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a bi-monthly of arts and ideas

edited by: **NISSIM EZEKIEL**

February - March '57 vol. II no. 4



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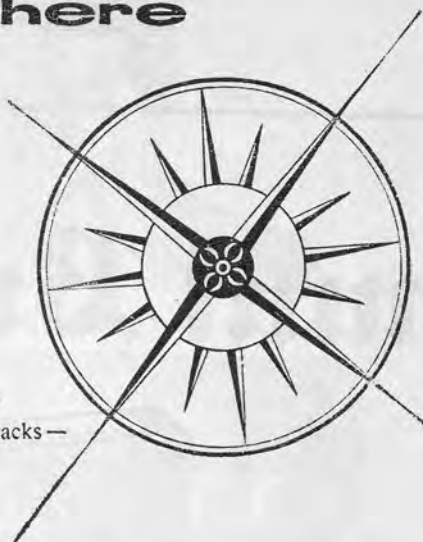
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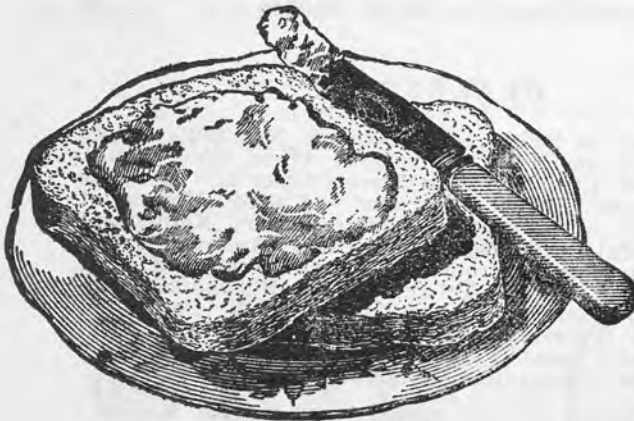
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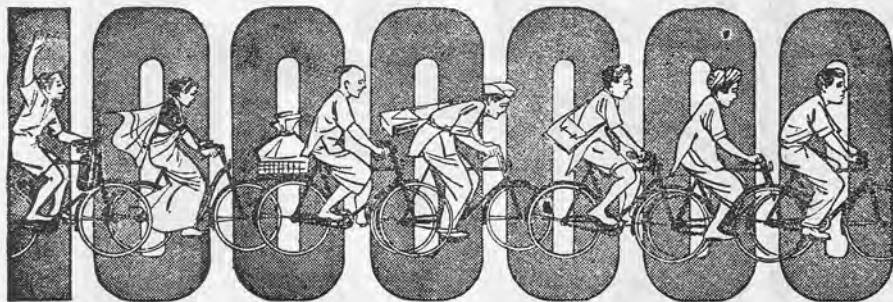
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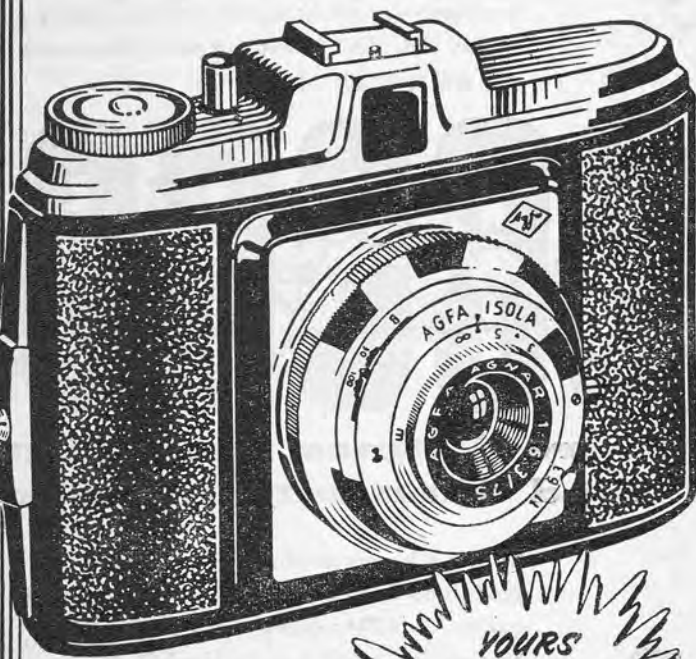

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QUEST

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QUEST is published once every two months in August, October, December, February, April and June, at Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1. Re. 1/- per issue, annual Rs. 6/- (six issues). Annual Subscription in U.K. 12s; U.S.A. \$ 3; France 450 francs; Italy 984 Liras; Ceylon Rs. 7.50; Burma Rs. 7/8; Germany 7 Marks; Israel 12s; Pakistan Rs. 7/8; Japan 567 Yens. Advertising rates on application.

QUEST is sponsored by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom.

REVIEWS EDITOR: MRS. LAEEQ FUTEHALLY
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editorial

THE virtual absence of an organised and integrated all-India Opposition is not an accident of history. It is a profoundly significant circumstance, and much may be gained by reflecting on it. One of its causes, perhaps, is a deep-rooted acquiescence in the acts of authority and a lethargic respect for it, rationalised as contentment or being above the battle. Dr. Radhakrishnan's plea for the co-existence of ideologies is an expression of this tendency. There can be no hostility to the argument for tolerance as a principle of thought and a moderating influence in action. On the other hand one's suspicion is aroused by propaganda for co-existence of ideas whose natural condition is controversy and conflict. An unpleasant consequence of such propaganda is the surrender of one's own values and convictions, and the gradual assumption that there is something superior and spiritual in the attitude.

If ideologies co-exist, in this sense, there is no room for fundamental criticism, for independent thinking, for crises of conscience which result in the transvaluation of values. Even in communist countries, those who are awakened to the tyranny under which they are living use this phrase to justify their hostility to it—a new and heartening development in the totalitarian camp. Co-existence of ideologies means that the dominating ideology, backed by power and its attractions to the 'non-believers', will never be subjected to any attack; complacent and secure, it need neither defend itself nor develop. The only changes observed in it are changes of strategy—at bottom it is a static conglomeration of beliefs, prejudices and emotions buttressed by an ever-increasing bureaucratic machinery.

What ideas, for instance, have been developed by Congress thinkers during the past decade which could emerge in a respectable state if objectively and rationally criticised? Nothing would suit them better than to be allowed to live in tranquil co-existence, accepting the consolations of privilege and unwilling to debate the issues of the day. Preaching, moralising, exhorting, appealing, they tell the poets to supply the nation with inspiration, demand music which will be understood by all, insist on a meal being cooked in gram-udiyog til oil, praise hand-pounded rice, express in uniform terms their adherence to a socialist pattern of society and to 'neutralism' in foreign affairs (while leaning in a precise degree towards the side favoured from on high). This is not an indictment of the Congress but a self-critical proposition which reflects directly on the absence of an Opposition in India, since we get the rulers we deserve. And we shall continue to deserve the rulers we have until a ferment of ideas displaces co-existence of ideologies.

Perhaps the clearest sign of national failure to develop an Opposition, and it must be regarded as a failure of the nation, is the desertion at election time of those who are known to hold opposition views in favour of the ruling party. This cannot be construed as faint-heartedness but it may be a misunderstanding of the function of Opposition. Even though it necessarily aspires to cease being an Opposition and to occupy the seats of power, its most honourable role is as disinterested critic of government policies. The Opposition has its own task of institutional organisation and development of ideas. If it fails to dislodge the

ruling party, it can still serve as a catalyst of ideas, as an independent force contributing to national development, even as a ready platform for an alternative leadership whose time must come.

In Asian countries particularly the ruling party has often disintegrated without being defeated, leaving the field open to chaos or communism. A small, well-organised democratic party, ably led and loyally followed could step into the breach even without the mass following essential for electoral victory. It will have the support of its own tradition of work, its own ideas and a generation which has matured within its ranks and capable of discharging the responsibilities of office. In a situation of crises, a country may prefer to follow such a party instead of going in for an adventure in revolution. The alternative must be clear and practical. A party which has no faith in its own ideas and merely seeks adjustments and alignments with other parties, including those from which it differs in every respect, can never be conceived as such an alternative. It dissipates its own resources, blurs the outline of its ideology, and masks its personality for immediate ends (which cannot be attained in any case).

India needs an Opposition party, but if it cannot have one in the near future it must still consider precious such opposition groups as exist at present, provided, of course, their attitudes and convictions are clear alternatives to those associated with power. If there is no difference between Congress socialism and Praja socialism, except in details, the former will always hold its own. Not that there should be an Opposition for its own sake. It is assumed that opposition groups crystallise because they have genuine differences with the ruling party, which if logically developed, would result in a coherent ideology.

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Sketches by **B. M. Kulkarni**.

SHIV S. KAPUR

revolt and mysticism in india

the historical pattern

THROUGHOUT its history, Indian civilisation has displayed a curious capacity for subverting revolution. It is a negative culpability that saps explosive impetus from radical movements. It levels their clamour into the ebb and flow of a change often quiet to the point of appearing unwilling.

There are a number of reasons for this behaviour-pattern of Indian civilisation. There is the racial catholicity of its birth, with elements of Dravidian, Negroid, Aryan, and Sino-Tibetan origin serving to shape its religion and mythology. The clear frontiers of each contribution are still not defined. Another factor is that of geography, sheer mass that tires man or movement even before it starts out to conquer and convert. It provides a defence in variety as much as in depth because no massive organism is actuated by quite the same impulse through the entire area of

its being. It is also conducive to the organisation of small immediate groups with an intensity of self-protective coherence that seeks to balance the amorphous general outline. The result is paradoxical: permanence, and that 'ferment of dispersion' which has plagued Indian history variously and so well. It would be like a pattern of pebbles upon the sand if the same seam could run through all of them. A seam of resilient fatalism, of the deepest instinct that eludes a close definition. Inevitably, it baffles abrupt change.

The earlier impacts from outside, whether Greek or Persian, spread from the periphery inwards, moving as far as they could go, leaving traces of their influence on art and manners. The first serious challenge, however, did not come till a thousand years later. The impact of Islam was two-pronged. The more spectacular was the political organisation. This, however,

never quite reached beyond the character of a dominant extraneous minority which left the main body of life unaffected. At the level of assimilation was the gentle influence of Sufism on religious thought and behaviour. There were also the inevitable economic and social concomitants of Islam as the State religion. In art there was the new calligraphy of line and the sunbeaten abstract geometry of form. But, in the total, there was no revolution. Large areas of life remained unaffected; socially, politically and in the arts, what was new leaned heavily on both the clashing elements, the rest lived side by side.

Revolution was naturally no part of the British programme in India. The only revolt they did actively promote by their presence was not a revolution but an essay at revivalism, even if as violent and celebrated as an effort at political independence. They brought to the country a new and purposefully alien dominant minority, the rudiments of industrialisation, and an aggressive Christianity. They provided also, for the first time, an effectively centralised form of government, the Western system of justice and, to a relative minority, a new mode of education. The result was the growth of a new civic consciousness in urban areas. The gradual change in economic opportunity, coupled with that in social thinking and the growth in individualism, led to the progressive disintegration of the joint family. Against the background of a neglected culture they also served to create a tribe of intellectual dilettantes whose thinking for the time being was of necessity done in a vacuum.

FROM its very nature, political domination by an alien minority for limited purposes tended to create and cultivate a cleavage between the Westernised local minority and the main body of people. The ideo-

logical exile of the former had begun, and would last till the temporarily arrested time-factor is once again allowed play. In any sense of culture other than the purely esoteric, British influence largely operated through a neglect of the mass of Indian social organisation, local political concepts and the indigenous arts and crafts. Inevitably, however, even if unwilling, the slow drip of alien thought continued. The new ideas they penetrated deeper into the national consciousness set up unrest. Heart searching ensued, the opportunistic reform and the call for self-cleansing, the getting together to counter disintegration. It began as a response typical of a loosely knit community, lacking the cohesive force of a dogma. Nationalism provided the common myth.

It is interesting to analyse the pattern of the reaction. Its leaders seized upon the absence of cultural sympathy between the people and the ruling class, indigenous and foreign. There was no leadership to oppose them, only governance. This gap they sought to fill with creative symbols that revived the past in the context of the present; symbols of magical power that meant much more than reason could grasp, symbols of dispossession unflinching because consciously made so bare and quintessential. They opposed slumming industrialism with the *charkha*, the symbol of self-help and economic independence. They opposed salt-tax and revived the instinct for the plenitude of nature. In *khadi* they sought to create a classless livery of freedom. They restated the fundamentals of religious belief and campaigned for socio-religious reform. Since they were also learned in the law of the British as they were in the ways of their own people, they took that law at its own value and created the weapon of *satyagraha*, without hard frontiers as the body that created it, and equally resilient. The effort was to restore to the individual his soul because the soul cannot be a slave.

The political platform followed. Perhaps, it never was too far out of sight.

And then, of a monsoon night, the British decided it was time for them to go. The Indian renaissance, geared to nationalism, suddenly found the race over, the winning post left behind, and the spectators turning away with glances of mild speculation. By a fortuitous combination of British temperament, Indian cultural traditions, and certain historical discomforts, India had possibly once again avoided a violent revolution.

Its intense preoccupation with the fight for political freedom gone, Indian culture now finds itself at the crossroads. For over a hundred years it lay dormant, sealed off from outside influence except for what seeped through to the shallow levels of a minority; a strange twilight in the high noon of a world in ferment. The whole basis of its recent growth has to be reorientated. So much needs to be discovered within the past and the present, and recognised, including the inadvertent legacy of thought that has of a sudden become so relevant.

A curious Rip-Van-Wincklism is of the essence of the situation in independent India. Almost two hundred years too late, a strident industrial revolution is now upon the country; a revolution too with massive problems in its train. Indian culture must find the right answers to a total mechanistic challenge, and find them quickly. The present crisis comes from the need to come to terms with radical change in social, political and humanistic activities. It carries within it the necessity to strike the correct note in the change over from an agrarian, largely feudalistic, society to one which would be democratic and adequately industrialised without turning materialistic in the process. There is need for right balance between agriculture and industrialism, between urbanisation and rural development. Large scale land reform measures have to stay with the law and

must not offend against norms of agricultural production. Provision has to be made for social welfare, education, transport, and for river control works. There is not much money and there has to be no forced labour. There is need to fight unemployment through cottage industries, also to raise production ultimately through some measure of automation. Our 'ferment of dispersion' has been activated most acutely in the past whenever there has been an effort at centralisation. After the reorganisation of the Indian constituent administrative units, there is need also to formulate decentralisation.

IN terms of Toynbee formulae, the time in India is now of the return to its own social milieu of the minority transfigured by contact with Western ideas. The return, naturally, has also to be a quest: the dictum that 'the return is the answer of the whole movement as well as its final cause' has to be translated into effect. Somewhere along the road there has to be a massive readjustment, a revolution controlled, or run amok because so late.

Talking of parliamentary government Toynbee remarks: '... as the 19th century passed into the 20th, all the peoples of the earth became possessed of an ambition to clothe their political nakedness with parliamentary fig-leaves'. India too has proceeded to adopt this particular fig-leaf with due ceremony. It has been said that democracy, in its parliamentary form certainly, is not suited to the genius of the Indian people: it presupposes a genial level of political education that is absent in this country. What is offered instead is perhaps a form of political 'canniness' whose proof was given in the first general elections in the country. The reality of this political wisdom, however, still remains to be examined in the context of the political mechanics

inherent in the country's traditions, and of the character of its leadership.

Within the meaning of the modern idiom it would be idle to talk of absolutist political tendencies in India's cultural tradition. Absolutism as now understood has no previous parallel in history. It is a concept of total control which could have been made possible only in a machine age. Paradoxically, therefore, democracy in India to-day, even with its Western paraphernalia, has an Indian need and aspect. As a concept it may be quite as reasonable to relate it to tendencies and institutions in India's political past as to similiar paternalistic feudalisms in the history of other nations. As a socio-political pattern, democracy alone, through a diffusion of power and through freedom of thought and belief, makes an answer to the materialistic challenge possible.

Totalitarianism in the present world context is merely the absolute aspect of a mechanistic society. It is the apexial, and the inevitable, summing up of the various tendencies inherent in such a society. It is also the only force under which they can ultimately cohere. It begins to negate the individual by gathering to itself all the social, political, and material sources of power. It provides at once the inspiration, the setting, and the object of propitiation. In India it also means casting out the whole religious basis of the people's life, it means the acute regimentation of a whole people who often worship even their God in a multitudinous form devoid of the harsh lines of dogma.

THE communist challenge—the better organised and led of the totalitarian tendencies in India—has a dual aspect. The first, in which it goes under its own name, is largely a function of the unhappy agrarian situation obtaining in parts of the country. The other remains named and un-

named, waiting upon the dialectic of economic history, ready to lend never so gentle a push if it should be tardy. In terms of industrial development a lot of leeway has to be made up. Nor can political democracy be firmly anchored in the existing disparity of wealth and poverty in the country. The likely pattern of an unregulated development of industry, at the same time, would be a further concentration of wealth in a few hands. Somewhere at the confluence of the two needs perhaps lies the communist dream of leviathan.

It would be rash to try and prophesy the manner in which the tradition of Indian civilization will meet this multiple challenge, if at all: a challenge made urgent because it is essentially of the present time in history. Only a few indications have crystallised, tentative so far and carrying no more than a little validity for the future within them.

In the present time of crisis, more than ever, the character of leadership and of political articulation would be a decisive factor. To quote Toynbee again, the problem of securing that the uncreative majority shall in fact follow the creative minority's lead, is open to two solutions. The one termed practical is by way of drill; the other is the ideal solution and works by mysticism, or what may be called the direct kindling of energy from soul to soul. It is the second method that is in India's tradition, in character with her basic instinct of life.

India loves her self-abnegating prophets even when they call her to worship at the site of multi-purpose projects, or exort, like Vinoba Bhave, that worship defeats itself if not accompanied by the gift of self. It is indicative of the peculiar genius of Indian culture that on a cynical world scene it should throw up the frail phenomenon of Acharya Vinoba Bhave. And that some 5,000,000 acres of land should already have been given away by the people be-

cause he went to them and asked for it and they took him in as their 'fifth son' and gave him his share. Of course it is not so simple as all that. In many cases the spontaneity of the gift is doubted. It may be that some of the donors look upon the act as the purchase of social indulgence. At times the land given is poor and worthless. But the act of faith remains, even with relatively indifferent organisation, without the support of a popular political party because the movement has yet no access of power to offer. The psychological climate of the movement is important, the fact that it can exist and move through appeal to certain emotions and values of life.

The fact of Vinoba Bhavé's movement has another significance. It is in line with the Gandhian character of Indian leadership. I think it was John Gunther who said that Gandhiji was a combination of Jesus Christ, Tammany Hall and your father. National leadership, however, is a continuing factor, and Jesus Christ and your father may not always be at hand. Therein lies the acute danger of mysticism in leadership. Also, such leadership is intensely alone, there is no training ground for it, there are no heirs or successors, and the base of the power-pyramid is a dizzy depth away among the multitude. Mystical leadership is not a conscious pattern in the sense that politics is conscious. There is little in the mechanics of a country's history to explain its recurrence or to ensure it: nothing, that is, except the need and the mass temper. Perhaps these two have the pragmatic capacity to conjure up leadership of the right contours at the time when it is needed. Not that such a belief in the power of mass evocation has not been held, most of all in India. There is, however, no rational or historical basis for this Micawberism. All over the world there have been far too many cases of failure of leadership and there is nothing in the Indian scene to-day to discount the possibility of its happening

here in future. When the present line of continuity breaks there may be a free-for-all. There is often the conscious will of only one man or two between mysticism and power-crazy charlatanism.

The present character of Indian political articulation stems from the same mystical tradition. Of the 'political' parties in the country only three are genuinely political because secular in their primary purposes. Of these three the ruling party is largely an empirical platform. It is moved by an undefined, though sincere, ultimate belief in the welfare of the people. A socialist economy, asceticism, free enterprise, industrialism, sarvodaya, and the religious basis of life, all these have a place in the platform.

