

T S E U Q

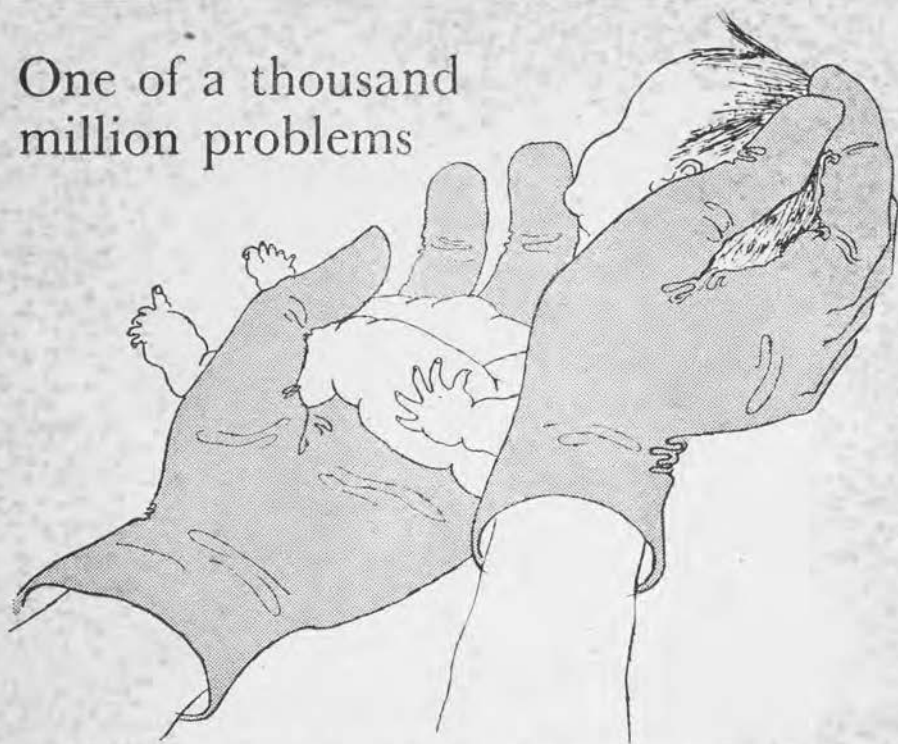
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edited by: **NISSIM EZEKIEL**

Dec. '57 — Jan. 58 vol. III no. 3

One of a thousand million problems



World population is rising rapidly.

We are told that in 25 years' time there will be another thousand million people—another thousand million hungry mouths to be fed. It is a challenge to the farmer which is being met by bringing more land under the plough and by improved methods of cultivation.

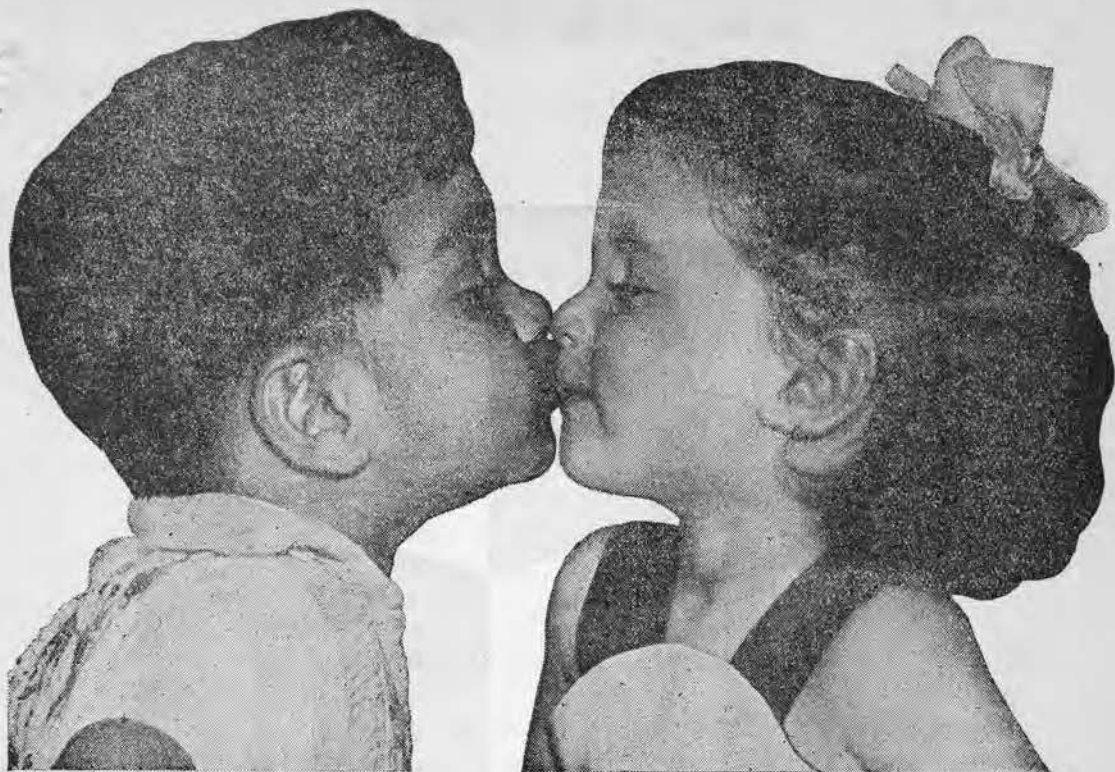
There are, unfortunately, hungry mouths as well in the insect world, billions of them.

Some of these pests prey on the foliage of plants; others lie in wait underground, devouring seeds, boring into roots and destroying or stunting the crops. A field newly-sown can be but the prelude to a feast at which the world goes hungry.

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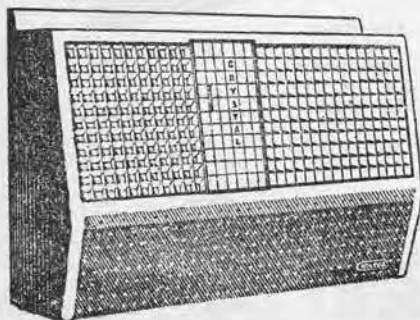
arming him with new insecticides which kill destructive pests more efficiently and economically than ever before. Foremost amongst these are the SHELL insecticides *aldrin*, *dieldrin* and *endrin* which, between them, control the major insect pests above and below the ground that menace world harvests. These products are effective in remarkably small doses and have no harmful effects on the crop. It's our job to ensure that regular supplies of *aldrin*, *dieldrin* and *endrin* are made readily available for farmers all over India. This is one of the many ways in which the Burmah-Shell organization is helping agriculture... is helping to multiply the fruits of the earth.

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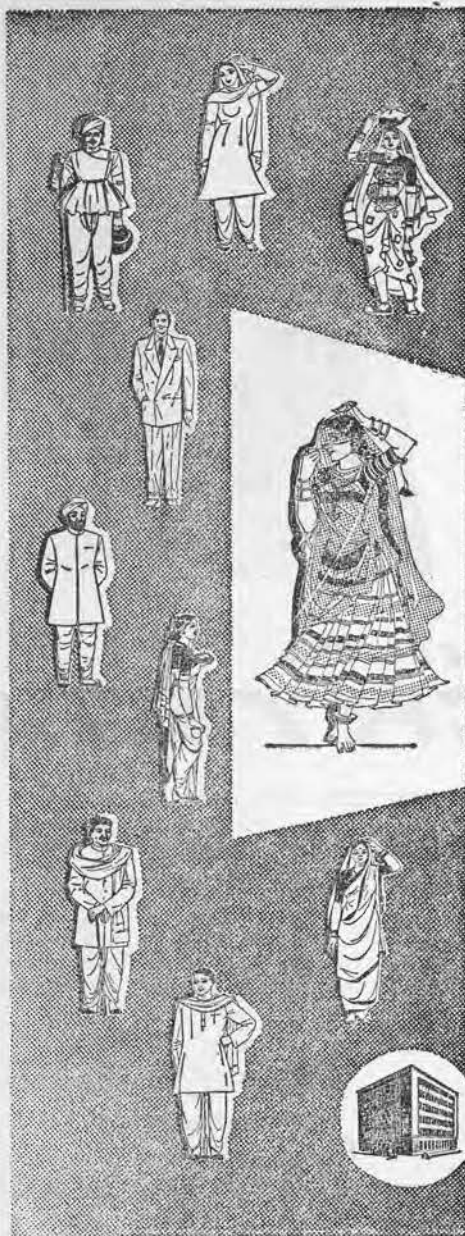
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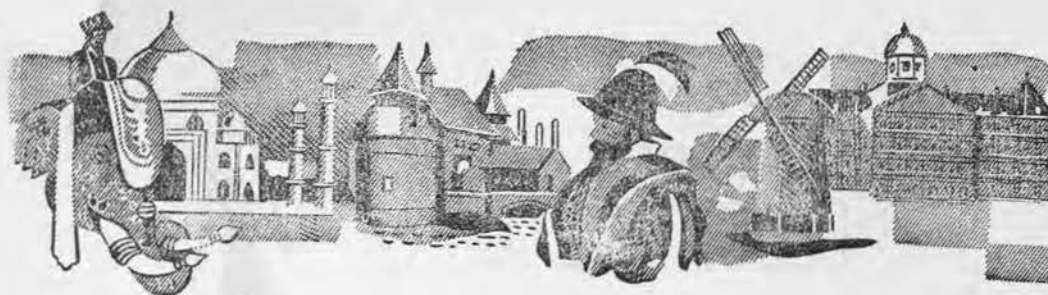
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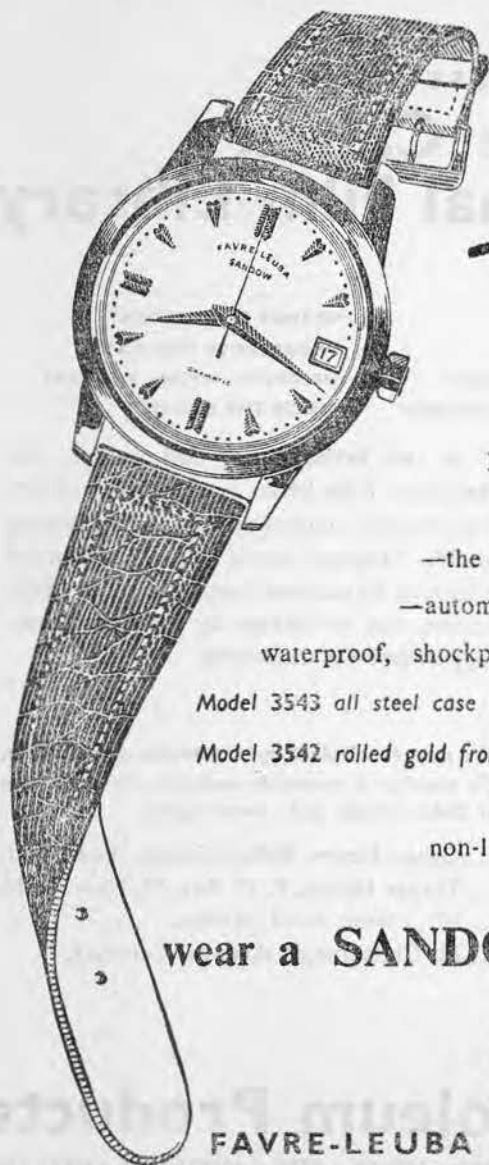
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a bi-monthly of arts and ideas
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FOUR COMMUNISMS

by A. H. Somjee

MUCH has happened to both the theory and the practice of communism during the years in which it became a force in world politics. From the point of view of power politics it would be proper to regard communism as one single force. But this is no longer true of its ideology and its institutional expressions. The ideological pattern of communism now unmistakably reveals a range of variations. Local as well as historical factors may be said to be responsible for it. Nevertheless this very presence questions the unity of communist ideology. In this article I propose to point out that Chinese, Yugoslav and Polish communism are different either in theory or in practice or in both, from the prototype Soviet communism. The three variations have the following two things in common: (a) They abrogate the Marxist-Leninist principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat; and (b) they make an *attempt* either in theory or in practice at the democratisation of the organised power of the community.

Chinese Communism

Historically speaking, Mao rather than Tito was the first to give up the orthodox tenets of Marxism-Leninism. Mao maintained that 'Marxism-Leninism has in no way put an end to the discovery of truths, but continues to blaze a path towards the recognition of Marxism-Leninism as a broad principle which leaves ample scope for experimentation within its framework, rather than a programme which is worked out to its last detail.' And circumstances compelled Mao to carry out one of the greatest experiments with Marxism-Leninism, the ideological significance of which

was not grasped till his forces gained a complete control of the mainland.

The problem which Mao confronted was how to apply Marxism-Leninism, a doctrine and a programme of revolutionary action essentially suited to an industrial society, to a feudal one like the Chinese. This problem was in fact faced by Lenin long before Mao. Both confronted the difficulty of finding a genuine totalitarian base for the communist parties of their countries. Lenin, however, never came to grips with this problem. He never questioned whether the Russian communist party had a genuine proletarian base or not. Like Marx he was given to viewing the working class internationally rather than nationally. He therefore never took into consideration the strength of the indigenous working class in its isolation from the working class of Western Europe.¹

Mao on the other hand knew that he would not find a working class in Yenan. He therefore threw open the party and its militia to its landless peasants. Stalin did not forgive Mao for giving a non-proletarian base to the Chinese communist party.

Mao did not stop at that. He went from one heresy to another. After completing the conquest of the mainland he came out with his bold non-Marxist-Leninist analysis of Chinese society, and advocated an equally heretical means of transforming it. He refused to regard the pre-revolutionary Chinese society as one that was exploited by the bourgeoisie. Instead of that he merely called it an economically backward society characterised by colonialism, feudalism and bureaucratism.² As far as its transformation was concerned, he maintained that China would by-pass the phase

of classic capitalism and would go over from feudalism straight to the 'new democracy'. And the means to achieve this transformation would not be the dictatorship of the proletariat but a coalition of classes consisting of workers, farmers, petty bourgeoisie (including the intelligentsia) and the national bourgeoisie.

MAO'S heresies culminated in his recent thesis on 'contradictions.' In February 1956, he came out with the much-discussed statement, 'let a hundred flowers bloom; let a hundred schools of thought contend.' During the Chou dynasty, when Confucianism was the official philosophy, there were a hundred schools of smaller philosophies flourishing side by side with Confucianism. But these hundred schools represented a deep contradiction within the Chinese society. The presence of the four classes in the ruling coalition, however, did not represent the contradiction of that nature. Classes may be contradictory and yet not antagonistic. Mao was thus forced to make a distinction between 'non-antagonistic contradiction' and 'antagonistic contradiction'. He went to the extent of establishing the Chinese People's Consultative Conference in order to represent and protect the interests of classes other than workers and farmers.

Mao did not justify the presence of new antagonistic classes on the grounds of expediency. He maintained that the presence of these classes and their representative ideologies will prevent Marxism-Leninism from becoming what he called 'a hot-house plant'.

The theoretical achievements of Mao have been two-fold. Firstly, as opposed to the class-bias (proletariat) implicit in Marxism-Leninism he put forward what Professor Benjamin Schwartz calls a 'populist' conception of communism. Secondly he replaced the Soviet method of 'self-criti-

THE RATIONALE OF CHINESE TYRANNY

Mao Tse-Tung, in a speech on
February 27, 1957:

We are confronted by two types of social contradictions—contradictions between ourselves and the enemy and contradictions among the people. These two types of contradictions are totally different in nature.

If we are to have a correct understanding of these two different types of contradictions, we must first of all make clear what is meant by 'the people' and what is meant by 'the all classes, strata and social groups enemy.'

At this stage of building socialism, which approve, support and work for the cause of socialist construction belong to the category of the people, while those social forces and groups which resist the socialist revolution, and are hostile to and try to wreck socialist construction, are enemies of the people.

The contradictions between ourselves and our enemies are antagonistic ones. Within the ranks of the people, contradictions among the working people are non-antagonistic, while those between the exploiters and the exploited classes have, apart from their antagonistic aspect, a non-antagonistic aspect. Contradictions among the people have always existed, but their content differs in each period of the revolution and during the building of socialism.

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interests of the people and serves the people, yet certain contradictions do exist between the interests of the state, collective interests and individual interests; between democracy and centralism; between those in positions of leadership and the led, and contradictions arising from the bureaucratic practices of certain state functionaries in their relations with the masses. All these are contradictions among the people; generally speaking, underlying the contradictions among the people is the basic identity of the interests of the people....

Ours is a people's democratic dictatorship, led by the working class and based on the worker-peasant alliance. What is this dictatorship for? Its first function is to suppress the reactionary classes and elements and those exploiters in the country who range themselves against the socialist revolution, to suppress all those who try to wreck our socialist construction; that is to say, to solve the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy within the country—for instance, to arrest, try and sentence certain counter-revolutionaries, and for a specified period of time deprive landlords and bureaucrat-capitalists of their right to vote and freedom of speech—all this comes within the scope of our dictatorship. To maintain law and order and safeguard the interests of the people, it is likewise necessary to exercise dictatorship over robbers, swindlers, murderers, arsonists, hooligans and other scoundrels who seriously disrupt social order....

cism,¹ by what may be called the method of mutual criticism.³

Theoretically speaking, Mao has thus broadened the base of Chinese communism and furnished it with the necessary 'contradictions' for its dialectical progress. Mao's 'contradictions', however, fail to work through a democratic process because the Party alone can decide which of the contradictions are 'antagonistic' and which are not.

Yugoslav Communism

As opposed to Chinese communism, which from its very inception started on heretical foundations, Yugoslav communism began with a complete imitation of the Soviet model. Between the years of 1946 and 1948, the Yugoslav economy came to possess the principal features of the Soviet economy. Her key industries were nationalised and the farms collectivized. Then followed the clash with the Kremlin which was not at all an ideological clash. Stalin did not like Tito's excessive emphasis on heavy industries. He felt that Tito was trying to make Yugoslavia economically independent of Russia. On his part Tito began to be suspicious of Moscow's desire to put NKVD men in top security positions in Yugoslavia. Moscow had already sent Pavel Yudin, 'the servile NKVD philosopher,' as Dedijer, Tito's biographer, calls him, to censor the publication of Yugoslav weeklies and dailies. On top of that Stalin never lost any opportunity to hurt the feelings and pride of Yugoslav leaders. On their part the Yugoslav leaders found Stalin's 'big brother' attitude simply intolerable. As opposed to the leaders of other Eastern European countries they did not owe their positions to the Russian army. They had in fact conducted one of the finest partisan struggles against the German army and were extremely proud of this fact. The final clash with the Kremlin came

on the issue of foreign affairs. The Yugoslav leaders were dreaming of forming a Balkan Federation covering Bulgaria, Albania and Greece. This incurred the wrath of Stalin; diplomatic and economic connections between Yugoslavia and Russia were broken.

The story of Yugoslavia after 1948 is a story of the birth and death of the democratic conscience of a nation. It expressed itself through the fearless voice of Milovan Djilas. Soon after the break with Stalin the leaders of Yugoslavia did a bit of heart-searching. They began to ask themselves why Russia had behaved so undemocratically with other communist countries. And the answer was that Russia's undemocratic behaviour was the reflection of the absence of democracy in her internal affairs. What they felt called upon to do, therefore, was to democratize the communist regime in Yugoslavia.

IN 1950 Djilas, the party theoretician, came out with his alternative to the dictatorship of the proletariat. This he called 'socialist democracy'. He severely criticized the Soviet bureaucracy. By 'bureaucratism' he meant not red tape, corruption and administrative inefficiency, but the lack of democracy, the existence of arbitrary actions and high-handedness.⁴

At this stage the democratization of Yugoslavia took place on the following lines: (a) Workers' councils for the management of industries were established; (b) Forcibly organized collective farms were dissolved; (c) To some extent administration was decentralized and (d) certain civil liberties were granted. Together with this, in the Sixth Party Congress in 1952 it was decided that the Party should give up the method of compulsion and arbitrary arrest and should adopt the policy of persuasion, education and example, that the Party cells should be thrown

open to the public and that Party secretaries should be forbidden to hold top positions.

Although the leaders of Yugoslavia were engaged in the task of democratizing the regime, none excepting Djilas was sincere about it. As far as they were concerned they had agreed to the programme of democratization because it was likely to give an ideological quality to their clash with Stalin which might have otherwise looked like a sordid clash of power and personality. But soon they realized that it was likely to be much more than that. If the regime were to be democratized and its power concentration decentralized then it was likely that they might themselves lose their positions of privilege and power. They therefore refused to go any further.

From 1952 onwards Djilas travelled a lonely path, a path which was once chosen by Tito, Kardelj, Rankovic, Kidric, etc. along with himself, during the dark days of their clash with Stalin. Although Djilas still occupied a top party position, he knew that none of his ideas were going to be put into practice. He therefore started laying bare the implications of half-hearted democratization. The democratic revolution was called off, he now maintained, because the Party did not have enough faith in the masses. That the 'socialist consciousness' was no longer confined to the party and that in this respect the masses were on par with the Party. From such a premise Djilas argued that socialism could be introduced in Yugoslavia by a simple democratic process and the presence of a despotic communist party might deflect such efforts.

Djilas had by now not only parted company with his compatriots but he had also repudiated Marxism-Leninism. For he had begun to see the seeds of despotism not only in the temperament of Stalin, as did Tito, but in the Marxist-Leninist emphasis on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Djilas at this stage was at the height of his popularity. He was still making use of the Party organ *Borba*. Tito now considered him to be a great nuisance and was waiting for an opportunity to throw him out. In 1954 Djilas himself gave this opportunity to Tito. He published a paper called *Anatomy of Morals* in *Nova Misao* in which he attacked the social snobbery of communist officials and their wives. They behaved, he said, like a privileged caste. They enjoyed immense power and comforts and considered themselves to be superior to others. In support of his accusation he gave the example of the treatment given to Melina Vrsajkov, the twenty-one year-old wife of Colonel-General Peko Dapcevic, the Chief of Staff of the Yugoslav army. Melina was looked down upon for not having participated in the partisan struggle. What these snobs forgot, said Djilas, was the fact that when the partisan struggle was on, Melina was hardly thirteen!

