

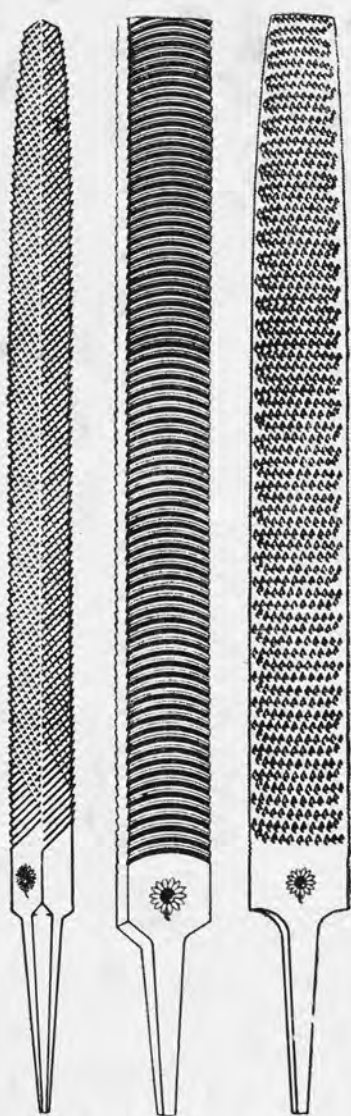
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<i>India's Foreign Policy</i>	A. B. Shah, Rajni Kothari and M. R. Masani
<i>Socio-Economic Analysis in Gandhian Thought</i>	Amritananda Das
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<i>Inner Resonance in Keats</i>	Devindra Kohli
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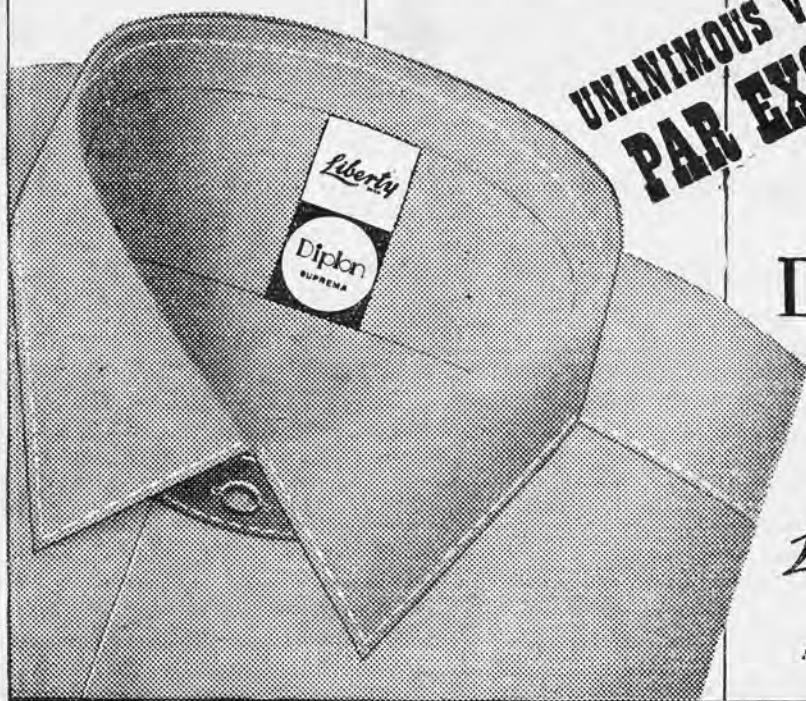
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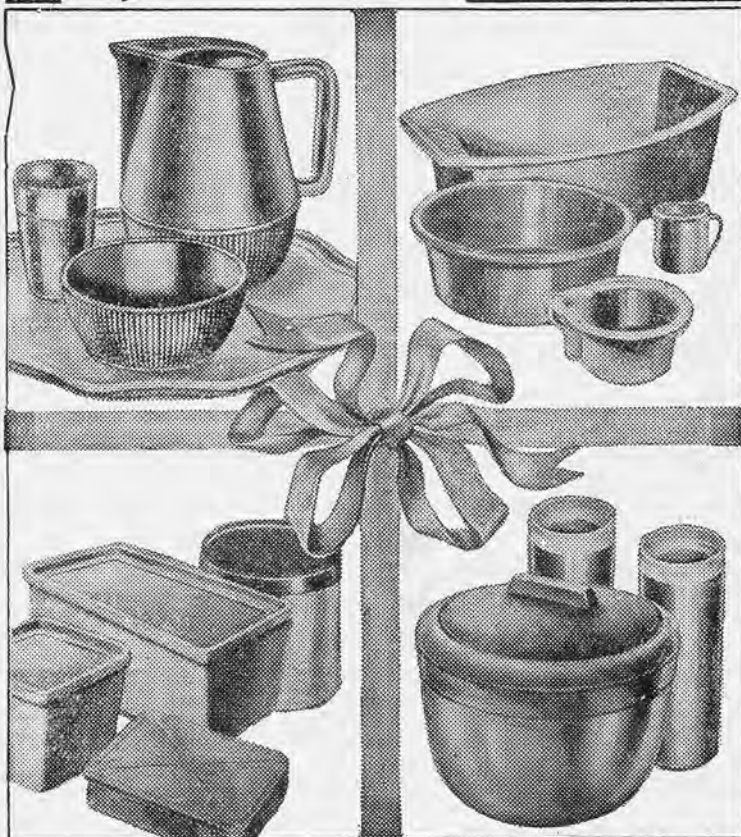
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Development through Intermediate Technology