IN a political association of this type the nature of leadership is a vital factor. For the present there is clarity of purpose at the top. The future sense of direction, however, is bound to be precarious. The more so if ever the party goes out of power and loses its pragmatic attribute of governance which holds it together. In the meantime by its very existence it serves to confuse general political definition as presently understood. It shuns total alignment. The uniform grey tones of mystical belief bind so much together that would otherwise fly apart. It is admirably adequate to the present needs. But the result may be a lacuna when a wise, clearly enunciated and widely diffused political tradition will be the most needed. Of the remaining two political parties one is composed of dissidents from the party in power. The third is contemporary in concept, well-knit and organised for opportunity. Its strongest present foe is mystical leadership, its best future ally may turn out to be the lack of political education in the country that results from that leadership. Meanwhile it practises elaborate political and economic skirmishes and bides its time.

The synthesis and the edge of crisis between drill and mysticism is symbolised in the figure of the Indian Prime Minister. His is the ideal return of the anchorite. Two threads thus run parallel in the present controlled Indian revolution: Bhoodan and State Socialism, the community projects and within them, lending form to decentralisation, the traditional 'panchas', and the newly trained, individually exercised functions of the village-level worker. The method of drill having been placed under self-imposed limitations, mysticism, or the magic power of the moral individual, is called upon to supplement the resources of the State to get so much done in so short a time. The semi-religious tradition of *daan*, or gift, is turned to modern ends of economic equity. An effort is being made to translate it in terms of a voluntary redistribution of land and wealth and in

terms of contribution of labour to make roads, build schools, community centres, dispensaries. Above all it has to generate a spiritual climate of justice so that violence may not arise, now or later.

It is a design where a cultural tradition is on trial, in a context where the existing leadership is not expendable. The utilisation of ancient patterns of moral behaviour in a new socio-economic revolution would have served its purpose if it can maintain dynamic continuity. Through the coming change that may also conserve the dignity of the individual. Reform by legislation at the same time is inevitable in the present context. It would, however, appear necessary that it should ultimately fuse with the other thread of movement to avoid the Indian revolution becoming an importation, and thus destructive before it can begin to build.

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We, Prisoners in Goa

by Shiru Limaye

Translated from the original Marathi by A. K. BHAGWAT

AFTER three months in the Panjim Police Headquarters we were transferred to Altino jail. This was originally meant to be a mental asylum. The place was on a hill and a bit more airy. But our cell was smaller than before. All that we could see from the back windows was the compound wall behind. In the beginning we thought we would be in jail not long after 15th August. No Government, we argued, would unnecessarily bear our expenses and the responsibility of looking after us. Gradually, this idea began to fade. Our logic, so simple and straight-forward, proved to be entirely wrong. It seems now that it was only the prisoner's psychology that was behind it rather than anything else. The fact that we were transferred from one jail to another showed that ours was only wishful thinking. And soon we were tried and sentenced to long periods of imprisonment—equal to Rama's period of exile (18 years).

An unbelievable paroxysm of joy or sorrow leaves the mind vacant and passive. One can neither laugh nor cry. My mind too was a blank after I heard the sentence. It was benumbed as if under anaesthesia. I saw, heard and understood what was happening; but the mind refused to react. This could not last long. The effect of anaesthesia wore out and the walls of the prison seemed to devour me as I pondered upon the long period that I had to spend behind them. But survival was impossible in this state of mind. 'This is unbecoming of a Satyagrahi', I admonished myself, 'This desire to go home so soon'. So I schooled and disciplined myself and started taking interest in jail life.

When one begins in this fashion many

things suggest themselves to occupy the time. Life becomes not merely easily bearable, but one begins to take positive interest in it. When you start loving jail how can you be bored with it? I started looking at human beings and trees and even stones with a new eye. And to put it without exaggeration there appeared a new humanity in common men around me that had never struck me before. I started with our cell. Goray* was with me here as before. The walls of our cell were decorated with personal and place names—attempts of our predecessors to make themselves immortal. They had sketched animals, trees and flowers—using the blood of bugs, or tooth-powder, to draw the sketches with. I started scrubbing out these works of art with a piece of tile. It was slow work; for I did not want to ruin the plaster on the walls or redecorate it with other designs of my own making. Operating on all the four walls, one by one, the work lasted me for a good fortnight. The walls were now quite presentable. Where formerly one was afraid even to touch them, one could recline against them almost luxuriously now. This brought a certain stability in a life that had appeared unsteady and incomplete. There was a new freedom now in our activities.

I looked out of the window to see if I could get a friend to talk to. There were in the compound a number of ducks. With great difficulty they balanced their fat bodies on their short crooked legs. It was they who woke me up in the morning after we got to know one another. I started my

* N. G. Goray, the Praja Socialist leader of Maharashtra who led the first batch of Satyagrahis to Goa.

day by giving them bits of bread, pieces of roasted jackfruit or banana skin. If at times I woke up late and deprived them of their breakfast they organised a protest march and stood there shouting slogans. And then after they had succeeded in their quest they waddled along, their stomachs touching the ground. They made several trips every day. This duck population appeared to decrease or increase in proportion to the needs of the soldiers nearby. And one day not a single duck was to be seen. I guess there must have been a feast of some kind.

This birdless state of mine did not last long, however; four new ducks and a few hens started strutting about. Of all birds, the hen is my favourite. There is nothing to compare with the proud beauty of a well-fed bright-hued cock with his resplendent crest when he begins to crow with his neck raised. He is always wary and watchful—like a successful head of the family. One has only to see him strutting about, step by step, jerking his neck at every step, with his foot bent, looking all over around him to realise how supremely self-confident he is and how marvellously he controls his family. To me the cock beneath my window looked like a wrestler, complete with the huge tail of his turban and a coloured crest, an amulet round his neck, rings in his fingers with the colourless long shirt made of a flimsy material, typical of a wrestler. He was the very picture of pride and seemed so sure of his authority over his numerous wives.

And suddenly, one day, behind one of the hens trailed a small platoon of nine chicks—looking like balls of coloured wool or cotton. It was difficult to take my eyes off them—for the whole day I did nothing but watch them. They looked so small, like miniature paintings; but they grew in size every day by the tiniest fraction of an inch. After a fortnight they looked even more charming, as a crawling baby is more attractive than an infant in the cradle. For

the whole day they followed their mother. How was it that they did not feel tired, I wondered. The mother fed them with her beak in the beginning and then gradually she trained them in the art of eating. The chicks, imitating their mother, looked funny—like a child parading about with father's spectacles and turban. In the mid-day heat when the mother hen sat sequestered in a shady place they too rested; some on her back, others under her belly. The mother scattered rubbish about with her talons and picked up an ant or some tiny insect. The chicks followed her, with their tiny feet stirring the dust. They did not even know that one has to look down at the ground to discover the prey. They just pecked at the ground beneath their beaks, pretending that they had found something. When the mother spread or fluttered her wings they were sure to follow her. If only I were a painter and a writer like Goray, here was material for at least a dozen pictures and articles. I felt so proud of them when later they started going about on their own, independent of their mother. It was as if I had trained and brought them up. But gradually as I realised that they would share the same fate as that of the ducks I turned my attention away from them, so that I did not know when their days were numbered.

MR. Crow was the next to whom I turned my attention. Here at least I could love without a chance of disappointment. I started playing with a flock of crows, remembering Vinoba's question, 'Is a crow black?' I threw them bits of bread which they caught in mid-air with the dexterity of cricketers and this was the only time they looked attractive, otherwise they were black and cunning all over. Is there only one flock of crows that travels all over Goa? In the flock outside Altino Jail there were forty-six crows and here in the Aguada Fort too there were precisely the

same number. So far I have not found a solution to this mystery.

Apart from the ducks, hens and crows I did not see any other of our feathered friends during this whole period of a year and a half. At first I was under the impression that in this beautiful and fruitful land with its mangoes, jackfruit and coconuts, one would find birds in plenty and of many kinds. The sparrow at least is universal. I expected to be amused by its chirping as in the Nasik, Dhulia or Yerawada jail. Here however, even the sparrow was absent. Are there no birds in Goa? Or are they all, with the exception of the cunning crow, scared of the mishapen terrible negro cutting wood in the compound?

On our arrival at the Aguada Fort where we came by a steam launch, we were greeted by a fat bitch. As I looked at her I was so glad that very soon we would have a small pup to play with. I loved the dog at first sight and fed her every day. I named her Chandri, but the others called her Blackie. In less than a fortnight she brought into the world four or five beautiful pups. Soon a few more dogs were added to the colony. These newcomers unfortunately, had very nasty habits. Every time they heard the band play they started howling most inauspiciously. Particularly after the Sunday morning bugle, their crying appeared most detestable. Soon all of them disappeared. Presumably somebody, annoyed with their pranks, had complained to the jail officials, and the dogs were all exiled.

These were common creatures seen every day—the hens, ducks, crows and dogs. I never thought that anyone could spend hours together watching them; but here even a humbler creature like the spider takes a lot of my time. In addition to reading I have started knitting. I am now familiar with the technical jargon of pearl one, leave one, knit one, etc. I have now made a sweater and when it is complete I

shall be able to decide to whom to present it.

I am also making satisfactory progress in drawing. When I draw a picture now I do not have to write my name below. I have always loved gardening and when I feel like it I take up a few old issues of the *National Geographical Magazine* and look at the pictures of plants and flowers. But that did not quite satisfy me. I then filled an empty tin and a bottle or two with earth and made a garden of my own. The croton in the bottle does not have even a single leaf but its roots are spread all over the bottle. Now and then a smaller bubble appears at the bottom of the bottle and slowly slides its way up to its neck. A leaf or two appears on some other bottled plants of mine. It is a hanging garden, suspended from the bars of the windows. But, I said to myself, how could I take it home after a dozen years? To solve this difficulty, I am making curtains out of the leaves that I have cut from the trees here. The place where we bathe is perhaps the most attractive in these parts. A stream flowing down from the hill is channelised and made to pour its water into a small tank. Except in summer, a small waterfall trickles down all round the year. This is our showerbath.

THE place is skirted by all kinds of trees—betel nut, papaya, jackfruit and coconut. The one furlong walk to our bathing place is most enjoyable and refreshing. It is an opportunity to store up energy and enthusiasm that last us throughout the day. On the way there are flowers; croton, mogora, queen of the night. Every day I bring a few leaves and stick them on to a piece of cloth and try to make a design. These curtains I keep pressed under the bed and as they are always in the dark, the leaves still look fresh and have kept their colour.

There are four of us in the same room. We try to be as social and accommodating as possible; but some times we are bored

with the same faces. Then there comes an intense longing to see the faces of our near and dear ones. Sometimes I have an irrepressible desire to see my mother. But that is impossible; for she is aged and blind. Then my mind starts finding out some way to be with her. That must have been at the back of my mind when, in the police headquarters, I used to pace up and down in the cell with my eyes shut. Goray has started fasting on Mondays. The rules that he observes are the same as those observed by his mother. The reason behind his fast is, I believe, the same as the one behind my blind walk.

Nothing can be more satisfying in prison than reading and writing letters. There can be no greater relief to a person away from his home than letters. You may be a staunch idealist but there in prison, in the matter of letters, you are as extremely sensitive as any morbid sentimentalist. Jail life again affords the best opportunity for reading, particularly to an active worker like me. I could never have com-

pleted the six volumes of Churchill's War Memoirs, besides many other books.

We are all prisoners here; but we play our parts—from a peon to a President. In the morning we wash our commodes and begin our day as scavengers. Then we are coolies or volunteers. We fetch water, sweep and clean our cell and wash our clothes. In the thirty minutes that we get for exercise in the afternoon, we dress ourselves in our best clothes and with our hair well brushed and sleek, we play the gentleman. Half an hour over, we shut our cell ourselves and act the part of the ideal prisoner. After the evening meals we are allowed to read for an hour or so by the light of big lamps. Then we sit in conference as members of a World War Cabinet or a Peace Conference. We keep pace with world affairs by reading papers which are more than a week old and send messages and mandates counselling or admonishing a Nehru or a Nasser, an Eden or an Eisenhower. Thus ends our day.

Courtesy, *Mouj*, Bombay.

M. A. VENKATA RAO

the ashram ideal in politics

India's version of classless society

WHEN Mahatma Gandhi started from Sabarmati Ashram on his famous march to Dandi, bringing the salt satyagraha campaign to a climax, he declared that he would not return to the Ashram till swaraj was won. After the advent of independence in 1947, the American missionary Dr. Jones suggested to Gandhiji that he lead a triumphant return procession to Sabarmati. Though the atmosphere of the time with its blood-curdling tragedies accompanying Partition did not favour the symbolic idea proposed by Dr. Jones, the suggestion highlights the role of the Ashram in Indian politics. While Sri Aurobindo had developed his famous Ashram at Pondicherry, it is the Gandhian Ashrams at Sabarmati and Wardha that caught the imagination of the country and played a vital role in the liberation movement. And it is Acharya Vinoba's emergence as the leader of the Bhoodan move-

ment that is maintaining the influence of this ideal in current politics and social thought.

The role of the Ashram in Indian life mobilises many strands of thought and value. Its overall effect points to the validity of the ideal of a classless society functioning in the ethos of Indian culture. The Ashram symbolises India's version of the classless society in a context far removed from the hate-filled movement of Karl Marx.

This may seem a tall claim; yet seen against the background of its theory and practice it may be shown to be a reasonable view of the institution.

The Ashram stands for many varieties of 'retreats' in Indian social and cultural history. For one thing, it corresponds to the monastery of the Christian monks. In this light, Mutts are Ashrams. The Mutt like the Church schools in the West maintains

and teaches the prevailing world-view and ethos through its own version of theology. It is a school for priests and theologians and moralists. Its alumni consists of scholars learned in the scriptures and in ritual.

But this does not exhaust the scope of the Ashram. The more valuable meaning attaches to those 'retreats' growing around a great and original teacher and thinker who attracts students from all over the country, students intent not on formal degrees with the prospect of a career but seized with a restless passion for a vision of truth and values and dissatisfied with current customs, practices and routine ideals. As Nietzsche pointed out, the world-renouncing monk and his institution of the monastery outside the routine of life was a cover that nursed the thinking free spirit of the adventurous. The Ashram also stands for the 'retreats' of those who take to a life of renunciation as true sanyasis, world-renouncers, to be able to concentrate on the way of faith and contemplation, to attain *moksha* or redemption from the world. *Moksha*, *nirvana* and *kaivalya* as super-social goals animate India's religious traditions, whether Buddhist, Vedic or Jain. But these have no direct significance from the point of view of social change and political contribution. For these individual devotees of the way of renunciation have only an indirect influence in demonstrating that there are values in human life not dreamt of in the philosophy of the severely utilitarian Horatios of the world.

But the Ashram as a living force today in India has its roots in the *tapovanas* and *gurukulas* of great teachers like Chanakya, who from his vantage ground of contemplative life (learning and teaching the best political statecraft of his day at Taxila University in the decades before the invasion of Alexander) saw the inadequacy of the scattered array of city re-

publics and tiny kingdoms to the political needs of the time. He realised how defenceless they were against foreign invasion and the maintenance of social order over the whole of Aryavarta from Purishapuri (Peshwar) to Pataliputra (Patna) in Maghadda (Bihar).

The external isolation of these republics in this sense was only the other side of a concentration on the problems of the age, free from the confusing details and personal rivalries of contending dynasties and states. It is this aspect of relative isolation combined with an intensive study of the essential ideas and values of state and society considered as a whole, independent of class and caste interests, that points to the power of classless ideals in the Indian political tradition. No one asks to what caste and class Aurobindo and Gandhi belonged. The Ashram of their practice puts them above the contending strife of classes and gives their advice the force of impartial truth.

MARXISM is committed to historical materialism as applied to the strife of classes. Marx draws much of his appeal to the revolutionary from his idea that there is no absolute truth, and that every economic structure (primitive communism, bourgeois capitalism and socialism or communism) evolves its own system of values and truths. All truths and values are class truths and values. If this is so it fails to account for the theories of Marx himself, whose proletarian theory does not reflect his bourgeois origin and class standing. Marx and Engels could emerge in their thoughts from their class tie-up and identify themselves with the supposed interests of the world proletariat. Later, Marxist theory in the hands of Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung, recognises the possibility of the intellectuals freeing themselves from their class origin and identifying themselves with the interests of other classes.

The Ashram ideal and institution in India is free from this contradiction. The influence of the Ashram depends wholly on that of the personality presiding over it and the measure of truth and justice that it makes its own. The influence of Vinoba Bhave does not depend on his Brahmin origin but entirely on the appeal of his selfless life and devotion to public interest, so obvious in his activities.

The Ashram derives much of its force from the Indian ethos of simplicity and sacrifice. If all the world loves a lover, all the world whether in East or West respects dedicated lives. Even those who are strong enough merely to reject the attractions of the world, without any purpose served thereby, like the pure sanyasis and sadhus, evoke a responsive chord among Indians in a greater degree than among other peoples. The figure of Gomateswara standing four square to the gaze of the world 'clad only in the sky' is a symbol of this appeal. But when such sacrifice is combined with devotion to an ideal, national or religious, social or individual, the appeal becomes immensely strengthened.

It is this strand of thought that is embodied in the institution of the Ashram. The truth of an idea or proposal for social reconstruction does not depend, of course, on the degree of self-sacrifice displayed by its sponsor, just as the 'jail qualification' of many Congress workers does not prove any special fitness for administrative posts. But it has one great merit, and that is, it shows depth of conviction and relative freedom from the extraneous motives of careerism and personal advantage.

For social ideals to acquire force, to acquire hands and feet as it were, they must develop sanctions. The Ashrams in modern India have evolved such sanctions superior to those on which the communist technique relies. In the practice of Mahatma Gandhi at Sabarmati and at Wardha, the Ashram has developed social

sanctions by way of constructive activities. This contrasts sharply with the communist technique of training elites and cadres, groups of leaders and workers devoted to their programme of world revolution through legal and illegal methods of working.

Just as there is an element of truth in the idea that a democratic party should mirror democratic practices in its own day-to-day activities, as well as in the formulation of programmes, there is an element of sound psychology in the Ashram ideal and practice. The Ashram is a small community gathered spontaneously round a leader putting into practice in daily life the ideals for which the leader and his following or disciples stand. The social reform or political programme for which the Ashramites stand, gains the support of the general public from the picture of a dedicated life that their conduct displays. The element of simplicity and even a strain of asceticism is reinforced by another suggestion inherent in the Ashram ideal, namely the devotion to truth. The Ashram is national in form but universal and humanistic in content. It is not possible for an Indian Ashram to take up frankly the position of class or sectarian interests. Such a tendency will automatically make for its loss of face and dissolution. The tradition is still powerful on this question.

IN addition to truth as a social force, non-violence is equally an integral part of the tradition of the Ashram. The Ashram as a nurse of elites of reform and leadership cannot be exploited by amoral conspirators and violent revolutionaries. The spurious *bhajan* parties that the communists had organised in some parts of the country, particularly in the Uttar Pradesh some years ago, could not hold out for long. Their motives were suspect to the masses early enough.

The values of truth and non-violence

backed by those of personal example and commitment contribute to the power of the Ashram as a forger of sanctions supporting policies of social reconstruction, sanctions free from the destructive and disruptive techniques of revolutionary communism. The value of truth to which the Ashram is committed, and from which its social force derives, imparts to it more of the scientific spirit in a genuine sense than can be claimed with justice by the ideology and technique of Marxism. The policies to which an Ashram attaches itself under its leader will derive their social force not from their appeal to the passions of the hour and the interests of classes who happen to make the most noise at the moment but from the amount of truth and justice they contain after an impartial and thorough investigation of the questions involved. The appeal of Bhoodan to the conscience of the possessing classes needs to be backed by a full programme of rural democracy and rural reconstruction evoking and giving form and shape to the natural groupings and associations of family neighbourhood and occupation of the area with the whole village community as the matrix.

This is different from the communist proposal of village management in collective and State farms now spreading like a forest fire on an immense scale in the Chinese countryside. The reference to village management in the Draft Second Five Year Plan and the kind of co-operative farming associations it mentions are far removed from the democratic and humanistic proposals of Vinoba Bhave. They smell more of the mechanical collectivisation of Stalin and Mao depriving the peasants of their land and converting them into proletarians in the image of Marxism, i.e. robots at the mercy of the communist elite.

Another value for which the Ashram stands comes close to what many far-see-

ing thinkers in the West from the days of Proudhon and Owen have emphasised in the name of the integral community and decentralisation. In sociological and political theory, the idea is indicated by the term pluralism. Harold Laski made many proposals in his works, particularly in his *Grammar of Politics*, pleading for the preservation of local and vocational autonomy in the complex structure of Marxist socialism to which he was attached.