Anatomy of Morals gave Tito his much awaited opportunity. Djilas was immediately brought to trial and for two days the members of the Central Committee bitterly attacked him. The only person who defended Djilas was Dediđer, Tito's biographer. Djilas was accused of being a romantic debator, a reformist and an egoist. Tito maintained that the time was not ripe for the withering away of the Party which Djilas advocated. Djilas was expelled from the Central Committee, and three months after that he himself resigned from the Party. He was given a modest pension and he retired to a country villa.

DURING the Hungarian uprising, Tito did not want to spoil his relationship with the Soviet Union which had improved considerably after the death of Stalin. He therefore forced the Hungarian refugees to return to their country and openly came out with a statement justifying Soviet interven-

tion. This outraged Djilas and he came out with the following counter-statement: with the Hungarian revolution 'a new chapter began in the history of humanity . . . perhaps no less meaningful than the French or Russian revolutions The Hungarian revolution blazed the path which sooner or later other communist countries must follow.'

In *the New Class* Djilas tries to point out the element of fundamental contradiction in the achievements of communism. By means of rapid industrialization, communism has provided what Marx called 'economic freedom', which can be the basis of other freedoms. But in so doing it has also created a new despotic class which negates the blessings of industrialization. The ruling communists make a 'class' even by Marxian standards. For they enjoy the monopoly of power and its accompanying economic benefits. The composition of this 'class' is not static. Once it was headed by extraordinary individuals like Lenin and Stalin, who had ideas. Now it is led by mediocrities like Khrushchev who do not have any ideas to offer humanity. Consequently, the internal structure of this class is undergoing a change. Now there is a naked struggle for power taking place between the lower and the higher strata of this class.

Yugoslavia today is in a great ideological mess. Of all the Eastern European countries she had about the least opportunity to conduct her experiments with communism. She has the advantage over Poland of not having the Russian army on her soil. In that respect she resembles China. But she also had an advantage over China in the sense that she received a very healthy shock at the hands of Stalin and started off in the right direction of balancing communism with democracy. And for this purpose she had a very dynamic theoretician in the person of Milovan Djilas, who would rank with Plekhanov, Lenin and

MODERN MACHIAVELLIANISM

Imre Nagy, twice Premier of Hungary and now in a Soviet prison:

What sort of political morality is there in a public life where contrary opinions are not only suppressed but punished with actual deprivation of livelihood; where those who express contrary opinions are expelled from society with shameful disregard for the human and civil rights set down in the Constitution; where those who are opposed in principle to the ruling political trend are barred from their professions—the journalist from his work in the area of the press, the author from his literary activities; and where a man is not only dismissed from his political office but from membership in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and from his university teaching position as well; and indeed where all those activities whereby he might guarantee his livelihood are made impossible for him?

What is this if not a shameful degeneration of political morality? Can

one speak, in such a case, of a Constitution, of law and order, of legality? Can one speak of the morality of public life when the 'battle of opinions' is waged with such depraved tools, when they lie about freedom and at the same time deprive the brave representatives of freedom of the bare necessities of life? This is not socialist morality. It is modern Machiavellianism.

The deterioration of public life and of character has repercussions in every area of our social life, in that it hastens the decay brought on by the ever intensifying economic and political crisis. Falsehood and careerism are spreading dangerously in our public life and are deeply affecting human morality and honour. Distrust is gaining ground. An atmosphere of suspicion and revenge is banishing the fundamental feature of socialist morality, humanism. In its stead, cold inhumanity is appearing in public life. It is a shocking picture that the moral situation of our social life reveals.

Bukharin for his ideas. The leaders of Yugoslavia did not make use of any of these opportunities; instead of that they first betrayed communism and later on democracy.

Polish Communism

It is indeed too early to say anything definite about Polish communism. This is so on account of many reasons. Firstly, Poland's recently won independence from

Moscow is none too secure. Russian troops are still on Polish soil and no one knows when they will start interfering in Poland's internal affairs. Secondly, Poland is passing through a grave economic and ideological crisis and it remains to be seen whether Gomulka will be able to tide over it or not. Thirdly, unlike the Yugoslavia of 1948 when the entire Party was with Tito, Poland has a strong Stalinist group which is marking its own time. We shall, therefore, confine our analysis to certain

administrative changes that have taken place in the past one year and examine the problems that Gomulka's government is facing.

Orthodox Marxists describe the recent changes in Poland as a Bukharinite deviation. In his *Notes of an Economist* Bukharin had warned against forced collectivization and the rapid pace of industrialization. He had also pleaded for the maintenance of democracy in the Party's internal matters. The recent changes in Poland have been more or less confined to these lines. But they are by no means conscious attempts to follow Bukharin's ideas.

ADMINISTRATIVE changes in Poland were preceded by the cancellation of a number of trade agreements with Soviet Russia. She cancelled her agreement to sell coal to Russia at a lower price. She reduced the official rate of exchange of zloty with dollar from four to sixteen.

Then she dissolved collective farms and handed over land and livestock to individual farmers. Bankrupt nationalized industries were handed over to private individuals. Applications were invited for starting small industries and the principle of priority to heavy industries was given up.

The establishment of Workers' Councils was one of the most important administrative changes in Poland. The factory director can now be an *ex-officio* member of this council but not its chairman. Not more than one-third of the Council's strength is to consist of administrative and managerial staff. Directors are to be appointed by the Government with the consent of the Council. In case of a conflict between the Council and the director, the government is to act as an arbiter. The office-bearers of the Council are to be elected by secret ballot. The Council is responsible to the workers and cannot be dissolved by the Government.

It is, however, too early to pass any judgment on the working of these Councils. The principal obstacles in this work are two. Firstly, the Polish bureaucracy which has been brought up in the Stalinist tradition interferes far too much in their day to day work. Secondly, Gomulka himself looks at them as instruments of increasing industrial efficiency rather than of introducing industrial democracy.

The economic picture of Poland is certainly pretty grim. During the last year the production of grain, milk and meat has fallen considerably. Moreover Polish workers are clamouring for higher wages which the Polish economy at present cannot afford. The economic problems of Poland strengthen the Stalinist group inside the Party. And Gomulka's success over this group will largely depend on his success in the economic field.

To some extent Gomulka has succeeded in liberalizing the communist regime in Poland. In today's Poland freedom of speech and conscience is an indisputable fact. The Polish parliament also includes non-communist members. The concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and governing the country with the help of the secret police, is supposed to belong to the pre-revolutionary communist regime. The Workers' Councils have also secured substantial autonomy for Polish workers. But all these achievements would remain precarious so long as Russian troops remain on Polish soil. And the Russians have to some extent convinced the Poles about the need to keep Russian troops on Polish soil so long as Western Germany threatens to reverse the Oder-Neisse line.

Soviet Communism

Mao's China started off with great differences with the Marxist-Leninist line. Yugoslavia and Poland departed from it in the fight either with Stalin or Stalin-

ism. What about Russia? Did she faithfully keep to it? It is almost impossible to answer this question. This is because what goes by the name of Marxism-Leninism cannot be indicated excepting with reference to what has actually been done by way of social and economic transformation in the Soviet Union. We shall therefore ask another, and equally significant, question as to what are the problems which Marxism-Leninism as an ideology faces in the Soviet Union today?

(a) *Decline in the importance of ideology*

The Marxist-Leninist ideology was useful for the purpose of agitation and for making people work for a communist millenium. With the help of it, Lenin preached the gospel of revolution to the starving and illiterate masses of Russia. Forty years after the revolution the composition of the Russian society has changed considerably. Instead of starvation there is economic security for the average individual. And instead of illiteracy there is an extra-ordinary familiarity with science and technology. Thirty years ago twenty-two million people were directly or indirectly connected with industries and government services. Now their number has risen to ninety-five million.⁶ A greater and greater number of people are coming in contact with science and industry every day. They constitute a very vital section of the Soviet economy. For years they were dominated by political bosses well-versed in Marxism-Leninism. But as the Soviet scientists and technicians grew in stature the leadership of these bosses became weaker in laboratories, workshops, factories, mechanized farms, etc. Although scientists and technicians are still required to work within the framework of the rules laid down by planners in their own places of work, they remain leaders. At some stage or another they receive their political education in

Marxism-Leninism and occasionally they also have to come out in praise of it. But nothing is more redundant to their actual work than their education in Marxism-Leninism.

(b) *Failure of indoctrination*

Recently some western thinkers have expressed a grave concern over the cogency of communism and its consequent appeal to young minds in comparison to democracy, which lacks a doctrinal statement. Walter Lippmann, in *The Public Philosophy*, went to the extent of formulating a doctrine for democracy. The Polish and Hungarian uprisings proved that their fears were exaggerated. For both these uprisings were led by students who had been subjected to at least ten years of indoctrination. The chances of the success of indoctrination in the Soviet Union in comparison to the countries of Eastern Europe were much greater because there it was the indoctrination of a native ideology. But this advantage did not outlast the downgrading of Stalin and the uprisings in Poland and Hungary. These events shook the indoctrinated Soviet youth. Soon after these events meetings of Soviet youth expressing their disillusionment were described by the Soviet press as 'demagogic' and their demands as 'anti-party demands'.⁷ The success of Soviet indoctrination is mainly a negative success. It has succeeded in running down the West rather than in justifying the ways of Soviet rulers.

(c) *Failure of ideology to explain the world events of today*

There is a growing feeling among communist writers that the world is changing rapidly and that Marxism can neither explain it nor predict its future development. It failed in its prediction of revolution in Britain and Germany; it failed to grasp the extra-ordinary flexibility of the late

nineteenth and early twentieth century capitalism; it failed to notice that a substantial revolution can be brought about in the economic structure of society through parliamentary means; finally it failed to foresee that the communist technique of capturing power and of transforming society might become an anti-democratic and anti-humanitarian technique. Recently the disenchanted French communist intellectuals, such as Pierre Herve, Aime Cesaire, Edgar Morin, Jacques Frances Rollant, etc., expressed their feelings in the following words: 'We must be able to undertake the colossal task of the reconstruction of Marxism. We cannot live any longer on the basis of frozen theories which have only the scantest relationship with the dramatically changing reality of today. Only a rigorous theoretical effort can enable us to start a debate on new ways of socialism.'⁸ Although these are the sentiments of disenchanted intellectuals outside the Soviet Union it would not be altogether baseless to say that Russian intellectuals too share a similar disenchantment. Otherwise it would be impossible to explain novels like *The Thaw* and *Not by Bread Alone*.

¹ *Foreign Affairs*, October 1955, P. 75.

² *Current History*, January 1957.

³ *Problems of Communism*, July-Aug. 1957, p. 7.

⁴ *Foreign Affairs*, January 1955.

⁵ *Bulletin* (Institute for the Study of the USSR) May 1957, p. 11.

⁶ *Political Science Quarterly*, July-September 1957

⁷ *Foreign Affairs*, April 1957.

⁸ *Political Science Quarterly*, July-September 1957.

An Announcement

Vyankatesh Madgulkar's novel *Bangar-wadi* two chapters of which have appeared in successive issues of QUEST (Vol II, Nos. 5 and 6) will shortly be published by Asia Publishing House, Bombay. The novel has been translated from the Marathi by S. D. Deshmukh. The title under which it will be published has yet to be decided.

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NAME

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V. P. RAMAN

politics in madras

the neglected south

WHAT is attempted in these few pages is a dispassionate appraisal of recent political developments in Madras. The appraisal endeavours to be dispassionate but cannot claim to be disinterested. No appraisal of political developments can ever be objective in the true sense of that term. Personal predilections may either consciously or otherwise get woven into the fabric of the essay, but then it is due to the inherent nature of the subject.

To appreciate the current trends in Madras politics, it is necessary to have some idea in retrospect of the political situation immediately prior to the general elections in March 1957. The Congress party had been in office since 1946 under the successive leaderships of the late Mr. T. Prakasam (known by the affectionate sobriquet of the 'Lion of Andhra'), Mr. O. P. Ramaswami Reddiar, and the late Mr. P. S. Kumaraswamy Raja. Then came the

elections of 1952. The Congress party suffered serious setbacks, and the party position in the House of 371 members was delicately poised. A United Democratic Front, dominated by the Communists, constituted a serious threat to a stable Congress Government. Qualitatively as well, the Congress ranks were impoverished. Top-ranking Communists including Politbureau member Ramamoorthy and veterans from Andhra and Malabar could never have been managed in the House by a Congress leader from anything lower than the topmost levels. A steam-roller majority makes up for a hundred other defects, particularly with a capable service machinery behind it. But as the majority gets narrowed down, the need for individual personality and capacity increases and the task of the ruling party becomes both delicate and difficult.

In this state of affairs, the Communist-

dominated Front began even to nourish hopes of forming the Government, and the crop of independents who had been returned were in great demand, being wooed on all sides. Out of this serious predicament there was only one way out, and that led to Bazlullah Road. Congress party bosses including Kamaraj trudged heavily to that Road, and there met Mr. C. Rajagopalachari who had just then relinquished office as Union Home Minister, and entreated him to lead them out of the woods. There is perhaps none in India who can better tackle a critical situation than Rajaji, and it is another hint of Kamaraj's astuteness to have thought of C.R. to save the situation.

Rajaji assumed office for the second time as Chief Minister of Madras, and went on for nearly two years in the course of which he broke the back of the Communist movement in the State. He did this in three ways: first, by launching a widespread and constant propaganda seeking to denounce the Communists as anti-God and extolling the greatness of the Hindu religion; secondly, by detecting in time the serious agrarian crisis in the granary of the South and enacting ameliorative legislation; and thirdly, by directing the demand for an Andhra State to a safe and sweet consummation.

SO systematically and deliberately was the propaganda for religion done by C.R. and his lieutenants that the Marxist axiom about religion being the opiate of the masses was getting proved. Lukewarm God-mongers got activated, and indifferent people began to sit up and think of religion. Promises of the Communists for a prosperous *now* got clouded by the prospects of a paradisiac *hereafter*, so convincingly hawked by the orthodox. Bourgeois sympathy for the Front waned and attention got diverted to other channels. The crest of popular support for the Communists sub-

sided. Many were worried by conflicting thoughts and retreated. C.R.'s first trump card had worked. He had at any rate stayed the tide of enthusiasm for progressive forces. The serious agrarian situation in Tanjore District, which, if left undiagnosed and untreated in time, would have given the Communists an invincible fortress of support from where their activities would have radiated, was nipped in the bud by C.R.'s legislation. Agitate hard as they might, Communists could not thereafter muster anything like useful support from the region. The kisan who was taught what he wanted by the Communists found that it was easier to get it from the Government. This trick of removing the opposition plank from under its feet was first tried successfully by C.R. in Madras in 1952 and has since proved to be a valuable weapon in the hands of his successors.

The third stratagem adopted by C.R., which made Madras State safe for his party, was the smooth fulfilment of the Andhra ambition to separate from Madras State. This resulted in a much truncated residuary state, but it shifted the focus of Communist activity and depleted the legislature of many members on the opposition side. The Congress party was assured of a comfortable majority, and the fangs of the Opposition were extracted.

C.R.'s job almost done, the crisis averted, he sowed the seeds of his own destruction by propounding a novel education scheme, which was immediately and with some justification equated with an attempt to impose and perpetuate *Varnashrama Dharma* (or Duty according to Caste). The scheme was vehemently opposed both within and without the Congress party, and C.R. relinquished his stewardship of the State. The forest cleared, the weeds removed, the earth ploughed, the manure supplied, the seeds sown, the crops were ready for harvest, and Kamaraj thought fit to assume office himself to reap them. As one records

these events it is difficult to suppress the thought that notwithstanding the provocation, it seems almost as if Congress vultures were waiting to devour the carcass once the killing was done by someone else. There is no Congressman in the South who can or will deny the fact that but for the timely intervention of C.R. in 1952 immediately after the general elections, the Congress would have gone into the doldrums, never to rise again. That one whose signal service in that direction, from their own standpoint, should have been allowed to unceremoniously depart the moment his task was done, shows the extent to which individual ambition can outweigh larger interests, and narrow-minded power politics eclipse moral values.

I should not be understood as defending the education scheme which was the immediate cause of C.R.'s departure from State politics; it was undoubtedly such as to engender reaction, and was particularly susceptible of a sinister construction. But still, one is left in doubt whether the Congressmen of Madras honestly explored the possibilities of democratically settling the inner party crisis and persuading the statesman to drop an unpopular measure; or whether they did not jump on it as affording an ideal opportunity to rid themselves of a person who by his very austerity and discipline was suited to meet a crisis, but became loathsome as days went on, and stood in the way of avaricious grabbing at spoils or corrupt interference in affairs of government.

BE that as it may, Kamaraj, hitherto known to be King-maker, became King himself. It takes but a drop of human blood to make a beast a man-eater. It took Kamaraj little time to taste power and like it immensely. He immediately set about the task of consolidating his position and in so doing, has succeeded to a considerable ex-

tent on the personal level, but compromised Congress politics to a degree. Soon after he got himself elected as leader of the Legislature party, Kamaraj had to face a bye-election, and this was the beginning of his series of political liaisons and opportunistic alliances that in course of time became so valuable a tactical move as to blind him and the Congress completely to the far-reaching consequences of such moves.

Kamaraj sought and was given support in his bye-election by E. V. Ramaswami, known as 'Periyar' or Venerable Person, the leader of the Dravida Kazhagam. This organisation, of which we shall have more to say later, is primarily a social reform party. It has not so far entered the political arena by contesting elections and testing its strength. But the personality of its leader, E.V.R., certainly has an impact on the masses, and to this day he can command a very large audience in the South. His party, known as the D.K., is an avowedly communal one. While on the one hand it reviles Northern and Aryan domination, it carries on a relentless tirade and campaign against the Brahmin community in Madras. The illogical nature of this agitation, which forgets that the non-Brahmins of the North are as much Aryan as the Brahmins of the North, and that the Brahmins of the South are as Dravidian as the non-Brahmins of the South, has never been deeply analysed. But it has the advantage of simplicity, and attracts a section of the people.

Many bitter battles have been fought between the Congress and the precursor of the D.K., the Justice Party, in bygone days. But to Kamaraj, all was grist that comes to the mill. He enlisted the support of E.V.R. and his intrepid band of followers. Kamaraj won the bye-election, and whatever Congress circles might say, E.V.R. took much of the credit for Kamaraj's victory.

By the time Kamaraj won his bye-election

tion, the momentum to the administration's efficiency, given in C.R.'s time, began to die down, and lapses were reported. The rigid separation of the legislature from the executive, observed in C.R.'s time, yielded place to a new order of things. Kamaraj almost set himself the task of undoing all that was done by C.R., and mixed the good with the bad in his onslaught.

THIS would be an appropriate stage to introduce a new political party in the State, namely the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, or D.M.K. for short. This party was formed in September 1949 by the dissidents from E.V.R.'s Dravida Kazhagam. Its leader is C. N. Annadurai, known to the Tamil people affectionately as 'Anna'. An orator of unparalleled excellence, a Master of Arts of the Madras University, a scholar and writer of rare worth, he is also known to the country as 'Aringner' or Learned Person. He was E.V.R.'s foremost deputy and still graciously and gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to the Periyar, in sharp contrast to the vile abuse which that old gentleman is wont to hurl on his erstwhile follower. Anna and his colleagues, primarily the younger men, separated from E.V.R.'s party, and the reasons that led to the parting of their ways are not germane to our present purpose. But it may be stated that the popular belief, sedulously fostered by interested persons, that Anna quarrelled with E.V.R. over the latter's marriage is not the entire truth. Anna and his colleagues had several points of difference with Periyar, and the wedding was only the last straw. The policies of the D.M.K. are themselves proof of its separate existence and sustenance. Anna could not see eye to eye with E.V.R. and quite naturally so. Anna preached a gospel not of hatred for individuals, but for rationalistic thought.

The D.M.K., since its inception in 1949,

continued its agitation only on the social side, and apart from expressing its views and popularising them on some political questions, did not contest the general elections in 1952. It extended support to some individuals who, after getting elected, forthwith abandoned the election alliance, and ranged themselves on the side of the Congress. In its momentous Conference in Trichy last year, the D.M.K. decided to contest the elections in 1957, and also issued a manifesto. The main plank of the D.M.K.'s platform was the abolition of Northern domination over Southern States, the opposition to Hindi as the national language, the reshaping of the Five Year Plan to treat the South fairly, nationalisation of the means of production, fixation of ceilings on landholdings, fullest exploitation of the natural resources of the South, and establishment of a casteless and classless society. It would be seen however that the emphasis on the interests of the South, as opposed to all India, was the keynote of the whole programme, and much of the election propaganda of the D.M.K. centred round this theory of antithetical interests of the North and South, and the impossibility of a fair deal for the South in a United India dominated by the North.

