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a bi-monthly of arts and ideas

edited by: **NISSIM EZEKIEL**

February - March 58 vol. III no. 4



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An Announcement

Mr. Nissim Ezekiel is relinquishing charge as editor of QUEST from this issue. The Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom is grateful to Mr. Ezekiel for all that he has done for QUEST. It was mainly because of his readiness to shoulder the burden that QUEST was launched, and it is due to his devoted work and care that it has in the short period of three years attained an eminent position. The Committee takes this opportunity to express its high appreciation of the selfless services rendered by Mr. Ezekiel. It is also thankful to all those who collaborated with him and assisted him in his work.

Mr. Abu Sayeed Ayyub and Mr. Amlan Datta will now take charge of QUEST as Joint Editors. Mr. Ayyub is a well-known writer and critic from Bengal. He was for some time Professor of Philosophy at Shantiniketan. Mr. Datta is a well-known economist and is at present a lecturer in Calcutta University.

Under the new arrangement there will be some changes in QUEST. In the first place it will become a Quarterly. The first issue will be published on 1st April. Subsequent issues will be published thereafter on 1st July, 1st October and 1st January. QUEST will become more a journal of inquiry, criticism and constructive thought than of arts and ideas.

The editorial offices of QUEST will be at 5 Pearl Road, Calcutta 17. Correspondence regarding contributions should be addressed to the editorial office. Books for review should also be sent to the same address. The managerial offices will, however, remain in Bombay and Miss Sheela Singh will continue as Business Manager.

The annual subscription will be reduced to Rs. 5/ per year. But the price of a single copy will be raised to Rs. 1.25.

The Committee trusts that all those who have helped QUEST so far will continue to take the same interest in it.

J. B. H. Wadia
V. B. Karnik

Hon. Secretaries, Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom

QUEST

a bi-monthly of arts and ideas

EDITOR: NISSIM EZEKIEL

Feb. - March 58 Vol. III No.

Advisory Editors: NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI
SUDHIN DATTA
D. G. NADKARNI

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PAUL IGNOTUS

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M. R. MASANI

the great challenge

why Western aid to Asia is essential

This is a speech delivered at the International Industrial Development Conference, San Francisco, sponsored by Time-Life International and the Stanford Research Institute. Delegates from sixty-two nations attended.

AN American labour journal not long ago made the observation which might provide a good starting point for our discussion this morning. We have heard the word 'underdeveloped' so much in the last four days that I almost apologize for this quotation. But it says, 'The most underdeveloped area in the world lies underneath the hats and caps men wear.' I think you will agree it is a profound observation and applies to all parts of the world. Our world has been called 'one world' or 'the shrinking world.' It is a small world in which we live. We can't gossip about one country without being overheard these days. A rash action in one part of the world brings calamity in another. A cold in one continent brings influenza in another. This conference, with hundreds of delegates from 60-odd countries, is a microcosm of this world in which we live...

This is one world because of the forces of production, the means of communication, and the growing oneness of human beings drives it toward a measure of unification hitherto unknown in the world's history. And yet there are barriers that come in the way. It has been well said that

one of these barriers is that we have still got to learn to exercise earth-wide tact and courtesy. An obvious barrier is...national and racial boundaries.

The third barrier is international Communism. Because it is autarchic, because it insists that the world of socialism is distinct and separate from the rest of the world, international Communism is capable of uniting the world at one price: that it must first conquer it. It gives no place for that diversity which is the essence of democracy. I do not think that the leaders of the Kremlin are more reactionary in any other respect than in this: that they are obstructing historic progress.

Having said that, let us also admit that another obstacle is the gulf that divides the more advanced from the less economically advanced peoples of the free world. It is a wide gulf—between the United States, which in 1945 had a per capita production of goods and services of \$2,000 a year; Western Europe, of \$1,000 or a little less; and the underdeveloped areas, producing \$100 per capita a year—a wide gulf between the American worker's average in-

come, \$1,440, and that of the Indonesian, \$27 a year.

Left to itself this gulf unfortunately will not shrink, but widen. But why leave it to itself? To me, the significance of this conference appears to be that we are resolved not to leave this gulf to widen; that we propose to intervene and take steps to rectify this drift... Now the problem is a very big one. The peoples with whom we are concerned in the underdeveloped regions constitute two thirds of the population of the free world. And they live at all stages of the world's history, from the Fifth to the 20th Century. But they do have, despite this diversity in race, religion and culture, and civilization, some things in common: low production, low income and deplorably low living standards. Many of them have never switched on an electric light, never read a book or been visited by a doctor.

On the other hand, Nature has endowed these regions very richly. The Middle East has two thirds of the crude oil deposits of the world. The Belgian Congo alone has 60% of the world's uranium and 90% of its radium. And these regions contribute nearly all the rubber and tin for the world's economy...

The resignation with which the peoples of this area have accepted their lot all these centuries has given way to resentment and dissatisfaction and impatience. The people of these areas are not prepared any longer to play the part of 'The Man with the Hoe,' to be the drawers of water, the hewers of wood for the rest of the world... The peoples of these regions demand that growth be telescoped overnight and a better life obtained for them. This charging of old need with new desire creates an explosive situation.

WHEN some of us get impatient with what we consider the confusions that prevail among the intelligentsia of that part of the world, when you get impatient with

the naivete of those who believe in Communist professions of 'coexistence'... I think it might be worth-while to consider the situation in which a member of the Asian intelligentsia finds himself. He belongs to a country which has been newly freed; foreign rule has ended; but he finds himself faced with tremendous problems. There is a stagnant economy, a rising population, illiterate people with low health and social mobility.

National pride demands that that country catch up with the rest of the world—if not with Britain and the United States, at least with Japan and Italy. But this new intelligentsia is unequipped for this job. The absence of capital, the absence of know-how, the absence of a democratic tradition and of enterprise all come in the way. One is restrained by pride from asking for help although one needs it...

Now in such a situation the tall claims made by those who talk of achievements in the Soviet world are to be heard. In our minds we have what has been called 'the private version of Communism'—a beautiful state of society where each gives according to his capacity and receives according to his need, where the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity are being practiced. And we confuse this beautiful ideal of philosophical Communism with the Soviet reality, which is entirely different, as only some of us know. And that, I think, is why, while international Communism is beginning to crumble at its very heartland, it still advances at the periphery.

In place of the old colonial governments... of Britain, France, Belgium or Holland... one has to look for a new scapegoat. And, justly or unjustly, that position is apt to be occupied by the United States. The United States, the symbol of white supremacy, replaces the old colonial powers and quite unfairly gets most of the antagonism. You do not expect a man in a slum who can see a mansion across the street to love his

neighbour. And getting assistance from the man in the mansion does not help either. Because being obliged does not make one very happy. I do not know how many thousand years ago Confucius asked a man, 'Why do you dislike me? I have never done anything to help you.'

Now, I come to the sphere of government policies. . . . The door to foreign investment is open but it has been well said that there is no one at the door to extend a welcome. There are reasons for the foreign investor to pause and hesitate. Maybe there is too much dependent on the state. There is the bias in favour of heavy industry to the relative neglect of agriculture and consumer goods. There is the 'planner's vocational disease,' if I may call it that, of biting off more than he can chew. Some mistakes are made. But who doesn't make mistakes? After all, democracy has the right to make mistakes and pay the price.

Now the general trend is . . . to get breathless with the race, to force the pace, and maybe sometimes to budget for resources that do not exist. On the other hand, the advocates of these policies argue with a great deal of force that they must satisfy the swiftly burgeoning aspirations of people who have been suddenly released from the Malthusian world and endowed with political power for the first time. . . .

I would like to believe that as the years give greater experience of administration and greater understanding of the laws of economics there would be less dogmatism and greater realism in those parts of the world. I was very encouraged when in June of this year one of the great leaders of Asia, Prime Minister U Nu of Burma, made a very frank and courageous statement of the revision of thinking through which he and his government had been going. I quote from his speech made in Rangoon this June: 'Because of intense enthusiasm to achieve the quickest results in the quickest possible time,' he said, 'we have committed several

blunders. . . . We wanted to get a thing done in one month which normally should take one year. . . . Therefore, out of the new economic project only those projects which seem indispensable will be allowed to proceed. All others will be suspended. . . . In order to step up production in the economic field, the operation of mining and industrial enterprises, except certain key projects, should not be entrusted solely to those who are only interested in getting salaries. They should be entrusted also to those who have profit motives. From practical experience I no longer like to see the government's finger in all sorts of economic pies.' May I remind the Conference that U Nu is the leader of the Burmese Socialist party?

IS it premature to discern similar trends elsewhere? I don't know, but I'd like to feel that this is not to be a unique or unrepresentative example. I think it is the advance guard of a trend that will become discernible in the years to come. Only last July and August I served upon a select committee of our Parliament entrusted with the final drafting of new taxation proposals. I was opposed to them. But I would say that in the course of the proceedings of the select committee, I became aware of the great sense of realism with which our Finance Minister faced the position of foreign investors. He went out of his way to accept amendments designed to facilitate the interest of the foreign investor, even to the extent of discriminating against the Indian investor. And I am glad to say the entire committee supported him in this move. I am right, therefore, in accepting his *bona fides* when he says in the Indian Parliament, as he did a little later, 'Our attitude toward foreign capital today is totally different from what it was in 1948. . . .'

Now as to the problems of investment and aid: There are several of them. I shall refer to two. In the plane from India, a very

long journey, I was reading one of the stories of my old favourite, P. G. Wodehouse. And rather surprisingly I came, in the course of this comedy, to a sentence that was made for this conference. P. G. Wodehouse says, 'Most of the things that are good at first sight prove to have a string attached to them.' Now I believe that there are two kinds of string—the right kind of string and the wrong kind of string. The sound and effective use of funds that are given or credits that are extended, the supervision of their effective use is, I think, the right kind of string....

But there is a wrong kind of string which I would define as being the questioning of the right of a country democratically to decide its own economic structure and its way of life. I think that even if one does not agree with the philosophy of a government, so long as the people of that country support that point of view, there is an obligation to respect the sovereign rights of that people. And I therefore feel that no attempt should be made to export economic philosophy....

The question does arise 'What is the right form of aid?' Is it government-to-government grants or credits, or should it be equity capital? Well, free enterprise has developed into a wonderful system in this country.... It has created a society almost more classless than any that is known in the world. And we honour it for that. But free enterprise in Europe is different and free enterprise in Asia is again something else. In our part of the world it is widely questioned by others besides Socialists and Communists whether free enterprise by itself can effectively deliver the goods or whether it is a complete answer to our problems.... We believe that the lack of capital and know-how and the absence of a democratic tradition and a tradition of enterprise in our countries creates a vacuum that partially needs to be filled by the state.

Now there are certain preconditions to

industrial development, as has been mentioned many times in this conference: roads, railroads, harbours, water supplies, telecommunication, schools, hospitals, and so on. These are suitable for governmental aid and they are suitable for credits from government to government. They will help to create a situation where free enterprise can flourish.... At the end of our second Five Year Plan, for lack of funds there will still be 56 bridges missing on our national highways. So long as these bridges are not constructed, we cannot have through and fast traffic, which we badly need. We want the government of India to find these funds (\$84 million) by 1960-61. We are not very hopeful of getting them. Well, now this seems to me precisely the kind of field where government-to-government grants and loans would be most welcome to free enterprise in India, because it will create the foundation on which the superstructure can be built.

WHEN we come to steel plants and heavy machinery, in my view, we reach a border line. It is a matter of controversy. But I would only say that it should be met in a spirit of tolerance and without the rigid dogmatism which has been called 'Chamber-of-Commerce Marxism.' I personally believe that equity capital is the most fruitful form of investment for many good reasons. For one thing, there are no strings; no political strings. For another, it creates the maximum contact between people. It brings groups of non-officials in direct contact with each other. It brings the managerial skills and the standards that prevail in the more advanced country. It brings more enlightened standards of behaviour to its neighbour....

Now it may appear to some of you that the attitude of the governments in our part of the world toward free enterprise is not a very encouraging one. It savours of that old jingle, 'Thou shalt not kill, but need'st

not strive officiously to keep alive.' I think that is not an inaccurate description of the attitudes of many of our governments toward free enterprise. But I would like to say this: There are differences between the different countries of Asia here. Today Dr. Ebtehaj of Iran very candidly stated the difficulty caused by the absence of an entrepreneurial class in his own country. Well, I would like to say that the position in India is altogether different and has no parallel with that of Iran. We do possess an entrepreneurial class that is well established, which has roots in the country, which has functioned for over half a century, and which in very adverse conditions under British rule made considerable progress and headway.... I would also like to give some more recent data to show how well free enterprise is doing in India in spite of the ... inclement climate to which I have referred. In 1953-54, of a total national income of \$22 billion the share of industry was \$3 billion, or 16%. In the last three years ... there has been new Indian investment... in the order of \$1.7 billion. I think that this will show we have an inherent dynamism in our free enterprise system.

The Indian economy refuses to die even if it is not kept alive. The private sector fulfilled its role and its target set for it in the first Five Year Plan. It has also filled its role and its targets in the first year of the second Five Year Plan, and invested more than the second Five Year Plan expected or encouraged it to do. The index of industrial production in India, if you take 1951 as the base of 100, was 129 in March 1956 and 156 in May 1957.

For the first time a year ago a group of Indian businessmen, the most enlightened among them, came together and decided that it was necessary to stand up for the free way of life and free enterprise as part of it. And they established an organization called the Forum of Free Enterprise.... I think the forum has done a great

deal of educative work to enlighten the Indian people about the values of free enterprise.... The education of public opinion throughout the world about the values of free enterprise should be a joint obligation which you at this end and we at the other should share.

NOW how is Western enterprise, how is Western capital going to react to this challenge? To what extent would it play an active part? Is it desirable that there should be a greater amount of investment? I think we all agree on that. And I would say that there are three reasons why one should favour large-scale foreign investment: The first is that of self-interest. I think that when a country becomes more industrialized it buys more.... I would like to share with you just for a moment a vision some of us entertain of what would happen if the lives of billions of people were transformed; if their wants were increased; if their purchasing power were increased; and it would approximate the standards that prevail in Western Europe today. The British Chancellor of the Exchequer many years ago said that if every Indian wore his *dhoti* an inch longer, the mills of Lancashire would be working three shifts. But there is no doubt that people already are diversifying and multiplying their wants. Even in the Indian villages you find demands for things that were not known ten years ago—for example, bicycles, and one could parallel that in many fields. And I would like you to consider what a tremendous potential market exists there with millions and millions of people who today do not have wants but who, guided, could be made to be aware of those wants.... Here is a great field of opportunity for partnership....

A second reason for investment in a big way is ... national security. The rulers of Russia have recently shifted their attack from the military plane to the plane of economic and scientific manoeuvre, and I think

we must concede that they have recently won a tremendous propaganda or psychological victory through Sputnik. This field of economic and cultural and scientific manoeuvre is a very dangerous and tricky one and calls for a broader concept of national security than some countries possess. I myself believe a situation exists in Asia and Africa like that existing in Europe when the Marshall Plan was devised or when the free world met the military challenge in Korea in 1950. It is with the same spirit and the same unity that this new economic challenge needs to be met today. I would like to think that every American who invests abroad in these regions is perhaps taking out an insurance policy for the welfare of his children.

The third reason, if I may mention it, though I hesitate to do so in a gathering of hardheaded businessmen, is that of altruism. I was very encouraged yesterday when I heard the hardheaded unionist of your country, Mr. George Meany, proudly proclaim that altruism was one of the essential elements in American policy. I believe it is so. I cannot any other way explain the tremendous schemes of international aid that you have undertaken in various parts of the world and I believe that you are conscious of this need to help those whose need is greater than yours. And as John Donne said, 'No man is an island, entire of itself....'

THE question is not whether the transformation in Asia and Africa will occur. The question is whether it will occur with the assistance and cooperation of the rest of the world or whether we shall have to go it alone. I do not deny that there are risks either way, either in investing or not investing. But I would like to think that the dictates of ethics, of national security, and of self-interest all point the same way. And that the risk of action is well worth taking.

An American student of Asian affairs re-

cently wrote, 'We cannot be sure of the outcome even if we strongly help. We can be reasonably and pessimistically sure of the outcome if we do not help....'

I believe the struggle against world communism can only be successful if we of the democracies demonstrate the same dynamism and the same faith and the same passion that the Communist devotes to his misguided ideals. I believe this country—and if I may now address myself in the last moment to those who belong to this country—has a great deal to share with us even apart from material goods. They can share with us the love of freedom; the standing up for one's rights; they can share with us their belief in the equality of status, the fighting back when one's dignity is offended; they can share with us the value of self-help, and not waiting for the government to do everything for one. They can share with us generosity, the risking of one's life for a stranger.

Above all, I would like them to teach us the values of being frontier-minded and not fate-bound. You have a great tradition in this country of expanding the frontier. I have a little boy back home of nine years who drags me to western films, who is half the time reading western stories, and when I go to New York after this conference, high on my list of shopping priorities is a cowboy suit which I must take back.

I appreciate the desire for profits and for guarantees. But I would like to feel that the leadership of free enterprise which American business possesses and claims, rightly, would lie in looking beyond the profits and guarantees. The challenge that the hovels of Asia and Africa present is a very real and immediate one for all of us. I would like to leave you with a question to ponder as to what more daring perspective can face the man of enterprise in the United States today than the challenge that is presented by the newly developing countries.

A Hungarian Dialogue

NOTE: On the day of the trial of Tibor Dery, the official Hungarian press, not insensitive to the protests of the world, tried to justify the policy of imprisoning writers. Below is the text of an article in the Budapest paper "Magyarország". The reply is by Tibor Meray, a young Hungarian writer who also participated in the 1956 revolution and who is now living in Paris.

SOME of the writers who are traitors to the Hungarian people have organised a meeting in London. Who they may be, or how many of them are involved, are matters which remain shrouded in mystery. In their communique, the organizers boast of having received telegrams from Albert Camus and Bertrand Russell in which these Nobel prize-winners call on Hungary to respect "the freedom of writers".

Other tendentious news stories of Western origin declare that, in Hungary, "the Muse is in chains" and "writers are being persecuted".

The truth is that Hungarian writers have never written as much as at present; 201 literary works — novels, poems or scenarios — were published during the first half of 1957. . . .

This being so, there can be no doubt that the progressive intellectuals who, in all good faith, sign petitions calling for freedom for writers know little or nothing about the literary situation in Hungary and live in an atmosphere of falsehood with regard to everything concerning our country. Consequently, these Nobel prize-winners did not know that they were being led astray into the company of renegades.

One year ago, part of Hungarian public opinion was also living in an atmosphere of falsehood. These people believed that the Western imperialist Powers wished to help Hungary, that the Soviet soldiers were the enemies of the Hungarian workers. They failed to realize that an attempt was being made to restore the capitalist system, and did not believe that certain circles wished to place Hungary in opposition to her socialist neighbours. This atmosphere of falsehood was created, above all, by propaganda put out by Western agencies, and it is being maintained abroad by the same poisonous sources.

The writers who emigrated one year ago broke with the people, the literature, and the writers of Hungary. They believe that, in our country, things are still as they were in October, 1956. It is worth while reminding them of the joint declaration made by all the well-known Hungarian writers in protest at the placing of the Hungarian

affair on the agenda of the United Nations meeting. This declaration proves that, among our writers, the atmosphere of falsehood has been totally liquidated. It is still being maintained abroad thanks to the zeal of those who are traitors to their country. Among other things, this most important declaration stipulates that "the action taken by the revolutionary workers' and peasants' government and the appeal made to the Soviet forces have spared our country the ever-increasing danger of a bloody counter-revolution."

It is the renegades who spread the rumour that this declaration was signed under pressure and that the signatories were insincere. Most Hungarian writers are made of different stuff, and no one brought pressure to bear on them.

The accusation that writers' freedom 'is in chains' is a low calumny spread by the renegades. No one, in Hungary, has been restricted in his freedom to write as he pleases, provided he does not wish to glorify the ideas of fascism. Of course, it is true that some writers have been brought to trial, *but not for their literary activities*. Here, for instance, is what Tibor Dery has said about his own activities: 'You made speeches, you spurred them on to revolt', and he continues: 'After each shot had been fired, half-mad, I felt it was I who had pulled the trigger myself. . . .'