THE Ashram ideal in the Indian tradition attempts to solve the relation between political and social wisdom. The men of wisdom remain unattached to power, in the retreats, without any ambitions of their own. They mature their policies free from class orientation and careerism and acquire social sanctions for them indirectly through the force of their dedicated lives devoted utterly to social good as a whole.

Other classes and groups in society like the rulers, teachers and industrialists, traders, artisans and workers are all to devote themselves to their own vocational values. No one class is to dominate the others. In this scheme there is no domination of any class over the others—teachers, politicians, capitalists, etc. have each their own sphere, none dominating over the other. From time to time, Ashramites will suggest new lines of reconstruction or reinterpretation of the ethos prevailing at the time, and they will be put across through the respect that the people have for the institution of the Ashram and of its leading personalities.

Mr. Edward Shils, the American sociologist, outlines wistfully some such picture of a society where sub-societies have their own relatively independent spheres. Such a society, according to him will not succumb to the pathology witnessed in recent American life known as *MacCarthyism* which consisted in a small group invading

the spheres of the Executive Government and all other departments of social life such as churches, schools and universities and creating demoralisation all round. He thinks that a pluralist system of social life will free the country from such a confusion of functions with the resulting spread of panic, hypocrisy and conformism. (See *The Torment of Secrecy* by Edward Shils.)

The Ashram ideal reinforces such a pluralist system of social and political values and helps to keep leadership free from the confusion deriving from the overlapping of ideas and emotions across social circles. The Ashram is not committed to any one religion. The ethos it develops depends entirely on the personal leadership of its founder. Chanakya mentions the lokayatas (materialists) also as having their own school of political thought with their own justification in political principles (dharma) on the basis of their utilitarian sceptical philosophy of naturalistic rationalism.

Today, nothing prevents thinkers with a

world view different from the *Sampradayas* (religious traditions) of the past from having their own Ashrams, literally in retreats, or figuratively in the attitudes of scientific detachment and devotion to truth and justice. The essence of the Ashram as an institution is its detachment from current prepossessions and devotion in a single-minded fashion to the realisation of truth and justice. Communities of like-minded reformers from the 'creative minority' who will help, in the language of Toynbee, to meet the challenge of the times. Bergson looked for the groups of mystics of a more dynamic type to introduce the era of the open society leading the present phase of civilisation away from its closed horizon.

The Ashram stands for the science and art of what may be called an 'evolutionary revolution', based on the best values of the present and seeking to lift society to higher levels by breaking the vicious circle of violent class interests and personal ambitions.



COMMUNIQUE

ON THE ANNUAL SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM

THE International Executive Committee of the Congress for Cultural Freedom assembled in Paris on January 12 and 13 to review its activities and those of its national affiliates during the past year and to set its tasks for 1957. Among the honorary guests present at the session was Paul Ignotus, Hungarian poet and journalist and member of the Hungarian Writers Association.

In the course of its deliberations, the Executive Committee reasserted the opposition of the Congress for Cultural Freedom to every form of aggression and noted that aggressions in Eastern Europe and the Middle East have weakened and continue to weaken the foundations of international morality which are among the guarantees of international peace and order. The Committee noted that, while the French and British governments have obeyed the decisions of the United Nations and withdrawn their troops from Egyptian territory, the Soviet government has defied the United Nations and remains guilty of continued aggression and naked imperialism. The Congress for Cultural Freedom shares the widespread feeling of sorrow and shame evoked by the free world to prevent this aggression and to protect the independence of the Hungarian people.

The Congress for Cultural Freedom pays tribute to the intellectuals of Hungary and Poland for their continuing struggle for the right to know and affirm the truth. This struggle has opened new historical perspectives and possibilities for the extension of freedom in countries where it hitherto has been denied.

The fact that the writers and students of Hungary and Poland are in the vanguard of the fight bears testimony to the validity of the Berlin Manifesto of 1950, on which the Congress for Cultural Freedom was founded. The Manifesto states that cultural freedom is a precondition for the acquisition of other liberties.

The Congress for Cultural Freedom has endeavoured constantly to aid intellectuals whose freedom had been imperilled. Therefore, the Executive Committee salutes the initiative of the editorial staff of FORUM, a Congress magazine published in Vienna, in assisting in the rehabilitation of Hungarian refugee intellectuals.

The Executive Committee announced that the Congress for Cultural Freedom will pursue contacts and discussions begun during the past year with intellectuals where totalitarian governments prevail.

At the same time, the Congress for Cultural Freedom will continue to give its moral sympathy to intellectuals in Latin American countries engaged in the struggle to strengthen intellectual freedom and it records with satisfaction the progress made in this direction in several of these countries.

ELIEZER LIVNEH

sidelights on israel

behind the headlines

NO amount of 'news' can give a truly correct picture of a country. There are too many important facts and significant developments which just do not make 'news'.

To begin with the military angle: what can we learn from the papers about the effect of the tense security situation on the character of the Israeli people? There is no peace between the Arab States and Israel. Boiled down to essentials, the Arab attitude is very simple: they have never acquiesced in the existence of Israel. Their behaviour appears rational from this point of view. As they do not intend to acknowledge Israel's existence, they feel no need to make peace with Israel; and having no intention of concluding peace, they try to make the Arab refugees as bitter and as unhappy as possible. That—to them—makes sense. The people of Israel are willing and ready to make peace, but they are not

hopeful about the prospects, and so they have settled down to a situation which is neither peace nor war.

The impact of this situation on the people of Israel, and particularly on the younger generation, is remarkable. Perhaps the most important effect is that, with the passage of time, people have come to adopt a different attitude towards danger and death. The whole country is a frontier. Jerusalem is hemmed in on three sides by Arab territory. Tel-Aviv, the biggest city in Israel, is ten miles from the border. Arab 'infiltrations' may—and often do—take place only a few miles from Tel-Aviv. People are living, as it were, in perpetual readiness and, as time passes, this is producing a new type of Hebrew people. It may not be quite new, it may be very ancient.

There is general conscription for both boys and girls. Young men and women know that 'something' may happen any day

and night. They are getting used to the 'night-life' of ambush and skirmish. They have come to regard it as an everyday experience. They are not militaristic. Israel is a free and complex society, intent on all kinds of pursuits and pastimes, but people have come to feel danger and the risk of violent encounter as things that are 'all in the day's work'. Like other elements of normal life—work, education, marriage—it has become an accepted ingredient of their days.

This is having a profound effect on two important segments of Israeli society: the young people born in Israel and the new Oriental immigrants. Probably the young people are no longer conscious of what has happened to them. Suspense, the arts of war, the presence of death in their midst, have become organic parts of their lives. Somehow this leads them to feel sure of themselves, and develops a certain amount of 'nerve'. External insecurity produces internal security.

The new immigrants from the Moslem countries, where they have been oppressed and down-trodden for centuries, and have never known the meaning of civic life and freedom, find a kind of education in the same experiences. The military tension is having an immense effect on them, and will bring their younger generation very close to the Israel-born.

THERE is a second aspect of the prevailing tension: its influence on the Israeli economy. For the last 1,600 years, Jews have been accustomed to congregate in towns or cities. They are said to be efficient business men (not in Israel!). The mere journey from Morocco or Baghdad or Bucharest to Israel does not change their lifelong habits and inherited tendencies. But under the impact of the external pressure, the Israelis are being encouraged to move to the frontiers, to climb up into the

hills, to establish new villages everywhere. At first the new immigrants were settled in the plains, but later they began to move into the hills—where the old Hebrew civilization flourished 2,000 years ago. The Jews are not a modern people, though to the outside world they often appear in modern guise. Under the pressure of military tension, they seem to be reliving their ancient history.

Since Israel cannot trade with the surrounding Arab countries, it is unable to buy their agricultural produce, and is driven to produce what it needs for itself. The security situation exerts a pressure on the people to go out and farm the land—sometimes half-barren land—and settle on it. The external tension has created a certain amount of productive internal tension, a drive back to basic production, to the good life among animals, trees, 'the kindly fruits of the earth', and the invigorating course of Nature. If this goes on for a few more years, as it probably will, it may have great value for the resurgence of the Hebrew nation. Nobody would choose so stern an education for himself—and the Israelis are no exception. But there may be some power which is greater than human reason. It is shaping the modern Hebrew into something very different from what was expected.

It is difficult to discuss the economic problems of Israel because of semantic complications. The general social and economic definitions in use in Western society, words like socialism, capitalism, trade unions, welfare state, and so on, have a different meaning in Israel, and in order to be intellectually honest, it would be necessary to explain the Israeli meaning of all the terms before putting them into context. So I shall confine myself to one aspect of Israel's economy.

Israel needs a considerable amount of external help. Probably some 25 or 30 per cent. of its national income is 'unearned

income; about half of this comes from Jewish communities abroad, and the other half from Germany by way of Reparations, and from the U.S.A. as grants-in-aid. The effect of this massive external help is complex. Many European, and some Asian countries have enjoyed American help, but on a relatively smaller scale. Marshall Aid to Britain, for instance, amounted to no more than three or four per cent. of the national income. Of course, Israel needs this assistance. It could not, with accumulated internal capital alone, have absorbed in the past seven years an immigration exceeding the established population.

It is not merely a question of economic absorption, but also of the re-education of a people. Take, for instance, the Jewish community from the Yemen. They have made a long journey, not only in space, from Yemen to Israel, but in time, through two thousand years of history. To illustrate what this means I mention one small incident. The Yemenites had never seen an aeroplane. But when they boarded in Aden the planes for Israel, they were not at all astonished: is it not written in The Book that one day they would return to their Land 'on the wings of eagles'?! But when they left the airport in Israel, and saw their first buses, they were deeply perplexed: there is nothing in The Book about buses, and no amount of liberal interpretation could produce a bus out of the Bible. To hundreds of thousands of people like these, Israel has to teach modern skills, western technology, the elements of democratic experience, and, of course, in many cases, the language. The Yemenites are an exception to the last, because they speak the same language that is spoken in Israel, Biblical Hebrew. But many other Jews do not. All this calls for a great deal of money in a modern Western society.

But on the other hand, a society which accepts long-term and large-scale philanthropic help from outside must experience

some less positive effects. Such help lessens the compulsion to be fully competitive. It does not give the necessary encouragement to decrease the costs of production, or to proceed as rapidly as possible with the business of rationalisation. Bureaucracies mushroom under such conditions.

THE great boon of healthy competition, which runs some risks in any Welfare State, is a tender plant in Israel. This situation affects the older settlers and the newcomers rather differently. The effect on the old settlers is obvious: they know the Government's address all too well, and when they find themselves in economic difficulties, they feel they only need a subsidy. Israeli enterprises and 'blocks' are so sophisticated about getting subsidies from the State that they generally avoid the direct or open forms. They may try for 'cheap' foreign exchange, for monopolistic import licences, for long-term credits to be repaid after due stages of inflation, etc. And these are some of the cruder forms; every year they are inventing new ones. So if ever a group of enterprises, industrial or agricultural, lands itself in difficulties, it has 'redress' from the Government.

There are substantial achievements to set against all this: 420 new villages, and 15 new towns have been established in the last eight years; new industries never before known in this part of the world have been founded; metals and minerals have been discovered, and some of them are already being mined commercially. Nevertheless, the mixed effects of long-range philanthropy are unmistakable. The fact remains that people use gift money in quite a different way from money earned by the sweat of their brows.

The effects on the new immigrants are different. To give an example: during last year the authorities began to settle a new region, Lachish, a district in Southern

Judea where King David spent his more adventurous days. It is a fertile plain. Jews from the Ghettos of Morocco were brought directly from the ships to agricultural settlements in this area. They got their houses, full employment (Israel being a Welfare State), decent wages (the trade unions have fought for them for many years), and free schooling. They get entertainment free of charge—an educational film or folk-dancing. But it will be a long time before they can produce by their own exertions enough to pay for all this. Now it is paid for by the State. How many years will it take them to become skilled and productive enough to meet the cost themselves?

It is a queer phenomenon, this absorption by a western-type society of people from medieval and pre-medieval times. Some of them may not even be very happy to have full employment; they would prefer desultory work for two or three days a week. They may well entertain their own ideas about recreation, different from educational films or lectures. It is still not too clear how they react to the benefits given to them.

Young second generation Israelis leave their own farms for a year or two and volunteer to serve as instructors to the newcomers. How do the latter regard all this? Perhaps as a miracle—but perhaps as an excuse for economic slovenliness. They have not yet acquired the discipline and skills of western industrial workers. They do not see the Welfare State in the same light as modern Westerners.

THERE is, perhaps, some innate contradiction between philanthropic outside help and the necessity for competition. At what level will that contradiction eventually be solved? Probably it will be solved through some great *moral* upheaval, some reverberating spiritual experience, whose

outcome might be a more puritan economy and a more liberal way of life.

Who is going to decide all the open issues of Israel—military, economic and social? Israel has many political parties. But maybe the great divide is on a different plane, between the passing and the coming generation. Between them is much more than the normal difference separating two generations. For the first time in the history of the new Israel, there is now arising to leadership a generation which is Israel-born. Of course, since the beginning of the Third Return to Zion, there have already been six generations of Jews born in Israel, but the leaders have so far always been men who have come from the Diaspora. They have been more numerous, and sometimes more cultured, than the indigenous Jews. The people who now lead the State of Israel and its society are Jews born in Eastern Europe. The political leaders are mainly Russian Jews. This to some degree explains their anti-Communism. There is also some admixture of German Jews in the leadership of business and finance. But this generation is passing. It may not be more than three—at the most five—years before Israel is led by people born there. And this means a totally different type of people.

These young people are different in many respects. They have a different hold on Jewish tradition. For them, Jewish tradition is The Bible. They are infused with the Bible, with its connotations and associations, but they do not identify themselves in the same way with the Jewish traditions created during the 1800 years of the Exile. Of course, they learn about these in school, but they remain somehow strange to them. 'Existential' Judaism means for them Joshua and the Kings, the Prophets, the Maccabees, and Bar-Kochba—that is, as far as the Second Dispersion. This, for them, is part of their real, present history; they enjoy it and feel it. From this springs the

enthusiasm for archaeology. It is no accident that the first Israel Chief-of-Staff, now aged 41, is a noted archaeologist. Israel's national sport is neither horse-racing nor dog-racing, but archaeology. A new discovery from the Middle Bronze period or from the Hittite Empire is something that will excite many households in the country. Things beneath the earth (and I do not mean oil, important as that is) are almost as important as things on the earth's surface. It is an ingredient in the widespread attachment to ancient Hebrew tradition.

The younger people also differ from the European-born in their attitude to Western society. Most of the men who founded the State came from Eastern or Central Europe. They had not been very happy with the Western civilisation they knew. For the generation born in Israel, Western civilisation means Anglo-Saxon civilisation, and particularly its American version. They admire American technology and the fluidity of Ameri-

can economic and social life. Many of them are socialists, but their socialism goes hand-in-hand with great admiration for the material and technological achievements of America. The products of Hollywood make some of them doubtful, but it takes time before they become conscious of the dichotomies of western civilisation, techniques, and 'progress'. Anyhow, these will be the men who will, in a very few years, be taking over the State, its economy, its trade unions, its institutes of higher learning, and all the key positions.

The Israeli people feel, obscurely enough, that whatever they do or fail to do, they are unwitting, sometimes even unwilling, agents of some greater, inscrutable Will. Now is only a beginning, a new beginning. They will go the way, whatever it may mean and however hard it may prove. They will not look back. They obey, as it were, the Message on a scroll which only gradually unfolds itself before their eyes.





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PLATO'S INDIAN REPUBLIC

A FRAGMENT

(The following is a free rendering of part of a Platonic manuscript of doubtful authenticity.)

AS we sat in the market place and considered the nature of the good life and sundry other matters as was our wont, Agropatus expressed a desire to hear somewhat of my experiences in India which I had lately visited on the invitation of its Government.

'One hears, Socrates, such a great deal these days of disputes among the Indians about the learning of languages and the banding together of people who speak the same language,' said Agathon who read the newspapers more avidly than any other person I knew.

Young Lysis, who had accompanied me on my journey, said rather impatiently, before I could intervene, 'While we were in their midst, it was nearly impossible to get away from talk of language questions in one form or another. Should language determine the boundaries of administrative districts? In what language should the bureaucrats write their circulars and memoranda? In what language should their preceptors teach the young? And so on and so forth. To the articulate Indian, language problems are a never-failing subject of conversation, just as the weather is to the Englishman.'

'And for the same reason, I presume,' said Phaelon, 'the weather keeps changing in England so rapidly that the subject never gets stale. And in India, language policies keep changing so constantly that the subject is of unfailing interest.'

'Maybe, but they could at least have spared the foreign visitor,' protested Lysis.

'But they meant no harm,' I said. 'For I had many occasions to notice that though they talked a great deal, they were never concerned about whether you were listening or not. They are good talkers, but rather poor listeners. They apparently do

not expect you to be any better at listening either. You cannot complain of a loquacity that does not impose upon you the irksome obligation of listening.'

'But, if you did not listen,' asked Phaelon, 'how ever could you converse with them or argue with them?'

'The truth,' I said, 'is that in the whole of the six weeks I spent amongst them, I never conversed above once a day, and never was able to argue even once.'

'But that is most strange,' said Agropatus. 'We had heard that you had been very well received in India.'

'Indeed I was,' I said. 'No one could be more hospitable than the Indians. For, even when they do not quite approve of a visitor, they take a great deal of trouble to make him welcome. They would spend lots of money building arches all along his way, send out their children from the schools in their thousands to shout greetings to him, and get their academies to confer degrees on him. Wherever I went, they would burden my neck with loads of enormous garlands, the flowers so dewy and the load so heavy, that I ended my visit with a bad cold and a stiff neck. But I could see that their intentions were most generous.'

'I was talking about conversing and arguing,' I continued. 'I had looked forward to having many pleasant and profitable disputations in their academies and their law-making assemblies. But I soon discovered that when their leaders and their law-makers and their preceptors assemble, they do not converse and dispute; they merely make speeches. One after another. Dozens and dozens of them.'

'But did not each speaker endeavour to add to or confute the points made by the previous speakers?' asked Agathon.

'That did not happen,' I answered. 'Each

went his own way. It reminded me of what our mathematicians tell us about parallel straight lines, namely that they never meet. It could not be otherwise, for, as each spoke, the others were evidently not listening.'

'How did you know that?' asked Phaelon.

'It was so obvious. For speaker after speaker was making the same speech. I attended a sitting of their law-making assembly one day and made an exact reckoning. There were really only two speeches, but seventeen persons made one of them, and six persons made the other. Often in the same words, of which they seem to have a common stock-in-trade, and always the same ideas. And yet no one seemed to notice the constant iteration.'

'The law-makers couldn't be very businesslike,' observed Agathon.

'I did ask my guide why the members were making the same speech over and over again. If such iteration were avoided, could they not arrive at their decisions more quickly? My guide explained that the decisions did not at all depend on the speeches. The ruling party had already made up its mind, and the decision would not be changed by anything that the speeches contained. That, I was told, was how parliamentary democracy worked. The British had taught them the way. It is very unlike our way of democracy. Why then were the speeches necessary, I asked. The guide explained that in England, when a member of Parliament wanted to speak he sought to catch the Speaker's eye. In the Indian Parliament, the member is not content with that: his attempt is to catch the Prime Minister's eye. This could best be done by getting up and speaking frequently.

'Why do they want to catch the Prime Minister's eye?' asked Phaelon.

'I asked the guide the same question. And by way of answer he pointed out to me several important-looking men seated beside and behind the Prime Minister, and whispered to me, "They are men who have

at one time or another caught the Prime Minister's eye." "But if all members try to catch his eye in this manner, he will not have room enough beside him for all of them!" I said. "That is true," agreed the guide, "Our Prime Minister is a much harassed man".'

'Well, how did you fare among these speech-makers?' asked Agopatus with some amusement.

'Wherever I went,' I said, 'someone got up and made a speech. Then they called upon me to make a speech. I did my best, but by their standards, I must have been accounted a failure. And when I finished, one or two others also made speeches. They were good at it. If I ventured to ask my questions, there was general embarrassment. If instead I invited questions, there was only one question they would put; and that came up in all places I visited up and down the country.'

'What was this all-important question?' asked Agathon.

'It was not all that important,' I answered. 'They merely thought it was a topical question to put to a Greek.'

