

An
Adventure
of
Ideas

QUEST

Editors: Abu Sayeed Ayyub & Amlan Datta

ASAF A. FYZEE

Cultural Unity of India

MICHAEL POLANYI

Conspicuous Production

A. B. SHAH

Liberty in the Modern World

RAJ KRISHNA

Thoughts on Tradition and Modern

RAJENDRA AVASTHI

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Cultural Unity of India

ASAF A. FYZEE

IT is often asserted that despite diversity in language, race, religion, creed, and mode of life, there is a fundamental unity of culture in India. For example, Rawlinson says: 'And yet through all this apparent diversity there runs an underlying unity',¹ and Humayun Kabir, 'In spite of this derivation from many sources and the consequent variety of forms and types, we find a remarkable unity of spirit informing Indian culture throughout the ages'.² Kabir has written other eloquent passages where his objective, historical and critical spirit has been influenced by a romantic glorification of India and its unity and spirit of toleration. If by Indian culture is meant 'Hindu' culture, then statements such as those of the two scholars quoted are perfectly true. But if by Indian culture is meant the common factor of the culture of all the races, peoples and religions of India, then certainly the proposition is open to serious question.

By and large, Amaury de Riencourt in his *Soul of India*, takes a somewhat different view; he is more sober, less emotional. The apparent unity must not make us blind to differences in religion, in morals, in language, in food, in dress, in spirit, in modes of thought and even in daily social salutation.

Perhaps it is nearer the truth to say:

(a) that there are times when the forces of unity were preponderant, such as the period of Akbar, or a decade prior to 1947,

when the dominant aim of Indians was to drive out the foreigner and achieve independence;

(b) that there were times when the forces of disunity gained the upper hand, as in 1947-48, when thousands belonging to one community were slaughtered by those of the other and *vice versa*, and popular misconceptions, such as those graphically described by Saiyidain, prevailed: 'A Muslim is a *mlechcha* who has always tried to propagate his blood-smear religion with the sword and whose loyalty is suspect. A Hindu is first a stone-worshipping *kāfir* with no vision of the divine or breadth of outlook. A Sikh is inflammable material incapable of cool and rational judgement and at conflict both with the Hindu and the Muslim. A Christian is only concerned with the conversion of the heathen and thus saving his hell-destined soul';³

(c) that at present there is *potential* but not actual unity in the country. Linguistic, religious and provincial jealousies have gained the upper hand;

(d) that the constant repetition of the slogan of the unity of Indian culture by quoting ancient scriptures and the 'tolerance' of the Indians as a race is sheer self-deception, and should be abandoned on a nationwide scale;

(e) that real unity, on the basis of the love of one's country, namely patriotism and a true conception of tolerance, should be propagated. Hinduism (which permitted untouchability, allowed the notion of caste to grow and taught the non-egalitarian doctrine of *Karma*) and Islam (which asserts the brotherhood of man, but has broken itself up into Shia and

¹ H. G. Rawlinson; *Cultural History of India* (London, 1937), I.

² Humayun Kabir: *Heritage of India* (Asia, 1955), 42.

³ "The Role of the Intelligentsia in Emotional Integration" in *Gandhi Marg*, adapted from a paper contributed to a symposium held on September 20, 1961.

Sunni, Shaikh and Syed, orthodox and heretic) are hardly good examples of the virtue of tolerance.

The unity of the future should be based on the following among other common ideals:

- (a) inculcating a love of the motherland;
- (b) strengthening the theory and practice of democracy;
- (c) creating a socialist welfare state (and the accompanying rapid industrialization);
- (d) evolving a better system of education;
- (e) learning the truth of other religions in order to respect and tolerate them; and
- (f) practising the brotherhood of man, irrespective of language, caste, creed or race.

Statements such as those of Rawlinson and Kabir are historically speaking not defensible and are liable to misguide us. A more scientific, realistic and critical view is therefore called for.

Before proceeding further, a few words are necessary to explain the terms 'culture' and 'civilization'. They are often used vaguely and promiscuously, and it is therefore all the more necessary to understand and distinguish between them. Neither word is capable of precise definition; a number of authors have used the terms in different connotations and we must beware of school-boy definitions and class-room distinctions. T. S. Eliot says: 'I have made no attempt in this essay to determine the frontier between the meanings of these two words; for I came to the conclusion that any such attempt could only produce an artificial distinction, peculiar to the book, which the reader would have difficulty in retaining; and which, after closing the book, he would abandon with a sense of relief.'⁴

The term 'culture' is not synonymous with civilization, but it is better to use 'civilization' for a special aspect of advanced

cultures. 'Culture' is akin to the word cultivating the soil, the cultivation of plants and animals, the cultivation of the spirit of man. But the sociologists use the term 'culture' in a very wide sense. Tylor, in his *Primitive Culture* defines it as follows:

'Culture . . . is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of Society'. In this sense 'culture' is far wider than 'civilization' and is objective; it does not indicate any higher or lower state of society; it is an entirely neutral term.

But in the philosophical sense it has another significance as well. Culture is an attribute of the spirit of man; it is humanity's effort to assert its inner and independent being. Human culture is a continuous movement towards a higher life. 'Culture' in this sense is the creation of 19th century European thinkers and is to be equated to a large extent with 'Civilization' as defined by Clive Bell. This meaning of 'culture' the humanistic or philosophical one, need not detain us, for we are using the term in its wider, more neutral and objective sense which such authorities as Melinowski and Tylor have given it. It implies *the whole way of life of an individual, group or society*.

'Civilization' is the term derived from *cives*; citizens; and thus it refers to the rights and duties of a citizen. *Civitas* is the Latin word for society or a State, and 'civil' means among other things, becoming or befitting a citizen, and therefore properly ordered; and not barbarous, but advanced; hence humane, gentle, kind, polite, courteous. 'To civilize' means to bring out of a state of barbarism, to instruct in the arts of life, and thus to elevate in the scale of humanity.

Civilization thus means *an advanced state of human society*. The meaning of the term civilization has been extended considerably since Roman times, and a useful picture of civilization has been given to us by Clive Bell in his *Civilization; an essay*

⁴ T. S. Eliot; *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (Faber, London, 1948), 13.

(Chatto and Windus, London, 1928). For the purposes of this article we have agreed to accept Clive Bell's definition of the term Civilization.

To summarize, we may for our purposes say that 'culture' is the wider, more ethnic term, embracing knowledge, belief, religion, morals, law, custom and, indeed, the whole of the inner and outer life of man. But 'civilization' is the narrower and more specific term, to be restricted in its application to a *higher and more developed state of society*.

Will Durant says that 'civilization is social order promoting cultural creation. Four elements constitute it: economic provision, political organization, moral tradition, and the pursuit of knowledge and the arts.'⁵

For our present purpose a more detailed discussion of these definitions and concepts is not necessary.

Culture is thus the way of life in the community, and in this sense Indian Culture, in common with other cultures, is and always has been, a composite one. Just as it is impossible to evolve a single world-culture, so also, for historical reasons there cannot be a *uniform* culture in India. In the first place we have many communities, many ways of life, many religions, many views of ultimate destiny in our country. To steam-roller them into one entity would be impossible even if it is considered desirable. In the words of Eliot: 'For it must follow from what I have already pleaded about the value of local cultures, that a world culture which was simply a *uniform* culture would be no culture at all. We should have humanity dehumanized. It would be a nightmare'.⁶

In the second place our sensitivity to religion is highly developed. We may be

Indians, some of us, but *every one* is either a Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Muslim, Parsi, Christian, Sikh or simply non-descript. And *it is a mistake to think that all religions are one*, or even that their aims are one. Such an over-simplification leads to a mischievous sense of self-deception, a complacency which is utterly unjustifiable. 'Ultimately antagonistic religions must mean antagonistic cultures and ultimately, religions cannot be reconciled'.⁷ All that can be done is for these divergent beliefs to settle down with one another in peaceful co-existence.

The first difficulty is between Hinduism and Islam; the one is a mystical, the other a prophetic religion; the one emphasizes contemplation, self-improvement, spiritual enlightenment leading to mergence with the deity; the other teaches service and love and brotherhood, and asks man to forget himself in the service of men, which really is service to God. But God and man are separate, discrete entities, and the two cannot become one. Man is man, created by God, God's slave, and God is the Creator, the Almighty, the One, Who is merciful to man. The basic attitudes of mysticism and the prophetic religion have been tersely summarized by Radhakrishnan: 'Mysticism is passive, quietist, resigned and contemplative; the prophetic religion is active, challenging, desiring, ethical'.⁸ The main dichotomy in India is between Hindu and Muslim; but there are other off-shoots as well, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism and Jainism. These religions produce divergent kinds of culture and therefore to forge a cultural unity in India is a task of considerable difficulty and complexity.

The elements of a common culture among the masses can be described generally by dividing them into three:

- (a) Ancient;
- (b) Medieval;
- (c) Modern.

In the ancient Indian culture, as described by philosophers like Radhakrishnan, historians like Rawlinson, and critics like Amaury de Riencourt, there are a number of elements which have great relevance in

⁵ Will Durant: *Story of Civilization* (New York, 1935), Commencement.

⁶ T. S. Eliot, *op. cit.*, 62.

⁷ T. S. Eliot, *loc. cit.*

⁸ Amaury de Riencourt: *The Soul of India* (London, 1961), 120, quoting Radhakrishnan *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, 666.

the modern world. The recognition of a Supreme Being, *brahman*; the deathless character of the human soul, *atman*; the doctrine of *karma*; and the gradual evolution of the caste system — these exist in one shape or form to this day, and are responsible for the strength and the weakness of Indian society.

Muslims (45 out of 450 millions, 1/10th of the population) on the other hand believe in the concept of absolute monotheism, without anthropomorphism; give the greatest importance to the service of humanity and proclaim that 'all men are brothers' (*Koran*). Later, during Moghul times, Islamic culture was responsible for the progress of science and art in the country. The ancient Indian and Medieval Islamic elements are alive and vital in the India of today, and shape the lives of the village folk in the country to a large extent.

The third and the last factor is Western and modern. The Western influence came with the British conquest of India, and even after their departure the legacy of the English language has opened to us a wide window on the world. The English language, British notions of justice and democracy, Western science, including nuclear physics and outer space travel are some of the valuable forms in which Western influence permeates Indian life. Urban life is far more influenced by modern science than the life of the villages. But the barriers are being broken down at a rapid rate, and electricity and family planning and housing and visual education will touch the life of the villager, taking him out of the cow-dung age and bring him nearer to the modern, atomic age.

None of these three elements, ancient, medieval or modern, can be given up by Indian society without grievous loss. A happy blend of them will produce the culture of the future, and an undue insistence on uniformity or harkening back to the past, like the familiar cry of *Rām-rāj*, or the strident call from the minarets — 'Back to the Koran' — is likely to produce more difficulties than sound solutions. It may however be confidently asserted that there

can be no mathematical proportions fixed for each component, and there is every likelihood of the Western element increasing and strengthening its hold in the future in the public sphere.

To take familiar examples of each of the three elements, the magnificent descriptions of the Supreme Being in the *Upanishads* and the beautiful tales of the national epics, *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* should mould our character and shape our dreams. This is a value, which, within its own proper limits, and without undue glorification, cannot be given up. Similarly, some of the exquisite virtues of Islamic culture — the Muslims' sense of courtesy; their hospitality; their love of architecture and music and calligraphy and the things of beauty, in a variety of forms — how can India afford to cut itself off from these harbingers of joy and a civilized way of life? And finally, it is hardly necessary to stress the importance of science and its predominant voice in national evolution. For me a scientific conception of *law* and *society*, even more than the mere use of science for the utilitarian service of man, is the true spirit of the age, the *zeitgeist*, which India must try to understand from its greatest masters — Schweitzer, Bertrand Russell, Einstein, Dewey, William James, Croce, Maritain. The English law speaks of the 'Reasonable Man' — a myth which (despite A. P. Herbert) is truer than fact! And so it is permissible to say that the *Perfect Indian* will possess a true conception of the 'Eternal Reality', as reflected in his own ethical life and social behaviour, an aesthetic perception making him an example of manners and taste and sensitivity to things of beauty; and a mind capable of rational thought, a spirit of humility and an unquenchable thirst for deeper and better knowledge. In other words, he must be steeped in the Socratic prayer — 'Give me beauty in the inward soul, and may the outward and inward man be at one'. (*Phaedrus*, 279).

We are now in a position to carry the

argument one step further. India is declared to be a 'secular' state. If by a secular state is meant a 'state without a state religion', India is a secular state. But in reality every religion is equally protected; both Hindu and Islamic laws are recognized by the Constitution, and the Christian rule of monogamy is an ideal towards which all modern marital laws are converging. Thus India may more accurately be described as 'a multireligious state without a state religion, guided by the ideals of a secular state'. For it may be remembered that 'the secular state' is by no means a magic formula which does away with the angularities of the *Sanatana Dharma*, Indian Islam and the Akali Dal, and brings about 'peace on earth and goodwill among men'.

The conflict between the Islamic way of life and the Hindu view of life has often been the subject of discussion. One of the best summaries of the problem is to be found in *The Soul of India* by Amaury de Riencourt, when he describes the extraordinary genius of Alberuni.

'One of the most remarkable episodes of this time was the journey and long sojourn in India of one of Islam's greatest intellects, Alberuni, for ever known as the Master. A philosopher, mathematician and astronomer of great repute, he came originally from Khwarizm (Khiva, in modern Turkestan) and accompanied Mahmud of Ghazni down into the Punjab. Having settled there, he proceeded to make a thorough study of Sanskrit and of Hindu literature, and has left us a penetrating description of India in his famous work *Tahkik-i-Hind* (An Enquiry into India). In this brilliant and yet scholarly study of India in the eleventh century, we have a mine of information about the country and its people on the eve of the great Muslim invasions. Gripped by an irresistible impulse to discover truth for its own sake, Alberuni was not content with merely describing India as he found it, but philosophised at great length about India's relations with the powers of the Middle East throughout the ages.

'What appears to have struck Alberuni most forcibly is the extreme xenophobia of the Hindus, their exclusiveness and hatred for all *mlechchas*, all 'barbarians'. In some penetrating passages, he attributes this hostility (never mentioned by his predecessors: Greeks in the last centuries B.C. and Chinese in the early centuries A.D.) to the bitter rivalry between Mahayana Buddhism and Zoroastrianism in North-West India. In his eloquent pages, one can feel the hostile clash between two alien societies, between an ageing Hindu Buddhist Civilization and a young Middle Eastern Culture; and he goes on to say that the advent of Islam only intensified this hostility. The inroads of the Arabs, four centuries before his time, are blamed for a good deal of this feeling, especially the raids of Muhammad bin Kasim, who conquered Sind in the eighth century A.D. Yet it is clear that for centuries afterwards the Hindus did not trouble themselves overmuch about events taking place west of the Hakra river, historical boundary between Sind and Hind. For all practical purposes, the area occupied by the Arabs remained unholy ground to the Hindus, and India proper went on living unconcerned. It is only in the days of Mahmud of Ghazni and Alberuni himself that this Hindu hostility began to acquire the pitch of virulence he ascribes to it.

'Alberuni's work has been described as a magic island of quiet impartial research in the midst of a world of clashing swords, burning towns, and plundered temples; it is certainly that, and much more besides. Quite apart from its immense scholarship and scientific erudition, it is a masterpiece of psychological analysis and a precious clue to the enduring characteristics of the Indian soul. Among many other things, Alberuni singled out the Hindus' pride in their civilization and contempt for all things alien to Hinduism, their reluctance to communicate their culture and knowledge to foreigners; he marvelled at their religious tolerance and lack of theological disputations among *pandits*, and referred with a certain contempt to their unwilling-

ness to stake their lives for their ideals. And time and again, he describes their fanatical hostility towards all *mlechchas*. His description of the caste system as it was in operation at the time is masterly and proves conclusively that it had already reached the stage of absolute rigidity for which it became known centuries later.⁹

In conclusion it may be stated that the secret of unity in future seems to be the recognition of diversity of thought in all aspects of life and particularly in matters concerning religion and the problem of ultimate destiny. Recognition of diversity will breed tolerance, and tolerance implies: (a) holding strong convictions of one's own; (b) understanding the faith of others and (c) realising the possibility of truth having numerous facets, visible to different individuals in different forms.

In practice it is desirable to inculcate first of all, patriotism, by every means possible. For instance, in schools the beauty of our country in its splendid variety of flora and fauna, of people and scenery, of dress and forms of life, should be shown to the students who must gradually learn to love the variegated forms of nature, and of life and culture. Secondly, to strengthen democracy, complete freedom of action in the political sphere should be allowed even within the same family. And every form of political thought must be allowed full freedom of expression. Thirdly, the utmost possible freedom should be allowed in the matter of language. There are people in India whose real mother tongue is English. English is the mother tongue of the Anglo-Indians, and several Parsi and Jewish and Christian families have only one language, which happen to be English. They too are Indians and it is monstrous to look down upon them as de-Indianized. Similarly the Muslims, by and large, use some form of Urdu as the language of communication, and why should they be considered pseudo-Pakistanis? Fourthly, we must all bend our energies to creating a welfare

state; and in the joy of creation, there will be a unity of action and ideals which will weld the nation into one indivisible entity. Fifthly, we must proclaim the brotherhood of man in no uncertain terms, and fight untouchability and caste as two of the greatest enemies of the nation. Silly prejudices regarding intercommunal and inter-religious marriages must give place to a rational and modern outlook. And lastly, we must learn to respect and understand the opinions of others in all matters, and even in problems of ultimate destiny. Why is it necessary to repeat *ad nauseam* that all religions are one, and lead to the same goal? The great religions of the world are NOT one; their means are not identical; their ends are not the same — and why should human beings think alike on questions relating to the ultimate reality? In the words of Hafiz: 'Nobody has ever solved, and nobody ever will solve — the eternal riddle'. It is quite unnecessary to hug the illusion that all religions are the same and teach the identical doctrine. This is all the more necessary when Russia has made godlessness so fashionable, and when some of the greatest thinkers of the day like Bertrand Russell are either agnostics or deny the validity of religion.

Two great religions are bound to influence each other when they come into close contact: such is the case of Hinduism and Islam in their mutual relationship. Nanak and Kabir, the Sufis and the Shaivites and the Bhaktas, the Khojas and Memons and Meos and Girasias, and many over instances of the mutual influence of culture should not deceive us. Such influences began during Moghul times. They are a good beginning for the mergence of the ways of life, and newer patterns of thought and culture will result from them. But in India this has not constituted real unity. Real unity comes not so much from identity of thought and mergence of cultures as from the humane and civilized *recognition of difference of outlook*. It is an attitude typified by Voltaire and Bertrand Russell. This fact has been com-

⁹ Amaury de Rencourt, op. cit., 165 sq.

pletely missed by our thinkers and historians who have not been able to explain the terrible tragedies of the partition, and the spirit of casteism, linguism and provincialism which followed the creation of Pakistan. We are not fighting with Pakistan; we are not fighting Islam and the Muslims; we are quarrelling amongst ourselves. And this is NOT the fault of Jinnah, nor the fault of our British rulers whose policy of *divide et impera* was well known to us. This basic fact has to be recognized and corrected. This is due to lack of real tolerance, the tolerance of views entirely different from our own.

India can learn a great deal from three remarkable illustrations of cultural unity in the modern world — Switzerland, England and the United States of America. Switzerland is an instance of two Latin cultures, Italian and French, commingling with a Teutonic way of life, German, and settling down to an orderly constitution, working for peace and neutrality in poli-

tics, and prosperity and thrift in industry. There are three languages, three ways of life, each distinct — and yet united. Great Britain is an illustration of Norman, Anglo-Saxon, Danish and Celtic elements which have come to constitute a liberal and progressive democracy. The United States is an instance of the common blending for social welfare of all the European races and cultures with Negro and native elements, and a variety of faiths such as Christian (Protestant and Catholic), Jew and now also Bahai, in addition to numerous smaller denominations.

Neither religion, nor race, nor language need be a permanent barrier. But we must discover that secret cement, that specific amalgam, which has yet to be found. And this can only be some form of practical vision connected with patriotism. Exclusive loyalty to the Ancient Culture of India and the Spiritual Heritage of Bhārat Varsha must be steadily and firmly given up; for, 'The opinions that are held with passion are always those for which no good ground exists; indeed the passion is the measure of the holder's lack of rational conviction'. (Bertrand Russell).¹⁰

¹⁰ *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell*, ed. R. E. Egner and L. E. Denmon (London, 1961), 16.

We would welcome further contributions on this important topic — Editors.

Conspicuous Production

MICHAEL POLANYI

DURING the decades before 1917 in which Marxist socialism had grown into a world movement, any discussion of the way the future socialist system would function was banned as unscientific. As a result, when the Bolsheviks achieved supreme power, their economic ideas had remained utopian. Lenin declared their aim: 'The whole of society will become a single office and a single factory . . .', and the Soviet Government decided, accordingly, that it would direct all economic activities centrally in the form of a single comprehensive economic plan. Thus, they felt government by the people would govern economic life for the people. This government would be fully informed at every moment of all the particulars of the economic situation, and would take all these into account for every single economic decision. It would establish a brotherly and scientific cooperation among men in place of self-seeking, impersonal, chaotic commodity-production. How could it be otherwise?

Yet this idea, so plausible and exhilarating, is quite impracticable, and this became apparent as soon as it was effectively put into action. Central economic direction made its first full impact during the second half of 1920 and, increasingly, up to the end of February 1921. This attempt at suppressing all commercial relations and the very use of money, in favour of a central allocation of productive resources and distribution of goods produced, was resolutely sustained until it led to total economic paralysis. Production fell nearly to zero. At this point troops mutinied, workers went on strike and Lenin was forced to restore commerce throughout the economic system.

Then production recovered and rose again to pre-war level.

But the original utopian ideology did not die. The aim of establishing a centrally directed economic system was not abandoned. Attempts to force it on a refractory reality never ceased, and in the course of the last forty years they have led to the present way of conducting economic life in the Soviet empire, which can be understood only as the outcome of this utopian effort sustained over four decades.

Unfortunately, the critical analysis of these efforts by Western economists has not been altogether successful and, as a result, we still do not quite know how the Soviets are operating their economy. I believe that an important point has been missed, and I shall explain this point by telling you first about the previous development of ideas on this matter.

The discussion was opened in 1920 by Ludwig von Mises, with a paper which claimed to prove that central economic direction is impossible. Mises argued that without a market productive resources cannot be allocated economically, and hence you cannot run a modern economic system as a single enterprise. I agree with this conclusion in principle, and consider that it does explain the total paralysis of economic life in Soviet Russia during the years of 1920-21 when the government attempted to suppress all commercial transactions. But, unfortunately, it appears that the argument which Mises gave in proof of this principle was inadequate, and that, in consequence, he went too far in the conclusions he derived from this principle.

His argument was based on the classical theory of economic equilibrium. But economic theory cannot explain the fact that

resources can be allocated economically *within one enterprise without* a commercial network, but *not between a number of industrial enterprises*. Mises paid no attention to this inadequacy, which should have served him as a warning. And, having argued that economic life cannot be conducted without the use of a market, he went on to assume that all existing markets are indispensable. Applying this conclusion to the capital market, he declared that public ownership of industry, which would suppress the capital market, must necessarily stop all industrial production.

This, however, was presently refuted by the facts. Admittedly, economic development of Soviet Russia continued for a time to be questionable, but by the middle of the second Five Year Plan — that is, around 1935 — there could be no doubt left that a system of state-owned industries was in fact operating there. No signs of a paralysis, such as had overtaken the first economic experiment of the Soviets in 1920 and 1921, could be seen.

The mistake of Mises now began to develop serious consequences. By 1936 his argument came under fire by F. H. Knight,¹ a distinguished economist and a passionate supporter of the system of private enterprise. Knight said that Mises was wrong in using market theory to deny the possibility of central direction. A government could conduct production in accordance with the marginal principle, and thus satisfy all the requirements of economic equilibrium. Government direction could indeed surpass the market by including the processes of taxation, allowing for social costs, and compensating for all other imperfections of the market. The fault of the Soviet

system was — Knight declared — not economic, but political; it involved the total suppression of liberty. This new argument was given powerful expression by Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* (1944). By 1947 Mises himself had joined the supporters of this view. He now denounced the Soviet Government for wickedly doing the very thing which he, Mises, had in 1920 affirmed to be impossible?²

The new doctrine spread rapidly and was soon voiced independently from many quarters. It has produced a disastrous confusion which still widely prevails today. For it has obscured the true reasons which make the central direction of economic life impossible, and has obscured, likewise, the true reasons for which Soviet Communism suppresses liberty. Moreover, it has offered underdeveloped countries a false inducement to get rich quickly at the price of sacrificing liberty, while in the Western countries it has injected into every discussion on government intervention in economic affairs the false menace that this was the way towards Communism.

I have opposed these views for many years. In my opinion the true obstacle to the central direction of economic life is that such a task exceeds by far the possibilities of administrative control. This conclusion can be derived from a general principle, which can be stated as follows. Wherever a *very large number* of units are found to achieve a joint advantage by mutually adjusting themselves to each other, such mutual adjustment cannot be replaced by any deliberate planning.

In its most general form, this principle has nothing to do with the claims of individual freedom or indeed with human affairs. It applies to a sack of potatoes. Consider how ingeniously the knobs of each potato fit into the hollows of its neighbours. Weeks of careful planning by a team of engineers, equipped with a complete set of cross-sections for each potato, would not reduce the total volume filled by the potatoes in the sack so effectively as a good shaking and a few kicks will do. Turning to human affairs, take a football team of

¹ F. H. Knight, *The Place of Marginal Economics in a Collective System*. Amer. Econ. Rev. 1936 Suppl., p. 259.

² "Man must choose between the market economy and socialism. The State can preserve the market economy in protecting life, health and private property against violent and fraudulent aggression; or it can itself control the conduct of all productive activities. If it is not the consumers by means of demand and supply in the markets, it must be the government by compulsion." L. von Mises: *Planned Chaos* (1947) p. 34.

eleven, mutually adjusting at every moment their play to each other, and pit this team against another, each member of which has to wait before making a move, for the orders of a captain controlling the eleven players by radio. The radio-directed team would be at a hopeless disadvantage.

This is not to place mutual adjustment generally above central direction. These two principal ways of ordering human affairs have each their proper function. Only a hierarchic order, controlled from one centre, can direct an army to carry out a single strategic or tactical manoeuvre, decided upon by their supreme commander. To rely in such a case on spontaneous mutual adjustment, in place of central direction, would be madness.

But we can see now also why it is madness to suppress the market in a modern economic system. Such a system works by adjusting a *very large number* of centers to each other, and hence any attempt to carry out these adjustments by deliberate central planning can only result in total failure. It will inevitably spell complete paralysis; and this is what happened in 1920-1921 in Soviet Russia.

But in this view it is reasonable to expect also to find tasks in which central direction and spontaneous mutual adjustment do not sharply exclude each other. If the number of centers to be adjusted is small enough, as for example when you have to pack only four or five potatoes, instead of a whole sackful, you might deliberately arrange the potatoes to a close packing. And if you are prepared to play a game of football very slowly, it might be best to move one player at a time, centrally, by radio. So we see that a task may become centrally controllable, if the adjustments required by it are sufficiently slow. In such cases we may expect central direction and spontaneous mutual adjustment to be combined.

The allocation of public expenditure between numerous rival government departments is commonly determined by such a combination. Admittedly, each item of expenditure must ultimately be approved

by the supreme financial authority, but these supreme decisions are determined to a considerable extent by the requests made by the several departments, and by the arguments and the pressures put forward by each of them in support of their rival claims.

The reason why central direction and mutual adjustment can be successfully combined here is that the number of adjustments to be made is relatively small. And this is true also for the distribution of investments to the individual enterprises of a nationalised industrial system. The interplay of rival pressure groups – each supported by its own mixture of economic and political arguments – can thus replace the capital market. This method, though clumsy, is not impracticable. But owing to the fundamental inadequacy of the grounds on which he based his argument, Mises was bound to overlook this possibility.

In 1948, when I first applied the principles of administrative feasibility to nationalised industries, it was easy to see this mistake. On the grounds of my principle, I could now point out that the *mutual adjustments required for the running of enterprises* are many million times more complex and more rapidly changing than the *mutual adjustments for allocating investments* to them, and could conclude that, even though publicly owned enterprises can be financed centrally, they cannot possibly carry out their day to day operations except by the use of a market.

This conclusion, however, stood in sharp conflict with the image of Soviet industry, as presented to the world. Soviet industry was carrying out its day to day operations on a vast scale, and yet the Soviet government claimed that its industrial transactions were not conducted commercially, but carried out according to a strict and detailed plan imposed from a center. Faced with this conflict, I upheld my conclusions by denying the claim of the Soviet Government that the operations of its industry were directed according to a detailed central plan. I affirmed that, contrary to what the Soviet government was saying, the run-

ning of its industry must be relying on some kind of market, however distorted and heavily overlaid this market may be, by a pretence of central direction.

The following features of the Soviet economy tended to confirm my view. Since the beginning of the second Five Year Plan, the Soviet government had introduced accounting in money and this has been strictly enforced ever since. There is ample evidence that the Bolsheviks had to overcome a strong ideological reluctance in taking this step, and this proves that this was no mere formality. It must have been motivated by the urgent necessity for using money as a measure of economic value, which to this extent must have become commercially effective. Another feature, which as far back as 1935 had made me suspect that the central planning could not be a coherent act of central direction, was the official applause given to the over-fulfilment of the central plan. This was inconsistent with any attempt at the effective coordination of productive efforts. Engineers building a bridge do not regard an excess in the height of one pillar as a compensation for the fact that another pillar had fallen out shorter than planned.

There was also a growing amount of evidence, that black markets played an essential role in the running of Soviet enterprises. And, finally, there were reports that the plans were worked out by a continuous tussle between the top and the base of the hierarchy. In such exchanges the initiative could pass over predominantly to the enterprises, so that the directives eventually issued from the top would, in fact, only summarise the individual plans originating with the enterprises at the bottom of the hierarchy.

However, my view that the Soviet economy was conducted by a camouflaged commercial system, met with some serious difficulties. Descriptions of business management in Soviet Russia left no doubt that enterprises do receive detailed instructions which closely determine their programme of production. Managers strive strenuously to fulfil prescribed targets in

order to earn the substantial premia awarded for such achievements. These are an essential source of their income, while the premia earned as a reward for the profitability of their enterprises is comparatively unimportant. This was bound to lead to a strong distortion of any market relations. But more important was the following difficulty. If it be true that the Soviet System owes what productivity it has to a concealed and distorted market economy, its productivity should be found to be defective to a degree corresponding to this distortion. Yet all indications seemed to suggest that its productivity was rather higher than that of a Western market economy.

I shall meet this problem, by asking a question that may sound curious. Could it be that the distortion of a market may actually favour production?

This may seem impossible until we recall a paradox that has often puzzled Western observers. Berliner has voiced it in his study, *Factory and Manager in the USSR*, published in 1957. He says that 'the elements of inefficiency are so striking that they may create the impression that Soviet industry is grossly ineffectual and scarcely to be taken seriously. Such an impression would fly in the face of all we know about Soviet industrial performance.'

Professor Ely Devons makes the same point even more forcefully in his review of a book by the Hungarian communist writer called Kornai, of which I shall say more in a moment: 'It adds up,' writes Professor Devons, 'to a damning indictment of detailed central planning. Indeed as one reads of one inefficiency after another, one begins to wonder how the system produced anything at all. And yet according to figures given by Kornai, production in Hungarian light industry doubled between 1949 and 1955.'

But in his book — published in English under the title *Over-Centralisation in Economic Administration* — Kornai himself identifies and condemns the short-comings of the Hungarian economy by comparing them with a capitalistic market. He takes

these commercial standards unquestioningly for granted and regards the disorganisation caused by excessive centralisation as nothing but harmful.

But it is actually from Kornai's book that we first get a hint towards the solution of these riddles. He quotes Stalin's praise of the sellers' market that prevails under the Soviets. Stalin had written: 'With us in the Soviet Union a consumption of the masses is constantly growing, outstripping the growth of production and thus stimulating production.' To which Kornai replies, that an excessive demand may stimulate the planners, but it does not induce enterprises to do better work; rather it induces laziness, negligence, disregard of the buyers' requirements.

At first sight this may make the situation appear even more puzzling. We may ask, how the central authorities responsible for directing enterprises by a minutely detailed plan, could possibly feel satisfied by a situation in which production is generally disorganised. But an answer may be found to this question, at least in part, by remembering a situation in which disorganisation was, in fact, accompanied by increased production. Such was the case in England during the years immediately following the last war, when a sellers' market was chasing money through a system of fairly rigid prices. The long queues which tend to form everywhere under the Soviets indicate that sales habitually stand under the pressure of excessive purchasing power.

A chronic sellers' market has the advantage of securing full employment. But it tends to disorganise the physical process of production. It causes defective coordination between resources supplied to factories and a consequent waste of resources. And it causes also defective timing in the supply of resources, resulting in stoppages and in wastage of capacity. Another effect of it is to reduce economic productivity, as measured in terms of the satisfaction given to consumers. By forcing them to buy what happens to be available, they are supplied with goods less satisfying

to their needs. I am not referring here to the deterioration in the quality of goods, for this can be taken into account in the statistical assessment of production; I am referring to the lowering of satisfaction due to a reduced range of assortment, to the slowing down of innovations, and to the erratic distribution under the pressure of excessive demand, none of which show up in a statistical assessment of the physical product. Finally, we must note the important fact, that the three shortcomings caused by forced sales — reduced variety, sluggish innovations and erratic distribution — all tend sharply to reduce the costs of producing and distributing any given parcel of goods, and that this will stimulate production and thus tend to counteract the disorganisation of production by the sellers' market.

The favourable production statistics of post-war England and of other countries in a state of suppressed inflation, indicate that the reduction of production costs caused by a sellers' market actually offsets its disorganising effects, so that on balance the national product, measured in physical terms, increases. Here we discover, at last, the reason why planners can be happy with a sellers' market, even though it disorganises production. It yields high statistical results, and this is the standard by which they measure their achievements.