SUSHIL KUMAR DEY

THE object of foreign aid in economic development can be defined quite simply. It is to pull up backward technologies to the level of the most advanced. But the attempt to do this in one quick heave, however laudable in intent, will do more harm than good. This is the theme of an article which was published by the *London Observer* in its week-end review of 29 August 1965. The author, Mr. E. F. Schumacher, is the Economic Adviser of the National Coal Board in the United Kingdom, and it has been suggested that the view he has propounded will be found startling. It certainly did not appear so to the present writer. Perhaps the reason is that this writer has seen repeated evidence of the truth of the Schumacher argument in his own experience of development planning over a period of more than fifteen years. The first five years of this period were spent in receiving and making use of development aid in his own country; while for the rest of the time he has been involved at the opposite end, from where multi-lateral aid is dispensed. During these years he has sought every occasion to give expression to some of the basic elements of this argument in discussions, writing and such practical experiments as he has found it possible to direct and organize himself. He may thus claim some right to a hearing for a number of observations pertinent to the issues which are implicit in the *Observer* article and which deserve a more direct and closer scrutiny.

The essence of Mr. Schumacher's reasoning is as follows. Poor countries striving for rapid development are plagued by a paucity of capital and an abundance of unskilled manpower. In these circumstances it would be a mistake for them to go in for

the most advanced technology in the initial stages of their development. They should adopt an intermediate level of technology, which will be somewhat in advance of the traditional and stagnant methods of current production. This will lead to some increase of efficiency and output, enabling the economy to start a progressive climb up the technological ladder. At the same time, this more modest initial change will be economical in the use of capital when capital is scarce and provide more scope for engaging labour when unemployment is pressing. The duty of those giving aid to the poor is to turn the latter away from the blandishments of instant modernization and alter the character of aid to suit the special requirements of development by means of intermediate technology.

Considerations in support of this approach to development are both economic and social. The installation of a highly complex and capital-using technology on a primitive base will be unprofitable and self-defeating in the long run, because the vast majority of people, working according to age-old methods on a subsistence level, cannot sustain the operation of ultra-modern technology for long with the needed raw materials, skills or markets. In fact, the continued effort to do so can only be at the cost of further impoverishment of the masses. The consequence will be the creation of a dual economy within a country, with increasing disparity between the two, mounting tension, recurrent crises and final disruption, instead of an even and balanced course of integral development. On the other hand, improvements initiated on a more modest scale can spread over an extended base and can be more securely anchored in the competence, capacity,

understanding and inspiration of a country-wide network of local groups.