'I can guess,' said Agathon, the newspaper addict.

'Easily,' I said. 'They wanted to know what I thought of British policies in the island of Cyprus. And they were somewhat disappointed that I did not immediately start denouncing the British.'

'Does that mean that Indians are still anti-British as they used to be some time ago?' asked Phaelon.

'On the contrary. The British are now very popular in India. The British Empire was brought to India by a company of merchants who did not quite know what they wanted; they have packed up and left. Into the scene of their misdeeds have stepped a band of harmless-looking schoolmasters calling themselves the British Council, and they know what they want. And it seemed to me that the schoolmaster

was going to succeed where the merchant had failed. He is very much liked by the Indians. Even so, Indians seemed to love it whenever they could feel morally superior to the British and read them a lecture on the wickedness of trying to govern other peoples.'

'Do Indians continue to study and cherish the English language as they used to in the days when the British ruled India?' asked Agathon.

'They study it all right, but they are far from cherishing it,' said Lysis.

'Lysis is right. For the Indian's approach to English, I noticed, was grudging and unwilling. In the days when he wanted to get rid of British rule, he promised himself that as soon as the British left, he would throw over their language also. But after they left, he has found it somewhat inconvenient to do without the English language.'

'After all, speaking the English language was not more unpatriotic than buying English gunboats and English machine guns,' interposed Lysis.

'But patriotism, I discovered, is only one of the many gods that Indians worship. They have lately added a new god to their Pantheon, and that is Efficiency. And as I understood it, some of the older gods are getting short shrift whenever they come into conflict with this new god. In the matter of English, however, I supposed that the plea of efficiency served as a cloak for certain vested interests.'

'I know what you mean, Socrates,' said Lysis. 'But vested interests are ranged on both sides of the controversy. True, those who have learnt English, some of whom even earn a living through English, want it to stay. And those who have not learnt it, or learnt it but inexpertly, want it to go. On that level, there is nothing to choose between the two.'

'Lysis has acquired a new vehemence of speech since his visit to India,' said

Phaelon mischievously. 'It seems to be an infection which he caught while there.'

'Perhaps so,' I agreed. 'I have found it at times an engaging quality, though I have myself no talent for it. Those who wanted English to stay, began by pleading that India needed an international language for contact with other countries. This argument did not carry them very far. The contacts they referred to were those of diplomacy and commerce. But, as a waggish college professor pointed out to me, in diplomacy you hardly ever mean what you say, or say what you mean; did it matter then what language you employed for the purpose? As for commerce, if the Indian wanted to get a high-powered motor car from America, all the best English in the world would not help him, but a cheque for the right amount would, whatever be the language in which the bankers were instructed. To use an English vulgarity, in such matters money talks—talks better than whole encyclopaedias.'

'They have now come round to the discovery of the real use of English as a clearing-house of the world's knowledge, haven't they?' asked Lysis triumphantly.

'How Lysis has picked up all the catch-words!' I said. 'That phrase about the clearing-house was often heard while we were there. It so happened that a conference of the Elders who were in charge of the education of youth in the various provinces was being held at the time. They decided that the study of English was indispensable for those who pursued scientific and technological studies. India's leaders are greatly concerned about the success of their Five Year Plans. This cannot be ensured without a large number of competent technicians. And it seems that they have to seek their scientific and technical knowledge in English books.'

'I was told,' added Lysis, 'that in none of the Indian languages is there an adequate number of books on any of the

branches of scientific studies on the fruits of which the Indian taxpayer is staking his millions!

'I suppose, on the other hand, that the Indian languages are rich in authoritative books on philosophy and literature and the arts?' asked Agathon.

'I do not think so,' answered Lysis.

'Then why don't their Elders advise the youth to get such knowledge too from English books?' asked Agathon.

'I did ask that question,' I said. 'The ready answer I got was that dependence on a foreign language was a sign of slavery. Indians love to talk in such figures of speech. When I pressed the question why they would have their mechanics well-read in their crafts while leaving their philosophers to get along as best they could with the books available in the native tongues, the answer was that in philosophy India did not have to learn anything from outside, and anyway philosophy could wait, but dams and dynamos and tractors were more urgently needed.'

'They will end by having well-read mechanics and ill-read philosophers,' commented Lysis.

'I am not sure,' I said. 'Even the way of the mechanic is going to be difficult. For while we were there, there were many protests against the decision of the Elders to make all mechanics learn English. Processions were taken out in some places to show what people felt about the continued adherence to English.'

'Whenever they feel strongly about anything, they take out a procession,' said Lysis. 'Or, someone would announce that he would not eat his meals. Or, they get together and start throwing brickbats at one another. Anything, in fact, except sit down and have a proper argument. They seek to fight ideas with fisticuffs and fasts.'

'It is true,' I said, 'that Indians take to fasting otherwise than as a way of subjugating the body for spiritual ends. I was told

of purely material ends that were achieved by someone refusing to eat his meals. In the shadow of the possible death of the person who thus goes on a fast, it becomes difficult to reason calmly on whatever he is asking for.'

'Why don't they do what the British do?' asked Agropatus. 'Whenever feelings run high in England, Government appoints a Commission, I am told, and by the time the Commission finishes its job, popular interest will have shifted to something else.'

'Oh, but Indians love Commissions, and have appointed dozens of them since they became a free people,' I said. 'But a Commission is a different thing in India from what it is in England. When I was in England some years ago, a wise Englishman told me that the Government in England uses a Commission as a sort of umbrella to shelter under whenever the wrath or the suspicion of the people is roused over any subject. But in India, the Government is deficient in the quality of cynicism. In fact the Government is even more earnest than the common people. They take even the reports of Commissions seriously.'

'Do you think a little cynicism would improve matters in India?' asked Phaelon.

'I do not think so. As I see it, cynicism is a quality that only the well-to-do can afford. The British developed their cynicism during generations of uninterrupted prosperity. Lately they have not been so well off, and the reports are that the cynicism is wearing somewhat thin. In India, they are too poor to afford the luxury.'

'So you approve of the Indian attitude?' asked Agathon.

'I cannot presume to sit in judgement. India is too vast and complex a problem for the tidy answers of the logician. Everywhere you turn, you confront large puzzles, large inadequacies, large absurdities. They are brave men who try to tackle such matters. I came away praying for them.'

V. V. JOHN

RHONA GHATE

a passage to india

after thirty years

INDIA is much more than the scene of *A Passage to India*. As Wessex in Hardy's novels, so here India dominates character, plot and theme; and if Forster had failed in his understanding and portrait of India the whole novel would have failed. In fact he succeeds to an extent unapproached by any other foreign writer, and in so fundamental a way that his picture remains essentially true today, after thirty years of upheaval that have transformed completely the Anglo-Indian set-up he knew. How is this feat achieved?

The most obvious part of the answer is Forster's understanding of Indians, made possible by genuine love for India. In his biography of Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson he speaks of the happiness and peacefulness he found in Indian society, and in *The Hill of Devi* he says that his visits to the native state of Dewas Senior were 'the great opportunity' of his life. In fact *The Hill of Devi* explains to a great extent how in so short a time (a short visit in 1912-13 and a longer one in 1921) he was able to get such an insight into Indian character. Living as an accepted member of a Prince's court, he never had to echo Adela's cry, 'I want to see the real India'. He was only too deeply engulfed in it.

It is this underlying sympathy for India, combined with the unerring eye for character which is shown equally in the other novels, that enables him to deal so surely and subtly with national differences in values, without ever falling into the self-consciousness that can mar dealings with a foreign country.

So when Abdul Latif, Aziz's poor relation, makes his appearance—'a gentle, happy, and dishonest old man'—the unexpected coupling of dishonesty with gentleness and happiness jerks the reader into looking at dishonesty with Eastern eyes as something not so very uncommon or profoundly reprehensible. And so with the relative value attached to politeness and verbal truth. The purest comedy is achieved, but at the same time sound comment, by placing Adela, the prim and literal-minded English girl, in a land where invitations should not be taken too seriously, and where her host can quite naturally invent a wife for himself because 'he felt it was more artistic to have a wife alive for a moment.'

And even when the author's comment is critical it is always just. Aziz's tendency to overrate the virtue of hospitality, and

his liability to suspicion, are both valid criticisms.

But Aziz is not an embodiment of generalizations about the Indian character: he is real, the realest person in the book. From the moment he flings down his bicycle on Hamidullah's steps, till the last ride with Fielding, there is never a moment when we do not believe in him. Even his style of speech, which lapses into babu English in moments of excitement, always rings absolutely true. No other foreign writer has created an Indian character like this. And not the least part of the achievement is the conviction with which Aziz's belief in Islam is conveyed. His attitude to poetry, his sense of the Muslim past, the surety of touch with which his feelings in the mosque scene are portrayed, all help to build it up, and give meaning to the section of the book—'Mosque'—that he represents.

PROFESSOR GODBOLE, the other major Indian character, is not, to my mind, so successful. True, as a figure of fun he is superb. At Fielding's tea party 'he took his tea at a little distance from the out-castes, from a low table placed slightly behind him, to which he stretched back, and as it were encountered food by accident; all feigned indifference to Professor Godbole's tea'. And the end of the party when he breaks unexpectedly into wavering song and by his sincerity defeats the pettiness of Ronny and the forces of everyday life, is one of the most beautiful moments in the book. But in the last section—'Temple'—he has to bear a greater burden. Here he plays the leading role in the Krishna Festival and apparently represents Hinduism. Yet he somehow fails to be anything more than a grotesque figure dancing up and down a strip of carpet. In fact the whole episode of the festival, which follows closely the description in *The Hill of Devi* of the actual festival witnessed by the author in Dewas, has an extraneous feel

about it and carries none of the conviction of the 'Mosque' part of the book. 'There is no dignity, no taste, no form,' Forster says in the description of the actual festival, and that is all that comes over. We share Aziz's feeling that Hinduism is extremely boring. Yet this does not seem to be the author's intention, for he often hints at deeper implications.

With the minor Indian characters we are back in the realm of pure comedy in which Forster excels, and there is no false moment. Dr. Panna Lal, ingratiating and timid; the Nawab Bahadur, the reliable and genial landlord; Hamidullah, the cultivated barrister—as they sit gossiping on Aziz's sick-bed or discuss whether or not to accept the collector's invitation to the Club, they are all completely alive.

But this is not all. An eye for character and an understanding of Indian ways do not explain the uniqueness of *A Passage to India*. Other English writers such as Edward Thompson have had understanding, and a much deeper knowledge of the country; and the social comedy has been depicted equally piercingly by J. R. Ackerley. Something more is needed to account for the sense of complete insight which *A Passage to India*, in spite of its faults, gives.

Peter Burra, in the essay which forms the introduction to the *Everyman* edition of *A Passage to India*, speaks of the musical quality of Forster's novels, achieved by the use of associations and echoes that link up the various parts of the book—the quality that Forster himself calls rhythm. *A Passage to India* is very rich in this quality, and it is this surely that makes it so beautiful, not only as a work of art but as a portrayal of India. For by these devices not only people and ideas, but scenery and natural objects are caught up and illumined and fused into a whole.

Sometimes a natural object is used to suggest an idea or link. Burra instances

the wasp, seen by Mrs. Moore on the night she meets Aziz, and recalled by Godbole long after at the Krishna festival. Then there is the green bird which cannot be identified, and the snake which turns out to be a tree-stump, which link up with other suggestions of elusiveness and mystery.

True, the suggestions do not always quite come off. For instance, the ghost animal that almost causes an accident when Adela and Ronny go out for a drive with the Nawab Bahadur (based on an actual incident on the Indore road, we are told in *The Hill of Devi*) seems to be meant to be symbolic—but of what? Is the Indian belief in ghosts (the Nawab tells his awe-struck audience that it is the ghost of a man he has killed), shared by Mrs. Moore? Or is it just part of the general problem posed at Fielding's tea party as to whether India is a mystery or a muddle? In fact there is too much unresolved doubt and hints of meanings never cleared up, especially in connection with the much more important incident in the Marabar cave, on which the whole plot hinges. There are constant references to the caves before and after the incident, and at Fielding's tea party it is suggested that Godbole has some esoteric knowledge of them. They give Adela an almost fatal shock (whose only physical manifestation consists of some cactus thorns) and are the cause of Mrs. Moore's turning 'disagreeable and nasty.' But the mystery is never cleared up; and Moore's 'brouhaha' and Adela's 'echo', unlike the goblins which run over the notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in *Howards End*, do not quite convince.

WHERE the suggestiveness and linking up do supremely come off is in the main theme of the book, the opposition and interaction of the two groups, English and Indian. This counterbalancing of two groups of people with different outlooks is, of course, the theme of all Forster's novels,

but here it is accentuated by the difference in race and worked out with intricate subtlety. It is introduced in the first chapter, before we meet any human beings, with the contrast between the drab and ignoble city of Chandrapore, 'edged rather than washed by the Ganges,' and the trim little Civil Station with its red-brick club 'and further back a grocer's and a cemetery.' After that we are introduced to the people, and, especially in the first part of the book, constantly jerked backwards and forwards between the two groups, seeing each with the other's eyes. Dr. Panna Lal drives over the hollyhocks in the Club grounds. 'They ought never to have been allowed to drive in', says Mrs. Turton; but we have already shared the doctor's anxiety about his restive horses and feel differently about it. Aziz generously gives his own collar stud to Fielding, and Ronny later uses the incident to illustrate a lecture on the slovenliness of Indians. Somebody remarks that Callendar has been let down by 'some native subordinate,' but we have been through the bazaar with Aziz and know the cause of the puncture that delayed him. All this adds enormously to the humour, but it also reminds us constantly of the underlying tragedy of human separateness, and throws a sharper light on both the sides. Then in the superb scene at the 'bridge party' they meet face to face across the Club lawn, which stubbornly refuses to be bridged, and we see the seeds of the suspicion and pettiness that will break out later in violent form in the trial scene.

Here, it is true, there is a weakness. For the Anglo-India Forster depicts has ceased to have any but a historical interest; and, what is worse, the Anglo-Indians shown here are surely overdrawn. Can Mrs. Callendar and Mrs. Turton ever have been quite so crude and obnoxious, even in the Political Department, from the ranks of which, Forster tells us in the *The Hill of*

Devi, his impressions of Anglo-India were largely drawn? Lionel Trilling, in his book on Forster, says, 'The English of Forster's Chandrapore are the limits towards which the English in India must approach'; but this is not quite satisfactory either. The Indians are very definitely real and not distorted, and the antithesis becomes invalid if the English are not meant to be drawn realistically too. Fortunately there are two characters on the English side to whom this does not apply. One is Adela, a rather pale version of the Schlegels, who fails to enlist much concern as to whether her engagement to Ronny is 'on' or 'off', but who is at least credible; and the other is Fielding, the prosaic but fair-minded schoolmaster.

THESE are the opposing forces. But from the beginning there is also a hint of something that 'connects', symbolised by the 'overarching sky' which joins city and civil station and is referred to repeatedly in the early part of the book. On the human level Aziz's friends soon propound the problem in a light-hearted discussion as to whether it is possible to be friends with an Englishman. Then Fielding takes up the thread,

and in his painstaking way spends the rest of the book trying to prove that it is possible. 'The world is a globe of men who are trying to reach one another' he believes; and here he represents his creator who has reaffirmed in a recent article his 'belief in the individual, and in his duty to create and to understand and to contact other individuals'. On his matter-of-fact level Fielding fails, and in the last ride which closes the book the rocks rise up to divide their ways. But by then it doesn't matter, because the over-arching sky has found its real embodiment in Mrs. Moore, who achieves intuitively what Fielding fails to achieve rationally. The scene where we meet her first, emerging into the moonlight from the shadow of the mosque, is perhaps the most beautiful and evocative in the book. Aziz has been musing on 'the secret understanding of the heart', and their friendship at once ripens—'The flame that not even beauty can nourish was springing up.'

The secret understanding of the heart triumphs where reason fails. Thus theme, plot and character are all interwoven; and it is this subtle integration that makes *A Passage to India* not only a great novel but a unique picture of India.



D. D. KARVE

medium of instruction

in Indian universities

IN most countries of the world, the question as to which language is to be used as the medium of instruction has never to be dealt with, because all education has always been given through the mother tongue. In countries where there were smaller groups, which had a mother-tongue other than the national language, it was the national language which prevailed as the medium of instruction at least in the higher stages of education. The question has arisen in India because, since the advent of the British and the introduction of higher education of the Western type, English has been used in high schools and universities as the medium of instruction. Unlike the national languages in Europe and Japan the Indian regional languages did not develop a scientific, technical or modern vocabulary. Although all the major Indian languages have a long history and are rich in religious

and philosophical literature, they have not been used during the last 150 years or so either in general administration or in the institutions of higher education. The Indian constitution has laid down that from 1965 the Union language shall be Hindi and it shall also be used for interstate communication.

Everybody will probably agree that the mother-tongue can or should be the only medium in the primary and secondary stages of education. Not only is this educationally sound, but the pupil has not a sufficient knowledge of any other language to be able to use it for expressing his thoughts or for understanding the teacher. Naturally all teachers in primary and secondary schools must be able to use the mother-tongue of the pupil as the medium of instruction. In the case of very small groups of people living in a region with a different language, it will be necessary to

use the regional language as the medium of instruction at the high school stage.

The case of higher education—especially education after the intermediate examination—is a little different. Actually, only post-intermediate education can be properly called University education. It is a problem for consideration whether either Hindi or the other regional languages can or should be used as media of instruction in the Universities. The essential requirements from an educational point of view are, firstly, that both the teacher and the student should be able to use the language to be employed as medium of instruction with a sufficient degree of proficiency. Secondly, suitable text-books and reference books appropriate to the level of education should be available in that language. Finally, we must also see that in the careers and professions which the students are expected to follow after the completion of their education, the language used as medium of instruction is found useful. None of these essential requirements is fulfilled by the regional languages of India. Only English satisfies these conditions—and this will be so for a long time to come.

POLITICALLY, all the States of India are units of the Indian Union and it is necessary that at least the University-educated students should know a common language which would serve as the means of communication. It is the University-trained men who will be in charge of the higher levels of administration, business, industry, trade and foreign relations, and the University teachers will also be recruited from them. They must therefore be conversant with at least one Western language and as things are, that language can only be English. If the selection of the candidates for the all-India services is to be made by examinations conducted through Hindi, the

non-Hindi-speaking citizens will be severely handicapped—and they form more than half the total population. This handicap will be very much greater in the case of the people speaking the Dravidian languages. If the selection is made through examinations conducted in the regional languages, uniformity of standards cannot possibly be maintained, and we will have to resort to regional quotas which would be undesirable from the point of view of the need to pick out the best candidates.

Then again, if each University were to adopt the regional language as the medium of instruction, teachers in the Universities could not be selected from outside the region, and second-rate local persons will have to be preferred to the best available. Similarly the appointment of external examiners even for the degree examinations or for research theses will also become impossible. These things will inevitably lower standards.

Some people have suggested, as a remedy for all these disadvantages, the use of Hindi as the medium of instruction in all Indian Universities. I am however definitely of the opinion that this proposal should not be accepted. In the first place, Hindi is neither more advanced nor has it a richer vocabulary than other Indian languages. In fact at least three or four other languages are more developed and have much richer literary traditions than Hindi. The lack of Hindi text-books and reference books required by post-intermediate students will continue for a long time, even if authors and publishers all unite to remove this difficulty. Then again, the hope that in all Indian Universities teachers with a high degree of proficiency in Hindi will become available in a few years is, to put it mildly, an attempt at self-delusion. The only advantage which the use of Hindi as medium of instruction in all Indian Universities would have, would be that of uniformity. Only those difficulties would be re-

moved which would have come in with different media of instruction in different Universities. But other difficulties and disadvantages would remain.

Many persons in India are under the delusion that having Hindi either in the central administration or as a medium of instruction in the Universities is going to ensure political unity. I am afraid they are going to be sadly disappointed. India is a multi-lingual country with over a dozen major languages, each spoken by millions of people. The large majority of them will know only their mother tongue and will not go beyond the primary stage in education. It is obvious therefore that the use of a particular language as the language of administration or instruction at the higher levels is not going to make India a unilingual country.

Actually, if we look at different regions of the world we find that many groups of people with the same language and culture are violently antagonistic or unfriendly to each other, while many people speaking different languages are on the best of terms. In fact our political or cultural unity is not based on identity of languages or religion. In the past we have clearly demonstrated that we could unite in our freedom movement in spite of these diversities, and the English language has served and is still serving as a means of communication for the educated classes.