But such statistics are misleading. For they disregard the lowering of economic value, due to reduced variety and slower innovations, combined with erratic distribution. This is the main point which I want to introduce into the assessment of the Soviet economic system in which conditions are similar to those of a sellers' market, even when there is no excess demand in it.

With this in mind, let me continue, for a while, my analysis of production in a sellers' market. It is difficult to measure the actual economic value produced in a sellers' market. But we may roughly estimate the possible reduction in actual value by comparing prices paid in a normal market for a less discriminating allocation

such as a meal from a single fixed menu with that of a meal ordered from a rich à la carte choice; or the prices of clothes purchased at the user's convenience; or the prices of uniforms, compared with an assortment of civilian suits, etc. From such examples we may estimate that the value produced by satisfying a sellers' market may be less than one half the value of the same physical goods satisfying a normal market. Hence when this reduction is taken into account, the real value of the total national product of a sellers' market is likely no longer to appear higher, but substantially lower than that of a normal market. The planners' satisfaction with the increased output of a sellers' market then proves to be based on a statistical illusion.

A very similar analysis applies to the Soviet economic system. I shall assume that this operates by market relations, distorted by the setting of production targets. The fact, already mentioned, that the Soviets are prepared to offset shortfalls in one branch of production by excess production in another, reveals that their aim is to increase total production, without concern for the exact proportions between different items. Targets are fixed predominantly by adding to the reported results of the last quarter a few per cent of expansion. Demand for the product is virtually guaranteed by a mixture of commercial and non-commercial arrangements. The result is similar to that of a sellers' market, which is, in fact, often used as an aid to provide guaranteed demand for any quantities that a factory will turn out. What I have said of the effect of a sellers' market, applies here, therefore, once more. Stoppages and other wastage, caused by the setting of incompatible targets and the forcing of disproportionate productions, are counteracted by a concomitant lowering of costs due to the reduction of variety, slowing of innovation and erratic distribu-

tion. Therefore as in a sellers' market total production measured in physical units will tend to increase, even while its total actual value is reduced below that which a system of normal market relations would yield.

The way the Soviets conduct their economy today has developed by the attempt, sustained over more than forty years, of imposing public direction on a network of economic adjustments that can be sustained only by mutual arrangements between enterprises. The result of this pressure has been a system based on market relations that are camouflaged and distorted by a framework of central direction. This distortion causes the disorganisation of production and distribution commonly observed in the Soviet empire. But this disorganisation is covered up by an increase of the physical product, which arises as follows. Disorganisation and forced sales lead to lowering of variety, slowing of innovations and erratic distribution; this reduces the economic value of a given physical product and at the same time reduces also the cost of its production and distribution; finally, this reduction of costs induces the production of an increased physical quantity of goods. The total economic value of goods produced thus falls short of that of a normal market economy; but the ideology of socialism is blind to this negative overall result. Its ideal of economic life is to transform the aggregate satisfaction of each individual into the collective satisfaction of all. The total physical product is a symbol of this intended collective satisfaction. Thus the illusory exercise of central direction distorts the economy into producing an illusory socialist satisfaction. Targets are produced instead of commodities, and resources are wasted to serve the glory of the communist cause; shortages are inflicted for achieving statistical triumphs.

This is what I have called a system of Conspicuous Production.

Harold Laski and Liberty in the Modern World

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A. B. SHAH

I

IN the introduction to the Pelican edition of his *Liberty in the Modern State*, Professor Harold Laski referred to what H. G. Wells had termed the 'raucous voices' heard in the 1930's over vast areas of mankind. He had in view the rise of fascism in Europe and Japanese militarism in Asia, which seemed to augur the beginning of a new Dark Age for mankind. Their power was built on the scientific organisation of terror and they professed a philosophy that sanctioned the arbitrary and unabashed use of force for their own criminal ends. They were 'guilty of cruelties so gross, of infamies so unspeakable, that ordinary men have bowed their heads in shame at the very mention of their crimes.' What was still more disturbing to Laski was the fact that admiration for the dictators was not confined to men who had to show it on penalty of death. In the democracies there were many who looked upon the dictators as men of a new Renaissance, creators of a new culture, vigorous and forward-looking, on the ruins of a liberalism which had ceased to inspire and which, in any case, could not defend itself. That this attitude was to a considerable extent rooted in their fear of communism was clear to anyone. Nor did the admirers of fascism make a secret of it. They condoned, and in secret approved, the methods of terrorism used by Hitler and Mussolini, though their use by the rulers of Russia aroused in them feelings of disgust and indignation. According to them, 'Germany under the new dispensation had saved the world from horrors beyond endurance.'

* Ninth Annual Lecture delivered at the Harold Laski Institute, on August 23, 1963; revised and slightly condensed.

The wheel has come full circle today. Within less than a decade of Laski's writing the Introduction in question, fascism and Japanese militarism were defeated beyond a chance of revival. But new dictatorships had arisen elsewhere in the world, and the threat to liberty was no smaller in 1962 than it had been a generation before. By the time of Laski's death in 1950, communism had extended its sway over nearly 800 million people of Asia and Europe. China and Eastern Europe had exchanged incipient democracy or inefficient tyranny for a more ruthless and efficient type of dictatorship, from which no popular revolt could provide an escape. There were, no doubt, significant gains in countries formerly under Western rule. But many of them were soon to go under dictatorship of one type or another. And today, in the world as a whole, the prospects for liberty are more helpless over a vaster area of mankind than ever before.

One need not go into the details of regimentation under communism and the reduction of individuals and entire human groups to the status of an instrument of state policy. It is enough to recall the riots of East Berlin and Poznan, the revolts in Hungary and the rebellions in Tibet and Sinkiang. These were only the most violent explosions of a desperate situation resulting from the total denial of liberty under a communist regime. Even in countries which have not yet been absorbed into one or other of the communist power blocs, the condition of liberty is worse today than under Western rule. Whether it be in Pakistan or Egypt, in Ghana or Indonesia, in Burma or South Viet Nam, the eclipse of liberty is complete or near complete. Not only is the press in chains

and the right of peaceful assembly denied; in some of these countries even dress and religious belief are matters which invite persecution either from the government or, with its connivance, from self-appointed custodians of the country's faith and morals.

However, the non-communist dictatorships, including the older ones of Dr Salazar and General Franco, or of the Latin American variety, have one redeeming feature. They are too weak economically and lack the ideological cohesion to threaten liberty beyond their own frontiers. They have to be content with holding on to what they have got. Essentially, they are *personal* dictatorships, in many cases a resumption of the pre-industrial tradition of princely rule in the present context. But their personal character also makes them especially susceptible to communist blandishments. Most of these societies do not have a sufficiently developed educated middle class of their own which might have assimilated from their former rulers the values of democracy and the habits of parliamentary government. Had it grown to a sufficient size and over a sufficiently long period of time as it did in India, it might have provided a centre of resistance to the ambition of would-be dictators and the seductive appeal of a totalitarian ideology. The fact that this did not happen may be traced to the selfishness of the West in its imperialist phase as much as to the inability of the indigenous cultures of these societies to benefit adequately from their contact with it. What is important now is its almost total absence in most of the new states of the Afro-Asian land mass when they came into being in the post-War world. In the absence of such a class and of a native tradition that could prove viable in the contemporary world, it would be surprising if, under internal stresses, these personal dictatorships did not gradually borrow the ideological trappings of communism and adapt them to local conditions to ensure their own survival. Burma has shown how an initially non-communist dictatorship is driven by

the needs of existence along the communist way. Others may soon follow. If not, sooner or later they will begin to disintegrate. No dictatorship that is not totalitarian can expect to last long in an industrial civilisation.

The communist dictatorship, like the fascist one of the inter-war period, has all the requisites of permanence and continued, inherent expansionism. Even if economically backward in most cases, militarily and ideologically it is the most efficient that the world has ever seen. Its power is based on what Laski called 'the scientific organisation of terror', and it believes in proselytising the pagan world to its own faith – by subversion if possible, with the sword if necessary. It has an extensive fifth column in all ranks of public life, especially the higher ones, in a large number of the states of Asia and Africa. The nuclear power of the Soviet Union rules out the possibility of this dictatorship being overthrown by a frontal attack from outside. And the thorough indoctrination it carries out of its subjects and the total control it exercises over their lives insure it against disintegration from within. The only prospect seems to be that of a prolonged division of the world into two parts, the free and the unfree, the former always remaining on its guard lest the latter should steal into its domain or grab it openly by force. In the course of time the dictatorship of the proletariat may begin to show signs of age and decay, provided it does not meanwhile invite destruction on itself and the world by misjudging the democracies' will to resist its blackmail. For once the production of economic and cultural goods reaches a certain level in most countries of the world, a totalitarian organisation of power will be found both inefficient and difficult to keep up under conditions of peace. This, however, is a long-term perspective. In the foreseeable future, the problem of liberty will continue to be essentially that of holding the fort against native authoritarianism and international communism.

II

How is it that Laski failed to understand the significance of communism? It was not as though he were unaware of the nature of communist dictatorship. In his earlier writings he had described it in language which leaves no doubt on that score. In an article written in 1923, he said:

(dictators) may begin by asserting that they have seized power for a great end; they are bound to continue by holding power for its own sake. Lenin and Mussolini alike have established a government not of laws but of men. By treating their opponents as criminals, they have made thought itself a disastrous adventure.¹

And this is only one example of Laski's views in the 1920's.

It was in the early 1930's that his journey to Marxism began. By 1937 he was practically convinced that communism alone offered mankind a hope of escaping the horrors of fascism. He was therefore willing to pay the price that the dictatorship of the proletariat demanded. He squared his conscience by persuading himself that once the threat from 'capitalism in decline' had been exorcized for good, the dictatorship of the proletariat would relax its grip since there would be no class basis to perpetuate it in a communist society. In short, Laski had by this time completely accepted the Marxian theory of the state. Having once accepted this, it was natural that the liberal in him would undertake to see the Soviet dictatorship 'in a proper perspective' and find in it redeeming features that other systems lacked. Thus the Soviet dictatorship, according to Laski, was

wholly different in character from that of Mussolini or Hitler The purpose of the (Soviet) dictatorship is measurably and directly related to (popular) welfare; its standard increasingly rises; it is built upon the principle of planned production for community consumption.²

Laski then goes on to praise the Stalin constitution of 1936 and refers to the Soviet citizen's confidence in a better future in contrast to the despair of his counterpart in the non-communist world. Recent

studies on the place of the consumer in Soviet economic planning³ have shown that, like many well-meaning intellectuals of his time, Laski, too, was a dupe of communist propaganda. It is true that when Laski wrote, no reliable data were available on life in the Soviet Union. However, it does not require academic research to see that an economy which starts from scratch and which devotes a major part of its resources to military development and heavy industries cannot also, at the same time, look after consumer welfare. If Western intellectuals of the 1930's were taken in (as Indian intellectuals are even today) by Russian propaganda, the main explanation would seem to lie in their predisposition to believe. They wanted a centre of hope in a world that was threatened by fascism, and they discovered one in the Soviet Union.

III

I have quoted from Laski and tried to analyse his thought at some length for more than one reason. He combined in himself, perhaps better than anyone else of his generation, the finest and the most tragic aspects of the intellectual's concern for liberty in the modern state. Laski was no ivory tower academician. His commitment to freedom and the passion with which he lived up to it were of the purest kind. But he failed to understand clearly the nature of the forces that thwart freedom in the modern world. The rise and growth of fascism and the sympathy it evoked in a section of the ruling class in the West drove him to an uncritical acceptance of Marxism. He identified all power with economic power, and the impulse to power with the desire for profits. This fallacy of mistaking a part for the whole prevented him from recognising the threat to freedom implicit in the concentration of any type of power — political, economic, cultural — in the hands of a small number of men. And yet, as mentioned above, Laski's commitment to freedom was pure. He had, also, in an earlier period realized

that the lust for power like the *kama* of Yayati may prove insatiable in spite of protestations to the contrary. Often, therefore, he was compelled to question his support of Marxism and his defence of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This involved him in ambiguities and contradictions,⁴ the like of which one generally does not come across in a thinker of Laski's stature. He symbolised the tragedy of the angry intellectual, who permits passion to obscure his reason and thus contributes to 'the defeat of the values he strives to realise.

For there is no doubt that Laski did immense harm to the cause of liberty, which he passionately espoused. Besides obfuscating his own ideas, Laski is also responsible for confusing, in the minds of at least three generations of Indian intellectuals, the concept of liberty with one of the preconditions for its realization in modern times. His allergy to private enterprise was so great that short of nationalization he could think of no other way — neither a mixed economy nor a system of countervailing forces — to constrain it to function in conformity with public good. Unlike Bernstein, he could not conceive what a few years later John Strachey was to notice, namely, a steady transformation of capitalism under the pressure of a democratic movement. Nor could he understand the logic of power organized in the form of a total dictatorship. Consequently, whereas he could wear the mantle of a prophet while warning his fellow-men against the evil that fascism was, he could only talk like an apologist for another evil which, even when Laski was alive, had already proved an equal, if not a greater, menace to human freedom. It was enough for him that the Soviet dictatorship had abolished private ownership in the means of production. From this step would follow, according to him, in the course of time all the other conditions under which alone liberty can live.

IV

This was, of course, an over-simplifica-

tion of the problem of liberty and amounts to an acceptance of what has been called the positive concept of liberty. Since the distinction between the classical, negative concept of liberty and the later, positive one is tantamount to the distinction between freedom and its absence, it may be useful to elaborate this point a little without going into details.⁵

The classical formulation of liberty comprises the freedom of thought and expression, 'of tastes and pursuits' and, finally, the freedom to unite with one's fellow-men for any purpose not involving harm to others.⁶ Nowhere in this formulation is there any mention of what the state should positively do in order to promote what it considers to be the good life. For there can be no particular way of life that the state or any other organization may legitimately impose upon all.

Two types of obligation follow for the state from this negative conception of liberty. First, in the competition between individuals and groups engaged in the pursuit of their own interests, the state has to function as an umpire to ensure that no one gets an unfair advantage over others. Secondly, the conditions under which men pursue their goals are always undergoing change, and therefore the rules governing their activities are constantly in need of revision. No society that is not stagnant beyond hope can expect to escape this twofold process of environmental change and the modification of laws and social conventions in response to it. The second group of functions of the state follows from this fact. It is to ensure that no group in society distorts the operation of this process, with the power of its wealth or numbers, to suit its own interests. The state should, on the contrary, ensure that it (the process of change) is informed with the spirit of liberty and guided by the best knowledge that mankind can bring to bear on it.

Finally, liberty is indispensable for social stability in modern times. So long as men believed in the divine origin of temporal power, the absence of liberty did not

appear to them as a denial of something to which they were legitimately entitled. However, with the rise of the secular view of life, the moral basis of authoritarianism was undermined for good. A government that now denies liberty to its subjects, even if it be in the name of other values — such as social justice, equality, and the like — inevitably finds that they soon begin to clamour for both, the promised benefits and the liberty they lost as the advance price of the benefits. For experience teaches them that the loss of liberty means not merely a loss of dignity and self-respect but also of the opportunity to fight for the aims for which liberty was sacrificed.

Contrary to the widely prevalent misconception, this does not mean an attitude of *laissez faire* on the part of the state. Even Mill, whose formulation of the negative concept of liberty still remains the most eloquent, recognized the need of state action 'as soon as any part of a person's conduct affects prejudicially the interests of others'. All protective legislation, such as the regulation of factory hours, and all enabling legislation, for example, with a view to removing untouchability, would be justified under this principle. With the growing concentration of power in fewer and smaller centres as a consequence of the progressive integration of economic life, the obstacles to liberty have become all-pervasive and stronger than in the nineteenth century. State action, therefore, in the interests of liberty, especially of the weaker sections of the society, becomes necessary on a larger scale now than was imagined by Mill.

However, the state itself is a Leviathan, with a tendency to devour those whom it would seek to protect. The problem in the modern world is thus not merely that of defining the limits of the authority of the state or of society over the individual as Mill formulated it. It also includes the much more complex task of discovering the types of action that the state ought or ought not to undertake for creating the conditions in which liberty can flourish in a given type of society. It is

obvious that what the state may do in England or the United States without damaging liberty may stifle its growth in a less developed society. Equally, it is possible that what the state may safely leave to non-official agencies in an advanced society may in others have to be done under its own auspices. Again, what may be appropriate for the state to do at one stage of a developing society may cease to be so after a certain level of development has been reached. And yet by that time the policies of the state may have created certain vested interests which could make policy revision extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, without exacting a heavy price in terms of human and material loss. That this is not a mere hypothetical possibility has been amply demonstrated by the experience of the Soviet Union and a number of other countries during recent decades. Nor is it very surprising that this should have been so. For the leadership of an underdeveloped society is itself likely to be culturally and intellectually underdeveloped and, to that extent, incapable of ensuring that the means shall not defeat the end. The task mentioned above, therefore, becomes all the more difficult in so far as it bears on cultural factors precisely for those societies for which it is desperately important to accomplish it.

This is not to suggest that there is no solution. Indeed, Mill himself has enunciated a guiding principle for determining the type of action that government should take. Such action, he says, *should foster initiative and permit a 'variety of experiments.'* For, according to him, the purpose of state action is

to enable each experimentalist to benefit by the experiments of others, instead of tolerating no experiments but its own. The mischief begins when, instead of calling for the activity and power of individuals and groups, it substitutes its own activity for theirs.⁷

The validity of this principle is magnificently illustrated by the economic policy of Ludwig Erhard and, in an earlier

period, by the New Deal programme of the Roosevelt administration.

V

The unconscious slip from the negative to the positive concept of liberty takes place at this stage. *Because* it is the function of the state to ensure the existence of conditions under which liberty would be enjoyed by all, it is presumed that the state is entitled to take *any* action in order to remove the obstacles in its path. *Because* it is the obligation of the state to see to it that economic exploitation does not make a mockery of liberty, it is presumed that the state is justified in destroying the economic freedom of *all* by resort to wholesale nationalisation. *Because* some section or another of a free press is bound to oppose even the most enlightened policy of the government, it is presumed that government has the moral right to put the press into a straitjacket.⁹ In the course of time, government comes to believe that it ought to exercise complete control even over the private life of its subjects in order to fight what it considers to be 'forces of reaction' and 'vested interests'. 'Liberty' becomes a 'bourgeois' concept, 'freedom' acquires a new meaning, and dictatorship claims to be the highest form of democracy known to mankind so far.

How does this happen? By what logic of argument and sentiment do men persuade themselves that freedom is best realised in the total absence of liberty? And what does 'freedom' mean to them anyway that men like Laski should feel impelled to announce that in

the provision of opportunity to the individual — in the full sense of the career opened to the talents — the Soviet Union stands today in the forefront of civilization?¹⁰

It should be remembered that when Laski wrote this, he was not ignorant of the nature of the Soviet state. According to his own statement,

Art, the drama, music, the cinema, through all of these the dictatorship has sought to pour a stream

of tendency, often with ludicrous, and sometimes with tragic results.¹¹

And yet Laski pleaded for looking at the Soviet dictatorship 'in a proper perspective' because, according to his conception of freedom, liberty was a luxury that men fighting for certain profound ideas could ill afford. Indeed,

the Soviet experiment goes deeper than that of the Reformation in the changes of human behaviour it seeks to induce; it is not startling, therefore, that Stalin and his colleagues should not yet be prepared so to relax their authority as to permit its foundations to be called into question.¹²

Laski here assumes that a group of men are justified in 'inducing' (what a word!), *by force*, changes of human behaviour which *they* consider to be in the interests of their subjects. It is this assumption, which is nowhere explicitly stated, that makes him a willing apologist of the Soviet dictatorship.

The roots of this assumption may be traced back to Plato through Hegel, Rousseau, Spinoza and the entire stream of non-empiricist, rationalist philosophy. In its view, man is a hierarchy of elements, some noble and the others base. Of the noble ones, reason represents best his higher self, but the lower self, represented by his impulses and desires, is always trying to hold it in constraint by blurring his vision of reality as it is. If therefore man is to be 'really' free, the removal of external constraints, imposed by nature and social institutions, is not enough. He has also to be freed from the inner constraints that result from the ascendancy of his lower over his higher self. Unless this is accomplished, the removal of external constraints may, indeed, lead to what Aristotle called 'licence.'

The notion of 'forcing men to be free' follows from this view of man. Once freedom is given a metaphysical meaning, unrelated to the environment in which man lives and exercises his powers of creation, it is easy to think of *compelling* him to perceive his own real interests, even

if the process involves a certain degree of unhappiness for the time being. Ultimately, when his reason has established its sovereignty over his lower self, he will see that the suffering was a necessary price for the 'real' freedom he has attained.

Now it is true that Laski and the Left intellectuals did not subscribe to this view of man. For that matter, neither did Marx. What was common between Marxism and rationalism, especially its Hegelian variety, was not the specific elements of theory but the pattern of it.¹³ For our purpose it is enough to note that what was true of man according to the rationalists, was true of society according to Marx. For him the individual was an abstraction; the class alone was real, and society was made up of classes one of which was progressive and the others reactionary. The proletariat was the higher self of society, for its interests were in harmony with the laws of history. The bourgeoisie was the lower self, representing all that was base in society — greed, philistinism, hypocrisy, callousness and love of war. Society had to suppress its lower self, the bourgeoisie, in order to establish the sovereignty of reason, which for Marx was embodied in his theory of history. Until this was done, external constraints could not be removed — indeed, their removal was but another name for the suppression of the bourgeoisie. Dictatorship was thus an inevitable stage before mankind could emerge from the realm of slavery into that of freedom.

The conception of freedom implicit in this view of man has no place for liberty. It may comprehend security, social justice, economic equality, the opening of careers to talents — everything that the inmates of the Aga Khan's stable enjoy. But of the freedom to think and to express one's thoughts, the freedom to combine and work for voluntarily accepted goals, the freedom to frame the 'plan of our life to suit our own character' — of freedom, in short, as ordinary men and women understand it all over the world, there is none in the positive concept of liberty. There cannot be, for this concept is based on a perverse

view of man. As seen above, it regards man as incapable of knowing his own good and, therefore, as needing coercion to be saved from perdition. Secondly, so far as Marxism is concerned, it looks upon him primarily as a member of the herd, with no claim to anything higher than a guarantee of physical safety and economic well-being. Ironically enough, this was also the view of a Stuart monarch who lived two hundred years before Marx and ended up on the gallows. Charles I is reported to have said from the scaffold on 31st January 1649:

For the People; and truly I desire their Liberty and Freedom as much as anybody whomsoever; but I must tell you, that Liberty and Freedom consist in having of Government, and those laws by which their Life and their Goods may be most their own. It is not having a share in Government, Sir; that is nothing pertaining to them.¹⁴

The modern successors of Charles the First have been more subtle and more powerful — they have till now escaped the gibbet.

VI

Liberty in the new states of Asia and Africa has to meet another challenge in the form of an indigenous culture that is largely authoritarian. Its main elements everywhere include: excessive reliance on authority, and the absence of initiative and the spirit of inquiry; the tendency to look upon men primarily as members of a collectivity — tribe, caste, language, religion — and indifference to the rights of the individual; the absence of a secular tradition of political thought, and of concern with and participation in public affairs; and, finally, the love of comprehensive philosophical systems, whose spirit is antithetical to the scientific temper, in the absence of which an open society cannot for long survive.

The authoritarian bias of the indigenous cultures of these countries is strengthened by the urge 'to catch up with the West' by rapid and, if necessary, forced economic development. The examples of the Soviet

Union and Communist China are held out in support of an increasingly centralised economy. The experience of these societies under private enterprise has been that of exploitation and stunted growth in the economic and cultural fields. Consequently there is in most of them neither a decent class of native *entrepreneurs* nor an educated middle class strong enough to provide leadership and act as a countervailing force against the monopolist tendencies of the state. Also, in the absence of unbiased information on the working of state-managed economies, the communist model appears to them to be the only alternative to nineteenth-century capitalism. It is only in a few countries like India, Israel and Malaysia that economic development is not considered to be inherently incompatible with representative institutions. Elsewhere, a pleasantly false image has grown up of the 'achievements' of communist planning. That the image is false, and has always been false, has been conclusively established during recent years.¹⁶ However, the leadership of these countries finds it convenient to sustain the myth of communist achievements from the standpoint of popular welfare, for it facilitates the concentration of all power into the hands of the Government. The common man is easily deceived because he is ignorant and credulous, unaccustomed to questioning the wisdom that goes with power, and uneducated in the exercise of his right to think and choose for himself.

Contact with the West and the pressure of economic development have, no doubt, released the forces of modernization in many of these societies. However, modernity is understood by them mainly in the technological sense. The culturally liberating role of science, illustrated in the philosophical revolution that the West experienced at the beginning of the modern age, is underplayed, if recognized at all, in their educational systems. Consequently, the forces referred to above are too weak to guarantee the steady growth of liberty in these countries in the face of a native authoritarianism buttressed by the modern

state with its machinery of control and repression. In the long run, the spread of education and the needs of a sophisticated industrial economy may, as suggested by recent Soviet experience, compel the government to relax its grip on the life of the people. In the foreseeable future, however, the odds against liberty will continue to be heavy in a majority of the new States.

India appears to be the sole major exception. Here the democratic tradition is at least a hundred years old, and there have been in different parts of the country a number of movements of social reform which drew their inspiration from an incipient renaissance. It is true that the rise of a militant nationalism (Tilak), which itself was preceded by a spurt of chauvinistic cultural revivalism (Vivekanand), prevented this renaissance from culminating into a philosophical revolution. Yet the fact that these retrogressive developments took place in the context of a growing cultural contact with the West, through expanding education and participation in the administration, ensured that the process initiated by the work of men like Ram Mohan Roy, Narmad, Phule and Agarkar would not for ever be blocked. Even when Gandhi came on the scene with his talk of the inner voice and the emphasis on duties rather than rights, his concern for the socially oppressed and the programmes of social reform that he undertook as an *integral part* of his political work mitigated to a great extent the obscurantism of his outlook. On the plane of ideas, he confused the issues between tradition and modernity and thereby prevented their crystallisation. But his insistence on the political and cultural enfranchisement of the lowliest of the low strengthened the forces of liberty in those spheres of life where the masses could easily understand and respond to its appeal.

The result of the preceding hundred years' evolution, as it concerns the prospects of liberty in India, has thus been rather complex. The old social structure and its philosophical sanctions have been irreparably shaken though they have not

yet been replaced by suitable substitutes. However, the establishment of the rule of law, the creation of a secular administration and the progressive association of Indians with it at various levels, the founding of the universities and a modern system of education, the permitting of the growth of industries — all this, though done in a limited measure and with motives which perhaps were not altogether altruistic, has laid the groundwork of a polity which, in the course of time, may evolve into a genuinely open society. For we have a press that enjoys, and even under the British enjoyed, a remarkably high degree of freedom. There is a vocal middle class and a network of voluntary associations — opposition parties, trade unions, chambers of commerce, co-operative societies, literary organizations — many of which do not hesitate to criticize and oppose, sometimes with considerable success, the policies and actions of the government of the day. The ruling party itself is led by men most of whom are committed to a vaguely understood liberal social democracy. It is true that many of them often put expediency above principle in the name of public interest. But on major issues public opinion asserts itself and the ruling party develops a schizophrenic personality. Together, they succeed in compelling the government to respond as soon as it can do so without serious loss of face.

And yet it is not possible to be confident about the future of freedom in India. The defences against its subversion are all of recent origin and only surface deep. The press is free, but it rarely concerns itself with what Mill called 'social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression.' The middle class is vocal, but it lacks self-confidence and is unaware of its own leading role in the building of a better world. Trade unions and opposition parties, though numerically weak, are an important force, but they are more concerned with immediate gains and their vision of the future is too narrowly conceived to inspire confidence. Public opinion, though capable of asserting itself,

and sometimes aggressively so, is aroused only when issues touching deep-seated emotions are involved. That was what happened during the period of the linguistic re-organisation of the States and, again, during the period immediately following the debacle in NEFA. But it refuses to be moved when the rights of the individual or of a weak social group are at stake. For instance, in 1957, when the movement for Samyukta Maharashtra was at its height, Professor N. R. Phatak, a well-known Maratha historian, was not permitted by a mob to deliver in peace his public lectures in Bombay on the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. The reason was that Phatak's evaluation of the Mutiny went counter to the strong popular sentiment over it at that time. What was shameful about the incident was not merely the behaviour of the mob, but also the silence of the organized intelligentsia and its leaders over its intolerance. In June 1963, again, during Mr Nehru's visit to Goa, members of the scheduled castes were not allowed to enter the famous Mangeshi temple with him. The temple priests came in for criticism and later the temple was thrown open to the scheduled castes as the result of a local agitation. What was disturbing here was not so much the earlier attitude of the temple management — they had not heard of human rights — as the action of the Prime Minister in entering the temple without insisting on a recognition of the Harijans' right to worship God on a footing of equality with the caste Hindus. Gandhi or Vinoba, even in his personal capacity, would have refused to go into the temple alone. That was the least that Mr Nehru, as Prime Minister, could have done. His not doing so does not seem to have invited any protest.

The threat to liberty in India thus lies not only in the seductive appeal of communism; it also lies in her social system, which drove thousands of Harijans to change their religion so that they could live as self-respecting human beings. But not all oppressed groups have an Ambedkar as their leader, and in the absence of such

a leader they are likely to be deceived by the serenades of totalitarianism.

Whether Indian society will develop sufficient momentum in the near future to make the process of democratic liberalization more real than it has been till now to its culturally weaker groups, time alone can show. One thing is certain: social liberalization and the integration of the various groups constituting the Indian people into a modern democratic polity will proceed only to the extent that the abortive renaissance of the nineteenth cent-

ury gathers strength once again and becomes the mainstream of India's cultural life. To that consummation we, the intellectuals, can make a unique contribution. Whether we measure up to the task, will be judged by history. But the judgments of history are slow in coming and we are living in times when the opportunity to rectify mistakes will be denied to us. That fact distinguishes the challenge we face from those that were faced by preceding generations. It also makes the challenge more exciting to meet.

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Some Thoughts on Tradition and Modernity*

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INTEGRATION' and 'synthesis' are popular words, especially in this country, but their exact meaning is not always made clear. In one sense integration or synthesis may mean that a set of values pertaining to a certain realm of activity and experience dominate the valuation of all other kinds of activity and experience. I suggest that integration in this sense is antithetical to an important aspect of modernity. Modernity in one of its aspects is pluralism, above all cultural pluralism and, if you like, valuational pluralism. As societies progress into modernity, an increasing differentiation of knowledge, experience and valuation comes about. Pre-modern society is generally characterised by the dominion of theology. In pre-industrial Europe theology 'processed' politics, theology 'processed' economics, theology 'processed' art. 'Christian' art, 'Christian' science, 'Christian' politics, 'Christian' economics emerged and flourished. In modern times we have seen the emergence of 'communist' art, 'communist' science, 'communist' politics and 'communist' economics. The Christian and the communist 'syntheses' provide two examples of a religious philosophy and a secular political philosophy determining the role and the criteria of validity of activity in almost all fields. With the rise of modernity in Western Europe the very idea of one realm of experience dominating all other realms was rejected. Modern science

arose when science declared its relative autonomy, when scientists started exploring the mysteries of nature independent of theological presuppositions about natural phenomena. Modern art developed after it freed itself from theology. So did modern economics, modern politics and modern sociology. Such differentiation of knowledge and experience is an essential aspect of modernity. I think any attempt to lay down a logically coherent synthetic model embracing all fields of activity according to which social change should hereafter proceed is utopian and antithetical to a very basic element of modernity. This is my first proposition.

My next proposition, which follows from the first, is that change in an inherited social structure cannot be ordained except in a few directions. I think the most powerful and most tangible manifestation of modernity — the form in which modernity strikes a traditional society first — is industrialisation. Industrialisation is a complex of many interrelated processes. Six of these processes are very important: monetisation, mechanisation, specialisation, urbanisation, the emergence of large-scale production and large-scale organisation and the growth of operational rationality. Each one of them is a powerful process. But when all of them operate together and accelerate each other their impact is very strong indeed, and very disturbing to the pre-existing structure. In the long run any ingredients of this structure which cannot make room for or adapt to these changes have to give way. From my reading of economic history I do not know any important case of a traditional society which has, for any length of time, resisted these processes. Some sociologists tend to ex-

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aggrate the power of inherited structures to resist the processes that accompany industrialisation. As industrialisation proceeds, there are troubles; there are heartburnings; there are conflicts. But it would be interesting to know if in the long run the processes of industrialisation have been effectively thwarted anywhere in the last 200 years. In fact one may say that instead of asking 'Will this or that society industrialise or not?', we can start by assuming that every society *will* industrialise. The only questions which really matter are: how can we soften some of the shocks of economic development, how can we compensate people who lose involuntarily from a greatly accelerated techno-economic change? It is not as if we have to prepare our social houses for industrialisation first and then invite industrialisation. For here is a guest who is coming anyway and is used to reordering the house himself to suit his convenience. Industrialisation is itself a strong dissolvent of the obsolete rigidities of an old social structure. Instead of saying that society should be reformed first and rapid industrialisation launched afterwards, social reformers should welcome industrialisation as one of their reforming agents. In many countries many rigid elements of the social structure — certain types of class relations for example — which could not be changed by centuries of doctrinal debate were loosened or liquidated by industrialisation in a rather short time. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* is a classic account of how religious orthodoxy, in its techno-economic and social aspects, yielded inch by inch, idea by idea, to the demands of techno-economic change.

As I say, there were subjective troubles, objective conflicts — no one likes obsolescence — but the outcome was never in doubt. I suggest that in any traditional society — Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Asian, African or Latin-American — where the process of industrialisation sets in motion, the ultimate outcome will be in no doubt.