When the D.M.K. announced its decision to contest the elections, it took E.V.R. no time to extend his hand of fullest cooperation to Kamaraj and the Congress. To E. V. R., Kamaraj was the *summum bonum* of Madras politics and had to be supported at all costs. Kamaraj gratefully accepted the proffered aid, and jointly he and E.V.R. set themselves to counter the powerful and eloquent propaganda of the D.M.K. orators. It may be here mentioned that the cherished goal of the D.K., as much as of the D.M.K., is the establishment of a separate Dravidistan. And yet, the D.K. went all out to oppose the D.M.K. at the elections. The selection of Congress candidates for the election was done by a Committee led by

Kamaraj himself. In the choice of candidates as well, Kamaraj was guided by considerations not wholly belonging to the highest traditions of his party. Where caste had to be humoured at the cost of Congress principles Kamaraj made the choice easily and without hesitation—choosing the former. Where money had to be obtained for the party by selling a ticket to the highest bidder, irrespective of his personality, the Congress creed yielded place to the coin of the realm. Notably the giving of a seat to a well-known magnate, an open enemy of the Congress till very recently, when there was an alternative delegate, a man of the highest probity and with a record of twenty-five years' service to the national struggle, led to a revulsion of feeling in orthodox Congress ranks, and dissidents were numerous.

Prompted by individual frustration in the fight for Congress tickets, or motivated by higher considerations of party purification, the dissidents resigned *en bloc* from the Congress and set up a new Party called the Congress Reforms Committee, or C.R.C. for short. The election programme of the C.R.C. was based on a need for purifying the Congress party in the State and elevating it to its pristine glory. But as the party found some support from rightist elements in some areas and leftist ones in others, its programme could not be definitely placed in any known category. As a matter of fact, it was only after the elections that the C.R.C. thought of officially chalking out a policy and programme.

FOR the 205 seats to the Madras Assembly, there were 785 contestants in all. The Congress put up candidates for all the seats; the D.M.K. for 110 seats; the Communists for 55 seats; the C.R.C. for 50 seats; the Socialists for 8 seats; the Forward Bloc for 2 seats; besides there were 337 in-

dependents. The final party position in the newly elected House is as follows: the Congress annexed 151 seats, the D.M.K. got 15, the C.R.C. got 14, the Forward Bloc got 2 (and for all practical purposes is merged in the C.R.C.), the Communists 4, P.S.P. and Socialists 2 seats each, and 15 independents. Viewed from another angle the figures showing the percentage of votes polled by each party are significant. The Congress which secured nearly three-fourths the total strength of the House, got only 44.1 percent of the total votes polled. The D.M.K., which returned just one tenth the number returned by the Congress, nevertheless polled 14.2 per cent of the total votes, or nearly one third the number polled by the Congress. The C.R.C. and the Communists who returned 14 and 4 members respectively polled 8.3 and 7.9 percent. The independents got 18.7 percent while the remaining parties got a negligible percentage.

In order that the picture may be complete, it should be mentioned that the D.M.K. were the runners-up in as many as 47 constituencies, and in many of these, lost by margins of less than a thousand votes. The Communists who were 14 strong in the old House in the residuary State alone, got only four seats and not one from Tanjore District, formerly considered to be a stronghold of theirs.

During the elections one feature had to be noticed. Apart from the open alliance which E.V.R. and his D.K. had with the Congress (or rather with Kamaraj, as E.V.R. would insist), in many areas where there was a three-cornered fight between the Congress, the Communists and the D.M.K., the latter two so succeeded in splitting the non-Congress vote as to assure the Congress of easy victory. In at least one key contest, the Communists went to the extent of throwing in their weight at the last moment in favour of the Congress candidate (though they had a nominee of

their own in the field), so that the D.M.K. candidate lost by a margin of two hundred votes. After the elections, as a matter of fact, the Communist party newspaper *Jana-sakthi* claimed with a sense of pride, that the Reds had played a significant role in repelling the forces of 'anti-nationalism' and saving the Congress from serious failures at the hands of the D.M.K.

It therefore emerges from the facts set forth already that the current political situation in Madras ultimately resolves into a struggle between the centripetal forces emphasising the essential unity of the Indian sub-continent and the centrifugal forces emphasising the regional interests and belittling the notion of a united country. There may be, and are, quite a number of points of disagreement between the several parties (of an All-India character) *inter se*; but they view the Southern national movement as a disruptive and dangerous force to be firmly and jointly opposed and quelled if possible. Congress party circles, which ridiculed the very idea of a Dravidian movement before the elections, have now set themselves the sole task of meeting the arguments raised by the D.M.K. and seeking to propagate the need for a united India. Time and again, Congress leaders in Madras State seek to disabuse the people of the idea of a Southern nation; in this, they get the whole-hearted support of other All-India parties, notably the Communist Party of India.

ONE can visualise easily a state of affairs in Madras, when all parties subscribing to the importance of the Union will be arrayed on one side against the D.M.K. which seeks to secede from the Union and establish an independent sovereign Dravidian State in the South, comprising the four Dravidian linguistic areas of Tamil Nad, Andhra, Kerala and Karnataka. That such

a day may not be very far off would be an intelligent forecast.

The causes for the popularity of the Dravidian movement can be set out briefly:

Culturally, the South is definitely different from the North. The Dravidian civilization is far more ancient than the Aryan civilization that predominates north of the Vindhyas. The difference has only to be seen to be grasped. The facts of history militate against the artificially postulated homogeneity of the Indian people from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. India is a land of many peoples, speaking different languages and with different cultures. Geographic propinquity does not mean national unity. India is undoubtedly a country of many nations and nationalities. The separate interests of each will have to be reconciled in a Union and there must be something more than the *ex cathedra* declarations of leaders to cement them.

The whole of India has never been under the same central sovereign power. Kingdoms existed simultaneously in the North and in the South. The North had a succession of invasions from the North West, and the biggest empires of the conquerors never stretched upto the extreme South, where other kingdoms flourished. The unity of the country was achieved only in the time of the British rule, and at the point of the bayonet. There was never a historical, voluntary accession of the South to the North.

A central Government for India will be obviously and naturally dominated by the North; it would be strange if it were otherwise. A fair deal for the South under such a Northern-controlled central government becomes problematical, depending as it is on the generosity of human nature which is an inconstant and undependable factor.

The Constitution of India in its present form, as well as the experience of the last six years, makes it clear that the States have little autonomy left with them. Financially

bankrupt and politically subservient, State Governments have to look to New Delhi for their continued and successful existence. Protection of regional interests left in the hands of so powerless a State administration becomes unsatisfactory if not impossible.

Allocations under the Five Year Plans and their projects and schemes leave much scope for discontent. Gigantic projects in the North of the country and comparatively very insignificant schemes for the South furnish a basis for the argument that the South is neglected and make it sound reasonable in the ears of impartial observers.

These considerations are naturally seized upon, expatiated and put forth attractively in the language of the Southern people by the D.M.K. to support its demand for a separate Dravidian State as the only answer to the ills of the South. This argument has the advantage of being simple, and appealing as it does to the emotions naturally receives a good hearing. Nearly 16 lakhs of voters in the State at any rate were swayed by the argument at the polls in 1957. The movement of the D.M.K. finds more support from the younger generation, and this is itself an indication that it is a growing and not a dwindling movement. Quite naturally the Congressmen in the South are worried and agitated about it. But the remedy does not lie in belittling or caricaturing the Dravidian national resurgence. If the Congress wants to keep the South in the Union, the least its top leaders should do is to begin by respecting and not ridiculing the national ambitions of the South. Greater and nearly total autonomy for the States; the immediate suspension of the Hindi movement; and the reshaping of the Plans so that they are more equitable to the South are the three major steps which the Congress bosses can take to meet the Dravidian national movement. Short of these, any amount of argument or

assertion, promises or persuasion, will not do.

IF the Northern States and North Indian Congress leaders do not see the writing on the wall, and complacently believe that the Congress leaders of the South can 'tackle' the situation, they would be gravely mistaken. As things stand one cannot help feeling that there is an amount of complacency at the highest levels. The Southern Congressmen can do little to allay the fears and suspicions of the people that the Congress of the South is but the willing agent and tool of the North. The North should itself and in time respect the aspirations of the South. It is only a sympathetic understanding of the Dravidian movement that will enable the North to meet it on its own level. There are yet no signs of such an understanding. The linguistic imperialistic ambitions of the Hindi-speaking people to force Hindi down the throats of the Dravidians is a sure pointer to the contrary. National ambition when once afoot stops short of nothing. It is as well that the expositors of Indian unity are forewarned, if they wish to be forearmed.

The current political situation in the South is thus incapable of being 'solved' by the South alone. The problem is a larger and more basic one. The remedy, if one is at all required to be employed, has to be created in New Delhi. A radical change of approach and a realisation that India is a land of many nations, and notably two civilizations, are absolutely necessary. Kamaraj may annex the support of various diverse elements to win an election; but all the king's horses and all the king's men will not be able to put Humpty-Dumpty together again once the break occurs. The political situation in the South has to be solved in the North, by the North, by a change of outlook. Left to itself, the South can solve it only in one way.

A. K. Ramanujan

THE BODY AS THE TRANSLATOR

The body's wilderness of buds
wince and flower at once
in uncalendar'd spring.

You talk of Love;
but gland and gonad render freely
all thy sacramental innocence
into their own heretic language:
their idiom is caress
their cadence is the bloodbeat
and their syntax has no subtlety.

The Platonic mouth's surmise
is smothered in this crunching certitude;
the body's roots
begin to stir and twine themselves
in their groping tropic journey
towards another's startled roots of secrecy.

Even deadwood hands
begin to live; and faintly brush
the waiting curve:
the true dark's eyelash.

OF CORRUPTION

Allama said once of men:
There is no help
when the very mountains shiver
in the cold.

When Space herself goes naked,
where is the apparel
to cover the cosmic shame?

When the salt of the earth
(Thy own, my Lord)
take the taints of the world,
where is Corruption's adequate image?

—after ALLAMA PRABHU,
a medieval mystic of Karnatak

PAUL TABORI

on being neutral

a speech delivered in Bombay

THE saddest symptom of our confused age is that even truth has to carry an identity card. And when I use this weighty and yet imponderable word, I do not mean the truths that are battle-grounds and bargaining counters. I am thinking of the verities that are as simple as day following night or rivers striving to reach the sea. Truths that might be hidden or forgotten but without which our world would cease to exist.

There was a time when truth came first and he who proclaimed or carried it was only its servant. In those days it did not really matter whether such a servant was rich or poor, ugly or fair, what language he spoke or who had been his parents. For truth shone through the vessel and was recognized.

To-day as I stand up to speak to you, many of you will ask: 'Who is this man? What right has he to speak? What purpose is behind his words?' And may be, even cruder: 'Who pays him? What does he want of us?'

That is what I meant when I said

that even truth had to carry an identity card. In this age of ours it is increasingly difficult to make people believe that one is simply concerned with truth as far as a finite human mind can conceive and encompass it; that there is no hidden scheme, no ulterior motive behind one's words. And this is very sad.

For the last thirty years my profession has been that of a writer. I have written in a number of languages and have lived and travelled in many countries. I left Hungary, my fatherland, twenty years ago and since then have mostly lived in England. I have never been a member of any political party and all my life I have worked for one goal: that people of different nations, races, languages should learn to understand and love each other. I have never taken payment for speaking my mind or suppressed any opinion of mine for money. This you must believe if you are to listen to me at all.

It was during my travels through the Middle East and Eastern Europe more than ten years ago that I first came upon

one of the most obscene political theories, propounded by the Communist leaders of the satellite countries. It was a grotesque distortion of the saying of Christ as recorded by Luke: 'He that is not with me is against me.' What they said was this: 'If you are not a Communist, you must be a Fascist. If you are not a Fascist, you must be a Communist.'

You will say that this is a childish and stupid political philosophy that no man of intelligence can take seriously. Yet thousands were caught in this trap and are still struggling in it. Men of brains, even of genius, have fallen for this crude juxtaposition. The evil of Fascism has been at least weakened, if not destroyed, even though it survives in many forms and countries, like a latent plague. But it is still serving as a useful bogey-man. Because of its horrors many men of honour have been driven to the extreme of Communism. How these extremes touch, we have seen often enough and never more clearly than within the last twelve months.

Using this transparent trick, Communists have again and again succeeded in branding their enemies as Fascists and Nazis. That is what I meant again when I spoke of truth having to carry an identity card—or at least it is the second part of my meaning. These days if you attack or denounce Communism, you must prove that you are not a Fascist. A ridiculous necessity, but those of us who have suffered the name-calling and filth-throwing have found it less than ridiculous.

That is why I must tell you that my father, a writer and journalist like myself, was murdered by the Nazis thirteen years ago and that twenty-two members of my family have been killed by them. But I must add that several relatives of mine have suffered in Communist prisons and concentration camps—some of them after having endured the same at Nazi hands—and at least two of them have disappeared

in Siberia. This is the dark and terrible authority I have been given, this is the bloody and grievous identity card that makes me bold enough to try and speak the truth and to demand that you should believe me.

UNTIL a year ago I cultivated my garden, as Voltaire's *Candide* advised us all to do. My contacts with my native country were few and far between. I only wrote to those who wrote to me first as I knew that correspondence with the West was often dangerous. Twenty years' exile had unavoidably weakened the links, reduced my interest in Hungary.

And then—all this changed overnight. In ten days, as so many millions did, I went through the whole wonderful and shattering gamut of fear and pride, of hope and despair. In Britain I had become a naturalized citizen—now, as the Hungarian Revolution wrote a deathless chapter in history, I was de-naturalized again. This was, I think, the common experience of all honest Hungarians abroad, whatever country adopted them. We could do little but what little we could do we did. And our lives, our minds, our hearts had been changed and enriched by even this vicarious, second-hand experience of a nation's glory and agony.

You have heard, I am sure, a great deal about the Hungarian Revolution and I am not here to tell its story or analyse its effects. It happened in a country that is far from yours and of which you may know little—for which you may care even less. But I would like to tell you through my experience, through the true facts—as true as day following night, as rivers seeking the sea—what this revolution meant and still means to me—and to *you*.

In the last weeks and months there has been much talk in the world's press, on the radio, and in innumerable books, that this revolution was the work of Fascists, of big

landowners, of retired generals; that it was financed by America and that it had to be crushed by Russian tanks as otherwise it would have swept back the Hungarians into feudal slavery.

This is a lie. It is a falsehood which is very easy to refute. For the first time since the birth of Communism we have witnesses. Not just a few dozen or a few hundred whose veracity can be challenged, whose character can be blackened—but almost two hundred thousand of them. Two per cent of Hungary's population. Do you believe that all two hundred thousand can be liars? Do you believe that in some vast conspiracy they have been taught to parrot the same story?

Among the two hundred thousand there have been eight people whom I have known for a very long time, members of my own family. Let me tell you about them because through them it is easiest to show how the filthy slanders about the Hungarian Revolution can be disproved.

One of them is a writer and translator like myself. During the war he had been drafted into the forced labour corps by the Nazis, was almost beaten to death, and escaped, to spend over a year in hiding. Five years later he was arrested by the Communists. He spent almost six years in prison, was tortured and beaten, forced to sign a false confession and survived only by playing the fool, pretending to be a half-wit. He left his country only because he had good reason to fear a new arrest, new tortures.

His wife was a well-known opera singer. When her husband was arrested, she was banned from the theatres. They tried to force her to divorce the man she loved; for seven years she had to work as a char-woman to keep herself and her son.

The son is a brilliant student of architecture. In his own country they would not admit him to the university—because his father was a political prisoner. He taught

himself his craft by stealth. He left Hungary because he wanted to build, to create—and in his country he was forbidden to do both.

With these three came the wife's aged father. All his life he had worked hard to save for his old age. He had been a small shopkeeper. His shop was taken from him, his savings vanished. He would have starved. On his old legs he tottered through the snow to reach freedom and a little peace for his declining years.

THE fifth was a printer. For thirty years he had been a Socialist, a trade union organizer who had suffered persecution under the Fascist regime. He left Hungary because, as he told me, he could no longer stand 'setting lies, nothing but lies' on his linotype machine. At fifty it isn't easy to change your country; for a printer and proofreader to teach himself another language is one of the hardest prospects. Yet he left and is to-day working in London.

His son, a student of sculpture and an apprentice stone-mason, came with him. He was earning good money in Hungary and was happy in his profession. Yet he left without hesitation because so many young men had been picked up on the streets and disappeared as 'voluntary labour' somewhere in Siberia. Two of his friends had been taken in this way and he couldn't stand the fear and tension any longer.

Number seven and eight on my list are a young couple. The wife was a school-girl last October, studying at a high school in a provincial city, her father a well-known and brilliant surgeon. The husband, not yet twenty-one, worked as an electronics mechanic—he, too, was denied admittance to any university because his father wasn't a worker or a peasant. They had fallen in love before the Revolution and both felt that there was no future for their love and for the children they wanted to have in a

country where Hitler's racial persecution had been turned into class persecution—and what difference was there between the two when both oppressed the innocent and defenceless?

These eight people are representative enough of the two hundred thousand. They and their like are the landlords, the aristocrats, the bankers, the Fascist plotters who fought the Revolution, who shed their blood and then had to flee their country! These are the 'counter-revolutionaries' whom the Communist leaders and press slander incessantly. The two hundred thousand witnesses who taught me the truth about Russia and her satellites.

And what is this truth? I hope you have looked at my identity card now and have accepted it. In any case, I do not intend to go into the tortuous details of Communist politics and economics. Who deviated from what and who is strangling whom with the party line—these are not my concerns. As for economics, though twenty-five years ago somebody handed me a parchment and proclaimed me a doctor in this most unscientific of all sciences, I do not profess to be an expert in the theories of Professor Varga or Tovarish Mikoyan.

The message Hungary taught us is a very simple one. So simple that it has to be learned again and again, at the cost of millions of lives. *The truth that without freedom nothing is any good.*

I know well enough that freedom is one of those words that have become tarnished and cheapened. On the lips of professional politicians and playing-to-the-gallery orators it has turned into the equal of anybody's sweet, white-haired mother or the sanctity of treaties. Everybody talks about it and, as in Mark Twain's aphorism about the weather, nobody does anything about it. In the last few decades when someone speaks about 'freedom-loving peoples' and 'the sacred trust of liberty' we either get goose-flesh or go to sleep.

But freedom, as you know very well, is something very real and very potent. Arthur Koestler, a deeply disillusioned man whose gods have all failed him, spoke of the choice between 'comparative freedom and total unfreedom.' I don't think there is such a thing as comparative freedom just as there is no such thing as being comparatively dead or having a relative toothache. I believe that all roads lead to freedom as they used to lead to Rome; only sometimes the journey is endless and sometimes we reach our goal. It is, of course, something of which we are far more conscious when we have lost it—like the sight of our eyes or the use of our muscles.

HUNGARY has shown us—as all totalitarian countries are bound to prove it sooner or later—that without freedom no nation can be prosperous. The Revolution last October was prepared by writers who—or at least most of them—were the pampered darlings of the regime, winners of Stalin and Kossuth Prizes, privileged in a hundred ways. It was fought by the young—who had ten years of methodical indoctrination which they shed like a piece of dead skin—and by the workers who were supposed to be the aristocracy of the 'people's democracy'. The same process is being repeated in every dictatorship, whatever its name or its continent. Very often the people do not know what freedom is. But they still want it. Sooner or later, as surely as day follows night, they discover that the promises of freedom tomorrow, of temporary 'restrictions' in the interests of future riches, are just as empty as the benefits of forced peace-loans or the evil pretence of equality in a Communist State. Lincoln summed it all up when he spoke of the impossibility of fooling all the people all of the time. It is becoming harder and harder to fool even the few and even for a short period, as Hungary has shown us. There is no substitute for liberty. There is no such thing as

ersatz freedom. And people will fight and die for it, however intangible or difficult it is to define.

Very well, you will say, but what has all this got to do with *us*? Hungary is far away and there is place in this world for neutrality, for keeping out of the deadly race of atomic weapons, of a world split into two. You do not want to make the choice, perhaps, between Soviet and American imperialism—however misleading these terms are. Maybe to you the USSR has shown its friendliest, most attractive face. There are the great Youth Festivals—which, by the way, provide the Soviet Union with a useful amount of foreign currency to be used for espionage and sabotage—there are the great gifts of the mighty Soviet industry. But even without these, surely one can contract out of the clash of ideas, the cold or not-so-cold war?

I am sorry to say that you cannot. Can you be neutral about cholera or a tornado? Can you declare your disinterestedness in a tidal wave or the Black Death? There are no two sides to a cobra's bite or a shark's jaw.

Let me make it clear: I am speaking of ideas and not of weapons. I am not a recruiting officer for the NATO or SEATO forces, nor do I advocate any form of government or party within the two extremes of Fascism and Communism both of which I loathe in equal measure. The weapons I would plead with you to use are weapons of the spirit. It is commonplace enough that these are mightier than the sword in spite of all appearances to the contrary. They are mightier because they are more enduring. You cannot remain neutral because whatever your truth and belief, these are menaced by the same forces that are at this very moment torturing and killing the Hungarian writers, intellectuals, artists—and ordinary workers. All you hold dear is threatened by the same enemy. I know how hard it is to accept

this. But if you are a writer, consider the fate of the innumerable authors who have been executed, sent to concentration camps, imprisoned and tortured because they failed to follow the dictates of a Zhdanov, an Ulbricht or an Anna Pauker. Many of them have been good Party members who at one time or other discovered that you couldn't *create* at bureaucratic orders. And if they tried too long, they ended like Mayakovsky or Fadeyev, in despair and suicide. If you are an artist, think of the ridiculous commands of 'Socialist Realism' or of the fact that though he is one of the great showpieces of Communism, Picasso's works could not be viewed by a Soviet citizen until recently. If you are a composer, remember the nauseating rebukes administered to Shostakovich and Prokofiev because their music rose above the level of a Red Army march or a 'pretty tune.' If you are a scientist, a philosopher, a historian—but there is no craft, no profession, no field of creative work where the examples could not be continued indefinitely. That is *your* enemy and mine. That is what I meant when I said that without freedom nothing is any good.