'Spurring them on to revolt', 'pulling the trigger'—are these activities the writer's business? Are not our legal authorities acting in the interests of the peace of the Hungarian people when they isolate these 'half-mad' persons, for a time, from those who are in good health?

There can be doubt about the answer, for it is not to be found in words, but in the facts of daily life throughout the year. It was right to put away those who preached revolt, for that was the only way to put out the fires of counter-revolution and end destruction, evil-doing and senseless strikes.

It is not vengeance that has guided our legal authorities and our government, but a wish to re-establish order and peace in the country, in the interests of nine-and-a-half million Hungarians. The interests of socialism make it necessary to

strike at counter-revolutionary political criminals, whatever their position may be. The writer's vocation cannot guarantee immunity to those who spur people to revolt, pull triggers, and incite others to start ill-intentioned strikes. The manoeuvres of the renegades, who try to make out that the liquidation of political crimes which prevent the re-establishment of law and order is a restriction of the writer's freedom, no longer deceive anyone in Hungary. Here, the atmosphere of falsehood has already been dispersed. Abroad, it may still be possible for some time to obtain results by means of such tricks. But there can be no doubt that we shall be able to disperse this atmosphere of falsehood the world over.

MAGYARORSZAG (Budapest)

A REPLY BY TIBOR MERAY

On the very day when the issue of *Magyarország* containing the above article was published in Budapest, a court of law, sitting *in camera*, sentenced Tibor Dery, that master of Hungarian prose, to nine years' imprisonment; Gyula Hay, the playwright, to six years; Zoltan Zelk, the poet, to three years; and Tibor Tardos, the short-story writer, to eighteen months. After that, what purpose is served by arguing with *Magyarország*? Let us admit that, in Hungary, 'the Muse is not in chains', but only Tibor Dery. Let us admit that a veritable creative fever has seized hold of Hungarian writers—with the exception of some thirty authors and journalists rotting in Kadar's goals or deported (to Rumania, as it appears). And is there any point in replying to the accusation levelled at us, the writers in exile, the 'renegades', accused as we are of providing copy for the well-intentioned but misinformed writers of the West?

If it were only so! For months, we, the renegades, have not ceased to repeat with a constancy that may, no doubt, have become boring: 'Dery and his friends are in danger—try to save them!' On the other hand, the French Communist weekly, *Les Lettres Françaises*, of 17 October last, devoted part of its editorial to a contribution from a Hungarian writer who is not in exile, and therefore not a renegade—Michel Andre Renai. He wrote: 'I hope I shall be believed when I say that... Tibor Dery will not be judged without this trial coming as a warning to us, for the times in which certain procedures were possible will never return...'

If only *Les Lettres Françaises* had been right, as against our 'low calumnies!' It would be far easier for us to stand the shame of having lied than the

sad prestige of having told the truth. If only the times in which 'certain procedures' were possible had really passed!

But, they tell us, Dery was not put in prison for his literary activities. In order to uphold this allegation, they arbitrarily tear from their context two sentences of the famous article that Tibor Dery published in the insurrectional issue of *Irodalmi Ujsag*—(The Literary Gazette) and which, although it hails the revolution, is a *warning against arbitrary procedures and mob action!* The reader may have noticed that the sentences quoted are clearly falsified: Dery, who was dreadfully tormented by the drama of the revolt, had the *impression*, as each shot was fired, that it was he who had pulled the trigger—and he is immediately accused of having really done so. And all this leads to the terrifying conclusion: 'the writer's vocation cannot guarantee immunity to those who spur people on to revolt, pull the triggers, and incite others to pursue ill-intentioned strikes.'

It must not be forgotten that this statement appeared in a *communist* newspaper. Such are the heights which Marxist-Leninism has now attained! If Tibor Dery deserves nine years in prison, Sandor Petoefi, the greatest of Hungarian poets—all of whose political poems were nothing but an 'incitement to revolt'—would have received, from the present regime, at least 99 years' imprisonment. What would have happened to Byron, who did not hesitate to take up arms—to Schiller, the rebel—to Heine, the agitator—to Rousseau, and Voltaire, whose responsibility is clearly established in the words of Gavroche's song—to Gorki, who defends the right to strike in *The Mother*? Not to mention writers still living! How lucky it is for all these critics of established authority that they are not forced to live in the Budapest of today! Otherwise they would certainly be shut up in the Fő-street prison with Tibor Dery and his 'accomplices'...

The literary policy of Kadar's party has succeeded in forming a common front with the aesthetic notions of the House of Hapsburg and the Romanov dynasty—although the latter, less steeped in hypocrisy, did not try to pretend to the world that they guaranteed to Russian writers 'complete freedom of expression.'

But, say Kadar's friends, the vast majority of Hungarian writers is still free, the proof being that they have published a proclamation approving the calling in of Soviet forces and the government's action—and it is only the 'renegades' who pretend that this declaration was extorted, under pressure, from most of its signatories.

It would certainly be a 'low calumny' to pretend that the signatures were extorted under the threat

of Soviet machine-guns. (The 'renegades' have never said so, but that does not matter.) The truth is quite different: writers who were still free received the promise that, if they 'made a gesture', their imprisoned colleagues would only receive nominal sentences and would shortly be released under the terms of an amnesty. Consequently they were not forced—at least the enormous majority was not—by the threat of the loss of their individual freedom. The article in *Magyarország* is quite right when it says that Hungarian writers are 'made of different stuff', and that signatures cannot be extorted from them. The proceeding was more infamous. A pretence was made of placing in their hands the fate of their imprisoned colleagues. What is the more cowardly thing to do in such circumstances—to sign or not to sign? And what is the fitting name for a procedure that consists in condemning Tibor Déry, once the signatures had been collected, to nine years in jail, after which these 'freely given' signatures are brandished beneath the noses of Albert Camus and Bertrand Russell and the others?

Kadar's friends are evidently satisfied. The prisoners will remain in jail, the signatories of the declaration have been duped, and they can go about proclaiming, 'We shall be able to dissipate this atmosphere of falsehood the world over...' However, a slip of the pen in part of a sentence shows us things are not quite so simple. 'This was the only way to put out the fires of counter-revolution.' Something must be amiss with this superior society, with its 'irrefutable scientific ideology', its 'camp of peace', its hydrogen bombs, its 'collective leadership', and its sputnik, if the only way in which it can put out the fires of counter-revolution is by sending a few unfortunate scribblers to prison. This involuntary confession is for the 'half-mad writers' a far more glorious decoration than all the Stalin Prizes in Russia. And the whole of *Magyarország's* article thus becomes a sort of obituary notice published during his lifetime by a man who is quite sure that he is in 'good health...'

TIBOR MERAY

(Obtained through *Forum-Service*, Paris)

HAPPY ACRES

Young and crazy, I have seen
plenitude fixed beyond a noble arch;
and loving so, regaled with raptures
each narrow waste of monotony.

Uplifted in my solitary awareness
the cult of the heart has shown
that love dove-tails, far inwards,
manifestations of tones.

Life manifests as a vivid plexure
and our thoughts pass, repass, fuse;
Fingers touch in intense merciful joy
only our universe realized.

The clean happiness of lush growing things
crystal dawn in the eyes of spring.
Elements cadenced in poignant thrills
across realms of unpicked stars.
Oceans locked in the storm of calm
and natures enduring frailties.
These are happy acres, dear heart,
and our sacred communion.

RANJANI RAO

A. RANGANATHAN

Coomaraswamy and Indian Nationalism

neglected aspect of a great scholar's thought

THE Asiatic Cult', wrote Hans Kohn, 'has assumed new forms corresponding to Europe's expressionist tendencies, her reaching out towards the mythical and primitive; the roots of nationalism struck deeper, men meditated upon its spiritual value, as is seen in the writings of Coomaraswamy and his contemporaries. And all this reached its climax in Gandhi's agitation' (*A History of Nationalism in the East*, Routledge, London 1929, P375). Prof. Kohn's attempt to bring out the similarity between the basic tendencies of European expressionism, which was essentially a movement in literature and painting radiating from Germany in the first quarter of the present century and the Asiatic cult which is a political phenomenon might surprise most readers. It is probable that Professor Kohn tried to recapture the European scene on the vast Asian canvas, by substituting the phrase 'Asiatic Cult' for 'expressionism' and

also by equating the revolt of the traditional Indian mind against the so-called alienation caused by the Western impact on India with the sense of revolt of the adherents of expressionism against current art and civilization.

In a slightly different vein, it was suggested by Basil Gray of the British Museum that Coomaraswamy died just when his life work was coming to fruition in 1947, the year which dispersed the last vestiges of 'the smoke clouds which had all too long obscured the splendid achievements of Indian Sculpture.' (Rothenstein) Indeed, it has been a fashion to regard Coomaraswamy as the prophet of the most creative phase of Indian cultural nationalism. It is an attitude which has been taken for granted, but never analysed. To any student of Coomaraswamy's thought, however, it is clear that from the avowedly national perspective of his earlier days, Coomaraswamy

over the years began to appreciate all that was best in other cultures and traditions, as is evident from the universal quality of his mature writings.

In order to understand Coomaraswamy's approach to nationalism it is necessary to know something about the background of his times. In the beginning he had to reckon with a generation to whom Oriental Art conveyed no meaning. And it is not to be wondered at that he began his career as a nationalist by starting a campaign against the 'Anglicisation of the East' exhorting the Indian and Ceylonese students to shed their superficial Western veneer and imbibe the spirit of their own culture. During this period, he was the editor of the *Ceylon National Review*. As president of the Ceylon Social Reform Society, he launched a movement for 'national' education, the teaching of vernaculars in all institutions and the revival of Indian cultural traditions. He even went to the extent of setting up new sartorial standards and started sporting the South Indian dress and turban. This is not surprising in Coomaraswamy, since through the pattern of the Indian national scene, during the first decade of the century, the thread of aggressive nationalism, at times amounting to a kind of atavism, can be traced. Apart from this purely 'swadeshi' stand, Coomaraswamy had to defend the principles on which Indian Art was based to answer the criticisms of many Western intellectuals, beginning with Ruskin, who may be termed as the father of the school of the misunderstanding of Indian Art in the West. In his lecture entitled 'The Deteriorative Power of Conventional Art,' at the South Kensington Museum in 1858, Ruskin stated that 'it is quite true that the art of India is delicate and refined. But it has one curious character distinguishing it from all other art of equal merit in design—it never represents a natural fact. It either forms its compositions out of meaningless fragments

of colour and flowings of line; or, if it represents any living creature, it represents that creature under some distorted and monstrous form. To all the facts and forms of nature it wilfully and resolutely opposes itself; it will not draw a man, but an eight-armed monster; it will not draw a flower, but only a spiral or a zig-zag'. It is possible that the views of Maskell, Birdwood, Archer, Vincent Smith and others have had their roots in Ruskin's criticism. Vincent Smith wrote: 'After 300 A.D. Indian Sculpture properly so called hardly deserves to be reckoned as art. The figures both of men and animals become stiff and formal, perception of the facts of nature almost disappears and the idea of power is clumsily expressed by the multiplication of members. The many-headed, many-armed gods and goddesses whose images crowd the walls and roofs of mediaeval temples have no pretensions to beauty and are frequently hideous and grotesque.' (*The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Oxford, 1908, Vol. II, page 121)

NATURALLY, Coomaraswamy's efforts were primarily directed to channel India's national life towards a fuller understanding of its freedom and a deeper awareness of its cultural inheritance and dignity. It was at this time that he brought out his excellent publication on the *Aims of Indian Art* which followed in the wake of his classic monograph on *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*. The work of Coomaraswamy and Western critics like E. B. Havell resulted in a new attitude towards Indian culture. In fairness to Vincent Smith, it must be stated that he modified his earlier views in the light of Coomaraswamy's interpretation, a fact which although admitted by Coomaraswamy himself is conveniently ignored by our historians. But it is well to remember that Coomaraswamy went to the past not for creating ideally picturesque forms of

Indian Art but for culling facts grounded in scientific scholarship. He was not a romantic aesthetician, but the foremost scientific historian of Indian and Indonesian Art. In a sense he succeeded in transforming the ideals and traditions of Indian Art scattered through the ages into a great heritage of artistic achievement and also created a new consciousness of cultural unity.

The aesthetic philosophy of Indian Nationalism found its most articulate exponent in Coomaraswamy during the swadeshi years. In one of his essays he stressed that 'we want our own India for ourselves because we believe each nation has its own part to play in the long tale of human progress and that nations which are not free to develop their own individuality and character are also unable to make the contribution to the sum of human culture which the world has a right to expect of them' (*Essays in National Idealism*, Probsthain, London, 1909, pp. 2-4). In this connection, one is reminded of Professor George Catlin's remark that 'the feeling of renascent Asiatic nationalism expressed in Coomaraswamy's thought must be encouraged' not as an exclusive Asiatic racialism but as a contribution of each member, each with peculiar gifts, to what Mazzinni acclaimed as the concert of mankind, the total orchestra of human genius.'

Coomaraswamy gave a new content to the *swadeshi* idea based on the realization that 'Nationalism' must be a 'religious artistic ideal' in his book on *Art and Swadeshi*. Coomaraswamy's contribution to Indian politics lies in the fact that he had spiritualized the concept of Mazzinnian nationalism. These views were echoed by Tagore in his lectures on *Nationalism* delivered in Japan. It is also interesting to note that Coomaraswamy's plea for a school of Oriental learning which would attract scholars from all parts of the World to learn East-

ern thought in the East moulded Tagore's idea of 'Vishwabharati'. Coomaraswamy was not unduly concerned with India's loss of political freedom; but he was anxious that the educational pattern should not produce 'a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect!' (Macaulay) His main thesis was that 'India politically and economically free, but subdued by Europe in her inmost soul is scarcely an ideal to be dreamt of, or to live, or to die for'. (*Art and Swadeshi*).

At this stage, it may be recalled that Emerson had criticized the intellectual subservience of American writers to Europe in his famous oration delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa society in 1837. This lecture, in which he maintained that 'our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close' has been hailed as America's Intellectual Declaration of Independence. Similarly, to Coomaraswamy, nationalism was a quest after self-realization, a spiritual Declaration of Independence. The full significance of his philosophy of Indian Nationalism, however, cannot be understood without grasping the impact of Ananda Vardhana's technique on Coomaraswamy's philosophy of art. In his *Hindu View of Art* Coomaraswamy points out that the most important element in Indian aesthetics is derived from 'the theory of rasa' (aesthetic emotion). Likewise the most important element in Sanskrit poetic theory was *dhvani* (reverberation). While the literary theories were concerned with the significance of words, their perception and their subtle undertones suggestively leading to the world of literary perception, the aestheticians reflected on the eternal significance of art motifs; their symbolic meanings and their impersonal attitudes inducing the state of aesthetic emotion. Ananda Vardhana who is believed to have lived in the 9th century is perhaps the most celebrated

literary philosopher that India has produced and his *Dhvanyaloka* (the world of reverberation) is a major work in Sanskrit poetics. The world of Ananda Vardhana can be reached through three successive stages—factual communication, imaginative introspection and the aesthetic contemplation of an emotional state (*rasa-dhvani*). And it is possible to conclude that Coomaraswamy's idealistic approach to nationalism combined the nationalistic spirit of Mazzinni, the intellectual freedom of Emerson and the aesthetic insight of Ananda Vardhana.

Coomaraswamy visited India thrice and purchased a remarkable collection of Art objects. He was willing to gift it away to the Indian nation if only a suitable museum and gallery could be built at Banaras to house the collection. He tried hard to get a professorship in Indian Art in the Banaras Hindu University. But our staunch 'nationalists' failed to rise to the occasion. Was it because he was not born as a pandit on the banks of the Ganges, that Banaras refused to have him? And yet when Coomaraswamy became a world celebrity these very 'nationalists' referred to him as a 'modern rishi' and used many other fulsome expressions to show their deep love of Indian Culture! Coomaraswamy was hardly known in India till he was elected a fellow of the Linnean and Geological Societies. His services to Indian Art were never appreciated until he became one of the founders of the Royal India society in England. He was recognised as an art critic of standing only after he was appointed to the post of 'Fellow for Research in Indian, Persian and Mohommedan Art' at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

While it may initially strike us as a national loss, Coomaraswamy's migration to Boston was a gain, viewed retrospectively; it led to a greater appreciation of Indian Art in the West and particularly in America. There is no doubt that his stay at Boston

widened his intellectual horizon and deepened his ideas on mysticism. Here we are not concerned with his contributions to Indian Art as such, but with that frame of mind which he applied to the problems of art, religion and philosophy. The result is that he harmonised his astonishing range of interests, Eastern and Western, into that unity of outlook which invests his writings with a lasting significance. Coomaraswamy argued in his *Hindu View of Art* that the fusion of religious ecstasy and artistic experience is not an exclusively Hindu View: 'it has been expounded by many others, such as the Neo-platonists, Hsieh Ho, Goethe, Blake, Schopenhauer and Schiller and also restated by Croce.' In one of his flashes of self-revelation, Coomaraswamy called himself an Orientalist who was in fact almost as much a platonist as a Mediaevalist'. He was ever engrossed in understanding the unity of symbolical expressions—the 'Brahma' of Indian philosophers, the 'Logos' of the platonic philosophers, the 'unio mystica' of Jan Van Ruysbroeck, the father of mysticism in the Netherlands, and the 'Urquell' of the German mystic Meister Eckhart, trying to merge in his thought the fundamental insights of the Eastern and Western traditions of mysticism.

THIS great philosopher of Art did not take kindly to a mechanized world. Coomaraswamy idealized the picture of Indian society, but was vigorous in his denunciation of centralization brought about by economic and technological changes in the Western world. He observed: 'The modern world is afraid of the caste system and of monarchy, not because it could not understand their theory, but because a vocational order is inconsistent with the competitive basis of its way of living by money standards' (*Indian Culture and English Influence*). He developed his theory of caste in

another essay and stated that 'a Western professor and a navvy do not understand each other half so well as a Brahmin and a Shudra.' (*What has India contributed?*) In this statement, Coomaraswamy has mixed up the effects of academic education and cultural tradition on individuals. Surprisingly enough, he does not seem to have realized that this gulf between 'a Western professor and a navvy' is equally applicable in the case of an Indian professor and an Indian navvy, even if they belong to the same caste. It is also obvious that a Western Professor and a Western navvy can savour a common christian tradition more easily than Indians can share the Hindu attitude to life, irrespective of caste affiliations.

Coomaraswamy drew an ideal picture of the Indian theory of Government in his *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government*. He explained the religious basis of Indian society by stating that 'The political concept is one of joint government by the spiritual Authority and Temporal power cooperating as in marriage; it is, in fact, a primary function of the High Priest as the "Eye in the World" to see to it that the king does no wrong' (*Religious Basis of the Forms of Indian Society*). And having drawn this idealised picture of Indian Government based on the ideal monarch and the High Priest, he criticized some of the shortcomings of the democratic form of Western society in actual practice. His interpretation of Indian Art was scientific; his approach to mystic thought was universal, but his attitude towards Western political, social and educational thought was provincial, since he idealized Indian society at the expense of Western Society. It is clear that his indictment of modern Western values is based on some of the ideas which he

formulated during the *swadeshi* phase of his career.

Coomaraswamy was critical of the Western system of education in India due to his fear of the 'proselytizing fury' of Occidental civilization. In a famous speech he expressed the view that 'what we need most of all to cherish and honour in ourselves is our Indianness, for by all that is therein included and not by the degree of success with which we can imitate others, shall we ultimately stand or fall. We may fully recognize that a knowledge of Western science and of English will contribute to our national prosperity and may also be made a means of culture . . . what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?' (*Anglicisation of the East*, reprinted from *The Ceylon National Review*, July 1906) He was even more critical in his essay on *Young India* wherein he spoke of the 'sterility of higher education in India'. In his criticism of the Western system of education, Coomaraswamy forgot that most of the Indian languages during that period had not reached a level good enough even for primary education, let alone secondary and University education. It is unfortunate that Coomaraswamy did not view the problem in its proper perspective. Indeed, but for the Western system of education, the transition from mediaeval India into that of a modern nation could never have been effected. When even today it is difficult to replace English by Hindi or any other language how much more difficult it would have been to have introduced a system of 'national' education, more than fifty years ago. And to support his contention Coomaraswamy referred to Pandit Nehru's 'Pathetic Confession': 'I have become a queer mixture of East and West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere.'