My next point is that, again taking a

long view, the product of this process is also fairly homogeneous in many essentials. If we look around the world today and compare societies which have gone through industrialisation the similarities between them are extremely striking. The big cities, the big mechanised factories, the organisation of economic, political and intellectual activity, administrative systems, fiscal systems, monetary systems, social security systems, and the education and research systems, the beaches, the clubs, the cafes and the tourist resorts, the blue jean boys and the blue jean girls at bars, fountains and street corners, the organisation men and the organised men, the angry young men and the sullen old men: they are all so alike all over the industrialised world today that one cannot fail to see that the face of what is coming is pretty uniform and familiar. We can see the microcosms of it in the industrial cities of the developing countries themselves. There you have all the outer features of the modern industrialised society. I must add at once that there are many serious differences between industrialised societies. But, again, we must not exaggerate the differences and overlook the overwhelming similarities of the emerging social structures and perhaps personality structures all over the world.

I should also qualify what I have said by my next proposition, namely, that while the process of economic modernisation destroys what comes in its way, it is, at the same time, *indifferent* to many elements of tradition which do not come in its way. These can continue to live their own lives in spite of the industrialisation of society. Even in the most highly industrialised societies numerous ethnic and cultural groups continue to maintain their individual identities, and carry on their cultural traditions. There are many aspects of traditional life — community customs and rituals, art-forms, religious beliefs and practices — to which the process of industrialisation is, in principle, indifferent and within an industrial society, traditional communal, aesthetic and religious activities

are and can be carried on provided, of course, that the industrial society is pluralistic, and tolerates and even encourages cultural plurality. There is nothing in the process of industrialisation which prevents these aspects of traditionality from continuing and evolving. For conserving the valuable elements of tradition what we have to guard against are the excesses of planning. The proposal made by some people that we should have a social perspective plan just as we have an economic plan is, in my view, neither practicable nor desirable. What really happens is that when the human agents of industrialisation at micro-levels face specific conflicts between the requirements of industrial change and the traditional behaviour-patterns, they find the relevant pragmatic solutions involving persuasion, cooperation, and/or competition, and the accumulated sum of these solutions amounts to social change. In the regions of indifference between industrial change and tradition nothing happens except that better material means are available to observe customs, pursue art and pursue religion. The theory of democracy refuses, on principle, to lay down the *content* of the *right* culture in detail; and this, I suggest, is one of the great virtues of democracy. Social organisation is supposed to give the individual physical security and civil and political liberty. Within the frame-work of security and liberty thus provided, people can pursue happiness in any manner they like; they can experiment with different styles of living, forms of human relationships, forms of art, forms of religious exploration. If, therefore, industrialisation is associated with a social organisation which is tolerant of this plurality, whatever is valuable in tradition will, in fact, survive and grow.

The question has been raised: is the Indian tradition hospitable to modern scientific method or not? I would say from my little knowledge that in the later schools of Nyaya different forms of inference were clearly distinguished and rigorous tests for establishing the validity

of propositions were laid down. A distinction was made between deductive inference, inductive inference and inductive-deductive inference and five steps in valid inference were enumerated. These would involve the statement of a proposition, drawing deductive corollaries from it, comparing the corollaries with their empirical correlates and then coming to final conclusions. In fact there are many sets of ideas in the vast body of Indian tradition which are not only not hostile to the modern methods of scientific discovery but very hospitable to them and probably anticipated them. Nevertheless, it seems that at some point in our history the Indian mind shifted its interest. In the earlier periods, the individual importance of different realms of knowledge and experience was fully recognised and very remarkable contributions were made by the Indian mind in the fields of botany, astronomy, mathematics, statistics, and, of course, in the realm of art. Different dimensions of human experience were explored in full for their own sake. There was also the recognition of a relatively autonomous politics, very flexible about the means which might be adopted to attain political ends! But later, something happened — it is for historians to tell us how — so that the old positive attitude towards the physical world, and the intellectual curiosity about it, weakened and almost disappeared. An excessive emphasis began to be laid on the illusoriness of the world. As Kabir has said: *Sahib tera hai ghat mahi bahir naina kyon kholay* ('Your Master is in your heart; why open the eyes outside?'). I think one may say, with some pardonable exaggeration, that on a national scale the Indian people attempted to close their outer eyes and open their inner eyes. World-denying saints appeared in large numbers; very few affirmed the world. And while the inner eyes were sought to be opened, economically, politically, socially and intellectually the nation declined. Our scholars became mere commentators, quarrelling about quotations from the scriptures. Original curiosity and

creativity withered away. They remained, by and large, indifferent to our secular decline until the recent contact with western thought offered an 'unignorable' challenge. We were repeatedly invaded and almost enslaved. We were progressively impoverished. Our social institutions became obnoxiously iniquitous.

It is perhaps one of the important tasks of the historians of Indian philosophy and culture to explain this striking discontinuity of interests in our intellectual evolution. If this impression of discontinuity that we non-specialist intellectuals have is wrong, we will only be grateful to our historians for showing it to be wrong. I must add that there have been counterparts of this phenomenon in Europe also.

So far as the intellectual situation today is concerned, it seems that there are two aspects of our historically inherited attitude to knowledge which may obstruct the growth of scientific knowledge: one teleological and the other procedural.

Teleologically, our inherited late Hindu mentality devalues curiosity about and experience of the physical and the social world. The hymns which we learn in our childhood definitely have the effect of blunting our intellectual curiosity about this world. People who study physical sciences or the social sciences somehow feel that they are doing something which is ultimately useless, that they should really be studying philosophy and seeking Brahma Vidya. This is a psychological barrier which the modern Hindu intellectual has to overcome.

Procedurally, the trouble is that empiricism is very deficient in our scholarship. We state and believe in all too many propositions without trying to verify them. Gandhiji laid much emphasis on intuition as a source of knowledge. It has become a tradition for our leaders to present 'the truth by intuition', and if any scientists are around, their business is simply to document and 'prove' what has already been intuited.

I think we have to break away from this excessive pre-occupation with unverified

intuitions and insist on empirical verification of propositions. But the change in this, as in other respects, cannot be ordained beyond a point. Intellectual workers in the field of science have simply to become conscious of the processes at work within themselves and liberate themselves from obstructive mental habits by their own intellectual effort. There is no outer solution. Consciousness is itself a sufficient liberating principle. People who have succeeded in breaking the barrier between the inherited late Indian mentality and empirical inquiry have done and are doing excellent work. And we must expect an increasing number of intellectuals to do the same in the future.

Another question is whether industrialisation and modernisation are to be considered equivalent. I believe that modernisation is a larger movement than industrialisation. Industrialisation is the more tangible aspect of modernisation which first strikes the traditional society. We should not identify modernisation with industrialisation. It has to be identified with the liberal spirit in the broadest sense, and, above all, with the restless search for truth which is science. The heart of modernity may be said to lie in the Western universities. There the Western scholars and scientists continuously attack the realms of ignorance one by one and push back the frontiers of knowledge with a dedication and mental asceticism now so rare in India. The technical and socio-economic progress of the West is simply a byproduct of this basic engagement with truth — both the truth pertaining to particular realms of phenomena and general moral and philosophical truth. It is, again, wrong to identify Western culture with jazz or a dress or a hair style or beatnikism or any such thing, just as it is absurd for Westerners to identify Indian culture with caste, untouchability, cow-worship, sati, snake-charmers and hatha yoga. These things are there. But we must look at the full picture. The jazz is there but the great classical symphony is there also. The low TV show is there but channel 11 and the

third programme of the BBC are also there. Appreciation for all forms of art has been increasing. There is a mass culture but there is also a very vital and dynamic elite culture. I have never understood why all over Europe today the elite is so disgusted with what is called the 'yankification' of Europe. Mass affluence has some cultural consequences which the elite does not like. They feel that the world is going to the dogs because the vulgar masses invade their cultural oligopoly.

I suggest several questions in this connection. Is it true that everybody in England always read Shakespeare? Was there not always a gulf between elite culture and mass culture? In the sense in which the word 'vulgarity' is now used, was mass culture not always vulgar? Does the elite not appreciate some aspects of the vulgar mass culture? Can't we plead for something like cultural pluralism or cultural co-existence? There is such a thing as cultural ascent. Groups with their 'vulgar' cultures move, through stages of snobbery, to high culture. But at any given time there must be segments of the vulgar culture and the elite culture co-existing. If one is really a pluralist one should not be horrified by the existence of some vulgarity. It may be that this vulgarity exists in a more or less stable proportion in different times and places.

Just as we oppose prohibition, so we must demand liberty for both 'high' and 'low' culture. Of course it may be true that along with the industrial civilization come certain attributes of the Western way of life and people take to them far more quickly than to things like rationality, technology and science. But if we do not believe in cultural commissariatism, then we have to say: let jazz and other such cultural articles come. Let the Indian cultural traditions flourish too, with some deliberate encouragement, if necessary. Let the vulgar, the less vulgar and the elite cultures co-exist and find their own spheres and their own adherents. I do not see any one of them destroying the others. There is no evidence for this. The jazz fan only

seems to be the enemy of the symphony fan and the symphony fan the enemy of the jazz fan. But really they are not enemies. Dr. Haldar was quite right: logical contradictions need not be experiential contradictions.

In conclusion I should like to add a few words on modernisation and religion — although this subject really demands separate treatment at length. Both in Indian and in a great deal of contemporary Western thinking there has been a consensus to the effect that the West has failed, science has failed, rationality has failed, in coming to terms with man's Unreason. The Unconscious, which we may use as a term for all the deeper and higher realms of consciousness, has been rediscovered by modern Western psychology. But the modern West has not been able to come to terms with the life of the symbol, the ritual, and the myth, with realms of experience and consciousness which are trans-rational, trans-social. Perceptive observers have noted that in spite of science and rationality the possession of the mass mind by the hunger for the one redeemer or deliverer or the heightened craze for psychic relief in abnormal sex, crime, drink and crowd intoxication are symptoms of a failure of rationalism in the best sense to come to terms with the Unconscious. In the East — though by no means in the East alone — the exploration of the non-rational realms of consciousness has been a great tradition. This exploration can be continued as vigorously as ever, and industrialisation need not come into conflict with it. I can easily imagine a modern industrial man doing his 8-hour, 5-day-week job and devoting a good part of his increased leisure exploring the Unconscious. There is nothing, in principle, inconsistent between being a good, efficient, rational job-doer and being at the same time an explorer of knowledge for its own sake, or art for its own sake, or another realm of consciousness for its own sake. One of the best formulations of the East-West issue that I have come across

is to be found in the *Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities* by F.S.C. Northrop. He distinguishes there between concepts by postulation and concepts by intuition and says that in developing and using concepts by postulation the Western man has done very well, but in dealing with concepts by intuition he has done well only in respect of sensation and inspection. Eastern wisdom has been more efficient in developing and using concepts by

intuition and encountering what Northrop calls the 'undifferentiated aesthetic continuum'. The possibilities as well as the techniques of exploring other realms of consciousness were definitely pursued more thoroughly and for a longer time in this part of the world than in the West and I suggest that there is nothing in modernity to prevent us, both in the East and in the West, from continuing and developing that pursuit.

Whoever does not affirm at some time or other with a definite resolve—yes, jubilate at—the terribleness of life, never takes possession of the unutterable powers of our existence; he merely walks at the edge; and when the decision is made eventually, he will have been neither one of the living nor one of the dead. To show the identity of terribleness and bliss, these two faces of the same divine head—indeed, of this *single* face that merely looks this way or that, depending on the distance from which, or the mood in which, we perceive it—that is the essential meaning and concept of my two books.

RILKE'S LETTERS

Dwarkanath Tagore, The "Prince" of the Indian Renaissance

MIHIR SINHA

IN a tropical country the basic materials of history have a tendency to age and decay rather too quickly. Contemporary history covers too short a period of time compared with, say, that of the West European countries. A family seat built only a hundred years ago would, for example, carry the same prestige in Bengal as a five-hundred-year-old one in England. Documents and other raw materials of historical research also age as quickly. As a matter of fact, the nightmare of a historian here is not as much that of being saddled with an intractable mass of conflicting data, as one of not getting any data at all. One is tempted to say, without reflecting on the ability of Indian historians, that in this way we have come to revere the traditions of mythology and folk-lore.

Reassuringly, however, the ancestral house of the Tagores still remains (in part) in the heart of Calcutta and a great wealth of their own papers and other materials are available in public or private collection. To the common man, Rabindranath is the Tagore, and even if human memory proves to be frail and acquiesces in his installation as a *swayambhu* (born of oneself), this concrete mass of evidence will be there to remind the unwary that like all great men Rabindranath did dominate his time and society, but he was nonetheless a product of his environment. The House of the Tagores was, undoubtedly, one of the most important pieces in the institutional framework of nineteenth century Bengal — the Bengal of the Renaissance into which Tagore was born. It is rather sobering to reflect that the family of the Tagores would have been famous in the pages of our history even if the poet had never been born! Excepting a few

monarchical dynasties, there have perhaps been very few families in the annals of any nation who have exerted such great social influence over so many years.

King Adisur's Legacy

As in the case of many other old families, the origin of the Tagores is shrouded in mystery. It is, however, generally accepted that towards the latter part of the tenth century, King Adisur of Bengal brought over five high caste Brahmins from Kanauj (Upper India). According to popular legend, the King brought them for the sake of certain religious rites which he wanted to be performed by Brahmins of unsullied character and ancestry. It was perhaps, in reality, a part of the powerful King's socio-political campaign for a revival of Brahminism.

Bhattacharayan was more or less accepted as the leading spirit of this group of Brahmins and as such he was a protégé of the King. He must have been a man of some talent as he is reputed to be the author of the Sanskrit classic *Beni Samhara*. Bhattacharayan settled down in Barh and fathered a large family of sixteen sons— one of whom was Nri Sinha or Naru, the ancestor of the Tagores of today. The family he founded seems to have enjoyed both worldly success and intellectual recognition. Among his descendants Dharanidhara, Banamali, Dhananjay and Halayudha have all left notable literary creations behind them, and the two last named achieved prominence respectively as a judge under King Ballala Sen (1158-1179) and as the Prime Minister to King Lakshmana Sen (1179-1205). The literary tradition was kept up in the later

generations as well and we hear of Raja Ram and his grandson Jagannath as authors of repute.

Jagannath's son Purushottam, the author of a number of books, was the unwitting cause of one of the most intriguing turns in the family history. It is said that Purushottam married the daughter of a Brahmin who was of a high moral character and equal social standing but had technically lost his caste because he had smelled beef—the forbidden food. Whatever be the basis of this story, it is a fact that the Tagores (known as Kusharis at that time) became a very special type of outcastes. They were accepted in society otherwise, but were not considered fit for community dinners or matrimonial relations by other Brahmins of equal standing. In the upper caste Hindu society of Bengal, socio-religious taboos did continue to be very strong and it was only within a very small circle that the Tagores could look for matches for their sons and daughters. This resulted in considerable inbreeding and today the relationships among the members of the family are quite a jumble, due to the tradition of marriages between cousins which is generally forbidden among Hindus. Perhaps it was due to this decline in the family prestige that Purushottam migrated to the district of Jessore now in East Pakistan where the Tagores were to live for five generations. In the sixth generation, however, appeared an apparently venturesome character, Panchanan, who decided to move out into the wide world outside. Incidentally, he was the first in the family to be known as *Thakur* in place of the family name of *Kushari*, *Thakur* later becoming *Tagore* in the Anglicized form.

The Early Years in Calcutta

Panchanan came to the village of Gobindopur on the eastern bank of the Hooghly, acquired some landed property near about the present Fort area of Calcutta and established useful contacts with the bustling foreign traders who were destined to rule over India for two

hundred years. Panchanan procured for his son Jayram the lucrative post of *Amin* (Revenue Officer) for the district of 24 Parganas. The following years were crowded with the eventful rivalry between the East India Company and Nawab Seraj-ud-Daulah, the last independent ruler of Bengal. Jayram seems to have made a windfall profit in compensation money when the East India Company acquired his homestead at Gobindopur for building the citadel of Fort William. He was also given some sort of contract for the construction of the Fort—and thus was made the first fortune of the Tagores in Calcutta. A new house built by Jayram in the locality, now known as Pathuriaghata, still remains as the seat of one branch of the family. When Jayram died in 1762 the family was already established in the fast-growing city, although the halcyon days of both the family and the city were yet to come.

Jayram had four sons, Ananda Ram, Nilmoni, Darpanarayan and Gobindo Ram. The first and the last among them did not have any children. Of the other two, Darpanarayan fared better in the struggle for worldly success. He seems to have possessed a keen sense of business and he made good use of it not only at speculation in land in the fast-developing urban area of Calcutta but also in various commercial transactions with the British trading interests. Nilmoni, on the other hand, chose to serve under the newly-established British Raj and made his mark as the *Sheristadar* to the District Court. Nilmoni also made his pot of money, although it was in no way comparable to the fortune of his more successful younger brother Darpanarayan. When he retired from service, Nilmoni's earnings became the bone of contention in a rather undignified squabble between the two brothers. Nilmoni claimed that he had been remitting from time to time sizeable portions of his earnings to Darpanarayan for safe keeping, which the latter denied. A compromise was, however, reached when Darpanarayan agreed to pay Nilmoni the round sum of

a lakh of rupees on condition that Nilmoni surrendered all claims on the estate, including the inheritance from their father. After this incident, there could hardly be any question of the two brothers living together, and Nilmoni decided to build a house of his own.

The quarrel between the brothers had attracted a lot of public notice and a rich landlord of the locality, Baisnab Das Seth (well-known at that time as the supplier of authentic Ganges water to the devout Hindus all over the country) came forward to give a plot of land to Nilmoni about a mile away from the ancestral house at Pathuriaghata. On this plot of land rose the building (1783) which was destined to house the best-known branch of the family — the family of 'Prince' Dwarkanath, 'Saint' Debendranath, Poet Rabindranath and many more glittering personalities. The original building now stands at 6 Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, while the equally famous annexe at 5 Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, built by Prince Dwarkanath, has since been pulled down.

The construction of this building may truly be regarded as the beginning of a new chapter in the long and eventful history of the family. One might as well pause here for a moment to recapitulate the course of development so far. The family had travelled far indeed — and in more than one sense. The journey began with the migration into Bengal and settlement at Rarh; a few generations later the family had to move out of their adopted home to settle in Jessore, only to make a further move on to Calcutta after a few generations. These visible journeys were but the outward expression of an age-long struggle for security — social as well as economic. These people never belonged to the very rich — which class was traditionally composed of big landlords and chieftains, with a sprinkling of big bankers and traders like the Jagat Seths. On the contrary, the first love of the Tagores seems to have been intellectual pursuits and one gets an almost unbroken line of authors and scholars from generation to

generation. It must not be overlooked that they were Brahmins first and they were brought over to Bengal specifically for providing spiritual leadership in the days when 'Brahmin' was almost a synonym of 'Intellectual'. Yet they apparently differed from the conventional type of studious Brahmins who led a rigorous life of plain living and high thinking and spent their days in performing priestly functions or in teaching.

The Tagores, on the contrary, were often prominent in the civil services and occupied positions of considerable trust and responsibility. So it can safely be said that the traditions of the family combined in a remarkable manner idealistic scholarship with down-to-earth wordly wisdom. But apparently due to the breakdown of the medieval order in the eighteenth century, they also had to feel the all-pervading sense of social and economic insecurity and had to come to terms with the spirit of the new times. Their early history in Calcutta was marked by this obvious renunciation of the spiritual values for the material, and at long last they settled down very well at Pathuriaghata. But the urge for idealism was perhaps too strong to be kept down for ever — the proof of which may be seen in the almost symbolic breakway of Nilmoni, who had the reputation of being a pious and idealistic person, from the rich and secure citadel of success at Pathuriaghata. Although the Tagores of Jorasanko always retained a streak of practical horse-sense and the Tagores of Pathuriaghata always revealed a flair for cultural refinement, subsequent history shows that while Jorasanko went on to provide the middle-class of Bengal with idealistic leadership, Pathuriaghata became more and more entrenched in its position of wealthy reaction, at times assuming active leadership of militant conservatism.

The Years of Apprenticeship

Nilmoni, the founder of the house at Jorasanko had three sons — Ram Lochan, Ram Moni and Ram Ballav. Ram Moni's

second son Dwarkanath (1794-1846) was adopted by childless Ram Lochan. The modern system of public education was yet to be evolved at that time and young Dwarkanath had little academic training. Like most young people in those days he also had his grounding in the vernacular and in the court languages of Arabic and Persian; but unlike many of them he also had some training in English, first in a school run by one Mr. Sherbourne and later under the Reverend William Adam and others. Another potent influence on his intellect from the youthful years was that of Raja Rammohan Roy (1774-1833), the greatest figure of the Indian renaissance. Those were restless years seething with intellectual impatience and full of interesting and adventurous people. Dwarkanath's was undoubtedly the most colourful personality of them all. He died in 1846 at the age of 52, but within this rather short span of life he achieved spectacular success in a number of careers and on several planes — both at home and abroad.

Dwarkanath began life on his own quite early when, on his father's death, he had to assume the managerial responsibilities for the family estates. His branch of the family which had grown rather feudal was living on the income from the *zemindari*. But it was not by any means a big income and Dwarkanath began to look around for a suitable occupation. His stewardship of the family properties had made him familiar with the revenue-cum-judicial system and so it was no wonder that he chose to be a lawyer and succeeded in building up a large clientele among the big landlords. To the British community, however, he was no less known as a young businessman of promise and integrity as he had already made a good start as an exporter of indigo and silk. Personal integrity was very much in short supply but it was badly needed for the smooth functioning of the slowly-developing administrative machi-

nery. Dwarkanath was drawn into Government service, first as the *Sheristadar* to the Collector of 24 Parganas and later as the *Dewan* to the Sudder Board of Customs, Salt and Opium. He resigned from service in 1834 to devote more time to his own business interests.

This may be said to mark the end of a chapter in the life of Dwarkanath. In the course of these forty years, which may truly be said to have been spent in preparation for greater things to come, he came to acquire a zeal for pioneering, the spiritual fire behind which was obviously supplied by the philosophy of Rammohan Roy. At the same time he developed a taste for taking infinite pains in doing a job well. Within this short time he mastered the profession of law, was very successful in revenue administration, and as if those were not sufficient outlets for his energy, made a successful entry into the sphere of commerce, till then monopolised by the foreign interests.

In the Prime of Life

Dwarkanath was essentially an extrovert finding pleasure in cultivating society, local as well as British. Moreover, his success as a Government servant and before that as a law agent had secured a reputation in all the right quarters. So when he decided to make business his wholtime career, there was no scarcity of friends and supporters. The two firms established by him were the Union Bank (1829), which was interested in commercial as well as agricultural finance, and Carr, Tagore and Co. (1834), general merchants. The former was perhaps the first joint stock bank flated by Indians.* While the latter was the first Indian partnership enterprise on the 'European model', with William Carr and William Princep as the original partners, besides Dwarkanath himself.

The Bank was destined to be plagued with the dishonesty of its officers and bad investments. It had to close its doors ultimately in 1847 due to speculation on the exchange market and imprudent advances made to indigo planters when Dwarkanath

* Capital of Sicca Rupees 15,00,000—equal to Company's Rupees 16,00,000—consisting of 600 shares of Sicca Rupees 2,500 each, held by all classes of the community.

was abroad. Messrs Carr, Tagore and Co. however, flourished in the industrial and trading world of the nineteenth century. In course of time, it came to count among its subsidiaries such diverse enterprises as indigo factories at Selaidah and silk *kuthi* at Berhampore — both in Pabna (East Pakistan), coal mines at Ranigunj (Bengal) and a sugar factory at Ramnagar in Murshidabad (Bengal). The Industrial Revolution was thus grinding to its slow start in India. The third contribution of Dwarkanath to the cause of industrialisation was as a member of the committee of certain enterprising people of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay who advocated and ultimately brought about a regular steam transport between British and India.

Feudalism was, however, dying hard, and landed property was still the only key to social recognition. Dwarkanath was no exception to this idea; he systematically converted his huge earnings into extensive landed properties in Bengal and the neighbouring provinces. The bulk of his income originated in commerce, but deliberate efforts on his part did succeed in elevating this titleless family to the social level of the Indian 'Peerage'. As a *zeminder* Dwarkanath seems to have been neither better nor worse than his contemporaries. As a matter of fact, we are told tales of his adroit handling of the magistracy if it happened to incline toward the *ryots* of Dwarkanath's estates rebelling against the tyranny of his local agents. In this respect he typifies the contradiction between the pull of a traditional set of values and the demands of industrialisation. Much of his political thinking was obviously coloured by his own interest as a land owner.

The interval between Dwarkanath's giving up Government service in 1834 and his first journey overseas in 1842, i.e., the period of his life between the ages of 40 and 48 were crowded years. Besides the process of money-making he took a leading part in the spheres of social reform and public education as well as public administration and the reorganisation of political forces. In that juncture of history

changes were needed and changes were being effected in preparation for the Industrial Revolution. It would be no exaggeration to say that Dwarkanath's was one of the most important influences moulding the currents of history.

As a social reformer, he was a follower of Raja Rammohan Roy. Although his successful championing of the anti-*Suttee* agitation is the best known of his efforts in this sphere, he also took great pains and spent a lot of money for the unglamorous fight against the problem of beggars. He was instrumental in the enactment of a law of vagrancy and establishment of work-houses and alms-houses. In these days of metropolitan planning it is interesting to learn that Dwarkanath was a leading member of the Committee appointed by the Governor of Bengal to enquire into the sanitary conditions of Calcutta. The 'Fever Hospital of Pataldanga', later merged into the Medical College Hospitals, was sponsored by this Committee.

Looking back, Dwarkanath's note on the spread of public education essential for an industrial revolution, seems to be greater importance. As a colleague of H. H. Wilson and David Hare in the Committee of Management, he took a leading part in reorganising the Hindu College which was no doubt the single most important factor in the advancement of modern education in India. In promoting the teaching of medical sciences his leadership was even more decisive. Not only was he associated with the Calcutta Medical College since its establishment in 1835, not only did he finance a large number of scholarships or meet the expenses of the first batch of medical students going overseas for higher studies, it was Dwarkanath on whose personal initiative the Hindu students overcame the prejudice against dissection.

Simultaneously with these changes on the social-economic scene, public administration too was slowly emerging out of the chaos following the crash of the Mughal empire. With the advent of the British the rough and ready machinery for keeping law and order was first run by the

armed forces and then by the civil police. The more imaginative among the foreign administrators had a feeling that an effective civil administration was necessary for the stabilisation of the economy. At this stage people like Dwarkanath, who were as much the children of British liberalism as anything, acted as the bridgeheads in the advance of the rule of law. They had realized that an effective executive and an impartial judiciary were badly needed to give the developing bourgeois a chance.

Although interesting, it is not very important that Dwarkanath was the first Indian to be made a justice of peace. Through his control over the press and by virtue of his intimacy with the high officials, he was perhaps the most influential Indian in his day. He occupied the position of a confidante to successive Governors and Governor Generals, and was at the same time a true spokesman of the educated and progressive middle class people of Bengal. Besides social reform, he systematically used this tremendous pull in introducing various reforms and innovations in public administration: among the measures directly sponsored by him were extension of trial by jury, allowing appeals before the English Courts against the judgments of the mofussil courts in India, creation of the cadre of Deputy Magistrates, and stabilisation of the sub-divisional administration which led to the end of the superiority of the district police.

The two landmarks in his political career were the successful agitation for liberalization of the press regulations and organisation of the Landholders' Society. From this distance of time it is rather difficult to assess the political ideas of Dwarkanath. But it might not be too far off the mark to guess that three main principles guided his actions: modernization of the national economy, co-operation with the liberal element in the administration and re-organization of the new class of *zemindars*. He was not so much an intellectual as a practical man of affairs — as a matter of fact a hard commonsense was his most remarkable characteristic.

Still on a few rare occasions he was articulate enough to voice his patriotism. His personal interests as an ambitious business man and a member of the new aristocracy did of course colour his way of thinking, but the validity of his judgment that collaboration with the advanced economy of Britain was the quickest way out of social and economic stagnation cannot be challenged. Parliamentary democracy was out of the question considering the general level of education and social awareness, and Dwarkanath naturally looked to the new aristocracy for leadership.

The End of the Journey

His services as a link between the uneasy rulers and the uneasy ruled proved to be of inestimable value, although the hopes placed on the aristocracy were largely belied by history. In his day, however, education suitable for modern times as well as control of capital were to be found only in the ranks of the liberal aristocracy. In the last years of his life Dwarkanath must have realized the possibility of coming in conflict with the colonial government. The Government in India had actively worked for the spread of modern education but only because that was necessary for effective exploitation of the empire. People like Dwarkanath were, however, dreaming of greater things, and he in particular might have thought of one master stroke which would gain for him the political control of the land, of course within the existing political framework.

The climax of Dwarkanath's flamboyant career was his tour abroad, actually two visits to Europe via Egypt. On the first occasion, he was away from India for a little less than a year in 1842; and on the second occasion he left India in 1845 to die in England the following year. A story prevails in the family circle that Dwarkanath's main interest in going to England was to secure the Dewanship or the rights of revenue management of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa which was then vested with the East India Company.

Some say that his ambition was responsible for his rather mysterious death. Such rumours are difficult to verify but it remains a fact that Dwarkanath was spectacularly successful in establishing rapport with the leaders of European society including crowned heads like Queen Victoria. This could hardly have been achieved merely with lavishness or for the empty gratification of a snob. Quite on the contrary, Dwarkanath was successful because his mind was attuned with the mind of Europe which was subconsciously preparing itself for something tremendous in the history of mankind – the phenomenon called the Twentieth Century, and perhaps because he was working after the highest political prize.

After Dwarkanath

Dwarkanath had three sons – Debendranath, Girindranath and Nagendranath. Debendranath (1817-1905), the eldest, had little in common with his father. In his earlier life he came in intimate contact with Raja Rammohan Roy whose influence on Debendranath was powerful and lasting. Debendranath grew up to be an ascetic and was inevitably drawn into the fold of Brahmoism. On the whole he was perhaps less of a liberal than his illustrious father but he will continue to be remembered for the impetus that he provided to the movement of Brahmoism which was a potent force in the Renaissance.

The young and bright minds of the country, had by this time come into contact with Western civilization, and were chafing under the reactionary set-up of the society and religion. Some of them escaped into Christianity while others, under the leadership of Raja Rammohan Roy, found the answer in a reformed and intellectualised version of Hinduism, to be known as Brahmoism. In spite of his missionary activity, Debendranath seems to have embraced Brahmoism primarily out of an intense spiritual craving and not out of any inclination for social reforms. His was a rather aloof and lofty personality pri-

marily inclined towards contemplation and religious discussion with a select few. It was as if the House of Tagores after achieving outstanding social distinction at the time of Dwarkanath, applied a sudden brake to its soaring wordly ambition and returned to the ideals of plain living and high thinking. In a way it was almost an act of atonement, almost a symbolic gesture, that young Debendranath had to cut down even on his food to repay the huge debts left by his spendthrift father.

When Debendranath embraced Brahmoism and gave up the worship of images, there had to be a break with the rest of the family. His family continued to live in the original house at 6 Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, while his brother Girindranath's family occupied the annexe built by Dwarkanath at 5 Dwarkanath Tagore Lane. The subsequent history of the family can be traced by the two parallel courses followed by the Brahmo branch at No. 6 and the traditional Hindu branch at No. 5. Earlier still, when Nilmoni and Darpnarayan separated, they unknowingly set in motion certain forces which brought about changes in the atmosphere and the character of the two branches (Jorasanko and Pathuriaghata) of the family which can be discerned even today.

History repeated itself when Debendranath and Girindranath parted ways. Talent was not wanting in the family of either and the well-known complexion and other physical characteristics were present in both. Yet the two branches grew up as two distinct families in spite of the physical nearness. Their different religious beliefs was certainly a contributory factor but can this alone explain the obvious differences in culinary habits, manner of speech, cosmetic tastes and all that, specially when the two branches lived in adjacent houses? The house at No. 5 is no more – in its place now stands the Rabindra Bharati – but outsiders who were familiar with the house would perhaps agree that No. 5 brought to one's mind the affinity of the Tagores with the merchant princes of Calcutta. The domestic culture of the great merchant

families of Calcutta had a distinct flavour; and it would be a plausible hypothesis that the Tagores at No. 5 were not very different from them. But while the family of Girindranath remained at that stage, Debendranath's family underwent far-reaching changes, retaining only traces of that earlier culture in their domestic habits. While the branch of Darpanarayan obtained a title and made their way up into the feudal aristocracy from mercantile origins, the branch of Debendranath, through a deep involvement in the nineteenth century renaissance moved into the newly-recognized but destined-to-be-powerful ranks of the middle-class. Debendranath himself was, however, far from any involvement as such. Although his adult life had started on a stormy note owing to the pecuniary indiscretions of his ambitious father, it continued and ended on a serene note with his interest being primarily centred in the development and propagation of Brahminism and secondarily in the well-being of his large family.

Debendranath's was not only a large family but an unusually talented one. Of his fourteen children, two sons died early but all the others won distinction in some field or other, the most well-known among them being Dwijendranath, Satyendranath, Jyotirindranath and Rabindranath. Dwijendranath, the eldest, was an outstanding intellectual presiding over a circle of brilliant people. By nature he was a philosopher who took a keen interest in mathematics and was also a poet and essayist of great distinction. He was interested in all new things, such as shorthand for which he wrote the first primer in Bengali. Satyendranath was also a scholar and the author of a profound work on Buddhism, although his fame mainly rested on his being the first Indian member of the Indian Civil Service. It seems rather intriguing to note that the first Indian ICS was not made even a Rai Bahadur let alone a Knight. Was this Tagore too much of a non-conformist for the ICS? Jyotirindranath, the sixth child of Debendranath, was a flamboyant character like Dwarkanath.

Jyotirindranath had many talents, he was an accomplished musician, a poet, a dramatist and a promoter of imprudent business enterprises fired with patriotic zeal. He also used to draw and sketch; but he will be remembered above all as the inspirer of young Rabindranath. The personal achievements of Rabindranath, the youngest of the living children of Debendranath, are too numerous to be dealt with in a short compass and there is no necessity for doing so here. The family of Girindranath too was not far behind in their contribution to the cultural revolution. Particular mention must be made of his grandsons, Gaganendranath and Abanindranath, two of the greatest artists of modern India.