As is to be expected, serious students of development planning have begun to perceive a few of these truths, although still only in a vague and general way. As yet there is greater awareness of doubts about the efficacy of the conventional approach to development by outright adoption of the latest appliances and processes than assurance about the alternative approach which might be followed in its place. This assurance can only come from a sharper definition of the positive principles of the new approach and their systematic ordering into a coherent code for action. The recapitulation of Mr. Schumacher's basic position provides a convenient springboard for this attempt, to which one may now proceed by analysing the further implications of some of his proposals.

The first concern should be for a clarification of the concept of intermediate technology. An intermediate level can be anywhere between an archaic or primitive or traditional technology which is currently practised and the most advanced that is possible anywhere. Which is the optimal level for a particular process or enterprise in a country at any time and what are the factors which determine this?

One thing is clear. Development cannot be sustained by continuing to practise the existing technology. This rules out the pursuit of full employment as an objective overriding all other considerations and at the cost of a lowering of the technological level and productivity. It must be realised that in the short run there is an inverse relation between most types of technological improvement and the expansion of employment. That is to say, the introduction of an advanced method of production is usually accompanied by a retrenchment of the labour force which had been previously needed to operate the process. But under conditions of normal growth, this redundancy is short-lived, the reduction in employment in the particular enterprise being more than offset in due course by expand-

ed employment in other sectors of the economy as the stimulus imparted by the saving in cost brought about by the initial improvement is transmitted to these other sectors. There is an inevitable period of adjustment to a new pattern of production during which people are changing their occupations and here is what is called transitional or technological unemployment. But this is the price of progress that a healthy economy can afford to pay, meanwhile alleviating the individual hardships with redundancy benefits and retraining arrangements.

The course of technological change runs into two special difficulties in the case of a subsistence economy already suffering from serious unevenness in development. The first of these is that being destitute, even a short-run set-back in employment and income will cause acute distress, which the economy will be too poor to take care of in any appreciable measure. The second is that the economy being in two widely separate, almost dismembered, parts through unequal development, the impetus of technological improvement in the tiny modernized sector will take an unconscionably long time to travel to the others. During this period the extinction of old jobs will not be compensated by the expansion of new opportunities for employment. The bigger and the more concentrated the change, the greater will be the hiatus, and there will be a danger that the loss of market for wage-goods caused through widespread unemployment will plunge an already precarious economy into an altogether lower level. Thus, rash investment in technological improvement in one firm or industry may spell a net shrinkage of employment and net disinvestment for the economy as a whole.

These considerations provide the clue to the enunciation of sound principles for setting the pace of technological change, that is determining the level of technology which would be optimal in a given set of circumstances. In short, the technological improvement effected must be the maxi-

imum compatible with net increase in minimal time. A formula in these terms provides the conceptual framework within which the planner can then manoeuvre with some assurance of going in the right direction, steering clear, on the one hand, of suicidal over-sophistication and, on the other, of hopeless over-simplification through unrestricted expansion of crude works programmes. Mr. Schumacher does not seem to attach much importance to the need for this policy guidance in the choice of technology. His prescription is to proceed empirically, taking as a general guide an equipment cost of £70–£100 per average work-place, aiming at the highest possible output per unit of capital and then testing the viability of the process installed by a series of design studies. His is an invitation to a blind and purely arbitrary start with the exhortation to see what happens thereafter. In this he is clearly wrong. The local groups who are to organise themselves for this type of production live on too narrow a margin to be in a position to take such a chance. In a concrete situation, empirical manoeuvring will be still necessary, but that must be within the limits of a set of adequately conceived policies.

One basic condition is inherent in the consistent pursuit of intermediate technology in development. It is that the improvements embodied in this technology must be simultaneously applied over a wide range of goods and services which are in demand for mutual exchange. This will be necessary, because the output of low or middle-grade technology cannot expect to take away an existing market already served by products of superior technology unless it is granted costly subsidies or protection. This is a course which poor countries must seek to avoid as far as possible. Consequently, the new supply must be found a new market. This can be done if a number of workers, who were previously without work and income and thus unable to satisfy their latent demands, simultaneously engage in a pattern of production designed to meet

their respective demands. Each man's product then gives him the power to purchase the products of others and together the group will bring into existence a new market, over and above the established market of advanced technology. In fact, the products of this new market being relatively crude and inferior, its appropriate image would be 'under and below' the established market, a basement bazaar.