Coomaraswamy characterized Mr. Nehru's 'Confession' 'as the marks of a terrible soul-sickness' and that 'these are not

the words of a free man as Gandhi's always are' (*Indian Culture and English Influence*). It is difficult to understand how Coomaraswamy is able to connect this statement of Nehru with the Western system of education. But Gandhi, who was also a product of the same British pattern of education is termed 'a free man'. Individual reactions, under different circumstances and in periods of emotional strain, however valuable from a subjective point of view, cannot be interpreted as indicting an entire system of education simply because it is based on the Western pattern. Coomaraswamy illustrated the same thesis, a little more elaborately in *The Bugbear of Literacy*: 'My real concern is with the fallacy involved in the attachment of an absolute value to literacy and the very dangerous consequences that are involved in the setting up of literacy as a standard by which to measure the cultures of unlettered peoples... which becomes a prime factor in the spiritual impoverishment of all the backward people you propose to civilize'. The modern Western system of education does not lead to spiritual impoverishment, nor does it in any way contribute to the neglect of Eastern Wisdom. Even here Coomaraswamy mixes up the aims of 'Western knowledge' and the 'ideals of Eastern Wisdom'. The spread of literacy is only one of the aims of modern education and it is mainly to prevent the isolation of the masses from the intellectuals. The Western system of education, in spite of all its limitations and defects (there is none to idealize it as Coomaraswamy idealized the Eastern system) is the inevitable educational approach in a highly developed society which has passed through the eras of the Industrial Revolution, the development of modern science and technology and the growth of parliamentary democracy in large areas of the world.

Of all Coomaraswamy's ideas that which is culturally most significant is the ideal of

'the chosen people of the future'. According to him, 'nationalism is not enough. Patriotism is parochial and even banal and there are finer parts great souls may play... how could there be a divergence of idealism from idealism? The chosen people of the future cannot be any nation or race but an aristocracy of the earth uniting the virility of European youth to the serenity of Asiatic age.... The flowering of humanity is more to us than the victory of any party.' (*Young India*) Elsewhere he wrote in the same strain, 'who that has breathed the clear mountain air of the Upanishads of Gautama, Shankara and Kabir, of Rumi, of Lao-tse and Jesus can be alien to those who have sat at the feet of Plato and Kant, Tauler, Behmen and Ruysbroeck, Whitman, Nietzsche and Blake?' (*Intellectual Fraternity*).

Coomaraswamy hoped for a more fruitful era in 'East-West Cultural Relations' and wrote 'that men like the English De Morgan and George Boole, the American Emerson and the contemporary Frenchman René Guénon and Jacques De Marquette were able to make a real and vital contact with Indian metaphysics which became for them a transforming experience' and explained the desirability of 'using one tradition to illuminate the other and so as to demonstrate ever more clearly that the variety of the traditional cultures, in all of which there subsisted until now a polar balance of spiritual and material values, is simply that of the dialects of what is always one and the same language of the spirit, of that perennial philosophy to which no one people or age can lay an exclusive claim.' (*Indian Culture and English Influence*).

In the last analysis, despite a few contradictions, much of his writing on nationalism is idealistic. He was first and foremost an artist. Dorothy Norman recorded her observation on Gandhi just before his death—

'Gandhi can be looked upon as a moral saint. But not as an aesthetic saint. He said for example that a woman should not wear a necklace. Had he been an aesthetic saint, he would have said that if a necklace is worn, then it should be a good necklace.' Even his message when India achieved Independence was 'Be Yourself.' It placed the accent on aesthetic beauty and not on political fads. 'Nations,' wrote Coomaraswamy 'are created by artists and poets, not by merchants and politicians. In art lie the deepest life principles' (*Essays in National Idealism*.)

It is remarkable that Coomaraswamy who began his brilliant career as a geologist (the discovery of 'thorianite' stands to his credit) should have ended it with the publication of *Time and Eternity* (Artibus Asiae Publishers, Ascona, Switzerland) one of the greatest books of the century. In this marvellously documented exposition of the

perennial Doctrine from the Hindu, Buddhist, Greek, Christian and Islamic Christian and Modern view points, Coomaraswamy formulated the aesthetics of the space-time equation. In this book, Time is viewed from Eternity, which is the timeless point resolving time itself in terms of past and future in the cosmic setting of space. Coomaraswamy's early scientific career can be compared with a spring originated from some subterranean mineral source, delighting everyone by its natural freshness and sweatness. And the later development of his mind can be likened to the course of a stream which, starting from its Vedic source and flowing through *Swadeshi* India, catches the nationalistic current at the turn of the century till it mingles with the stream of Western mysticism and sweeps into a mighty confluence before it finally washes the shores of the 'philosophia perennis.'

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EMOTIONAL INTEGRATION OF INDIA

A Symposium

IT appears that Professor Gadgil is mainly concerned with emotional integration within a region and the All-India aspect of the problem becomes merely incidental. He considers even the concept of a single Indian society as 'obviously impracticable' and even 'undesirable.' 'Such homogeneity,' he asserts, 'could be achieved only by a deliberate suppression of existing diversity as in the case of colonial societies. He is evidently obsessed by an exaggerated sense of regional, even linguistic separateness. The more untenable part of his contention is the one concerning regionalism. He says, 'In my opinion the largest area basis on which a meaningful attempt to create such a (emotionally integrated) society can be made in India is that of the linguistic region.' The reasoning by which he arrives at this conclusion provides such a classical example of *non-sequitur* that it deserves a close consideration.

The vast majority of the Indian people are Hindus, among whom the primary social group is on the basis of caste.' This much is easily conceded. But, the next two steps in the reasoning are factually dubious and tendentious in interpretation. 'The caste groups among Hindus function within certain regional boundaries. There are properly speaking no all-India castes.' This is indeed a bold statement to make. Are not the Brahmins an all-India caste group? If a certain pattern of customs, social attitude, status and prestige and occupational predilections are characteristics of a caste, the all-India character of the major castes is undeniable. The Brahmin in U.P. or Maharashtra or Madras will display almost identical features in the context of the above frame of reference. The somersault from caste to region, however, does not suffice for Professor Gadgil's thesis. He

even goes one step further. 'The large caste groups are found spread over relatively wide regions whose limits are usually coterminous with the linguistic region.' Surely, one wonders, is region an independent category or derived from and determined by language! The manipulated sequence from religion to caste and from caste to region and from region to linguistic region ultimately emerges into the main thesis, viz: 'Hindu society may thus be said to be composed of groups of speakers of *the major languages* stratified into caste and sub-caste.' Thus, it would appear that neither religion nor 'the primary social grouping' nor geographic or economic region, but only a linguistic region can provide the basis of emotional integration!

Is the 'case of communication' which a common language provides a sufficient condition for emotional integration? How would he explain the attitude of Vidarbha, which inspite of assumed linguistic affinity and socio-cultural homogeneity, refuses to be a part of the proposed linguistic State of Samyukta Maharashtra? Are not factors, other than language, more important? Does not the clash of economic interest between the tenant and the landlord, or a labourer and a capitalist, constitute an obstacle to emotional integration between the speakers of a common language? Does a Maratha tenant or a labourer feel greater emotional affinity with the Maratha landlord or capitalist,—simply because the latter speak the same language,—than for a tenant or labourer speaking a different language? The Socialists and the Communists, who support Professor Gadgil's thesis, should certainly ponder over the implications of their action on their cherished ideal of economic interpretation of history and class struggle. What happens to their sacred slo-

gan of 'Workers of the world unite'? Will they abandon it for the slogan 'Marathi speaking workers and capitalists unite. Your common language is the only meaningful basis for the creation of an integrated society and for realising unity in diversity'?

To be fair to Professor Gadgil, it must be admitted that he does not ignore the class basis of society. But, his dislike of the 'trading' elements arises because they constitute 'immigrant, different language-speaking, minorities'. Thus, even his economic radicalism appears to have a linguistic basis. Evidently for Professor Gadgil, reorganisation of States on linguistic lines is a condition precedent for any integration of India, emotionally and in other ways. Anyone who does not accept this proposition cannot be given credit for an honest difference of opinion. A dissident must have some vested interest, economic or political. If Nehru does not like the disintegration of Hyderabad and does not support linguistic states of Professor Gadgil's pattern, it is because he suffers from 'amazing lack of understanding' and 'his sub-conscious thinking is rooted in a North-Indian, predominantly Muslim, feudal aristocratic past.' The possibility of his own sub-conscious thinking being rooted in the regretted downfall of the Maratha Empire has perhaps escaped him!

To seek compartmental integration on the basis of different languages and allocate (inviolable!) territories to each one of them in which they have majorities is to simultaneously perpetuate numerous pockets of linguistic minorities. By the very hypothesis the majority linguistic groups cannot have any socio-cultural homogeneity with minorities and therefore, no emotional integration. We must thus face the inevitable consequences of projection of linguistic nationalism in the realm of politics. As pointed out by Professor Schuman, 'If there are those within the State who do not speak the mother-tongue (the language of the

ruling linguistic group) they must be taught, assimilated and if necessary, coerced into abandoning their own language and culture in the name of national unity and power.' It is a patent lesson of history, that no safeguards and no assurances and even no fundamental rights can save the minorities from subtle psychological exclusion in the social, cultural and other spheres which linguism implies. In the words of MacCartney: 'In such a case the rule of the majority, exercised more often under the title of a democracy is a true tyranny. It is the worst which is the corruption of the best'. The grievances of the minorities in such cases would be put off 'with mealy-mouthed resolutions' about their duties; they would be asked to demonstrate their loyalty to the linguistic Region and admonished to appear before it with clean hands.

Further, the problem of integration between several major language groups remains unsolved, is even aggravated in the process of emphasising separate emotional integration for separate language groups. In a country where so many major languages are spoken, the net result will be disintegration rather than integration. If the ultimate integration of the people of India is to be achieved on other than language basis, such as 'a lasting sense of cohesiveness, based on the recognition of common values, traditions and interest,' (Professor Gadgil) there is no point in resorting to cultural stratification on a linguistic basis in the first instance and then strike for cohesiveness on an entirely different basis. Emotions cannot be moulded and circumscribed into one pattern and then 'integrated' into another.

It is true, diversities have to be recognised and respected. One must recognise the claim of all languages to develop their arts and cultural traditions through a full and unfettered use of the regional languages. The objective of promotion of the growth and development of regional langu-

ages could be actively pursued by establishing regional Universities, through the use of regional languages in local administration, the press and the radio, and the establishment of literary and cultural academies. But, surely for fostering the growth of language, literature or art, the country need not be reorganised on the basis of linguistic regions (States). To mix up the question of the importance of regional language with that of administrative reorganisation of States is to rocket a purely personal emotional and cultural value into the vortex of politics and thereby pervert a perfectly rational feeling into an irrational one.

Professor Gadgil wants us to ignore the whole trend of recent political thought. Wisdom and statesmanship would lie in dissociating nationality (linguistic) from questions of politics which are in their nature distinct and ought to remain so in practice. The phrase 'Emotional Integration of India' has a wider connotation and significance. While recognising the need for preserving the great variety and richness of Indian cultural life, a note of warning needs to be sounded against the separatist and disruptive forces of casteism, communalism and linguistic parochialism, which have proved to be positive obstacles to the development of a united and integrated India.

To postulate that in India existence of different languages connotes the existence of culturally distinct societies is to misread the entire cultural history of the country. The history of India from the ancient past to the recent times bears testimony to the characteristic feature of homogeneity in culture and variety in its expressions and forms through various languages.

The cultural unity of India does not reflect a group concept but a way of life, a culture with a common source of inspiration and a unity with a variety of forms and expressions which have enriched that culture. In her art, architecture and paint-

ing, literature and philosophy, we see the oneness of the Indian way of life and all the different languages draw their inspiration and vitality from this fundamental unity of our cultural heritage. We should emphasise the forces which unite rather than those which divide and disrupt the nation. On this basis alone, we can seek our real and enduring emotional integration.

C. L. GHEEWALA

AS Prof. Gadgil points out, the emotional integration of India cannot be achieved 'by slogan-mongering or propaganda campaigns,' but only 'through an intelligent long-term national policy.' This serious question may be tackled on different lines from those suggested by Prof. Gadgil. I do not disagree with his practical approach but some of his ventures of faith call for re-interpretation.

It is intellectual integration on which we should focus attention, before we think of anything else. In India at present the stage is set for it. Political integration is an accomplished fact and therefore its concomitant, economic integration, may be achieved as a matter of course.

Cultural integration of India, however is a baffling problem. This question has brought new difficulties in the wake of linguistic states. A national culture is communicable through a common language and India is unfortunately lacking one. Since the regional languages have attained more or less a high standard of efficiency and are acquiring importance with the passage of time, the future of the common language seems to be gloomy and discouraging. Anyhow the regional language will out of necessity foster regional cultures. In the past each region stood apart and developed its culture the achievements of which are professed in the name of India. For example, from Kerala emerged a philosophy through

Sri Sankaracharya which became Indian philosophy par excellence. In Madras a number of saints and religious thinkers transformed the output of the entire land in the matter of contemplation and a way of life. The artistic genius of Bengal through Tagore and others awakened the whole of India, while before that central India paved the path for a renaissance through Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Vivekananda. There are a lot of other instances in which states contributed to the culture of India as a whole and so cultural integration must primarily be achieved through the Indian languages. For a century more Hindi should not be fixed as a national medium 'if we are earnestly interested in the return of India to herself.'

This intellectual integration will result in an emotional integration. In order to achieve this what are the hopes and fears of Prof. Gadgil? His fear that 'caste' is still a factor to be reckoned with is groundless because in the economical reshuffling of society it will disappear once and for all. His hope that regional societies may be formed to 'create the feeling of solidarity, of unity in diversity' is another historical error. Long experience shows us that regional societies in the form of exclusive units will in the long run grow up to be formidable and begin to challenge the Centre. The masses must participate in this work of integration.

But the 'Nehru cult,' I am afraid, is a fiction of his imagination. None of us in the South (Kerala, Mysore, Madras and Andhra) feel the pressure of such a cult as the North Indians do. Impartial recognition of talent in philosophy, art and science will prevent the Government from being looked down upon by the South. There is a prospect of a growing rift between the various parts of India or between the South and North, if the Central Government is not careful in dealing with major national issues wisely.

As to the attitude of 'different elements among the top strata' the remedy suggested by Prof. Gadgil seems to be unsatisfactory. A socialistic pattern of society may find the country purged of all recalcitrant elements. But the factors Prof. Gadgil set out on the credit side are a consolation.

G. SUKUMARAN NAIR

IT appears that our national leaders and national educationists have recently discovered that there is an absence of an 'emotional integration of India.' It has been taken for granted that the *desired* emotional cohesion is lacking among the Indians. The absence of such an emotion is cited to suit various motives and policies. Thus while the protagonist of Hindi smells the absence of 'emotional integration' in the reluctance of the non-Hindi speaking people to accept without any proviso, the introduction of Hindi on an all-India scale, the advocates for regional languages think that *Hindi imperialism* reflects the same absence. The expression 'emotional integration of India' is thus being used in many different senses.

In the absence of any intelligible meaning attached to the term 'emotion,' it will not be presumptuous to think that the term has been used in its *classical*, though nebulous, sense. 'Emotions are described,' in traditional psychology, 'as turbulences in the stream of consciousness, the owner of which cannot help directly registering them; to external witnesses they are, in consequence, necessarily occult.' This occult character is responsible for the divergent views on the 'emotional integration of India.' Belief in the occult generates only the occult.

After levelling a broadside against the lack of 'clearer appreciation of the structure of Indian society and its appropriate evolution,' Prof. Gadgil seems to have dis-

covered the 'permanent heritage' of India in the 'comprehensive combination of the realism and humanism of the Buddha, the logic and intellectualism of Shankaracharya and the mysticism and latent radicalism of the Bhakti saints,' and shares the optimism which 'stems from the judgement that all the adverse elements should, in the main, prove to be transitory, while favourable elements are parts of our permanent heritage and are bound to exert a continuous long term influence.' He has even found some *virtues* in the caste structure of Hindu society and believes that the integration that the caste structure achieved 'was significantly lessened because of foreign rule and the deliberate encouragement by the British to emphasize their separateness.' The British had not to do much to emphasize the separateness of castes in India. 'Separateness' is an ugly fact recognised in India since the codes of Manu became the operative and the determining factor of Hindu society. Surprisingly enough, it is only after the rise of the 'intellectualism of Sankaracharya' that Manu could definitely extend its stranglehold upon Hindu society and Buddhism was banished from the land of its origin.

Prof. Gadgil, like so many other *Indologists*, believes that the Hindus as well as *most others* 'have shared, since historical times, common developments in religious life and intellectual and artistic activity, in spite of *linguistic diversity*.' (Italics mine). It appears that in such a sweeping generalisation there is a lot of pigeon-holing of facts. We forget that the difference between an *Agam Nabis* and a *Vaishnav* is wider than the difference between a Christian and a *Vaishnav*. If intellectual continuity can be discovered in the diverse schools of Indian thought and religion, the same may be discovered in the British and the French thought and religion or for that matter in the East and the West yet there is no problem of 'emotional integration' of France

and England or of the East and the West. As a matter of fact the diverse people who are to-day known to be Hindus and call themselves Hindus have undergone a process of 'emotional integration' so much so that Hinduism can be defined only in negative terms.

The trouble with the problem of 'emotional integration of India' is that its advocates have seldom tried to give any positive definition of the expression. Whenever we speak of 'emotional integration' of a vast country like India, we are faced with the problem of determining the highest common factor to which all the groups and sub-groups of India individually and severally be put as numerators without any loss to their self-identity and individuality. This idea of the highest common factor has often been presented before us in a very nebulous and at times even in a woolly fashion.

Prof. Gadgil has rightly observed that 'To confuse the country with those who wield political power in it at any particular time is an old trick of the authoritarians.' But need it be mentioned here that authoritarianism is inextricably bound up with nationalism particularly so when the nation-state happens to be big. It is as yet to be determined how much of the problem of 'emotional integration of India' has been the creation of the authoritarians. In a vast country like India, who represents the good of the people in general? Who determines what is the permanent feature of the country? The country or the national state by itself is an abstract entity. It must be concretised, it must be given a *real existence* in the mind of somebody and that somebody is the individual in power. The sociological and the psychological factors entailed in the rise of national states have authoritarianism as one of their constituents. The nation-state has exhausted its positive contribution towards the progress of humanity.

If we want, as Prof. Gadgil seems to want, 'to create an open society which disregards caste, class or religion the only possible basis is that of the neighbourhood and the local area.' We cannot have emotional integration of India and at the same time hope for a decentralised and egalitarian society. Emotions let loose are too overpowering and are pregnant with disastrous consequences. They tend to find unity in uniformity. The trouble with the emotions arise when they take the better of our reason which alone can guide our emotions fruitfully. As a matter of fact 'emotional integration of a country' appears to be the last refuge of the moribund cult of nationalism. Politically, the cult of nationalism has proved its bankruptcy, especially so after the rise of Fascism and Soviet Communism. In India the problem is becoming more acute. It is our emotional attachment to our ancient heritage, supposedly superior to anything of the present and having some supposed permanent and peculiar features which nobody should challenge lest he becomes an anti-Indian, which clouds our capacity for rational discernment and is too eager to put all blame upon foreign domination, thus revealing an element of arrogant inferiority complex and persecution mania. What we need is not an 'emotional integration of India' but an intellectual reorientation which will pave the way for a rational understanding of the co-operation that the different groups—linguistic, provincial, religious, and others—will need to exist and develop effectively and fruitfully. As a matter of fact only those who

have no faith in human reason talk much about emotional integration as if the emotions are to be conditioned by some *emotion-control* process. Prof. Gadgil's bias for anti-intellectualism is apparent from his over-zealous appreciation of Vinobaji who is supposed to have peculiarly combined in himself *Bhakti*, *Jnan*, and *Karma*.

If we are serious about bringing about an emotional integration of India let us be honest about it and go the way that is being followed and has been followed elsewhere providing us with an archetype of *emotion-control* and emotional integration so much so that the individual human being faces the danger of being reduced to a robot, moving according to the dictates of the *bosses*. The picture of such a well organised emotionally integrated society has been well drawn by George Orwell.