Once we come to the conclusion that the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction in the higher stages of education is undesirable, the choice must be that of a language which is useful from all points of view. In my opinion that choice should be English and the advantages of this arrangement will become clear from the following. In the first place, English will continue to be studied as a compulsory subject in high schools and upto the Intermediate examination, and its use as the language of instruction for the degree and post-gra-

duate levels will not present any great difficulties. Care will have to be taken to emphasize the reading and writing of grammatically correct English as also conversational ability and not the historical and literary aspects.

Beyond the intermediate stage, the language of instruction has not that importance which it has in the lower stages, as is the experience of many students who go to foreign countries for their higher education. A very large proportion of higher publications in all subjects including research publications is written in English. A uniform medium of instruction in all Indian Universities, which is also simultaneously a modern language for international contacts and advanced work will certainly be a desirable thing.

THE objections to the adoption of English (not only as a medium of instruction but also as the language of central administration) are mainly sentimental. Many people think that patriotism should necessarily go hand in hand with the hatred of English. To these people I can only say that English is now no longer the language of the British. It is a world language and is studied in the high schools of such countries as Germany, Russia, France, Holland, Sweden, Norway etc. In all international gatherings, the largest number of participants is always that of English-knowing persons. Not only that, a few million people in India—particularly those who feel the need of inter-regional and inter-national communication—are able to speak and write English. We have taken so much from Britain—our political ideas, many features of our constitution, the election system, etc.—that there could be no shame in using the English language. That would be in line with our having assimilated the architecture, music, painting and many other cultural traits of our

penultimate rulers, the people from West Asia.

Recently, at a conference of Ministers of Education from the States, the Prime Minister made a statement about the inevitability of the use of English as the language of instruction in technical, professional and scientific training. With the needs of the second and subsequent five year plans, we just cannot afford to let sentiments against a 'foreign' language being used as a language of instruction guide us, and to waste money and energy for a change-over which is bound to prove disastrous.

THE Indian situation is really without parallel in the world. China and Japan have each a common written language and had also never used any other in their educational systems. In Russia, all regional languages except one were undeveloped and backward languages so that Russian came naturally to be selected as the 'national' language. The Indian languages are, at least for the time being and for a long time to come, unable to serve as efficient media of instruction at the University level and what is important, the non-regional 'Indian' language, viz. English is already being used quite efficiently. In certain states like Bombay, a curtailment of the time devoted to the study of English in the high schools has lowered the standard of achievement. But this suicidal policy will, I hope, be reversed before it has done much damage.

According to my proposal, all Indians educated at the higher level will have to learn compulsorily two languages, their regional language and English. The former would serve them for practically all purposes within their region and the latter for practically all purposes outside their region, both in India and in the world. They will not be required to devote seven

years of study in the school to Hindi, which may of course be taught as an optional language like any other regional language.

I should like to summarise my argument as follows:—

1. If regional languages are used as media of instruction in Universities—(a) advantage—educationally sound, but (b) disadvantages—lowering of standards due to impossibility of recruiting teachers and examiners from outside the region; uniformity of standards becomes impossible; good knowledge of English necessary in any case because text-books, reference books and research journals are not available in the regional languages; migration from one University to another would become impossible and children of all members of the all-India services, the business community, etc. will be greatly handicapped.

2. If Hindi is used as medium of instruction in Universities, some of the disadvantages under (b) would be removed, but there would be several others, viz. that Hindi also suffers from being an undeveloped language with no literature in the subjects of higher study; that people from non-Hindi-speaking regions, who form the majority in India, would be greatly handicapped; that the need for a good knowledge of English for keeping in touch with all subjects in all Universities will be very difficult to secure; non-Hindi students will have to learn three languages instead of two.

3. The use of English will remove all the disadvantages, and we shall not be cut off from the modern world. The selection of the best persons in all fields of higher administration and learning can be made on a uniform basis and no effort need be wasted in the replacement of English through Hindi either in the central administration or in the seats of higher learning.

The Asian Writers' Conference

NOW that the handshaking and the hair-splitting are done with, now that the group photographs have been framed and the address books have been put away, there is no need to keep up the pretence. Conferences are life forces. They belong to the world of power, of trumpets and flags, of microphones and slogans. Completely to be involved in them is to allow oneself to be stifled. But totally to withdraw from them is to embrace death, to seek the saintly world of sackcloth and snow and total silence.

The artist is cursed to live apart from both worlds, alone but conferring with himself. He must participate in conferences and yet refuse to rotate with them, he must run away and yet finally not cut himself off from them. He is condemned to eat apples in a graveyard. Conferences may help to enlarge the area of his choice and may make him aware of the many men that he can be, but his ultimate doom is fully to be himself, to remain intimately aloof, a beautifully ridiculous figure.

In a message to the Asian Writers' Conference the American writer Jon Dos Passos applauded the vision of a 'great republic of letters'. It is a phrase that Robert Musil uses to describe the mammoth Collateral Campaign in his *The Man Without Qualities*. Musil's hero, Ulrich, is a new species of human being, a man whose quality is that he has no qualities. Ulrich sees the Campaign as shapeless and amorphous but gathering momentum and spontaneously sparkling, failing to achieve the destiny it is for ever proclaiming but constantly expanding and concerned with every facet of human activity. Ulrich sees the grand vision but refuses to *subscribe* to it. The Campaign revolves. The faster it spins the more cohesive it seems to become and the greater equilibrium it seems to attain. Ulrich gracefully detaches himself

from the whirligig of the Campaign. He is disturbed enough to pursue his own unique destiny.

There was no Ulrich at the Asian Writers' Conference. Mr. Prabhakar Padhye and Mr. S. H. Vatsyayan were absorbed in questioning the nature of regional and linguistic representation. They were not concerned with fundamentals. Their objections, protests and revolt were against procedural irregularities. They played a useful role inasmuch as they kept the Conference politically neutral, but their anger and interruptions had a strictly limited, functional urgency.

The question is 'why should writers in Asia confer?' not 'who are the Asian writers who should confer?' Asia is a political concept, not a literary one. It is a measure of the intellectual flabbiness and loose thinking in Asia today that the Conference readily accepted what Asian politicians created at Bandung and settled down to sing a chorus to the theme song of Bandung. Asia has a surfeit of soulful sentiment. What it needs today is the discipline of sustained doubt, it needs to adopt a rigorous logic and to cultivate a mood of enquiry, it needs to query and correct, to evaluate and reject.

The inability of intellectuals in Asia to see beyond their souls, the indifference of our writers to the task of developing a spirit of dispassionate enquiry can have the following results:

1. It can drive the European intellectual into deeper isolation and make him hardened in his belief that there is no need for him to come to terms with ideas outside Europe;
2. It can make intellectuals in Asia suspect any idea shaped by logic and cooked with the salt of doubt; this suspicion can, in turn, breed a kind of boisterous, demonstrative humanism, a humanism

lacking all the detached generosity of liberal humanism;

3. It can lead to a kind of cloying, smug morality—a morality of numbers;
4. It can create an atmosphere which only the back-thumping, gift-giving, statistics-chanting Communists can use to their advantage and can exploit for their political advancement.

The report of the Commission on Asian Cultural Traditions says:

'It is agreed that the Asian peoples have created a glorious cultural tradition of their own, worthy of themselves. The writer should respect it, taking from it what is good for the people for whom he writes, and further develop this tradition for the benefit of the people... The traditions of various Asian countries, which are evolved under different circumstances and conditions, are different in many respects. But they have many factors in common, which are constantly expressed in Asian literatures. The greatest common factors may be summed up broadly as follows: 1. Recognition of the supreme value of the human being and the humanism that results from it; 2. Love of freedom, of one's own country and people, and of justice; 3. Love of life and the emphasis on the spiritual value of life; 4. Love of peace and universal brotherhood.... This Commission feels it is not impossible to reconcile Western civilisation with these traditions, and it is the writer's job to attempt such a reconciliation for the good of Asia and the world'.

This report was adopted unanimously at the Conference and is a good example of what the lack of a questioning mood can produce. Here are some of the questions that may have been asked: The writer should respect what?—the glorious cultural tradition or his people's worthiness of it? If it is a glorious tradition, why should a writer not take all of it? By taking from it what is good for the people does the writer

respect it? If there is 'a glorious tradition' why are traditions of various Asian countries different in many respects? Is the emphasis on the spiritual value of life consistent with the recognition of the supreme value of the human being? Is it with Asian traditions that Western civilisation has to be reconciled?

Individual contributions to the Conference also reflected this shabbiness of thought and untidiness of language. Here is one precious example:

'Coming from the land of Dhamma, Ceylon, and amidst you in the land of the Buddha, India, the concept of freedom is nothing new to us. We Asians are all representatives of Sri Gautama Buddha's philosophy, transcending the barriers of space and time... To my mind, to attune ourselves to this sublime philosophy of freedom it is essential that we Asians group ourselves into a United States of Asia with two heads—the one a President-General and the other a Premier-General....

SOCIALISM plus INTERNATIONALISM

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BUDDHISM

minus

COLONIALISM plus IMPERIALISM

FASCISM

equals HUMANISM

This Humanism alone can prove an effective counterblast to presentday ills... Long live emergent Asia.' (From a paper on 'Freedom & the writer' read by Dharma Sri Kuruppa, a delegate from Ceylon.)

It is necessary for writers in Asia closely to scrutinise the phrase 'emergent Asia'. What is it? What does it stand for? Is it valid? Intellectuals in Asia in their present temper are not likely to encourage or to invite any such examination or criticism. But if the enquiry is conducted without bitterness and rancour it is likely to prove as useful as such Conferences prove futile. The purpose of my report on the Asian Writers' Conference is to initiate such an enquiry. Where do we go from here?

V. ANANT

variety

theatre

cinema

dance

Aparajito

SATYAJIT ROY'S first picture, *Pather Panchali*, was a comprehensive technical achievement. In a medium that has become sophisticated in both content and style, he had to portray a simple story exploiting only the primary emotions. This he did convincingly by bringing an objective intensity to bear on the *viewpoint* of every shot, by building up a sequence with every meaningful detail in its place and by assimilating the sequences into a natural and fluid composition with a personal feeling. The camera caught the mood of every situation with economy of effect, never dramatising what was already subtle. The whole film was imbued with such a mysteriously symphonic quality that the simple shot of a water-fly hovering over plants in a pond achieved the appeal of intricate symbolism.

Roy gave us several moments which vibrated to the winged sensibility of his characters. The old woman casually watering a plant; the brother and sister running like mad to have a look at the passing train; the little boy brushing his teeth forlornly, after

his sister's death, standing on the edge of the pond. To state it simply, one felt that Roy was telling the story of his own childhood, that things were not being enacted, but happening for the first time before our eyes, so intimate was the relation between the directorial control of image and the establishment of an emotional phase by a character.

Aparajito, which continues the 'story' of *Pather Panchali*, is, not unexpectedly, disappointing. The film traces the growth of Apu, the boy, through early adolescence to the point of his mother's death. The two deaths in the earlier film, that of the old woman and of the girl, had an elemental significance. When the old woman is struck down, we feel the shock of high tragedy. The girl's hunger for a mystic union with Nature, which causes her to get drenched in the rain and results in her ultimate death, has a semblance of the primitive death-wish, epitomising a quest for liberation. It is suggested and developed right from the early scenes showing her pampering the kittens or sharing a culinary concoction with her young brother.

In *Aparajito*, the death of the father is a

mere incident, dryly and logically represented, while the mother's is an unwanted accident, marking the tame ending. The way the father's death is depicted on the screen—a horrible close-up of dying eyes accentuated by the succeeding shot of frightened doves taking off in the dusk—becomes a visual trick because of its isolation from the humdrum nature of the rest of the film.

Of such visual tricks there are a few in *Aparajito* that remind us of the potential vision of Satyajit Roy. The very first shot of the wide expanse of the Ganges seen through the running girders of a bridge from a passing train—a shot which is slavishly repeated at a later stage—throbs with momentous excitement. But the shots of Banaras which follow appear to be recorded impersonally by a dutiful camera. We look in vain for the atmosphere-building cameos in which Roy exercised a sympathetic wit and let the selective detail of a particular shot mark his pertinent comment. The only sensitive detail of this kind is the effectively repeated shot of a smiling old ascetic drawing the father's attention to the eye-glasses which he habitually forgets on the steps of the *ghats*. An attempt is made to catch the peculiarities of Banaras life through Apu's eyes: a young athlete swinging his heavy cudgel on the stones of the *ghats*, a temple infested with hungry, playful monkeys. But this again hardly establishes Apu's changing sensibility in the way almost every scene of *Pather Panchali* did. A shot like that of seminaked *sadhus* loudly chanting to the god when Apu's mother prays for her husband's life has no dramatic inevitability, no oblique symbolism. The spectator is mildly interested for the time being, while the director gets busy telling the story.

In *Pather Panchali* the human drama was allowed to blossom through an articulate visual lyricism. Behind the lives of a particular family, one could witness a

permanent, universal texture of human experience. In *Aparajito* the director is pre-occupied with the narrative links between successive scenes. Consequently any attempt at scenic comment, through lack of significant observation, falls flat like any aspect of a representational painting. The alcoholic *tabalji*, who tries to corner Apu's mother when she is alone in her kitchen, never materialises, unlike the grocer-cum-schoolmaster or the itinerant sweetmeat-seller in *Pather Panchali*. He becomes a contraption, psychologically making no contribution to the situation around him, which is anyway static.

The visual virtuosity, as seen in the close-ups of the drunkard's hand, opening a lock or trembling with lust, has no compulsion, no weight. In *Pather Panchali*, the shot of the first drops of rain falling on a bald head speaks volumes of satirical meaning. But with all the comedy about picking an old man's white hair, the rich old man whom Apu serves in *Aparajito* is a conventional derivation from Indian 'comic' films. Though he is treated with the restraint that one expects of Roy, he does not contribute to Apu's situation, becoming merely a curious peg on which to hang a chapter of the story.

After her husband's death, and after realising that Apu is wasting his life in the rich man's household, Apu's mother returns to her own locale, with the help of a kindly relative. Apu starts going to school; and here begins the most insipid part of *Aparajito*. From this stage on it is a perfectly Dickensian story, minus its whimsy, of a righteous young boy facing the battle of life. In blandly emphasising the advance of an already docile morality, Roy becomes uncritical, sentimental and aimlessly didactic.

In the early stages, both Apu and his recently widowed mother live in a vacuum; they have no compelling hankerings, only an attachment which is pitifully conventional. Roy loses his grip over the prismatic,

enlightening eye; everything is painted in familiar black and white. We do not see Apu's growing mind, because it is never shown reacting to a changing environment. The cameos are there: Apu lustily imitating a savage warrior from darkest Africa; the schoolmaster driving away a cow trespassing the school grounds on the day of an inspection—but these hang limp and, therefore, become barrenly amusing.

Apu grows up into a scholarly, earnest, frail-bodied youth. This development is very literally shown, as if the director were producing an educational film for schoolmasters under training. Apu, after passing the matriculation, joins a Calcutta college, working nights in a printing press. The narrative strain of the film becomes so grossly predominant at this stage that one thinks of the whole thing as a big bore unworthy of the man who created *Pather Panchali*. Samples of observation become sparse: the *babu*-type college professor teaching figures of speech; Apu's reaction to a cigarette that is offered to him—these lack roots, and virtuosity begins to decline into noncommittal competence.

There is a linear progress of the plot, where no incident has an extensively repercussive effect on the expected pattern of syllogistic development. Led into a blind alley by the impotence of his outlook, through the lack of any psychological excuse, the director ends the picture by contriving the mother's death 'off screen'. Our disappointment is sealed, as if deliberately.

Every work of art, in aspiring towards greatness, achieves an abstract quality in spite of playing upon concrete modes of expression. Word, sound and colour transcend their own technical limitations and become the intangible abstraction that is experience. *Pather Panchali* was a symphony, every movement of it breathing with perfection of tone and pitch. *Aparajito* is not even a song, while often degenerating into a tract. What was a soulful and penetrating visual

In aid of its welfare activities, *The Bombay State Women's Council* presents its Annual Ball,

The Golden Arrow

at the Royal Western India Turf Club, Mahaluxmi, on Thursday 14th February 1957, from 8-30 p.m. onwards.

Admission Rs. 10/-

Tickets available at The Bombay State Women's Council's Office, Town Hall, Bombay 1.

Added Attractions:

Dancing to Hal Green and his Band
Handsome Prizes
Catering to all tastes
Skilful Game-Stalls

experience in *Pather Panchali*, such as the silhouette of a train rushing over the distant tracks, becomes in *Aparajito* a faded trick of figurative connotation. The versatility of the camera, as in the oft-repeated shot of the winding path facing the entrance to the mother's hut, makes a natural set-up look stagey. In places, the camera is so static as to look upon stagey exits and entrances with a listless eye.

As in *Pather Panchali*, so in *Aparajito* Satyajit Roy shows that he can dramatically exploit the phenomena of distance and perspective: the father tottering dazedly in the alleys of Banaras; the schoolmaster walking through the school corridor with the inspector. The camera underlines the emotional content, tragic or comic, of such scenes, but with their brilliant isolation, they do not blend into a symphony.

Both acting and photography, as in the earlier film, are impeccable. The straightforward fading between sequences could,

if stylised, have given symbolic undertones to passing events. The first version of Apu has some of the glamorous plumpness we associate with other child actors of the Indian screen. The mother's worried expression becomes monotonous, but is relieved by intensity. Minor characters have distinct facial characteristics. Because the roles they play have only the temporary urgency of the narrative, they never merge with whatever thin texture of life the film provides. Instead of being the essential parts of a mobile mural of life, the characters of *Aparajito*, when closely scrutinised, appear to be props accommodating the developments of the 'plot'. Thus *Aparajito* lets slip what its predecessor had so uniquely gained. Even as a failure it does not haunt.

D. G. NADKARNI

Two Exhibitions

THE visitor to Rasik Raval's exhibition of paintings at the Jehangir Art Gallery could be neither surprised nor disappointed. He may be delighted within limits, perhaps because of the limits. Here is an artist who has found his own idiom at an exceptionally early age and who seems to find it an inexhaustible source of imagery. Among his restricted range of subjects, his medium is actually one; I mean colour. A number of his works are entitled with a colour as the operative word. For example, *The White Flower*, *Symphony in White*, *Study in Yellow*, *The Black Princess*, *The White Goat*, *The Yellow Drum*, *Grey Wings*, *White Feathers*, *The Black Horse*, *Grey Birds*, *White Crests*. I do not think this is accidental. The colour in many cases is the subject of the painting; the objects depicted provide the linear pattern.