AND here I must speak of something that I have encountered again and again, in England and many other countries, whenever I tried to speak the truth as I knew it. There was always somebody who rose and said: 'Yes, but what about lynchings and racial discrimination in the South of the United States?' 'What about colonialism?' 'What about *apartheid*?' 'What of Cyprus?'

Now, happily, I am not responsible for whatever Downing Street, Washington, the Quai d'Orsay or Mr. Strijdom have been doing. Nor do I like most of the time what is happening in connection with the problems my interlocutors used to raise. But these are red herrings indeed. Two blacks do not make a white as we know to our

grief. Men of goodwill, men of honesty have to fight on two fronts—on twenty fronts if you like. The old saying of the price of liberty being eternal vigilance is more valid to-day than ever.

There is, however, something that must be said here—and I cannot be tactful about it. Many men of goodwill and honesty have been attracted to the Soviet Union for one reason only—its alleged racial tolerance, the complete equality it is supposed to grant its citizens (and the citizens of other countries) without regard to race, colour or religion. This, I have been told time and again, shows that the USSR is a progressive country, on the side of the underdog, a champion of minorities.

This is one of the most nauseating lies of our century.

If we examine the Soviet record as far as her own minorities are concerned, it is surprising that such a lie could maintain itself so long. The re-settlement of the Volga Germans practically decimated them. The deportations from the Baltic States—thousands of ordinary men and women—have cost thousands of lives. The deep-seated anti-Semitism of Stalin and his successors caused the torture and murder of hundreds of Jewish writers and intellectuals. There is nothing as ghoulish as the 'rehabilitation' of Isaac Babel, perhaps the most outstanding Russian writer of the last forty years—who was killed because he was a Jew and because he did not toe the Party Line. The examples could be continued indefinitely—and there are just as many in Asiatic Russia, where whole tribes were exterminated, as in Europe.

YES, the Soviet regime fetes and pampers its coloured visitors, pays lip-service to racial equality. It does it for one reason only: to use them—as it well may try to use you—for its own ends. Believe me, there is no tender spot in Mr. Khrushchev's heart for a man whose skin is darker than his;

there is no love in the members of the Politburo for anybody except themselves. The long and painful struggle which so many coloured peoples had and have to wage to achieve independence and human dignity must not blind them to the fact that the smile on the Communist face is the smile of the tiger—before pouncing on its prey. The Communist equality is the equality of slaves. Whatever the sins and crimes of the Western world, however much the Western nations had to be prodded to give up their colonies or grant them a more equitable status, at least they are beginning to realize that this historical process is unavoidable and unstoppable. If the Soviet Union had any coloured minorities within its frontier, we would soon discover how flimsy is her pretense at protecting the underprivileged, how specious her championship of the downtrodden.

In the last twenty years I have had many an argument about freedom and tyranny, about Communism and Fascism, about truth and justice. And I have come to one final conclusion: it is impossible to persuade or convince anybody if the seeds of conviction are not already in his mind. How often these seeds are smothered by prejudice and ignorance! I have spoken to you not with any hope that you will accept my word for all I have said, to take my arguments for the whole truth. But I hope that you believe me: I have spoken frankly and freely, with no ulterior motive. And that is already a good deal.

For the only hope of our world is that people should listen to each other with an open mind, with a charitable heart and with faith in a world that has no barriers, no iron curtains, no traditions of hate and no dreams of one nation's or race's superiority. A world in which the spirit can move unfettered and in which no one shall be neutral about the dignity of man and the liberation of those who have been robbed of it.

V. V. JOHN

india's lost generation

the predicament of youth

FORMING one's impressions at long range from books and magazines, one would imagine that the youth of England now belong to one of two categories, namely, those who are angry, and those who are bored. Often the two categories overlap, for the Welfare State seems to induce in the young alternate reactions of anger and ennui. The chief feature of youth's predicament over there is perhaps that the element of adventure has passed from life. As one of the less angry young men said over the radio a little while ago, 'We force ourselves to concentrate on taking the next bend safely, where our fathers were eagerly pointing to the millenium at the road's end'. And, I suppose, one cannot even express one's exasperation with any spirit, when the gnashing of teeth has to be done with artificial dentures provided free under the National Health Scheme.

In the radio talk from which I quoted above, the speaker referred to 'the disappointment and bitterness that accompany the new levelling of living standards, especially in those of us who were benefitting from an efficient mechanism of social mobility. These are the people who were climbing a ladder that has suddenly been tilted

to the horizontal, who thirsted for nectar at the fountain of Tom Quad only to find when they got it that it was the same, plain, ordinary water which almost everyone else was drinking. Even those of us who are on the same rung as our fathers were, and do not expect to climb any higher, have been affected by the levelling of the ladder, which has brought others up to our shoulders and swollen the proportion of our total age-group that vies for leadership and influence. We all know moments when we look back in anger, when we nurse our frustration in a lather of detergents in our servantless kitchenettes, hard up against the realities of collective love-in-a-cottage.'

A young Indian who watches all this modish agony cannot help feeling envious. It is more than likely that he would whisper to himself, 'I wish I had half his complaint.' Even in England, those who are old enough to remember the Distressed Areas of the thirties, and the long lines of the unemployed, are not likely to have the same disdain for the amenities of the Welfare State as these latter-day Lucky Jims who do not know their luck. Anyone who lived any part of his adult life during those pre-

War years would know that the search for employment lacks some of the thrills of a search for adventure.

THE cynicism of youth—which has close affinities with the present malaise—is not a new phenomenon in the West. Bertrand Russell wrote an essay on it in 1929, and contrasted it with the earnestness of youth in countries like India and China. 'In India,' wrote Russell, 'the fundamental belief of the earnest young is in the wickedness of England: from this premiss, as from the existence of Descartes, it is possible to deduce a whole philosophy.' Detailing the simple and naive reactions of Indian youth to British ways and institutions so far as they impinged on India, Russell went on to observe: 'In this way the Anglo-Indians save the intelligent youth of India from the blight of cynicism.'

I remember reading this as an undergraduate and feeling annoyed at the glib simplification. For it was evident that the philosopher did not consider 'the intelligent youth of India' to be very intelligent. As in so many of Russell's bright observations, however, there was a useful half-truth in the statement. For, during the years of the national movement for freedom, youth was inspired, however partially, by a purpose other than that of merely getting on in the world. Even the self-seekers and the careerists liked to openly admire those who made sacrifices in the fight against alien domination. All shared vicariously in this heroism.

Unrest among students was one of the prices that the country, quite needlessly, paid for freedom. To preaching that students should not take part in politics the reaction among students was one of defiance. It was argued that, after all, England called upon students in time of national emergency, as for instance, to fight in the World War, and to man trains and buses during the General Strike. In India, the free-

dom movement was such a national emergency, and it was not to be confused with the humdrum politics of vote-catching. While there was truth in this, it was not the whole truth. For, most strikes and other disturbances in colleges and schools were not inspired by any irrepressible urge for national freedom. At their best, they were an expression of the youthful love of excitement and an outlet for the high spirits for which the educational institutions themselves found no use. At their worst, the disturbances were a conspiracy of the indolent and the incompetent against the more capable students; for strikes and stoppages of work helped to level the good student with the bad. Surely, not even the dullest student could have had the illusion that he could help to break up the British Empire by refusing to learn his lessons. But, by making a row, he could prevent his class-mates from learning their lessons either.

There is an interesting passage in Wavell's biography of Allenby, in which he refers to the use to which students were put during political upheavals in Egypt. 'Egyptian popular leaders,' wrote Wavell, 'used the student classes as a political weapon. They could easily be excited by a little heady oratory and naturally found street demonstrations more amusing than the dull routine of education. School strikes became a regular game and were proclaimed on the slightest occasion; should a British Cabinet Minister in London make a speech which displeased the students, they left their desks and paraded the streets in noisy demonstrations; anniversaries of certain events since 1918 also provided excuses to neglect work in favour of noise. Over a period of years both learning and discipline were almost unknown to a large proportion of Egypt's schoolboys.'

A somewhat similar account could be given of the behaviour of students in many parts of India in the thirties and the forties. It had usually nothing to do with the pre-

sence of the British in India. Matters came to such a pass that in one of the universities the students cut classes and created a civic commotion because the cinema houses in the city had discontinued cut rates for students. In another university, the men students struck work because the authorities had decided to build a wall round the women students' hostel. Writing in August 1947, the veteran educationist and historian, Jadunath Sarkar, lamented the fact that in the preceding academic year, owing to strikes and other disturbances, colleges in Calcutta had only eighty normal working days. He recalled with grim foreboding the indiscipline that had finally destroyed the ancient university of Nalanda and had brought about the decline of Buddhism in the land of its origin.

THAT unrest among students had developed a pattern of its own, unconnected with the national movement for freedom, has been established by the experience of educational institutions since 1947. In recent years, students have walked out of examination halls because question papers were difficult. They usually destroy some furniture on these occasions to indicate the vigour of their feelings. In 1948, in Bihar, the work of all colleges came to a standstill because the students refused to take any college examinations for testing their fitness to be sent up for university examinations. In the same State, a great upheaval took place two years ago owing to a quarrel between students and a bus conductor over bus fares. The students alleged that the conductor had behaved rudely. Granting that this was true, there surely were other ways of dealing with him than by university men taking the law into their own hands. It perhaps never occurred to the agitated youth involved that if the bus conductor had had the advantages and privileges that university students have, he would perhaps not have been a bus con-

ductor. It certainly did not occur to them that it was the duty of university men to set him an example of good behaviour, instead of trying to make an example of him. In the event, the trouble did not settle down until the police intervened and several persons were killed.

More recently the work of most colleges and schools in Rajasthan came to a standstill because of the students' protest against an increase in tuition fees. It was arguable whether the increased expenditure on higher education should wholly be a charge on general revenues or whether a part of it should come from the parents of the students. But such arguments on the merits of the question took place only on the fringes; the larger area of conflict was taken up by noise, bad temper and anarchy. One should have thought that it was a question for grown-ups to wrangle about. But parents now have a strange willingness to let their offspring do all the fighting with authority. And by the time the affair was settled, scores of people had been admitted to hospitals for the treatment of injuries, and a considerable quantity of public property damaged. It was interesting that at the close of this dismal affair, a responsible public man publicly hoped that there would never again be any occasion for such 'misunderstandings' between students and the authorities. To refer to abusive slogans, defiance of authority, brickbats and arson and general mayhem as a 'misunderstanding' is the sort of wonder-working euphemism on which the politician thrives.

The same gingerly quality is always to be seen in the manner in which public men refer to any wrongdoing by the young. They do preach perfervid sermons on the subject of indiscipline, but these sermons come during the quieter intervals between one disturbance and another, and never when trouble is actually rampant. What they prefer is to win the acclamations of students with the solemn cliché: 'You are

the hope of the country! If they were honest, they would more often say, instead: 'You are very nearly the despair of the country!'

Meanwhile during periods of trouble, the teachers withdraw into their shells of facile cynicism, and too willingly surrender their natural leadership of students. Whatever one may say of the unscrupulous interference of a certain type of politician, the students will not succumb to his blandishments on any large scale, if they felt that by doing so and cutting classes they would be missing something really precious. Two factors have made it seem a matter of indifference whether students attend to their studies or not. One is that the nature of the studies is half-hearted, and the other is that at the end of the studies waits unemployment or unsuitable employment.

THE nature of the studies in colleges was described by one of the more waggish professors who said: 'We pursue learning all right, but always at a safe distance, taking good care not to overtake her.' The examinations, which set the pace for studies in college, have become so stereotyped, and in many cases such an unmeaning test of ability, that the average student does not have to devote any considerable part of his abilities or energy to passing them. (Many fail, but that proves nothing; for by now, passing and failing, like hanging and wiving, go by destiny.) As for the pursuit of learning for its own high sake, such an idea does not easily get past the cynicism of the teachers and the indolence of the students.

It has been argued that since there aren't jobs waiting for all, the very fewness of employment opportunities could be expected to induce in the students a spirit of emulation and hard work. If the fittest alone survive in the search for good jobs, would not everyone want to be at the top

of the form? This, again, is a plausible half-truth. In actual experience, however, it will be found that the theory works only if the number of good jobs have a reasonable relation to the number of competent people that the colleges can train up. If, on the contrary, one job is to be tried for by a hundred graduates, the result is not competitive emulation, but discouragement and despair. And besides, it is not unknown that the best jobs do not always go to the best qualified.

In this predicament of youth, induced by an education that does not educate, and by the strange phenomenon of a backward country that cannot find a proper use for its trained personnel, there is an opening for the propagation of deperate evangels. The Communists are said to have won the allegiance of a large number of students in certain regions. I have a suspicion that this allegiance will at the moment be found to be tenuous. The intellectual temper of our seats of learning is such that discussion hardly gets beyond mere verbalism; and loyalties are formed, not out of intellectual conviction, but out of resentment, envy and such other reactions to temporary vicissitudes. The climate is indeed favourable to the spread of Communism. But so far, its triumphs have been of uncertain durability. As a teacher, I have had some students who were known to be Communists, but I have also seen them turn in a very short while into placid Government servants, more bothered about their next promotion than about the world revolution. The danger is not one of Communism winning any straight battle for the mind of youth, but of moving in to fill a vacuum created by misery and despair. If free institutions cannot free us from want and hunger, why not give the other way a chance?

One of the functions of higher education in a democracy is to train leaders for the community. In terms of active politics,

our colleges and universities have more or less ceased to perform this function. In twenty years of college teaching, I have had only one instance of a capable student taking to politics as a career. The others among my students who went into politics did so because they could not find anything else to do, or having become lawyers, had failed miserably in the profession. I do not suppose my experience is unique. The fault, this time, is not the fault of colleges and universities, but of economic conditions and of certain features of contemporary politics. Who among the young products of our universities can afford to go into politics? There was a time, during the national movement for freedom, when fine young men renounced all their chances of advancement and followed the lead of Gandhi. That spirit has not been handed down to the present generation, for the spirit was killed by these erstwhile 'political sufferers' themselves, who, since 1947, have been insisting on their virtue being rewarded in the shape of ministerships and jobbery of various kinds.

WHAT has been happening to the Congress Party has a tremendous effect on the morale of India's youth. Twenty years ago, it would have been impossible to imagine that the white khaddar clothes and the white cap of the Congressmen would ever be other than symbols of austere and single-minded dedication. Today, the Congress, having ceased to be a national movement, does not even have the qualities of a real party. It is internally torn by faction fights; only the love of power and the fear of Nehru's displeasure keep the disparate elements together. The youth of India have been watching this unedifying spectacle for quite a while. They are also intrigued by the strange love affair that goes on intermittently between Nehru and Communism. The Chou-Khrushchev-Nehru camaraderie and Nehru's envious admiration of

China's economic achievements produce a greater impression on the young than his protestations of adherence to democratic ways, and his tepid disapproval of totalitarian atrocities. Meanwhile, the Communist technique in India is to attack Nehru's Party, but to extol him personally. Only recently, when Central Government employees threatened to strike and the people were feeling that the proposed action was rash, Hiren Mukherji spoke in the Lok Sabha, commending the spirit of Nehru's broadcast speech to the nation on the subject, but added: 'One wonders what the Prime Minister is doing in the company he keeps!' This wooing may not deceive Nehru, but it does deceive a lot of other people in the country. It is part of a sinister attempt to deprive the Congress Party of the credit for its leader's achievements; and the attempt has not been unsuccessful.

When one considers India's many problems and the ambitious plans that are being made to solve them, one should expect this fact to inspire youth with enthusiasm and ardour. To the extent that the Five Year Plans provide more jobs, youth is interested in the Plans. The young who get good jobs are pleased, and the others are angry and sullen. One looks in vain for any pride in being partakers, in however small a role, of a great adventure. Or, in more unpleasant terms, real patriotism seems to be withering away in the exigencies of individual privations or of individual self-seeking. That this should be so is due to a number of reasons. One is that youth is being launched upon life with inadequate equipment, both intellectual and moral. Secondly, there is too much and too premature talk of the Welfare State which is at the moment but a distant prospect. (In England, the reality of the Welfare State seems to have become a bore; in India, the prospect of it is working like an opiate). And thirdly, the grown-ups are setting such a bad example.

ARJUNA'S PENANCE AT MAHABALIPURAM

The baby elephant with tendril
 Tenderly curved in stone and looking up
 At me mischievously has no place
 But has romped into the panel,
 Does not wonder whether it is Arjuna.

The monkey delousing its willing
 Mate with the intensity born out of love
 For lice does not care whether it is
 Arjuna fighting his epic battles
 Or Bhagiratha weighed down by old ashes.

The tall cat with lean ribs
 Round which frisky the mice play
 Gives me the key to this picture
 Of Classical Indian Art, Indo-Aryan
 Synthesis or pure Dravidian.

Because there is no epic, only a fable
 Of the hypocritic cat, need it follow
 That the skill of the artist was not
 Employed in ironically obeying
 The task that the King had set him?

Are Kings and ministers the only wise
 Ones? Did not the artist have his loves
 And likes and has he shown more
 Love for Arjuna (or is it Bhagiratha?)
 Than to this cat called Dadhikarna?

Or being as near to the Gods as man
 Can attain, did he purposively
 Attempt to set learned men of later times
 At loggerheads, knowing that the Gods,
 Being idle, love to take sides?

'ANDAL'

INDIAN SUMMER

by T. R. Ramanathan

[The author won the first prize in ENCOUNTER's short story competition for Asian and African writers with his entry, *The Biggest Census in the World*.]

ONE evening, now sacred in the twilight of his memory, he came with his few belongings to one of those quaint little places which in Mysore they call a halli. It was dusk. A man was coming out of a gap in the fence. A few women with baskets full of ripe brinjals followed, and lastly, a child trying to pull a calf which seemed in no hurry to jump the fence.

The women adjusted the thorn gate, and followed the man in single file along the broken foot-path. In the fading light of the evening, he could not discern their features, but felt a sense of kinship as if he had been there before. The path was scarcely enough to allow him and the women to pass abreast. He let them pass, then called back. He asked for a night's lodging. The man turned round to look at him. The women, believing that this was a man's affair, did not wait. The villager looked at him scrutinisingly for a while, then nodded him to follow. He felt accepted. That was how he had first come to rent the little cottage by the vegetable plot in the halli.

It was one of those cottages slumbering in a dell, just as one sees in picture books. Once there had been a rock garden watered by a spring well, now in disuse. The patel of the village who owned the cottage had it whitewashed, painting the windows a watery blue. The little creepers that dishevelled the wild garden were trained along the archway bamboos in the porch. Soon the archway was resplendent with honeysuckle and ingasaman. The spring-well began to spout anew. Beyond the hedge lay the plot of brinjals where the young gauda and his wife laboured early and late. Watching them heave alternately at the windlass made the visitor in the dell restive. To be perpetually heaving at a windlass seemed to him a kind of bondage. One had to be free to pitch one's tent or strike camp at a moment's notice.

From the window in the kitchen, once in a few hours, he could watch the train going express to Mysore. The halli was home to the gaudas. To him it was the well of loneliness. However, even the loneliest person cannot wear out his heart in terror. He must talk to somebody, at least to himself.

One evening, the gauda came in with a bottle of milk. 'What's left over,' he told the visitor,

'How much?'

'Four annas.'

'But I don't need it.'

'Well, give me two annas and be done with it,' said the gauda.

It was a deal. It was also the beginning of an intimacy between the visitor and the gauda.

'What's your name?' the gauda asked almost bashfully.

'Pattabhi,' the visitor said simply.

'Pattabhi...Pattabhi,' the gauda seemed to caress the word gently on his tongue, to distil the essence of its meaning.

'Do you know what they call me?'

'No,' said Pattabhi. 'What do they call you?'

'Appanna.'

He said this as if the very secret of his existence depended on that word.

'And your wife's name?'

'Ask her,' said the gauda with a sly wink.

'Come now, what do you call her?' persisted Pattabhi.

'I call her child!'

The gauda could not have been a day more than twenty, and yet he called his wife 'child'. And what did she call him? Appah? Annah? Was he brother, father, husband to her, and she to him, mother, sister, child?

TOWARDS the end of April, there was a change in the air. The dust was laden with the scent of wild flowers. The brinjals were ripe for picking. The earth was parched and rain seemed far away. Beneath the rafter in the kitchen, a woodpecker had made her nest. The young ones were always awake at the first touch of rose in the sky. Pattabhi felt very much alive. He had only to look out of the window across the thorn fence, listen to the twitter of the nestlings under his roof, and lo—there would be the life-giving sun grappling with the bowels of the earth.

This was such a wonderful morning. Pattabhi could hardly contain himself. He cleared the fence at one bound, pot in hand. A young monkey, a poacher in Appanna's preserve, seeing him, ran away chattering. There was a low whistle from

the tall grass near the fence, and Appanna emerged naked from where he had been relieving himself. Unabashed, he cleaned himself in a pool of water, adjusted his langoti, and smiled.

'You seem to manure your own garden,' said Pattabhi laughing. 'Will you draw some water from the well for me?'

Appanna took the pot from Pattabhi's hand and slid down the steps to the well. Pattabhi threw away his clothes and let the warm sunlight caress his skin. From his position, he could see the small of Appanna's back cleft in two by a strip of white cloth, as he bent down to lave the water. When he emerged again into the land of unbroken sunlight, he seemed to carry with him something of the mysterious darkness of the well.

'Is it cold?' shouted Pattabhi, edging away.

Without a word Appanna splashed water all over Pattabhi's body. Pattabhi yelled with joy. Appanna went down the steps again. So up and down, down and up, his narrow, beautiful shoulders stooping, his arms never tiring, Appanna fetched over a hundred pots of water.