We can have, (and as a matter of fact do have), fruitful emotional relationships only with *things* about which we have a 'knowledge by acquaintance'. Whenever we want to transfer the emotions to things about which we have only a 'knowledge by description', we tend to take ourselves into a make-believe world and indulge in negativism. In our endeavour to do away with conflict and war, we tend to advocate and welcome a ruthless suppression of diversity. Our logic is that of throwing away the baby with the bath water. And rulers easily find a 'considerable dose of falsehood and deceit necessary for the *good* of their subjects.'

M. K. HALDAR

In The Conference Hall

WE keep thinking for years that our life has been rich and varied, but suddenly discover what a spicy bit we have missed. It happened to me when I was selected as a delegate to the All India Writers' Conference which met in Calcutta in the closing days of last year.

I was not unaware of Conferences. Long ago, when the world and I were younger, and life and thought were simpler, I had helped as a 'volunteer' and escorted soft-spoken, dropsical-looking, elderly delegates from other Provinces to the local temple I had also seen men with flamboyant rosettes, conscious of their temporary importance, but unaware of the obtruding badge, threading their way among the townsmen, and vociferously impressing on a meek fellow-delegate how a particularly important point had not been sufficiently dwelt on; and I had laughed at their expense. But it never occurred to me that one day, in my late fifties, I would be an unself-conscious, rosette-adorned, curiosity-rousing passenger in the crowded trams and buses of Calcutta.

We dutifully sermonise on 'Vanity of vanities....' when we get an unfortunate young peacock in our grip; but when we are offered by a respect-oozing volunteer, and that too a lady, a delegate's badge, we feel like a pea-hen which has had the good fortune to receive an ephemeral supply of feathers. And when we discover that the pin has been forgotten, we are not so mean as to embarrass the young lady, (we leave it to a rude successor), but prefer to walk up to the nearest pavement hawker and buy a needless strip of twelve safety pins in three sizes, made (crudely) in India, for sixteen nP.

Conferences are useful, in spite of the cynic who might say that all the weighty

findings of five or six sessions could easily go into one page, octavo, of 10-point type, which, again, is a repetition of a similar page of an earlier time and a different place. The personal contacts between birds of a similar feather are interesting, heart-warming and—I'm sorry if I sound mercenary—valuable. And as for autographs, what a thrilling experience for those who have never been approached by a 'hunter' before! (Which, by the way, raises the question: does a tiger, long ignored by *shikaris*, gratefully welcome its first experience?) And it is not entirely a mechanical, self-conscious scribbling of one's name.

Speeches are a *sine qua non* of Conferences. And the operator at the loud-speaker switching panel is a useful modern adjunct to such functions—though, as Sri-mati Sarojini Devi said of herself once, some people do not need a mike; and it is better so for the audience. I would like to install another adjunct: the clock operator. His duty should be to discerningly operate a clock attached to the mike and clearly visible to the speaker, and to him alone. When the speaker gets discursive and dull (with anecdotes of what his grandmother told her sister's son-in-law), the minute hand must be made to race. Of course, the clock must be set back correctly after he halfheartedly resumes his seat. It may appear cruel, but it is really a kindness. At present, the position is that the supplementary speakers, who are duly warned, and doled out a limited number of minutes, usually leave a better impression on the audience than the Chairman of the session or the main speaker, as the supplementer is forced to boil down his opinions to a few pontifical sentences which reach the audience with the liveliness of hammer strokes. I have in mind a chairman who spoke of

the 'great danger of a revolution without a transformation . . .'; apart from the words, sounding original, being actually Stephen Spender's (uttered during the last PEN meeting in Japan and being the cause of a flutter), that was the only almond in a big plate of *maida* paste. Ruthless boiling down was indicated. . . .

More seriously, a large number of us were disappointed to find the Conference of Writers being swamped by the vexed 'Hindi problem'. From Pandit Nehru's point of view—expressed in his role of a writer—it need not be a problem to the author, as he is concerned with his mother-tongue or the language adopted for his literary expression. But a speaker of the previous day had anticipated this argument by visualising a bolstered language - either of the Centre or a neighbouring State - having a larger clientele and hence being in a more paying position and drawing away many from the State languages; this would lead to a gradual attenuation and virtual non-existence of the State language. I must hasten to add that Srimati Mahadevi Varma, the Chairman of the opening session, did not fall into the traps of the Hindi controversy. She confined herself to 'the temple of the Muse—Chaitanya, Tagore, Tolstoi—unity in diversity—fire of our agony—the glow that shows the path—tree takes food from the soil, but its beauty it owes to the air and the sun—*tat twam asi* ideal—music of the smithy and the plough—past present and future to be bound in an immortal whole—*etc.*

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, who was present at the final session, also gave general advice. He said, 'Writers today have a great function to perform. They have to portray the pathos, the failures, disruption and self-betrayal of our country. We have corruption in high places, great economic distress, national differences, dissensions which divide us one from the other. If the literary artists are able to capture the atmosphere

of the country and direct the attention of the people so as to remove these blemishes which make us ashamed of ourselves, if they do not participate in these disputes themselves, and if they hold up the vision of India as a unity, and humanity as one, they would have done a great deal for this generation. This is my appeal to you.'

Sri. C. Rajagopalachari could not be present, as originally planned. But his message was a summary of his oft-repeated views on Hindi. Sri Anantasayanam Ayyangar's message was a good example of what a message ought not to be. It would be a good rule if (with apologies to Lord Northcliffe) such messages have to be sent by telegraph at the sender's expense.

Prof. Humayun Kabir, Chairman of the Reception Committee, enlivened the wool-gathering audience by announcing that there would be no resolutions as 'writers do not believe in resolutions.' (A gentle ripple rising to a crescendo of laughter). Another positive point was also a negation—there were no Committees or elections.

No offence need be taken at the expression 'wool-gathering.' If the speaker, by common consent, as the king of all he surveyed for his allotted number of minutes, indulged in weaving words on an 'air-loom', could not the audience co-operate with him by gathering wool? Though I tried to keep alert by taking notes of the speeches, my mind could not help wandering now and then and dreaming of 'hot air—air-loom—heir-loom,' the rhythm of the loom of the fraudulent weavers in the story of *The Emperor's New Clothes* . . .

Dr. Mulk Raj Anand suggested treating English as the fifteenth language of India, and exploiting it for all general purposes. Sri. Buddhadeva Bose supported him, seeking refuge in the argument that every language of India is an imported one. Sri Sahi, Sri C. Balakrishna Rao of Allahabad and some others opposed the unpatriotic idea—though, necessarily, in English.

Sri. M. P. S. Gramani of Madras surprised his audience with a Tamil speech. He is a good speaker and trainer of speakers. His Tamil was chaste, graceful and dignified, and removed many common errors existing in the minds of non-Tamils. Due to shortage of time (which he had to share with his translator), his sentences had to have Gandhian clarity and crispness; and it was to his advantage.

Some people take themselves seriously and make themselves and others unhappy. That does not matter. But when they lose a sense of proportion and publicly expose themselves to ridicule, some good friend has to tug at the sleeve and pull them back. Two highly educated and well-meaning gentlemen from Mithila demanded passionately that Maithili be declared a major language. It looked as if the needed goods, wrapped and ready for delivery, were reposing in somebody's unwilling pockets in the Hall. What could a conference of writers do in the matter—especially when they resolved not to pass resolutions, or take votes?

Many demanded equality for all the fourteen major languages. 'Equal to what?'—I could not understand. The gardener with his sheers establishes an 'equality' along the top of the hedge. Is it that kind of uniformity? On the Howrah platform, I sensed the existence in India of a born language-equaliser. The lady clerk announcing the arrival and departure of trains, spoke in Bengali, Hindi and English. She succeeded in 'equalising' the three languages—the same sing-song tone, the same sweetness and the same inaudibility. It could as well have been Malayalam or Assamese.

Before I forget, I must record my appreciation of the sumptuous teas and dinners, the sweet music and the thrilling dances, and the elevating theatricals. People responsible for the several items had acquitted themselves very well.

As usual, the lobbies were more enlightening than the Conference Hall. Referring to the present varieties of the Hindi language, much fun was made of such Sanskritised modes as 'sameecheen prateet hota hai' for 'theek maloom hota hai'. Scorn was also poured on '*main agree karta hun*' and '*main concur karta hun*', as there are no words in Hindi to show up the subtle distinction between 'agree' and 'concur' of officialese.

A capital story came from a Central Government official. His local Chief had ordered that all memos were to be in Hindi, except when the stenotypist was dictated to. The narrator of the story was a Bengali gentleman; and he took advantage of the saving clause by dictating even single-word endorsements. The Chief resented such sabotaging of Office Orders and 'spoke' to the official concerned. The latter drafted the next memo in English, spread before him the various governmental word-books, hand-picked the remotest Hindi equivalents and cooked up a jaw-breaking note in what passes for Hindi. (He could have dealt with ten files in that period, sticking to English). The next officer happened to be from down South, and he naturally sent for his Junior. The original English draft was placed before him with an impish smile. The joke was enjoyed; and the file went up to the Chief with a short endorsement in romanised Hindi. But the Chief, whose mother-tongue was Hindi, could make nothing of it, though the note was grammatically perfect, 'he not being a scholar in Vedic Sanskrit'. Some words were exchanged behind closed doors between him and the perpetrator of the joke; but Hindi memos are not insisted on to the same extent in that office now.

All of which proves that Conferences are useful, after all.

M. S. KALYANASUNDARAM

TEMPORAL POWER

NOTES BY S. NATARAJAN

THE only thing one can safely assert about ideologies is that they help you to do what you have always wanted to do. Despite the proneness of the average Indian to principles, or to their unctuous enunciation, the ideology any one of us favours invariably underlines our traits. I think we are beginning to glimpse this truth. The insurance tangle would seem to bring it out in a curiously disturbing manner. Life insurance business was nationalised because, it was argued, insurance funds were put to improper use by a number of companies; it has not taken long for nationalised life insurance to manifest on a vaster scale some of the glaring defects which were adduced as an argument for nationalisation.

Nationalisation—and we are being furnished with concrete evidence time and again—gives us a very delicate instrument where errors of judgment make themselves felt right down the line. The belief that nationalisation somehow does away with the human factor, is a hardy one; but there is little reason for us in India to cling to it today. The only redeeming feature in our present difficulties is the survival against heavy odds of parliamentary democracy.

It is not a small matter that the part played usually by opposition members, has in repeated instances been taken up by individual Congressmen in the Lok Sabha. In December, the dissatisfaction of Congress members revealed itself in an effort to form a group within the Congress. The press described the group as a 'ginger group' but the Prime Minister has indicated that it is only an instrument for facilitating the study of public questions. The name is immaterial; what matters is that Congressmen have at last decided to organise themselves in order that they might have something more satisfying than government hand-outs to work upon. It would be very surprising if any one of the first problems to which the group turns its attention were not nationalisation and the working of State enterprises. We could do with some

clear thinking on this. The leading opposition parties are committed to nationalisation, and, as they have no administrative experience, it is natural that they should pin their faith on more of it. It is from the Congress that a corrective must come.

The meeting of Commonwealth parliamentarians in New Delhi has in this context a special significance. Members from Ghana, some Asian countries and South Africa expressed their fervent faith in parliamentary democracy, though in several of these regions the tasks of government have sorely strained parliamentary institutions. Gratifying though this might be as indicative of common interests within the Commonwealth, there are other matters which could usefully be tackled at such conferences, like the relation between the legislative and executive arms of the government, the growing magnitude and influence of the bureaucracy, and the position of political parties in parliamentary government. Within the Commonwealth, parliaments vary from domination by a single party to confusion caused by too many parties.

No reasonable student of administration expects a party in power to be interested in undermining its position. But there must be some recognition of the need for encouraging democratic thinking and a clear distinction between this and promoting an opposition. In India, of which we can speak with some knowledge, the fault is only partly with the Congress that we have a single party with no prospect of an alternative leadership. The climate for democracy is greatly vitiated by the lack of a critical attitude towards the Government. This may seem a paradoxical remark in view of the wide expression of discontent found in the organs of public opinion. But a great deal of the discontent is joined to a sense of frustration which exhausts itself in vague generalities and avoids specific issues. Since the acceptance of office in Kerala of the Communists, it is true even of the Communists

that they are more eager for adjustments with the ruling party than for the opposition role. It has been the practice in India to speak of a strong opposition as the best evidence of parliamentary democracy, and the absence of it as proof of the ruling party's evil intention. It would be more correct to describe parliamentary democracy as the promise of an effective opposition regardless of the ruling party's attitude. After all Canada had to struggle for twenty years with an apparently unbreakable party before it saw an alternative party strong enough to take over. On the other hand, instances are not lacking where the attempt to force an opposition ended in disaster to the parliamentary system itself. An outward sign of the expansion of the parliamentary idea is the fact that the conference was held in New Delhi. It is necessary that this should be followed by greater positive thinking.

* * *

The Kerala Education Bill has been referred by the Union President to the Supreme Court. All the eleven judges, it is said, are expected to pronounce on its constitutional validity, and, strangely enough, the opinions of other States Governments are to be sought. How far the press reports to the effect that representatives from these Governments have been called upon to express their views, one cannot say. But it is obvious that the President is anxious to share his burden with as large a body of opinion as possible, and to avoid any possible reproach that politics governed his decision. All this circumspection, however, has brought on the very danger that was sought to be avoided. The Kerala Government has made no secret of its feeling that it is discriminated against, and it professes to be baffled by a procedure which, it feels, is rendered unnecessary by the fact of the Bill having been referred to the Union Government before it was taken up in the Kerala Assembly. Strictly speaking, the introduction and discussion of a bill in a State Assembly do not imply approval by the President. But it would be desirable if constitutional doubts were settled before public opinion on any bill has been declared in any legislature.

The bringing in of other States governments at this stage is also open to criticism. But, as a general rule, it is a healthy move to find out the trend of opinion throughout the country on issues of national importance. This has not been the approach of the Congress in the past. For example, on the future of Bombay, every effort was directed to isolate the issues and only Western Indian

sentiment was allowed to play on them. It is an interesting point for constitutional pandits whether a subject on which the opinion of States Governments is sought can be excluded from the States legislatures. The assemblies have an interest in briefing the States governments' representatives which the mere fact that the matter has to be argued in the Supreme Court cannot vitiate. All states governments are naturally interested in the subject of jurisdiction which is what the Supreme Court has to decide. The Congress has in theory at least adopted a policy favouring a strong Centre but it contains within it elements advocating regional interests. It will be interesting to see how the different States line up on the issues raised by the Kerala Bill. It is perhaps not irrelevant to this subject that the Kerala Government has struck out a path different from that of the other South Indian States on the language question, declaring itself in favour of Hindi replacing English as the all-India language, a policy that should endear it to New Delhi in the present agitation of the South against the North.

* * *

The action of the Indonesian Government in taking over Dutch firms followed President Sukarno's promise of strong action if he was refused satisfaction in the matter of West Irian. About 70 per cent of the total estate production and 70 per cent of the inter-island shipping were in Dutch hands. Indonesia exports 19 per cent of its total exports to Holland, and 28 per cent comes from the Dutch estates. The immediate effect of nationalisation is, of course, an economic set-back which Indonesia can ill afford at this stage. The trouble began with the communist-dominated Labour Federation forcing the pace when Sukarno's Government called for a 24-hour strike in Dutch businesses, by converting it first into a boycott and then seizing banks and business premises. The Government called upon the workers to hand back the buildings to the Dutch and, when this order seemed likely to be ignored, President Sukarno asked the army to take over. The outside world has not been able to distinguish clearly between the army, the communists and the extreme nationalists but reports are frequent of internal trouble in Sumatra and the Celebes. President Sukarno, meanwhile, has left Indonesia on a six-week 'recuperation trip,' of which the first stage is India.

The action of the Indonesian Government that has provoked most comment, is the staking of a claim to sovereignty over the waters between the

three thousand islands of Indonesia which brings Singapore and part of Malaya within her territorial waters. The British Foreign Office has entered a mild protest but the question will be pursued with greater vigour this February when the conference on international waters meets at Geneva. Whether a solution which meets national aspirations and satisfies international needs will be arrived at remains to be seen. But the differences between the attitude of the West and the approach of Asian countries will be strongly brought out. These centre largely on the economic consequences of anti-colonialism and carry little conviction to nations which are determined to pay the price for it. What the West fails to allow for is that even countries which are not prepared to follow Indonesia's drastic lead, are not disposed to condemn Indonesia. Mr. Nehru declared his sympathy for President Sukarno's forced move and significantly ignored a question from Communist M.P.s about India's attitude to Goa. The fact that there are contradictions in this approach, is less important than that countries which are anxious to settle problems peacefully, are not willing to condemn other governments for resort to violence.

* * *

The Arab world too is restive under the tensions of the cold war, utilising opportunities to exploit the situation to its advantage. Arab unity has still a long way to go, but the moves towards closer alignment between Egypt and Syria suggest that the foundation may well be against 'western commitments'. Jordan and the Lebanon have reacted to the Egyptian-Syrian propaganda in marked fashion—Jordan by indulging in anti-Israel sentiments in answer to attacks from Egypt and Lebanon with measures to cope with a mounting wave of violence and unrest. While in several States there is a determination to deal firmly with local Communists, there is equal anxiety to avoid involvement in the conflict with international Communism. In this predicament, the Turkish lead at the Nato conference—'Join the Baghdad Pact'—met with a cold response from the parties to which or at which it was addressed. Both the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. today are supporting regimes in the Middle East that are unstable—since King Saud resolutely refuses to be backed by the U.S.A. For the rest of the world the fact that Moscow and Washington are struggling for position in an unstable Arabia, is a disquieting factor. In the Middle East itself, this Big-Power conflict is an influence making for unsettled conditions.

* * *

The release of Sheikh Abdullah after over four years' detention is an event of profound importance. The Kashmir Government has evidently decided to face the situation created by Sheikh Abdullah's preference for an independent Kashmir and his restoration to freedom indicates either greater confidence on its part or a desire not to suppress a controversy which bodes no good for the State. There is little reason to assume the first after the recent split in the leadership. In the circumstances, the decision reflects credit on the Kashmir State and on the influence of liberal ideas from India. Sheikh Abdullah is in an unenviable position which not all his past popularity and estimated present following can mitigate. It would be too much to expect that he does not harbour some resentment at the persons and governments concerned in his long detention without trial. At the same time, he would be unwise to ignore the fact that by giving way to this natural sentiment he runs the risk of destroying everything for which he has stood in the past. That, however, is a personal matter.

It is unfortunate, though understandable, that he has shown himself willing to destroy his past work. At the moment, he has reaffirmed his pre-detention attitude and declared himself for an independent Kashmir. But he has also indicated that Kashmir cannot join India because of the Hindu character of India. Here is one more witness, if it were needed, that detention never effects a change of political views. On the contrary, Sheikh Abdullah obviously regards his own detention as convincing proof that India is lost to the secular ideal, and that it only remains to save Kashmir.

The action of the Kashmir Government suggests that there is a keen anxiety to end the ten years' stalemate which has brought much avoidable hardship to the people of the State. The expectation of a solution through the United Nations having been set at naught, it is natural that Kashmir State should wish to do everything in its power to end the initiative, and it can only be a perverse mind that interprets the release of Sheikh Abdullah as a diplomatic manoeuvre timed to coincide with Dr. Graham's entry into the picture as a U.N. mediator. It should not be forgotten that India has set its face against this fresh effort which promises nothing more than a reiteration of old attitudes. Whether Sheikh Abdullah's undoubted talents can be utilised in the wider scope of the Indo-Kashmir affair remains to be seen, but it is a matter for congratulation that good sense has at last prevailed to the extent of allowing him the wide freedom enjoyed by non-conformist politicians in India.

Five years back, Sheikh Abdullah made the mistake—also committed by some political personalities in British India before 1947 and a few leaders in the Indian States before integration—of demanding ideal conditions in the country so far as communal relations went before applying themselves to the effort for national unity. The presence of a third party before political independence brought about the weakening of national strength and partition; after 1947, the result was the throwing off of those who kept aloof; in the case of Sheikh A'dullah, this manifested itself in his detention. This has not been fully understood even in India, and it is well to reiterate now, on the release of the Kashmir leader, that to look to others to make India safe from communalism is an unreal approach, whether the struggle is lost or whether it is won without one's active participation.