Debendranath's children and grandchildren (as well as nephews and their children) were interested in many things — in everything on earth so to say. But their total achievement can perhaps be summarised as the creation of a new cultural tradition for the country. While the 'leaders' of the Calcutta society were hesitating between the immobility of the traditional society and the impact of an advanced system, Dwarkanath demonstrated in a manly fashion the self-confidence of the middle-class, while it remained for his son Debendranath to provide the spiritual basis of this regained self-confidence. The next two generations of Tagores filled in the outlines drawn by these two great men. The Bengali language as it is spoken and written today was largely fashioned by them; they founded the so-called Bengal school of painting; at Santiniketan they broke new grounds in the theory and practice of education; they introduced the modern trends in stagecraft and dramatics; the standards of interior decoration were set by them; even the way in which our women wear saris today was introduced by them. Today the house at No. 6 Dwarkanath Tagore Lane has been partially rescued from the process of decay but who will rescue the history of this remarkable family from the quagmire of myth and hearsay?

Wordsworth's Lucy

KESHAB D. BHATT

THE passage of 164 years since Wordsworth composed the 'Lucy poems' has left in its wake tides of speculation as to Lucy's identity. Time instead of blunting the inquisitive mind, has all the more whetted the curious urge to probe deeper into the mountainous heap of facts already known about Wordsworth. Many have been the conjectures about Lucy, — the myth or the reality, but all the while the oracles of Lucy have sat tight-lipped, unsmiling, — even scornful. The enigma of Lucy, the phantom, or 'the girl in rock and plain' is a conundrum not of recent times. All through the years in those Westmorland hills while Wordsworth was 'droning the still sad music of infirmity to the verge of the grave', (as one acid-tongued critic¹ has parodied him) speculation was rife among the more intimate circle of his friends — bardolators and critics alike — as to who this mysterious girl could have been. De Quincy, close as he was to Wordsworth and his circle, felt even at such close proximity, the veil of mystery closing steadily over the maid for whom the coronal of the Lucy poems was woven. He must have wondered often enough, for Wordsworth, he says, 'always preserved a mysterious silence on the subject of that 'Lucy', repeatedly alluded to or apostrophised in his poems'.² Indeed, the girl whose image inspired those haunting lyrics is now in her grave

Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks and stones and trees,

but the circlet of flowers he so tenderly

fashioned for that mysterious head remains undying, ever fragrant and fresh.

Conjectures regarding the elusive Lucy keep widening their tentacles as the mystery deepens. One school of thought maintains that Lucy never existed in human form; that the girl is but a fiction, — a figment of the poet's imagination and based upon folk song prototypes. This argument is plausible enough when we disregard the fact that Wordsworth's inventive genius was patently the weakest point in the texture of his poetic fabric. His greatest poetry, indeed almost his entire poetry, is based on personal experience and wherever invention was required the poetry of such passages is no better than second-rate. The Lucy poems on the other hand are gems of sheer inspiration; they are distinguished by an intensity and strength of emotion which radiates a tenderness almost rare in the treatment of the love theme. These exquisite lyrics which often reach the breaking-point of tears could hardly have been invented; the experience was indubitably lived through by Wordsworth; all those 'aching joys' and 'dizzy raptures' and their final reunuciation. For example, when Wordsworth describes the palpable ministry of Nature on Lucy, he says that

beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.³

In these lines there is no invention, but a faith which exquisitely expresses the synthesis of Nature and Man. This fusion so complete, so perfectly expressed and so full of the deepest conviction could only have been inspired by the image of the living Lucy and not by the genius of fiction.

It would be idle to toy with the idea

¹ T. S. Eliot — *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*.

² *Recollections of the Lake Poets*.

³ *Three Years She Grew*.

that Lucy was non-existent as a human being, when the evidence almost screams in our ears of Lucy, the reality, the girl who 'grew in sun and shower'. But in immortalizing her he ungenerously turned her face away from us and left it to posterity to discover the real woman beloved of the poet. Who could she have been?

Forty-seven years ago, Professors Harper and Legouis discovered a skeleton in Wordsworth's cupboard, — the dark secret Wordsworth had so successfully kept under cover, — that of his love-affair with the French girl Annette Vallon. Hitherto, his biographers had recognised his sister Dorothy and Mary Hutchinson (later his wife) as being the two predominant womanly influences in his life between the years 1792-1802. The 1916 discovery caused a sensation in literary circles, not because Wordsworth during his sojourn in France (1792) has loved too well but because a new aspect of Wordsworth revealed itself. Critics had long been familiar with the outpourings of the moral pontiff Wordsworth, but with the shadow of Annette falling across so much of his poetry, they were less inclined now to accept as authentic older theories regarding his emotional development during this decade. Indeed, the conspicuously sharp hiatus between the adolescent eroticism of the Wordsworth of twenty and its stringent cauterization and atrophy by the time he reached thirty required some explanation!

With the discovery of Annette Vallon, the constellation of maidenly influences on Wordsworth now resolves itself into three glittering lights: Annette, Dorothy and Mary. Each of them, in varying degrees, had some influence in shaping or directing the course of his life. Lesser lights such as Mary of Esthwaite water and other calf-loves are forms too shadowy to investigate to any purpose. Indeed, until another woman of the like of Annette or Dorothy, or of Mary is discovered in Wordsworth's

life, we must be content to limit this investigation to these three women.

Before deciding who Wordsworth had in mind when he composed the *Lucy* poems it would be well at this stage to analyse these lyrics and discover for ourselves in which direction the evidence points. Evidence there certainly is, and even though prodigal, it points strongly in the direction of one of these women.

Even a casual reading of the poems suggests immediately that each poem is the record of an experience, — a personal experience, which when described in the abstract yields but little substance. Each experience is described in a singularly objective manner so that the element of objective reality diffuses through the whole; a reality seen through memories, — indeed, through the metamorphoses of the unconscious mind.

Although scant in substance, each poem powerfully succeeds in conveying an emotion full of personal significance; an emotion which springs from the memory of an actual experience, — real and all-pervading, so that any concept of Lucy as a visionary being immediately dissipates itself. In none of these poems does Wordsworth stop to analyse or reflect on the feeling conveyed, but by his habitual mode of recollecting in tranquility he enacts the emotional episode with such serenity that all else in the poem subordinates itself to the emotion he feels for Lucy.

The particular emotion or feeling communicated through these lyrics is one of tenderness; a tenderness that is almost spiritual in its depth and one which is born of love:

such love as spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away, no strife to heal —
The past unsighed for, and the future sure.⁴

These lines though not from the *Lucy* poems, serve admirably to illustrate the mood of blessed serenity from which this aura of love emanates; love strong enough to convince us of its reality, and yet in its purity so little touched by mundane emo-

⁴ *Laodamia*.

tions as to attain an almost idealistic plane. It is the thought of such love that induces the hauntingly sad memory of happy days with Lucy:

I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.⁵

As love poems they are singularly devoid of any passionate expression of love. A complete absence of the erotic manifests itself by the very sexlessness of the emotion imparted. One gets the impression that Wordsworth's love for Lucy is not deliberately spiritualised, but takes that form when the emotion is recollected in tranquillity and whatever 'coarser pleasures' may have been associated with the actual experiences revived by memory, these are lost in the process of selection as being trivial or unimportant.

Four of the five poems conclude on the elegiac note. In these the reader is categorically told that Lucy is dead. She is but a beautiful memory now. The last stanza of each poem, dealing as it does with Lucy's death, or the premonition of death, heightens the tender feelings of love into sharper relief by its very antithesis; a clever device which is skilfully used by Wordsworth in these poems.

In concluding this analysis of the Lucy poems we might add scraps of information of a topical kind. Lucy was an English girl who lived away from the busy haunts of men in the lovely seclusion of hills and dales, — 'the untrodden ways', as Wordsworth puts it. Both she and Wordsworth were kindred spirits in their common love of Nature. They gloried and exulted in her various and multitudinous forms, as Wordsworth readily testifies:

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.⁶

⁵ *A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal.*

⁶ *I Travelled among Unknown Men.*

⁷ *Three Years She Grew.*

⁸ *The Prelude*, VI 339-341 (1850).

Lucy's excursions into Nature's realm of beauteous forms was not just a passive process, but her mind was supremely receptive to its sights and sounds, — to 'all the mighty world of eye and ear', so that catching the very pulses of Nature's most subtle music was not difficult for her, since she had been taught

to lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round.⁷

This acute sensitivity to Nature is in itself a distinguishing characteristic of the personality that is Lucy's, not to speak of her warm and ardent love of Nature in all its manifestations.

The question then is, with whom did Wordsworth share this joyously intense emotional experience, — an experience which on retrospect stirred the poet to feelings of deep and tender love? There can be little doubt so far as emotional involvements are concerned that Annette and Dorothy touched him far more deeply than ever Mary did. The low domestic voltage that Mary's love generated served its purpose well enough in the common affairs of daily life, but lacked the intensity necessary to stimulate Wordsworth's poetic sensibilities to any great heights.

The first major emotional upheaval in Wordsworth's adult life took place in France (November 1791 — December 1792) at a time when the country itself was going through the toils of a political resurgence. 'Europe at that time', Wordsworth tells us,

was thrilled with joy,
France standing on the top of golden hours,
And human nature seeming born again.⁸

Against this stirring background, love in all its passion flowered for Wordsworth and Annette during the thirteen months he spent in revolutionary France. In the first flush of young and innocent love, he beheld in Annette

A vision and loved the thing he saw.
Arabian fiction never filled the world
With half the wonders that were wrought for him.

Earth lived in one great presence of the Spring
 Life turned the meanest of her implements
 Before his eyes to price above gold,
 The house she dwelt in was a sainted shrine,
 Her chamber window did surpass in glory
 The portals of the East, all paradise
 Could by the simple opening of a door
 Let itself upon him; pathways, walks,
 Swarmed with enchantment till his spirit sank
 Beneath the burden, overbless'd for life.⁹

This blinding splendour of love which
 Annette and Wordsworth knew, when still
 innocent, lost much of its radiance once
 Wordsworth's erotic though somewhat inhibited
 instincts were liberated by the
 vivacious Annette. Soon the warm glow of
 sensuous passion thrilled through Wordsworth's
 twenty-one years, and the

youth to whom was given
 So much of earth — so much of heaven
 And such impetuous blood!¹⁰

found himself swirled deliriously in the
 whirlpool of voluptuous desire, and soon
 Annette

yet without the name of Wife
 Carried about her for a secret grief
 The promise of a Mother.¹¹

Considered simply as an experience of
 love, this affair could have inspired the
 Lucy poems. However, love's aftermath to
 this delirious passion was hardly rewarding
 for Wordsworth as subsequent events
 show. Wordsworth's desertion of Annette
 and Caroline soon after the latter was born
 (December 1792) was the one ugly lapse
 in his life which brought upon him terrible
 retribution. Apart from precipitating a
 mental and moral crisis, the 'viperous
 stings of remorse' haunted him for the
 rest of his days like some avenging
 Eumenides, and often enough the reproachful
 eyes of Annette must have

stared at him as conscience reasserted
 itself. It is improbable in the extreme, as
 such, that Annette could have inspired the
 Lucy poems, which are full of the most
 tender expressions of love, in the face of
 this unchivalrous desertion.

It is then to Dorothy Wordsworth and
 Mary Hutchinson that we must direct our
 investigation and plumb the depths of the
 tender emotions each of them lavished on
 the poet and gauge his love by the feelings
 which he reciprocated in his turn. It
 must be remembered from the outset that
 Wordsworth and his sister had been
 separated from early childhood, and that
 on the few occasions they spent together,
 these happy days were all to brief and
 they looked forward with more than
 friendly ardour to the next occasion when
 they would be united. In 1793, Dorothy
 writes:

I cannot help heaving many a sigh at the
 reflection that I have passed one and twenty
 years of my life and that the first six years
 only of this time was spent in the enjoyment
 of the same pleasures that were enjoyed by
 my brothers, and that I was then too young
 to be sensible of the blessing.¹²

A year later, writing from Windy Brow,
 where she spent a few weeks in the company
 of her brother William, she addresses her
 Aunt:

I am now twenty-two years of age and such
 have been the circumstances of my life that
 I may be said to have enjoyed his company
 only for a very few months. An opportunity
 now presents itself of obtaining this satisfaction,
 an opportunity which I could not see pass
 from me without unspeakable pain.¹³

The direct effect of this separation made
 them long for each other's company and as
 both stepped on to the threshold of manhood
 and womanhood each was haunted by the
 dream of a cottage which would be their
 home together. Dorothy tells a friend of
 hers:

I see my brother fired with the idea of
 leading his sister to such a retreat as Fancy
 ever ready at our call hastens to assist us in
 painting.¹⁴

⁹ *Vaudracour and Julia*, 38-50.

¹⁰ *Ruth*, 124-26.

¹¹ *Vaudracour and Julia*, 66-68.

¹² *Early Letters*, Dorothy Wordsworth to Jane Pollard (February 16, 1793).

¹³ *Ibid.*, Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Crackanthorpe (April 21, 1793).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Dorothy Wordsworth to Jane Pollard (July 10, 1793).

She paints this dream of ecstatic happiness in the softest lights:

When I think of winter, I hasten to furnish our little Parlour. I close the Shutters, set out the Tea-table, brighten the Fire. When our Refreshment is ended, I produce our Work, and William brings his book to our Table and contributes at once to our instruction and amusement, and at intervals we lay aside the Book and each hazard our observations upon what has been read without the fear of Ridicule or Censure.¹⁵

And William who 'preferred her society to every other pleasure'¹⁶ has feelings not a whit different. 'How much do I wish', he writes to his sister in July 1793, that each emotion of pleasure or pain that visits your heart should excite a similar pleasure or a similar pain within me, by that sympathy that will identify us when we have stolen to our little cottage... I certainly will make a point of once more mingling my transports with yours. Alas! my dear sister, how soon must this happiness expire; yet these are moments worth eternity'.

The cottage of their dreams came true in September 1795, but not before Wordsworth went through the throes of a mental and moral crisis, precipitated directly from his inexperience in love and politics, both of which had their roots in France. The months of stark physical blankness that Wordsworth groped in between the end of 1794 and the beginning of 1795, gradually came to an end when he abandoned Godwin's principles of philosophic anarchism¹⁷ and was gently weaned back to Nature through Dorothy's love and sympathy. This healing process took place at Racedon, 'the first home I had',¹⁸ as Dorothy says, and Wordsworth's gratitude to his sister for this tranquil restoration is eloquently given in *The Prelude*:

She in the midst of all, preserved me still
A poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon the earth.¹⁹

In times of stress and doubt Dorothy was the 'breathing balm' and through the days of spiritual convalescence at Racedon, and after, Wordsworth finds in Dorothy the ready wonder of his own youth and reads his pleasures in her eyes:

In thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes.²⁰

It was here, in this first home of theirs, that Wordsworth recovered his early capacity and delight in Nature, and the autumn of 1795 marks the beginning of the three idyllic years, the 'three years she grew in sun and shower', during which time Wordsworth and his sister gave themselves up completely to the undisturbed contemplation of Nature. Dorothy's observations of Nature in the *Alfoxden Journal* (1798) proved to be a veritable store-house for Wordsworth's poetry, and it is worth observing, that these snippets describing Nature's myriad forms are set down calmly and objectively, testifying to the blessed serenity of this period. Wordsworth could not have found a better collaborator than Dorothy and his tribute to this exquisite sister is as spontaneous, as it is simple:

The blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy:
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
And love and thought and joy.²¹

The joyous tranquility of the period between Racedon and Alfoxden underwent a change before the middle of 1798, and the tenacious affection by which brother and sister were united demonstrated itself clearly enough by the ardour now attendant on their feelings. This is increasingly evident from the *Grasmere Journal* (1800-1803) with its intimate revelations of Dorothy's companionship with her beloved brother and bears a striking contrast to the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Dorothy Wordsworth to Jane Pollard (February 16, 1793).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Dorothy Wordsworth to Jane Pollard (February, 16, 1793).

¹⁷ This is evidenced by his play *The Borderers*.

¹⁸ *Memoirs of William Wordsworth* (1851).

¹⁹ *The Prelude*, X, 345-47.

²⁰ *Tintern Abbey*.

²¹ *The Sparrow's Nest*.

Alfoxden Journal which is peculiarly devoid of any disturbing emotional undercurrents. Although there never was anything sinister in the deep affection they had for each other, nevertheless Wordsworth must have recognised the danger of allowing anything, even unconsciously, that savoured of the physical to obtrude on what was purely a spiritual relationship, although a far more demonstrative one than ordinary brother-and-sister relationships. The *Grasmere Journal* is charged with an undercurrent of this new emotion and in spite of Wordsworth's recognition of its dangers, the shutting out of this love is postponed, as we learn from Wordsworth's impassioned plea to his sister in mid-July, 1798:

Oh! yet a little while

May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister!²²

Undoubtedly, Wordsworth came to this painful decision during the winter months at Golsar²³ where he composed four of the five Lucy poems,²⁴ and knowing Wordsworth's psychology as we do, and the importance he gives to 'the impressive discipline of fear'²⁵ he killed Lucy symbolically, and in the dark recesses of his subconscious mind she no longer existed for him, she was dead.

The state of Dorothy's feelings is clear enough in the *Grasmere Journal* and as the days draw closer to Wordsworth's marriage, her greatest emotional crisis, her feelings stand out poignantly in the elusive phrases and broken asides that seem to be wrung from her, in spite of her determination to suppress them. The very first entry

in the *Journal* gives the key-note of her feelings. 'My heart was so full that I could hardly speak to W. when I gave him a farewell kiss. I sat a long time upon a stone at the margin of the lake, and after a flood of tears my heart was easier.'²⁶ During Wordsworth's absences, Dorothy always shows signs of tension; her headaches become more frequent and she becomes over-anxious for his return. 'No letters . . . I had many of my saddest thoughts, and I could not keep the tears within me.'²⁷ She determines not to show her feelings. 'I will be busy. I will look well and be well when he comes back to me. O the darling! Here is one of his bitten apples. I can hardly find in my heart to throw it into the fire . . . I was full of thoughts about my darling. Blessings on him.'²⁸ The intimate revelations of their companionship intensify in the six months before her eclipse. 'After dinner we made a pillow of my shoulder — I read to him and my Beloved slept.'²⁹ As the days go by Dorothy psychologically prepares herself to abdicate, at least part of her kingdom. 'They will soon be gone. Let that pass, I shall be beloved — I want no more.'³⁰

Perhaps, the most significant entry, so far as our study is concerned, is dated April 10, 1802, and refers to the letter Dorothy received that evening from Wordsworth telling her of his decision to marry Mary Hutchinson. Although Dorothy must have known that this would happen, everything seems to snap in her.

Every question was like the snapping of a little thread about my heart — I was so full of thought of my half-read letter and other things. . . . At this time William, as I found the next day, was riding by himself between Middleham and Barnard Castle, having parted from Mary.³¹

While Dorothy's heart was breaking that evening, Wordsworth, at exactly the same time was composing the beautiful poem, *Among all lovely things my Love had been*, one of the lesser known 'Lucy' poems, as he rode back to Grasmere from Mary. The

²² *Tintern Abbey*.

²³ Wordsworth and his sister spent over four months in Golsar, Saxony, during the period October 6, 1798 to February 23, 1799.

²⁴ *I Travelled Among Unknown Men* was composed in 1801.

²⁵ *The Prelude* I, 631.

²⁶ *Grasmere Journal*, May 14, 1800.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, May 16, 1800.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, March 4, 1802.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, March 17, 1802.

³⁰ *Grasmere Journal*, May 31, 1802.

³¹ *Ibid.*, April 12, 1802.

poem deals with an affecting incident which took place during their early days at Racedon, and Wordsworth writing to Coleridge on April 16, 1802, tells him:

The incident of this poem took place about seven years ago between Dorothy and me.

Dorothy Wordsworth had never seen a glow-worm, and Wordsworth riding back home one stormy night found one and carried it back to their garden. This was to be a surprise for Dorothy, and Wordsworth with fervour relates:

The whole next day, I hoped, and hoped with fear;

At night the glow-worm shone beneath the tree;
I led my Lucy to the spot, Look here,
Oh! joy it was for her, and joy for me!

This clinches the issue that the Lucy of the Lucy poems is Dorothy and indicates clearly enough that Wordsworth's feelings of tender love for his sister were far deeper than those he had for Mary Hutchinson, his future wife. Or else, how could his first thoughts have been of Dorothy and the joyous days he spent with her at Racedon soon after parting from his betrothed, Mary Hutchinson?

One does not know whom to pity more, Dorothy or Mary, but at this juncture our sympathy goes out to Mary. It would appear that Wordsworth's reluctant rejection of Dorothy has its corollary in the long-delayed marriage which took place on October 4, 1802. According to an early draft of *The Prelude*, his first vows of love to Mary Hutchinson were made in the long vacation of 1789.

when in the blessed hours
Of early love, alone or with the Maid
To whom were breathed my first fond vows.³²

³² *The Prelude* edited by Ernest de Selincourt, XI, 316-19, MS. A2C.

³³ *The Prelude*, VI, 233-36.

³⁴ Wordsworth told Crabb Robinson in 1842 that the poems, *Our walk was far among the ancient trees*, *She was a Phantom of Delight*, *Let other bards of angels sing* and the two sonnets *To a Painter* should be read in that order as describing the phases of his affection for his wife.

This was the maid who

breathed
A gladness o'er the season, then to me
By her exulting outside look of youth
And placid undercountenance, first endeared.³³

The renewal of this early love in 1794, after Annette had been thrust into the background, is described awkwardly enough in the poem *Septimi Gades*. Wordsworth apparently forgiven for his moral lapse in France, tells Mary:

Think not my friend, from me to roam,
Thy arms shall be my only home,
My only bed thy breast;
No separate path our life shall know,
But where thou goest I shall go,
And there my bones shall rest.
Yes Mary, to some lowly door
In that delicious spot obscure
Our happy feet shall tend;
And there for many a golden year
Fair Hope shall steal thy voice, to cheer
Thy poet and thy friend.

Through all the poems which deal with some phase of Wordsworth's affection for Mary³⁴ one gets the impression that Wordsworth was never ecstatically in love with her. Even the poem, *She was a Phantom of Delight* which sparkles with beautiful imagery, is tame, when considered as a love poem. Here is the picture of the grown-up Mary:

A traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort and command.

This tribute lacks in powerful feelings, — feelings of exalted rapture, and Mary is praised for the Roman virtues — virtues gracefully worn by matrons, but hardly those a lover thinks of in moments of ecstasy.

It is evident that Wordsworth required some profound disturbance before 'the mighty world of eye and ear' could come alive for him in vital and imaginative terms. Dorothy's intense affection for Wordsworth fulfilled his imaginative needs, whereas Mary's 'placid undercounten-

ance³⁵ and qualities of temperance, endurance and foresight merely gave strength and direction to the physical and social needs of Wordsworth, the man. If Wordsworth's marriage stabilised the man, it also served to raise a barrier and shut out the intense emotional life hitherto shared by Wordsworth and his sister, and Lucy's death symbolises the disruption of the perfect communion that existed between Wordsworth and Dorothy during those halcyon days at Raceden and Alfoxden. Not only did Dorothy radiate an affection at once soothing in its tenderness, but her genius matched the acuteness of her brother's sensibilities, as did her desires and ideals, so much so, that Wordsworth wrote of this joyous companionship:

She who dwells with me, whom I have loved
With such communion that no place on earth
Can ever be a solitude to me.³⁶

³⁵ *The Prelude*, VI, 236.

³⁶ *Poems on the Naming of Places*.

³⁷ *The Prelude*, XI, 281, 82.

³⁸ *She Dwelt Among Untrodden Ways*.

However, by his marriage, he cut off the main spring of emotional tension in his life, and as a result assassinated the poet in himself. Little wonder then, that bereft of this powerful source of emotional stimulus, Wordsworth lamented three years later:

I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,
May scarcely see at all.³⁷

And whether or not the deep shades of solitude blighted Wordsworth's happiness in after years, this much is certain that the quickening impulse generated by the intense communion between brother and sister was lost, and he is left both intellectually and spiritually poorer for the loss. Indeed, Lucy was dead for the poet, and Wordsworth could not have said with greater truth and pathos:

few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me.³⁸

*And until you have possessed
dying and rebirth,
you are but a sullen guest
on the gloomy earth.*

GOETHE

The Problem of Kierkegaard

RAJENDRA AVASTHI

HE was himself a 'problem-man,' a 'Janus bifrons' whose one face laughs while the other weeps¹. Imagination, dialectic and religious melancholy — these three basic dispositions he inherited from his father. The father unburdened the sense of guilt and released his tensions by confessing to his son his sexual fall and blasphemy against God; but this confession became a constant source of tension for the son who characterised that event as 'the great earthquake' and 'the terrible revolution', which served as a psychological basis for his 'dread' and 'despair', his 'fear' and 'trembling'.

Whatever be the method and process of Kierkegaard's writings, their purpose was but one: to bring man into a religious relationship with God. His problem was to seek truth not by contemplation and thinking but by living and dying for it — to seek 'a truth which is truth for me' and which asks for personal response and sacrifice. This, for him, means giving up life to the service of God and approaching Him personally. About himself he writes: 'there is melancholy in everything in my life, but then again an indescribable happiness. . . . I have, quite literally, lived with God as one lives with one's father.'

But from the very beginning he makes a reservation that though relative contradictions may be mediated and problems springing therefrom resolved, yet 'personality will protest in all eternity against the proposition that absolute contradictions can be mediated, it will repeat its immortal dilemma through all eternity "to be or not to be that is the question"'. The vital condition of personality is inwardness. Inwardness is a struggle marked by qualitative leaps and crises, and to be born a man is

to be put in a state of painful tension and to be given over to the serious and to suffering.

There are three stages on life's way, he explains: the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious. An individual passes from one stage to another not because of any process of transformation of one stage into another but because of a leap, that is, his own free decision. There are also some such states of soul which indicate that the individual has gone to the extremest limit of the mode of life he is living. A leap into another stage of life then becomes possible².

The three major moods that express the aesthetic sensibility are sensual immediacy, doubt and despair. It is explained that passions and sensuality do not have something in them that may cause disorder; but they do breed disorder in human existence as soon as they are cut off from moral will and are thus changed into selfish lust. Don Juan represents this phase of aesthetic existence which is innocently isolated from the motives which may regulate passions and sensuous desires, whereas Faust, who, for the sake of momentary pleasures, considers the efforts to satisfy human spirit as futile and becomes sceptical about every certainty and moment of joy, represents the second phase. Doubt remains the central point of his existence, and though he always wishes to continue the quest for a happy moment yet at the same time he remains sceptical of ever attaining it. The Wandering Jew is the representative of the third phase of the aesthetic mode of living. Apart from the passions and intense doubt that prevail in his life, there also runs a current of silent despair underneath. Though he is

aware of the significance of other modes of existence, he finds himself lacking in the resolution that may bring them forth.

The aesthetic life is, therefore, a meaningless, imbalanced life. The core of such a life remains pleasure, but a pleasure that breeds frustration and melancholy instead of joy. In his search for pleasure the aesthete marches seven times around existence and blows the trumpet and thereupon lets the whole thing collapse. His attitude is essentially sterile, his life anarchic and disordered, and his soul 'makes chaotic, jerky movements, like a galvanized frog. Boredom and disgust overwhelm him. He finds his refuge from reality in the bitter laughter of despair which Kierkegaard terms irony.

Irony is the intermediary existence-sphere between the aesthetic and the ethical. Irony is 'a specific culture of the spirit, and therefore follows next after immediacy'. It arises from the constant placing of the particularities of the finite together with the infinite ethical requirement, thus permitting the contradiction to come into being. As an intermediary existence-sphere irony is a contemplative attitude which has the ethical as its object while it is polemical in its attitude towards the aesthetic life. Though the ironist comprehends the ethical as a possibility of a higher mode of existence yet he has not actually arrived at it. He frees himself from the obedience to the aesthetic life but has not yet entered into allegiance with the ethical.

To solve this problem is to take a leap into a deeper and better mode of existence. In this context, despair, which is the cause of tensions in the aesthetic life, is also the remedy. But for that purpose it is not to be taken as a condition in which one is to remain. It should be a choice, 'for one can doubt without choosing to, but one cannot despair without choosing. And when a man despairs he chooses again... He chooses himself, not in his immediacy... but he chooses himself in his eternal validity'.

By the introduction of the category of

choice the individual has come to realise the despair which was all the time inherent in the aesthetic stage; out of this despair emerges a self which now knows itself to a certain extent and is thus more truly a self than before. This 'knowledge' is of the fact that the self is in relation primarily to eternity in time. The individual acknowledges the significance of self-mastery and self-knowledge, and of the fact that by moulding his conduct in the light of the moral good, he can have them. The eye of the soul is turned towards moral ideals and the elements lying in his nature are controlled with its help.

Choice remains the centre of the ethical mode of existence. "The important thing is not to cultivate one's mind but to mature one's personality", and choice is most significant in this context, because that which is chosen stands in the deepest relationship to the chooser. Through choice personality reverses itself in the thing chosen, and thus personality is moulded in the choice; and 'when it does not choose, it withers away in consumption'. In making a choice the individual reveals himself, and 'in making a choice it is not so much a question of choosing the right as of the energy, the earnestness, the pathos with which one chooses... For the choice being made with the whole inwardness of his personality, his nature is purified and he himself brought into the immediate relation to the eternal Power whose omnipresence interpenetrates the whole of existence'.

The individual chooses the absolute which is his own self in his eternal validity, and he chooses in despair. But though his fundamental ethical choice is the choice of a self, yet the self is historically conditioned and is related to the social order; so he chooses himself in relation to his environment and surroundings; his task is to become the universal man. 'He has his place in the world, with freedom he chooses his place'. His personality is placed on a higher level through the interaction of his personal self and the social

order. In this way he receives the reality of his existence and assumes the responsibility for his task. The ethical is the universal.

The ethicist holds that every man has a calling. The ethical thesis that every man has a calling is the expression of the fact that there is a rational order of things in which every man, if he wills, fills his place in such a way that he at once expresses the universal-human and the individual. Since the ethicist is willing to work, his occupation is not slave-labour, but he regards it as the most beautiful thing. He lives by his work, and his work is at the same time his calling; hence he works with pleasure. His calling brings him in association with other men, and in performing his job he accomplishes what he could wish to accomplish in the world. He is married, contented with his home, and time appears to him a true blessing. He regards marriage as the universal-human, 'the beautiful mid-point and centre of human existence', where the aesthetic and the religious values are realised primarily in the context of the ethical. Only in married life is the aesthetic despair controlled, for here the various poles of existence are reconciled and a reliable and historical reality is endured.

The ethical mode of existence, therefore, does not totally discard the aesthetic; the aesthetic is only dethroned and is given a subordinate position. It undergoes a metamorphosis, and then everything comes back, but comes back transfigured. 'In the ethical the personality is concentrated in itself, so the aesthetic is absolutely excluded or is excluded as the absolute, but relatively it is still left'. The aesthetic personality follows its own whims and tastes, and thus concealment remains the feature of the aesthetic mind. The ethical personality, on the other hand, governs itself by moral standards which bind all men; thus frankness, open-heartedness and simple dealings with others are practised by the ethical individual. The conformity of the individual being with the universal factors gives expression to that which is essentially human in the individual existence. Only

the ethical person, therefore, 'solves the great riddle of living in eternity and yet hearing the hall clock strike, and hearing it in such a way that the stroke of the hour does not shorten but prolong his eternity'.

The ethical mode of existence has a natural ordination to religiousness. 'The ethical and the religious stages have in fact an essential relationship to one another'. So, by adopting the ethical mode of existence the individual completes only one phase of that which is a double movement. He acknowledges his unconditional obligation to abide by the moral law, but he lacks the power to do the moral act. The ethical principles place the concept of duty before the individual with the presumption that he possesses the conditions necessary for carrying the life freely upto the exacting standards. Because of this abstraction, ethics fails to point out the original sin effectively and to create an attitude of being in dread before God. As long as the individual does not willingly bring his aesthetic and ethical concerns under the subordination of the more significant and comprehensive demands of a religious mode of existence, the specific aspect of human existence remains unknown. Hence the importance of entering into the religious mode of existence.

As irony is the 'confinium' between the aesthetic and the ethical, so humour is the 'confinium' between the ethical and the religious. Humour is not yet religiosity but lies on its boundary and is 'the starting point for religious beginning'. It is 'the concluding stage of the immanent within the immanent: it is still essentially a retirement out of existence into the eternal by way of recollection'. 'The humouristic makes its appearance when the problem 'Can there be a historical point of departure for an eternal happiness?' is answered not with the yes or no of decision, but with a smile of sadness, which means that both the aged individual's seventy years and the almost still-born child's half an hour of life, are too little to be decisive for an eternity'. The humourist holds the moral in all honour thereby per-

forming his part in that context, yet he is 'femininely in love with immanence, and recollection is his happy marriage, as recollection is also his happy longing.... The temporal life is for him a fugitive episode having a very dubious significance'. The humourist comprehends the significance of suffering as relevant to existence, but he does not comprehend the significance of suffering itself. The first thought is the pain in the humouristic consciousness while the second is the jest, and hence one is tempted both to weep and to laugh when the humourist speaks. The humourist 'touches upon the secret of existence in the pain, but then he goes home again'.

That which is essential for irony, namely, the retirement out of the temporal into the eternal by way of recollection, is also essential for humour. The ironist levels everything on the basis of humanity in the abstract, the humourist on the abstract God-relationship, because he does not enter concretely into the relationship but it is just at this point that he 'parries by means of the jest'. Irony, however, distinguishes itself from humour by not expressing the pain, but replying quizzically by the use of the abstract dialectic which 'protects the excess involved in the unfortunate individual's outcry of pain'. Humour has its justification precisely in its tragic side, in the fact that it reconciles itself with the pain; irony is justified as over against immediacy, because its state of equilibrium is higher than the immediate consciousness. Both, irony and humour, receive their justification as an existential art. However, since humour is always a concealed pain, it is also an instance of sympathy; in irony, on the other hand, there is no sympathy but self-assurance, and so 'its sympathy is sympathetic in an entirely indirect way, not with any man in particular, but with the idea of self-assurance as the possibility of every man'.