'Why don't you bathe yourself while I rub my body?' said Pattabhi.

'Not today,' said the gauda. 'There is a child born to our house.'

'Your wife?'

'Hunh!'

'You are not overjoyed.'

'Is it a joy to be born a woman?' asked Appanna.

'Then it is a girl,' said Pattabhi, half to himself. 'Poor girl.'

Pattabhi felt very hungry after the bath. Appanna busied himself with the fence, adjusting a few props here and there. He was not tired even after the strenuous exertion of fetching water.

'This is monkey business,' he said, pointing to a few of the brinjal plants uprooted and drying in the sun. Then he went to inspect the honeycombs.

Pattabhi wiped his hair dry, and stood in the sun as was his wont, to rid the bones of moisture. Then, with a pot of water for cooking, he went back to the house. Appanna lagged behind and came in only when he was lighting the fire.

'Is there an old shirt, could you spare?'

'Is that all?' asked Pattabhi mock-heroically.

'When is the woman of your house coming? You need someone to cook for you,' said the gauda.

Pattabhi laughed. He felt the need to keep up the illusion of familiarity, especially since Appanna had stopped addressing him as thou, using the more familiar you. He did not stay to answer the gauda's question, but went in to return with an old shirt torn at the sleeves.

LONG after Appanna was gone, Pattabhi lay in a stupor. He was not asleep, but as it very often happens, when one's ears are glued to the ground, a thousand mysterious noises seemed to emanate from the earth. The glug-glug of a wood pigeon in the distance seemed to aggravate his restlessness. Perhaps the bird's mate was preening her ashen breast nearby. 'Here am I,' thought Pattabhi, 'a human being, a will supposedly free, always toying with the death sensation, ready to immolate myself on the pyre of self-mortification. I am at once an actor and spectator. If I could only stop turning round to see the beauty of my back, if I could stop wishing for wings.'

'But your premise is fallacious,' a little voice within him seemed to say. 'You assume that everybody thinks and acts like you. Appanna is unlike you. He would not understand you. He believes in the order of society in which he lives.'

'Famine and drought he accepts as part of fate. He looks at you as one luckier than himself, one to whom money is easily accessible, while he has to work in the sun to earn a few rupees, and you don't even have the decency to admit your poverty of existence. You quibble with ideologies and presume you are the keeper of Appanna's conscience, when all you want is to dominate his mind!'

A home. A wife. Anyone who had a home must have a wife. To the gauda that was the most natural thing on earth. Then, who was he, an impecunious wanderer, to feel superior to the native wisdom of the gauda?

He rose and prepared tea in a tin can, and sitting on the steps of the porch, made soft and warm by the afternoon sun, lit a cigarette. In the cool of the evening, silhouetted against splashes of colour in the west, he thought he could dimly discern the rise and fall of a low line of hills. He may have been wrong. It may have been only a trick of the eye. But he knew that the mystery of those ghats was impenetrable as the mystery that surrounded his own being at that moment.

Suddenly darkness enveloped him on all sides. 'I don't need a light,' thought Pattabhi. 'Let me be engulfed in the blanket of the dark. There is nothing to fall back upon—except myself. This is what I wanted, and now that I have created the situation, there is no escape. There is neither heat nor cold, being nor non-being. Suppose I should pass away into that inner sanctum of darkness, the villagers will come tomorrow and say, "Look! the stranger is dead!"'

Pattabhi, however, did not want to die out like an ill-fed lamp. He wanted to be a symphony of sound and light, not an abject figure of poverty,

huddled up before the vastness of the invisible world. Cold and hunger were naught before the terrible oppression of the senses which divided him from that other world.

A pumpkin yellow moon flooded the garden with a pale incandescent light, stealing up the steps, silently, stealthily. The very foundation on which he seemed to have built his philosophy of loneliness seemed to crumble before the unreality of the invisible world. There was the well, the fence, the railway line, and somewhere in the distance, the lights of the hamlet. He was the prisoner outside the prison gate. He was at large. The moonlight bathed him in ambrosia. He longed for the perfect woman.

If he had a friend, someone whom he could shape, someone younger than himself, Pattabhi thought, the tedium of his lonely existence would be relieved. But then, it was only a woman who could fulfil his innermost need.

Appanna was young and ignorant. He could only grasp one thing at a time. Some things he deliberately refused to understand. It was useless to tell him that the haves had no right to dominate the have-nots. Appanna was too near the soil to grasp the significance of such a statement. He knew to his cost that it was the patel who was the owner of the vegetable plot which he and his wife cultivated.

Miracles were more in Appanna's line. If somebody had told him that by invoking the god, who lived in the peepul tree, he could realise a bumper crop of vegetables, Appanna would never have doubted that.

Beauty in woman the gauda understood and respected; none of that unctuous, hypocritical courtesy one shows to women of birth, but elemental, crude and full of laughter.

'She has the longest hair in the whole village,' said the gauda, taking a pinch of snuff, and settling down for his afternoon snooze one day.

'Who?' asked Pattabhi absent-mindedly.

'Kummi, of course.'

'I have not seen her.'

'You are a queer person,' said the gauda.

'Why?'

'You don't behave like a man!'

Pattabhi laughed at the gauda's naivete. 'Who is Kummi?' he asked.

'She is my wife's sister.'

'Not that little child.'

'She is eighteen,' said the gauda.

'Well, does she know me?'

'Aye,' said the gauda. 'She knows you. She sings catchy songs about a pigeon.'

'Pigeon?'

'You are her pigeon.'

'Well, I never...' said Pattabhi, amused and surprised.

The gauda sighed and closed his eyes as if to sleep.

A few days later, Pattabhi was spring-cleaning. He made a little shelf for the kitchen. He stored and labelled the condiments and spices in little tin cans—marked pepper, salt, groundnuts, onions, etc. Then he went out into the garden and began to gather stones for the fireplace. Appanna had sent Kummi to raise the hearth-stone and smear it with cow-dung.

'Kummi is a wild thing of the woods,' thought Pattabhi, trying to unearth a big, three-cornered stone. He huffed at it till the perspiration ran down his bare back. He was going to call Kummi to bring the iron rod from the kitchen, when the girl herself came running out of the kitchen, the pupils of her eyes rolling. She did not speak, but kept pointing to the door. Pattabhi peered in cautiously. At first, he could make nothing of Kummi's fright. There were no signs of a ghost. Then his eye fell on something—a beautiful brown viper, his head lifted to the wall, very still and attentive to the slightest noise. Kummi was now looking, fascinated.

'It has been here all night,' she said, hardly taking her eyes off the snake. 'I put my hand behind the box where it was, but I drew it back half-way.'

'You were lucky, that's all,' said Pattabhi, watching the heaving of her young breasts. 'Now be still, do as I say. A snake can hear, you know!' Pattabhi hurriedly singled out a long bamboo pole from the fence and with great precision pinned the viper against the wall.

'Now fetch that iron rod and hit him hard. You are not afraid?'

The viper wriggled furiously, but Pattabhi pinned him harder to the wall. The girl hit out with all her might, but her aim was poor. The blow caught the viper on the stomach and a slimy, greenish yellow fluid spurted out from his entrails.

'You little fool!' shouted Pattabhi. He was mad and excited. Wrenching the iron rod from the girl's hand, he dealt a vicious blow on the viper's head. The creature gave a gasp just like a dying man (Hah!) and lay very still.

He walked out into the sunlight, Kummi at his heels. She was looking at him strangely.

'You are not hurt?' he asked her, smoothing her brown hair. There were little beads of perspiration on her brow. He felt strangely attracted to her at that moment. He held out his arm and she nestled

close to him. She smelt of garlic and saffron and spices.

Kummi was like a dart of sunlight coming in and going out at will. You could not bottle sunshine, neither Kummi. She meddled with the books, with the bed, fondled whatever belonged to Pattabhi with greedy eyes. After spending hours pottering around, she would suddenly become very active and order Pattabhi about. He would always watch her coming down the path, her slip of a waist showing between the folds of her sarree and jacket. The string of coral round her neck was in marked contrast to the coal black of her eyes. She was sly when it came to money. Her account of little purchases was always correct to the last pice. Pattabhi was no match for her, and he enjoyed her sly attempts to hoodwink him over the matter of a few annas.

'There is no such thing as a perfect woman', thought Pattabhi. 'If there were, I could not sleep with her. Yet poets and writers and even painters have tried to invest her with a dignity she doesn't need. She wants to be mastered, overpowered. She doesn't have to fight for equality. She doesn't want it. Then why put the strain of intellect on woman?'

AT the end of three months, the patel sent word for an advance payment on rent for another quarter. Pattabhi found that this was a luxury he could not afford. He put off deciding from day to day whether he should stay or quit the village. One day, the patel himself came in person.

'Now that Appanna is going away, you may as well lease the brinjal field,' he said.

'What could I do with it?' asked Pattabhi.

'It is profitable if you know how.'

'But where is Appanna going to?'

'Oh, he is going to join the army. He will wear heavy boots and trousers and a cap. They will feed him like a pig! He will never be the same again.'

'He is a fool,' said Pattabhi, vehemently. 'This is not our war. You and I are responsible for Appanna's ignorance. Why....'

'I did not know you were a Congressman,' said the patel. 'Well! do you want to lease the plot of land or not?'

A commotion outside prevented Pattabhi from replying. He knew he had erred in airing his views before the patel, who was the symbol of authority and power in the village. Instead, he went out to investigate the reason for the noise outside.

'We caught her trying to smuggle a seer of rice past the toll-gates,' said one of the men in the

crowd, pointing an accusing finger at Kummi, who was standing unabashed in the heat of the noon, with a load on her head.

'Who are you?' asked the patel.

'I am the toll-gatekeeper,' said the stranger. 'She is a real vixen. She does a regular business in smuggled rice.'

'I'll take care of this,' said the patel, rearing himself to his full height of five feet.

'I can't let her go,' replied the gatekeeper, holding his ground.

'You caught my hand, but I would not let you,' said Kummi, baring her teeth like a squirrel cracking a nut.

The group of young gandas, who were also village wags, looked menacingly at the toll-gatekeeper.

'She says it's for someone living here,' said the stranger.

'Come on in and have some coffee,' smiled the patel, friendly like. 'We can explain all this in the shade.'

The gatekeeper was only too glad to rest his legs and sip good, strong, black coffee. He was also glad of a few annas to go back with. Kummi went into the kitchen, the young wags scattered about the field, and the heat put an end to any more interruptions.

Pattabhi was in no mood to refuse the patel anything after this incident. So he paid him the rent for three more months and leased the brinjal field without any reservation.

Although he was the new master of the garden plot, it was hard to resist the thought that he was an intruder. People came to draw water from the well as usual. Kummi came in and went out of the house as she pleased. Mornings found Pattabhi at the well and Kummi was there to help him. To keep the sun from wilting the young plants, Pattabhi covered them up during the day with mats made of palm leaves. He was waiting for the seasons.

In a month's time the star-shaped leaves would bend beneath the weight of the pinkish purple fruits. Then, he would collect them in baskets and cart them to market, just as Appanna used to do.

One day, he was seated on his haunches, shading his eyes against the glare of the sun, trying to find out what damage the monkeys had done overnight, when Appanna sauntered in, looking dandy in his green sapper's uniform and heavy boots. He was cheered by the urchins of the village.

'I am on leave before they send me to the front,' he explained. He looked around the field disdainfully.

'You have not done badly,' he told Pattabhi.

'But with your book knowledge you could be somebody in the army!'

'I don't want to be in the army. You wouldn't understand that,' said Pattabhi.

'Every one at home admires me,' declared Appanna jerking his cap at a jaunty angle.

'I can see that,' said Pattabhi amused. 'Especially the kids seem to envy you.'

The children, who were for pillaging the brinjals, had to be driven out, and Appanna too left in their wake to say goodbye to his old cronies.

HARVESTING the brinjals was a full-time job. Everybody helped. Kummi brought a whole host of relations to help her. No one went home that day. A huge cauldron was put on the fire, and Kummi made a gruel which she served out at intervals to the thirsty gaudas.

There was much laughter and joking at the expense of Kummi. Two of the young men were her blood cousins, and were subject to the risqué jokes of the elders.

They loaded the brinjals in huge baskets, as many as two hundred in each, and when the last basket was filled, it was dark.

'You can leave the baskets in my house,' said Pattabhi. 'You can cart them tomorrow to Chickpet.'

'We must settle something else,' said one of the boys. He was a strapping fellow with beautiful, shifty eyes, and long hair tied in a knot at the nape of his neck. They called him Malla.

'Yes,' said Kummi's blood cousin, 'What is our share for helping?'

He was short, stocky, nervous, and lisped like a child.

'Kummi will settle that with you,' said Pattabhi. 'She gets half the proceeds and will pay you as she thinks fit.'

'No, you pay them if you like,' said Kummi. 'I will not forgo my share. There is no agreement that I should pay them!'

'We have been duped,' said the stocky lad. 'We have wasted a full day.'

Pattabhi sensed that this was a game they were playing. Their hostility upset him. He would gladly have asked Kummi to take the produce and be done with it. The boys seemed to challenge his sense of fair play. The girl's eyes were searching him for signs of surrender.

'Nobody invited you to work here,' Pattabhi said angrily. 'You came here of your own accord. You will get a rupee each. Now carry the baskets and leave them where I tell you.'

'What about her,' said the long-haired youth

pointing to Kummi. 'She watered the garden all day and she gets half—eh?'

'That's fair enough,' said Pattabhi.

'Arre Ramal' said Kummi sighing. 'Somebody does the work, somebody gets the produce!'

'Look here,' said Pattabhi, throwing all caution to the winds. 'You seem to think that this is Appanna's preserve, that I am an intruder. You are wrong. The patel owns the land. I leased it from him. The produce is mine. Yet I am willing to be fair and share half with Kummi. You boys can settle your disputes with her.'

This seemed to flatter Kummi, but the boys were disgruntled. 'Come on, sister,' they cried. 'Let him carry the baskets home.'

For a minute, the girl wavered. Then instinctively, she turned on her heel, and followed her cousins without once looking back.

Pattabhi was deeply hurt. He realised that a gulf separated him from these people. He had on previous occasions watched the harvesting, the spirit of camaraderie, the long line of workers leaving the field with baskets on their heads, the children carrying their own load.

They had never questioned Appanna's right to sell the produce. A few annas to Kummi, a new shirt each for the boys would have sufficed. Who was the fool who had said that one had only to take a spade and dig, and the dignity of manual labour would do the rest? Had he not failed to win the trust of the gaudas? Should he not have told Kummi, 'Take the baskets home with you. Tomorrow we will all go to Chickpet and enjoy ourselves. The boys too will get new clothes?'

Instead, he had shown his native distrust of the villager, let habit override his judgment. Yet, in his heart, that day, he had been as near to the soil as when he had begun with the promise of summer in the morning; but by nightfall, human nature had stifled that promise.

Wearily he lifted the baskets and carried them, one by one, to the kitchen.

Tomorrow he would tell the boys, 'There is the produce. Do what you like with it.'

Once more Pattabhi felt lonely, the same gnawing in the pit of the stomach, the same feeling of oppression that had dogged him before he had met Kummi. A heaviness enveloped him as if he had been doped. He slept the sleep of the restless.

When he awoke, it was long past morning. The events of the previous day seemed to have taken away from him the zest for living. He rubbed his eyes and rolled up his blanket. Kummi had deserted him. Would she come again?

He went into the kitchen to light the fire. He

would show her that he was his own master. He placed one twig on another, and carefully built a fire. Then he filled the tin can used for making tea, with water from the earthen pot. Every time he went near the pot, he thought of the snake he had killed. The thought always excited him, an excitement that was in some way associated with Kummi. Between them, they had killed something. Was it just a life or the symbol of desire that they had scotched?

Pattabhi noticed that the door of the kitchen was ajar. He pushed it wide open and found that it was unsteady at the hinges. Someone had tampered with the lock. Suddenly it dawned on him that the baskets of brinjals were not there any more. He looked into the other rooms to see if memory was playing him false. The baskets were certainly not there.

She who had darted in and out of the house like sunshine had come with her thieving cousins and carried away the fruits of his endeavour, while he was asleep. He must have slept like a log.

And what should he do about it now? Search Kummi's house? Inform the village patel or call the police? No. He would not show by so much as a look that he suspected her of theft. He would let Kummi come to the field, work on it as before. But all the while another voice within him said, 'They are laughing in their sleeves. They think you are gentle.' But in spite of a thousand conflicting thoughts, he did not swerve from his original resolution.

Kummi did not come again. Pattabhi busied himself with little odd jobs about the house. There was a lull in the breeze, occasionally a cloudy day. Then the rains came, and there was nothing to do, except to sit and watch the wind twist and turn the driving rain past the open spaces.

It rained incessantly till the spring well overflowed and the rock garden was flooded. The field and the well, where in the long months of heat, he had filled his nostrils with the smell of earth and manure, were deserted.

For him, the spell of summer was broken.

contributors to this issue

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RAMASWAMY
R. IYER

contemporary tamil literature

the malady of complacency

MR. KA. NAA. SUBRAMANYAM'S article on the Tamil novel in the August-September issue of *Quest* is disappointing. One read the article with the hope of finding clear discriminations and definite judgments. What one finds is a chronicle in the manner of a text-book of literary history, with all writers arranged seriatim and summed up with a little praise or a little blame. Judgments are offered, of course; but an article which fails to hold fast to the most essential, though admittedly difficult, discrimination between literature and that which is not literature can hardly be considered illuminating merely because it compares writers and finds some better than others.

An attempt will be made in this article first to place a few individual writers in clearer perspective and formulate clearer judgments about them than Mr. Subramanyam has done; and then to arrive at a deeper understanding of the plight of Tamil literature to-day. In doing so, the

bounds of the novel will have to be overstepped and the state of poetry and criticism briefly referred to.

From Mr. Subramanyam's comments on the pioneers of the Tamil novel, Vedanayakam Pillai, B. R. Rajam Iyer and Madhaviah, there is not much to detract. But one begins to hesitate when he lists in an even tone the names of Natesa Sastri, Ponnuswami Pillai, Arni Kuppuswami Mudaliar and Vaduvor Doraiswamy Iyengar. It is necessary to mention the craze for adaptations and the love of melodrama which marked the early years of the century, but merely as stages in the development of the Tamil novel. *Kamalambal Charitram* is literature as surely as the novels of Arni Kuppuswami Mudaliar and Vaduvor Doraiswamy Iyengar are not: these belong merely to the footnotes of literary history. From Rajam Iyer and Madhaviah one has to take a jump straight to Kalki (R. Krishnamurthi).

About Kalki, Mr. Subramanyam's judg-

ments are fairly correct but slightly misleading. He is certainly not a great novelist; his dialogue is strained, his characters do not always come alive, and the prose of his novels is often weary. But though he practised the novel as melodrama and was never a great novelist, nevertheless he belongs centrally and not marginally to literature—a fact which Mr. Subramanyam does not bring out clearly, perhaps because he is concerned only with the novel. Kalki's novels have a place in literature, not because of their intrinsic worth but because they were written by a great man of letters. For that is what he was—and it is time to recognise that he was not merely 'the greatest journalist of his age'. His published work with its 'feeling for the topical and temporarily important' may not interest many generations; he was principally a political commentator, and political commentary, however distinguished, dates quickly. But Kalki, as Mr. Subramanyam points out, is the best writer of prose that modern Tamil has known. In his political commentaries, his prose is clear, terse and vigorous, and is capable of irony as well as powerful argument. These excellences are the reflections of the sanity, the common-sense and the ardent patriotism (in which local and national attachments were finely balanced) which made him singularly influential.

It would be surprising if his novels contained no evidence of these qualities; but, of course, they do. His historical novels are attempts at the imaginative reconstruction of history but are failures on the whole, for they contain undigested lumps of history; but occasionally the historical passion does come alive, and the deep and abiding love of Tamil Nad which inspired him all his life transfigures a scene here or a character there in these as well as in his other novels. But neither his historical scholarship, nor his prose style, nor his political wisdom, can explain the sense of bereavement, of

personal loss, that writers and readers alike felt all over Tamil Nad at his premature death two years ago. When he passed away, one felt that the man of letters of the age, the man who more than anyone else stood for letters, had passed away. He was the intellectual *par excellence*; his integrity and his devotion to literature made him an archetypal figure.

KALKI excepted, there has been no major writer in modern Tamil. This is the simple fact about modern Tamil literature which requires to be categorically stated, and which one might easily forget in floundering through the welter of names mentioned by Mr. Subramanyam. P. M. Kannan, Gowri Ammal, 'Anuthama', Ku. Rajavelu, etc. etc.—Mr. Subramanyam is catholic; he lists practically all the writers who at one time or another have contributed a novel to a magazine. Indeed, he is so catholic as to include that prolific writer, Smt. Kodai-nayaki Ammal, who surely does not belong even in a footnote to a literary history. The majority of the writers writing in Tamil today can offer nothing which can hold the interest of an adult; the bulk of the writing is the work of adolescents writing for adolescents. There is an occasional glimmer of promise. Now and then a novel begins promisingly, only to lose itself in sentimentality or melodrama; the spark of insight which occasionally lures us goes out, leaving us blind in utter moral darkness. Only two novelists deserve mention as literary craftsmen: 'S.V.V.' about whom Mr. Subramanyam has failed to make the most important point, and 'Devan' whom he does not mention except in a list of the names of popular serial-writers.