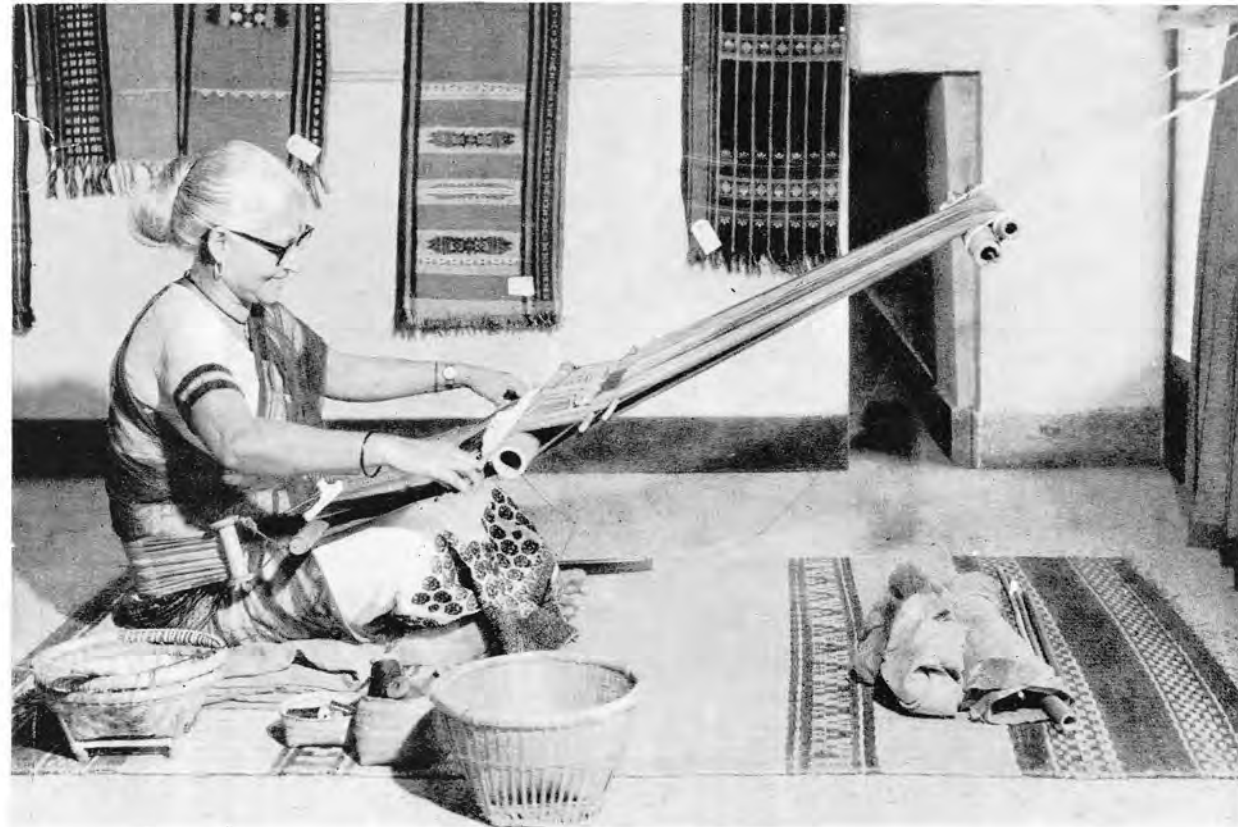
The objects depicted are archetypal, not individual. The women are all the same, with elongated necks, upturned faces and

twisted tubular boneless limbs, sometimes clothed, often nude. The men are fixed in familiar Indian gestures and movements—I do not agree with the critics who describe them as negroid. And then there are animals and birds. The animals are recognisable as horses, bulls or donkeys, the birds are strange and remote, of no sea or land. And all are against flat but slightly addled washes of a single colour. Except for this, there is no texture to Raval's paintings. They rely for their effect on clarity within small or large areas which are fully defined. Each colour is enclosed, resulting in a highly formal, stylised even hieratic art which lacks nothing so far as its decorative qualities are concerned. One consequence of this is its immense popularity. At this exhibition the artist has sold work worth nearly Rs. 10,000.

Having described it to the best of my ability, I must evaluate this painter. To some extent he has been evaluated already by the description: he is fundamentally decorative. This much can hardly be denied. The form of each painting is two-dimensional in more senses than one. However simple and central the main image, even when it consists of two birds with their feet and necks crossing in a pleasant pattern, it always spreads outward, diffuses itself, covers all the available space in actuality or by implication. It never conserves its potency nor explodes in the mind of the beholder by a powerful concentration of interest. If it did that, Rasik Raval would be a different order of painter. As it is he is an exceedingly pleasing one.

* * *

The Bombay Art Society's first exhibition of portraits was a regular chamber of horrors. Notable mainly for its failure to set and maintain any standards worth mentioning, the Bombay Art Society allowed mediocrity, pretentiousness and even stark absurdity to run riot in this show, not



An exhibition of Assamese textiles and handicrafts in the collection of Mrs. Nilima Barua, was held at the Jehangir Art Gallery from Jan. 10 to 20. The photograph above shows Mrs. Barua giving a demonstration. Below: a view of the textiles.





A Scene from Satyajit Roy's *Aparajito*, reviewed on page 47.

(Courtesy, Manager, Naaz cinema)





Paintings by SHANTI DAVE





enlivened by six photographs with such titles as *Oh! My, Gorgeous* (spelt *Georgous* in the catalogue) and *Look*, of young girls with no particular claims to photogenic features. I am sorry I did not find a single work to praise in this exhibition. To confine myself to the better known names: K. H. Ara attempts a violently expressionistic self-portrait but only overreaches himself. Violent expressionistic techniques are useless unless they are the result of strong and turbulent feeling. Madhav Satwalekar provides four elaborately ornate portraits whose ornate oddities are more remarkable than their portraiture. Miss Angela Trindade is sincere but commonplace. Prof. Langhammer displays his usual excellence in empty society-conscious realism. His *Family Portrait* is his most ambitious and monumental example of this. Much admired Almelkar perpetrates yet another monstrosity in his portrait of a quite exceptionally ugly girl with a 'pony tail'. This painting is appropriately entitled *Pony Tail*. I hope nobody wasted more than ten minutes at this show.

NISSIM EZEKIEL

Letter from Calcutta

CALCUTTA veritably wakes up in the winter months so far as social, cultural and political activities are concerned. The hot, sticky weather which damps one's enthusiasm and exhausts before the evening sets in is gone and there is freshness, fragrance and mild cool breezes around, welcoming you to art exhibitions, music festivals, theatre, symposia, political gatherings either in the *maidan* or in halls, scientific discussions, etc. This year Calcutta has been full of it as we had not only the usual annual fare but also the centenary celebrations of the Bengal Engineering College and of the Calcutta University as also the session of the Indian Science Congress. It is hard to make one's selection in attending

these. Naturally one selects according to one's own aptitudes and then drops in at some others which are not in his 'line' as it were.

If one is to mention the highlight of this continuous panorama of succeeding and overlapping cultural events in these three months, I would give the pride of place to the lectures delivered by the historian Toynbee. His talk on *Uniqueness and Recurrence in History* at the Asiatic Society's hall was indeed fascinating. The cream of Calcutta's intellectuals was there avidly inhaling and absorbing the essence of the lecture, trying to keep pace with the sweep of the survey of history of human behaviour in all times. Toynbee's conclusion, though no doubt very controversial, was extremely thought-provoking. He put it this way:

'Are there longer cycles still? Well, I believe, myself, that there probably are. I believe there are still longer spans of subconscious psychic patterns in history. I think there's some evidence for spans of about eight hundred years. If one is talking in terms of the conscious, rational element in the psyche, eight hundred years is so long a time in proportion to the length of the individual human life that it would seem most improbable; but it's much less improbable if one is thinking in terms of the subconscious, because the movement of the subconscious is, as we know, vastly slow compared to the movement of the conscious element.'

* * *

The third week of January was filled with science in all its rich and variegated efflorescence. The Indian Science Congress Session was presided over by Dr. B. C. Roy and inaugurated, as usual for the last ten years, by Nehru. Nehru's speech was monotonously the same as he has been delivering on all such occasions, and I do not understand how the galaxy of scientists stand it and how Nehru himself stands it.

This reflects eloquently on our scientists, though scientists are not the only group to be marked out. Dr. Roy's speech was good in parts, presenting in simple language the principles of 'Chemotherapy'. But if he had dealt only with this subject, it would have been effective. Instead, he tried his hand on the ethical dilemma of science, on psychology, and on applied research and its role in national development. One could notice in the address a chemical mixture of many ideas and moods of a many-sided personality busy with too many things. It was an address that did not quite fit the occasion. But what can the scientist do? Here in India the politician is higher up in stature than the scientist and the latter must borrow the former's feathers to be accepted even in his own community.

Each day of the session was packed with sectional meetings of scientists and numerous papers were presented and lectures delivered. More than a thousand scientists from other parts of the country attended. Delegates and visiting scientists from abroad were prominent. Special mention may be made of Sir Spencer Jones, Prof. Gordon Childe, Prof. Neyman, Prof. Buddington and Prof. Kuznets. It was indeed a scientific *mela*. This certainly had value but did it promote an integral view of science in the mind of our scientists? I doubt it.

Prof. Gordon Childe's lecture on *Bronze Age Europe as a colonial region of the economy of ancient Asia* was of special interest as it indicated for the first time that we Asians were also imperialists of a kind long before the modern European imperialists. The learned lecture stressed the role of Egyptian Pharaohs and the Aegean cultures and documented it with illustrations. What were the reactions to this thesis in the minds of the audience? Were they ashamed? Or were they proud that *they* also were imperialists at one time and it was the 'barbarian' Europeans whom they

had exploited? The audience evidently relished it when the word 'barbarian' was used to describe the Europeans of those days. Prof. Childe must have been laughing up his sleeve when he used this and other 'double-edged' phrases in a vein which sounded authentic as well as satirical.

The theme of the *Bhowani Junction* film is highly interesting and controversial. Calcutta has a large Anglo-Indian community, the largest in India. The film therefore drew big crowds. But apart from this, many Indians were interested in it because it had a political background and because it was shot in Pakistan, India having refused permission. The problem of the Anglo-Indians has been well portrayed from actual life. The issue remains valid even to-day, except the fact that no Indian mother would so easily like to plump for an Anglo-Indian daughter-in-law as the story suggests. The scene of the holding up of the train by *Satyagrahis* in 1942 is rather melodramatic and halting. Those who have lived through this period of Indian history would find the portrayal artificial and jerky. Partly it may be due to its being filmed in Pakistan. But the scenes of the Railway disaster were brilliant and realistic. I am certain the film would have been far more effective if it had been shot in India. The country has lost an opportunity due to its shortsightedness and narrow outlook.

One of Bengal's outstanding novelists, Manik Bandopadhyaya, died recently. His wellknown short-stories are: *Pragoitihāsik* (Prehistoric), *Sarisreep*, *Putulnacher-iti-Katha*, *Padmanadir Majhi* (translated into English, Chinese and Czech). In his middle phase he had a coldblooded detachment and nonchalance in describing his charac-

ters who were mostly derelicts and delinquents. His use of dialect was masterly. During the forties, when the Bengal famine swept the land, he turned towards Marxism. But his frustration and disillusionment could find little solace there.

* * *

Tagore's famous short-story *Kabuliwalla* has been filmed. The *Kabuliwalla* who lends money and occasionally sells *heeng* is a well-known figure in all major towns of India. He is notorious for the rate of interest he charges and for the summary manner in which he realises his loans. He is more feared than loved. Tagore has artistically presented the other side of the pathetic *Kabuliwalla*, the father of his little daughter whom he has left far away. Tagore's universal humanistic appeal was excellently portrayed in the story which had not much of action but left a nostalgic feeling in any sensitive person. Only good acting could portray these sentiments. The film has been a great success from that point of view. Chhabi Biswas who played the leading role was extremely effective; he even changed his voice and spoke *Pushtu* when necessary. The scenes of Afghan landscape, the long camel caravan accompanied by the typical folk tune of the area with which the film started were most enchanting and created the desired effect. The acting by the child Tinku Thakur is bright and sparkling, sometimes too bright. Coming after *Pather Panchali*, *Kabuliwalla* should receive universal appreciation. All of Tagore's stories that have been filmed so far have flopped. This is the only one which has been able to capture the spirit of the theme, difficult though it is. On the technical side it is not so highly finished as Satyajit's production. But in the sensitive expression of human emotions it is first class.

KAUTUHALI

An Opera in Punjabi

RUMOURS about the coming production of *Heer Ranjha* were first heard some months ago. And because this was to be an opera written and produced by Sheila Bhatia there was a pleasurable rustling together of memory and anticipation, her previous successes, *Call of the Valley* and *Rukhe Khet*, not being difficult to recall.

The *Heer Ranjha* theme itself has a wide appeal. It is a distillation of the sense of loss that inheres in Punjab's concept of love. The reasons are of political and sociological deriving, reflecting a background of constant change and uncertainty in which all great love carried within it an inevitable lagoon of circumstance. It was a known pattern of sorrow, desire, and sacrifice in a society in which puritanical conduct was a general necessity. Separation and loss echo through Punjab's love tales. The artistic objective of a classic like Warris Shah's *Heer Ranjha* is consequently plainly cathartic.

The opera which the Delhi Art Theatre put up—in December and again in January—spelled out a design in which lines from the original *Heer* comprised the mood-setting tear-jerking refrain. The entire superstructure was ably written in by Sheila Bhatia. The total composition in its intent of words and music, however, never strayed very far from the full-bellied magic of that refrain. In that, largely, lay its success and its failure.

A production of *Heer* can be stylised in expression or it can be naturalistic. It need not be either if the producer were quite certain where exactly between the two he wants to stand and take his bow. This overall clarity of view was lacking in parts of this particular production. The musical pattern of the main story, except in the glorious last act, of which more anon, was essentially lax and slow-swinging. It clung to the refrain and the mood, but it also

therefore failed to be sufficiently various. It clogged the mime which became stilted except when it moved in spurts of silence or when it intensified the rhythm and cried one to the other through the music. There were times when the dramatic exchange of dialogue was a dichotomy between music and mummery which could not fail to tend towards occasional monotony and which made quite a few of the transitions abrupt and wayward of dramatic impact.

Of the players, Shanno Khurana's Heer was, by turns, mature, spirited, tender, and filled with final sorrow. Her rendering of lines was as fully musical as one has come to expect from one so obviously gifted. Her chief limitation, especially evident in the gay, earlier scenes, gawked around her in the shape of Nishi Nakra's palely loitering Ranjha. I must confess to a dramaturgic relief when Heer moved on to mourn for a love that never was.

Of the others, Inder Razdan's Chuchak was adequately indulgent and capable of spirit in defence of his unfortunate daughter; the three Grundys from next door were pious, malicious and convincing. Shiv Lal's Quaido, even if rather to type, was zestfully evil, an uncle who made murder plausible as the only ultimate resolution.

It fell to Snehlata Sanyal as Malki to put in a performance of sustained dramatic intensity. Her movement and speech, her very facial expressions were marked by a haunting restraint, waiting to contain the ultimate passion of a mother whose daughter was lost at her own hands. Contain it

they did too, and gave it form, as in a hush that lost last cry was flung across the footlights.

For decor the producer largely contented herself with four boards and a passion. The wisdom of adhering to the old adage became the more obvious as the scene shifted to the home of Heer's in-laws, in the third act, with the fifth board appearing, and the sixth, and both being found very much in the way. Lighting was good; the unchangingly bright costumes would have more suited a stylised production. Stagecraft was excellent, the groupings effective throughout. The production sought a resolution of words, music and action into a dramatic unity. It came closest to achieving this in the nosing visits of Malki's neighbours, and in the staccato scene of Heer's unconsenting marriage. This latter was played with great éclat and perfect timing, the words ringing close and true.

In the last act we are down to the four boards and the passion. They are boards charged with the urgent sibilance of Quaido's words, with his convulsive progress across the stage, the game leg tapping behind the words, boring through the father first and then the mother till no resistance is left and the deed is done and Heer dying there poisoned by Malki because there is nothing else that waits to be done.

It was a production whose total achievement could be questioned but not its frequent power.

S.S.K.

correspondence

That Theatre Conference

Sir,

I read 'The International Theatre Conference' by Uma Anand published in *Quest* of December '56/January '57. For a bi-monthly whose objective ostensibly is to raise the standard of writing to have published a report which is full of inaccuracies does no good to itself or its readers.

Had Uma Anand cared to ascertain her facts she would have been told that what she describes as the International Theatre Conference, was the First World Theatre Conference held in India because Bharatiya Natya Sangh was keen on enlisting the support of the Asian countries and wanted these countries to send their representatives. To enable the non-member Asian countries to attend, the International Theatre Institute resolved to call a World Theatre Conference instead of an International Theatre Congress or Technical Conference. The conference was able to enlist the support of China, Indonesia, Iran and Egypt who not only sent their representatives to the conference but agreed to become members of the International Theatre Institute.

The Foreword to the agenda for 'Theatre & Youth' stated: 'Considering that the object of this conference is to diffuse knowledge concerning the experience and results achieved by various theatres devoted to youth, the discussions should reach the practical conclusions that may be of use to all countries who believe in the great value of the theatre as a means to cultural and educative development.'

The first item on the agenda was:-

'The condition of the Theatre for Youth in India and other Far Eastern Countries, in all its aspects.'

(Report by the Indian Centre to appear as an Annexe)

The above facts will show that Smt. Uma Anand is innocent of the purpose of what she describes as a 'paper'. She is content to state that 'this is true of both papers; the discussions ignored the papers'. What papers? The conference was not called to discuss any paper. The reports submitted by the Bharatiya Natya Sangh, to which she seems to refer, appeared as an annexe to the report and will be discussed by relevant committees of the International Theatre Institute. Again she states, 'The paper on *Theatre for the People* was meant to have been the work of Mr. Gerson D'Cunha'. Mr. D'Cunha may have been one of the contributors to the report. The fact that no credit was given to him or for that matter to anyone indicates the intention of the publishers, viz. that this was to be a group work on behalf of the Sangh. Should Mr. D'Cunha have any personal disagreement in this matter he would be free to say so. To my mind this going behind the scenes is indicative of a low standard of journalism.

Smt. Uma Anand states, 'The speakers at the inauguration were, as could be expected, civic and government dignitaries'. This statement has no basis in fact. The speakers at the inauguration were: Shri M. C. Chagla, then Governor of Bombay, who inaugurated the conference, Shri Chagla, as is well known, enjoys a literary reputation in his own right. Shri S. K. Patil, Chairman of the Reception Committee, as Smt. Uma Anand must know, was first a journalist and theatre critic, then a 'civic dignitary.' Prem Kirpal on behalf of UNESCO, Acting Director, Department of Cultural Activities, Mr. Milan Bogdanovic, (Yugoslavia), Chairman of ITI, Smt. Kamla-devi, President of the Conference, Andre Josset, Secretary General of ITI. To disappoint Smt. Uma Anand, these were the only 'Governmental and civic dignitaries' who spoke on the day of the inauguration.

Discussing the work of the Committee,

Smt. Uma Anand states, 'While discussing *Theatre and Youth*, Mr. Ayaz Peerbhoy is reported to have said, "artistic policy would depend upon the ideal of the country..."' The particular quotation attributed to Ayaz Peerbhoy was in reference to a discussion on 'Ways and means for improving the present condition of Theatre for Youth in various countries.'

- (a) Future artistic policies to be followed. Can a common ground be found for the guidance of such artistic policies. Indonesia opined 'that the aim should be to widen the theatre interest and for this purpose, even if the form is lowered it should be done.'

Peerbhoy with a view to pinpoint the discussion raised the point: 'If the purpose of education is to teach a child the sense of discrimination between good and evil, then naturally artistic policy would be to encourage understanding of total values as against a set of values.' I feel that this brings out the basic difference between the approaches of 'Free' countries and 'Communist' countries. The communists adopt a set of values and their criteria of artistic judgment is from that single point of view. 'Total' values soar above any defined ideology because they stand for the right of acceptance or rejection. This concept is strictly an expression of Buddhist philosophy.

But, Sir, permit me to place the entire responsibility for publishing this distorted report on you. You, as an editor, must examine the credit of your contributors. *Quest* is not a political forum which can be used by any person to air his or her personal grievances; its function is to examine and direct the creative energies of literary activity with sympathy and understanding. By publishing this piece of 'yellow' writing you have betrayed all that is held as an ideal by publishers.

Yours etc.,
ADAM ADIL

Bombay

The unposted reply

My dear Adam,

Thank you for your letter of January 10, and the official 'Letter to the Editor' about the International Theatre Conference. The letter will appear in the Correspondence section of the February *Quest*, with Mrs. Anand's reply. Since you make specific allegations against *Quest* and myself, I shall be obliged to add a few sentences expressing my view.

I would let the matter rest there, but we know each other personally and can hardly behave as strangers. I know you have not liked many of the critical and controversial articles in *Quest* but you do me an injustice by casting aspersions on my good faith in publishing such articles. You say Uma Anand's note is 'full of inaccuracies' and on that and other grounds make your accusations. But this is only your view of the matter. You may think you have proved it, but it has not been proved to my satisfaction.

In my opinion, it is your letter which is 'full of inaccuracies,' but I do not question your motives or good faith, I merely express my disagreement. It may please you to call S. K. Patil a theatre critic or attribute a literary reputation to Shri M. C. Chagla. It may satisfy you to believe that Prem Kirpal or the others are theatre personalities, but no theatre personality will accept this or approve of it. Alkazi is a theatre personality but I am not. Being Secretary or President of a theatre organisation does not make one a theatre personality, and all such persons should merely claim that they are interested in the theatre and associated with it. Anyway, that is my opinion, which is different from yours. I think you are mistaken, but if you accuse me of not knowing my duties as an editor, you are allowing indignation to replace argument. I feel your case is weak

and badly stated. That you should conclude your letter by telling me that 'Quest is not a political forum.....' etc. shows how completely you have misunderstood Mrs. Anand's criticism. There is no trace of politics in her comments. Incidentally, what shall I reply if asked whether I have examined *your* 'credit' before publishing your letter?