Humour neither comes after faith nor is it the development of faith, but it comes before faith. It absorbs neither the suffering side of the paradox nor the ethical side of faith but merely the amusing as-

pect of the situation. The humourist constantly rests the God-idea in conjunction with other things and evokes the contradiction, yet he does not maintain a relationship to God in terms of religious passion. Though he has apparently 'assimilated the entire Christian position,' this is 'without having appropriated it in a *decisive* manner'. He has to take a leap into the religious sphere which accomplishes this God-relationship. The transition from the ethical to the religious is made by infinite resignation and faith. By the first movement the individual breaks off with the temporal and becomes conscious of his eternal validity. The movement of faith begins only when this consciousness is attained. Through infinite resignation the individual is prompted to sacrifice love and to reconcile with pain.³ This is what is called 'dying to the world!'

But this is a negative movement, and the positive movement, that of faith, begins from here, by which the individual is again brought back to the temporal.⁴ But a new change has now occurred, since the individual now lives in the temporal by virtue of his God-relationship. Due to the individual's absolute relationship to God, the ethical consciousness with its relation to universal requirements is suspended in favour of the religious consciousness, and the individual becomes higher than the universal. To an ethicist, the ethical is the universal and, as such, the divine; thus for him the duty towards one's neighbour is duty towards God. But in the paradox of faith, the individual determines his relationship to his neighbour by his relationship to God. Though he is aware of the universal and regards it as his home, he is also aware of the solitude which is outside the universal, and where due to his absolute relationship to God, he cannot make himself intelligible to others.

According to Kierkegaard, the highest paradox of existential thinking resides in man's efforts to know God; and existence can be grasped only by faith, by taking a leap of belief. For, eternity is the one 'object' which existence cannot know, be-

cause in this case knowledge would convert existence into eternity. Since knowledge and being are one, eternity cannot be known without being it, and since man is existence and not eternity, he cannot know it. But because there is in some way something eternal in him, he must have a relation to eternity. This relation is faith. Faith stands for uncertainty, and so the object of faith is not known. It stands for paradox, and so the way in which the eternal is in man is not understood. Paradox is the object of faith, not because in faith itself there is something paradoxical, but because in relation to existence eternity must be paradoxical. Faith is the *human* condition in which the eternal in man is most fully realised.

An individual's ultimate aim is to be related to eternal happiness. The answer to the question as to what the maximum is that a man may gain through the relationship to the absolute *telos*, is that in the finite sense there is nothing whatever to gain and everything to lose. In the life of time, the expectation of an eternal happiness is the highest *telos*; and it is precisely a sign of relationship to the absolute that there is not only no reward to expect, but suffering to bear. So, for an existing individual the concept of an eternal happiness is essentially related to his mode of existence. 'If the idea of an eternal happiness does not transform his existence absolutely, he does not stand related to it; if there is anything he is not willing to give up for its sake, the relationship is not there'.

In Christian religion eternity is brought into time, and the antagonism is done away with; thus the individual can resolve tension by becoming a Christian. To attain this, three categories are employed: resignation, suffering and sin. 'When it is said 'seek ye first the kingdom of God', the goal of eternity is thereby posited as that for which man shall strive... But what is this 'something else' which he seeks? It is the temporal. If then he is to seek first God's kingdom, he must 'freely renounce every temporal goal'. Resignation sets the indi-

dual in the absolute direction towards the absolute *telos*, and 'will make its inspection early and late, to see how he preserves the lofty solemnity with which he first acquired the absolute direction towards the absolute *telos*'. Resignation brings a change in inwardness, and all actions in inwardness constitute suffering. The religious individual finds that there exists an absolute difference between God and man; he searches for the means through which the principle of equality in love is to be expressed. He finds that it is to be expressed by means of absolute difference, the form of which is humility — 'the humility that frankly admits its human lowliness with humble cheerfulness before God... Herein lies the profound suffering of true religiosity, the deepest thinkable, namely, to stand related to God in an absolutely decisive manner, and to be unable to find any decisive external expression for this'. Suffering is the very expression of God-relationship, and in it immediacy expires and 'religiosity begins to breathe'.

Since the ethical rules are 'universal' in nature, they set up a horizon towards which the ethical personality strives; but it is unable to reach it. The ethical expression for the ethical failure is guilt. But it is also the extreme point of ethics where ethics is destroyed. The ethicist is lost in the impossibility of eternal demand. As he approaches to maintaining absolute relation to God and relative relation to the temporal, he finds himself unable to maintain the absolute relationship, and out of this inability arises the consciousness of guilt which disrupts his God-relationship. But at the same time the consciousness of God supports the religious suffering and guilt-consciousness so much so that the consciousness of guilt does not completely break off the individual's God-relationship. It creates tension and disturbance in his personality. He takes a new leap and places his guilt before God, and his guilt no more remains guilt but becomes sin. Now, to know God implies that the seeker must become a sinner and confess his sin. In the confession of his sin, the confessing sinner

places himself before God, for 'every sin is before God, or rather it is this which properly makes human guilt to be sin.' And 'the measure for the self always is that in the face of which it is a self,' so when the self is before God it acquires a new meaning. 'But the more the self, the more intense the sin'.

Thus there remains a yawning qualitative difference between God, the infinite, and man, the finite. Yet God humbles himself and takes the form of human life in Christianity. God is love and Christ says, 'Blessed is he who shall not be offended in me'. 'He who is not offended worships in faith. But to worship (which is the expression of faith) is to express the consciousness that the infinite yawning abyss of quality is fixed before them.' (i.e. between God and man). The religious individual feels a tension, and seeks the way to appropriate the paradox. The tension is resolved by a leap of faith which is the 'second immediacy'. Faith is a divine gift, and has contemporaneity with Christ. But the individual can apply the second immediacy of faith only when he has previously destroyed the immediate consciousness of God by the consciousness of sin.

Thus one can attain the significant dialectical tension by having faith in the Original Sin and the Incarnation. Because of the presence of the original sin, all ways to escape from eternity by means of recollection are blocked to the individual. He becomes aware that his mode of living is not only temporal, that is, in time, but also that he lives in time as a sinner. Consequently, the possibility of his turning back to any Golden Age is negated, and he is set only to march forward. This second immediacy is the same as 'repetition',⁵ and restores the personality of the individual to its primitive integrity and his God-relationship. This explains that the temporal existence is not external to eternity, but that it is the proper mode of human existence. Now, the Incarnation signifies something more by incorporating the hope of achieving eternity in time. It explains that the eternal has placed itself

in time, that it has accepted the mode of sinful existence, and that God has become Man.⁶

The individual does not lose his existence for an assimilation with the absolute, but acquires a new vision to evaluate the worth of human existence. The eternal bestows on time the significance not only for enduring happiness but also in itself. The eternal good is placed on the temporal and the human level. The Incarnation subjects itself to the proper conditions of both, the eternal and the temporal, to transcendence as well as to immanence. Impersonality and aloofness from the Infinite, and incapacity and inability to achieve eternal happiness on the part of the finite, are negated. The individual gains eternal happiness in faith which means his inward act of free dedication to the good. In the Instant, time and eternity are brought together and, as it were synthesised, and by his highest act of existence, faith, the individual gains contemporaneity with Christ.⁷

Thus the chief characteristics of the religious mode of existence are, that religiosity is a way of life, that it is a personal and individual matter, that the religious man cannot make himself immediately understood, that because of the domination of God-relationship in his life the individual becomes greater than the universal, that religious existence is essentially suffering. If the aesthetic sphere is that of immediacy, and the ethical that of requirement, the religious is that of fulfilment. The three stages 'are not distinguished abstractly, as the immediate, the mediate and the synthesis of the two, but rather concretely, in existential determinations, as enjoyment-perdition; action-victory; suffering'. Problems of the aesthetic mode of existence are resolved when the individual takes a leap into the ethical through the 'absolute choice', and of the ethical mode of existence when he takes a leap into the religious through infinite resignation and faith.

To sum up, Kierkegaard's problem is to reconcile eternity with time. Man's existence is in time, and yet he has to realise eternity so that he may exist in the full sense. For,

existence is eternity in time, and the whole tension and striving of existence arises because of this chasm that lies between eternity and time. Since man must live and act in time, he cannot leave existence; rather he has to determine his place in relation to it, and the nature of the relation is determined by the presence of the eternal in the subject.

Though man realises himself ethically through choice, ultimately he must attach this choice with eternity, to realise which is his task. But such a choice does not grasp the eternal once and for all; rather, the eternal is to be reappropriated and rechosen. This signifies the need for 'repetition'.

While searching for his eternal happiness man is working under the intensest kind of emotion. As a result, eternal happiness presupposes itself in the form of infinite passion. So, man has to adopt the subjective method which sets up an infinite tension at the source of emotion, and this basic tension exists there because of the juxtaposition of man's existence in time with his relation to eternity.

The tension between eternity and time

is of such magnitude that they are irreconcilable.⁸ Eternity or Pure Being is God in theological terms, and so a relation between Pure Being and existence means God's penetration into time. Now, the answer to the question as to which of the three aspects of time—past, present and future—corresponds to the eternal aspect, is that it is the present in which eternity intervenes, and this gives reason to the fact that though the past has been and the future will be, the present *is*.

Man by himself does not possess truth, nor has he the power to understand it himself. He can possess truth only if God Himself reveals it to him. So there remains a discontinuity between God and man which is also explained by the fact that man is a created, derived self, and that sin makes a qualitative difference between God and him. Man evolves and becomes by moral tension and striving. Thus he cannot *be* a Christian but can only attempt to *become* a Christian. This, therefore, is the problem of Kierkegaard: How to *become* a Christian?—specially in the Christendom where one lives under the illusion of *being* a Christian.

NOTES

¹ As a young man of twenty-five he wrote, "I have too both the tragic and the comic in me. I am witty and the people laugh but I cry". While publishing his 'Papers Of One Still Living', he comments that they were published contrary to his will by S. K.

² This does not, however, imply that an individual invariably starts from the aesthetic, and passing through the ethical, reaches the religious sphere, since these spheres of existence are not at all similar to a temporal order or hierarchy. Nor does it mean that when an individual leaps into another stage he altogether leaves the former; for, these spheres are treated as simultaneously present and overlapping. The stage from which an individual takes the leap does not disappear; it is only dethroned. Nor is the third stage a synthesis of the first two. Kierkegaard holds that everyone in Christendom is more or less affected by the aesthetic outlook; thus he prefers that the process should begin with a reflection on the aesthetic outlook.

³ Abraham's sacrificing Isaac.

⁴ Abraham's regaining Isaac.

⁵ Cf. Kierkegaard's *Repetition* and *Stages On Life's Way* (both translated by W. Lowrie, pub. in London, 1946 & 1945 respectively) pp. 143-4 & p. 342 respectively.

⁶ To Kierkegaard, 'existence' means 'a finite temporal mode of being which is essentially subject to becoming'. Hence God's existence means the truth about Christ, the God-Man, which is a matter of faith.

⁷ To be contemporaneous with Christ does not mean to be an 'eye-witness' but to 'receive the condition' which is possessed by the autopsy of faith.

⁸ Kierkegaard explains it by the fact that in time there is an either/or, while in eternity there is no either/or; in time there is a becoming while in eternity there is no becoming. (Cf. his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, tr. by D. F. Swenson and W. Lowrie, London, 1945, pp. 270-2.)

⁹ The quotations used in the article are from the works of Kierkegaard translated into English by the Swensons and W. Lowrie.

Problems and Prospects of Panchayat Raj

P. C. MATHUR

THE transition from Community Development to Democratic Decentralisation is the starting-point for our analysis. Starting with the basic premise that the Community Development Programme failed to achieve its primary objective the present paper tries to discuss how far Democratic Decentralisation can succeed in this respect. This assessment has been carried out in terms of the *problems inherited* from the Community Development Programme and the *problems inherent* in the operation of Democratic Decentralisation.

I

Democratic Decentralisation emerged out of the challenge posed by the gradual slowing down of the Community Development Movement which, as the Balwantrai Mehta Committee pointed out, had come to a virtual standstill in the absence of a regular and continuous supply of its main motive-power, viz., the people's participation. Making a realistic assessment of the situation, the Balwantrai Mehta Committee proceeded to spell out its scheme of 'Democratic Decentralisation' in an effort to associate the local people more thoroughly with administration of local programmes such as the Community Development Programme so as to evoke their initiative and maintain their interest in schemes formulated by them for their own benefit. In its essence 'Democratic Decentralization' involves a dispersal of authority and a decentralisation of machinery but in its totality it covers the entire rural developmental activity and ranks as a major effort to supplement the State-sponsored Community Development Pro-

gramme by securing people's participation and ensuring local control and supervision over local expenditure and programmes.

Democratic Decentralisation is thus only a general response to a specific challenge, and this should make us realize the possibility that even this scheme might fail to achieve its objectives either because the same problems which were responsible for causing failures in the Community Development Programme continue to exist or because the response itself is inadequate for purposes of meeting the enormous challenge posed before it. The specific problem is whether the new scheme or structure proposed under Democratic Decentralisation is *sufficient* to secure peoples' participation and evoke people's enthusiasm to the necessary extent. We have already witnessed the failure of the Community Development Programme which was started on the assumption that it would be sufficient for these purposes and we must not fall into the error of automatically assuming that once Democratic Decentralisation gets under way it will be adequate to meet the challenges which the Community Development Programme failed to meet.

The question whether local institutions, as for example the Panchayats or Panchayat Samitis, will be able to create a large amount of enthusiasm among the local people for developmental activities in the local jurisdiction is not merely academic but is relevant in the practical context of Panchayat Raj. Thus as the initial trend indications go, in Rajasthan even the elected non-officials do not seem to be sufficiently inspired and enthusiastic about the working of (and the work to be done by them in) the Panchayat Raj institutions. It is not being contended that the elected

representatives are, *in toto*, uninterested in Panchayat Raj work, but there seems to be a growing awareness that some of the elected non-officials such as the Panchas are not contributing their full share in the important and urgent task of rural development.

In Rajasthan, the pioneering state to launch upon Democratic Decentralization, an official report¹ has spotlighted the following shortcomings:

(a) the Gram Sabha continues to be largely ineffective;

(b) the Panchas (members of Panchayats) are not displaying great activity;

(c) the Panchayats and the cooperative societies are working as parallel or rival institutions; and

(d) the attempt to build up a second front of Associate Organisations like the Mahila Mandal or Navyuvak Mandals has not yet been made in right earnest.

All this should not be taken to denote a failure of the Panchayat Raj but rather construed as a failure of Panchayat Raj institutions to generate and attract the people's interest and enthusiasm on an intensive as well as extensive basis.

It is becoming clear that Democratic Decentralisation or introduction of Panchayat Raj does not automatically ensure that all the problems which were contributory factors towards the failure of the Community Development Programme have been eliminated. In fact there are many problems which under Panchayat Raj may be made more acute and intractable, thus further accentuating the weaknesses rather than removing them. One such specific problem deserves detailed consideration here since it relates to a basic element of any scheme or programme.

One of the gravest charges levelled against the Community Development Programme was that the statistics supplied in this connection were not only inaccurate and unreliable but bore the stamp of manipulation and inflation which went on at all levels till the final figures supplied to the public bore no relation to actuality. Despite persistent complaints and many

attempts to streamline the work of collecting statistics (such as appointment of a Progress Assistant at block level) the quality of statistics never became trustworthy. Now under Democratic Decentralisation the function of collecting statistics has been handed over to Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis. This step, in some cases, is likely to exacerbate the problem rather than ease it. Under the Community Development Programme false statistical returns were submitted by the officials concerned presumably to show their efficiency and impress upon others the large amount of work done. Thus at every level the officials submitted exaggerated accounts and sometimes did not shrink from manufacturing statistics to support their tall claims. Now under the new system the possibility of the same tendency manifesting itself with an additional force cannot be ruled out. The reason is that the elected non-officials will be naturally interested in showing the best achievements in their areas. Since these people such as Panchas and Sarpanchas will be dependent upon the people's votes for a term in office they will try to secure more votes by presenting impressive records of achievements during their tenure of office, and for this purpose they may collude with officials in exaggerating accounts of achievements and producing inflated figures instead of checking these officers and compelling them to make only accurate and true reports. Hence the officials and the non-officials at each level may perpetuate the old evil and thus continue to bedevil the very foundations of our developmental plans and activities.

This is only one of the specific problems which have filtered down to the post-Community Development era and it is easy to see how it could be intensified after Democratic Decentralisation has been inaugurated. In general, the entire block machinery and block funds have been continued under the Panchayat Raj and many problematic details connected with them remain to be solved. Thus the long debate in the columns of *Kurukshetra*

regarding the B.D.O.'s two headaches — the jeep and the L.S.E.O.—has by no means reached a conclusion and in fact many more such headaches have arisen in the form of complex problems of coordination and regular administration. In short as Mr. D. C. Dubey emphasized, Panchayat Raj poses a new challenge to the block structure.²

One of the most complex administrative challenges posed by the introduction of Panchayat Raj related to the supervision of the work of the Extension Officers who are all technical specialists in one field or the other. As matters stand today, the Extension Officers have been placed under a sort of triple control: The Pradhan and other non-officials try to bring down political pressure upon them and frequently resort to browbeating and harrassing those officers who fail to fall in with them; the Head and other officers of the Technical Department to which they belong retain a considerable amount of technical control over them; and finally, the B.D.O. has been made responsible for maintaining administrative control over them. With three authorities exercising three different types of control the Extension Officers are able to play off one authority against the other and the actual supervision over their work remains lax.³

II

The main objective of introducing Panchayat Raj as we noted above is to carry out 'Community Development through Panchayat Raj' with, as Mr. S. K. Dey the Minister for Community Development puts it, all its 'implications'. In fact the implications of the change-over from the Community Development pattern to the Panchayat Raj system are many and they are likely to give rise to a host of bewildering problems. The exact nature of many of these implications is not likely to be obvious in the short run but there are some problems which raised their head as soon as the change-over became effective.

One such factor in the change-over from

Community Development to Panchayat Raj is obvious enough: under the new system there has been a transfer of powers (decision-making as well as administrative) to a set of locally elected non-officials, with the result that the Community Development block staff with the B.D.O. as its head has been placed subordinate to people's elected representatives. This in itself constitutes a momentous change with multi-dimensional implications. The change is not to be regarded as a simple switch of masters; it involves and will initiate many radical changes in the programmes, policies, methods of work and is likely to spawn a multitude of problems having significant bearing on the direction and operation of rural developmental efforts. Democratic Decentralisation is not to be understood as simply giving a wider popular base to the Block Advisory Committees which were working as adjuncts to the block machinery. What has happened can be better understood in terms of the following three major changes: (1) a realignment of the driving forces, (2) a readjustment of the working relations and (3) a re-orientation of operational programmes, plans and priorities. Let us discuss each in some detail and see how far, up to now, the above changes have been effective.

A new dimension has been added to rural (development) administration by its being placed entirely under the charge of people's institutions and representatives. Up till now the villagers have always been at the receiving end of official instructions and inspiration, but now they can dictate their own terms. This means that the rural folk need no longer live in constant dread of the Government or Administration which is now easily accessible for redressal of their wrongs and is more amenable to fulfilment of their demands. At one stroke an entire chapter of Indian administrative history which was marked by a total dependence of the rural people on petty officials has been closed and a new one started in whose writing all of them have been promised a share. This human-

ising' of the administration will proceed further as the rural people come in closer touch with the administrative institutions and are able to watch the bureaucratic processes at closer quarters. The traditional fear and distrust of the Government will thus be eroded away bringing the people and the Government into a cooperative partnership. This sounds like a platitude, but anyone who has some knowledge of the oppression and repression perpetrated by the Government administrative machinery in the feudal princely states of Rajasthan will realise the magnitude of the transformation that is under way.

The Community Development programme and all other programmes of rural development will thus be more readily accepted and assimilated since they are being operated by local people who, with their local knowledge and prestige, will be able to direct them into more fertile areas, meeting less resistance and getting more response. While in this sense the management of the local schemes will distinctly be better, new problems are likely to arise because the experience and abilities of the local people which makes them ideal navigators may fall short of the minimum which a successful pilot requires. In other words, the people's representatives may not possess the technical expertise needed to bear the responsibilities of operating developmental schemes and supervising the concomitant administrative apparatus. This raises a stupendous problem of training nearly 4 million elective non-officials so that when they step into office they will not be utter strangers to the tasks they have to perform and will be able to control the machinery placed at their disposal. The problem is further complicated by the short term of office prescribed for these non-officials (3 to 5 years generally) and the further possibility that a large fraction of these trained personnel might fail to secure re-election thus rendering the expenditure incurred largely a waste so far as the immediate results are to be counted. In the long run, of course, the number of trained non-re-elected non-

officials is likely to dwindle to manageable proportions but in the initial two or three elections a large number of non-trained people are likely to be elected. With the limited financial and technical resources available, a big gap in the training facilities is bound to remain, leading to a significant diminution in the quality and quantity of work that can be done under Panchayat Raj.

While training of non-officials is a continuous problem, one more urgent problem implicit in the transfer of power to elected representatives relates to the establishment and maintenance of harmonious relations between the officials and the non-officials. This was in fact for long regarded as the problem of Democratic Decentralisation; fears and doubts were expressed in many quarters that the officials would not be able to achieve smooth operational arrangements with the non-officials and that, for one reason or another, a constant tug-of-war would continue between these two mutually hostile camps. The initial and present trends have, however, largely failed to substantiate these pessimistic prognostications and despite minor stray skirmishes it appears that the officials and non-officials have discarded their mutual suspicions and Panchayat Raj has not fallen between the two stools of officials and non-officials.

However, smooth adjustments, to be sure, are not identical with satisfactory actions; it is not enough to create and maintain relations which are free from tension or trouble but it is essential that both the officials and non-officials act together as partners and co-workers, and any tendency on the part of the officials to adopt a sit-back-and-relax attitude must be curbed. Within a year of the introduction of Panchayat Raj, keen observers noted signs of apathy and inactivity among the extension officers.⁴ Evidence is also accumulating about the District Level where the officials generally feel that after Democratic Decentralisation their responsibilities are over in respect to the schemes handed over to Panchayat Raj institutions. In

Rajasthan it has been found that as one District Level Officer has to cover a number of Panchayat Samitis (there are instances of one DLO's jurisdiction covering more than one district), they do not find enough time to give adequate attention to matters handled by the Panchayat Raj institutions.⁵ Whatever be the reason or apparent difficulties, such a 'hands off' policy and a 'Panchayat Raj is not our business' attitude on the part of officials will lead to disastrous consequences. Since the initial and important smooth adjustment between the officials and non-officials has been achieved, constant emphasis must be placed on forging dynamic links between them so that from the one extreme of lack of popular participation, the programmes for rural development do not swing over to the other of lack of official participation.

The Balwantrai Mehta Committee while pleading for Democratic Decentralisation put forward an extremely urgent and cogent case for rescuing the Community Development (and similar) programmes from degenerating into merely constructions-buildings and/or amenities-services channels and strongly urged that 'the emphasis should shift without delay to the more demanding aspects of economic developments'. Very rightly the committee indicated that greater concentration of work should be on activities directly relating to economic development (i.e. increasing production, income and employment) rather than on welfare activities such as provision of amenities. This was a bold re-affirmation of a principle which was being obscured behind a lot of 'brick and mortar', and involved a far-reaching re-allocation of priorities as between welfare activities and those activities which directly impinge on economic development. If carried out in practice this could lead to a remarkable re-orientation of the concept as well as contents of rural development.

However, the desire of the elected representatives to seek re-election and ensure victory by impressing on the electorate

the concrete results obtained in their tenure of office appears to be a specific snag in the working of this principle. The people's representatives prefer to launch into short-term activities which produce visible results (as past experience at many levels — national, state and municipal — has shown) or create amenities for which the people are clamouring rather than implement schemes which will be directly beneficial for economic development but which yield the results only after a long time and in an intangible shape. Their short term of office may possibly preclude them from entertaining long-range visions or embarking on schemes with a long gestation period whereby they are unable to cash in on their fruits at the next polls. This then is the dilemma in which the non-officials will find themselves; on the one hand they are not expected to stress schemes which are 'popular, easy of achievement and impress the casual observer' and on the other 'political necessity tends to focus undue interest upon physical accomplishments often to the prejudice of more important long-range objectives which are intangible'.

III

So far we have tried to analyse and assess some of the challenges which Democratic Decentralisation is facing on account of its inheritance from the Community Development programmes, and the implications which are inherent in the process of change-over from Community Development to Panchayat Raj. Not all of these challenging problems have, however, manifested themselves in full, while the corresponding response to them is embryonic in some cases, slowly emerging in others, and totally non-existent in still others. Of course, there are some problems which have been solved through proper remedies but they should not be treated as fully cured and constant watch has to be maintained for injurious side-effects or serious after-effects.

One of the problems-in-the-making is the concentration of power into the hands of a

few individuals and the consequent 'bureaucratization' of rural leadership. Such trends are already evident in the cases of the various Chairmen of the local bodies like Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads. In Rajasthan keen observers commented on the 'officialisation' of the non-officials within four months of the operation of the scheme⁶ and the same tendency has continued unabated.⁷ At each level, the Chairmen (Sarpanchas, Pradhans and Pramukhs) are being given V.I.P. treatment while the other members *qua* members do not get any special treatment such as payment of T.A. and D.A., or regular monthly allowances. Provision of jeep, telephone and residential facilities apart, some Chairmen are being invested with large administrative powers. For their part, they naturally welcome such investiture of powers as it gives them an eminent position much above all the other members. Thus recently in Rajasthan the Government prepared a draft of model bye-laws which sought to specify the powers and functions of various functionaries (mainly the Pradhan and the Vikas Adhikari at the Panchayat Samiti level), and a study of their adoption by the Panchayat Samitis shows that in many cases the 'model' bye-laws were modified to enhance the powers of the Pradhan and that many such proposals were rejected by the Government. The trend in most cases was to: (a) assign more powers to the Pradhan than those listed in the model bye-laws, (b) shift a number of powers and functions from the jurisdiction of the Vikas Adhikari to the Pradhan. The latter tendency was at its height in the case of administrative powers where all the ten powers which the model bye-laws had proposed to be invested in the Vikas Adhikari were sought to be shifted to the Pradhan, and the Government agreed to only two such modifications and rejected the remaining eight.⁸

The problem of power is not only confined to the individual level but has a wider ramification in the shape of the entry of power-politics into the local arena via the election mechanism which has been

built into the Panchayat Raj system. 'Politicisation of local affairs' i.e. rendering conduct of local affairs open to public judgement at the times of elections wherein the voters, at best, will tend to be swayed more by personalities than performance and, at worst, will be forced to choose between a number of professional politicians who have been given the party-ticket (or have obtained it by pulls and manipulations) each backed by a political machine whose main attention is on votes rather than welfare of the voters, is viewed with dismay by one school of thought (led by Shri Jayaprakash Narain) and deplored as an alien process which if engrafted into rural surroundings will corrupt the entire body politic. There is however another line of thinking which regards the idea of partyless democracy as a myth and a mirage and believes that the entry of politics instead of encouraging factionalism convert existing factions into clear-cut power-factions opposing each other on political grounds rather than kinship or caste factors.⁹ While the debate between the two schools continues, empirical evidence shows that the 'descending pattern of politics' is manifesting itself at lower levels making the local elections the focal point of interest even for national politics.¹⁰

Mr. Paul Appleby has asserted ('dogmatically' as he says) that the presumed identification of decentralisation with democracy has no basis at all and states that the world has had experience with 'decentralisation', but has had little evidence of or experience with democracy resultant from it.¹¹ These challenging statements have evoked the significant reply that, in India, we are not simply carrying out decentralisation for its own sake but are really trying to give the local people a chance to manage their own local affairs and to that extent, the prefix 'democratic' explains and emphasizes that the decentralisation is to be carried out in a democratic manner to create more democracy at the grass-roots levels. As Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru speaking at the annual meeting of the Indian Institute of Public Administration

on 29th October 1962 pointed out, we are genuinely interested in establishing a 'Decentralised Democracy' as Dean Appleby visualizes it.

Theoretical quibbles about 'democracy' and 'decentralisation' apart, the practical problems involved in evolving a suitable pattern of relationship between the State Government and Panchayat Raj bodies are themselves hedged around in a fierce academic controversy as to whether the State Government should exercise any powers of supervision, direction and control over the local Panchayat Raj bodies at all. There is a strong current of opinion which regards the mere presence of the State Government as a betrayal of the 'ideal' of 'Democratic Decentralisation'. Mr. Henry Maddick opens an article entitled 'Control, Supervision and Guidance of Panchayat Raj Institutions' with the remark that 'It signifies a considerable change in the climate of opinion that this article should bear the title it does. Not so long ago control was looked on as something not only superfluous but actually antagonistic to the whole Panchayat Raj conception...those who argued for control were looked on as being traitors to an ideal'.¹² The best example of this tendency is perhaps Mr. P. K. Chaudhuri's article¹³ written on the eve of the inauguration of Democratic Decentralisation in which he analysed the Rajasthan Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad Act, 1959, section by section, and showed, again and again, that the Act did not provide, adequately and sufficiently, full scope for the local bodies to function in a free atmosphere. In fact he reached the drastic conclusion that 'Surely this is not the type of administrative reform that is required to meet the situation

which faces us. It amounts to nothing more than a theoretical delegation of power to Panchayat Samitis with the State Government reserving to itself the right of intervention at every stage' and added that 'The State Government is in a position to maintain rigid control and supervision over the Panchayat Samiti'.

However the actual operational course of events belied such pessimistic prognostications and in an article written on the first anniversary of Panchayat Raj in Rajasthan Mr. Chaudhuri failed to substantiate these fears with solid evidence.¹⁴ In fact, in the entire article this topic was not touched upon, signifying thereby a tacit admission that the worst had not materialized at all. From all accounts the State Government in Rajasthan has shown a keen interest in fostering and strengthening Panchayat Raj institutions, and the control and/or supervision exercised over these local bodies has not been, generally speaking, excessive or detrimental to their working and viability. Though the Rajasthan Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad Act vests considerable powers of control in the State Government they have been judiciously utilised and at no place has rigid or excessive State control been applied in such a manner as to destroy the initiative and enterprise of the Panchayat Raj institutions.

One of the continual problems of Panchayat Raj will be to maintain the equilibrium that has been achieved in the initial stages. Hence though the prospects for a satisfactory State-Local relationship are bright, nevertheless continuous vigilance is essential to ensure the integrity and initiative of the Panchayat Raj Institutions.

¹ *The Working of Panchayat Raj in Rajasthan (April 1951 to March 1962) A Report*, The Evaluation Organisation, Government of Rajasthan, 1962.

² *Panchayat Raj poses a new challenge to the Block Structure*; 'Kurukshetra', Vol. 9, No. 7, April 1961, pp. 22-24.

For further details see: B. Mukherji: *Administrative Coordination in Community Development*, 'The Indian Journal of Public Administration', Vol. 4, No. 1, and Douglas Ensminger:

Democratic Decentralisation: A New Administrative Challenge, 'The Indian Journal of Public Administration', Vol. 7, No. 3.

³ The Rajasthan Evaluation Report in this connection notes: 'Unless the exact nature of supervision exercised by each of these three authorities is clearly defined, the control over the work of the extension is bound to be loose', op. cit, p. 88.

⁴ 'Following decentralisation, extension officers at the block level have gone slack' — P. K. Chaudhuri: *A Year of Panchayat Raj*, 'Economic Weekly', February 4, 1961, p. 142.

⁵ The Rajasthan Evaluation Report gives statistical evidence to show that the District Level Officers (a) do not regularly attend the Panchayat Samiti meetings and (b) do not carry out the required number of tours and inspections. See pp. 86-87.

⁶ Mr. Mathura Das Mathur a veteran Congress leader (now Home Minister, Government of Rajasthan) noted that: 'The Pradhans have not been able to give a better performance than the B.D.O.', and added that instead of imparting a new dynamism to the administrative machinery of the Panchayat Raj institutions, 'the non-official representatives at the block level are getting officialised and are carrying on the work in the same manner and method which was never desired' — *Four months of Panchayat Raj*, 'Kurukshetra', Vol. 8, No. 7, p. 23.

⁷ Vide K. S. V. Raman's observation: 'A much more disconcerting feature is the attempt to vest the non-official president with considerable power and a bureaucratic halo' (Italics in the original) — *Democracy at the District Level*, 'Kurukshetra', Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 24.

⁸ For further details see the Rajasthan Evaluation Report, Chapter 1 (Constitution of Panchayat Raj Institutions), pp. 2-7.

⁹ Some leading expositions of this line of thinking are as follows: W. H. Morris-Jones: *Democratic Decentralisation — Some Political Consequences*, 'Economic Weekly', July 1962; (2) John A. Vieg: *The Mirage of Partyless Democracy*, 'The Indian Journal of Political Science', July-Oct. 1962; (3) Rajni Kothari: *Panchayat Raj: A Reassessment*, 'Economic Weekly', May 13, 1961.

¹⁰ Vide: Rajani Kothari: *The Take-off Election*, 'Economic Weekly', July 1962.

Prof. Myron Weiner introducing the *Studies in Voting Behaviour* observes that 'All these reports suggest that the dispersion of power in India has made control of local bodies an important factor in deciding who wins Assembly and Parliamentary seats', 'Economic Weekly', July 1962, p. 111.

¹¹ Paul H. Appleby: *Some Thoughts on Decentralised Democracy*, 'The Indian Journal of Public Administration', Vol. 8, No. 4, p. 45.

¹² Henry Maddick: *Control, Supervision and Guidance of Panchayat Raj Institutions*, 'The Indian Journal of Public Administration', Vol. 8, No. 4, p. 500.

¹³ P. K. Chaudhuri: *Decentralisation or Delegation of Power*, The Rajasthan Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad Act, 1959, 'Economic Weekly', Oct. 3, 1959.