Both 'S.V.V.' and 'Devan' were writers of promise who never quite achieved what they were capable of. 'S.V.V.' appeared on the Tamil literary scene with great *éclat* as a humorist; his earliest sketches, stories and

serials are excellent pieces of observation and they capture the domestic idiom with felicity. But the central fact in S.V.V.'s literary career is his remarkable deterioration, which Mr. Subramanyam does not mention. Half-way through his career he ceased to be a humorist and became a moralist; and humour being the light by which he saw, he lost his vision without it and became 'an old man with an old soul, and both extremely blind'. His later novels are a series of tracts for these degenerate times, sentimental, verbose and full of a benighted morality of which a fair idea can be given compendiously: the old ways are good, the new ways are bad; and the practice of virtue consists in keeping one's orthodox tuft of hair and repeating the scriptures, the rewards for which are a good job and the fairest girl in the community. In this world expedient conformity is equated with virtue; material prosperity is the reward. It is a body of work written by an old maid for old maids; it is 'serious' only in the sense of being unfunny. It is in fact his earliest humorous sketches and stories that constitute his serious contribution to literature, but the contribution is slight, very slight.

'Devan' was a writer who might have made more of his undoubted talents, had he been born into a live tradition. He practised the novel as melodrama, but no one who remembers Dickens will venture to say that melodrama cannot be serious literature. Devan's eye and ear were remarkably acute, and he has reproduced with fidelity every variety of speech and pronunciation to be heard in Tamil; his dialogues can almost be used as textbooks of Tamil phonetics. His best work has a curious combination of Dickensian humour and a mystical piety; but the Dickensian degenerates into the Wodehousian and the mystical lyricism becomes turgid rhetoric. It is possible that the very greatest writers are not stifled by adverse literary circum-

stances—at any rate we are sometimes told so; but Devan is surely an example of a good second-rate writer who has been ruined by a bad tradition. In the work of 'Pudumaippittan' too, one finds promise rather than performance. A Hardyesque bitterness and irony pervades the slight volume of work left by him; but the emotion was never mastered by him, never completely externalised and dramatised: it obtrudes into the foreground and distorts the work.

THE renaissance in Tamil began quite promisingly. The novel *Kamalambal Charitram*, the verse and prose of Bharati, the revival of interest in ancient Tamil literature—one couldn't have asked for more auspicious beginnings. Why then did the stream run so quickly into dry sands? The progress in certain directions has been undeniable and remarkable. Bharati has left a body of prose and verse which has received uncritical adulation and which badly needs sifting, but there can be no two opinions regarding his importance as a rejuvenating force in Tamil life and letters. In handling a Tamil which, in both verse and prose, departed from the literary-scholarly tradition of using a crabbed grammar-book idiom and turned to colloquial vocabulary and rhythms, he might have had predecessors; but it was he who *definitively* accomplished the task of bringing written Tamil closer to speech. The work of Kalki consolidated Bharati's achievement; in his hands Tamil prose became a precise and vigorous medium which could be put to a variety of uses. For clarity, strength and purity Kalki's prose has no equal. With him we have left the stage of development and arrived at achievement.

But the progress seems to have been arrested. At any rate, in the last decade or so there has been a remarkable deterioration in writing which (one can only hope) is a temporary phase. When I said that,

Kalki excepted, there has been no major writer, I didn't mean that there is no literary activity: there is a great deal. There are scores of magazines and periodicals; the volume of writing produced as well as the body of readers whom it reaches increases every day. So industrious and noisy is the Tamil literary scene that very few have realised that the inspiration which produced the renaissance has almost run dry, and that activity is not to be equated with vigour nor movement with life. The deterioration in writing becomes very clear if we compare, say, the Deepavali number of the *Ananda Vikatan* of 1938 with the current issue of any magazine. The stories in the old Deepavali number are not distinguished; they don't pretend to be other than what they are, mere magazine-stories which seek to entertain an idle moment; but most of them are written in an easy fluent Tamil which is not far removed from speech. Today, however, the majority of writers go in for various kinds of fine writing, some of the defects of which can be set down as follows: translations, conscious or unconscious, of English idiom; attempts at novel or striking imagery ('his laughter was like the beating of a broomstick on a dustbin'); crudeness; attempts at creating atmosphere by means of stilted language and the tritest and stalest of images ('the wheels of Time revolved four times' or 'the Deity of Time let fall four petals'); and often downright bad Tamil which suggests that the writer is imperfectly acquainted with his own native idiom.

The deterioration in writing is the reflection of a deterioration of the sensibility. This is what I had in mind when I used the expression 'adolescents writing for adolescents', an expression which was intended not as abuse, but as a reasonably accurate statement of fact. The bulk of the stories which appear in magazines are variations on a few recurring themes—tales of love at college, love at a bus-stop, love between

neighbours, etc.; historical tales of chivalry built around medieval Muslim rulers or Rajput chieftains; 'humorous' sketches of middle-class South-Indian life; sentimental tales of domestic life, in which the estrangement between husband and wife, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, or step-mother and step-son is dissolved into love by the intervention of illness or bereavement; tales and sketches of rural life which might have been refreshing had they only had greater vitality. The stories of love are generally so unconvincing, so *gauche*, as to reveal quite clearly that their authors have never grown up (into adults); that they have wrought their tales not out of experience or knowledge but out of febrile day-dreams. As for the sentimental tales of domestic life, there is not a flash of real observation, not a spark of moral or psychological insight in these.

IT might seem that I am making heavy weather of magazine-fiction of which, after all, nothing better can be expected. It is true that as magazine-fiction some of these stories are fairly successful and are not inferior to the stories of *Saturday Evening Post* or *Collier's*; but then no one pretends that *Saturday Evening Post* or *Collier's* is literature, whereas in Tamil Nad no distinction is made between literature and magazine-fiction. That is why I have been at pains to labour the distinction between literature and that which is not literature, though I am quite aware that it is a difficult and sometimes practically impossible distinction. In Tamil Nad everyone who wishes to write has naturally to contribute to a magazine; in fact, when people talk of literature they have the magazines in mind. Novels are not published in book-form without first being serialised.

Mr. Subramanyam recognises this, but his account of the literary situation in Tamil Nad is not clear and adequate. He

makes a rough distinction between the 'serious' writers and the writers of popular magazine-fiction and says that as against the latter the former should be thankful to get a hearing at all. But serious writers can be stifled only if they published their work in book-form and these books couldn't compete with the magazines. This, however, is not the case; 'serious' writers, like other writers, generally write for magazines. It is misleading to think of the 'serious' writers as a group distinct from the magazine writers: they are all magazine-writers, and some are more 'serious' than others. There is surely no great risk of the serious writers' work being rejected by the magazines, unless the work is a thoroughly radical or shocking experiment. It seems to me—Mr. Subramanyam will correct me, if I am wrong—that good work of certain kinds, even very good work, can find its way into print in one of the numerous magazines, if only it gets written; the point is that it does not get written.

ON the one hand, there has been no *major* serious writer; and on the other, even the most negligible writer who has ever contributed a potboiler to a magazine is genuinely convinced that he is a 'Writer', a literary artist. Never did writing enjoy greater prestige in Tamil Nad than today, when there is hardly a writer who can be taken seriously. How did this curious situation arise? The explanation can be given in three words: jingoism, parochialism, complacency. Perhaps these are not causes but are themselves merely symptoms of a deeper malady, but even so, an account of the symptoms might make the situation a little clearer.

Among those who awakened the political consciousness of Tamil Nad, Subramanya Bharati has an honoured place; but the pride in things Tamil which he instilled into Tamilians, though necessary at the time,

has led to a great deal of jingoism. Kalki, who made Tamil history real to the Tamils, was intensely proud of Tamil Nad and was never tired of singing her praises. It may be that neither Bharati nor Kalki can be held to blame for the extreme local patriotism which has resulted from their glorification of Tamil Nad: the jingoism has probably been fed by various resentments and jealousies—like, for instance, the theory of the exploitation of the South by the North or the fear of Hindi 'imperialism'. Whatever the causes, the jingoism has reached the proportions of a tidal wave to-day and has led to a glorification of Tamil literature which is destructive of all critical standards. This is the explanation of the widespread belief that the present is the golden age of the Tamil renaissance. Are there not scores of magazines and hundreds of writers? Isn't there a tremendous output of writing? Very few question the merits of all this writing; and any young man who gets a bus-stop romance published is filled with exultation: for has he not become a writer—a Tamil Writer?

A number of such young writers join together and form literary societies. Wherever there is a sizeable Tamil population Tamil "Sangams" are formed, and in these sangams the young fledgelings and the old professionals of magazines assemble, gossip and occasionally organise talks by other 'writers' and are convinced that they are partaking in the creation and criticism of literature. These talks are generally about Kamban (the great classic of Tamil poetry), Bharati (the modern classic) and a few other such themes; whatever the theme, the talks are generally paeans in honour of the writer and of "Mother Tamil". In such a complacent frame of mind how can there be room for a conception of literature as a serious and exacting discipline?

To these writers and critics poetry is not the verbal exploration of experience but merely the (at best) mellifluous versifica-

tion of well-worn themes, and good prose is not clear transparent writing which lets you see the subject through it, but rhetoric or precious writing. They write romantic stories about 'writers' and their struggle for literary expression, drawing from the profundity of their own experience of writing. They write verses about young maidens who pine for their lovers and send messages through parrots or address their woes to the Koel, and imagine that this is poetry. The plight of poetry in Tamil Nad to-day is sad indeed: there hasn't been any for a long time.

THERE isn't any criticism either. P. Sri Acharya and T. K. Chidambaranatha Mudaliar have been acclaimed as critics, but their criticism consists in laboured paraphrases of Kamban's verse and/or a series of admiring exclamations. The weaving of a fanciful embroidery around the verses, the elaboration of Bradleyan interpretations of 'character' are substituted for articulate critical judgment; there is not one line of genuine critical analysis in all their writings. And this is hardly surprising. The spirit of the time is so complacent that there is no room for critical analysis. There is practically no book-reviewing worth the name, the few reviews which appear in magazines being merely bland reports of the books received, their tables of contents and price; they are no different from publishers' lists.

The complete isolation of Tamil from other languages and literatures is not conducive to the development of critical standards or discipline. One of the reasons why Tamil literature today is not contemporary in spirit is the absence of any awareness of European literature. There have been translations of a few novels of the last century, but the really great classics of European literature have not been translated in large numbers and the few novels

translated have had nothing like an impact on Tamil readers or writers. It is significant that *A Tale of Two Cities*, one of Dickens' least successful novels, should be translated in preference to *Bleak House* or *Hard Times*; that Ibsen's *Doll's House* should be translated and not his *Ghosts*. As for Proust or Joyce or Eliot or Henry James, the Tamil literary world does not know that they ever existed.* A few Bengali writers like Bankim Chandra and Sarat Chandra have been well translated but their influence has been mainly to improve slightly the rendering of dialogue and character in the sentimental domestic tales. A few unimportant or downright bad writers have been translated and read widely; in particular the pretentious novels of the Marathi writer V. S. Khandekar have had a pernicious vogue. But the best fiction of Tagore—for instance—is unknown. Surely, if the extremely intelligent and witty novel *Farewell My Friend* had had anything like Khandekar's vogue, its influence would have been wholly beneficial.

The absence of good translations of the major works of other literatures, the absence, in fact, of any contact with the contemporary literature of any other language, reflects an indifference to literatures other than Tamil. A parochial outlook is fast gaining ground in Tamil Nad. Tamil

[Please see page 65]

* It is strange that even that Indian writer, R. K. Narayan, the only novelist writing about Tamil life who is engaged with adult and mature themes, should have had so little impact on Tamil writers merely because he writes in English. Two of his novels, *Swami and Friends* and *The Dark Room* have been translated into Tamil. So firmly rooted is his work in South Indian life that the Tamil version of *Swami and Friends* not only doesn't read like translation, it is actually better than the English original. In its humanity, its deep understanding of children's minds, and its utter freedom from sentimentality, it is surely a classic of modern Tamil literature. Unfortunately it is hardly remembered in Tamil Nad; it has had no influence; and though it is no mere translation but (as I have said) a Tamil classic, no lecturer on modern Tamil literature ever mentions it.

TEMPORAL POWER

Notes by
S. NATARAJAN

RUSSIA'S rude entry into outer space has disturbed and rattled the pundits of the West. The United Kingdom, with its record of empire in the East and in Africa, might be expected to be peculiarly sensitive to the stirrings of the Afro-Asian mind. Nevertheless, one reads with a sense of dazed shock the animadversions of the *Economist*, the most sober and sedate of the organs of British opinion. Sputnik I was to it the concrete evidence of Russia's catching up with the West; Sputnik II, six times as large as its predecessor and 'fifty times bigger than the first still-to-be-launched American satellite', has convinced it of Russia's having overtaken the West. And 'the dog in the sky' is the final argument for it. Parliamentary democracy and superior technical know-how, writes the *Economist*, were the two trump-cards of the West, which 'is now in danger of losing the second'. The peoples of the world's poorer regions, it maintains, cannot but be impressed by this achievement of a country which 'fifty years ago was almost as poverty-stricken as they are'.

For people in the West who had confidently linked superior technical know-how with parliamentary democracy, the challenge of the Sputniks is grave indeed. In his 'International Economy', Dr. Gunnar Myrdal attributed industrial advance to the freeing of Christianity from the doctrines of grace and absolution effected by the Reformation, which placed the emphasis on effort and reward instead. He was able to ignore Soviet Russia in 1956. But now that crime and punishment have yielded even more spectacular results than effort and reward, what are we to conclude? Theorists will need time to change their views but the politician is compelled by circumstances to accommodate his notions to the force of events. President Eisenhower, who pathetically broadcast that America had carried out several experiments into outer space affectionately eyeing the while a white

object which was supposed to have made the journey and back many times, has set up a high-powered commission to hasten American work on the job; and everyone in the free world is indulging in denouncing or abusing Eisenhower for passing the golden opportunity. Verily, nothing succeeds like success. It as an unhealthy sign, however, when men in power begin to push scientists around. Nor is the cause of parliamentary democracy helped by these methods.

In contrast to what the West thinks we think about 'the dog in the sky', the few Indians whom I have personally talked to on the subject seem to be interested in very different aspects of the case. A friend who is scientifically minded drew the inference that the launching of the Sputnik indicated a high level of technical training in Russia because of the precision with which its course was charted and its movements predicted. The rest of the world, he declared, was at the mercy of the power which had this degree of knowledge. A teacher in a secondary school wanted to know why the satellite, once it escaped the earth's atmosphere, kept circling the earth on a charted orbit. Exploited Asia associated Europe's discovery of new places to go with colonialism. This basic impression transcends all cold-war considerations, linking Russia and America with Europe. All India Radio put out a question-and-answers programme in which four people were asked to say what they thought of the possibilities of 'colonising' other planets. And the *Hindu* sententiously commented on the evil of venturing out of the earth before men and women had learnt how to behave themselves on it. Mr. Nehru—how could the Prime Minister remain silent on such a momentous achievement?—expressed his regret that he may not live to enjoy the experience of inter-planetary travel. There has been nothing in India, at any rate, to suggest that we are considering ventures into outer space on our own or are

contemplating an abandonment of parliamentary democracy.

* * *

THE past two months have been frantic ones for India. The search for foreign exchange has assumed heroic proportions, and desperate diseases call for desperate remedies. A group of businessmen set out for the West with the object of inducing their counterparts there to invest funds in India, a task whose difficulties were complicated by the official attitude towards Western powers and towards Indian business itself. Mr. G. D. Birla and his business friends did considerable spadework in the U.S.A., and the Finance Minister, who followed them, found his task lightened in so far as he was not required to prove that between the Government and Indian business there existed a basic understanding. Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari, however, is a rugged individualist who likes to feel he is creating his own atmosphere. Before leaving for the United States, he declared in an interview with the Delhi correspondent of the *New York Times* that India needed assistance to defend herself against possible attack. Not content with this statement, the Finance Minister let fall some remarks which impressed the American journalist as expressive of distrust of Russia and China. Much of all this was in the nature of a modern application of Chanakya's advice on kingcraft, done with much less finesse than one associates with a designing politician. In today's shrinking world, it is unwise to talk of treating one's present friends as possible future enemies. Panchashila which proclaims the opposite thesis, is more discreet—which is why it has caught on. In the United States itself, Mr. Krishnamachari interpreted the socialist pattern as a harmless concept which did not mean what it was understood to mean in the West.

* * *

THESE diversions may have created difficulties for the Finance Minister and they certainly did not yield immediate results, but they served to make his American visit more congenial. But a more important result has been noticed so far as Delhi is concerned: In the past, the neutrality of the Indian Government has been shaken periodically by the leftist pronouncements of individual ministers. Now, for the first time, the Government of India has been administered a rightist corrective.

For Mr. Krishnamachari's unorthodox interpretations of Indian policy have passed, if not unchallenged, uncondemned by the Congress, and unrepudiated by the Government. It would, of course, be too much to ascribe the recent moderation in official comment on world affairs to the Finance Minister's influence, but both India's subdued voice and the Finance Minister's assertiveness spring from the same cause—our present exchange difficulties.

The public continues still in the dark as to the extent of foreign aid that we might expect to receive, though there is greater optimism than was seen two months ago. But a greater realism is apparent in those who are at the helm of affairs, and there has even been talk of 're-phasing' the Second Five-Year Plan. It is also an improvement on past conditions that we are beginning to worry about American misunderstandings: Mr. Nehru was prompt to repudiate any suggestion that he placed American troops in Japan in the same category as Russian troops in Hungary, and the Government of India's delegation to the International Red Cross did not follow the lead of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur when she walked out over the issue of admitting the delegates of Nationalist China to the Conference.

* * *

IN the years before Independence, this writer was shocked out of his normal placidity by an editorial which roundly charged the British with 'forgery by day and burglary by night.' The shock was the greater because it was a newspaper on which he served as Assistant Editor, and the editorial had been penned by the Editor himself who was also the effective proprietor. It was with the same sense of exposure to indecency that he read Mr. Krishna Menon's wild accusations against Britain in the U. N. exchanges over Kashmir. The issue before him, which was a draft resolution circulated to members, did not warrant such reckless outbursts. Perhaps, the state of his health was an adequate excuse. Nevertheless, it is a matter for serious thought whether India's cause or India's prestige is served by these too frequent explosions. That Mr. Krishna Menon apologised and withdrew his hot words is some consolation. But except to those eccentrics who believe that withdrawn insults are a means of cementing good relations, the incident is extremely distressing. Mr. Menon himself remarked earlier in his speech that much of the anti-Indian attitude of Britain flows out of a personal vendetta against him. Surely in the circumstances the proper course would be

for him to cease representing India at the U.N., and for India the step would be advantageous as well. To persist in retaining Mr. Menon at the U.N., in the teeth of this dual strain on the individual and on the nation, is to be guilty of a perverse sense of loyalty.

* * *

THE Education Bill of the Kerala Government is before the Union President for sanction. Dr. Rajendra Prasad is believed to be considering the implications of the Bill. In brief, the question is whether the President or the Supreme Court will be called upon to mitigate its harsh provisions. The Bill contemplates reducing the power and authority of the managers of private schools and increasing the influence of the Government in educational matters. No one has attempted to introduce such an all comprehensive measure, though others before the Communists in Kerala attempted, and many ministries in other States even today are attempting, to check the same abuses by legislation. Though the claim has been made by the Education Minister that it is meant to give greater security and better amenities to teachers, this does not emerge from the provisions of the Bill which at best can be said to strengthen them in relation to the managers. The Communists have thus their most notable success in dividing the ranks of educationists.

In the political objective of driving a wedge between the Kerala Christians and others in the State, the Communists must be regarded as having failed. Since the days of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, there has been an uneasy relation between the Christians who played a leading part in the Kerala Congress, and the others. Integration and secularism weakened the element which traditionally rallied to the side of the Maharaja and the State. The Roman Catholics, who form the majority of the Kerala Christians, have always been extremely jealous of State incursions in the field of education—not for democratic reasons but because the education of the young belongs in the Roman Catholic scheme of things to the things that are God's rather than to the realm of Caesar. Their present quarrel with the Communists is one which might well occur with any other Government which follows a secular policy.

In the existing conditions, there is sufficient room for educational control without resorting to fresh legislation or organisational reform. Kerala with its high percentage of literacy has a network of schools, sixty-five per cent of which are private

owned. In the Malabar District of what used to be Madras State, the salaries of teachers are paid directly by the Government. In Travancore-Cochin, since 1951, the students' fees are divided in the proportion of four to one, 80 per cent being paid into the Government account in return for the amount of teachers' salaries turned in to the management, and 20 per cent being retained for maintenance by the management. Admission to teachers' training institutes is regulated, the Government controlling admission to the greater number of seats. Even the malpractice of getting teachers to sign for larger amounts than they receive—not by any means peculiar to Kerala—can be checked if the existing law is rigorously applied.

If, despite all this, education in Kerala has become an industry rather than a public service, the remedy is not more legislation but more character. Nobody suggests that the teachers should be cheated of their reward. But to think that by reducing the power of the management the cause of education will be served is to indulge in an illusion. Considerable interest has been taken in the fact that the Education Minister was dismissed from a teaching post in a Catholic College. Personalities ought not to count in deciding matters of principle. Yet it is more significant that for some 25 years Mr. Joseph Mundasseri was a professor in a Catholic College and a consenting part of the system which he is now seeking to overthrow, than that he was dismissed from the college after 25 years. But it is a sign of our distorted values that this point has not been even raised in the entire controversy.