I have written this immediately after reading your letter. On second thoughts, I have decided to publish it instead of sending it to you, even though it is personal.

Yours etc.,
NISSIM EZEKIEL

Bombay

Uma Anand writes:

Sir,

Nothing Mr. Adil has said makes me change my carefully examined opinion. In fact his very first point not only highlights an attitude of hair-splitting, of useless verbiage that we find rampant among our people, but also of a peculiar ethical code which condones the utilisation of just so much of the truth as will serve immediate ends.

All the literature published by the Bhartiya Natya Sangh (Theatre Centre, India) relating to the Conference refers to it as 'the First World Theatre Conference of the International Theatre Institute'. What is the difference between a 'World Theatre Conference' and an 'International Theatre Conference'?

The Asian bias which Mr. Adil seeks to give to the Conference was nowhere substantiated, either by the literature published by the B.N.S., by the countries represented, or by the items on the agenda. To quote what Mr. Adil himself has quoted 'that discussions should reach practical conclusions that may be of use to *all countries* who believe in the great value of the

Theatre as a means to cultural and educative development.'

While Mr. Adil takes the trouble to quote the *first* item on the agenda, (since it serves his purpose) his regard for truth prevents him from proceeding to the *second* item on the agenda, which was namely: 'The condition of the Theatre for Youth in Occidental countries' (see I.T.I. Enquiry on Theatre and Youth in 27 countries).

The above facts will show that I am not so innocent as Mr. Adil supposes, either of the proceedings of the Conference, or of the subterfuges to which he is willing to resort in order to make a point.

Concerning the papers 'Theatre for Youth in India' and 'Theatre for the People in India' which I maintain were to have formed the basis for discussion, Mr. Adil insists: 'The Conference was not called to discuss any papers.' He further insists that these papers were 'reports' which 'will be discussed by relevant committees of I.T.I.' May I refer him to the last page of the Programme for the Conference. I quote: 'Tuesday, 30th October, 1956, 9.30 a.m.—12.30 p.m. The Conference will be divided into two groups: The two papers 'Theatre for the People' and 'Theatre for Youth' will be taken as read. Group A will discuss 'Theatre for the People of India' and Group B will discuss 'Theatre for Youth.' Two groups *continue discussions on the papers*'. I also quote from the paper 'Theatre for Youth in India' page 1. 'This *paper* deals with Theatre for Youth as it exists today...' and later on the same page 'Statistics are lacking and therefore will limit the *factual aspect of the paper* to observation.' A 'report' is *limited* to 'factual aspects'—a 'paper' can put forward opinions, or a point-of-view held by an individual or a group, substantiated by facts. Both papers are full of opinions, contradictory statements, and inaccuracies of a flagrant nature. I will refer to these later.

Thirdly, there was no need to 'go behind the scenes' to learn of Mr. D'Cunha's contribution. *Script*, the official organ of Theatre Group (one of the members of the B.N.S.) published the information that he had been asked to prepare a paper on the Theatre for the People.

Fourthly, regarding the definition of a Theatre Personality, Mr. Ezekiel has correctly differentiated it, but I would go still further and add, for Mr. Adil's benefit, that not only did most of those who spoke at the inauguration not fall in this category but that many of the delegates themselves (Indian as well as foreign) attending could hardly be called Theatre Personalities, any more than Mr. [REDACTED] who is supposed to represent India at the I.T.I. They were largely official administrators, or office holders in Theatre Organisations. As a result since few of the delegates had *first hand* experience of Theatre in their countries, its problems, experiments and trends, the discussions themselves remained diffused, general, and could not but arrive at meagre 'practical conclusions.'

Fifthly: Nothing Mr. Adil has quoted from Mr. Peerbhoy's speech has further illuminated me as to his meaning or its 'practical value'. In fact his elucidation that 'total values soar above any defined ideology, because it stands for the right of acceptance or rejection. This concept is strictly an expression of Buddhistic philosophy' seems to my mind merely to add chaos to confusion. It is however typical of the verbal pomposity employed to cover the sort of confused thinking and lack of ideas that the two papers prepared by the B.N.S. also abound in. For instance, page 1 of 'Theatre for Youth in India.' 'The traditional Indian theatre sought to enlighten the man about the Absolute and therefore there exists no classical play for the youth. Youth, to the classical playwright was flowering into man growing into a higher consciousness.'

I now refer back to the point as to whether the pamphlets were factual reports or 'papers' propounding opinions, open to debate, contradictory, unsubstantiated and inaccurate statements.

Theatre for Youth page 2: 'The Indian classical theatre which was essentially a vehicle of communication with the people dramatised these principles through epic characters. An excellent example of which is found in the Ramayana.

Historical events which followed brought divergent influences to bear on the form of theatre, but the content remained very much the same.'

Theatre for the People pages 2 and 3: 'under the Moghuls some aspects of classical forms were changed to suit the new objective of entertaining the leisured class. But though the emphasis is shifted from religious content to a lyrical romantic feeling, the theatre flowered.'

Firstly it is highly debatable as to whether the Indian classical theatre (Sanskrit Drama) was a popular or people's theatre or that 'entertaining the leisured class' was a new objective in Moghul times. According to H. H. Wilson in his preface to *Theatre of Hindus* page 3 'The greater part of every play is in Sanskrit. . . they must therefore have been unintelligible to a greater part of their audience. . . This circumstance however is perfectly in harmony with the constitution of Hindu society by which the highest branches of literature were reserved for the privileged. . . ' Secondly, whereas one paper maintains that though the form changed the content remained the same, the other states that the emphasis shifted from religious content to romance. Thirdly of inaccuracies. The Ramayana is an epic *poem*, and not an example of classical Indian drama, although characters from the Ramayana have been introduced in Sanskrit drama.

Theatre for Youth pages 3 and 4: 'In

Shantiniketan, therefore, one could see with critical appreciation the production Bishop's 'Candlesticks' as well as Kalidasa's 'Toy Cart'. Who is this playwright Bishop? This play 'Candlesticks'? Can the reference be to a pedestrian dramatisation of an incident from Hugo's 'Les Miserables' performed by every third-rate amateur dramatic society? Surely this is an aspersion on Shantiniketan and not mentioned as praiseworthy. And since when is the 'Mrichchakatika' or the 'Toy Cart' attributed to Kalidasa? I was under the impression that it is ascribed to Sudraka. Perhaps we are to congratulate the B.N.S. on this admirable piece of research into our theatrical past?

Perhaps the same research scholars could enlighten us about the flowering of 'the romantic theatre' in Moghul times with a few choice illustrations. Since we are rich in the literature, poetry, music, painting and architecture of Moghul times surely examples of their theatre must also be extant.

I do not raise these points without purpose. The shoddy work exemplified in those pamphlets is typical of the standard to be found in most ventures undertaken by Theatre Centre. Surely 'reports' of 'papers' (call them what you will) prepared as the basis of discussion of a World Theatre Conference should be authoritative and achieve certain standards of scholarship, style, and thought. The paper 'Theatre for Youth in India' is a remarkable example of bad English and slipshod uneducated thinking.

Since Theatre Centre is the official organisation for the promotion of Theatre in India and large sums of money are sought to be put at its disposal to be utilised for this purpose, is it to be wondered at that most Theatre folk and their well-wishers are apprehensive about the future of the Indian Theatre Movement?

The Copyright Bill

Sir,

The Select Committee has greatly improved the Copyright Bill, but has made one change which is to be deplored. In the first draft of the Bill, the right of translation into Indian languages was to be protected for the full term of copyright, but the Select Committee proposes that the period of protection shall be limited to ten years after first publication, as at present.

Presumably the belief is that this will encourage publishers to undertake translations more freely, and so enrich the literatures of India. In the January issue of *Freedom First*, Mr. M. A. Venkata Rao indeed comments: 'While the motive is unexceptionable, there is no reason to expect that such a curtailment of authors' rights will promote the end in view. It will only favour the tribe of publishers at the cost of creative writers.'

Mr. Venkata Rao sees no benefit in the proposal for the writer, and nor do I, as a publisher, see that I am going to be in any way favoured. I am far more likely to risk the publication of a translation the success of which by definition is doubtful—because otherwise it would have been published within the first ten years—if I am protected from competition by the copyright law than if I have no such protection. The only beneficiaries are likely to be the State and charitable translation bureaux, which will avoid the payment of royalties to those Indian authors whose works they are translating. So long as these bureaux have to be subsidized by public or trust funds, this is not very objectionable; but if the bureaux succeed in their aims, translation rights into Indian languages will soon become much more valuable than they are at present, and then the ten-year-translation clause would be a great handicap to Indian writers and publishers.

Yours etc.,

R. E. HAWKINS

Bombay

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book reviews

THE STATE AND THE CITIZEN

by K. M. Panikkar

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SORROWING LIES MY LAND

by Lambert Mascarenhas

THE STATE AND THE CITIZEN by K. M. Panikkar (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, Rs. 6|12|-).

MR. PANIKKAR has emerged in the post-war years as our most prolific pamphleteer, but he has little justification for being so. A pamphleteer is a person who says things which are not readily accepted, but Mr. Panikkar is such a populist that the press and platform are always open to him. The book under review is largely a collection of convocation and other addresses with an introduction freshly written which alone links the title and the book.

On the subject of the relationship of the State and the citizen, no point is made which has not already been printed at least a score of times, and the writing is not elegant enough either to justify the restatement.

Mr. Panikkar's opinions are official, what

the ruling Congress party accepts, even to the point of making a distinction between civil disobedience during the days of the British and now. 'It is the right of each individual, where his conscience is concerned, to decide whether he should submit to the authority of the state. In such a case the authority of the state is not denied, but the individual, obeying what is to him a higher law, voluntarily submits himself to punishment rather than obey an unjust law. This undoubted right in a free society should not be confused with the right to organize disobedience, for this latter involves a denial of the validity of the state's action and is a repudiation of allegiance to the state. Such a right does not exist in a free society.'

But the right exists in a free society for an individual to disobey an unjust law, to preach, while disobeying, that a law is unjust, and thereby set an example to others

to disobey the law, and for a number of individuals to disobey an unjust law. That amounts to organizing 'disobedience', but Mr. Panikkar accuses others of confused thinking.

Since there is not one sentence in this book which is not a paraphrase of some Western theorist on the subject of the individual's relation to the state, it would be fruitless to labour on that part of the book. One would have expected Mr. Panikkar to dwell on specifically Indian conditions like the caste system or the civil law which are the immediate obstacles to individual freedom in this country and do reduce the citizen to a condition of subjecthood towards authority exercised through caste and religion, if not the state.

Mr. Panikkar is occasionally for the secular state, but the main tone of his voice is of an advocate of reformed Hinduism, which once again is the attitude of the ruling party though not outspokenly official. Hinduism does not confer freedom in the sense that Protestant Christianity or Islam does, because between the individual and God there is the caste and the ancestral responsibilities. This intervention of a collectivist force curtails individual freedom and so far in all discussions of Hinduism complete disavowal of these collectivist compulsions has not found its way.

In the lectures in this book there are no references to these collectivist factors. Mr. Panikkar gives no heed to the fact that even after the Hindu Code reforms, the civil law does not recognize any direct dealings between the state and the individual. Though the civil law deals largely with inheritance of property, we all know that free, individual ownership of property, as long as property exists, is the primary factor conducive to independence of action.

Independence of action is probably the aspect of individual freedom that Mr. Panikkar does not like. He would allow

individuals to have all the freedom so long as they do not band themselves to defy the authority of the state in free India, for that would 'involve a denial of the validity of the state's action.' If validity is conceded to the state's action even when it legislates unjustly we commit ourselves to a faith that our own Government can never degenerate into a dictatorship or tyranny, only its particular acts may be wrong.

Supposing that only particular acts are wrong, Mr. Panikkar's dictum against the right to organise disobedience sounds curious read with his description of the modern state as 'Jenghiz Khan with distance control exercised by a hundred methods.'

But that is the true Indian attitude. Think of authority in the form of a demon and an angel at the same time, bow to tyranny and worship its author, derive masochist pleasure from all this, never rebel, sacrifice yourself to authority and hope for a change of heart. 'Submit yourself to punishment' as Mr. Panikkar says. Freedom is theoretically ours, provided we do not exercise it against authority and the collective. That is exactly the relationship between a caste and one of its members.

Mr. Panikkar subscribes to all these traditional Indian views in essence, though superficially he is talking of freedom and liberty. No wonder he quotes Yudhishthira questioning one man's rule over another, but omits Bhishma's answer which was more representative of Indian thought.

Even so he has to admit that the Hindu thinkers evolved a theory of state 'of which the sole basis is power, the sovereign being only respected for his power,' but Mr. Panikkar has to describe it as showing 'the greatest originality.' He also gives the Hindu view of justice in relation to the state as justice being there so that 'the righteousness of the sovereign may not suffer extinction.'

Ironically, after many such quotations, Mr. Panikkar ends with an anti-European

homily: 'Current Indian political thinking will not cease to be a pale reflection of Western ideas until we try to understand Indian social and political institutions *in terms of Indian thinking*.' (Italics mine).

How wonderful to be born an Indian, so different from all others!

HAMDI BEY

TENTS IN THE CLOUDS by Monica Jackson and Elizabeth Stark. (Collins. 18s.)

IN recent years there has been a spate of expeditions to the Himalayas, and a corresponding spate of books describing them. The Nepal Himalaya, only recently opened to mountaineers, has received a special measure of attention. These books, all of them interesting in their own way, have inevitably followed a law of diminishing returns. In the early days—it seems difficult to believe that this was only a few years ago—an expedition could count with certainty on recuperating a fair measure of its expenses from the sale of the book that it would produce. But as one book followed another, even the most devoted readers began to find much of a muchness in them. They all described the initial planning, the assembling of equipment, the denseness of the customs authorities, the hiring of sherpas and coolies, the approach march, a chapter about local customs and peoples, the mountain, the camps, the storm, and of course, the tracks of the ubiquitous but elusive *yeti*.

The expedition described in *Tents in the Clouds* was, however, different from most other recent expeditions in several ways. It was the first expedition to the Himalayas to consist entirely of women. It was the first expedition to visit the Jugal Himalaya, and, as far as I know, this region has never been visited again. It climbed an unknown and unnamed peak. It christened this peak after its sherpa sirdar, Gyalgen. And as the expedition was different from others, so its account, too, is different.

Most books on Himalayan mountaineering, however interesting and exciting, make solemn rather than lively reading. *Tents in the Clouds* is lighthearted and readable and the authors maintain their lively sense of humour throughout. When they returned to Khatmandu, one of the porters wanted a photograph of the three women to nail up in his house. 'Dirty we may have appeared to be on our return to civilisation,' writes Monica Jackson, 'ragged and thin, straight of hair and sunburnt of face—but by the lord, we were pin-ups at last!'

The photographs, without which no mountain book dare appear in public are up to standard. But above all, this book is welcome because it emphasises that climbing in the Himalayas is good fun. So Monica Jackson concludes her account by saying, 'There is a belief current among mountaineers that while Himalayan climbing is a great and unforgettable experience it is not as a rule fun, in the sense that climbing in the Alps or among our own hills can be fun. The march to and from the mountains is reckoned to be far the most enjoyable part of Himalayan travel..... With us this was certainly not the case. Much as we enjoyed parts of our march out and back.....it was the days of strenuous endeavour we spent on the high ridges, glaciers and snowfields of the Jugal that will remain for ever in our memories as not only the happiest but also, strangely enough, the most serene and peaceful days of our lives.'

All the big named peaks of the Himalayas, except Dhaulagiri, have been climbed—Everest, Kangchengjunga, K2, Nanga Parbat, Lhotse, Annapurna and so on. Even Dhaulagiri is unlikely to be able to hold out much longer. The French are to attempt it in 1957, and if they fail, the Argentinians will return to the attack in 1958. Apart from this, it would seem that the days of the big expeditions are over, expeditions which attracted a lot of finan-

cial support and in which motives of national prestige were predominant, protest how they may. But this does not mean that climbing in the Himalayas is over. There will be—there already are—an increasing number of small expeditions, self financed, not attempting the major peaks but enjoying the exhilaration of climbing among the thousands of lesser peaks. *Tents in the Clouds* is a good indication of the possibilities open to such small parties. It is therefore a pity that no indication of the cost of the undertaking has been given.

AAMIR ALI

AN HISTORIAN'S APPROACH TO RELIGION by Arnold Toynbee. (Oxford University Press, 21s.)

AN *Historian's Approach To Religion*, based on the Gifford Lectures of 1952-53, is not a book everyone could relish. It is not primarily a book on the history of Religion (though a knowledge of history would add to its appreciation), but a reflective analysis of the most central problems facing humanity all through its history, and more urgently now than ever before when 'the quickening touch of Adversity' raises the question, 'What is our attitude towards Religion?' The historical details only bring out and illustrate these problems.

Although a definite thesis is propounded throughout the book with increasing force and eloquence, and although the exposition is clear and precise, yet the vast accumulation of historical facts (many of them unfamiliar to the non-historian) and the many interesting but secondary issues which cling around the main argument, make it difficult to single out and see the central thesis as a whole.

The book is divided into two parts. The first, 'The Dawn of the Higher Religions', traces the growth of religion, showing the essence of true religion which emerges through earlier and cruder religions. The

second part, 'Religion in a Westernizing World', traces the decay of religion in our civilization. The question 'What is our attitude towards religion?' brings to light what *ought to be* our attitude to it.

Dr. Toynbee says that each individual's glimpse of the universe, being partial, subjective and unique, leads to self-centredness, which is a necessity of human life as well as an error and a sin. 'No living creature has the right to act as if it were the centre of the Universe', and yet, to do otherwise is very difficult. Self-centredness distinguishes the cruder religions from the higher ones. This is the theme of the entire book. The historian, by entering sympathetically into the lives of other generations, shifts out of his initially self-centred standpoint and so presents a wider vision of life to our view.

Dr. Toynbee reveals the nature of the higher religions, which do not worship Man, either collectively or individually. Suffering is the essence of life, because it is 'the inevitable product of an unsolvable tension' between a finite individual's self-centredness and his dependence on Reality. He shows that the greatest enemy of the higher religions is the idolization of its institutions, its saints and its Holy Book; he discusses the various challenges to the claims which every higher religion makes to finality and uniqueness. The historian's point of view is one such challenge.

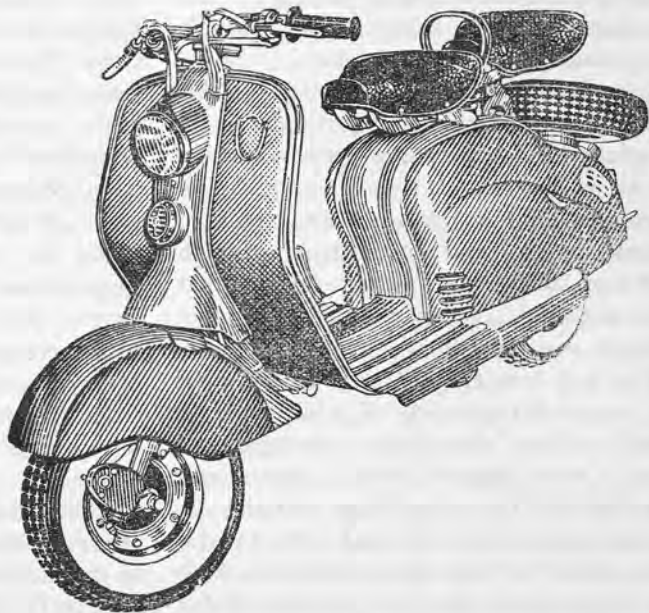
Dr. Toynbee bears a grudge against two things—Greek civilization and Philosophy. The Greeks lacked 'intellectual clarity' and 'moral courage' (pp.61-62), they 'inclined to ignore the existence of the unconscious abyss of the psyche altogether' (p.22), and they were 'conspicuously inferior' to the Buddhists (p.65), who did not turn aside 'into the agreeable field of unprofitable speculation' (p.62). No student of Greek philosophy could allow these remarks and his misrepresentations of Plato (pp.68-9) to go uncontested. He condemns

philosophy for being 'ineffective' because it is 'conveyed in the scientific language of the Intellect and not in the poetic language of the Heart,' and he commends the Buddha for his 'sublimely illogical practice!' (pp.72-3). He does not realise that philosophy tries to satisfy that 'disinterested curiosity' which, according to the author himself, 'distinguishes, not only historians, but all human beings from most other living creatures' (p.5).