¹⁴ See, P. K. Chaudhuri: *A Year of Panchayat Raj*, op. cit.

CURRENT POLITICS

The Communal Cycle

BASUDHA CHAKRAVARTY

THE recent outburst of attacks on the Hindu and Muslim minorities in East Pakistan and West Bengal respectively has brought into fierce light the continuing menace of communalism in the sub-continent. It is well-known that some States in north and central India had to be alerted against possible extension of those events into them. The grim reality that such happenings could be possible even after sixteen years of Independence and the formation of two sovereign States designed in order to secure adjustment of Hindu-Muslim relations, has administered something of a shock to the public mind. But this is so only because the persistent strains of communalism have not been clear in public consciousness. As it is, the majority community in either country is impervious to the existence of communalism in itself, to the same extent as it has a live awareness of communalism in the other country. In the same perspective it regards the minority community as less than loyal to its own country and disposed towards the other. But in the very nature of the genesis of the partition of what was British India the minority community has been made somewhat dependent on and so aligned with the country where the same community forms the majority. Only when upheavals of the recent kind occur, is the majority community made aware that elements of communal aggressiveness do exist within it. Even then it tends to ascribe their existence to the communal

trends in the other country and regard such activities as a mere repercussion of what has happened there. Such was the case during the recent happenings.

This theory of repercussions is a mild form of putting what should more frankly be described as retribution or retaliation. Neither side admits that happenings on its own side could be of such a nature as might justifiably produce repercussions on the other side. The other side is always held responsible for initiation of riots; happenings this side are not taken into account. With this belittling of wrongs committed by one's own side goes in India conscious lack of sympathy with the minority community born of the now permanent allegation that this community supported the creation of a separate homeland for Muslims in Pakistan and hence its members are *ipso facto* debarred from loyalty to India. Even granting that a substantial majority of Indian Muslims did support the demand for Pakistan, the fact is not taken into account that they supported it as a solution of Hindu-Muslim differences which had defied all other solutions, and when the original demand for a Pakistan comprising all Muslims and a proportionate territory had to be abandoned in favour of what the founder of that State called a moth-eaten, truncated Pakistan limited to Muslim-majority areas, the bulk of Muslims outside Pakistan had no difficulty in deciding to continue living loyally in their homes of centuries and

under an avowedly secular State. True, recent disturbances had caused a psychological breach between the communities and Muslims of India in the atmosphere caused by prolonged communal conflicts, might have developed, to some extent, a sense of dependence on and therefore some positive sympathy with Pakistan. The plausibility of such a position was officially recognized in the Nehru-Liaquat Pact of 1950 in which either Government was given the right to take and direct interest in the welfare and security of the minority community in the other country. The obvious national duty is to help the process of integration of the minority community in the nation's evolving life and not to condemn the community to permanent distrust which has a corroding effect on national life. But the communal attitude gets the better of national interest and the result is the kind of events we have recently witnessed.

Pakistan frankly looks upon its Hindu minority as affiliated to Indian nationalism and hence little better than aliens. It assures protection to the minority community but in the very character of its State and Governmental structure, does not really consider it possible to grant them equal rights with the community which has realized that country as its homeland. The Hindus of Pakistan have been excluded from counsels of Government except superficially and casually when the impact of democratic forces secured them a political place. This is of course in contrast to India when the secular State welcomes Muslims to counsels of Government though not to the fullest natural extent because it is inhibited by antipathy to Muslims in large sections of the body-politic. No Muslim except in the vastly Muslim-majority state and distinctive political climate of Kashmir, has yet been elected leader of the majority party in any State legislature so as to become Chief Minister. Not that an occasion for doing so did not rise. It did rise, but was baulked, in a North-Eastern State. Between themselves, however, both India and

Pakistan have been unable to prevent communal depredations in their own regions. They would cover their inability by self-righteous and somewhat self-satisfied recourse to the theory of repercussions. But realities make this plea also wear somewhat thin. There have been riots in Jabalpur, for instance, which did not fit into the theory of repercussions. Attacks on the minority have on occasion been so much for their own sake as to preclude all other considerations. The width and depth of the operations against Hindus in Eastern Pakistan could arise only out of deep-rooted suspicion and hatred. Killings of whole families, burnings of whole villages, rape and loot are not explicable simply by feelings of resentment at what has been done to co-religionists elsewhere. Nothing but elemental hatred could lead rioters in Calcutta to make attempts on the lives of the widely beloved and sick poet Nazrul Islam and of Ali Akbar Khan whose music delights millions all over the world and has added to his nation's glory. Had such proceedings been really of the category of repercussions, they would have been inhibited if not prevented by the possibility of disastrous counter-repercussions on fellow-religionists in the other country. For, if repercussions are a reality, counter-repercussions are so less so, as recent events have blatantly demonstrated. It is futile to try to rationalize or play down communal passions as motivated by sympathy for the minority community in the other country when such riots only add immeasurably to that community's peril. Reaction to personal bereavement or suffering as a result of riots in the other country, is also advanced as a motivating factor, but is inadequate to explain the entire communal phenomenon.

Better then be frank and call it naked antipathy. There is a small but serious-looking school of thought which puts Hindu-Muslim differences in a class with historical racial conflicts and draws a parallel with the current clash between Arabs and Jews. It would place this issue

in the context of the classical problem of minorities and seek a solution on corresponding lines. That means inducting the religious minority into the national community where its fellow-religionists constitute the majority. In facile language it means the now unfortunately familiar recipe called exchange of population, voluntary or compulsory. In serious parlance it is an international settlement with territorial readjustment if necessary and other residuary adjustments.

Communal riots such as we have recently experienced are so brutal and recurrent a phenomenon that they seem to point to a malaise too deep to admit of ready-made solutions. It must be confessed that the problem is too serious to be easily grasped or lightly dealt with. The stupendous social, family and personal tragedies involved, permit no surface remedies. But the problem falls within no set historical pattern either. The fact is that Hindus and Muslims have lived together in this sub-continent for centuries and nobody ever thought that it could and need be otherwise. They did live side by side under monarchical, feudal and foreign rules, and it is certainly a matter of shame that conditions of freedom and democracy could give rise to the question whether members of the two communities can continue to live as citizens of the same State. Before bluntly deciding that they can not, it is necessary to ascertain where the peoples of the two countries stand in relation to the question.

The enquiry must first be addressed to Pakistan which is avowedly a religious-communal Muslim State where the non-Muslim minority must necessarily live perpetually on some sort of sufferance. But Pakistan is not and cannot be immune from the operation of democratic and progressive forces which are not containable within the communal bonds of the State and which find it to their interest to absorb the non-Muslim population. This has found expression in the demand for joint electorates which would necessarily strengthen the democratic forces and help the

country towards secularism. It helps the integration of non-Muslims with the social life of the country particularly in the fields of sports, art and culture. This explains the forthright manner in which the influential section of the press at Dacca called for resistance to the riots and refused to mince words in its criticism of the Government and vested interests whom it charged with responsibility for the riots and also of the Opposition for its failure to stand up against the riots in time. It described the riots as riots and not merely as disturbances as the Calcutta press did to describe the organized attacks on minority houses in the West Bengal capital and districts. It denounced the communal atrocities in banner headlines. Even during the peak of the riots, students, journalists, litterateurs and democratic parties brought out a peace procession on the streets of Dacca and organized Peace Committees. Editors issued a strong call for restoration of peace. Women prominent in public, literary and social life published a stirring appeal for all-out efforts to save the minority. There is no denying that the people as such bestirred themselves against riots much more promptly and determinedly than they did in West Bengal where peace marches and committees were organized only after the cessation of riots and then also under governmental auspices. Local and individual initiative to protect the people in danger was evident in both regions. Risks were run in both places in the process and resulted in the sacrifice of a number of lives in East Pakistan, and at least one in West Bengal.

But the Government there was less determined to suppress riots than the Government of West Bengal and the Union Government of India who, after some initial delay in realizing the danger, acted with resolute decision. The East Pakistan Government resorted to suppression of news of riots and activities of Peace Committees. Here is an illustration of the difference in the patterns of popular and governmental behaviour in the two areas.

The press and the people in Eastern Pakistan called for a fight against the communal marauders whom they called goondas. No such call was possible in West Bengal which had to be content with a rather inane appeal for maintenance of peace because the rioters could not be wholly identified as a class apart but were in numbers drawn from ordinary society—unemployed and refugee youth having admittedly been a substantial component of the rioting element in the population. They were not habitual or professional goondas but behaved as such for the time being and the given purpose. This is but a reflex of the prevailing communal attitudes in the two countries. The Hindu minority in Eastern Pakistan is no political, social or economic competitor of the majority community and so arouses no direct animosity in the latter. Opposition parties, as has already been mentioned, bank on its political support. The equal position recognized for the Indian Muslims by the Constitution, their total numerical strength and political potentiality make them a force which on the background of memories of past communal conflicts, creates a fear complex even in the vastly more numerous majority community. This is evident from the fact that even purely Hindu areas are not exempt from a sense of fear. Also there is a feeling of resentment against the minority community retrospectively on account of the latter's support for the Pakistan movement. It is aggravated by the State's scrupulous regard for the personal laws of minority communities leading to their exemption from social reform measures like the Hindu Code and the Religious Endowments Act which are applicable to the majority community alone. The State's uncompromising secularism too imbues the minority community with a sense of confidence and makes the community psychologically orientated to resist communal attacks wherever feasible. These factors somewhat neutralize the aversion in the majority community for communal riots and make it possible for those elements in the

community which have not been absorbed for social purposes, to visit their anti-social instincts on the ready target provided by the minority community. Hence it is the Government of the secular State and not the people as such that are trusted in India to assure security for the minority community. Nevertheless the fact remains that vast numbers of the majority community are unconcerned with communal orgies, members of the two communities are working together not only in top Government agencies but in the fields and factories and, in spite of everything, getting integrated together in trade and industry, in trade unions, in cultural associations and sports. Despite the existence of strains of communalism and counter-communalism, peoples of all communities throughout the land are living and pursuing their avocations together. It must be admitted, however, the minority community is not completely free from an underlying feeling of insecurity, which is natural in view of the occasional communal flare-ups in the country. It is necessarily greater in Pakistan's Hindu minority, which is comparatively small and scattered and has no equal political and constitutional rights with the majority community.

Against this sad background communal riots occur and have recently occurred to our horror and shame. They are not to be regarded abstractly but as involving terrible losses and sufferings to persons and families. Their recurrent and horrible nature has now prompted an earnest search for permanent remedies. Reference has already been made to an attempt to classify the Hindus of Pakistan and the Muslims of India as belonging to the category of minorities in Europe and therefore demanding a solution on the lines of the latter. But protection of minorities has been found even in those cases mostly in constitutional safeguards and political guarantees. Voluntary exchange of population was provided for in the Greco-Bulgarian Convention and compulsory exchange in the Greco-Turkish Convention. The latter has since been universally

rejected as dangerous and harmful. Even the former has been found to be possible only under conditions of coercion and hence deserving no commendation. It has of course to be distinguished from the run-for-shelter-from-murderous-assaults such as we have experienced in India and Pakistan and which has necessarily to be provided for on humanitarian, perhaps also political, grounds. The present minorities in India and Pakistan were the creation of the partition of the sub-continent in 1947 and had been, for centuries prior to that date, constituents of the same people. It is an exaggeration to place them in historical parallel with the minorities elsewhere for whom also the League of Nations and other international arrangements sought protection not outside but as parts of their nations.

Exchange of minority populations between India and Pakistan finds some support at present also on humanitarian grounds. It is suggested as the only way of relief for the minorities from the attacks to which they are periodically subjected and the fear under which they seem almost permanently to have to live. But however pragmatic and seemingly plausible in the immediate context, it would not be acceptable, for the inhumanity of uprooting millions if not crores from their homes of generations and planting them on unfamiliar soil must also be taken into account. Moreover, it would amount to India's confession of failure to integrate her minorities and to establish herself as a secular State. *No case has yet been made for a confession of defeat as sordid and shameful as that.* Pakistan is also committed to the protection of her minorities and if she cannot do that as a mono-communal State, she has to be asked to change her character so that the non-Muslim minorities can live in it in peace. Failing that, there would be a theoretical case for asking her to surrender her non-Muslim minority and to come to consequent territorial arrangements with India. But in order to do that India must fully live up to the secular character of her state and

ensure complete integration of her minorities regardless of the state of things elsewhere. Upto now our differences with Pakistan seemed to be in the nature of a family quarrel because, as has been penetratingly said, the two countries have one soul—*albeit* a split soul. But the split has recently widened as a result of Pakistan's alliance with China which has arrogantly chosen to make herself India's enemy. It remains to be seen whether the recent happenings will help realization of the dangerous gulf that has been created between the two countries. On the national plane too, however, the problem must be viewed realistically and there are no reasons to divert it from the perspective of national integration to which it has so long been rightly related. To regard Hindu and Muslim minorities in Pakistan and India as near-aliens incapable of integration, is to bid good-bye to all sense of reality and proportion. Both countries then must be called upon and call upon themselves to take all necessary measures to assure their minorities honour and security. If identifiable anti-social elements are responsible for assaults on the minority community in East Pakistan, they are no asset to that country. If for any perverse political or economic reason she does not neutralize those elements, international opinion will have to be brought to bear on her. India can best mobilize international opinion by setting her own house in order and permitting no reservation in her integration of communal minorities.

Here arises India's internal problem: the forces that impinge on her secular character and stage riots according to the theory of repercussions or otherwise. This brings us to familiar ground: the somewhat hackneyed plea that it is the unassimilated fringe of the population—unemployed and refugee youths and the usual anti-social elements who go against the national purpose and make themselves responsible for communal madness. But they are not a class apart from society and are spread out in ordinary social strata, even students and employed, educated

people not infrequently going berserk. There are among the unemployed many who render themselves physically and intellectually unemployable. It is absurd behaviour for a nation to leave any class of its citizens to visit its frustration on helpless members of a numerically weak community. Much is heard about corrosion of human values caused in India and particularly in Bengal by the unsettlement of standards of private and public conduct during the Second World War, the moral and material ravages caused by the famine of 1943, fierce communal riots that shock our moral and social foundations and the uprooting of masses of people as a result of Partition. All that is no doubt true, but the vacuum must be filled by the struggle for national development in which every individual irrespective of caste, creed or language, must find his place and fulfilment. That seems a tall order but one that must govern every phase of our national life and purpose. With that goes the need for educating our citizens in the purposes and principles of the nation and the impermissibility of any section of the people obstructing and disturbing any other—let alone staging physical assault. Pending the absorption of all sections of the people in such consciousness, the Government must rigorously put down all manifestations of violent and anti-national behaviour. It is to be hoped and even expected that the social mind will grow increasingly self-conscious so as to assert itself positively and effectively against forces that impede the nation's ordered growth.

Often a situation is sought to be minimized by comparing figures with similar figures in situations elsewhere, forgetting that it is the qualitative factor that is more important than the quantitative and that even a single incident might be enough to shake the foundations of society. The individual man, woman and family bear the brunt of these calamities and on them alone human bestiality, howsoever motivated, descends in all its fury. But the individual man is ignored and

human sympathy is inert and inactive. The whole angle of vision is politically and communally vitiated to such an extent that even members of the minority community are found to have little or no sympathy with the minority in the other country with whom they are, at least in relation to the respective major communities, more or less similarly placed. On the individual—personal plane sympathies of members of the majority community should move towards members of their own minority community even more than to sufferings of co-religionists in the other country because a question of the majority community's direct political and social responsibility for the minority community of its own country is involved. But they are neutralized by the politico-communal outlook and also by communal, social and personal bonds with the minority community in the other country. Here is the tragedy of dehumanization by politics par excellence. Genocide is the word for it. It will not be remedied by mere well-meaning appeals in times of crisis like the present. For a return to the established norms of human values, the Government and society must undertake to thwart and ruthlessly suppress all external manifestations of inhumanity. The two nations must for the sake of saving themselves from utter degradation take all political, social and cultural measures requisite for honourable living and for the development of their constituent units. For a nation like India it is a travesty of all her ancient cultural heritage of unity-in-diversity, of her pride in non-violence and tolerance, to get disgraced and bogged in communal violence. We shall make no progress as long as we remain stuck in the communal quagmire. Often behind an educational and cultural cloak we hide a grossly communal interior. It reveals itself in connivance, open or implied, at all kinds of communally biased activity, even at communal violence. If we really want a remedy for communalism, we must embark on a thorough re-examination of human and cultural values. It has to be done on the personal as well

as on the social plane, and there is no short-cut. All simplified solutions come sooner or later to a dead end. The complexity of the problem evinces itself in the paradox of many people who have personal and social relations with members of the other community, turning on that community on impersonal communal grounds.

The annals of our history show much that is evil, but the same annals are nevertheless resonant of the united lives of the communities through generations and their efflorescence in art, architecture, poetry and social life. One does not see the people being permanently rent asunder on communal lines when they have re-

emerged after centuries as a free, sovereign nation in the counsels of the world. As industrialization progresses and scientific knowledge spreads, medieval and obscurantist strands in our thought will be supplanted by modern lines of thinking, and social and individual minds will get orientated into and stabilized in rational attitudes in all spheres of life. That is not yet, and so we pay the price. How heavy the price is, should be clear from the fact that even the generation born immediately before and after national independence is being infected with the virus of communalism—which is certainly not the kind of legacy we would like to leave for our posterity.

In order to avoid unnecessary delay all contributions (except book-reviews) and correspondence regarding these should be addressed to **The Editors, 5, Pearl Road, Calcutta 17.** Book-reviews, books for review and all correspondence concerning business matters are to be addressed to **The Business Manager, Quest, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1.**

REVIEW ARTICLE

*Imagery in Indian History- A Recent Example**

D. P. SINGHAL

WHEN Frederick the Great would require history read to him by his secretary he would say, 'Bring me my liar.' History is certainly not a lie, but undeniably it has been sufficiently made use of as a very effective instrument of brain washing to merit periodic accusations of partisanship. Yet no historian would confess to anything less than strict impartiality, and in fact, he would denounce others for distortions of facts or interpretations. Some historians may be sincere in their professions but in many cases, serious scrutiny reveals that by calculatingly highlighting certain facts while playing down others or by assembling half-truths dexterously, the intended image is created in the unsuspecting minds of the non-specialist readers, at whom these works are mainly directed. Specialists, who are in any case very few, generally tend to ignore such works as of little academic value, rather than register protest demonstrably. One of the reasons which repels specialist critics from denouncing such propagandist historians is that, ironically, their disputations tend to add academic lustre to political pamphleteering. Motivated writers actually take full advantage of such criticisms by designating them as genuine historical disputes and even dismissing them, with an air of

aggrieved dignity, as having emanated from some kind of sentimentalism or counter-bias. If at all the critics succeed in exposing successfully the errors of historicity, their views, confined as they are to academic journals, seldom reach the vast majority of common readers. More than a century ago, commenting upon the historians who are seduced from truth and who stoop to distorting facts for a certain end, Macaulay pointed out with his characteristic power, the technique employed: 'For this purpose it is not necessary that they should assert what is absolutely false; for all questions in morals and politics are questions of comparison and degree... In every human character and transaction there is a mixture of good and evil; a little exaggeration, a little suppression, a judicious use of epithets, a watchful and searching scepticism with respect to the evidence on one side, a convenient credulity to every report or tradition on the other, may easily make a saint of Laud or a tyrant of Henry the Fourth'.¹ Histories all over the world are littered with accounts which hide underneath clearly concealed images, but few of them can match the imagery practiced in modern Indian historiography with as much devastating effect. Of these a recent and one of the most ingenious is Percival Spear's *'India—a Modern History'* which is

* Percival Spear: *India—a Modern History*

based on a series of his lectures given to the students of history at the University of California, Berkeley.²

Dr. Spear is a well-known British historian of India and has published several widely read works on Indian history, the most scholarly of which is *Twilight of the Mughals*. Before this study, he had revised and edited the famous but controversial 'Oxford History of India' originally published in 1919 by Vincent Smith, who seems to have left a definite mark on Spear's writings. Of Smith's 'lamentable failure at objectivity' Professor A. L. Basham said in a recent masterly analysis that he 'despite his thirty years' service in the I.C.S. never really came to terms with the land or its people'.³ The same could perhaps be said of Spear, who too had lived in India for twenty years. It must be pointed out however that the style of a modern Smith must be remodelled and made agreeable to suit the changed Indo-British political relationship. The rising Indian historians not only ask awkward questions but many of them take an aggressive attitude. Today it is not possible for a writer, who desires to be listened to, to speak as frankly and boldly as Smith could forty years ago or as some other imperialist historians before him. To be able to write the history of a people knowledge of them alone is not enough; the historian must possess, as E. H. Carr points out, the 'imaginative understanding for the minds of the people with whom he is dealing for the thought behind their acts'.⁴ Understanding must be distinct from sympathy for the latter may imply agreement which the historian does not seek. Spear's book reflects scholarship but no understanding and gives a distorted picture of the Indian people and their heritage.

Until recently British history and novels, as described by Edward Thompson had proceeded on certain clearly marked lines. There is the Indian 'half-devil and half-child' (Kipling's phrase) docile, patient, capable of a doglike devotion, given to mysticism and brooding contemplation,

yet with all these good qualities liable to perversion into a treacherous seditionist or bloodthirsty fanatic; there is the Englishman, silent, efficient, inflexibly just, dispensing to each his deserts'.⁵ Spear's Indian is not quite so revolting but he lacks vigour and vitality and his integrity and competence are at best uncertain. His Englishman however continues to be the powerful, stern but just, and benevolent patriarch, steadily doing his duty. Even those like Lytton who defied the London Cabinet, introduced suppressive measures (The Vernacular Press Act 1878), failed to avert a terrible famine, and involved India in an expansive, unjustified and cruel war (the Second Afghan War) are described as 'brilliant but wayward'. (p. 331) Unlike Seeley he does not expound that the British acquired India out of a philanthropic desire to put an end to the enormous evils of the 'robber-states of India' but impresses clearly the state of prevailing anarchy, and unlike James Mill he is not contemptuous of Hindu India, but depicts a picture of Hinduism containing superstitions, and evil institutions. On the whole he attempts to convey to his reader images—for that is what he really does—without putting his opinions in clear words. More subtly than Smith, Dodwell and Coupland, he implies that the British conquest was, beneficial for the Indians, and whatever good they have today is the outcome of its impact on their society. Indian debt to Britain, in some ways, is undeniable but to distract attention from the evil aspects of foreign domination, is lop-sided and unsound history.

India, as the British found it in the eighteenth century was in a state of utter degeneration but it was certainly not its permanent condition. Indian civilization has a long, continuous and glorious ancestry and, all historians now agree, that even at its earliest known period it gave evidence of maturity, vitality and tolerance. It was a healthy society inhabited by a virile and vigorous people, who while 'accepting joys and burdens of life were

ever searching for the ultimate and the universal'.⁶ Their contributions in the spheres of art, language, philosophy and sciences were remarkable and they bequeathed to humanity the Upanishads, the Buddha and the system of decimal notation. Their political and social institutions were very advanced for their time and they were famous for their republics, hospitals and universities. Their metaphysics and mathematics and medical science had considerably influenced contemporary civilizations and attracted worldwide attention. But Spear dilutes the effect of this vitality by making only brief and casual references to such themes covering himself thereby against the charge of omissions. As against this he gives a new look to the old distorted image of India by reflecting repeatedly at considerable length, over features such as racial diversity, territorial disunity, rigid religious rituals and decadent social institutions. Presented in a disproportionately magnified form in comparison to the healthy features of the society, and without being pointed out that such evils are not typical of India alone, for they have been, in some form, common to all societies and that they are rapidly declining, his narratives inevitably convey an erroneous image of Indian society to the unsuspecting reader. Various other devices directed to create requisite images have also been employed, which give the author an appearance of objectivity yet allow him to retain the distortions; for example by giving major importance to minor virtues of India, and by pronouncing flattering verdicts on Indian achievements without giving convincing evidence in support. While ignoring India's brilliant contributions to Greek and Western civilizations, Spear makes a good deal of the words of Indian origin in the English language (p. 21-2) pronouncing that India has this way paid back her loans (p. 21). Again, while even the brief notices of Indian influences in the realms of thought and sciences are prominently qualified or interpreted as to have led to the growth

of some evil institutions such as India provided Europe, especially Carlyle and Nietzsche, a basis through its caste system for the doctrine of racial supremacy, (p. 23) he concludes by saying 'not by wars and conquest has India influenced the outside world but in the subtler and deeper realms and imagination and thought' (p. 29). Impressive indeed; but the image survives only for a moment, for there is nothing conveyed to retain it, and the author is protected against partisanship. What Spear could not dilute he has frankly denied. He has even denied Hinduism its universally acknowledged assimilative character, (p. 39) and Indian history its continuity (p. 447).

Spear's picture of medieval, modern and contemporary India is equally out of focus. The rejuvenating influence of Islam on Hindu society is hardly considered and the synthesis of Indo-Muslim culture is not adequately treated. Kabir, the apostle of communal harmony is casually mentioned as a weaver-poet. A flood of recent researches have further illumined the hitherto neglected large areas of Indian history and one indeed marvels at Spear's remarkable boldness to write in utter disregard of modern scholarship with which he must be familiar. While Shivaji is seen as a scourge of India the Mughal rulers, inspite of their being called great, are depicted as vulnerable to flattery. The distinction between the Hindus and Muslims is constantly kept in full view by frequent references to their dissimilarities, minor or major. Reviewing this 'Indian text-book' even the Conservative *Economist* of London felt constrained to observe that '... Dr. Spear has his bias', and advised the undergraduate to read other books along with this one to get a balanced view of Indian history.⁷

It is neither possible nor perhaps necessary to analyse all the images created or to discuss the various devices employed for the purpose. Spear's purpose is obviously to write a substantial academic defence of the British record in India against the much-apprehended attacks of Indian his-

torians. The roots of Indian backwardness must be traced to India's past and not to British policies. It is ironical that such defence disguised and ingenious as it is, must invite reaction and defeat the very purpose it seeks to serve. To protect the British against the accusations of having introduced divisive measures in India Spear finds continuous tension between the Hindus and the Muslims (p. 449 and elsewhere and even between north and south India. Indeed, one gets the impression that he is implicitly preaching the politics of disunity (p. 91 and elsewhere). Not only Indian unity but even the image of 'Mother India', which has existed in the minds of Indians from the ancient days of the Puranas is attributed to the British regime. Between the various regions and peoples of any country there are both similarities and dissimilarities but Spear chooses to emphasise judiciously the latter. Excluded from the large common denominator even the minor differences would appear disproportionately deep and of great significance. In doing so he has often confused the finer distinctions, oversimplified facts and indulged in unrestricted flights of fancy. He does not illustrate the fact that religious antagonism in India until the beginning of this century was in fact less than in most other parts of the world, including certainly Europe, and that, in general, the groups lived together in harmony. Nor does he deal with the class divisions of Indian society, which Professor Cantwell Smith has so brilliantly analysed, that overlapped to a considerable degree the communal divisions making thereby the problem more economic than religious. Nor does he dwell upon the observation of the Simon Commission that the Hindu-Muslim relations, even in the 1920s, were far happier in the Indian princely states than they were in the British provinces. Why was it that the stray cases of communal riots in India steadily continued to grow both in dimensions and in frequency with the growth of the British regime, and why have they suddenly fallen into almost com-

plete disuse since Independence? He was of course not going to discuss Elphinstone's Minute of 14/5/1859: 'Divide et impera' was the old Roman motto, and it should be ours.⁸ Or Minto's remark that the Muslim demonstration of 1906 was 'most fortunate and has done much to save our position.'⁹ Or Coatman's suggestion of a separate Muslim state in his book *Years of Destiny* published a year before Rahmat Ali coined the name Pakistan in 1933.¹⁰ Was it merely a coincidence that Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India, found the Aga Khan a most loyal person and advised Curzon to consider him for his council in 1902 only four years before the Aga Khan founded the Muslim League and successfully led a Muslim delegation petitioning for separate Muslim franchise.¹¹ In fact by claiming too much for the West and discounting too much on the Indian side (p. 303 and elsewhere) Spear has attempted to secure his object.

Spear's treatment of the Caste in India further illustrates the point. No one denies its evil influence on Indian society but every development can not be explained in caste-terms. While drawing attention to all the real and imaginary evils of this system he does not care to point out the tremendous efforts the Indians themselves had made over the past 2,500 years from the Buddha to Mahatma Gandhi to eradicate this parody of an ancient institution. Nor does he explain as to why this system which had not only defied all attempts at reform by Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity but had on the contrary contaminated them, was effectively crippled by Gandhi and outlawed by independent India. Caste certainly exists today but much less than it did twenty years ago.¹² Explaining Indian situations in terms of Brahmanic supremacy he does not pause to analyse the full implications of the fact that the maker of modern India—Mahatma Gandhi—was not a Brahman, in fact none of India's idols, except Nehru, are Brahman. The Buddha and Ashoka were Kshatriyas, Akbar and Kabir Muslims, Gandhi a Vaishya. The 'untouchable' saints

of the Bhakti movement are revered by the Indian masses. How easily Spear has applied the caste analysis will be well illustrated by the fact that he calls attention to the fact that India's great humanist philosopher-poet Tagore was a Brahman, for it is well-known that the Tagore family had an invidious position among the Brahmans and many of its members had openly and vehemently revolted against Brahmanic traditions and orthodoxy. Spear does not seem to take any notice of the fact that in present day India, amongst the most eminent leaders, many are not only not Brahmans but come from the erstwhile untouchable castes. Nehru was certainly born in a Brahman family, but those who know him and are able to make a distinction between individual human characteristics and caste influences would like to know as to what is Brahman about him? He is a rationalist and a humanist and, whatever be his failings, he is certainly not communal. Whenever it suits Spear he calls Nehru a Brahman yet at other times he is called a person deeply impressed by British and western traditions. Where is the area of agreement between the two? It is a clumsy attempt at distortion, if not bankruptcy of imagination, to interpret contemporary Indian scene in terms of caste conflicts.

Another technique employed is to draw comparisons from European or British history whenever it is convenient for the purposes of the author, but not when it might soften the shock of Indian evils. While Spear repeatedly emphasises the burning of widows (Sati; p. 239) and caste discrimination in India he makes no reference to the burning of heretics or the orgies of witch-hunting or to slavery or to public hangings in Europe or to the fact that similar practices are known to have existed in Greek and other societies. Sati may well have been imported to India from outside. Nor is it pointed out that the cases of Sati were exceptions rather than rule and that it had, for some unknown reasons, increased after the

British occupation of Bengal. On the contrary he observes that British conscience was so troubled at these barbaric practices that Bentinck abolished Sati. He does not point out that Akbar and some Maratha chiefs had fought against it or that the Tantrics had denounced in strongest terms, the Portuguese had outlawed it in Goa more than 200 years ago, and that the Indians, under the leadership of Ram Mohan Roy had been asking for its abolition for years. Without Roy's advocacy of its abolition before the Indian public and the British parliament, is it likely that Bentinck's law would have been accepted so easily? Without minimising Bentinck's heroic efforts historical accuracy demands exposition of full facts. Not only does Spear claim all the credit for the policy of social reform for the British but he goes on to endorse the traditional interpretation of the Revolt of 1857 that it was the mutiny of the reactionary soldiers and others against the enlightened policy of the British. Anyone who is familiar with the complex reasons of any national revolt, including that of 1857, would discount such a facile explanation.

The evils in Indian society are indeed many and Spear does not miss any of them, but without discussing the efforts made by the Indians themselves to root them out. He also equates what he calls 'the historical atrocities' of the Afghans, Marathas and Pindaris with those of the Germans (p. 341). While excessively zealous to stretch imagination and interpretation to find parallels in India for those evil practices for which Europe often comes under heavy criticism, Spear forgets altogether to mention any of the well-known British excesses in India. For example, the forgery of Clive, the reign of terrors and mass executions in Kabul, public hangings in Burma, savagery in the Mutiny—after the Mutiny permanent gallows were erected at every station and the English of both sexes used to saunter down in the evening to see men hanged¹³—blowing up of 65 prisoners in 1872 at Maler Kotla, ruthless

suppression of nation movements until as late as 1942, the racial arrogance of the officials and merchants. He mentions the infamous Black Hole of Calcutta, but not the corresponding incidents of Mian Mir and the asphyxiated Moplah prisoners. What he could not suppress or deny Spear has diluted or diverted. Take his account of the Amritsar massacre (p. 346). His narrative neither gives any idea of the inhuman brutality with which the unarmed assembly of men, women and children were machine-gunned for ten minutes in an enclosure and the 1200 wounded left there for two days in agony and eating dust, nor does it describe the grave repercussions this incident had on the Indian mind. Even Mahatma Gandhi lost faith in British professions and would have nothing to do with constitutional reforms. It was then that he called the British Government 'the satanic government' and Spear dismisses in a different context, this expression of Gandhi's utter agony so glibly as having been made 'with a twinkle in his eye'. (p. 343)

His picture of contemporary scene too is a projection of old prejudices. Not only that no picture of the Indian economic progress, social revolution, technological advancement and developing democracy emerges, but the account is full of nar-

ratives of internal dissensions, minor or major, and uncorroborated fears, doubts and fantastic fancies (fear of the revival of Mauryan imperialism p. 443). The masterpiece of his floating imagination is the picture of the Indian parliament in which Nehru is likened with the Mughal Emperor in public audiences (p. 437). If Spear had cared to attend a session of the Lok Sabha or read its proceedings or even consult a recent famous study of the Indian parliament by Professor Morris-Jones he would certainly have thought twice before making such a statement. As early as 1954 the *Manchester Guardian* said that the Parliament in Delhi was working in an exemplary way.¹⁴

Such examples of fancies and distortions could easily be multiplied by many times. Looking at Spear's book one cannot help recalling what Edward Thompson wrote some years ago: '...in no country has British thought been so sterile, stagnant and satisfied with a few generalisations passed from one decade to the next. One reason for our present troubles is the fact that our thinking about India has been of such deplorable inadequacy'.¹⁵ In Spear's case, however, it is not a case of inadequacy of imagination, or even of scholarship but of an utter disregard of the responsibilities of history-writing.¹⁶

¹ Macaulay, *Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches*, Longmans, London, 1882. p. 153.