Two cryptic assertions by Mr. C. D. Deshmukh—at least, as reported in the press they are extremely perplexing—have made people ask what the ex Finance Minister really means. The first of these read:

'Mr. Deshmukh felt that of late they in India had been beating a retreat from the goal of socialistic pattern of society. This might be either due to the fear that the present incentive would be destroyed by increased taxation or to the belief

that foreign nations would give them more help. Their chief donor was America which believed in competition. India, however, believed in achieving results through cooperation. Very few of them could believe in totalitarianism... He believed in democracy and India could develop her own system.'

The second ran:

'The Government were also trying to change their machinery by cutting red-tape, and they had taken *a priori* decision that socialism was better than the capitalist system.'

Mr. Deshmukh is usually a careful speaker. He is not unaware of the fact that, despite professions, there is more cooperation in the capitalist countries than in the totalitarian ones, and more of it in competitive America than we have yet seen in India. It need not be argued that socialism involves bureaucratisation and, whatever might be asserted, Socialist systems lean heavily on the bureaucracy. Mr. Deshmukh's reference to cutting red-tape, followed as it was immediately by mention of the Government's '*a priori*' decision preferring socialism, would seem to mean that we are attempting the impossible. The common interpretation, however, is that Mr. Deshmukh wants more adherents to socialism in the Government. The logical conclusion is that he demands a greater consistency. And this only shows that more precision in expressing opinions is desirable.

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A POEM ON LOGIC

I burned and burned; but one day turned
 abruptly, and caught
 that thought
 by the screams of her hair,
 and told her straight:

"Stranger, beware.
 Do not follow a gentleman's morals
 with that absurd determined air.
 Find a husband, however poor,
 he'll give you a house of legitimate sons.

"I have no reason to know your kind.
 Bred in the rigour of a Hindu home,
 I shudder to the bone at hungers
 that roam
 the streets beyond the constable's beats."

But there She stood
 upon that dusty road
 of a nightlit April mind
 and gave me a look.
 Commandments crumbled

in my past. Her tumbled
 hair suddenly known as silken
 in my hungry hand,
 I shook a little and took Her,
 behind the laws of my land.

A. K. RAMANUJAN

variety

theatre

cinema

dance

A Letter from Delhi

DELHI, before the partition of India, was a silent, time-worn city, its streets reminiscing nostalgically of Moghul twilights, its people wearing a quiet, denuded air. Destroyed and created anew again and again, it was like an old-young woman who had tired of giving birth so often. Delhi was an introvert.

Delhi's population of a mere seven lakhs consisted of self-contained family interests, soft spoken men and *purdahed* women. They had delicately nurtured tastes and temperaments with a feeling for tradition, romance and poetry and a dislike of anything too physical or vigorous, like the Punjabi—according to some, an aversion bordering on cowardice. In fact, there is rather an amusing anecdote about the Delhi-wallah's attitude to a fight. When he is given a blow on the jaw, he closes his fists, rolls up his sleeves and says threateningly, 'Come, give me another and then I'll show you....'! He is given another, but he only repeats his threat.

This peace-loving community was not gregarious in the hail-fellow-well-met way of the Punjabi. Delhi had hardly any

restaurants, little predilection for fashionable gatherings, a few cinemas and no nightlife except the time-honoured one, punctuated with ghazals and thumris. The preference by far was for 'ready wit and repartee, a taste for talk and lengthy discussions.... twilight debates under a dust laden sky.' It was a slow, lazy, aristocratic culture, refined during long years when Delhi was the centre of the courts of kings, of sovereign splendour, taste and discrimination, of poets and artists and men of letters.

Into this universe of quiet men, in 1947, came the irresistible tide of independence and new thought, a cosmopolitan gathering of high commissions, embassies and legations—and the bombastic, pleasure-loving Punjabi. Under the impact of independence, the sophisticated foreigner and the inevitability of a new century, Delhi would in any case have lost the glamour of Moghul decadence and the *nawabi* habits of mind. But it is the Punjabi who has been a dominating influence in hastening the process to an extent that it seems to have caused almost a revolution in the lives of the indigenous inhabitants here. He has offended tender sensibilities, but he has

infused spirit and determination into a people almost defeated by a fatal romanticism.

The Punjabis in Delhi are somewhat like the Americans in Europe, awed by its ancient prerogatives but filled too much with the reforming zeal of the present to let the past yield any meanings, an eager bustling community with an eye to the future, 'a people', comparatively speaking, 'without a memory'.

The Punjabi's is a war-time philosophy of life. The first to bear the brunt of repeated invasions from the north-west, they lived in persistent tension when only the obvious stood for a value and serious thought faltered before the exigencies of imminent danger. They were receptive but unfortunately more often only to the superficial influences, specially of western culture. They adopted the coat and trousers and wore them with a swagger, they swore in English with an air and assiduously cultivated what they thought was modernism. Though they are a virile community, for the people of Delhi it became a matter for derision and contempt.

So much physical energy frightens the timid and the intellectual deduced that it could only exist at the cost of the profounder pursuits of the mind. But even Delhi succumbed to their warmheartedness and their innocent courage that triumphs easily over the complex fears of defeat.

Even as refugees after partition, the Punjabis came to Delhi with an undaunted spirit. It was they who jolted this city out of its nostalgic fancies, thrusting upon it the rigours of a hard, competitive world. Soon, a carefully established old shop, safely entrenched in the custom of centuries, found its business threatened by a small vociferous stall outside, which buttonholed all passersby into giving it first preference. Streets, which echoed before to horse carriages, now entertained all manner of vehicles, including the scooter rikshaw or the

phut-phutti, needless to say, managed mostly by the Punjabis. In fact, nearly the whole of Delhi's transport system is in their hands.

Ex-millionaires, who had lost the hard effort of years, as refugees, started from the beginning unashamedly peddling their wares on trolleys or on foot. They did not beg, steal or whine, but staged a super-human come-back. As a study in community character this is interesting. The refugees from East Bengal have not only sat back and let the Government take over but they have made a demand recently that it should also be responsible for providing them dowries for their daughters!

It is also the Punjabis who have given to Delhi the pride of a big city. The energy with which they have rehabilitated themselves has given an urgent impetus to commercial activity, so that there are business organisations and industrial enterprises which in another ten years could very easily compare with those in Calcutta and Bombay. Their hard, practical commonsense has nourished prosperity out of small potential and their broad humour and generosity have endeared them to the people of Delhi. Though most Punjabis know Urdu, it is the Punjabi language that one hears more often. The Punjabis have a zest for luxurious living and looking well which will no doubt affect the standard of living specially of susceptible middle-class families of Delhi. Most of all their coming has had a tremendous impact on the women here who have brightened up in appearance and attitude.

Piqued by comparison they shed their *purdah* shyness, donned the informal *salwar-qamiz* and strode out into the markets, with an increasing lack of self-consciousness. 'The veil,' as one Delhiwala put it, 'slipped further and further back, till at last it allowed the woman a glimpse of the world—and the world a glimpse of her too.'



Pheroza Cooper, Denis Fernandes as Poulengey and Malcolm Macrae as Robert de Baudricourt
in Theatre Unit's *Saint Joan* (see page 42).

[Photo by GURMEET SIN

Modern
INDIAN CERAMICS



Above and below: Tiles by BADRI NARAYAN

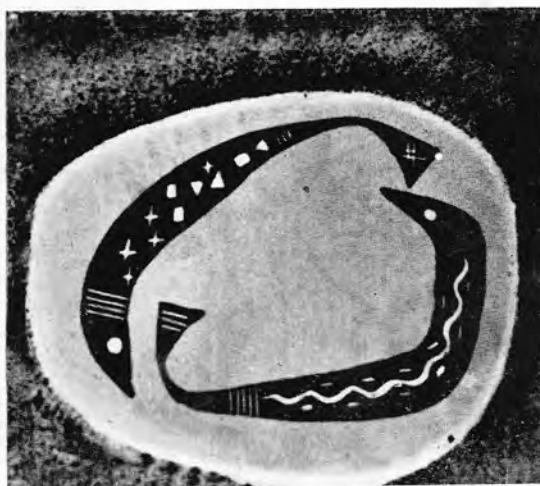


Pitcher by LAXMAN AJGAONKAR

(Photographs by JEAN HERMAN.
Pottery made at Vitrum Studio, Bombay)



Below: Tile by M. H. RATHOD



'Don't you think that would have happened in any case, with more education and inevitable social progress?' I asked him.

'May be,' he answered, 'but because of the Punjabis it has happened ten years earlier, at least in Delhi. In fact, we are all, men and women, more enterprising and positive in our attitude to life. In that the Punjabis' contribution has been outstanding.'

What people here cannot forgive them for, however, is their vulgarisation of Delhi's eating habits, which have changed to an unrecognizable degree. Restaurants have sprung up like mushrooms and people have taken to visiting them so eagerly and so often, that Delhi is by far the most restaurant-minded city now, I think, in the whole of India. 'But, in the choice of food,' said an old resident ruefully, 'the emphasis now is more on quantity than quality.' Delicacies like the Delhi *chaat*, *golegappas* as airy as a bubble, are now thick and heavy to suit the solid tastes of 'these Punjabis.'

Their passion for clever salesmanship and outward show has invaded the choice *halwai* shops and panwallahs in even the secluded corners of Chandni Chowk, that heaven of Delhi's lost years. 'In fact,' said another Delhiwallah, 'only part is real, the rest is hoax. Not that the Delhi salesman did not know how to measure a little more or a little less. He did it discreetly then, now he has slickness and finesse.' So much for what the Punjabi has done for and against Delhi. It would be interesting to see whether Delhi in turn will succeed in tempering the Punjabi's untrammelled energy or exuberance to produce what could be an apotheosis of moral refinement.

. . .

COMBINING a spirit of enterprise and receptiveness to new ideas with the severest training in the classical tradition, Ali Akbar and Ravi Shankar are two of India's most brilliant musicians. As son and

disciple respectively of 'the grand old man of Indian music', the great Allaudin Khan of Maihar, they have a similar style though what they express is entirely different. Ravi Shankar is flash, wit and brilliance, Ali Akbar is slow, deep and poignant. Ali Akbar has love and compassion in his music, Ravi Shankar an intellectual purity. Ali Akbar is moved by the sublimity of emotional experience, Ravi Shankar is thrilled to sensuousness by his naked grasp of it.

A few years ago, Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar started playing duets together on the *sitar* and the *sarod*. Their keen and instinctive understanding of each other's music contributed towards a wholeness which made the *jugalbandi* (the duet) something more than a novel idea. It was almost a new form. In Delhi recently, Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar played together again after a gap of nearly four years, during which both have been out on tours abroad individually. They have experimented with orchestration and the possibility of introducing harmony in Indian music. But both ultimately rejected any fundamental change in the melodic system.

It seems, however, that a fundamental change in attitude is taking place nevertheless, which could have far-reaching effects. This was highlighted when Ravi Shankar gave his first performance here after his tour of Europe and America. It raised a storm of controversy. It seemed evident to some that his excessive pruning of *ragas* like Malkauns, his short, fragmentary presentations of even shorter *ragas*, his consciousness of time arising out of his obvious concern for the foreign audience present would set in vogue a tendency which would strike at the roots of what Indian classical music is—a lonely, timeless aspiration of man.

It is the little things that reflect a way of life. Indians enjoy and experience their music when they do not feel bound either to sit in stiff-backed chairs in a formal hall,

or to have to hear a particular musician during a concert. They want to wander out or sit cross-legged on the ground, to listen for hours to something that expresses a sense of limitlessness. There is a distinct danger that amongst our musicians, smart presentation and show of technical skill might predominate over conveying this sense of limitlessness. It would be a pity if one let the twentieth century fad of standardisation in time, taste and attitude govern the content and inspiration of Indian music.

UMA VASUDEV

Theatre Units' Saint Joan

WHAT is *Saint Joan* about? It is about Saint Joan. The playwright grasped this firmly and so must the producer and the actress in the title-role. The dramatic opportunities of the play are important but less so than the interpretation of the character. This is saying a great deal when one remembers that in form *Saint Joan* is Shaw's most lucid play. 'What, no eggs!' is hardly the best possible opening for a tragic spectacle, but Shaw must be allowed his little jokes. The hens lay again, once Joan has won over Robert de Baudricourt in the first round of her struggle to save France. From that point, the play is all gravity and grandeur. The point of the scene was not taken well in Theatre Unit's production. Malcolm Macrae was good in his bluff and bluster but his collapse into Joan's scheme could have been more utterly astonished. Minoo Chhoi's Steward was too closely related to his Sganarelle. In the sublimities that followed the scene deserved to be forgotten.

That Minoo Chhoi was feebly resurrected as the Inquisitor was not his fault; actors should never be required to do double-duty, unless a *tour de force* is consciously aimed at for a 'star.' In this case it was not even necessary to peer at the programme for confirmation of a doubt. Here was the Steward again, with pretensions of a different

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

s a y s

ROBERT GRAVES

of

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role. Similarly, our objections to Malcolm Macrae, Denis Fernandes, Govindram Chawla and Joe D'Mello (the voice cannot be masked). Suspension of disbelief is no longer willing when so many characters reappear transformed after a quick visit to the Green Room. Theatre in Bombay is never so depressing as when it blatantly reveals the limits of its resources.

It is agreeable to digress critically at the start because Mr. Shenoy's play made some people feel that it was badly produced. It was in fact admirably produced, if production means getting from the actors what they are capable of giving and creating a total effect with words, sets, costumes and lights. *Saint Joan* had a total effect which gripped the audience but in its details it failed to impress. Speech in a play is by no means a detail, yet more than half of it was not audible from one of the better seats. The Englishmen in the cast were the worst offenders, but indeed, they all with-

out exception muffled their words. Even Boni Kapadia's masterful voice was concealed within a studied nonchalance, making Richard de Beauchamp seedy instead of sinister. A question of interpretation again. There is a range of political abilities in Richard which was not expressed through Mr. Kapadia's narrowly villainous wire-puller.

If the play is about the character, *Saint Joan* stands or falls on Miss Pheroza Cooper's interpretation. It falls. Miss Cooper was not a French peasant girl but a nineteenth century Romantic heroine. If it was a pleasure watching her do the wrong thing it is because she is so accomplished an actress. Her attack is superb. She presents the character complete and substantial, invoking the higher standards of criticism one considers irrelevant in the circumstances. A polished confident actress, she has never so far in her career been superficial or played to the gallery. This argues

strength of character which commands admiration. Her *forte* is intensity, her major failing is monotony on a high level of performance. This tends to make her miss the climactic moments, to by-pass somehow that steady build-up which would add shape to an evening's acting. A rather limited voice accentuates the defect. And she does not always know what to do with her hands.

As *Saint Joan*, Miss Cooper pleased by her expressiveness, both of face and of body. Since this is a quality of her acting in any role, the character suffered a further diminution. One is tempted to indulge in the generalisation that the finer the acting the greater the offence, once the general direction of it is misleading. But fine acting it was.

The sets and costumes were very professional, the stage movements clean and lively. Mr. Shenoy seems a solid and serious producer; he needs a little more flair and inspiration.

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correspondence

Tamil Literature

To The Editor, *Quest*.

Sir,

I was glad of the serious response which my article on the Tamil Novel in *Quest* evoked from Mr. Iyer, for two reasons. One, usually articles of serious criticism are ignored and, two, if there is any response it is usually superficial and flippant. Literary criticism can grow only in an atmosphere of frank and serious discussion and it is perhaps this lack of serious discussion that militates against the growth of criticism in Tamil which both Mr. Iyer and I deplore. I am not sorry that the discussion takes place in English, and in a Bombay paper. It is needless to say that it is mainly thanks to contact with English literature and through English literature with other parts of the world that Tamil has grown at least to the extent to which it has grown today. Purists in Tamil there are who want to forget the contribution that contact with English has made to Tamil as they want to forget their immeasurable debt to Sanskrit.

In my article I was interested only in a historical approach to the present stalemate in the Tamil novel. From the first word to the last my purpose was historical, to establish the landmarks of the tradition in the Tamil novel. Mr. Iyer remarks on 'the even tone' in which I mention Rajam Iyer and Arni Kuppusamy and Vai Mu Kothainayaki Ammal. I concede that they are not the same in quality but they are the same in kind, as one would talk of George Borrow and Charles Dickens as being English classics, though they are not of the same quality. As to which novelists in the Tamil tradition I myself preferred should have been evident to any reader.

Lacking the acceptance of literary tradition and an accepted list of classics, I could offer only careful personal judgments about who is better than whom. But in eighty years of the Tamil novel, till time establishes the literary landmarks, every writer who has contributed to the stream is to be considered a classic; till the mainstream is clear, there will be no footnotes. To my mind Vai Mu Kothainayaki Ammal is as important today as Kalki and cannot be neglected.

Regarding Kalki, Mr. Iyer accepts all my statements but argues that he was an intellectual par excellence, and he was the last major writer in the Tamil scene. Kalki's influence on present day writing is immense, I acknowledge, and in that he was in the company of Vaduvor Duraiswamy

Iyengar and before him Arni Kuppuswamy Mudaliar who influenced the writing of Tamil in a manner all their own and formed the tastes of the Tamil reader. In the tradition of Tamil letters, Kalki has as much a place as any of the others. But as a writer, Kalki bowed before every wind that blew and his intellectualism consisted of *stooping* to conquer on every occasion.

From his racy and readable novels, I can quote endless passages to establish the fact that when there was any serious writing to be done, he lost himself in stale jokes, in mysterious nothings artificially wrapped up in sentimentalism, in saying pleasing things which led nowhere. His contribution to language and clarity of expression can be granted perhaps but he had nothing to say beyond polite platitudes and timely sentiments. In my critical estimate, Vaduvor Duraiswamy Iyengar is much more impressive as a writer, for at least in his *Kanakambujam* and in his *Vilasacathy* and to a lesser extent in his retelling of the Greek legend of Eros and Psyche, unlike in his adaptations from Reynolds, he came to grips with his subjects and never tried to escape into mysteriousness, sentiment or trifling good writing. This is offered only as a personal opinion based on my reading.

The most important point about S.V.V. was not that he deteriorated in the middle of his career, but the role of a humorist was forced on him from the first, because he was writing for an audience, as Kalki was, an audience which wanted only humour of a particular type from him. He was a moralist from the first; and let me add that I don't share Mr. Iyer's contempt for moralists. I believe that every writer is at perfect liberty to be moral or immoral (if he can get away with it as Gide did) and/or moral if it so pleases him. The only thing that a critic can demand of him is that out of the moral, the immoral or the amoral, he should produce a work of art. From his early fiction to his latest 'tract for the times,' S.V.V.'s shrewd observation and his personal outlook on the relationship between the past and the present gave him the capacity to be a great artist.

About 'Devan' I find that I cannot share Mr. Iyer's enthusiasm. He was an ineffective writer in the tradition of the journalist Kalki. That he has recorded the dialects of Tamil and their differences is perhaps matter for academic praise by those interested in the subject. That Pudumaipittan wrote in the dialect of Tirunelveli and that R. Shanmugasundaram writes in the dialect of Coimbatore and that I write in the Tanjore middle-class Brahmin dialect is no more important than the circumstances of our birth. If Devan wrote in all the dialects of the Tamil districts, it can only

be because he was a good mimic and he had no roots anywhere.

I agree with Mr. Iyer when he says that there is no group of writers in Tamil who can be called serious. But except in group-conscious France, do such groups exist? Each serious writer writes in 'silence, exile and cunning.' Mr. Iyer has perhaps not come across the statement of Subramanya Bharathi (some time in 1908) that Rajam Iyer showed signs of being a capable writer in Tamil but for want of support he devoted more time to writing in English. Bharathi's own case can be cited as an instance. He was a serious writer who was forced by circumstances to spend most of his time writing inspired journalistic stuff. Even his poetry does not escape being journalistic. Shammugasundaram wrote a series of three novels, slight it is true but genuine and sincere as any modern work in any other language that can be named, but he has for more than ten years now stopped writing and has been silent because he cannot find a forum.

Mr. Iyer's contention that anything serious written can be published in a Tamil magazine is not factual. Till 1945, before mass circulations for magazines were possible, this might have been true. Since 1945, since the increase in circulation of magazines and since the dying down of the *little reviews* there have been few forums in Tamil for any serious writing which does not make concessions to the reigning tastes of history, politics and caste and communal differences. This again would explain the lack of adequate literary criticism in a modern context in Tamil and this in its turn has vitiated the further growth of Tamil letters, for traditions have to be assessed from time to time and literary landmarks fixed occasionally to help the development of the various departments of letters. That is why I said that trusts and little reviews and the like can help a serious writer but how to recognise a serious writer from the successful variety is something that will have to be tackled first.

