagonism between the two countries. The Japanese film *Children of Hiroshima* has been widely shown by Roman Catholic and Protestant churches in England. The trailer prepared for its promotion was written and spoken by Bertrand Russell, the philosopher. As to Norman MacLaren's cartoon *Fiddle-di-dee* I was certainly not so naive as to imply this film contained any 'message'. As I recall I pointed out that it was based on a folk tune popular in Canada and the U.S. This certainly makes the film expressive of the American continent rather than Europe.

Fourth, in regard to the influence of British and American films in India. Perhaps S. P. Sethna can produce statistical evidence as to the number of French, Scandinavian, Soviet and Eastern European documentary films shown and studied in India and contrast these statistics with the

number of American and British documentaries imported here. If S. P. Sethna can do this he can certainly prove that my statement as to American and British influence on the Indian cinema, documentary and feature, 'is typical of her naive approach.'

Fifth, I cannot tell why S. P. Sethna is so put out by my contention that it *appears* most outstanding films reflect a *national* rather than a cosmopolitan character, for this is something that is generally true of all major works of art—pictorial or literary.

I may be naive in my own field after a good many years of study and work, but I do not find the phrase: 'The universality of appeal arises out of the universally understandable living image, which has no basic national characteristics,' a well grounded opinion, if applied to any of the arts including the film.

Why, one may ask, was the somewhat Hollywoodish *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baahe* passed over in silence at the Venice Film Festival last year; while *Pather Panchali*, which is truly reflective of Bengali life, but becomes universal in the hands of an artist, was given an award at the Cannes Film Festival of this year? Are the international judges also naive to give an award to this film which is indisputably national in character and idiom? Perhaps I may boast of having publicly predicted and privately insisted that *Pather Panchali* would receive an award if ever entered in an international film festival. To conclude, had I seen *Pather Panchali* when I was in Bombay I would have predicted that this film would win an award as I have done elsewhere, commencing in Delhi. I think S. P. Sethna, however much he dislikes my opinions—he has every right to his own—should withdraw these words: 'she appeared to be extremely shifty in her interviews' and then misquotes me to prove 'contradictory interviews.'

Bombay

MARIE SETON

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contributors to this issue

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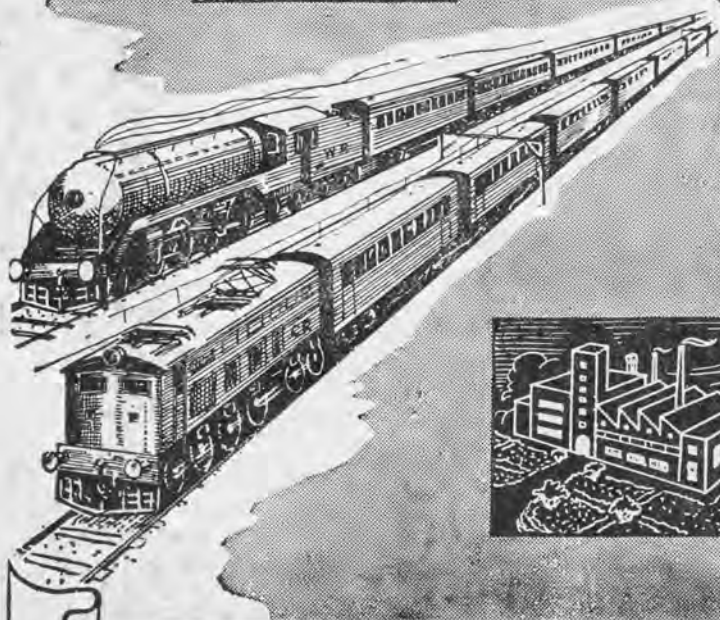
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