² Published by the University of Michigan Press, 1961.

³ C. H. Philips (ed.) *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*. p. 272.

⁴ E. H. Carr, *What is History?* p. 18.

⁵ Edward Thompson, *The Other side of the Medal* p. 29.

⁶ Jawaharlal Nehru, *India Today and Tomorrow* (vide — Humayun Kabir, *India and the World*, p. 4).

⁷ *The Economist*, June 2, 1962. p. 889

⁸ W. Cantwell-Smith, *Modern Islam in India* p. 323 (cited)

⁹ C. H. Phillips (ed.), *Evolution of India and Pakistan — Select Documents* p. 194.

¹⁰ J. Coatman, *Years of Destiny* p. 238.

¹¹ Hamilton Papers. C.126/4. pp. 285-6. Hamilton to Curzon, 31st July, 1902. "I sat next to the Aga Khan at two successive dinner parties. He is a shrewd and intelligent man with European ideas grafted upon Eastern training and traditions. He analysed, on the second evening that we were together, our position in India with skill and knowledge. He is much perturbed at the development of the seditious press in Bombay, and which he is afraid will, as education advances, attain really dangerous dimensions. I think it would be worth your while if you came anywhere near him to talk to him. He seemed to me the class of native who ought to be put either on your Legislative Council or that of Bombay. He is thoroughly loyal, and through his widely scattered following, of which he is the spiritual head, he would be able to give you information such as I doubt if you could obtain from any other native of standing."

¹² See W. Morris-Jones, *Parliament in India*, pp. 28-31.

¹³ Edward Thompson, *The Reconstruction of India* p. 107.

¹⁴ The Manchester Guardian, 5th June, 1954.

¹⁵ Edward Thompson, *The Reconstruction of India* p. 17.

¹⁶ Incidentally Spear's present study is at best an administrative history based on conservative works, ignoring recent researches and studies. It contains multiple errors of facts, some of which are highly misleading, for instance, he says that the India Council was retained under the Act of 1935 (p. 388) but in fact it was then abolished, and he calls the 1964 Cabinet Mission as Cripps Mission (p. 414).

SHORT STORY

The Sapling and the Rock

UPENDRA NATH ASHK

GREY clouds had covered the evening sun and darkness descended over the valley before its time. Foot-sore and weary Shanker reached Gagrait — a half-way halting station — where two or three smoky tin lamps were ineffectually trying to dispel the darkness.

Shanker felt starved. He sought out a cheap cook shop, huddled among half a dozen non-descript stalls, which passed for the local bazaar. Hunger appeased, his next worry was to find a shelter for the night.

Both the inns were crammed full with pilgrims. Countless more pilgrims had spilled over onto the maidan, where they lay under the open sky, cooking their meals over improvised brick hearths. A sharp wind had arisen; it licked the trembling flames. In the valley below, the pines sighed in the wind and the pilgrims shivered.

Shankar looked around helplessly. The cold seeped through his body, making him acutely conscious of the fact that he had no warm clothes on. He knocked about aimlessly for some time and then made his way down to the valley.

Luckily, he chanced upon a big mountain hut. It belonged to a school teacher who ran an ashram with a village school and a small dispensary for the benefit of the poor hill folk. He gave Shanker a straw mat and a blanket. Shanker could not have asked for more; he lay down on the floor hugging the warmth of the blanket, but he could not sleep. Perhaps he was too tired or

still hungry or the place was unfamiliar. When sleep still defied him, he wrapped the blanket around him upto the neck and moved into the window. As he sat there the events of his life flitted past his mind, one by one.

He had come all the way to the Punjab, hundreds of miles from home, where the University provided facilities to acquire the highest degree by passing the Sanskrit Examinations and then appearing only in English. It was cheaper, but hard going. He starved, took up tuitions to pay his college fees, and even demeaned himself by begging money from more fortunately placed friends. Perhaps it was the result of these hardships, and the painful awareness of the gulf that always yawned between him and the regular students who were lavish in their spending that he lost interest in wealth and women and toyed with the idea of turning a sannyasi. Or perhaps the sense of their being out of his reach had turned the grapes sour. Whatever the reason, without taking the highest degree, when he left the portals of his Alma Mater after doing his B.A. he was already somewhat of an anchorite, in spirit at least, if not in body.

Like so many countless other young men, he began hunting for a job. It was in those days that he came across a volume of Swami Rama Krishna Paramahansa's sermons. The book influenced him so powerfully that whatever vestiges of materialistic interest still lingered were extinguished.

Sometimes, it occurred to him that he

should concentrate all his energies and make a final bid to do his M.A.; that would secure him a position on the faculty of a college. Thus entrenched, he could disprove those who despised him as an insignificant creature. But then, he read in the book of sermons that acquiring wealth was the lowest of pursuits — not worthy of being made the supreme goal of life: "We feel proud of our prosperity, till we realise there are thousands of others in comparison with whom we are no better than paupers. Wealth can buy everything in the world, but not peace of mind".

The words still echoed in his mind: 'After sunset when glow-worms come out and skim over the waves of the west wind, they think it is their sparkle that sheds light on the dark world. Then the stars come out and the glow-worms feel their worthlessness. The moon in its turn smiles at the arrogance of the stars and drenches the world with its light. 'I illumine the world,' the moon boasts, till the sky is streaked with the glimmerings of the dawn heralding the arrival of the Sun, before whose effulgence the moon is humbled.'

And women Sometimes he thought he would get a job in a college and marry a beautiful educated girl and show the conceited college girls, who flitted about like butterflies and did not deign to cast a glance at him, that he had made the grade and was worthy of a much better girl than them.

But the book said — woman tempted man. Her spell clipped his wings. She multiplied his wants and before he knew it, he was finished, caught in his own net.

And Shanker resolved not to be ensnared by a woman; to lead an independent life, like a bird soaring in the sky, and bursting into song.

Outside the window, the valley was dark. Sometimes in nearby huts, faint points of light flickered and pricked the darkness. Shanker stopped gazing outside and sat down with his back against the wall. His mind rambled: his search for peace was tortuous; he had been wandering for a long time, his goal nowhere in sight. He covered

his face with the blanket and lay down on the mat.

Above him, in the bazaar, he could hear the creaking of bullock carts. The more enterprising pilgrims, determined to take rest after reaching their goal had already taken to the road, braving the cold. Shanker sighed. Had he set himself any goal? He was still groping; he had neither acquired the highest degree nor learnt to sing like a bird.

It is one thing to make up one's mind to renounce worldly desires, but another to put the resolution into practice.

Instead of becoming a sannyasi, Shanker took up a teacher's job in a newly established high school in the Doab. Due to mismanagement the school closed down within a year and he was left to fend for himself as best as he could. He had no mind to pursue his studies and he lacked the firmness of mind to take the path of renunciation. As a last resort, he decided to return home, and seek a guru who could initiate him into the ways of renunciation. Before leaving for home he could not resist the urge to visit the Chintapurni Fair. His feet were sore, his legs ached, and a strange restlessness had come over him.

He got up again and started looking out.

The clouds were spread out in the sky like the feathers of a partridge. From behind, the moon vainly struggled to shed its wan light on the tired world. In the distance, Shanker could see an intermittent line of hurricane lamps — some in the hands of pedestrians, others under the bullock carts — steadily moving forward till they were swallowed up by the darkness. As the carts receded into the distance, their creaking emanated like faded memories from a far-off land. And then new carts and new lights . . . But the valley below was still plunged in darkness and the moon smiled wanly through feathery clouds.

Shanker sighed. Startled by footsteps he recognized his host, the school teacher, as he came into the orbit of light filtering through the window. Perhaps he was returning after billeting the other pilgrims.

'Still awake?' he asked Shanker sympa-

thetically. There was something in his voice which commanded respect.

'Sleep doesn't come easily to me', Shanker said averting his head.

The teacher sat down by his side on the mat. His attitude was so sympathetic, his talk had such a ring of sincerity that before he knew it, Shanker had already poured out his heart to him like a simple innocent child.

His host consoled him. His words were a balm to his distraught mind.

He told Shanker that he was himself the son of well-to-do parents. In spite of his father being a rich man, he had decided to cut himself loose from the family and steer his own course through life. He had been in turn a government servant, a teacher, an accountant, and in the end, he had decided to dedicate his life to the service of mankind. He had acted as the secretary of many social institutions, worked among the peasants, lived for some time in Mahatma Gandhi's Ashram, had twice courted imprisonment in the struggle for the country's freedom. After that he had realised that while he served mankind he could also simultaneously strive for his own spiritual elevation.

'It's my conviction', the teacher said, patting Shanker on the back, 'that life has no meaning unless one has something to live for; one must have an aim in life, a goal to achieve. And could there be a greater aim in life than to merge one's soul with the Supreme Soul?'

'But this is possible only if one transcends wordly temptations, if one renounces the world', Shanker said struggling with his doubts. 'What if everyone became a sannyasi...?'

'I know what you have in mind,' the teacher said, giving Shanker an understanding look. 'I don't for a moment suggest that one should become a recluse. All that I say is, be in the world, but not of the world — like the mountains: it has its roots in the earth, but its peaks shine with transcendent glory.'

'But...' Shanker fumbled for words, not knowing how to express his thoughts.

'Perhaps you think it's not easy', the teacher said trying to read Shanker's thought. 'Of course, it's not easy. It requires the rigours of harsh self-discipline, which like the magic touch of the philosophers' stone converts dross into gold'.

Sleep deserted Shanker that night. The teacher's words kept echoing in his mind. When he dozed off he dreamed that he had become a rock. The rains of temptation beat down on the rock, the winds of desire lashed it in all fury. But the rock remained firm, the nails of hunger struck it and became blunt. Then he dreamed that he had become impervious to joys and sorrows, ate insipid food, slept on the bare floor, and spent his time teaching adults. He found himself making a round of the villages, medicine bag in hand. Next, the scene shifted to a jail, where he had gone on hunger-strike to defend the rights of the prisoners. He was threatened, beaten up, even whipped. But grim in his purpose, he neither whined, nor stirred. He had become a rock!

Suddenly he saw the rock hurtling down the steep mountain, with lightning speed and falling into a vast bubbling cauldron—the sea.

He woke up, a sweat had broken out on his forehead. Outside, the rustling of the pines had become louder, and the moon tired of its night-long vigil had gone to sleep. But Shanker was still awake.

This steep mountain was Bhabi and the bubbling cauldron his own sensual desires.

Bhabi was Bhai Saheb's wife. Shanker had now started staying with the teacher and addressed him as Bhai Saheb — elder brother. He had accepted him as his mentor.

In the beginning he was at peace with himself. Bhai Saheb's talks — an ocean of peace — soothed his mind and he drank deep of them. What happened later is, of course, a different story.

Bhai Saheb was addressed as Masterji, because he had opened a small school with his own funds, for the benefit of the children. For that matter, he could as well

pass for a doctor, and some people had honoured him with this title. His real name though was Deen Dayal. Bhabhi had told Shanker many things about her husband:

His father had been the headmaster of a government high school — influential and prosperous. Bhai Saheb had then been studying medicine, but he was already imbued with the idea of serving humanity. When the Congress launched the non-cooperation movement, Bhai Saheb gave up his studies. After much difficulty his father was able to persuade him to take up a job in the Accountant General's Office and also had him married much against his wishes. But Bhai Saheb did not hold on to the job for long.

'Do you know how he tendered his resignation?' Bhabhi once said while cooking the meal. 'He did it just like that — without warning. And do you know the reason he gave for giving up the job? That he was not prepared to be a cog in the administrative machinery of a government which kept his country in slavery. When Lalaji — that is how we addressed his father — came to know about it, he was furious and beat his head in despair. Himself a government employee, his own job was at stake. He might have been branded a traitor by his officers. But Bhai Saheb was not the type who would swerve from his course. He left home and joined Gandhiji's Ashram'.

After this Bhai Saheb had put himself heart and soul in the service of humanity. His father tried to bring him round to his own way of thinking, but Bhai Saheb was obsessed with the idea of doing public good. To fight for the country's freedom became the sole object of his life. From political independence to salvation of his own soul was just one step. His father died in the meantime. He put his patrimony in a bank, sent his children away to a boarding school and he himself came to Gagrait, where he opened a small Ashram to practice Yoga. The interest that he earned from the bank was mostly spent on the Ashram. In course of time he also opened a school and a small dispensary. He wanted to

leave me at home', Bhabhi said, 'But I insisted on coming with him.'

Not that Bhabhi was happy at the new place. Shanker had rarely seen her laughing and when she did, it was a rueful laugh, tinged with sorrow. Shanker also learnt that she had a weak heart, and headache was her constant companion. Sometimes she had fits. A sort of yearning, an unsatiated desire, lay in her eyes. Shanker felt sorry for her.

But he rarely looked into her eyes. Bhai Saheb had said that a man should keep his eyes down in the presence of a woman. According to him that was the only way to escape the snares of a woman's charm. 'See every woman in the role of your mother', he had said. And Shanker had followed his advice to the letter. Bhabhi was to him like a mother. But sometimes he faltered...

Bhabhi was preparing chapatis and he was sitting by her side with downcast eyes. As he started eating the talk casually led to fried 'parathas' and chapatis rubbed with ghee. Bhabhi told Shanker that her digestion had been ruined by dry chapatis which Bhai Saheb advised her to eat. There was a time when she had been terribly fond of 'parathas' but now she could not even digest dry chapatis.

She told him she was an only child. Her father had been an Executive Engineer. Tears came to her eyes when she told Shanker how after her father's death, her uncle whom her father had sent for education to England at his own expenses, usurped a major portion of her father's property and how even her grand-mother also sided with him. They harried and harassed her mother. This was when Bhabhi had her first fit.

Shanker looked up at her face. She was wiping her tears with the end of her *dopatta*. He immediately lowered his eyes.

'I was not always like this — morose and taciturn', Bhabhi said one day. 'I was a gay child and the house rang with my laughter so much so that mother often reminded me that unless I learnt to be sober, I'd have a hard time when I went to live in my father-in-law's house. But little did I know when I got married the very source

of my laughter would dry up'. And a sad smile played across her face.

Shanker could not help looking at her face. Bhabhi steadily looked back at him.

She had no interest in Bhai Saheb's activities. His altruism and profound study of philosophy left her cold. She complained that in his eagerness to help others he often got himself involved in difficulties. For instance, when he had been the headmaster of a National School at Hoshiarpur, and the Secretary of the local Congress Committee, he gave asylum to a girl who lived in the neighbourhood. Her mother was dead and her brothers lazy louts. Taking advantage of her helplessness her maternal uncle wanted to sell her off. Bhai Saheb had her educated so that she could stand on her own legs. Soon tongues began to wag and people insinuated that there was more between Bhai Saheb and the girl than met the eye. 'They suspected his character!' Bhabhi had put on a wry smile, 'After Munni's birth he started regarding me as his sister. What spell could that poor girl cast on him?'

Munni was their daughter, eight years old.

Shanker looked quickly at Bhabhi. She was stitching a button on his shirt. There was a hint of dejection on her beautiful face. Her eyes had a tired look and her lips were dry like leaves wilting in the summer heat.

Shanker's heart welled with pity and it began to beat faster.

Bhai Saheb taught him next day that for the fullest consummation of soul it was imperative to renounce all desire for woman. For a householder who wanted to free his soul from the shackles of desire, it was necessary that he should regard his wife as a sister after the birth of her second child. He should pray to God that He may give the couple the strength of mind to lead a life of the spirit.

Shanker looked at Bhai Saheb questioningly.

'Of course, it's difficult to put such a resolve into practice' Bhai Saheb said trying to still Shanker's doubts. 'But here I am, a

living example of what I preach. Not that I've attained complete mastery over my desires. But I do my best to practice what I profess'.

And even now Bhai Saheb regularly retired into solitude for a day or two. It was exactly in these days that Bhabhi complained of one ailment or the other: either her heart started sinking or she developed a severe headache. Once her condition became so bad that Shanker had to press her head and massage her temples with oil. As he was massaging her temples his hand slipped down to her cheek; he felt the warmth of her soft flesh. He immediately left the room, determined not to minister to her headaches in future. But Bhabhi again got a fit a few days later. Bhai Saheb, as usual, had gone to a quiet spot to meditate.

Bhabhi used to get fits before also — when she talked about her mother's sorrows and her uncle's cruel behaviour, or when she remembered Manohar, her husband's cousin, who died at a very young age. His jokes, his clever talk, his eagerness to run errands for her — the thought of these moved her to tears and she would swoon.

Bhai Saheb never allowed her condition to interfere with his routine. He took it in his stride, without losing his equanimity of mind. When she got a fit in his presence he remained composed as if this was also a part of his Yogic discipline. On such occasions the only deviation that he made in his fixed routine was to stop the morning ritual of the spinning wheel, or forego his nightly study, which time he utilized in sitting by Bhabhi's bedside. Whether this cold ministration did Bhabhi any good is difficult to say. But Bhabhi soon left the bed and Bhai Saheb was saved the drudgery of cooking the meal.

One day Bhabhi had such a terrible fit that Shanker was frightened out of his wits. It was evening and Bhai Saheb was not at home. Shanker had gone in to get some matches when he heard someone sobbing.

The room was plunged in darkness and he was groping for the match box when he heard some sobs coming from the direction of the bed.

'Bhabi.'

The sobs became louder.

'Bhabi, Bhabi.'

'Oh, God, something has happened to my heart'. She started groaning.

'Bhabi'. He went close to the bed.

'My heart my heart is sinking', she started writhing on the bed.

Shanker was in a terrible predicament. He tried to light the lamp, fumbled with the matches and could only succeed in lighting the lamp at the third attempt. He came near Bhabi's bed. Her hand was on her heart; she was groaning and tossing her head.

Shanker had never seen Bhabi in such a state. Once when she got a fit Bhai Saheb had given her a doze of spirit of ammonia. He quickly fetched a phial of spirit of ammonia and measured out a spoonful.

'I detest this medicine' Bhabi cried and clenched her teeth. The medicine ran down her neck.

'How will you get well if you don't take the medicine?' He filled another spoon. Bhabi pushed away his hand and the medicine spilled on the floor. She kept writhing on the bed.

Shanker drew the quilt upto her neck. Climbing on the bed, he caught hold of her hands and pinned them against her chest with his knees. Opening her mouth he forced a spoonful of medicine down her throat, and then quietly climbed down the bed. Sweat broke out on his brow and his heart went pounding.

Bhabi pushed away the quilt. The medicine had left a bitter taste in her mouth, making her cough. Pressing her heart she again started groaning.

'You'll be all right in a minute'. Shanker said, 'Just give the medicine a chance'. His breath came thick and fast.

'Please, please press my heart,' Bhabi wailed. 'I feel it sinking'.

Covering her with the quilt, Shanker again pressed her bosom.

'Harder, press it harder'. Bhabi was feeling relieved.

Shanker got down on his knees by her

bedside and placed his hands on her heart. While pressing her heart he found himself leaning over her body and his chest brushed against her breasts. He could hear her heart-beats.

Bhabi stopped crying. Her groans had changed into a low moan. Just then Bhai Saheb came in.

Shanker got up in confusion. Unperturbed, Bhai Saheb quickly took Shanker's place. Perhaps the medicine was doing its work, or perhaps it was the magic of Bhai Saheb's presence that Bhabi suddenly calmed down.

Shanker spent a sleepless night. His mind was in turmoil. Bhai Saheb's image danced before his eyes again and again. Here was a man who had renounced the greatest pleasure of the world to attain spiritual height. And look at himself; he had shamelessly fallen for the smallest picking. But the demands of the flesh

The next day he mentioned his predicament to Bhai Saheb. He wanted to know if one could indulge one's animal desires and yet attain spiritual fulfilment.

Bhai Saheb smiled. 'Sex is also a hunger, like all other hungers', he said. 'The way we subdue other desires through rigid training and self-discipline, we can quell our hunger for sex. It lies within us to give it free rein or curb it completely. Wading through a sea of desires an individual can still steer his way to spiritual salvation through devotion and penance. In fact, one should become a rock which can withstand the rigours of cold and heat with the same casual indifference'.

Yes, he would become a rock, firm and unchanging. He would rise above his passions, soar skywards, and attain the highest state of the spirit. The word 'rock' kept revolving in his mind.

But he had reckoned without Bhabi — Bhabi, who was like the spark of an unquenched fire.

One day Bhai Saheb was out on a visit to a patient. Shanker, his back set against the wall, was busy reading under the hurricane lantern which hung on a peg. Bhabi came and sat by his side. Shanker

kept reading, Bhabi yawned and lay down on the mat.

Shanker looked at her from the corner of his eyes. The end of the sari had slipped from her head, the button of her blouse had come open, exposing the curve of her breast. Shanker averted his gaze. He tried to read. The letters became blurred, and were reduced to a long black line. The page swam before his eyes, and then the book was gone. The only thing he was aware of was the dim outline of her breasts — the cleft between her bosom, dark and deep, which in the dim light of the lamp got lost somewhere.

The book fell away from his hand, his gaze travelled to her firm round shoulders, to her slim waist, and skimming over the divide between her breasts, it came to rest on her face. She was lying inert, like a lifeless log. Her lips were dry and parched and lined. His gaze remained fixed on these lines on her lips, and he felt tempted to kiss them. He bent over her...

Bhabi slowly opened her eyes — hungry, sad, heavy with desire. He looked into those eyes and bent lower.

He stopped. Those lines had become hard as nails, drenched in blood. They were trying to pierce through the rock.

He got up bewildered. Jumping over her body, he flung open the door and rushed out of the room. He walked swiftly and then broke into a run, as if he was being chased by a ferocious beast — bareheaded, barefoot, breaking the stillness of the night, piercing the dim moonlight.

The cold had increased and the wind moaned as it rustled through the pines.

At dawn Shanker found himself sitting on a rock. His legs were caked with mud up to the knees. His soles were blistered and

a toe-nail had pared off. Exhausted, he had sat down on the rock. Perhaps he had also dozed.

He opened his eyes. Far away at the farthest point of vision, he could see the undulating hills, gently merging into the plains, where the river Suvan glistened, carrying the sand from the hills as a votive offering to the distant oceans. Beyond the river, he could discern the town of Hoshiarpur, its roofs dimly rising out of the haze. He ran his hand through his tangled hair and stretched out his legs. His knee had started aching and his toe throbbed with pain. He looked around at the hills, thick with pines — there was a strange newness about them, as if he was seeing them for the first time.

He stretched out his arms in a yawn and his hand brushed against something soft. A tender sapling had narrowly escaped being crushed under his hand.

Shanker saw that some earth had fallen from above into the fold of the rugged rock and a seed carried by the wind had got embedded in the earth and sprouted into a tiny sapling. But a rock was a rock, harsh, cruel and inhospitable. It was not prepared to give an inch of space to the sapling to enable it to burst into green glory. The young sapling was on the point of withering and its tender leaves had turned yellow.

Shanker got up and cast a surprised look at the rock and then at the sapling. And then he saw the silhouette of another rock rising in hazy outlines over that rock and in place of that sapling, another sapling, also withered and yellowing, suddenly swam before his eyes.

(Translated from the Hindi by
JAI RATAN)



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BOOKS

ESSAYS ON LITERATURE AND IDEAS by John Wain (Macmillan, London, 270 pp. 30s.)

JOHN WAIN'S earlier book of critical writing, 'Preliminary Essays', which won the Somerset Maugham Award for 1958 received general praise for firm critical judgment and a certain sprightliness of presentation. These qualities are again in evidence here but their effect is not exactly enhanced by the inclusion of some very casual bits of reviewing and one or two extra-literary themes. In one way, however, this is an advantage. We get a more inclusive image of the author's mind by being able to place his literary opinions in the wider context of his thinking on issues other than literary. Even his literary essays are full of insights into the complexity of present-day life.

What engages the reader's interest at once is the charm and freshness of a poet's use of language no less than the equally refreshing approach to entrenched intellectual positions. Wain himself indicates this virtue of his critical work when in the preface he asks, 'Why do I do it? How could these elaborate essays on books or general topics be really a part of a writer's business? The labour is justified because of the belief that a critic could be a kind of artist, genuine enough though necessarily of the second rank. Criticism is the adventure of a man's soul among books. You feel that you are touching a mystery, that at moments of genial contact the rhythm of a poet's work enters into you. That remains the source of this book's delight even when the views expressed may seem wrong-headed as they sometimes do.

The volume opens with a brilliant essay—which is also the *piece de resistance* of

the collection—on the conflict of forms in contemporary English literature. Wain touches very perceptively on the problem of form that must lie at the root of all literary endeavour. How does a poet decide in what mould he should shape his vision? If he finds that the moulds ready for use, devised by others and preserved by tradition, are unsuitable for what he has to say he has to live again the primary act of creating a form. It is like Adam's first act of naming the animals. For the man who discovers a new form presents his fellowmen with a new language. An inquiry into the rise, growth and decline of literary forms would lead us, both outward, to the mind of society at large, and inward, to the gift and temperament of the individual writer. This thesis is supported by a vivid account of the formal developments that have occurred in drama, in poetry and in the novel, particularly in our own days. The condensed surveys make the most rewarding reading; there is not a word of the critic's jargon; all is said with the directness of one who has himself some time or other tussled with the problem he deals with.

Wain shows how drama has always moved between the two poles of ritual and realism, how in our day the cinema and television have been instrumental in releasing drama from the thralldom of realism and 'illusionism'. The theatre has asserted once again its deep need for ritual in modern work like that of Beckett and Brecht, Pinter and Osborne. Like the theatre, poetry too has re-established its roots in magic and incantation. The art of the 19th century was based on broad general statement. What killed it was the prodigious assemblage of information

which ended in an imaginative bankruptcy. Freud helped the poet to re-assert his claim to magical status by drawing attention to the irrational bases of motivation. A break and a new start were achieved when T. S. Eliot wrote about the mental world of apeneck Sweeny. Wain talks at some length of the different forms poetry has since assumed, the 'classical poetry' of Durrell, Hughes, Larkin and others, the 'scrap-book epic' of Pound and Eliot, and the 'jazz poetry' of the self-styled Beatniks. He seems to feel that there has been a shift back to an oral culture, to drama and poetry as spoken arts, which is all to the good. He is clearly inclined to be generous to the modern poet who is prone to obscurity and hostile to intellectual refinement—a trifle more generous than is defensible. One must, however, say in extenuation that he is more concerned with the rise of the new vogue itself than its valuation as artistic achievement.

Wain's account of how the novel, after being the dominant form for two hundred years, has come at last to the point of exhaustion makes fascinating reading. But one can't say that the point is made convincingly. He argues that the novel has always been close to social change and its function was to familiarise 'the strange modern world'. But as the technical means of diffusing the spoken word have challenged the supremacy of the printed page it has begun to lose that function. Its informative function is taken away by journalism and biography. And the novel, once its documentary underpinning is kicked away, crumbles into a score of minor forms. That is how, says Wain, the modern novel has splintered so completely that there is no longer any question of picking up the main tradition. It had reached its point of maximum 'purification' in the hands of James, Flaubert and Chekhov. The only major step to be taken was taken by Joyce in *Ulysses* and the experimental novel as such died with Joyce. It may be difficult to accept the gloomy finality of Wain's conclusion about the novel (I don't think he takes sufficient

note of the novel's changing form and purpose) but there can be no hesitation in accepting his remark that the main danger to the health of English letters to-day is from journalism, the 'plethoric diet of documentary' which makes it difficult to keep alive in the public mind the very idea that such a thing as imaginative literature can exist.

The more characteristic successes among the literary assessments are his treatment of the moderns, Hopkins and Orwell. In talking of Hopkins Wain is most in his element because of Hopkins's relevance to poetic practice to-day. He brings out what is central in Hopkins, his creative 'loneliness', his struggle to re-think the problems of aesthetics from an isolated position, his concept of 'inscape' and 'instress'. Wain regards the confrontation of Hopkins and Bridges (Hopkins's friend and editor) as a great, symbolic confrontation—Bridges standing for 'culture' and Hopkins, for what ran counter to the whole accepted system. "The whole dilemma of the modern artist is there, perhaps the whole dilemma of modern man." Consequently, when Hopkins's poems were first published in 1918 the modernist poets found themselves anticipated in their entire programme; the two principles of 'irreducibility' and 'simultaneity' which have underlain all modern poetry had already been the basis of Hopkins's work. In short, it would be difficult to find a better essay which, in the course of a few pages, tells us exactly what made Hopkins descend on modern poetry like a new Evangel.

The two rather lengthy essays on Orwell set out to show that Orwell's hostility was directed not so much against totalitarianism of the Right or the Left as against totalitarianism as such and power-worship. Orwell receives fair and sympathetic treatment though Wain differs sharply from his complaint against the intellectuals of his day. The most polemical piece is the essay on R. P. Blackmur, one of the four critics who receive cursory attention. In attacking Blackmur's method of criticism and particularly its language Wain takes

issue with the *New Criticism* as a whole and the formidable jargon that it has brought into vogue. The essay at the same time effectively brings out the difference between English and American literary criticism. 'The English tradition is always to try to make a difficult thing look easy, whereas the American rather likes a difficult thing to look difficult.' Wain's complaint is that Blackmur in his books like *Language as Gesture* deliberately refuses to reduce his meaning to simple terms, that, on the contrary, he inflates it, making it seem more complicated and important than it actually is. It is perhaps true that all *New Criticism* is not as pretentiously abstruse as Blackmur's. But most of it is, and Wain presses home his point with quite delightful pungency.

The last essay, 'A Visit to India', must cause many Indians some puzzlement as, I believe, it did on its first appearance in *Encounter*. And it is not any deviation from fact that bothers one, for what he describes is very much there, don't we know it, the filth, the beggary, the cockroaches, the superstition, the vulgarity, the Babu English and all. But it is the tone. One looks for a breath of sympathy, perhaps, or for perceptiveness that can see a little beyond the first report of the revolted senses; and we look for this because the writer is a poet. What we find is an extremely well-written and witty account of a refined Westerner's holiday jaunt in India not very different from the accounts we are accustomed to get from a journalist like Beverley Nichols. He opens with the remark, 'The most fortunate inhabitants of India are the birds,' and closes on the note of, 'After a few weeks in India I don't think I could say with confidence what belongs to whom.' There is first of all the shocking impact of the sheer numbers of hopeless, anonymous, humble, figures. 'Their humility is so great that it amounts to arrogance.' There are the beggar children who come out like flies and pursue him like the little beggar-girl and the man with the lopped hands who made it torture for him to go in or come out.

There are the restaurants where the main items on the menu are cholera and amoebic dysentery and everything else to suit this menu, the Pundits who offer to read one's 'Janmakundali' scientifically and the fleas that come to Wain by permission of Lord Krishna and with the compliments of the labour area. And in the midst of all this stands serenely the Taj's floating marble!

And there are encounters which induce reflection too. He meets the educated Indian girl who asks questions about Western sex habits not without presumptuousness. He finds Indian dancing frankly sexual in character but this he puts down to the Indian *ethos* which 'includes and accepts'. He speaks of the Indians' insecure hold on English idiom which makes it impossible for them to attempt anything creatively in English, and of the crudenesses of *Blitz* and Indian journalism. There is the usual hospitality at the beautiful Malabar Hill house of 'Bombay's richest man, a well-known industrialist'. One must concede that the report, however much it may hurt our *amour propre*, is candid. Wain has the grace to say in so many words that he is frankly bewildered and he conveys that bewilderment very wittily and effectively as only a poet can. One wishes, all the same, that the irony had been left out.

A reading of the book convinces us that, with Wain, absorption in literary problems does not mean a reprieve from problems of contemporary life. 'Is not the whole man involved in poetry?' he asks somewhere, 'And does it really not matter at all when this same whole man engages in political action?' His own firm opposition to the Communist creed comes through in these pages, and also his genuine concern that men should preserve freedom of mind at all costs. As a writer he reserves his venom for the pernicious influence of journalism in the modern world 'in which the imagination is so slighted and despised, the ephemeral and the documentary so exalted that men have ceased to believe in any values except those of the Press.' Was

this what the 'angry young men' were angry about? At any rate, this is what Wain is angry about and he could not have been had his commitment to art been less intense than it is.

V. Y. KANTAK

Colony Into Nation

THE MORNING AFTER: A Study of Independence by Brian Crozier (Methuen & Co. 290 pp. 36s.)

MR. BRIAN CROZIER has described vividly and with commendable impartiality the story of the colonies of European Powers like Britain, France, Holland and Belgium, which had in recent years attained 'independence', and the state of affairs which followed such independence. At the very outset, he was faced with the difficulty of defining 'independence' which would be generally acceptable as a yardstick. He noted that independence did not mean the same thing to the Presidents of Tunisia and Guinea, even as democracy did not mean the same thing in London and Peking, Paris and Moscow. He, therefore, evolved his own definition in absolute terms. A country was independent if it ran its own army and civil service, paid its way and controlled its foreign policy. He admitted that in this sense no country was independent. Even the super-powers like America and Russia had their independence circumscribed. He, therefore, admitted that independence in the absolute sense had lost its meaning and abandoned the attempt to define it and consoled himself with the escapist thought that, as it had proved impossible to define a nation to everybody's satisfaction, so it was impossible to define independence in a way that stood up to critical examination. Consequently, when he postulated that no colony of the European Powers, which professed to have attained independence, had attained real independence, he was not distinguishing them from the older sovereign states. In fact, the quantum of independence of independent countries

does not seem to have been uniform and universal in the whole course of history.

The descriptive part of the book is its best; it is fascinating and gripping. Mr. Crozier has acquired a great wealth of knowledge, both extensive and intensive, of the personalities and events in the erstwhile colonies which have since become independent if only in the sense that they had become members of the United Nations. These new members of the United Nations had no common heritage, economic, educational or political, except that they were subject to European Powers, which too had no uniform attitude towards their colonies.