My essay on the Tamil novel was a modest attempt at trying to point out who are the serious writers among the novelists writing today in Tamil. Even Mr. Iyer seems to proceed on the theory that the successful is the serious in literature, or the most important. Not more than a few hundreds might have heard of a writer called R. Shanmugasundaram or Chidambarsubramaniam while hundreds of thousands might have read Kalki, but that does not, by literary criteria, prove anything.

Mr. Iyer's other remarks on the present situation in Tamil can be endorsed, I think, in full. Except in the short story and in the novel there has been

very little of serious development. Literary criticism and poetry do not exist. The chauvinism and the complacency and the adolescence prevalent is nauseating. Indifference to all non-Tamil achievement is at its height today. The journalistic and the third rate and the pretentious attract the attention of the larger number. The language suffers by the attempts of the purists who want to usher in a completely Tamil era and make the language more inadequate than it really is today (though on this Mr. Iyer is silent). The academic and the literary world in Tamil is dominated by mutual admiration societies and groups bound together only by a lack of literary discipline common to all of them.

Yours, etc.

Trivandrum

KA NAA SUBRAMANYAM

To The Editor, *Quest*.

Sir,

I read Mr. Ramaswamy R. Iyer's article on Contemporary Tamil Literature in *Quest* Vol. 3, No. 3. Allow me to comment on it as it is a subject of some interest to me and one on which I have spent some time. The writer of the article assumes all the 'superior' airs usually associated with the Indo-Anglians when they talk of the language literatures of India, and with all the smugness of self-satisfaction which one associates with the well-fed when they think of 'the poor devil, the mere writer.' Mr. Iyer concedes the start of a renaissance in Tamil, but argues that it was soon lost in the sands and states that there is really nothing worth while being done in Tamil today, nothing worth reading by an adult. While I am willing to concede that the Tamil literary world is full of an unbearable chauvinism and Sangams which are only thinly veiled Mutual Admiration Societies and that most of what is being written is adolescent in quality and appeal, I am of the opinion that serious writing and some writing of the best kind is being done in Tamil today.

To claim Kalki as the only major writer of the Tamil literary scene, as Mr. Iyer does, is according to me, not literary criticism of any standards. 'From Rajam Iyer and Madhaviah one has to take a jump straight to Kalki,' says the learned author, forgetting for a moment even Bharathi and the fact that literature follows a slender but always recognisable thread of tradition and does not take jumps like the ones indicated. And pray what does one mean by a 'major writer'? Was Stendhal a major writer to his contemporaries, both readers and writers? Was Hermann Melville? Was Charles

Dickens? Were not Thackeray and George Eliot hailed as the major writers of England in turn while the major works of Dickens were still being produced? If Rajam Iyer at this distance of time looks like a major writer, is time or his single slender novel responsible? On what do we base these judgments? Mr. Iyer dismisses the work of S.V.V. as not 'major' because in the later stages he wrote like an 'old maid for old maids.' But is a writer to be judged by his best work or by his worst? If we were to judge Wordsworth by his bad poems...?

I suspect that in Mr. Iyer's vocabulary, major means the most well-known. For it is only by that criterion dear to the Tamil reader that Kalki can be called a major writer. And any literary galaxy to which Kalki is admitted will also automatically house his precursors like T. M. Ponnusamy Pillai, Arani Kuppusamy Mudaliar, Vaduvor Duraiswamy Iyengar and his contemporaries like Vai Mu Kothainayaki Ammal and Devan. Each of them was as good as Kalki in style of writing and in love for Tamil, the people, the land and the language. Of these writers, including Kalki himself, my own personal preference is for the work of Vai Mu Kothainayaki Ammal, who can sometimes be as startlingly delightful as Gertrude Stein though not often as original.

Mr. Iyer deplores the lack of the influence of writers like T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Proust, D. H. Lawrence, Henry James and others of that sort. I am myself not parochially-minded and I admire these writers as much as any one else can, but does Mr. Iyer suggest that there was no literature in the world before these writers came on the scene or that Tamil cannot develop in a 'contemporary sense' without these writers? Have the Americans and the Europeans themselves absorbed these writers salutarily enough and always to effective artistic purpose? This is a position which can be argued about endlessly.

I am sure I can name ten writers in Tamil today who are worth any adult's while—to the three hundred or perhaps more adolescents who clamorously occupy the scene. These ten can be added to or subtracted from as personal taste and perceptions dictate. Any literature develops in a way peculiar to itself and to its conditions and no awaiting of the coming of a major writer, I am afraid, will avail. If one thinks one has found a major writer the best way to announce it would be humbly, personally and diffidently, leaving the 'major-ness' to be tested by time and other people. The salient point is that we might not be entertaining mute inglorious Miltons at all, for Miltons remain neither mute nor inglorious for long, but we might

be unawares of entertaining writers who are in the Tamil tradition and who will in the course of the years add to the genuine Tamil tradition.

To recognise them when they are contemporary is of course difficult. The nearness and the lack of critical insight, a reluctance or an incapacity to accept or even to recognise achievement is often at the root of non-recognition. Dilettante enthusiasm and the lack of it, as well as a chauvinistic approach can obscure the issue. The history of literature is full of tardy enough recognitions. It is extremely difficult to say how many of us in spite of all our alertness and a training in the discipline of literature would be able to recognise genius when we see it. Edmund Gosse, you know, was perceptive enough about Mrs. Sarojini Naidu but not about James Joyce. This is where the definition of tradition, in however feeble a manner, can help. It is safer, I feel, not to neglect the Vai Mu Kothainayaki Ammals and the Kalkis of today while at the same time we strive also not to lose sight of the 'Anuthamas' and the R. Shammughasundarams.

If we read our literary histories right, any 'contemporary' literary scene is disheartening and sad. If the Tamil contemporary scene is saddening because of the prevailing chauvinism and the rest of it as listed by R. R. Iyer, other contemporary scenes not only in India but elsewhere in the world are no better. The remedy is not where Mr. Iyer seeks it, but in understanding the Tamil tradition in the novel or in the short story or in poetry and patiently evaluating each little slight talent as we find it, without neglecting even the least promising thing. In Tamil today the short story and the novel have passed beyond the stage of promise; there is critically assessable achievement in them. In poetry and in literary criticism there is not, but efforts are already visible and might yield results if not shortly in due course of time. Mr. Iyer's plea for a strict assessment of literary worth is perhaps only an expression of the contemporary Tamil groping for critical standards and values.

Yours, etc.

'ANDAL'

Madras

To The Editor, *Quest*.

Sir,

Mr. Iyer is not quite right when he says that modern Tamil literature has no serious writers. It has. I mention a few. They are Ka. Na. Subramanyam, N. Chidambarasubramaniam, T. Janakiraman, 'Krithika' and a few others; these are novelists; it has to its credit a host of fine writers who have handled the short story with grace and

distinction like 'Manni', 'Pudumaippittan', Ku. Pa. Ra., L. S. Ramamirtham, C. S. Chellappa, Swaminatha Atreya, Ku. Azhakiswami and others. Mr. Iyer should know that I have selected these names from various literary magazines like *Manikkodi*, *Kalamohini*, *Chandrodayam*, *Chinthanai*, *Teynee*, etc., as distinct from the more well-known and mass-circulation magazines such as *Ananda Vikatan*, *Kalki* and *Kalaimagal*. It would be possible to select a few writers who have contributed to the essay in Tamil like Va. Ra., Supanarayanan, C. R. Srinivasan, etc. In the field of literary criticism too, translations and original works are not wanting—here the names are Supanarayanan, C. Raghunathan, A. Srinivasaraghavan, K. N. S., and others.

How do we define a serious writer? Probably we should say that a work of art commands our respect by virtue of the peculiar vision of life it unfolds and the artistry with which it does it. It expresses a sense of values. I have deliberately chosen the expression 'value' as we may be allergic to that much abused term, 'moral value'. To illustrate what I mean I content myself with quoting two instances from the works of Mr. K.N.S., 'Oru Naal' and 'Vahndavar Kettal.' In the former there is a chapter which deals with the artist qua artist. A perusal of this chapter, as well as the whole novel, will serve to show Mr. Iyer that the Tamil writer is not completely unaware of the major European writers and how he dares to differ from them in certain fundamental values. Indeed the whole book moves in a world of values, which will impress any sensitive reader. The latter novel reminds one of Eliot's dictum, that our capacity for virtue is commensurate with our inherent tendency towards vice. I don't want to labour these points. To me S.V.V. is what he is, not because of his slight humorous pieces, but because his is a completely integrated personality. In the later novels the characters are alive, flat though they be, precisely because they have the force of tradition behind them. His novels, besides presenting a picture of a certain section of the people, has a scheme of values; that this scheme is not to our liking is beside the point. Incidentally, I may mention that Mr. Iyer who seems to have a taste for Eliot, will find 'Krithika's' novel congenial indeed! For there too one can scent a whiff of the wasteland. Besides these novels, the novels of Chidambarasubramaniam, R. Shanmugasundaram, T. Janakiraman, Va. Ra., 'Krithika', 'Anuttama' and Gouri Ammal have also some 'pretensions' to be considered as serious works. Now a pertinent question I would like to put to Mr. Iyer is, besides these writers, what is the peculiar vision of life that one gets after a reading of Kalki's novels?

How does he substantiate the statement that Kalki is a major intellectual force and an archetype?

A word about the conditioning of our environment so that it may be conducive to the growth of good literature. After all it was 'dear dirty Dublin' that served Joyce to produce his major works; and so Tamil Nad, with its jingoism, parochialism, complacency and communalism (why the writer should forbear to mention the last, I can't understand!) would serve any major writer now well indeed!

We can learn any number of tricks from the West; but for our literature to be effective the writing has to be, at bottom, related to our culture and our people. The truth of this may be seen when we read the final chapters of Mr. Nirad Chaudhuri's remarkable work. These chapters prove that even a professed Anglophile cannot escape influences which are essentially Indian; and it is precisely because our Indo-Anglian writers are rooted in our culture that they seem to be vaguely unsatisfying. Moreover these writers seem to suffer from an urge to explain in a superficial manner India to the West. I find that compared to any Indo-Anglian novel, a novel in the regional language, original and of the same kind, is infinitely superior.

May I add that I don't share Mr. Ramaswamy Iyer's enthusiasm for Rajam Iyer's *Kamalambal Charithram*. Its many flaws of texture and structure are offensive at least to one reader which only shows that in these matters none of us can afford to be dogmatic.

Let me end my letter with a request. *Quest* through its Marathi Special Number presented a balanced account of Marathi literature to readers of other linguistic areas. Let me hope that it will render a similar service to Tamil also.

Yours, etc.

Trivandrum

T. K. DORAISWAMY

To The Editor, *Quest*.

Sir,

As a Tamil of Ceylon, it gave me much pleasure to read two of the contributions published in the December, 1957, issue of your excellent journal: *Politics in Madras* by Mr. V. P. Raman and *Contemporary Tamil Literature* by Mr. Ramaswamy R. Iyer.

The Tamil situation in Ceylon is analogous to that in India, with the difference that, for the Tamils of Ceylon, the problem is one of life and death.

Max Muller did great disservice when he gave currency to the word *Aryan*. Again and again

Max Muller declared that when he used the word *Aryan* he meant neither blood nor bones nor hair nor skull, but only a person speaking a particular language group. But, in this age of propaganda, who cares for the truth? That awful word has gone into the headlines, and procreated such monsters as Adolf Hitler and such foolish notions as 'herrenvolk' and 'apartheid'. All those who are stupid enough to allow this word *Aryan* to go to their brains will go his way.

In India, all power, dominion and lordship are centred in the Aryan North; in Ceylon—in the bogus-Aryan South. The Tamil-speaking peoples of Ceylon are a humble, hardy and industrious people. They comprise a third of the Ceylonese population. They occupy, and have occupied for a thousand years and more, a defined and definitely separate territory in Ceylon. They have their own culture, their own language, their own distinctive civilisation. Pure Tamil, unadulterated by Sanskrit, is being spoken in Ceylon today. Much of the commerce of Ceylon is in Tamil hands. Intellectual leadership is with the Tamils. The Tamils began the fight for freedom. Yet even such a people is facing annihilation because the Sinhalese politicians, (kindly and courteous as they are), have got it into their heads that they are *Aryans*, some sort of first cousins to the Germans and the Dutch!

Even more than in Madras, the Ceylon Tamils have the problem of the traitor within their fold. A special facet of the Tamil temperament is that we can produce any number of merely clever persons. I believe that when Mahatma Gandhi and his heroes went marching forth for Indian freedom, many of the Aiyars and Aiyengars of Tamil Nad sat warily on the fence. It was unbelievable that that frail man could beat the British Empire! Similarly, Ceylon today has its contingent of Tamils who are shrewdly astride both sides of the fence—and filling their private purses. On the other hand, the whole generation of younger Ceylon Tamils is awake and alert.

In Ceylon too the Communists are playing their familiar part. Communism has no use for individualism. Therefore, peoples, races, civilisations must be merged in the general mud of materialistic 'welfare'. Of course, communism is not the answer to the money-lust of Capitalism, hateful as that is.

The true answer seems to lie in a solution incapable of the single-word slogan. 'Parity'—'Equality'—'Neutralism'—even 'Co-existence': these are all dangerous words making a vacuum of hard reality. Man will come into his own, and save himself, if at all, only when he realises that

he has been placed by Providence in separate and distinct compartments of civilisation. From a single seed-plot a hundred gardens can blossom. Each unit of civilisation must make up its mind to contain its soul in its own geographical soil. Each human being must self-consciously strive for the enrichment of his own separate civilisation. Only thus can civilisations live side by side in peace and friendly emulation—and Man survive.

The Tamil genius lies in the regions of ethics, music and religion. A Jefferson will one day arise among the Tamil peoples. He will write the canonical book of the Tamil intellect. He will direct the Dravidian mind along channels of its own special civilisation. Through him, and by him, will come forth our future Senecas, Lockes and Humes.

Yours, etc.

Colombo,
Ceylon

R. R. CROSSETTE-THAMBAIAH, Q.C.
Former Solicitor-General of Ceylon

Recognition of Sindhi

To The Editor, *Quest*.

Sir,

For eight years there has been a struggle for the recognition of Sindhi, which has unjustifiably been excluded from the eighth schedule of our Constitution. In spite of many resolutions, sent to the State and the Central authorities, our issue is not being taken for consideration; what we receive, at most, is an official letter of sympathy. All this has resulted in a wide-spread scepticism among Sindhis, whose peaceful, non-violent demand is being time and again put down by the lax administration of our country. Should we be led to believe that hooliganism or violent agitation alone can draw the attention of the Government to our plight?

Sindhi is a rich, living language with its origin in Sanskrit. Nearly four out of every five words have descended from Sanskrit. Thus, Sindhi has the potentiality of enriching Hindi—the test by which its sister languages have been included in the eighth schedule of our Constitution. Distinguished philologists like Sir G. A. Grierson and Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee opine that down the centuries, Sindhi has retained its original form, which is close to Prakrit, and that the knowledge of its form, style, and expression will help not only in the enrichment of Hindi but in the study of the evolution of other Indo-Aryan languages as well.

One of the arguments advanced by the authorities in defence of the non-inclusion of Sindhi, is

that Sindhis are small in number. Sindhis have suffered uniquely in so far as they were not left with even a portion of their province as Punjabis and Bengalis were; if due to circumstances beyond their control, they had to separate from three million Muslims, why should they be blamed?

Besides, the difference between the Kashmiri-speaking people (27 lakhs) and Sindhi-speaking people (20 lakhs) is not so large as to justify the exclusion; nor can Kashmiri boast of such a rich literary tradition as Sindhi.

The other argument is that Sindhis do not live in a 'fairly compact region'. Should we mean that the authorities themselves want to contribute to the cult of provincialism, which is already gnawing at the roots of our central unity and culture? Sindhis had to scatter to different regions of India for the sake of shelter and livelihood. It was the policy of the Government to disperse the displaced persons in a number of states. Besides, Urdu and Sanskrit are not spoken in a 'fairly compact region' and yet they are recognised in the Constitution.

The exclusion of Sindhi from the eighth schedule of our Constitution has placed it under various undeserved handicaps. Official and non-official bodies have refused to recognise it for the purpose of their cultural activities. The Sangeet Natak

Akadami, the Lalit Kala Akadami, the National Book Trust, Vividh Bharati, etc., do not allow its participation in their various programmes, because it is not officially recognised by the Government. The Intermediate U.P. Board in its prospectus, has dubbed Sindhi as a 'foreign language.' In our own land, we are made to feel as strangers. The Rajasthan Government have infringed upon the fundamental rights of citizens, as provided in the Constitution, by imparting education to the young Sindhi children through a medium which is not their mother tongue. All this is the logical outcome of the failure of the Government to give a rightful place in the Constitution to the language of the two million citizens of its own country.

In December, the All-India Sindhi Language Convention was held at Delhi to make a peaceful demand for an amendment of the Constitution. Sindhis have already been uprooted from their soil; to deprive them of their own language will be to add insult to injury. We are still hovering between a future which by turns appears gloomy and bright. We do not know when we shall be considered as citizens of India and be allowed to taste the fruits of democracy.

Ajmer

Yours, etc.

CHETAN KARNANI

OUR REVIEWERS

A. H. Somjee. Reader in Political Science at M. S. University of Baroda

Mahesh Desai. Bihar Trade Union worker

Foy Nissen. Free lance critic and reviewer of literature and theatre

Iqbal Lukmani. Young poet and critic

Andal. Pen-name of Mrs. S. Rajee of Madras

Uma Anand. Director of the Women's Programme, All India Radio. Film-script and commentary writer.

The Fourth Conference of The Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom

The fourth Conference of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom was held in Patna on December 14 and 15 under the presidentship of Rukminidevi Arundale. The Conference discussed two topics. The first was 'The Democratic Alternative' and the other the problem of the integration of the tribal people in Indian Society. An exhibition of photographs and paintings was held during the Conference. Among painters represented in the Exhibition were Mr. Gopal Ghosh, Mr. K. K. Hebbar, Mr. Ara, Mr. Badri Narayan, Mr. Almelkar, Mr. Shiavax Chavda and others. The photographers represented included Mr. Homi Patel and Mr. Sunil Janah.

Prof. Narmadeshwar Prasad of the Patna University presided over the discussion on The Democratic Alternative, the participants being Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, Mr. M. R. Masani, Prof. V. K. N. Menon, Mr. M. P. Mishra, Prof. Rajkrishna and Prof. Amlan Datta. The basis of the discussion was a ninety-page thesis specially written for the Seminar by Miss Devaki Sreenivasan.

The discussion of the integration of the tribal people in Indian society was presided over by Mr. B. S. Guha, Director of the Bihar Tribal Welfare Institute, and those participating included Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, Mrs. Rukminidevi Arundale, Mr. Zaiuddin Ahmed, Mr. H. B. Chandra and others.

At the General Meeting the Annual Report and the Statement of Accounts were adopted. The project of converting *Quest* into a quarterly and making it a journal of ideas rather than emphasizing in it literature and the arts was discussed at length. It was decided to entrust the editorial responsibility to Mr. Abu Sayeed Ayyub and Prof. Amlan Datta as joint editors, setting up the editorial office at Calcutta while retaining the managerial office in Bombay. It was decided to place on record the Committee's high appreciation of the selfless service rendered to *Quest* by Mr. Ezekiel.

The General Meeting decided to set up 5 Study Groups:—

- a) To study laws and procedures imposing restrictions repugnant to self-respect and human dignity. The Group will consist of Mr. Purshotamdas Tricumdas, Prof. V. K. N. Menon and Mr. M. P. Mishra, M.P.
- b) To study the full implications of the Gramdan Movement and the institutional structure and pattern of land rights and relations in Gramdan villages.
- c) To study import restrictions and other difficulties in the way of import of books and periodicals and material required for artistic work by artists, photographers and others and the restrictions placed upon speeches, debates and other matters by All India Radio.
- d) To study the problem of State patronage and writers' freedom.
- e) To study the developments in Kerala under the Communist regime, to be undertaken on the basis of a one-year programme.