* * *

THE entire question of the relations between an editor and the management of a newspaper has been brought to the forefront by the decision of the management of the *Times of India* not to renew the contract of Mr. Frank Moraes, its editor. What has been made public of the controversy does not throw much light on the subject. But, as a general rule, it may be stated that the Editor must be left unfettered in the exercise of his duties. From other cases that have not been as widely publicised, it emerges that managements have little thought of the good of their newspapers when they appoint an editor, and even less when they retain him. He who pays the piper has the right to call the tune, is a deceptive thesis in matters concerning public affairs. For the paymaster here very often has no conception of what music is. Only one who has been through the mill him-

self can have any idea of the strain of building the editorial team while at the same time humouring the management. Questions of principle come very little into the picture; petty details overshadow all other matters and they bear more heavily on the editor, generally an educated and sensitive individual, than on the management which is more accustomed to deal with toughs or be dealt with by unionised workers. An understanding between the two which rules out personal exploitation of the newspaper, would make for better relations. This should cover both publicity-seekers and personal friends of the editor and the manager who bring pressure on one or the other to publish what is not of public interest or to suppress what is newsworthy.

The President of the All India Newspaper Editors Conference in his address to the Conference called for recognition of the editor's special position. I am in full sympathy with this note. But I am afraid it comes too late. The 'working journalist', now fully unionised and casting covetous eyes on the benefits of the pressmen below, does not as a rule want the editor any more than the management wants him. Since the law requires that some name should appear in the imprint as editor, names are put forward to meet the occasion. To a large extent, editors themselves are responsible for this condition, but it does not help things just to say so. What seems an inevitable development in the future is for the editor to ally himself wholly with the editorial staff, and, with them and through them, with the press workers, and to seek the security of an entrenched position. It will not be pleasant for newspaper managements, many of whom today revel in a divided newspaper office; but that they are asking for it cannot be denied. The growing tendency to replace editors by managing editors, i.e., men who being closely connected with the management, assume over-all charge of the editorial department, is pressure from the other end. Either development certainly will mean an abandonment of the editor's special responsibility.

With the airy nonchalance which men attain in reflecting on other men's troubles, the Prime Minister and the Home Minister have advised the press to recapture the missionary spirit, to think of the good of the institution and to instil in the smallest worker a sense of participation in a great public service. I would ask these distinguished persons to go through the existing newspapers rather more seriously than with the cursory attention the average householder pays to his daily newspaper, and to visit an average newspaper office. If after this they cannot see why the press has lost its savour

then let them stay away from professional conferences of the press. The newspaper today is owned by individuals who are businessmen. Naturally, editors tend to become business executives with rather less power than business executives in purely commercial houses. Being better paid than other journalists, editors are very often cut off from their staff and somewhat disposed to subordinate questions of principle to considerations of standards of living.

Editorships are few, editorships of leading newspapers are even fewer. An Editor who asserts himself and maintains a high ideal of his profession is shunned by the management of all newspapers as a difficult man to deal with. He is disliked by his staff as an exacting chief who looks for more than a day's work for a day's wage. He is intrigued against by the politician who, while he may like freedom of the press in the abstract, is much too practical to value it against his own future which he readily equates with the nation's interest. For the journalist, the newspaper is his bread-and-butter; for the politician, it is the means to an end, which he hopes he can use; to the management, it is a commodity which it offers for sale; for the reading public, it is a source of information. It is only to the Editor that the newspaper appears as a public service, and, let us frankly admit it, only to a rapidly diminishing number of Editors. The pressures and conflicts on this solitary spot are far too great to be long withstood. I am glad that the All India Newspaper Editors Conference is turning its mind to this serious threat to the editor.

* * *

IF we are to judge from the reports of the Asian women's seminar which met towards the end of October in Bangkok, women are beginning increasingly to feel tied down by household duties from giving of their best to public affairs. The assumption of a contradiction between the home and the world reveals an undeveloped mind, and we are not surprised that the proceedings of the seminar should have afforded Indian newspapers an opportunity to expound the beauties and duties of women's place in the home. No seminar or public agitation can bring a satisfactory solution to a problem which is personal and individual. A woman who cannot persuade her own household of the usefulness of her public activities, is not likely to do much outside the home. And, speaking for our own country and as a mere male, I should say that we have enough bunglers and meddlers

in public affairs not to want to add to their number. That, however, is beside the point. Household drudgery, like all other drudgery, is inevitable and can at best be reduced to a minimum. The trouble in Asia seems to be not that women are confined to the home so much as that it is generally assumed that men have nothing to do with it. The Asian women's seminar would have been on far sounder ground had it called upon men to take their share of home-making rather than appealed for lessening household duties to enable women to play their proper part in public affairs. But apparently this is too revolutionary a step for Asian women today; or perhaps they fear that greater participation in the home will introduce in the sanctuary the same confusion that prevails outside it.

* * *

A statement sponsored by leading publicists in the South has sought to set aside Hindi in favour of maintaining a good grasp of the English language. Since official policies are a compromise of opposing views, this has its value. It has already had some success in moderating the tone of Hindi enthusiasts who are preparing for a more gradual substitution of Hindi for English than they were clamouring for some months back. When it is remembered that the decision for Hindi was a unanimous one in the Constituent Assembly, the conflicts that have risen in the past seven years over the language question are far from reassuring. What is at fault here is not the Government's policy so much as the methods of implementing it which have been followed. A great deal of preparation, it was recognised, was necessary before Hindi could be made India's real official language. But, if the change over was to be effected in fifteen years, more silent work should have been expended on the job instead of attempting to force the pace and bring Hindi in earlier. The getting rid of English became a prior consideration with States governments and the spread of the use of Hindi was expected to follow. The result was regionalism at its worst, and we are still not out of the woods. The prevailing opinion at the moment seems to be to postpone adoption of Hindi till 1970—i.e., an admission that five years have been wasted. But a mere postponement without a positive policy can only end in eventual abandonment. Nor will the teaching of English be done at a high level while this form of postponement continues.

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OUR LEGATIONS

Two Recent Comments

A. Hariharan, acting editor of BHARAT JYOTI, Bombay, wrote in the issue of October 27, 1957:

I was shocked by the calibre of the men and women who manage our public relations in cities like New York and Washington. They do not have either the intellectual standard or the pioneering spirit which are needed to sell ideas in this competitive world. Many of them are back-woodsmen who are interested only in buying a new Chev and getting it across to India by the time they retire; others are interested only in wangling out an education for their sons and daughters in some U.S. university and, strangely, some are concerned with matrimonial possibilities for their children, now studying in United States schools and colleges, with American eligibles.

And very few among the staff that we maintain in the States can speak intelligible English. Some of our top officials in Washington can hardly express themselves even when they are in the company of their own countrymen. When they make an official appearance at some gathering they read out, in a sing-song manner, a prepared text; and it is the privilege of the diplomat that he can not only violate traffic rules but also avoid the inconvenience of having to answer questions.

Mr. Daniel Bell, associate editor of FORTUNE, wrote in THE NEW LEADER (U.S.A.) of September 23, 1957:

In Paris where I sought a visa for India, I received a first surprise. The consul at the Embassy, a small, thin man with an abstracted air, looked briefly at my passport and said: 'I am sorry, I'll have to get permission from my government at Delhi—it says on your passport that you are a writer.'

'Since when do you discriminate against writers?', I asked. 'We don't discriminate,' he stammered, 'but—but we've had trouble with writers in India.'

'If I were a businessman or an engineer, would I require such permission?' I asked. 'No', he replied slowly, and then, suddenly: 'Look here, if you give me your promise not to write, I'll give you a visa.'

'That's a strange request, and I can't give any such promise,' I replied.

After several days of waiting, I received a short-stay transit visa through India. In Calcutta, later, I recounted the incident to an Indian friend, 'Everyone knows,' I said, 'how difficult the United States is about visas, how cumbersome and even humiliating some of the procedures are, and we deplore it, but India is such a moral country.'

'India,' he replied reflectively, 'is becoming a great power.'

book reviews

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PARLIAMENT IN INDIA by W. H. Morris-Jones (Longmans, Rs. 25/-)

ONE of the most impressive achievements of India is the manner in which its Parliamentary Constitution has functioned. The political unity amidst cultural diversity, the co-existence of corrupt practices and 'ethical' political theories, the secular State where caste feelings and regionalism lie submerged like icebergs, the ambivalent attitude of virulent criticism and adulation of authority, the necessity of a fast tempo in development, are all formidable difficulties against Parliamentary democracy in our country. Yet voices like those of Brajeshwar Prasad, who sweepingly declared in the Constituent Assembly, 'I am opposed to Federalism, Provincial Autonomy, Parliamentarism, Adult Franchise and Fundamental Rights', are solitary. Even the Communists pay lip service to Parliamentary democracy and are em-

barrassed about Lenin's doctrine of Permanent Revolution.

In this very able study, Professor Morris-Jones discusses the role of Parliament in India. The introductory essay on the nature of Indian Politics shows a deep and sympathetic insight into the bewildering complexity of Indian politics. The Evolution of Parliament is traced from the debating 'Councils', deferentially agreeing with the Governors-General. There are informative and detailed chapters on Parliamentary parties, procedure and privilege of the House and the officers and the Committees of the Houses. The author who was a Constitutional Advisor on the staff of Lord Mountbatten and who paid a recent visit to India shows great familiarity with the sources, scenes and course of events in India. His book contains excellent material on diverse subjects like the behaviour and attitude of M.P.s or the

Speakership of Mr. Patel and Mr. Mavlan-
kar. There is even an intelligible account
of the recurrent crises in Kerala, Andhra
and Pepsu.

Parliamentary institutions in India have
largely followed the experience of their
model at Westminster. But they have adop-
ted several continental features and intro-
duced innovations like the Committee on
Government Assurances which scrutinises
the undertakings of Ministers readily given
on the floor of the House. According to the
author the three outstanding institutional
problems are the need for an improved bill
procedure, the desirability of a distinct role
for the Council of States and a better
method of control over Public Corpora-
tions. But the graver weaknesses of Parlia-
ment are in the political field. It is true that
the electorate 'did not betray the act of
faith of its leaders' in spite of the mis-
givings of several critics. But the pattern
that has emerged at the Centre and the
States is not that of a Government con-
fronted by a strong and homogeneous op-
position which can provide an alternative.
The absence of established and constitu-
tional opposition and of a balance of parties
are weaknesses of our Parliamentary sys-
tem. It is unfortunate that the strength
of the Congress as compared to the other
parties is not only the strength of numbers.
It is also the strength of relative unity com-
pared to heterogeneous opposition. It is also
the strength, as the compilation regarding
the M.P.s in this book shows, of experience
against theory. This often tends to make
the Opposition irresponsible and uncon-
structive and the Government unresponsive
and supercilious.

The other weaknesses of our infant de-
mocracy add to the difficulties of Parlia-
ment. The disintegrative forces, dynastic,
communal and religious, have been check-
ed. But linguism and sub-nationalism,
'whether a crude hunger for office and
opportunity or idealised longing for libe-

ration', are a constant strain on our recent
nationalism. Another danger acutely obser-
ved by Dr. Ambedkar is that of hero-wor-
ship. 'For in India, Bhakti, or what may be
called the Path of Devotion or Hero-wor-
ship, plays a part in politics unequal in
magnitude to the part it plays in the poli-
tics of any other country in the world'.
Whether Parliamentary democracy render-
ed possible by our Constitution is fully
realised and maintained or not would
depend on the permeation of what Grote
called 'Constitutional Morality', and on the
emergence of social democracy.

The author takes the view that though
the traditions of parliamentary democracy
are not indigenous to India they have be-
come 'a part of national character and na-
tional needs', since they are shared by many
who operate the political institutions in
India. But the acceptance of Parliament is
not enough. Far larger questions arise. Do
we share the 'Traditions of Civility' (the
phrase is Coventry Patmore's) that were
won by the Atlantic Community after cen-
turies of struggle? Can such traditions be
transplanted and grafted on Indian soil?
Will such traditions thrive in a world hos-
tile to liberalism? It is important to ponder
over these questions. Parliamentary demo-
cracy, like liberty, cannot be taken for gran-
ted. Eternal vigilance is the price we have
to pay for it. Sir Henry Maine wrote as early
as in 1886 that his study of history did not
bear out the assumption that a popular
government had an indefinitely long time
before it. 'Experience rather tends to show
that it is characterised by great fragility
and that since its appearance all forms of
Government have become more insecure
than they were before.'

In terms of our politics, questions about
responsibility can be asked of all the three
major political parties. Will the Congress
impose upon itself the unpleasant task of
acting like a Parliamentary democratic
majority responsible to other parties in

Parliament? Will the P.S.P. grow into a responsible opposition that can be regarded as an alternative to Government? Will the Communists accept the fact that their apocalyptic vision can be achieved within the framework of our Constitution? And will the rising curve of public expectation be fulfilled to give democracy a chance in India?

The last chapter of this book examines the achievement of our Parliament on the four tests of control of the Executive, a channel of ventilation of grievances, a forum of public policy and a legislative body. The author, after his critical analysis, echoes the words of the *Manchester Guardian*: 'Pericles said that Athens was the School of Hellas. Mr. Nehru without boasting may say that Delhi is the School of Asia.' These are proud words. But the concluding sentences of the book are borne out by what has preceded them: 'In any event the story here told is unmistakably a story of success. As such, it is less exciting than the story of crisis and failure. But then, in politics if nowhere else, excitement is not a virtue.'

ASHOK DESAI

AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS by P. C. Chatterji (Kitab Mahal, Rs. 3-13.)

THE title of this book is misleading. 'Philosophical Analysis' is the name of a particular brand of modern philosophy, whereas our author deals with a number of well-known philosophical problems as they have been tackled by philosophers from Plato to Wittgenstein. He does say that 'too many students to-day seem to imagine that philosophical analysis began in the twentieth century', whereas 'analysis is as old as philosophy itself', but he nowhere tries to work out this idea in detail.

Let me mention the merits of the book. It is refreshing to find an Indian author

who deals philosophically with genuinely philosophical problems. He does not construct what he calls a 'mythological world picture', and there is none of the 'supra-rational' and the 'logic of the infinite' and other devices, for avoiding an argument, which are so generously dished out by Indian 'philosophers'. Mr. Chatterji can boast of a good straight-forward style and lucidity of expression, which are well displayed in the chapters on Perception and in the section on Pragmatism. He has also read a good deal, and digested much of it, and on the whole his judgment is sound.

The author claims to have written for 'the Indian undergraduate' and 'others in the initial throes of philosophical study'. Certainly he says nothing of value for the professional philosopher. He has no original theory. Neither does he explain obscurities and difficulties in past philosophers, nor does he reassess old theories in the light of modern developments, nor does he reinterpret or reconcile different theories. He admits that his 'conclusions are few and are mainly in the nature of tentative suggestions' (though he goes too far in saying that this is 'the very essence of the philosophic spirit!'). It is all an old tale retold in no new way.

But it is doubtful if any undergraduate (Indian or otherwise) will derive any benefit from the book. This is because of the unsatisfactory method the author employs. He wants to 'see clearly what the problems are', but in this he has not succeeded. He says that he has merely 'dipped into the history of western philosophy' and that 'references to the views of past thinkers are not intended to be exhaustive', but, in fact, he is too often content merely to give sketchy reviews of past philosophies instead of facing the problems squarely and developing them systematically. In Chapter V, for example, we start with Descartes, just look in on Spinoza, and switch over to Leibnitz; we then glance at Locke and

Hume, and, with a skip and a jump, we proceed to Kant; we end up with a peep at Russell and Wittgenstein.

We may agree that the references are far from 'exhaustive', but they are nevertheless quite exhausting, and the beginner is sure to be left gaping at this avalanche of conflicting views without a clue as to where a solution may be hoped for. The author suspects that the students would be reduced to some such condition, for he says, 'But we must not be disappointed at this lack of definite results. As Whitehead eloquently points out: "Philosophy begins in wonder. And at the end... the wonder remains"'. But philosophic wonder is one thing, bewilderment quite another!

Summaries are never of much value; in philosophy they are fatal. In a sustained argument where all the links hang together, the missing of a link may mean the misunderstanding of the entire argument. Mr. Chatterji dismisses Spinoza's contribution to the problem of knowledge in eight lines (p. 50), he ends the reference to Leibnitz's doctrine of subject-predicate propositions with: 'While we believe that Leibnitz's doctrine can be shown to be false, the question is not directly relevant to our problem and we must therefore restrain ourselves from getting involved in it', and the Berkeleyan doctrine, he says, is 'admirably summed up' in two limericks! In contrast, the long quotation from Berkeley (pp. 22-26), acquainting the beginner with a philosopher's complete chain of arguments, is an excellent idea, and could have been used elsewhere with profit.

The reader continuously finds that chapters end suddenly and abruptly, and the threads are hardly ever gathered together. Not once does the author offer even a 'tentative' solution to a problem. Parading as philosophical detachment, we here have indecision and a non-committal attitude. All that can be gathered about the author's position is that he has a vague dislike for

Idealism and warm feelings towards Realism. He might have his reasons, but he does not disclose them; he prefers to move with the fashion. For instance, after a harangue about Bradley's theory of relations (pp. 94-7), whose relevance to the problem at issue (the correspondence theory) is never explained, the chapter suddenly ends with: 'Correspondence between fact and proposition, then, is possible, and this idealist objection is seen to be without foundation.'

Again, on page 39 he writes, 'Thus a theory on which there cannot be perceptual error... must be rejected as false. It must be confessed that realists have not succeeded in finding a satisfactory solution to the problem.' One expects him therefore to reject realism as false. The expectation is heightened when he writes on page 43, 'A careful reader of this and the preceding chapter can easily see that Russell's theory (realism) is far from satisfactory.' But immediately afterwards the chapter ends with: 'For it is realism alone which can give significance to the activity of knowing...' Such surprises can only create confusion in the minds of beginners.

Unnecessary and difficult digressions now and again make not only the reader but even the writer miss the wood for the trees. The passage on Bradley, referred to above, the theory of descriptions in Chapter X and the unexpected introduction to the doctrine of acquaintance and description, on the last page of Chapter II, are patent examples. Some parts of the book, especially Chapters VI and XII, appear to me far too compressed and technical to penetrate the heads of the best-intentioned of our undergraduates. And glib statements like the following are not calculated to make things easier: 'With the possible exception of Mill, the history of induction is a sorry tale of prejudice and thick-headedness from which there is little we can learn' and 'The problem of truth is essentially a modern

problem. Older philosophers tended to assume that it presented no difficulties.'

While all these characteristics would leave the professional philosopher impatient, unsatisfied and hungry, they are bound to produce in the tyro a sense of bewilderment, uncertainty and an attack of indigestion. The writer seems to be quite an able thinker, but he has not used his abilities to good purpose, and we are left with the doubt: What contribution does a book like this make to philosophical literature?

S. OOKERJEE

THE NATURE OF CONFLICT: Studies in Sociological Aspects of International Tensions (UNESCO)

FOLLOWING its Constitution which says 'Wars begin in the minds of men and it is in the minds of men that defences of peace must be constructed', UNESCO is conducting and collaborating in research in the field of Conflict. The task is one for psychology as well as sociology and the book under review is a collection of four essays on the subject with an introductory chapter detailing the various 'Tension Projects' which have been carried out under the auspices of UNESCO.

The tension studies have a very practical aim—to eliminate conflicts. Conflicts exist everywhere, in the minds of men, in inter-group relations, among nations; and before they can be eliminated it is necessary to find their causes and the conditions in which they arise. Existing and potential conflicts have to be examined and analysed at all levels and with an objectivity which alone would permit the findings of research to be made the basis of practical policy. This aim, in a way, determines the area of research and the method to be adopted. The results achieved, however, point to the aspirations of sociology. The theory of tensions or conflicts and the technique of resolving them are still largely speculative.

Three of the four essays included in the book are analyses of studies already made on the various aspects of Conflicts. Mrs. Jessie Bernard in *The Sociological Study of Conflict* surveys the researches of social psychological and sociological schools of conflict. She is very critical of the first and she is sceptical about the utility of the other approach in eliminating conflict. On the other hand she suggests that the theory of pay-off implicit in the sociological approach may give a better insight in any possible conflict and the only possible deterrent would be the conviction of a person, a group or a nation that conflict is not the best bet in a given situation. Mr. Pear in the second essay, after giving some idea of the directions of psychological studies of conflict, deprecates the tendency to consider war intrinsically more interesting than peace. The central problem is discussed in a much more outspoken manner by Mr. Raymond Aron in *Conflict and War* from the viewpoint of historical sociology, but his conclusion is not very heartening. 'It is easier to take effective steps against the war of yesterday than against that of tomorrow.... I fear that the conversion which communities would have to undergo if they were never again to resort to organised violence is hardly regarded by science as imminent or indeed, in the long run, as likely'. After this Mr. Robert Angell's *Discovering Paths To Peace*, although much more hopeful, appears naive. His sociological view of peace, based on building 'an inclusive social system' bound by 'some value consensus in the field of international morality' and the cultivation of a group of leaders devoted to the objective, begs many more questions than it answers. Lastly there is a bibliography running into 86 pages and covering 1,160 items just in case we forget how much is being thought and written to find out why we quarrel and how we can be weaned from mischief.

It would be presumptuous to comment on

a book so obviously loaded with learning. The general impression left, however, is that sociological research is at the cross-roads. While evaluating the results of formal research, the sociologist has to admit that in the final analysis human behaviour, singly or collectively, is subject to far too many imponderables to make any definite formulation possible. Any further advance in the field would involve sociology in substituting its own values in place of the ones it disapproves. But Max Weber's famous exhortation to sociologists is: 'Value judgments, adieu'. Max Weber apart, the next stage in the development of the sociology of conflict would be the adapting of human behaviour, singly and collectively, to the set of values it has created, propagated and approved. People who respect sociology as a science of society would abhor it if it became the art of manipulating our associative urges.