The character of this new market needs to be correctly understood. It is a place of exchange of the surplus products of surplus labour. The labour is surplus because it is below the level of training and capacity which can command normal employment and the established level of wages. The products are surplus, because they do not make the grade for commercial acceptance. Whatever these workers produce and use must be in addition to and not in competition with what is produced and used through the normal market channels. But this does not mean that the group is forever condemned to an inferior, basement standard of work and reward. The members of the group are set up to produce something when they produced nothing before, although in the beginning what they can produce is only for use inside the group and not for sale outside. But this addition to their real income is the first stepping stone to progress because it enables them to save and invest.

How does this saving occur? It is by "purchase substitution", analogous to the process of import substitution, which is the recognized method of saving foreign exchange for import of capital instead of consumer goods when a country embarks on economic development. In other words, the members of a group producing goods and services for one another in their spare time can use these goods and services in place of similar products they were previously obtaining by commercial purchase, thereby releasing this commercial purchasing power for productive investment. Intermediate technology can intervene at this stage by introducing the appliances and

methods appropriate to a somewhat improved standard of productivity. Thereafter the process can be continued in order to step up the level of efficiency of the group in progressive stages until it becomes acceptable in normal commerce. At that point intermediate technology will have exhausted its role and the economy will be ready to take the most advanced methods in its stride. The application of intermediate technology for the use of surplus resources for additional markets constitutes a special therapy, designed only for a condition of arrested or malignant growth.

One is not sure that all these implications are clear to the new protagonists of intermediate technology. Mr. Schumacher does advise that production should be decentralized in modest work places, that the methods used should be simple and that use should be made of local materials. He mentions that the main object of production should be to meet local demand, but has little to say on the vital question of competition from the products of advanced technology. This must be particularly severe in the sphere of basic consumer goods, which he commends for small-scale, local production, although most of this range of goods is best produced in mass. He misses the significance of diversification of local production which is indispensable for creating its own market, perhaps because there is no recognition of the principle of additionality of use for the products of intermediate technology.

There is one further implication, which goes beyond the realm of economics, and is more fundamental in character. This is the importance of enlisting the willing participation of the masses in the development process, to which the *Observer* article makes reference, but which calls for deeper consideration. The people in general will respond to the call to development only to the extent that they have an understanding of what is involved. This will be therefore an additional reason for limiting the complexity of the technology that ought to be

followed. At the same time, the response of the people will be feeble unless the improvement achievable in the immediately foreseeable future is significant and appreciable. Thus, there is both an upper and a lower limit to the technology to be promoted at any time, indicating both a ceiling and a floor to the volume and technological standard of external aid which should be legitimately provided in a particular case. There is no mathematical formula by which the exact level of optimum technology can be fixed within this range, but it is possible and necessary to make clear the social and economic forces which are at play and present them in their appropriate pattern of relations.

The level of technology has thus not only a visible economic and material outcome measured in the Gross National Product, but will also affect the human quality of the development process that it will bring about. The tasks set by it must be within the span of comprehension of ordinary people. Only then will they exert themselves to draw upon their reserves of energy, putting forth extra efforts to combine with outside assistance to raise their technology above its current level. This extra exertion on their own part is vital to the growth being self-sustaining in character. This is the indispensable self-help element in every project of development. It will be invoked only when the target of effort is within reach of the people's imagination and understanding, even though beyond their present physical and material capacity. The measure of external aid would be the residual resources needed to reach the target after local capacity has been stretched through self-help to its utmost. This stretching constitutes the act of direct involvement, which will make the people self-reliant, enlarge their understanding, strengthen their capacity for organization and management and make them ready to take the next more difficult step to progress. It is only under these conditions that material development will keep pace with the inner growth of the

people themselves, remain under democratic control and make sure that men escape enslavement by the machine.