The following were elected as members of the Executive Committee. —

Mrs. Rukminidevi Arundale, M.P.
Mr. M. Bhaktavatsalam,
Mr. Eric da Costa,
Mr. Amlan Datta,
Mr. Raman K. Desai,
Mr. Jaipalsingh, M.P.
Mr. Laxmansastri Joshi,
Mr. M. R. Masani, M.P.

Mr. Asoka Mehta, M.P.
Mr. V. K. N. Menon,
Mr. Mathura Prasad Mishra, M.P.
Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan,
Prof. Narmadeshwar Prasad,
Mr. Ramsingh,
Mr. Sampurnanand,
Mr. Philip Spratt.

Hon. Secretaries

Mr. V. B. Karnik
Mr. J. B. H. Wadia

book reviews

ORIENTAL DESPOTISM

by Karl A. Wittfogel

THE FIVE GIFTS

by R. P. Masani

THE LOVES OF KRISHNA

by W. G. Archer

EXPLORATIONS

by Sibnarayan Ray

THE NEW CLASS

by Milovan Djilas

NOT BY BREAD ALONE

by V. Dudintsev

MAKING KNOWING AND JUDGING

by W. H. Auden

THE POET'S WAY OF KNOWLEDGE

by C. Day Lewis

HISTORY OF THE TAMIL LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

by Vaiyapuri Pillai

THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

by Melvin J. Lasky

TALKING OF GANDHIJI

by F. Watson & M. Brown

WELCOME EACH REBUFF

by Mahdi Ali Mirza

ORIENTAL DESPOTISM by Karl A. Wittfogel (Yale University Press: Pp. 556, Price: \$7.50)

IN the social sciences, the influence of Marxism as a technique of investigation is considerable. Marx may be said to have made the first 'scientific' attempt in the understanding of complex groups of factors which determine human relationships and institutions. His attempt was 'scientific' because he consciously made hypotheses and verified them with the help of his great scholarship in social and economic history. He also inspired a group of social scientists who in their mature careers drifted away both from his methodology and conclusions. They are Max Weber, Sombart, Schumpeter and Wittfogel, the author of *Oriental Despotism*. As opposed to the first three thinkers who mainly controverted Marx's analysis of bourgeois society, Wittfogel takes up issues with him on his most neglected study, namely the 'Asiatic Society'.

Professor Wittfogel has studied the nature of 'Asiatic Society' for a period of thirty years and he claims that his findings reveal the authoritarian character of its political institutions and bureaucracy, the counterpart of which, according to him, has never existed in 'Western Society'.

The principal thesis of Wittfogel's *Oriental Despotism* is that 'Asiatic Society' has produced the harshest form of political power. That the 'Asiatic State' exercises a *total* control over 'Asiatic Society'. This is because the agricultural 'Asiatic Society' has to totally depend on the efforts of the 'Asiatic State' to provide it with water by means of irrigation canals. In the 'Asiatic Society', bureaucracy is all in all. In fact it is the ruling class. 'Asiatic bureaucracy' never allows the Church, the nobility, the gentry and guilds to be strong enough and share its powers. Under the yoke of such a bureaucracy, 'Asiatic Society' stagnates for centuries. The only occasion when it begins

to move is when it becomes a colony of some Western power. What is worse, a society with an 'Asiatic' past can have no liberal democratic future for it always retains a latent fascination for some sort of authoritarianism. According to the learned professor this is what is happening to free India today.

The nomenclature specially coined to express this dubious thesis is, to put it mildly, nerve-racking. The book is littered with terms like 'hydraulic society', 'agropototic state', 'agromanagerial bureaucracy' etc.

And so far as Wittfogel's thesis is concerned I have the following criticism to offer: Firstly, his assertion that 'Western Society' as opposed to 'Asiatic Society', (a term which he has made as derogatory as he possibly could) has a social and economic past which is necessarily conducive to freedom is baseless. Germany, which by Wittfogel's own definition is a part of 'Western Society' produced a kind of political barbarism, both in peace and war, which is unprecedented in the history of mankind. Secondly, the conceptual framework used by Wittfogel is neither free from Marxian economic determinism nor naive historicism. Both these concepts have been refuted in the twentieth century social sciences. On his part Wittfogel makes use of them without answering their critics. Finally, Wittfogel has depended far too much on some sort of deductivist reasoning in the exposition of his thesis. And wherever he has tried to support his assertion with the help of empirical evidence, the facts supplied by him are not always reliable. For instance, he says that in 1950, eighty per cent of land in India was owned by absentee landlords (P.433). This is not true. In fact the proportion is much less. It was in the region of thirty to forty per cent (See *Capital Taxation* by I.S. Gulati, p. 114).

It cannot be denied that Wittfogel's *Oriental Despotism* is a product of great learn-

ing and scholarship but unfortunately it is not free from some sort of sociological cold war which the author indulges in with his opposite numbers across the Iron Curtain.

A. H. SOMJEE

THE FIVE GIFTS by R. P. Masani (Collins, 15s).

WE can now take it that those sceptics who thought of the Bhoodan movement as a taking off point for exercising their wit will have to find some other platform of mirth. All the jokes in the world will not alter the fact that, in the last six years, Vinoba Bhave has been given four and a half million acres of land by zamindars to give away to those peasants who have none. At the most the gesture of the gift of land might mean a real 'change of heart', a change of values, even an entrance into a state of grace. At the least, it means a grudging, sometimes even sulky acquiescence to the request of a venerated leader.

The fact that remains, however, is that people have, and do, willingly and without coercion give away their land if they are asked to do so by Bhave. This is a fact which must now be accepted and about which it is pointless to argue, doubt, or wonder. To the stock objections that much of the land is barren and some of the title deeds faulty, there are now stock answers. The land is a cross-section of all the agricultural land in India, and the percentage of faulty deeds is the same as the percentage of faulty deeds throughout the country.

Accepting all this, then, the question which remains is: What, in practical terms, has this movement meant so far? The U.P. and Bihar have been Vinobaji's chief hunting grounds and he has collected lakhs of acres of land from landlords in that area. It seems, on paper, that the land-redistribution problem should have been all but solved in these States. Has this, in fact, happened? Sir Rustom Masani has to ad-

mit that so far only 8% of the land which has been collected has been re-distributed to the landless. This is disappointing and slightly anti-climactic after the expectations which have been raised about our unique bloodless revolution. Obviously there is a bottleneck somewhere. No one expects, in this short time, a neat, ideal arrangement of 100% re-distribution among needy peasants with everybody becoming a new man, the donor spiritually fulfilled and the recipient materially happy. One knows very well that one must allow for land which is unworkable, land which is inaccessible, which is unirrigated, and a thousand other things. But allowing for all this, is it not reasonable to hope that 50% of the land should have been handed over to land hungry peasants by now? Or even 40%?

As for working the new land, the conditions of distribution stipulate that land must be worked within 3 years of acquiring it. Sir Rustom does not tell us how many peasants have already started to cultivate their new-found land. Since to do this would require seeds, implements, bullocks, ploughs, and a great many other things as well, we can assume that the figure is probably not astronomical.

Sir R. P. Masani, though full of fire and admiration for the Saint, gives a fair and objective presentation of the facts about the movement. He impresses us, even though he cannot convert us completely, and many of us find ourselves in a difficult situation. We do not want to give up our hard-headed, practical attitude; still less do we wish to be thought unsympathetic to India's spirituality and tradition of saintly leadership. Unwilling to scoff but unable to pray, we are caught between two fires, and we cannot make up our minds exactly where to place the Bhoodan movement in the economy and politics of the country. And yet, it is possible that we are seeking to judge it at a completely mistaken level when we try to pinpoint its place in our

political or administrative machinery. Perhaps its place is in another dimension altogether. Like the defences of peace, perhaps it is in the minds of men that Bhoodan has its real place. Perhaps it is true that, 'What is really important is not the actual acreage of land obtained but the new spirit infused into the minds of the people. You should not expect the Bhoodan movement to solve the problems of the landless.... But the movement has changed the atmosphere in India in regard to this question. Thereby it has helped directly to solve the problem.' The words are Mr. Nehru's.

LAEEQ FUTEHALLY

THE LOVES OF KRISHNA by W. G. Archer
(Allen & Unwin, 30s.)

KRISHNA and the Gita always go together in the Indian mind. Krishna, the Lord, is the exponent of the various paths to Moksha. Krishna, the leader of the Yadavas and the ruler of Dwaraka, is also a consummate practitioner of statecraft. But the Krishna who has cast a spell on the Indian mind is not the Krishna who revealed the mystery of religion to Arjuna, not the Krishna who slew the demons and ruled Dwaraka, but the young Krishna of Brindaban, the mischievous companion of the cowherds and the unabashed lover of the Gopis, chief among whom was Radha.

There is something strange in this. For Krishna's loves in Brindaban are neither tame nor traditional. He arouses intense longing in the women around him and he reciprocates their ardour without inhibitions. There is something incongruous in the apotheosis of this single aspect of a personality which has been considered total and absolute. For Krishna is Poorna Purshottam, perfect man among men. The strangeness and incongruity of the worship of Krishna, the Lover, would be incredible in the Indians who are so rooted and gyved in tradition. And yet Krishna is written

about and painted more than any other God or figure of Indian history.

There is, of course, the explanation of analogy and symbolism. That Krishna was no ordinary mortal but God, an incarnation of Vishnu and what he did is not permissible to mere mortals. That he loved without desire and attachment. That in his love for the Gopis he revealed the possibility for everyone to attain Moksha if only God is loved completely and fearlessly.

While it concerned itself with the search for unity that underlies everything, the Indian mind took cognisance of the concreteness of human experience. Its awareness of the undeniability of such concrete experience was as deep as it was genuine. There was no desire or need to evade it. The worship of Krishna, the Lover, underlines this deep awareness of human experience. Life is continuity. There can be no continuity without love. Life is love. This is also beautifully brought out in the story of Shiva and Parvati. When Parvati, unable to bear the affront to Shiva, leaps into the fire, Shiva is mad with rage and there is Tandava—the dance of destruction. The whole world is destroyed because Shiva, the God, is separated from Parvati. When love ceases there is nothing but death and destruction. Such a concept of living cannot but manifest itself in all expressions of literate emotions, poetry, painting, sculpture. And Indian sculpture, painting and poetry are replete with exuberant eroticism.

Judging by the yardstick of contemporary Indian society, its prejudices and its pre-occupations, such an all-embracing view of life, at once passionate and detached, appears to be distant and difficult to understand. It is, therefore, remarkable that an Englishman has been able to understand the working of the Indian mind so much better than we do. For Mr. Archer's book *The Loves of Krishna* is a summing up of the Indian way of life. It is a measure of his modesty that he has done so without

claiming to do so. He says that his purpose in writing the book is to 'throw some light on Indian Painting by presenting the story of Krishna in the clearest possible terms.' In order to explain the significance of Krishna paintings he has put together the source material of the Krishna legend and his range is very great from the Upanishads to the Hindi poetry of the seventeenth century.

Such extensive erudition could have easily smothered up the truth and tenderness of the Krishna legend as an abiding expression of the Indian mind. Nevertheless Mr. Archer has written with such sensitiveness that after reading the book one strongly feels like meeting him and talking to him. Or rather listening to him while he talks. For there can be no doubt that Mr. Archer can talk a great deal, knowledgeably and with understanding and without the slightest inflexion of voice which might suggest that he was sitting in judgment over the things he talks about. It is, therefore, a great pity that the discussion on painting in the book is so brief. One also wishes that the photographs were as good as the texts which explain the paintings.

MAHESH DESAI

EXPLORATIONS by Sibnarayan Ray
(Rs. 4. Renaissance Publishers, Calcutta)

MR. RAY'S *Explorations*, described as 'essays in literary and philosophical criticism,' turn out to be seven short rambles through well-known suburbs of a town the author seems to be reassuring himself he knows. The dissatisfaction this engenders is apparent in the first essay, on Montaigne, who, 'as we know him in his literary writings represents a certain human type.... his appeal is therefore largely limited to such readers as come within the range of that classification.' The essay becomes a character-chase after Montaigne the elusive and enigmatic, aided by clues that are turn-

ed up in commentary-breakdowns of Pascal, Flaubert and Sainte-Beuve.

Mr. Ray says rightly that Montaigne is 'a test for one's deeper susceptibilities' but disappoints by enumerating these as 'one's preferences between clarity and depth, wit and emotional intensity, between a view of man as stupid and a view of man as torn from within, between the limitations of art form and the manifoldness of experience.'

The discussion of 'Hamlet' follows much the same pattern. Mr. Ray attributes failure to Shakespeare 'not so much in the limitation of the plot as in the inherent unsuitability of the medium.' What does this mean?

Both Baudelaire and the 'Crisis in Modern Literature' receive sympathetic if only fact-feeding attention; both essays would be useful to a college student bereft of other pointers to an awareness of the ambience in which European literature has developed during the last half-century. There can be no doubt about Mr. Ray's genuine interest in the subjects he tackles, but one's own interest is repaid only with the feeling that nothing very significant emerges from the facts and opinions he collates.

Mr. Ray shows no signs of allowing his interest in modern European literature to stray from the tracks beaten out by Baudelaire, Ezra Pound, Eliot and Auden; he sees nothing but despair around him in the poetic landscape. One wonders how Mr. Ray reacts to the less arid but no less disciplined outlook of, say, a contemporary of Eliot's like the late Wallace Stevens.

Popper's theory of the 'open Society,' Anton Pannekoek's critique of Leninism and an account of Jean Paul Sartre's position as existentialist and political thinker make up the remainder of *Explorations*. Not much can be added in an essay to Popper's two volumes except by way of particular comment or meticulous analysis. Mr. Ray confines himself to presenting a concise ap-

praisal of the ground Popper covers and an appreciation for his having done so.

Summarising the principal arguments of the astronomer Pannekoek's analysis of Lenin's philosophical ideas, Mr. Ray embarks on a discussion of Marxism-Leninism in general. He is critical of Sartre at the same time acknowledging the historical processes of European thought that have developed into the two main forms of Existentialism; and its influence on modern European consciousness receives a clear exposition that sympathetically attempts an insight into the irretraceable nature of European complexity. However, by the very nature of the circumstances it was not possible to cover the ground at all extensively—one accepts Mr. Ray's offerings in the genuine spirit with which he presents them.

FOY NISSEN

THE NEW CLASS. An Analysis of the Communist System by Milovan Djilas. (Frederick A. Praeger, New York.)

THE full meaning of this slender volume has, I am afraid, been lost on most political students in the free world. For this, the pathetic eagerness to seize hold of anything that savours of anti-communism, is largely responsible. It is this very anxiety which hinders the development of thought behind the 'iron curtain'. Milovan Djilas, however, even in the years when he was the leading propagandist, theoretician and ideologist of the Yugoslavian Communist Party, was known as the man whose thoughts were several steps ahead of the rest. 'I have been since my earliest youth, and I shall remain till the end of my life, a free man and a Communist. I do not see that the one excludes the other.' That was in 1954 when, after a successful resistance to the pressures of Soviet Russia, the Yugoslav Communists were charting an independent course in foreign politics,

when Tito's confident words to the critical Djilas were, 'Go on writing.' Three years later, Djilas had travelled further along the line. 'As I became increasingly estranged from the reality of contemporary Communism,' he observes in his preface to this book, 'I came closer to the idea of democratic socialism.'

Djilas is still many steps ahead of other Communists. But it is significant that he has come thus far because it is the beginning of a process not dissimilar to that which saw the rise of Communism itself. For, as Communism grew out of the dissatisfaction of sensitive individuals who knew no other system with capitalism as it then existed, Djilas' revolt against Communism is motivated by his very absorption in the Communist system. And, like the early Communists who were firm in their faith that capitalism was bound to go, Djilas too has a strong conviction that the Communist system will not long endure. 'The world will change and will go in the direction in which it has been moving and must go on—toward greater freedom, progress and unity. The power of reality and the power of life have always been stronger than any kind of brutal force and more real than any theory,' he concludes.

Djilas, when he talks of democratic socialism, has something very different in mind from that which we have known on this side of the curtain. He makes a special reference to the importance of ensuring that the means are as free from any taint as the ends are desirable. Gandhiji, it might be said, was the first to insist on the 'purity' of the means in political matters, but we cannot claim that India today has been effectively converted to his ideas.

The New Class gives a searching analysis of contemporary Communism. Much of what Djilas says has been said before. Anton Ciliga had been among the first of the Yugoslavian Communists to denounce the enthronement of bureaucracy in the

Communist State. But Djilas has gone the farthest in asserting that the use of force is inherent in the Communist system and that intolerance of opposition is essential to the continuance of the party. He writes: 'Other classes, too, obtained their strength and power by the revolutionary path, destroying the political, social and other orders they met in their way. However, almost without exception, these classes attained power after new economic patterns had taken shape in the old society. The case was the reverse with new classes in the Communist systems. It did not come to power to complete a new economic order but to establish its own and, in so doing, to establish its power over society.'

The picture that emerges from Djilas' book applies not only to the Communist State but to all administrations which pin their faith on 'nationalised industry.' Out of this grows the single party State, the wastage of national effort, the theft and pilfering and misappropriation of 'national property', and the isolation of the economy. What sustains the State and the ruling party and class in all this is the fear that any attempt to correct mistakes of policy will let in foreign influences—a fear which is sedulously fostered in the public by the leaders and the Government. Djilas points out that not a single Communist leader has been overthrown or has suffered in any way because of unproductively expended or fantastically wasted means. The technique of 'self-criticism' has been adopted not to bring about corrections but in order to perpetuate the leadership and evade responsibility. As the ideological nature of Communism fades away, power and ownership remain, exercising their influence more effectively. 'Power is an end in itself and the essence of contemporary Communism. Other classes may be able to maintain ownership without a monopoly over power or power without a monopoly over ownership. Until now, it has not been possible

for the new class which was formed through Communism; it is very improbable that it will be possible in the future.'

Of all the chapters, the one on National Communism is the most fascinating, treating as it does with the conflict between international Communism and National Communism. Whether National Communism is Communism in decline, as Djilas observes, or whether it is an inevitable phase in the expansion of Communism, is a matter of terminology. But the U.S.S.R. faces a situation here which it can neither ignore nor control. The weakest section is where Djilas deals with the relation between the under-developed countries and the Western democracies. This, however, is not to be wondered at since the subject has baffled economic experts in the West.

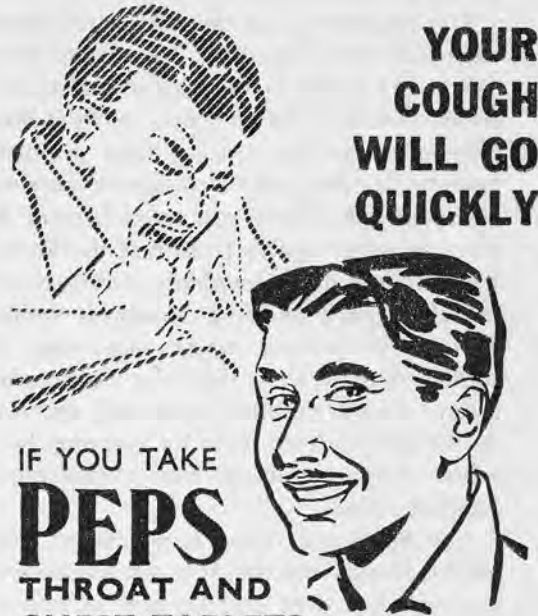
S.N.

NOT BY BREAD ALONE by V. Dudintsev.
(Hutchinson, 15s.)

DUDINTSEV'S sensational Russian novel', screams the cover, 'the FULL translation by Dr. Edith Bone,' (implying that other editions may be truncated, as in the case of allegedly pornographic books) The blurb takes it up: 'one of the most vital and significant documents of our time'a *human story* as only the old Russian masters could tell a *human story* (italics in the original)....goes much further than Khrushchev did in striking out against the tyranny which Stalin and his bureaucrats exercised over the human spirit....'

Not content with this, the publishers have perpetrated a special preface: '.... the authentic voice of Russian humanity a novel which illuminates a universal human predicament.' They have also provided a selection of opinions on the back cover, among them Edward Crankshaw's: '...will come to stand for the awakening of the Russian people to the true nature of the regime of Lenin and Stalin and Khrushchev.

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(We thought Khrushchev had struck out against the tyranny of Stalin and Dudintsev had gone much further. . . .)