The translation of the Gospels into metaphysics, Dr. Toynbee proceeds to tell us, 'had awkward consequences' because it has ignored the distinction between 'the Truth of the Subconscious Psyche' and 'the Truth of the Intellect'. He seems to believe that all truths that do not belong to the natural

sciences are truths of Poetry. He forgets that Politics, Ethics, Logic and Aesthetics are sciences, and his view (wrongly attributed to Plato-p.123) of Metaphysics as 'a complete and final blue-print' of scientific truth, leads him to the fictitious conclusion that Metaphysics is 'an interim provisional report on the general progress of science up to date'! He does not face the question whether the 'illuminating and saving truths' of the Prophetic Vision, expressed 'spontaneously in the poetry that is its natural medium', would still be true and convincing even if the Intellect showed them to be otherwise. Nor does he realise that most of these 'timeless truths and values' which he discusses (pp.273-297) are age-old problems of philosophy.

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Dr. Toynbee looks forward to an oecumenical-welfare-world-state which might bring stable peace to a panic-stricken humanity in an Atomic age, and hopes that in such a state religion could come into its own. He, however, warns us against a necessary curtailment of individual freedom in such a state, and recommends religious toleration, not only on the part of the state but 'alive in the hearts of the people' as a prudent safety valve.

Science has brought different religions so close together that the adherents of each religion are compelled to search their beliefs anew. The task of winnowing the 'essential counsels of truth...valid at all times and places' from unessential 'accretions' picked up during a religion's 'transit through space-time' is inevitable. The difficulty of the task is shown by the author in a characteristically striking passage: 'The historian is himself being carried down a lower reach of the time-stream.... whose upper reaches he is trying to map; and his own motion will make any particular reach on which he is focussing his attention take on, as he gazes at it, a kaleidoscopic succession of different appearances...' (p.271) Rituals, myths and institutions (though useful pp.265-6) are 'outer layers' that have acquired 'a tenacious hold on human feelings' and must be removed in the end.

The last two chapters are an eloquent and forceful exposition of what may be called nothing else than a metaphysical view of 'what ought to be Man's paramount objective in the perplexing situation in which he finds himself,' and how, by ridding himself of his self-centredness, Man will find a new centre 'in a presence that is spiritually greater than Man himself.' These chapters are so brilliant and these 'illuminating and saving truths' are explained and justified with such penetrating arguments and such subtle mastery that the reader is continuously tempted to ask whether the author still believes that they are truths of

the heart alone, or truths which will carry conviction to the head as well. Is it the unconscious psyche that is expected to understand and act on this profound analysis of Man and his World, or are all these chapters, written with such burning conviction, merely a set of 'unprofitable speculations' which are 'processed, refrigerated and sterilized' (p.116) by the Intellect?

S. OOKERJEE

THE NATURE OF PHILOSOPHY by Daya Krishna (Prachi Prakashan, Calcutta Rs. 10.)

THIS book, which originally formed a thesis for the degree of Ph. D. of the Delhi University, has the purpose of telling the reader what the nature of philosophy is and how it has been greatly misunderstood by philosophers in the past. The main culprits according to Dr. Daya Krishna have been the philosophers of the Great Tradition such as Plato, Spinoza, Hegel and their followers. In the first part of the book the author examines the nature of philosophy as understood by the traditional philosophers and points out that they were all wrong in their belief that philosophy was an activity without any presuppositions. According to the learned doctor the traditional philosophers *did* make certain presuppositions and these presuppositions have been usually three, namely, that the universe was rational, that it was real and that it was the source of values.

In the second part of the book the author examines these presuppositions and comes to the conclusion that all these are fallacious. In the third part of the book he examines certain variations of these presuppositions formulated by some modern philosophers such as Professor G. E. Moore and Professor A. N. Whitehead and by the philosophers of the schools of Phenomenology and Existentialism. In the fourth part the author gives his own analysis of

the nature of philosophy, not without giving a stern warning to the traditional philosophers that they should not deceive the public as they have done so far by pretending to do a function which is not their own and that if they cannot understand what the nature of philosophy is, which is of course that which is understood by men like Dr. Daya Krishna, then they had better give up their business of philosophising.

I must confess that my experience of reading the book has been extremely amusing as well as irritating. I must say this in spite of the fact that the book carries handsome compliments from such eminent British philosophers as Professor Gilbert Ryle and Professor H. H. Price. It is amusing in the same way as the attempts of Don Quixote to tilt at wind-mills are amusing; and irritating because so much time and energy have been spent by the writer in saying things that are just misleading.

When the traditional philosophers said that the nature of philosophy was without presuppositions they did not mean the activity of philosophising could be carried on without such presuppositions as the law of non-contradiction, but what they meant was that philosophical activity was carried on without such special presuppositions as are made by the special sciences. After all, philosophy is an intellectual activity and it would have been foolish on the part of these philosophers if they had attempted to prove the very laws of thinking. This much Dr. Daya Krishna could have gathered from Aristotle's 'Metaphysics' had he cared to read it and surely from Hegel about whom he says so much in the book, not that he says it truly and well.

Again, when these philosophers urged that the universe was rational, they used the word Reason not in the sense in which it is used by the author. Surely Dr. Krishna knows that these philosophers distinguished Reason from Understanding as for instance is done by Kant and Hegel, Know-

ledge and Opinion by Plato, Nous and Dianoia by Aristotle. When these traditional philosophers took such great trouble to explain their position, it is surely a sign of perversity to ignore these distinctions and condemn them for sins of which they could never be said to be guilty. The point is that these philosophers meant by Reason what Dr. Daya Krishna does not mean by the term, but it is a sin to differ from Dr. Daya Krishna and from the school of thought to which he presumably belongs, the school which has been made so fashionable by Russell with its truth-functional logic. Perhaps the author knows that the very assumptions of this kind of logic of 'Principia Mathematica' have been challenged by a large number of contemporary philosophers and he must be extraordinarily bold who dares to attack others so vehemently on such a shaky foundation.

Dr. Krishna does not fare better when he comes to examine the other two presuppositions of the traditional philosophers, namely, the reality of the universe and that it is the source of values. Here again the author shows very little understanding of the exact position held by these philosophers and I have no doubt that much of what he says is misleading and so beside the point. It is not suggested that any philosopher, however eminent, should be exempt from criticism, but I must insist that before you attack a philosopher you must see to it that you have read his philosophy as a whole and tried to reconstruct it with sympathy and goodwill. The impression which the book leaves on the mind of the reader is that the author has the set purpose of finding fault with every philosopher who does not belong to his school of thought.

In discussing Professor Urban's doctrine of intelligibility his lack of understanding of the main position held by Urban is quite transparent. It is indeed very amusing to see the author criticising White-

head's philosophy apparently on his acquaintance of only about the first thirty pages of 'Progress and Reality'. This is not the way any responsible critic deals with an eminent philosopher like Whitehead. But this is not an exception. The whole attitude of Dr. Krishna is that of a man who must attack somebody simply for the pleasure of attacking him. This is scarcely helpful, and not at all philosophical.

The author's own conclusions of the nature of philosophy are that philosophy is not formal like Logic nor is it capable of verification like the empirical sciences. It stands mid-way between these two. The main function of philosophy is to attempt to clarify the confusions which the author tells us arise as a result of the activity of philosophising itself. So philosophy is caught in a vicious circle. And he tells us at the end that this is all that philosophy means and should as a matter of fact mean, and to expect more from philosophy is to misunderstand its meaning as has been done by philosophers in the past.

There is however one thing which must be set down to the credit of Dr. Daya Krishna. Though I did not find much in the book which is of value, it must be said that the book is written with a good deal of zest and the arguments are conducted with transparent force and earnestness. Above all the author has broken away from that type of philosophising which is made so popular by Dr. Radhakrishnan, where one has only to quote a few verses from the Upanishadas to be called a great philosopher. Dr. Daya Krishna is free from this sort of hocus-pocus. And this is not a small gain and I for one take this opportunity of congratulating Dr. Krishna on breaking away from the type of pseudo-philosophy which is so fashionable in high circles in India.

G. N. LAWANDE

"Dons Know Best . . ."

Not always, perhaps, but at any rate where the government of Universities is concerned.

This may seem an obvious principle but recent events in such widely separated places as Göttingen and Tasmania have shown that academic freedom is by no means secure, even in democratic countries.

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Note: *Dons Know Best* is the title of an editorial article in the Times Educational Supplement, dealing with the recent crisis in Tasmania University, as reported in issue No. 4 of *Science and Freedom*.

IN THE AMERICAN GRAIN by William Carlos Williams (New Directions \$1. 25.)

IN this curious book an American poet sets out to re-discover what lies in the American grain, the things that have grown into the living texture of the American. Such an attempt naturally involves a digging into the past to see new significance in events and men who have now passed into American history. But history in its ponderous task of concatenating causes with effects often merely skims the surfaces and misses more than it reveals. With history, Williams, along with other poets has an old well-grounded quarrel. 'But history follows governments and never men. It portrays us in generic patterns, like effigies or the carvings on sarcophagi, which say nothing save, of such and such a man, that he is dead. That's history. . . . History must stay open, it is all humanity.' Who, if not the poet, will protect these lives from history's tyrannous designs and recapture the subtle, spiritual nuance of their personalities?

It is obvious that the poet's method will be all his own. He has no use for the historian's regard for continuity; he will dip his bucket at any point in the ocean and bring up something new every time. Even the formal consistency of narrative is no great virtue for his purpose. Consequently, many varieties of prose, plain reproduction of letters, journals or reports, some acute analysis of character and patches of beautiful prose descriptive of heroic action, are here freely mixed to produce an interesting mosaic.

Williams begins with a reference to the half-legendary Eric the Red and the early Viking sorties into Greenland. All the while, America lay in pure isolation till Columbus landed and the flower was ravished; the initiative taken, the course marked out, the story must go on. The pain and the glory that attended the great discovery of the Indies is a drama which is

fittingly represented by excerpts from the diary of Columbus. Soon, upon the orchidean beauty of the New World, the old world rushes in with its crassness, greed and violence. The beauty of the land and its people invited no warm-hearted response from the first conquerors; and yet, as Williams asserts, no man could be blamed for all the desecration of the primal life of America, the brutal destruction of the Red Indian civilization. It was simply the force of the pack.

This tragic phase of American colonisation finds symbolic expression in the destruction of the Red Indian city of Tenochtitlan which Williams describes in a passage of true epic prose—a passage that stands out in the whole book for its beauty and reserve; it also sets the tone for what follows. And yet the man who wrought that destruction, Cortez, was neither malicious, stupid nor blind; he was just a conqueror like other conquerors. It was simply the old world engulfing the new, refusing transformation through the impact. That is the central theme of the writer. Destiny provided a rendezvous, an opportunity; great Nature's beauty and poison was in attendance; but there was no new birth, only an abortion. 'History begins for us', says Williams, 'with murder and enslavement, not with discovery.' From this point he takes hops from incident to incident, from character to character through the course of colonisation to the bleak daylight of the present-day American scene. It is the same story all over—De Soto and his great drive inwards, Raleigh and his Virginia and *The Mayflower* with its load of puritans.

The puritan incursion only helped to prevent normal growth; it has given rise to an atavism that thwarts and destroys. Of the puritans themselves, Williams says, 'if they were pure it was more since they had nothing in them of fulfilment than because of any positive virtues.' They were a sort

of negative product of the old world. By their emptiness they became the fiercest element in the battle for colonisation having in themselves no curiosity, no wonder. This fiery element—clipped in minds and stripped in bodies, men with five or six wives yearly 'shooting babies into the wilderness like cannon balls' for mere self-preservation—became an important factor in the great failure. Naturally, they never realised the Indian in the least save as an unformed Puritan! Williams, indeed, lets himself go on this puritan strain that has survived from the past 'like a mermaid with a corpse for a tail'. It has remained in the American grain, 'a bad breath in the room. This thing, strange, inhuman, powerful, like a relic of some died out tribe whose practices were revolting.'

There were other impacts too, the Catholics and the Jesuits, which were hardly less devastating. The New World suffered greatly from puritans and Catholics, but always certain men stood out again and again and pointed the way; they either befriended the Indian or else at least understood and respected him. Such were the saintly Père Sabastian Basles, the Jesuit, and Daniel Boone who, through an epic test of endurance pioneered his way to Kentucky and the interior—men who met America with an open mind and thus contributed to the moral and aesthetic fibre of the American race.

Williams takes a few more hops to complete his picture. He finds significance in the fact that the almost mythologised hero, George Washington, of whom there is here a thumb-nail sketch, happened to be a limited creature with all his genius for warfare, love of waist-coats and want of imagination. 'He was a typical sacrifice to the mob, in many ways thoroughly disappointing.' Benjamin Franklin's letter to the intending immigrant from Europe defining the essentially 'practical' spirit of American culture—people ask here of a stranger not

what he *is* but what he can *do*—serves only to arouse an ironical comment on the narrowness of the ideal set before the people.

Williams' most daring departure from accepted assessments from later history is his treatment of two notable figures, Aaron Burr and Edgar Allan Poe. He gives a dramatic account of the political squabble and the celebrated duel in which Burr killed Hamilton. It is a spirited defence of Burr whom Williams holds up as one of the few in American history who 'knew what a democracy must liberate,' and who like all the rest fell a victim to party politics and to the calumnies of a hounding mob. If the revolution in the New World slipped into tyranny it was because the Hamiltons who were the agents of this tyranny got the better of the Burrs in whom had reposed the true element of liberty.

By far the finest restatement of this kind is his essay on Poe. It is much more positive in tone, unalloyed with irony. Poe is one of those heroes who point the way and he went unrecognised. His genius lay just in this, that he turned his back and he faced inward to originality, and that was the reason why he was not recognised; for 'Americans have never recognised themselves,' says Williams. In other words, it is time that they did.

First published over thirty years ago, when it almost passed unnoticed, this book may make a gradual penetration into the American imagination. Williams has been in his day, for he now appears to have passed his prime, one of the *avant garde* of American poets who had a particular comment to make on the world around them. And though the matter of this book is history, it is obvious that Williams takes his plunge into the past from the spring-board of the present. It is his keen sense of what is wrong with the present that drives him deeper to see the roots from which the poison plant has sprung. A sort of angry regret, consequently, tinges all the writing;

it also gives rise to some fine impassioned prose, lending the work somewhat of the character of a novel. The new configurations he discovers in familiar episodes and characters may not find general acceptance, but they do serve to arouse the conscience of his countrymen and force them to re-think their tradition. To the foreigner, the book should serve as a complement to his reading of American history and culture. It is indeed a necessary corrective to the picture we form by reading such popular works on the subject of American civilisation as those of Adams, Beard and Parkes. At the same time, and quite apart from the altered perspective on American history that the book provides, it makes rewarding reading because it has a true poetical flavour.

V. Y. KANTAK

DESIGN—Review of architecture—applied and free arts, January 1957. Edited by Patwant Singh (Bombay, As. 12).

EVEN after the appearance of its inaugural number, one finds that it is still the *conception* or *idea* behind the journal which is more exciting than the thing itself. However, one quickly recovers from the feeling of flatness and disappointment after reading it. It is, after all, only the first yell of the infant; maturity will come anon. And let us hope that this infant will reach adulthood in less time than human infants.

The purpose of this journal is, as I understand it, to relate good architecture to everyday living in this country; in a broader sense it is a magazine of aesthetics. It is a subject, or rather an aspect of life, which, in India, it has become a tradition to ignore completely. For a people who are so proud of the high level that art once reached in our country, we are curiously indifferent to our physical environment. And yet the wish to be surrounded by beauty is, in a way, next door to all morality and ethics. If *Design* can even

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FEBRUARY

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draw attention to our disease let alone find a cure, we hail it and wish it well.

There is one thing that I would like to say to the editors. In writing about Art and Aesthetics, it is very easy to slip into the habit of using a resounding sequence of words which, in fact, conveys very little to the reader. Admitting that it is not possible to express complicated thoughts in simple language, I still feel that, in a paper whose purpose is to invite the layman into the architect's and artist's field, special care should be taken to ensure that the writing is in clear and concrete terms. Finally, what about turning our critical gaze a little more homeward? What about giving us an analysis of the ground plan of the Asoka Hotel; or a dissection of the

amazing, truly amazing, edifice which has been built to house the Mysore assembly?

L. F.

SORROWING LIES MY LAND by Lambert Mascarenhas (Hind Kitabs Ltd. Rs. 2/-)

HIS Muse had a ready answer for him when Sir Philip Sydney complained that he was 'big with child to write, but knew not how to start.' 'Fool,' said his Muse to him, 'look into thy heart, and write.' Mr. L. Mascarenhas has taken Sir Philip's Muse at its word and written a novel straight from the heart, without any support from the head.

Surely this is not what the Muse meant.

One searches for something kind to say about this 'tale of Goa'. One could say that the green and yellow picture on the cover is quite pretty—considering. Or one could praise the simplicity of the contents; except that one would have to add that it is not the simplicity of great sophistication but of the great naivete. Alternatively, one might say that the author has an informal, racy style; except that, again, the informality it really the unconscious slanginess of the unliterary.

On the whole perhaps it is kindest not to attempt to say anything at all. We are ready to grant that unless young and inexperienced writers have a chance to be published we might never see some of our best works in print. But surely publishers should discriminate a little between those manuscripts which show some promise and those which show none. And so we end this review on a polite note of congratulation to Mr. Mascarenhas—on having found a publisher.

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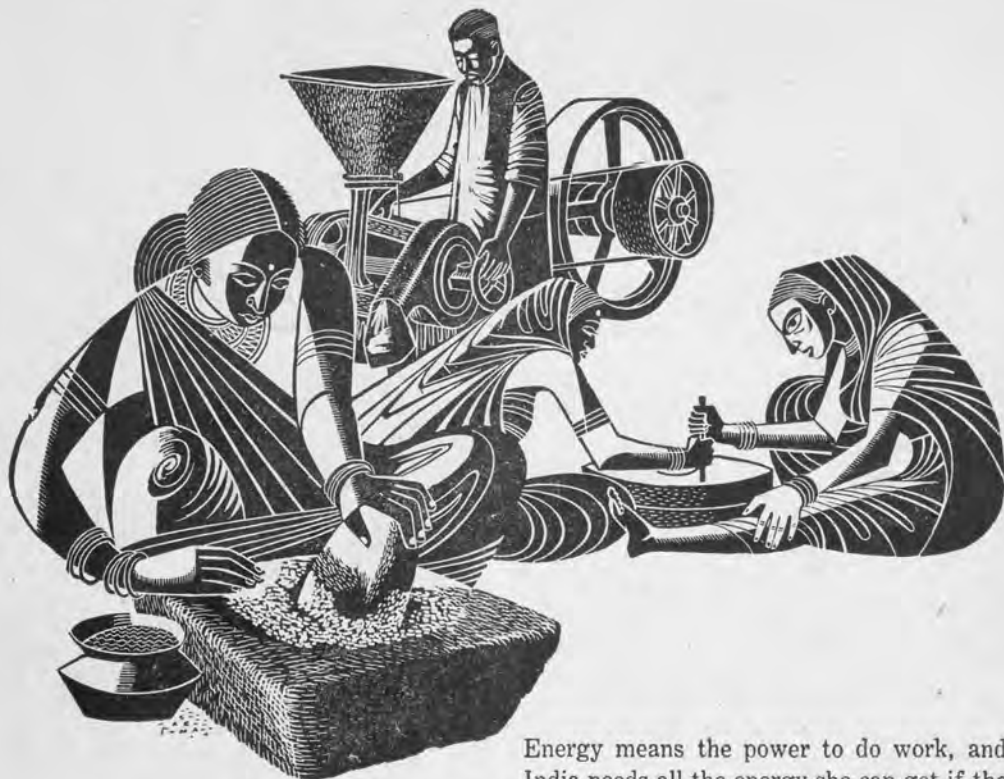
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Edited, printed and published by NISSIM EZEKIEL for the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, Army and Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1, at the Kanada Press, Podar Chambers, 109, Parsi Bazar Street, Fort, Bombay 1.



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