India and the Congo, for instance, differed very widely on the eve of independence from imperial control, even as Britain and Belgium differed in their attitude towards their subjects in India and the Congo respectively. Britain early acknowledged that her goal for India was self-government, and prepared her for it, though not as rapidly and enthusiastically as Indian leaders wished. But Belgium never dreamt of such a goal for the Congo and did not take steps betimes to train the Congolese for it. Though both Britain and Belgium left India and Congo respectively rather abruptly, India inherited efficient and experienced Civil and Defence Services, among the best in the world, and did not suffer much when the bulk of the British element left her, while the Congo had hardly a dozen local people who had anything more than primary school education and who had therefore no competence to shoulder the responsibility of modern independence when they expelled the Belgians. While India, which under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru attained independence with the minimum of bitterness and violence, was able to establish friendly relations with Britain soon after, the Congolese were understandably bitter against the Belgians and would not think of tolerating them, even if they were, according to Mr. Crozier, the best equipped to help independent Congo,

at least in the initial stages. There is thus no parallelism between India and the Congo. Each is unique.

India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon attained independence about the same time after having been ruled by Britain for over a century, and inherited a more or less common pattern of administration and are still members of the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, they differ widely now. There is no parallelism between them either. Mr. Crozier examines the post-independence state of affairs of several countries, and says that Burma, Indonesia, Algeria and the Congo are the worst; while India, Cambodia, Malaya and Nigeria are among the best in the sense that their Governments are at least doing their best.

Mr. Crozier comes to the conclusion that the newly independent countries were not really independent and that their nominal independence brought them only a decline in their living standards. He deplores as pointless the acts of defiance with which the newly independent countries tried to prove their independence. But he admits that nothing other could in reason have been expected in view of the attitude of most of the European metropolitan Powers which was one of blindness to the obvious, namely, that colonial intellectuals would demand independence. They resisted it until they were forced to concede it. The aftermath of independence would have been different and highly satisfactory if the metropolitan countries had, with missionary zeal and with their better resources, pulled up their subject peoples to their own level, if only out of enlightened self-interest which, Mr. Crozier thinks is probably the highest ethical motive, and if the richer nations had attempted to reduce the gap between themselves and the poorer ones. Such a policy is being followed in more recent years, though with strings attached, and unfortunately as part of the strategy of the cold war between the democratic and communist States.

Mr. Crozier feels greatly concerned that

the newly independent countries lean more towards socialism and communism of Russia than towards the liberalism of the Western Powers. He admits, however, that in their struggle for independence, the subject peoples received sympathy only from the Socialist Parties in the Western countries and from Communist Russia and China. India owed her independence to the British Labour Government under Lord Attlee, and not the Conservative Government of Sir Winston Churchill, who, in a famous passage, said that he had not become the British King's Prime Minister to preside over the liquidation of his Empire, and denied that the Atlantic Charter, which he signed with the late American President F. D. Roosevelt, applied to India! It was, therefore, natural, and even inevitable, that the newly independent nations viewed help from the Western Powers with greater suspicion than from the socialist ones, which, of course, Mr. Crozier, as a Liberal, laments.

Among the most interesting chapters in the book is the one in which he compares India with Communist China. Though Communist China was not a colony of a Western Power and had, therefore, no place in a book concerning newly independent nations, Mr. Crozier invokes it only to emphasise the contrast between her and India, to the advantage of the latter because India had parliamentary democracy, rule of law and individual freedom, while China had a one-party rule, arbitrary justice and coercions of various kinds. He expresses the hope that if the Indian economic experiment succeeded and did so faster than the Chinese, it would prove that the preservation of freedom was a value in itself and worthy of emulation by other newly independent countries, particularly in Africa. In saying this, he feels that he is too kind by half to India, as he is only comparing her, the bad, with China, the worst. He is at great pains to warn that socialism and democracy cannot co-exist in harmony, but democracy and economic development

can do so. He thinks that India was saved by her attachment to democracy and not to socialism. He avers that socialist planning is incompatible with freedom, for it implies coercion, while social justice is compatible with freedom, as has been the case in the Western democracies.

While granting that all government is bad, Mr. Crozier is reconciled to suffering it at present. The only question is about the best form of it for the undeveloped countries. In his view, economic development is their first priority, not political independence which, at best, is illusory. Economic development needs a stable government which would guarantee a free economy as it is the most effective instrument of economic progress. He grants that parliamentary government is the best, but it is too much of a luxury for the undeveloped countries. They should prefer an authoritarian government! He refers sympathetically to the 'guided democracy' of Indonesia, the 'basic democracy' of Pakistan, and the constitutions of Russia under Stalin, of Portugal under Dr. Salazar and of Spain under General Franco. While not affirming that they were a success, he is not sure they were a failure. Finally, he falls back on the proposition that institutions are less important than the men who run them!

Mr. Crozier welcomes the more recent trend towards friendly co-operation between the newly independent States and their former rulers. He affirms that the prosperous minority of mankind could no longer afford to tolerate slum States in the world than an enlightened State could afford slums in its own cities, and hopes that national independence would be recognised as a stage towards international interdependence. This is a lesson for all and not only for the newly independent states. Mr Crozier's attempt to treat 'the morning after' states as a species, and their earlier ruling states as another, is more interesting than valid, more descriptive than illuminating and profitable.

P. KODANDA RAO

Public Sector

GOVERNMENT IN BUSINESS by S. S. Khera
(Asia Publishing House, 364 pp. Rs. 38.)

THE innocent reader of 'Government in Business' must have been surprised by the recent announcement that Mr S. S. Khera is to retire from the I.C.S. in the spring of 1964. 'Government in Business' is a lengthy—indeed, almost exhaustive—account of higher management in public undertakings in India. The authority of the treatment and sureness of touch in the factual detail belong to a writer who has been deeply involved at the most arduous levels of administration and management. The canvas is, moreover, stretched to fit the frame of a quasi-doctorate thesis and the author has accordingly been obliged to provide some colour of academic background. The innocent reader could, in short, be pardoned for thinking that 'Government in Business' is the fruit of the leisure of a distinguished civil servant writing (say) three years after retirement from the conduct of affairs of state.

In fact, 'Government in Business' would have been less valuable as an analysis of problems recollected in tranquility, for Mr. Khera is at his best when he breaks out with some piece of pragmatism so robust that it could derive only from recent or current experience:

'Too many top bosses sit at headquarters asking far too many questions. Too many people watch other people doing things, instead of doing things themselves.'

He is rightly intolerant of the pursuit of principles which leave no room for the practice of everyday virtues:

'Higher management of state enterprises have to be measured by their staff and labour relationships, and the observance there of human values. I refer to human values and not humanitarian principles, not charity-mongering, but ordinary, plain and simple human values.'

Again, although Mr Khera rejects the 'pedestrian accounting' of the Auditor

General or the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament as a sensible test of management, he is under no illusion about his own accountability as a manager:—

'Good management means good accounting and good book-keeping. Conversely, bad account-keeping or confused account-keeping is always a mark of bad management...if I function, I must function with resources. If I function with resources, I must account for these resources, and the best time for me to make accounting arrangements is the first day I start functioning.'

Mr. Khera's firm common sense is nevertheless based on a clear perception of the ultimate purpose of economic planning and public undertakings. He considers that planning is 'one of our weak points' and hints obliquely that the weakness lies in the illusion that the success of a plan can be measured by the mere growth of production:

'It is most improper for the management of a state enterprise to imagine that its duty is to produce and that its responsibility ends with having produced its product efficiently. Higher management of state undertakings must make it their business and they must be compelled to make it their business, to attend to the 'SALE' of the product in terms of sufficient sale and a 'PROFIT' producing sale.'

One may perhaps regret that Mr. Khera's responsibilities in the field of higher management have apparently not included the direction of India's export drive. In that event, his facility at identifying the relevant factors in others' experience would have directed his attention to the outstandingly successful Japanese Export Trade Research Organisation and assured him that the responsibility of higher management begins with the consideration of the needs of 'the customers who buy one's products', and continues with the shaping of the product to meet those needs. Consideration of the harsh realities of export markets would have quickly revealed that one can in fact easily deceive one's customers provided import restrictions or prohibitive tariffs keep them ignorant of alternatives to one's own pro-



MICHAEL BRECHER

The New States of Asia

A POLITICAL ANALYSIS

These six political essays, by the author of *Nehru: A Political Biography*, were all written during 1961 and 1962. They focus attention on the 'new states' of Southern Asia which have become independent since the second World War. The rationale is the conviction that the future of all peoples is bound up with the course of events in these lands. In his Introduction the author writes of the neglect of Asia by the West in the past, the key role it has occupied in world affairs since the ending of colonialism, and the reasons for its importance today. 30s.

PETER LYON

Neutralism

What is neutralism? And what is the significance of neutralism in contemporary international politics? This book offers answers to both these teasing questions. Neutralism is considered in its various aspects: historically in relation to the Cold War; as a doctrine or ideology, to be found in its most comprehensive forms in Asia and Africa; and as a foreign policy—the three pioneer neutralists, India, Yugoslavia and Egypt, are of special importance. Finally, there is a study of the Belgrade Neutralist Conference of September 1961. Rs 15

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS



ducts. Mr. Khera would, in fact, have seen to it that 'the Indian made biscuits which are as good as any imported from abroad' were sold in world export markets at a profit—or amended his finding.

Mr. Khera may well pose problems for the historian of the future raking over the *debris* of our libraries for clues to the political and economic thought of the mid-twentieth century. Our future historian will find, for example, passages of jejune theorising and academic dogma which are wildly out of character with the rest of the book. Having commended Mr Khera's appreciation of the central importance of marketing among management functions, he will be shocked to read:—

If in India, as part of the planned economy and as part of the major objective of setting up a socialist state, you set up steel plants with a capacity of 10 million tons a year, then there will be only one single test as to whether these plants are doing their job: are they producing 10 million tons or not?

(No question here, be it noted, whether the steel is of the type customers can use or is produced at a price that will yield a profit.) Our future historian may well then begin to wonder, after the manner of the Homeric scholars, whether the book is not the work of two writers, a genuine Khera and a pseudo-Khera. He would find powerful support for this hypothesis in the statement that 'in Oxford and Cambridge was centred the main resistance to the introduction of scientific and technological education' and, knowing that the Cavendish Laboratory at the other university was opened in 1874, would conclude that the pseudo-Khera was writing not later than 1873. Our future historian's scholarly dissertation would doubtless end with the conclusion that there was an entirely admirable book written by an entirely admirable Mr. Khera in 1963 but that the only surviving text was disfigured by interpolations by an unidentified and unregretted scribe round about 1873.

FRANCES BLANK

Post-Mortem

OUR CREDULITY AND NEGLIGENCE by A. G. Noorani (Sponsored by Indians For Victory, Bombay, 167 pp. Rs. 3.)

BEFORE I started reading this small book I had the impression that it covered familiar ground and would hardly need a paragraph by way of a review. When I finished, I found that I was only partly correct. It analyses the Government of India's policy(!) towards China from 1950 to 1963 which has been aptly characterised as 'credulity and negligence'—a phrase first formulated, interestingly enough, by Dr S. Radhakrishnan, President of India, on return from a visit to the NEFA after the shameful defeat of our army at the hands of the Chinese. But this the author does in such a lucid style, documented at every stage that it reads like a novel that cannot be put aside without finishing. It is, in this sense, 'a great little book' and even if the sponsors disperse after its publication, they will still have rendered a great service to the country.

To students of politics in India the book is important for provoking a few fundamental questions that don't leave you even while you go to sleep. It is these questions that need to be discussed today.

It is perfectly plain that the main actor, the star performer on the 'stage' was Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru. But the record shows that as captain of the ship, as director of India's policy, he was a complete flop and yet he pretended that he knew better than others. He has been fooled by the Chinese practically at every turn of the situation and it was quite evident that they could play him about any way they liked. On one or two occasions he appeared to have realised that he was 'living in an artificial world of his own creation' but that was a transient phase and he soon slipped back into that world. He has been so contradictory in his statements and so prone to appease the opponent that nobody could say at any

given moment that here are the 'fixed points of reference' of the nation. In no other country could such a person carry on as Prime Minister for such a length of time with such a record.

Whatever may be our attitude to Mr. Nehru, the Chinese Communist leaders understood him much better than we did or do, and that is the reason why they seemed to be so confident of executing their policy of duplicity.

Is it possible that Mr. Nehru is entirely responsible for the miserable failure of our policy? The author has not gone into this question in detail. But it appears to us that while Mr. Nehru must own the maximum blame, it is Mr V. K. Krishna Menon who acted as the dominating intellectual guide of Mr. Nehru and the latter appeared to be completely overcome by the former. If this is the truth, then again it is Mr. Nehru who is to blame. But what of the other ministers? Occasionally they are reported to have expressed different opinions. But on the whole they have gone with Mr. Nehru through all the stages and none have resigned *on this issue*. Therefore all of them have at least been abettors in this pathetic story of default and negligence.

Now, why was Mr. Nehru so credulous? This is an important question which would require a long treatment. In brief, his frame of reference is a Marxist outlook and in this sense he is a 'progressive' and prides himself as a 'revolutionary'. He has a very peculiar belief in the myth of Asianism and he thought that between the great Chinese (who being independent-type agrarian communists) and great India a new 'Asian' force could be built up that would balance and even challenge the West. He is sentimental and utopian in his beliefs and these guide him much more than actual day-to-day, mundane realities of conduct.

And why was he negligent? Because, although he thinks he understands the world, he appears to have little knowledge of the actual forces and motivations that balance this world and keep it moving

in the way it does. He attaches little importance to the factor of force and strategy and believes that only ideas move men. With his Gandhian tradition over the decades, and believing that it is the Gandhian movement that 'forced' the British to part with power in India, he has little experience of the 'other world' of reality. He never felt that right must be supported by might in order to be effective in this go-getting world. In his sentimental enthusiasm for 'progressivism,' he has no real understanding of the dialectics of communist method and relative ethics.

But then if Nehru was credulous and negligent why were (or are) we? Why do we still believe in Nehru's capacity to lead? Even today there is hardly any clarity of India's policy towards China. The year 1962 has taught us some lessons no doubt but not sufficiently, I am afraid. We yet do not know on what design or strategy we are building our country's safety. We have hardly any initiative and are kept busy defending ourselves against the diplomatic onslaughts of others.

I am afraid no real improvement would be possible without our disclaiming the leadership of Mr. Nehru, as not only a failure but ruinous. This is the real lesson I learn on going through this book, although the author has studiously kept away from such strongly worded conclusions. But the implications are clear.

Before I conclude may I refer to two nasty printing mistakes—one on p. 27 line 2, read 1959 instead of 1963. And the other on p. 96 line 3, read *on* instead of *no*.

K. K. SINHA

Stormy Petrel

PROPHET OF INDIAN NATIONALISM: a Study of Political Thought of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh 1893-1910, by Karan Singh (George Allen & Unwin, 156 pp. 25s.)

NOT all the newly independent nations have the hoary past of India to draw or depend upon. Their nationalism is not the less viable for that. Indian nationalism

is unquestionably rooted in the past; and the roots go far back in history. But that is not its sole strength and justification. When it is made to strut forth on the crutches of the past Indian nationalism has a distinctly hobbled look. It is difficult, therefore, to feel enthusiasm for a book on Indian nationalism that shows little awareness of its inadequacy. Mr. Karan Singh, who has written this book, may contend that his is only an attempt to present the thought of one of the outstanding nationalists who preceded Mahatma Gandhi. Then he should have, to say the least, been more considerate in selecting the title for this book.

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh was certainly the stormy petrel of Indian politics of the first decade of this century. With Lokmanya Tilak he fought for a radical recasting of the Congress politics which had grown moribund under the leadership of the Moderates. It was he who lifted the concept of Mother India from Bankim Chatterji's writing and covered it with the glow of an intensely felt emotion that infected the national movement at the time of the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon. His voice, urgent and eloquent, called out ringingly for complete freedom till he retired to Pondicherry. In everything he said and did he far outshone the galaxy of the lawyer-orators who adorned the platform at the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress. In the short period of his active participation in the national movement he had already become the symbol and leader of young India in revolt.

Mr. Karan Singh's book says all this but somehow the powerful and many-sided personality of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh does not come into focus. This is surprising because the compass of his quotations covers all aspects of his thought and its development is traced with detailed regard for source and sequence. Maybe the anaemic quality of the book derives from the fact that it is a doctoral thesis. This may also explain its repetitiveness and the thinness of the author's contribution to

the theme of his study. The theme itself is worthy of greater sophistication than is evidenced in the book. A study in depth of Sri Aurobindo needs a perspective of contemporary political thought and a critical appraisal of the sources and sinews of modern nationalism. If Mr. Karan Singh's book does not turn out to be such a study it is not because Sri Aurobindo Ghosh's thought is weak but because the technique of its analysis and assessment is amateurish. The price for such fare is quite princely.

MAHESH DESAI

Worse than Atomic War?

OUR CROWDED PLANET Edited by Fairfield Osborn (George Allen & Unwin, 200 pp. 21s.)

THE problem of overpopulation though 'not so acute as the threat of atomic warfare is graver, since it springs from our own nature'. This collection of essays on the problem is sponsored by the Conservation Foundation. The contributions are divided into five sections to emphasise its most important aspects. The first two tackle its biological economic and political implications and the third concentrates on the world's demographic danger spots. The fourth and fifth which discuss the religious, ethical and moral issues involved are an unusual and welcome addition in a book of this kind. But some aspects of the problem have been omitted. Speculation on the possibilities of emigration to other planets probably still legitimately belongs only to the comic strip or to space fiction. Still, in an era when man has orbited the earth, and when his attention is so engrossed by the miracles of technology that he is easily deluded into thinking that the dwindling resources of the earth is no cause for alarm, a frank appraisal of the feasibility of harnessing those of the other planets would have been in order. Nothing is said about recent progress in the oral contraceptive either. In fact with the exception of a few suggestions here and there — like Julian Huxley's proposal for a joint

declaration by the developed and underdeveloped countries for concerted thought and action — no positive path emerges from the essays.

Particularly striking among the articles is World Banker Eugene Black's crisp summing up of the problem in its relation to economic development the world over, and aid to underdeveloped countries. Equally illuminating is naturalist Marston Bates' point that apart from its political, economic and moral implications overpopulation is a crisis from the biological point of view alone. Man's refusal to be governed by 'Natural Law' has upset the balance or what the physiologists elegantly call 'homeostasis', of the biological community to which with the plants and other animals he belongs. Sir Solly Zuckerman makes a plea for environmental planning and Grenville Clark expresses concern for population pressures and world peace. The Rev. Robert Gammon speaking for the Roman Catholics makes interesting reading, not because he is convincing but as a fine example of the kind of reply an effort to communicate through the thick wall of dogma receives. Julian Huxley and André Maurois express their uneasiness about the disappearance of the simple good things that made the life of man richer than that of the mouse. It is a pity that a great part of much else that is otherwise well said loses its edge due to repetition. The fact that the present world population of 3 billion will double to six within a bare forty years is no doubt vital, but it is annoying to have it repeated over a dozen times. More irritating is the awareness that the contributors are not to blame, much of the effort wasted in this kind of repetition could have been better utilized with proper co-ordination. This reduces the impact of the book which otherwise would have been considerable.

As spokesman for a country which contributed so much to make a solution to the problem difficult, jurist Chagla is embarrassingly vague and inadequate in his statement about India's 'striking advance on almost all fronts'.

The Congress Government has kept a promise made by the Indian National Congress as early as 1935. Family Planning has figured prominently in the allocations under all three of India's Five-Year Plans, (Rs. 65 lakhs, Rs. 40 crores and Rs. 27 crores). Appropriate administrative bodies were appointed at the Centre and the States during the second plan not to mention the several Committees which are appointed as need arises to assess and aid the many phases of the programme. The help of several voluntary bodies in the country, and sympathetic organizations abroad like the U.N. the W.H.O. and Ford Foundation has been solicited and used.

Under the three plans, clinics have been established, volunteers trained, free contraceptives distributed and operations for sterilization carried out. Every effort to educate people has been made through films, magazines, pamphlets, exhibitions, posters and circulation camps. Seminars, conferences and Family Planning Days are organized, demographic centres established and research and surveys of every kind sponsored and encouraged. The Government makes awards to States and individuals for outstanding work. And yet, our population, exceeding all estimates, has jumped from 351 million in 1951 to 438 million in 1961. This addition is alarming, but what is worse is the mounting rate of increase. At the end of the Second Plan it was 1.9% per annum and now it is 2.15%. That this is lower than the 5.4% of the Viet Nam or 4.6% of Singapore is no consolation, since it is much higher than the .9% in Japan or France or .5% in the UK. Moreover, it continues to rise. Our per capita income of \$ 69.30 per annum is absurdly poor in comparison with the \$ 900 — \$ 1400 of the nations of Western Europe, not to mention the U.S. at \$ 2,300. At the end of the Third Plan it is expected to go up to \$ 80.85 — if we achieve our targets — with another 2 or 3% added if the various foreign aid programmes materialize. But this is far below the \$ 200 — \$ 300 considered 'reasonable'. The balanced diet together with related consumption, recommended by the Nutri-

tion Advisory Committee costs an estimated Rs. 35 per capita per month. Today, barely 20% of the population can afford it. All this means only one thing; however 'striking' our efforts they are just not enough.

India's problem is different from that of Japan, where the movement for birth control came from among the people as it did in the Western World. In India these alien attitudes have to be planted among them. Attitudes need time to take root and to grow. We do not have the time, and unless something spectacular turns up the prospects are dismal.

SUMA CHITNIS

Theatres of the Tsar and the Soviets

RUSSIAN THEATRE by Marc Slonin (Methuen & Co. 354pp. 42s.)

MARC Slonin is one of the foremost authorities on Russian literature and in this book he covers the whole history of the Russian Theatre. The origins of pagan folk-lore and ritual are lightly touched upon at the beginning of the book but prove disappointingly cursory as do the few pages on the mummers and merrymen of the Middle Ages and the Morality and Puppet plays. In these periods are to be found the indigenous roots of the Russian theatre and they could perhaps have been dealt with in greater detail.

For those interested in the present day Indian theatre, the next few pages dealing with the effect of foreign influences on the growth and expansion of the Russian Theatre will prove most interesting for they offer a comparison with our own particular problems. Just as the Russian Theatre was rejuvenated by outside influences, we in India are imbibing as much as we can from the West in an effort to create a live theatre tradition.

Although there was no completely dormant period in the history of the Russian Theatre as there was in India, there was an almost complete break in the traditional theatre forms then prevalent of mummary

and bear-baiting when foreign theatre forms were first introduced by Tsar Alexey in the second half of the 17th century. He invited the Germans to stage the Biblical story of Esther. Emphasis, for the first time, was placed on showmanship and splendour and subsequently the first theatrical school was started and subsidized from the Tsar's treasury. Under Pyotr I, the stage was moved from the Tsar's palace into a State Theatre on Red Square; already the importance of the theatre for spreading ideas was realized.

A few years later the Italians enriched the theatre scene with their improvisations and masks, their *commedia del arte*, opera and ballet. Then came the French performing the tragedies of Racine and Corneille and the comedies of Molière. From all these diverse influences of German, Italian and French origin the Russian National theatre was born. In 1749, almost 100 years after the introduction of the first foreign influence, the tragedy 'Khorev' written by a Russian poet was produced by Russian cadets and Volkov, a merchant's son, started an amateur group of Russians who performed with success.

By the end of the nineteenth century Russian Theatre had passed from pseudo-French classical tragedy to the Romantic drama of Pushkin and Lermontov. Shakespeare was introduced and proved enormously successful. Gogol with his 'Inspector General' introduced the first truly realistic comedy and fifty years later was initiated the Moscow Art Theatre and its belief in 'truth in representation of life.' This brilliant period of Russian Theatre history has been dealt with by many authors but makes very stimulating reading in the two chapters devoted to its highlights in Marc Slonin's book.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of 'Russian Theatre' is that it gives a glimpse of the vast sweep of Russian Theatre against the changing social patterns of the Empire with its liberal but whimsical patronage of the arts by the Crown and the aristocracy when theatre was the privileged entertainment of the richer classes and

aesthetes, through the turbulent years just before the 1905 revolution when out of the unrest around sprang such noteworthy movements in the theatre as the Moscow Art Theatre and such giant personalities like Stanislavsky, Nemirovich Danchenko, Meyerhold and others. This was the era, before 1917, of the great director-producers. They held an almost unlimited control over actors, budget and repertory. Exciting experiments were being made and each director had his own personal approach which was unique.

The chapter called 'From Innovators to Conservatives' pinpoints the problems that arose when theatres were transferred from private to State ownership. The whole purpose of theatre slowly shifted from being an art form to becoming a tool for propaganda. For although politically the revolution affected the Russian people almost instantaneously, the theatre itself went through a most hectic phase just about then. From 1917-1930 experimentalism and innovation broke loose as never before. Any new thing, any eccentric proposal, any crazy attempt at innovation would find enthusiastic followers and material opportunity. As the state was not clear as to the policy it should adopt, every new venture was hailed as an answer to finding a new theatre of the people.

Meyerhold's unique position as theatrical leader of this *avant-garde* movement is well brought out and his struggle against 'socialist realism' ended with his last dramatic gesture, a frank and bold denouncement against the regime, claiming 'This has nothing to do with art, and without art there is no theatre.' Three days later he was arrested and disappeared into some Arctic concentration camp.

With the extermination of Meyerhold in 1938 and until the end of the Stalin era in 1953, there was a long dull period of uniformity in the Russian Theatre but Marc Slonin ends his book on a hopeful note by saying 'The Russian Theatre still has a long way to go before it acquires a tenth of the freedom and variety it possessed in the twenties. But its march forward is an

irrevocable process, and we would like to believe that its future will be worthy of its glorious past.'

ROSHAN ALKAZI

Criminal Cases

THE MURDER OF THE MAHATMA AND OTHER CASES FROM A JUDGE'S NOTE-BOOK by G. D. Khosla (Chatto and Windus, 245 pp. 30s.)

LEGAL autobiography is a difficult art. Lawyers seem to suffer even more than laymen from the occupational disease of autobiographers in thinking that the universe revolves round their own forensic efforts. There is a tendency to give such importance to advocacy as to disregard the intricacies of the legal process which tries to eliminate personal infirmities and to do justice even when competent advocates and subtle lawyers appear in the case! Added to this is our national style where the autobiographer solemnly informs us that he was an honest lawyer, suggesting delicately that this distinguishes him from others of the tribe. It is a measure of Mr. Khosla's success that he does not intrude on the narration of these criminal cases. Those delighting in 'Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts' should find the book maintaining sustained interest.

Mr. Khosla was a District Judge in the Punjab and became Chief Justice of the High Court at Chandigarh. Typical of the landscapes which were the setting for these cases is the description of the District of Jhang. 'The incidence of crime among these people was high, and their main recreation was breaking each other's heads and pursuing vendettas which, in some cases, had begun several generations ago. In the intervals between killings, assaults and abductions they lived peacefully, displayed warm neighbourly feeling towards everyone, and worked hard on the land, reaping a rich crop of wheat, cotton, sugar-cane and oranges'. But it must be said that these worthies preferred 'their murders by the blow direct without any

subtlety bar an occasional attempt to administer poison. Geographical distinctions may be invidious but in their method of the murder the ingenuity shown in the Punjab contrasts unfavourably with cases like the Babu who murdered a Zamindar by scratching him with a needle carrying plague germs or the Poona Doctor who put a widow to sleep by a painless drug which could not be traced by forensic experts. On the other hand, many of the offenders have taken the lament of Weller Senior seriously and prepared some of the most interesting alibis in criminal history. A particularly fascinating case is that of the village feud where two of the expected assailants prepared unimpeachable alibis. After the violent crimes they were accused as expected with others of their tribe and falsely identified as assailants by the surviving victims. The identification of these two was shown to be palpably false and such doubt was cast on the testimony of the witnesses that all were acquitted.

Equally gripping is the case of Amrik Singh. Annoyed at the reluctance of his wife Jaipal Kaur to go home with him he shot at her, his father-in-law, two others as well and rounded up a busy day by

attempting suicide. On second thoughts he escaped from prison and could not be traced. Years later one Dr. Azad was accused as the fugitive. But when confronted with him Jaipal Kaur could not identify him as her husband. However, on other evidence, particularly of finger prints, he was convicted by the Court.

The title of the book relates to the historical but unexciting trial of Godse and Apte. The author was a member of the bench that heard the appeal in the rather incongruous setting of the ballroom of Peterhoff, the Summer Lodge of the Viceroy in Simla. The appeal had a certain poignancy because Nathuram Godse spoke eloquently in his own defence and seems to have moved the audience sufficiently for the author to have observed 'Had the audience on that day been constituted into a jury and entrusted with the task of deciding Godse's appeal, they would have brought in a verdict of 'non-guilty' by an overwhelming majority'. This seems to be a strong ground for the abolition of the Jury system. Godse admitted his act and pleaded Gandhiji's tolerance and gentleness as provocations.

ASHOK H. DESAI

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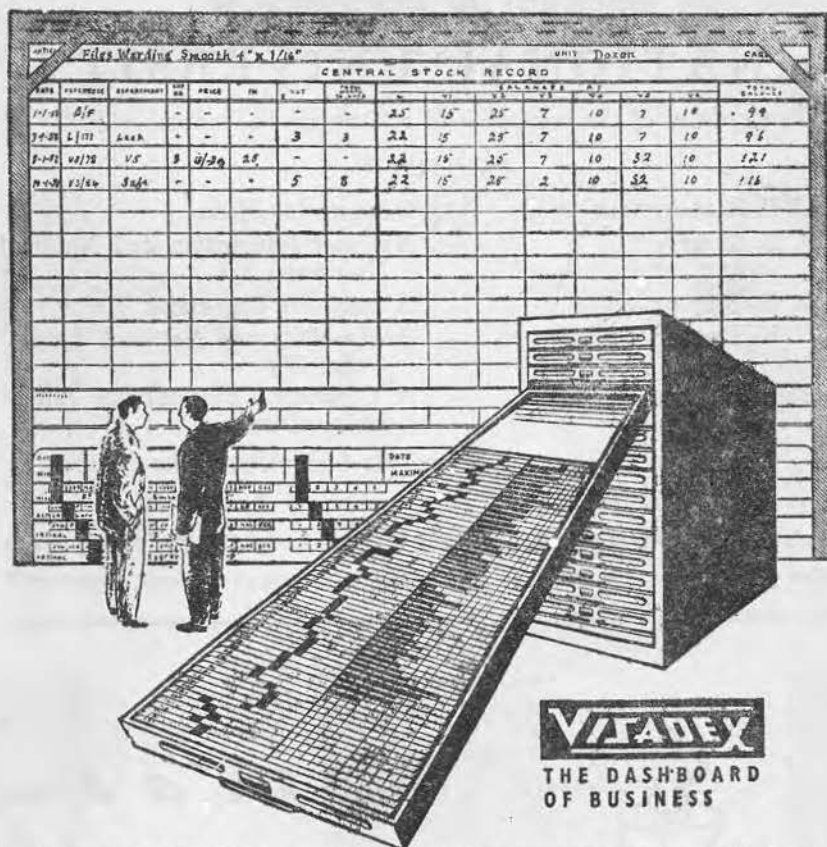
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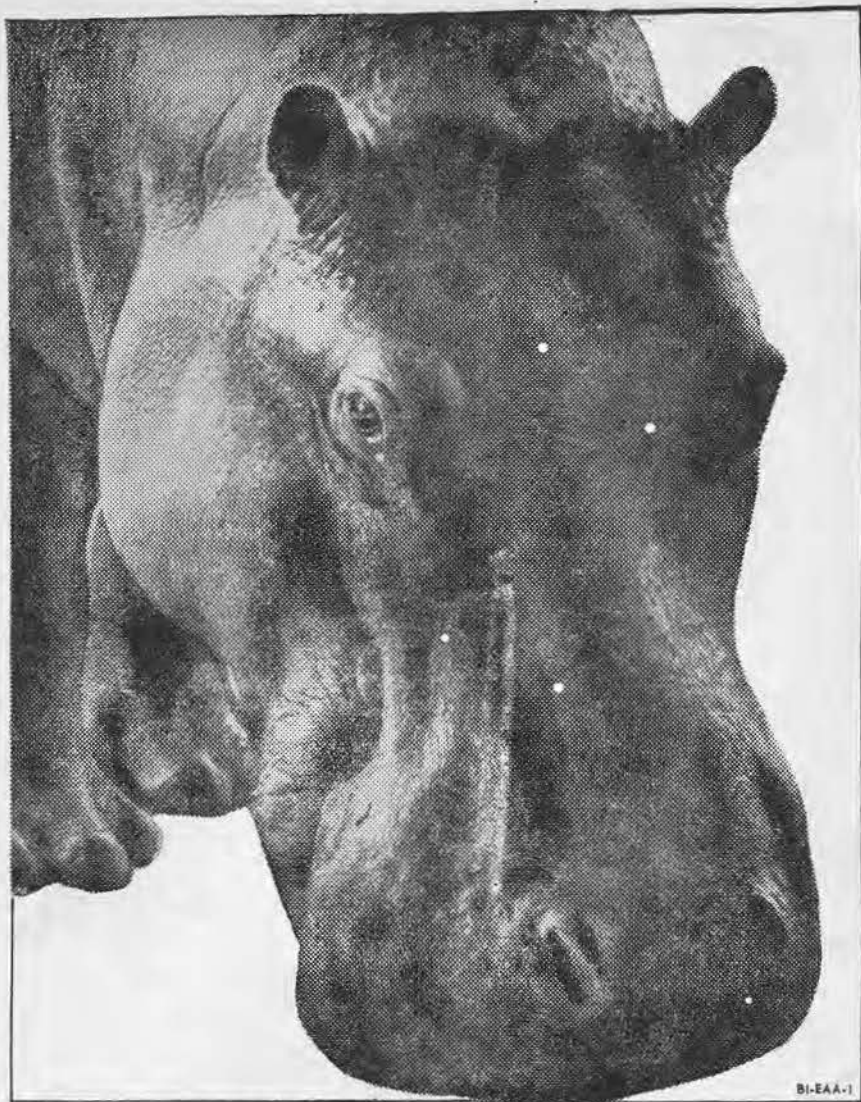
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