The publishers and the critics who have written in this vein about a mediocre Russian novel ought to be ashamed of themselves. Not only does it reflect on their literary judgment but also on their political honesty. Are they not extravagantly praising *Not By Bread Alone* as a novel because it gives an unfavourable picture of the Soviet Union? How many hundreds of American, British, French or Japanese novels would have to be praised in the same way, if similar criteria were used, by communist critics? And when they do use such criteria, do we not condemn them for assessing literature from a political and propagandist point of view?

Not By Bread Alone is significant, but not for literary reasons. It is not sensational as a novel, it does nothing new or important as literature. It has created a sensation because it does not conform to the pattern of literary expression imposed on the Russians by their rulers. This fact can be recognised without surrendering to hysteria, without inviting the contempt of the communists by seeming to exploit the situation for political reasons. Literature has its own dignity and integrity. Politics is frequently the arena of mass passions. To drag a novel into that arena is obscene. As Dudintsev rightly says, 'When I held in my hands a few newspapers with these honourable articles by "experts on Russia," I felt as though my novel—a peaceable ship in foreign waters—had been seized by pirates and was flying the skull and crossbones.' The rebuke is thoroughly deserved and well delivered.

Let me press the point home. If I write a novel exposing inefficiency and corruption in Indian business and government circles, the Indian setting is chosen because it is the only one with which I am familiar. The success of the novel as a novel depends on

the extent to which inefficiency and corruption are explored as human phenomena. This in turn stems from the sharpness of the particular context portrayed. A foreign critic may gloat over the exposure and use it to feed his hostility to the Indian government. This would be a travesty of the emotional and intellectual experience the novel is supposed to offer. It cannot command an iota of respect. In their response to *Not By Bread Alone* Western critics have placed themselves in that position.

Unfortunately, Dudintsev does not conduct his defence from the literary standpoint alone. He, too, enters the political arena and wields propaganda weapons with a will. We know that he was under pressure to do so, that he has recently been compelled to recant and promise a more 'positive' novel. Nothing less depressing could have been expected. Dudintsev speaks in his Epilogue with two voices. With one he refers to 'a work of art with all its intricate contradictions and peculiarities, rooted in the personality, philosophy and life experience of the author.' With the other, he produces this nonsense: 'We Soviet people jealously guard the basic principles of our life, that uplift of the soul and that purity of new human relations which spring up in us from our early years. And with all the force of which a dedicated man suddenly torn from a beloved activity is capable, we repudiate those who bring disillusionment, introversion (*sic*), and selfish calculation into our ranks; we pour out on them all our anger, and however tough such seasoned time-servers may be, we shall force them to surrender.'

It was these feelings that the Soviet readers saw in my book. These feelings are in no way related to that little flame of hope which may perhaps rise in the heart of some Russian landowner grown old in exile, when he reads a propagandist article about my book.'

These are the unmistakable accents of

the Soviet Propaganda Machine, the Big Lies of Soviet Patriotism, the Party Line in Literature which treats a demand for sincerity as a scandal and an outrage.

The novel itself strikes a somewhat different note. It has no climactic moments. It never rises to passionate denunciation of the evils it exposes nor to lucid insights and perceptions. Its analysis of motives is within severe limits, its characters, once established, behave predictably. The writing is journalistic throughout. The story, though interesting enough, drags at many places. The point Dudintsev wishes to make about bureaucrats is made over and over again. Lopatkin, the inventor, has a hard time of it but his sufferings are described rather than probed.

Dudintsev has not the stature to grasp the problem of bureaucracy in all its depth. He does not even try to do so. Nor does he

go beyond his depiction of Soviet bureaucracy to its totalitarian and ideological roots. In the first few chapters one feels he is going to do this but the effort is abandoned. It is forbidden in the Soviet Union to criticise the official ideology and its totalitarian expression. Bureaucracy, on the other hand, has been a subject for attack ever since the Revolution was consolidated under Stalin. Stalinism is evil of a darker colour than bureaucracy. Opportunism, self-deception, hatred of individualism and originality, abuse of power, dogmatism and petty jealousy are not vices peculiar to communist societies. If criticism of communism is to be fundamental it must discover the disease of absolutism at its ideological core, must uncover its essential method of government by terror, torture and murder, and it must record the scope of its ruthless power over human behaviour.



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Dudintsev cannot, of course, be blamed for not writing a novel which does these things. He would have had to pay for it with his life. What one has a right to expect is some hint of the cause that breeds the bureaucrats swarming in his book. Not a demonstration or an explanation of the cause but an awareness of it.

In the absence of this awareness the novel develops without revealing more about its characters than we know at an early stage. Only the sequence of events remains, to interest and to entertain. The technique of social realism, with its devotion to documentary detail, succeeds in making even that heavy going and repetitious. *Not By Bread Alone* may mean as much to the Russians as it is reputed to, but outside the Iron Curtain it is necessary to read it only once, to know what all the fuss is about. It *cannot* be read a second time. That verdict sums up its literary value.

NISSIM EZEKIEL

MAKING, KNOWING AND JUDGING by W. H. Auden (An inaugural lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 11th June 1956, Clarendon Press, Oxford University).

THE POET'S WAY OF KNOWLEDGE by C. Day Lewis (The Henry Sidgwick Memorial Lecture, 1956, Cambridge University Press).

ONE of the most useful by-products of the *intellectualized* approach to social and emotional problems in modern poetry has been the interest in discussing the Theory of Poetry shown by the poets themselves. As Auden and Day Lewis belong to that select band which has also been blessed with great learning, their critical writings provide an invaluable guide to the difficulties of reorientation of language and technique which poets have had to face while attempting to convert contemporary experience into poetry—their problem of creating a new symbolism which could adequately express the manifold impacts of science

and psychology on the soul of modern man.

In fact, were it not for such writing, I suspect that the critics whom Auden, in the course of this lecture, labels (i) The Prig, and (ii) The Critic's Critic (unfortunately the tribe increaseth everyday) would have so completely swamped literary criticism as to make the writing of new poetry impossible. The advantage, as Auden points out, which the poet-turned-critic possesses is that 'such satisfactions to the ego as the writing of poetry can provide have been taken care of in his case' which more likely than not would prevent him from turning into a Prig (for whom no actual poem is good enough since the only one that would be is 'the poem he would like to write but cannot') nor yet into a Critic's Critic who 'on the surface appears to idolize the poet about whom he is writing; but his critical analysis of his idol's work is so much more complicated and difficult than the work itself, as to deprive someone who has not yet read it of all wish to do so'. The interest of the scholar-poet is likely to be of a more simple and immediate character, because his chief concern would lie in whether a form or style is capable of catering to the variegated needs of his time, and how it is likely to affect the poems of the writers who adopt it. While of course what a poet may have to say about the nature of poetry is often one-sided and tends to degenerate into a justification of the particular kind of poetry he himself writes, yet in as much as it exposes the inner conflict of the poet, there is always something to learn from it. The great value of such reflections lies in the sharing of personal experiments, and to this end the student of poetry could have hardly hoped to find better guinea-pigs than Auden and Day Lewis.

Making, Knowing and Judging is the text of Prof. Auden's inaugural lecture delivered at the Oxford University where he was appointed Professor of Poetry last year. He has, with characteristic virtuosity and

finesse, captured in these thirty-three pages the most elusive ideas and experiences ranging from the time the poet is struggling with his first poem to when he refrains from writing what might perhaps turn out to be a good poem simply in order to avoid being trapped into 'self-imitation'; or the time when, faced with a new poem, he asks himself: 'Here is a verbal contraption. How does it work? What kind of guy inhabits this poem? What is his notion of the good life or the good place? His notion of the Evil One? What does he conceal from the reader? What does he conceal even from himself?' . . . One feels like the naturalist who in a single visit to the Zoo sees more wild life than he has been able to find in years of roaming in forests.

Day Lewis begins his talk on *The Poet's Way of Knowledge* by saying: 'Once upon a time poetry and science were one, and its name was Magic', and goes on to prove his thesis that poetry is another way of gaining and imparting knowledge—'operating with equal validity at different levels of awareness'—a son of the same father as science. The lecture is an excellent example of what prose should be—direct, lucid, polished; and while the conclusions Lewis arrives at are applicable to all poetry generally, they are specially useful in understanding the imagery—in fact the whole poetic approach—employed by the Auden-Spender-Lewis-MacNeice group.

IQBAL LUKMANI

HISTORY OF THE TAMIL LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE by Vaiyapuri Pillai
(New Century Book House, Rs. 4.75)

THE chronology of ancient Tamil literature is chaotic and on this chaos, the late Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai through this volume and through many essays and lectures and publications has shed a scholarly and revealing light. Some of his attempts at dating the old Tamil output have been un-

popular because the professor was inclined to assign, on impartial grounds, later dates for the classics and in a few cases he even traced the originals to their sources instead of proclaiming the uniqueness of the Tamil works. The posthumous publication of *The History Of The Tamil Language And Literature* is a landmark and a turning point in Tamil scholarship. The New Century Book House can be congratulated on having produced this volume, though it might be said that the proofs should have been corrected more diligently and some unEnglish expressions changed. Incidentally, along with Bharathi and Pudumaippittan, the communists will now claim that Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai also belonged to them on the strength of their having brought out this book.

It is not necessary to chronicle here the accepted traditional dates for the Tamil classics. I shall merely list the dates that



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Vaiyapuri Pillai gives because the traditional dates are often unsupported by facts. The author of this book is an impeccable scholar and he arrays his evidence in unimpeachable terms. The traditional scholars, inspired by a jingoism that is part of the world of scholarship in Tamil, will no doubt fight every year of the calendar still, but Vaiyapuri Pillai's dates on the evidence he has quoted in this book are more likely to be accepted by coming generations.

The beginnings of the Tamil script he assigns to about the third century B.C. and the beginnings of literature proper to the second century A.D. The work of about four hundred odd poets individually named and recognised was collected round about the fourth century A.D. in the famous *Sangam* Anthologies and *Idylla*. By about the middle of the fifth century, the first extant complete grammar in Tamil, *Tolkappiyam*, came to be written and the country round Madurai was considered the land where standard Tamil was spoken. By the beginning of the seventh century the first of the great didactic works of the Tamils, and indisputably the best, was composed by Tir Valluvar (*Tirukkural*) and this was followed by many minor didactic works. The sixth, seventh and the following centuries also saw a rise of the great devotional literature of the Tamils. This devotional output was of two persuasions, Saivite and Vaishnavite, the former being the earlier. *Appar*, *Sundarar* and *Sambhandhar* belong from the middle of the seventh to the middle of the eighth centuries, *Manikkavachagar* to the ninth. The *Alvars* flourished between 700 and 900 A.D.

Secular literature flourished side by side with this devotional religious literature. The twin epics *Manimekhalai* (first quarter of the 9th century) and *Silappadhikaram* (second quarter of the 9th cent.) are dated by the professor with what looks like in-

controvertible evidence, internal as well as external. The third available Tamil epic of old, *Jivaka Chinthamani* is placed by him in the 10th century. The author notices also many minor poems, lexicons and grammars that flourished in these centuries of which only a few references and some fragments have survived to this day.

Apart from providing the first clear authenticated and chronological history of Tamil literature, the author gives us a critical picture of the literary output as well as the many influences which shaped it. Eschewing the traditional, romantic, jingoistic approaches, he gives the first, or almost the first, critical estimate of the Tamil work of the old days and relates the life of the Tamil and his literature with activity in various other parts of India and elsewhere in the world with which the ancient Tamil world is known to have had contacts. The trade with the Romans in the early years of the Christian era is detailed as well as the Jain, Buddhistic and other religious influences from different parts of India. The Professor relates the influence that Sanskrit literature and Sanskrit ideas played in shaping early Tamil writing.

Speaking of the so-called *Sangam* literature, Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai writes: 'It consists of 2,186 poems distributed over six anthologies and one collection of longer poems. They contain in all about 26,350 lines. They are all in the *ahaval* metre, the first in the long course of development in the metrical system in Tamil. It is indigenous and it has no parallel in Sanskrit, the blank verse in English being its nearest equivalent. The magnificent sweep of the longer poems is sometimes marred by the obscurity of the construction... But in the shorter poems, the language is simple, direct and forceful. Conciseness of expression, pregnancy of meaning, purity of diction, and unity of thought are the main characteristics of these *Sangam* poems and the simplicity of the Tamilian taste com-

pare favourably with that of the ancient Greeks. The frigid conceits and the pedantic professional exercises of grammarians which characterise the literature of a later period are entirely absent. Simple humanity is mirrored in these crystal clear utterances. Where emotions are stirred they are severely restrained, and the subdued expression they give rise to are the most effective in literature. There is art, severe and simple; but of artificiality there is very little trace.

Vaiyapuri Pillai's *History Of Tamil Language And Literature* is a book which meets a longfelt need for a critical and historical introduction to the ancient Tamil classics. It can safely be recommended to any one who really wants to know the ancient Tamils.

'ANDAL'

Shorter Reviews

THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION. Edited by Melvin J. Lasky. (Martin, Secker & Warburg, London, 25s.)

THIS collection of material relating to the October rising is introduced by an illuminating commentary by Hugh Seton-Watson, Professor of Russian History at the London University. The record bears out the interpretation of events and the publication, at a time when considerable interest is being shown in slurring over the incidents of the revolt and its suppression on both sides of the iron curtain, is most opportune. Dr. Seton-Watson observes that the West, despite its professed opposition to the Russian regime and its declared detestation of the imperialism of the Communists, did nothing to help a people struggling for freedom. He points out that the revolt of the soldiers, workers and intelligentsia of Hungary against the Communist regime proved that internal discontent can destroy a totalitarian regime.

The ruthlessness of Soviet intervention would have exposed the nature of the Russian system but for the reluctance of the uncommitted world to accept the realities of the situation and anxiety of the West to avoid involvement in action which might lead to a major conflict.

It is with a sinking feeling that one turns these pages to see some unequivocal lead from India,

A few passages are culled by Francois Bondy from the speeches of Mr. V. K. Krishna Menon at the U.N. and from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's acknowledgement of the genuine national character of the rising. Mr. Bondy has been more than kind to India. But the fact cannot be glossed over that at a crisis India, despite her claim to moral leadership indirectly staked by her fervent adherence to non-involvement, failed humanity and the world.

S.N.

TALKING OF GANDHIJI by F. Watson & M. Brown (Orient Longmans, Rs. 6/-)

TOWARDS the end of 1956, the B.B.C. put over in their Third Programme four broadcasts presenting a 'sound portrait' of Gandhiji. This project, certainly the most elaborate and ambitious coverage of any single individual, was the result of several years' research and painstaking work on the part of two of B.B.C.'s outstanding personalities, writer-broadcaster Francis Watson, and producer Maurice Brown.

To those who like to plunge straight into a book without concerning themselves with such irksome preliminaries as reading through introductions and author's notes, a word of warning. No idea of the difficulties, the practical problems of the producers of this programme can be surmised without reading Maurice Brown's foreword on 'The Technique'. The 'raw material' covered fifteen miles of recorded tape. To edit, splice, join, cut, re-edit and present this enormous mass of material to the requirements of the final broadcasts, was a gigantic task. The result merits praise. Although it is difficult to judge a work out of its own medium, in this case the sound world being reduced to the printed page, one is struck by the vivid, varied and comprehensive 'picture' resulting from the hundreds of interviews, talks, letters and sound-effects, from which the details of this portrait have been built.

The four programmes presented four aspects of Gandhiji's life and work. They are entitled 'A Portrait', 'The Conquest of India' 'Gandhiji in England' and 'The Last Phase.' Although these programmes were designed for a British audience much that is new and of interest to our Indian listeners or readers is included. Several details in the struggle for the abolition of caste; or the uproar over the killing of a sick calf at the Ashram; the reaction of the Lancashire Cotton Mill-workers to his visit after the boycott of British goods had hit them badly; all these light up dim corners in one's memory of Gandhiji.

What will strike, an Indian forcibly is that the unbiased and open reportage of critical, even outspoken disagreement with his views by his opponents, lends an authentic, rational tone to the discussions, and in no way detracts from the general regard, respect, even reverence in which those who participated and those who produced these programmes, held him. It would do the powers that be in our own Department of Information and Broadcasting, a world of good to realise that by working too hard, as they are inclined to do, to present only one (one's own) side of the picture, the result is a lop-sided portrait that is nowhere near the original and is, in fact, a distorted view.

UMA ANAND

WELCOME EACH REBUFF by Mahdi Ali Mirza (The Times of India Press, Rs. 5).

IT is possible that a book which is not brilliantly clever, nor deeply disturbing, nor first class literature, nor an absorbing story, should still be very good fun to read. It is also possible for it to be personal, rather fragmentary, very dated, to contain nothing dramatic or exciting, and yet be so interesting that it is difficult to put down. Mahdi Ali Mirza's memoirs is such a book.

Mr. Mahdi Ali Mirza takes a small period of

his life and resolutely writes only about that period. It was the time when George Panjam was King-Emperor, and all good Indian boys with rich fathers went to English Universities. Mahdi Ali Mirza chose instead to go to Germany, and not the accepted Germany of Heidelberg, but the rather questionable one of Berlin-after-the-war. Here the group of Indian students was small but by no means undistinguished. There were Dr. Hameid, Zakir Husain, Abid Husain, Mohammed Mujeeb and several members of the Chattopadhyaya family, including Jaisooriya Naicu; while the rare, lionised and feted visitors from India included a young man called Jawaharlal Nehru.

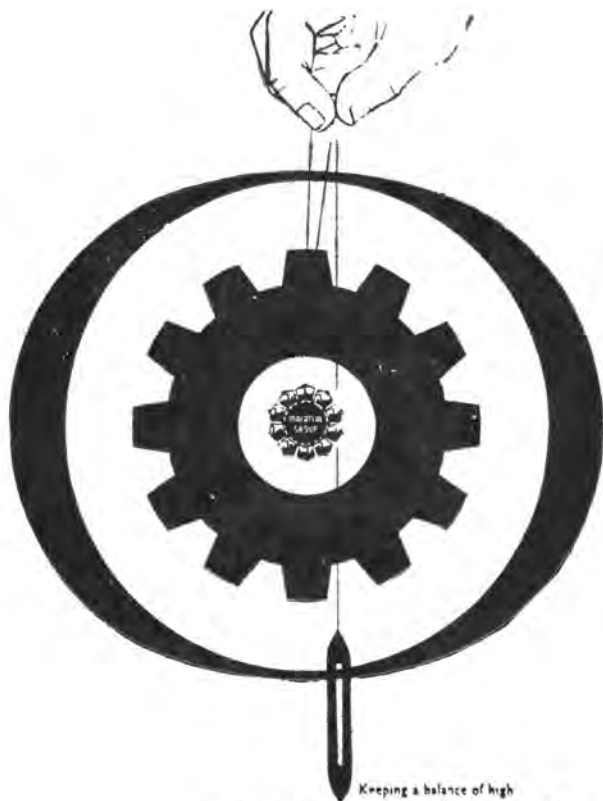
Mahdi Ali Mirza infects us with the high spirits of his youth. Everything has to be enjoyed. To have no money is a good joke. To be caught driving a motor cycle from Paris to Berlin without a licence is high comedy; and to be forced to earn a living as a taxi driver would be the height of humour, except for the slight difficulty in learning to accept tips gracefully, which was not funny.

If Mahdi Ali Mirza's book does not give us any new knowledge or information, it does give us a few hours of nostalgic enjoyment; and considering everything, that is not such a bad thing for a book to do.

L.F.

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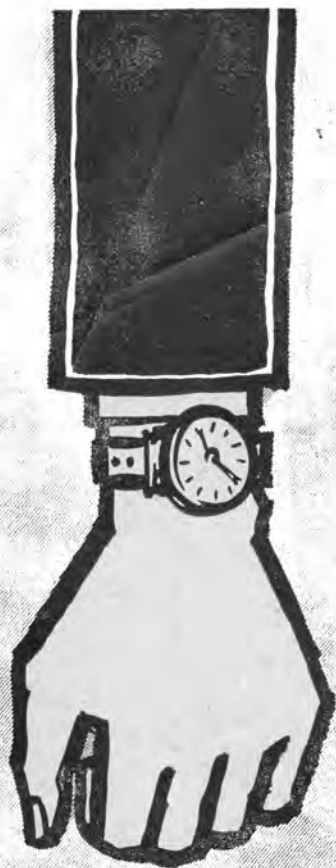
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