Mid-twentieth century man is being rapidly deprived of his traditional defences against loneliness and insecurity. Loneliness and insecurity, although they cause tension in individuals, do not themselves cause wars. But the fact that wars are declared without reference to the individual, and are justified without relevance to the values he cherishes, accentuates these feelings and makes for a fatal acceptance of the inevitability of wars. A successful sociology of conflict will have to discover empirically valid concepts of good and evil and create a social structure in which, faced with a choice, man will invariably prefer good to evil. That, as Mr. Aron says, is not imminent, and in saying so he proves how right St. Paul was when he said 'Human kind cannot bear too much reality.'

MAHESH DESAI

THE PINK AND THE BROWN by Hugh Atkinson (Gollancz, 12s.6d.)

IN the post-colonial backwash India has fallen a prey to dilettante, go-getter novel-

ists in English. At least three ladies have immolated themselves on the blazing pyre of Mr. John Masters' prose. Mr. Atkinson, more cannily, tries to dazzle one with a few verbal mirror-flashes, a brief technical display in the early pages of his first novel, just to reassure one that, despite appearances, what follows is the real thing.

Verbal sleight-of-hand appears early, on page 10, shuffling the expected subject: 'the bearer knocked with my freshly pressed suit...standing to attention on the hanger.' Variation follows on a taxi-engine that 'slipped and spun and gasped itself out down the long, hot night of the exhaust', and the taxi, itself thematic, 'carommed at a slower pace through the thick evening traffic.' These tricks are prettier conjuring up 'polished glasses with moonlight in their rims' when they are not called upon to evoke a particular scene. When the taxi curves round Marine Drive up to Malabar Hill (page 11), Mr. Atkinson's imagination fails him: 'The Hill looked good at night', 'Chowpatty looked good. Everything... looked good', and where the road begins to climb 'there is a spot that is good to look back from'; no wonder that the narrator, Peter Boyd, begins to 'feel good' by page 24.

It is unfortunate that English could not have been used better to express the particular emotional impact of so familiar a scene. Forster gives the feel of an Indian evening when he writes, 'each of the trees held a premonition of night.' If Mr. Atkinson's imagination were fully engaged with his Indian environment, details would be fully objectified and presented for assimilation by those unacquainted with the locale; in *The Pink and the Brown* this consists mostly of tourist-props and accepted exotisms like the Towers of Silence and their attendant vultures. There is an echo of this disengagement in the pretentious beginnings of chapters two and nine.

When dealing with the European community in Bombay, Mr. Atkinson's critical

"This is how
history should be
written..."

s a y s

ROBERT GRAVES

of

AN
INTRODUCTION
TO THE STUDY
OF
INDIAN HISTORY

by

DAMODAR DHARMANAND KOSAMBI

(Published January 1957)

Rs. 18.75

**POPULAR BOOK DEPOT
BOMBAY — 7**

grasp is much firmer; his insights are valid. The lack of assurance displayed by an Englishman arrived only four days in India is aptly suggested: 'His voice dipped away like a road going downhill.' Success here serves to underline the importance of the relation between an author and the environment he really knows. But in presenting his assessment of people, Mr. Atkinson allows himself to be led away by the parlour-game of behaviour-prediction. It is noticeable in the dialogue and its effect is to reduce the novel's thematic development to a series of self-centred lurches.

Taken at its face value as a novel, *The Pink and the Brown* is an attempt to use material actually observed, if not accurately related to its environment as presented. Although the title suggests at least a probe between racial antitheses—the blurb says the plot revolves primarily round Peter Boyd's love for an Indian girl, Sohini—this never materialises as an activating cross-

current in human relationships. The problem becomes blurred in the narcissism of the narrator's being 'a European who could not be classified into the archetypes by which he lived.' Sohini's love does not emerge more palpably; her problem is solved by the bullet which ricochets into her at the end of the novel, just after her return from a somewhat incredible association with satyagrahis on the Goa frontier.

The racial problem becomes a force only with the hatred of Goswami, a pro-Communist lawyer who is to defend Ahmed, the young Indian assaulted by a European executive. Ahmed and Goswami serve to focus Mr. Atkinson's more objective Indian sympathies, but the image is never clear enough and even Boyd's love affair exists in a convenient social void. None of the family pressures so typical of Indian life are permitted to affect Sohini's thoughts and actions.

Mr. Atkinson succeeds only in transmitting his own feelings of inadequacy. Peter Boyd remains at the end where he started, despite Sohini's death, at a remove from reality, like the author's comments, themselves at a remove from the novel. This structural detachment engenders an inadequate result, at most a mobile strung together from elements of freedom-struggle-Gandhism that one finds propagandized abroad.

FOY NISSEN

UTTARARAMACARITAM A Preface by
V. M. Inamdar (Karnatak College, Dharwar)

IN this booklet, extending over one hundred and ten pages, Prof. Inamdar has 'attempted to reinterpret the theme as the poet possibly conceived it, to re-assess the craftsmanship and revalue the significance and appeal.' As a student of English Literature and a lover of Sanskrit his competence easily stands to reason. He is fully

conversant with the principles of Western literary criticism, the ancient Indian Stage and dramaturgy, and moreover he is sympathetic towards Bhavabhuti, which is an essential requisite in the equipment of his critics. The book is divided into three lectures on the main themes of discussion, and they are: i. *Bhavabhuti and the Tragic Theme* ii. *The Workmanship* and iii. *Significance and Appeal*.

Bhavabhuti ranks with Kalidasa as one of the master minds of ancient Sanskrit literature. In delineating pathos he surpasses even Kalidasa and, in saying this, I am in the safe company of ancient as well as modern critics and interpreters of Bhavabhuti. Lakshmana's remark *Esa te Kavyarthah* (Kane's Edition, P. 152) gives a clue, according to the dramatist, to his creative re-interpretation of the theme or problem as he wanted to present it in this drama. Prof. Inamdar rightly notes and examines critically the views of Dr. Belyalkar, Dasgupta and De and Principal Karmarkar, and his considered opinion on this point is: 'neither the psychology of reconciliation nor the idealisation of love can be described as the central theme.'

The title of the play gives a clue to the theme. Rama is the central figure and his *caritam* which is *lokottara* is the theme of the play. Sita's abandonment and Rama's consequent sorrow are equally important in the play. Bhavabhuti's Rama clearly states, '*Sneham dayami ca sankhyami ca yadi va janakimapi Aradhanaya lokanam muncato nasti me vyatha*.' So Bhavabhuti's accredited theme, if we follow the development of the dramatic action and delineation of characters, seems to be the conflict between *dharma*, duty, and *kama*, love, two of the four *purusarthas*. Rama is an embodiment of *Lokottara ctas*, knitting together the two irreconcilables, viz. *Kathoratva* and *mrudutva*, and lives this ideal. Herein

comes the tragic element where Bhavabhuti's boldness and revolt is obvious.

Dr. Bhat has rightly emphasised the tragic element in the drama, but as regards the central theme he follows Dr. De and elucidates himself with these words: 'Bhavabhuti's dramatic problem, his central theme, was to present *uttararamacarita* as a play of perfect reconciliation. The integration of all the events in the play can be satisfactorily explained on this basis, and the causal law that operates behind the purpose of every act can be understood in the light of this central theme'. (Intro. p. 22). It is the character of Rama and the circumstances in which he was placed that culminated in a tragedy. However, the happy reunion of Rama and Sita, brought about by Bhavabhuti against Valmiki's sanction, was a natural and inevitable culmination of the heavy trials and tribulations the dutiful Rama and devoted Janaki had to undergo throughout their lives. Bhavabhuti's happy reunion was not only poetic justice but the inexorable law of Karma: *Sukham hi duhkhanyanubhuya sobhate* or *cakrarapanaktiriva gacchati bhagyapanaktih*.

Bhavabhuti's workmanship is thorough and exquisite, and leaves very little to be desired. Prof. Inamdar has analysed and appreciated every Act with keen insight and critical acumen. His able and convincing defence of the third act will serve as an illustration in point. Those, therefore, who can declare that 'what seems to be lacking in dramatic movement is more than made up by the richness and fidelity of its psychology' have only to visualise all that passes on the stage to discover that the scene is not 'lacking in dramatic movement' (p.59). The argument that Sita refers to Rama as *rajan* and not as *aryaputra* is examined and negated with simple arithmetic, because she refers to Rama as *aryaputra* in thirty-eight places and only twice as *rajan*. In the two places where she refers to her Lord as *rajan* there is no trace

of apathy or resentment but of her appreciation of his unperturbed performance of kingly duties. The dramatic purpose of the *garbhanataka* is very ably brought out. The people who compelled the dutiful Rama to desert Sita must be convinced of her purity beyond doubt. Prthvi and Bhagirathi vouch for her purity and reveal her sorrow and discuss both sides of Rama's action in order to enlighten and convince the sceptical. So the play within the play is an integral part of the play as conceived by Bhavabhuti. Moreover, this *Garbhanataka* bridges the gulf of twelve years' interval between the first Act and the second for the two audiences; the one on the stage and the other off the stage.

To Rama, Duty was greater than Love. In upholding the first, he subordinated the other. Rama, who cast off his wife without the least vacillation, was the man who wept bitterly, enlisting our sympathies. He had either to be an ideal King and forsake his wife or be a bad King and keep her. He sacrificed his individual happiness on the altar of public duty. Prof. Inamdar's book is a laudable attempt to give Bhavabhuti his long overdue credit as a successful dramatist and poet. This 'adventure in criticism' presents a sound, many-sided and thought-provoking study of *Uttararamacarita*, making a valuable addition both to a student's and a scholar's book-shelf.

R. N. GADRE

Shorter reviews

TOWARDS A SOCIALIST COOPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH by U. N. Dhebar (Indian National Congress, Rs. 0.25.)

THAT 'we are all socialists now' in India has some disturbing features. This ready acceptance of a new faith is perhaps the fastest mass conversion since an enterprising padre in Shanghai used a hosepipe to baptise his flock. But the acceptance of socialism along the whole spectrum of Indian politics has tended to substitute slogans for clear thinking. Sometimes one feels that instead of connoting a vision of new civilisation 'socialism' has become a vacuous term as used

by some of our politicians. I am afraid that the party in power is particularly culpable in advocating socialism without making clear to the citizens or itself the presuppositions and the goals of its version of socialism.

That is why this pamphlet by the President of the Congress is particularly opportune. 'A Socialist Cooperative Commonwealth' is the hybrid name for Congress Socialism. After reiterating the need for a drastic change, amounting to a complete reconstitution of our society, the author examines the *laissez-faire* and the communist approaches to development which regard man as *homo economics* and rejects them as unsuitable to the Indian ethos and conditions. He gives a closely reasoned argument of Sarvodaya and co-operation as the proper road to an egalitarian society.

The author raises numerous interesting issues which cannot be adequately dealt with in the modest limitations of a pamphlet. It is necessary that it should be followed up by a series expounding these concepts and relating them to actual Indian experience. Until then the suspicion would remain that the Congress way to socialism is more akin to the Government jumping hurdles as problems arise, with eyes closed and the pious hope that the jump is in the right direction. That is hardly the way to approach socialism, which the author envisages as the creation of a just society which provides for equality of opportunity and the chance for the development of the personality of man.

A.H.D.

PLUTONIA by V. A. Obruchev (Lawrence & Wishart, 15s.)

IN the closed shop of Soviet book-writing, success is the prerogative of the ideologically orthodox. To establish his orthodoxy, Mr. Obruchev would tell the teenaged reader of *Plutonia* that, while it may not have been Alexander Graham Bellovitch who invented the telephone, in the field of Arctic exploration, it was the Russians—barring the odd 'American pirate'—who did all the pioneering. But admittedly all this must be weighed against Mr. Obruchev's main and unexceptionable motive: that of interesting a teenager in paleontology—the study of extinct organic life.

Were the said teenager to press on with the book, he would find *unfolding* before him some unusual science fiction—unusual because its science is remarkably non-fictional. However, we must reckon with the unfortunate possibility that our youngster will not read past the first few pages, what with their predictable episodes, pedestrianly phrased and poorly illustrated.

Thus it is that our youngster lays *Plutonia* down unread, providing us thereby with a moral which is not untimely, considering that proposals for state-sponsored publishing are at present being aired in our own country. The lesson gained is that, given a state monopoly, there is ample and unfortunate scope for promoting works which would suffer rapid extinction under the natural selection which ruled the paleontological world and is still decisive in most of the publishing business.

PRATAP CHATTERJEE

HUNGARY IN REVOLT by Ajit Pyne and Bijay Bhattacharayya (Current Book House, Re. 1/-)

IN a recent lecture in Bombay, Paul Tabori regretted that today even 'truth needs an identity card'. Totalitarian states and parties adopt the tactics of *Mein Kampf*—to sling enough mud and raise enough dust to confuse even clear issues. The vacillations of our government and its treatment of the Russian repression in Hungary as 'a quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing' (words of Chamberlain on the eve of the Munich Settlement) shows some success of these tactics. In such circumstances this international symposium of articles from various authors, mostly Marxists, sheds useful light on the events in Hungary.

The Marxist contributors agree that the revolt against the Government in Hungary was spontaneous, widespread and popular, and that the Russian intervention was imperial and ruthless. Sartre says that the greatest tragedy was that the armoured attack on Budapest was rendered possible by twelve years of crime and foolishness and the semi-colonial status of Hungary. The behaviour of Russia, our joint signatory to Panchshila, has been in the nature of a traumatic shock to some Marxists. But when old-guard Marxists like Heinrich Brandler or optimist Marxists like Issac Duetscher blame Gero-Rakosi-Stalinism for the degeneration of Hungary after it became a 'people's demo-

cracy, they do not seem to realise that they are joining 'an inverted cult' of personality where all the faults of a system can be attributed to persons.

The contribution of Edvard Kardelj is an incisive Marxist analysis. While one may reject some of its conclusions which sometimes seem to be drawn to justify the Yugoslav approach to Marxism and Tito's hesitant stand on Hungary, it starts with the correct diagnosis that something must be wrong with a system when its most favoured classes—the workmen of Csespel, the students, the intelligentsia, the soldiers—die bearing arms against it. By implication Kardelj also admits that dialectics fail to explain the Hungarian events. Perhaps it is too much to expect any Marxist to transcend his narrow vision of history beyond this.

A.H.D.

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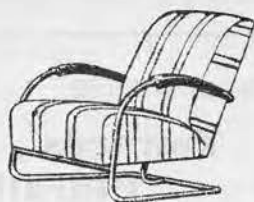
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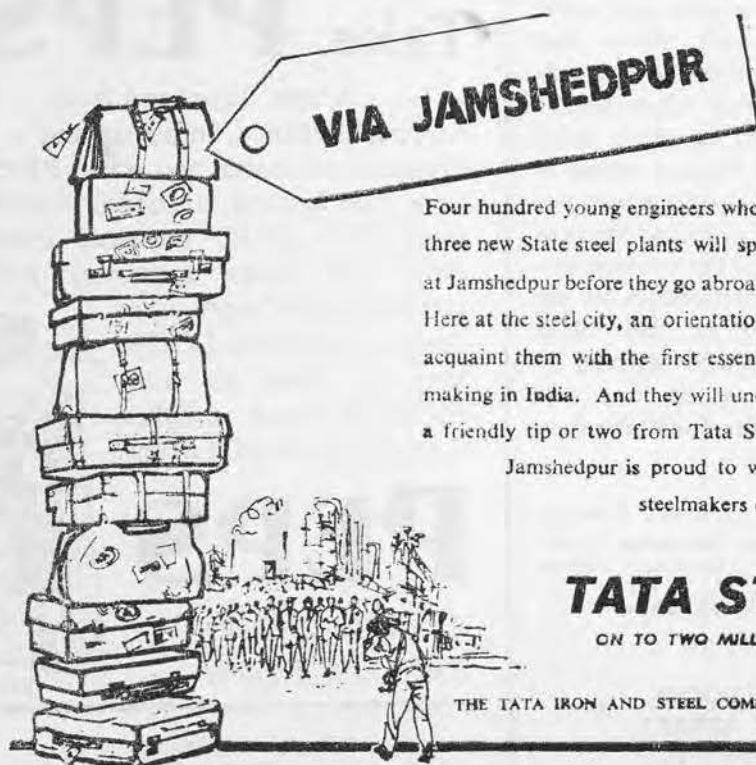
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CONTEMPORARY TAMIL LITERATURE — Continued from page 46

literature is the best literature, South Indian music the best music, and Tamil the sweetest language in all the world: with such an attitude you can't be seriously interested in other literatures or receptive to any influences. Two very commonly used expressions to-day are 'Tamil Panbu' (meaning Tamil Culture, in the sense of a way of life) and 'Tamil Kalacharam' (also meaning Tamil Culture but in the sense of 'artistic heritage'); these are not intellectual concepts but magical formulas, which throw people into ecstatic transports which are inimical to the exercise of the critical intelligence.

I am not suggesting that Tamil literature should necessarily come under the influence of T. S. Eliot or James Joyce or D. H. Lawrence in order to qualify as 'contemporary'. There are a hundred ways of being contemporary. My point is merely that Tamil literature might have been helped to grow up, had it been influenced to any extent by developments in England, France or America. But it is no use speculating on might-have-beens. Tamil literature, it appears, will have to mature and grow up without external influence. Such a development cannot be brought about by trusts for serious writers or any other institutional solutions. It is not as if there are a number of 'serious' writers waiting for a proper cultural environment. There are few serious writers actually writing, and the 'mute inglorious Milton' theory is always hypothetical and problematic. What Tamil literature requires is a vivifying force. If somehow a novelist or poet of mighty force were to appear, he might with difficulty win a hearing and succeed in having an impact on Tamil literature; new themes, styles and techniques might then begin to appear. But how can such a writer be expected to

appear in this dead tradition? Well: they do, sometimes; and one can but hope.

However, this is a rather dispiriting prospect: obviously we have no control over the emergence of a great writer. And Mr. Subramanyam who is clearly no happier than myself at the plight of Tamil letters today will say that pious hopes do not help. We certainly can't sit idle, contemplating our novels and waiting for a literary *avatar* to appear. Isn't there anything we can do? There is. Writers like Mr. Subramanyam who have already secured a hearing can teach the intelligent reading public to recognise good work when it sees it, so that when at last a good writer appears there will be at least a handful of readers ready to take pains to understand what he is doing. Standards of criticism cannot be established in a day; the education of the taste of even a small body of readers is a long and difficult process. Here writers like Mr. Subramanyam, who is obviously disturbed by the Tamil literary scene, have a useful duty to perform: they can keep alive the critical spirit by practising criticism with rigour, integrity and astringency. Blandness, surely, is the worst blight that can befall the critical intelligence. I do not suggest that every butterfly should be broken on a wheel; there are hordes of writers who can be left alone to boil their pots. But the growth of false reputations should be resisted; pretentious writers like 'Mayavi' should be deflated; false critical values or judgments should be shown up for the fallacies they are; and trash and good work should untiringly be called by their right names. Above all, the critic should remember that he is the keeper of the linguistic conscience: the deterioration of the language can be resisted only by the naming and the dissection of every kind of bad writing.

Such criticism will find tardy acceptance; and discriminations and insights even

when once accepted, will be quickly forgotten. The victory over imprecise feeling and confused thinking will have to be won not once but over and over again; but the effort is essential and will not be fruitless. The deflation of one pretentious writer, the exorcism of one false reputation, the recognition and naming of one disease of language, is a small but definitive gain for sensibility.

Two reactions are likely to this article on the part of its Tamil readers to whom alone it is addressed: anger at hearing eminent names denigrated and unpalatable ideas expounded, and a deep regret that an article which is so unflattering to modern Tamil literature should have been written for *Quest*, an English magazine published in Bombay. The first reaction I shall ignore as irrational; the second response I should like to 'sterilise' (as Eliot would have said) before it occurs. The article appears in *Quest* because it was provoked by Mr. Ka. Naa. Subramanyam's article which appeared in the same magazine, and also because

I can think of no Tamil magazine which would have accepted it. If anyone says that I needn't have chosen a Bombay magazine for airing my views on Tamil literature, as (for all I know) the plight of other Indian literatures might be just as bad, the obvious reply is that such considerations are surely irrelevant. It is regrettable that such explanations should be necessary. Anyone who ventures to question the supremacy of the Tamil language and literature runs the risk of being accused of disloyalty to his native tongue and servility to others: a sinister indication, this, of the prevalent obscurantism and irrationality. That is why my suggestion that Mr. Subramanyam should practise criticism with rigour and lucidity is not a piece of impertinent exhortation, but a necessary and definite plan of action. It might help to build up (though slowly and with many setbacks) a small but growing body of readers who will be intelligent, responsive and exacting; and Tamil literature might be regenerated.

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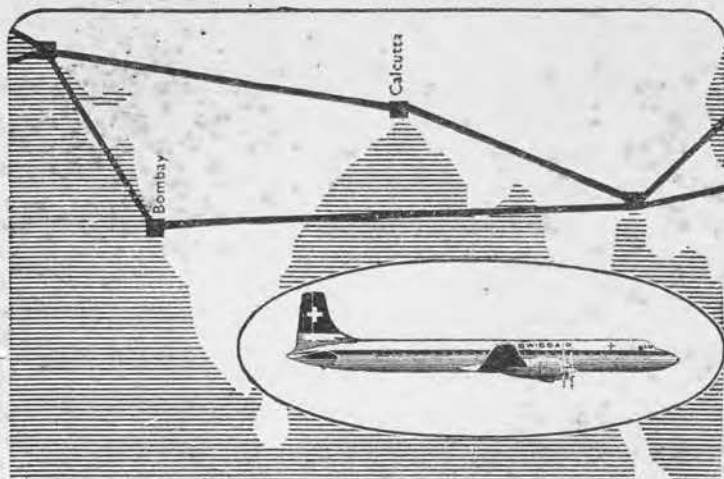
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