External aid has three distinct contributions to make to this type of development. The first of these is to explain and popularise the approach itself, including the institutional setting in which it must be practised. This is not fashionable today and may be easily misconstrued as dangerously slow, if not static or even positively regressive. Consequently, the work has to be done with a great deal of ingenuity, persuasiveness and persistence. The second form of aid should be in the provision of the expertise which can devise the needed prototypes of intermediate appliances and techniques. To accomplish this, engineering inventiveness has to be inspired by a great deal of imagination and sensitive insight into the conditions of underdevelopment. Finally, there can be concessional allocation of certain kinds of physical supplies which are suitable for use in the proposed pattern of development. Some of these can be semi-processed materials of non-specialized character needed in many types of simple construction of manufacture, such as cement, steel sec-

tions, aluminium and corrugated iron sheets. Others can be machinery and equipment of models which are obsolete for advanced technology. There can also be agricultural commodities, particularly food and feed, of which there is in many cases an abundance in some of the advanced countries, holding a chronic or recurring threat to the profitability of their agriculture.

Food supplies, particularly when these are surplus to commercial requirements, are ideally usable for additional markets to match and activate the surplus capacity for production which is now lying dormant in many poor countries. For the third year now an experiment in such development is in fact being made under multilateral auspices under the UN/FAO World Food Program. The experience acquired by this Program will no doubt be of direct relevance and interest in any work now planned to follow up the Schumacher thesis. A report appearing in the *London Times* of 1 September 1965 indicates that a Working Group is said to be aware of the activity of FAO, it is to be hoped that there will be no difficulty in establishing contact with the work of the World Food Program also.

Society, Politics and the Citizen

C. N. BHALERAO

A MAJOR assumption behind the development programmes in India is that these programmes in industrial, agricultural, educational and other spheres will be implemented successfully if they are based on popular enthusiasm and participation. It is true that social and economic development cannot take place in any society without the sustaining force of popular acceptance of, and participation in, change. Where this is lacking, a great hiatus between proclaimed policies and actual performance is created. It also leads to public frustration and confusion in financial policies and administration. Recent studies of the popular involvement and participation in developmental programmes such as those relating to agricultural or industrial development indicate that it is largely confined to inactive participation by the people, i.e., participation by way of earning their livelihood, or, at the most, contributing labour since it gives them more agricultural produce or civic amenities. It is also observed that there is little participation of the people in the political decision-making process. For some time the Government has been involving non-official agencies such as the Farmers' Forum, the Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development, the All India Panchayat Parishad, the Bharat Sevak Samaj and the Business and Industrial Organisations in development work. Despite the involvement of these and other voluntary organisations in development work, little improvement in the quality of performance is noticeable. On the one hand, leaders and politicians tirelessly go on repeating the *mantras* of socialistic society, democratic decentralisation and a stable and united India; on the other hand,

the common citizen is being increasingly confronted with the problems of unemployment, soaring prices, an inflexible and authoritarian bureaucracy, widespread indiscipline and corruption, poor and inadequate civic amenities and the subordination of public to vested interests. The dichotomy between policy and performance at the leadership level is reflected in the frustration and helplessness of the common man.

In the context of the prevailing socio-cultural, political and economic conditions of Indian society, the citizen can hardly participate in the development process or make any contribution to local or national decisions. A basic factor which impedes active and responsible participation by the citizens in development process or decision-making is the prevalence of economic inequality, wide-spread poverty and unemployment. Economic development is thus one of the basic objectives of our planning. But the central problem of planning is increasingly that of implementation and the problems of implementation, as Prof. Myron Weiner has shown, are essentially those of politics (including government and public administration), social organisation, and cultural values.¹ It will be fruitful, therefore, to examine the relation between politics and society, the nature of government and bureaucracy and the role which the citizen can play in the development of the country.

Politics and Society

The party system which is developing in India may be characterised as one-party dominance. The Congress Party occupies a dominant position in the political system

although it has received a few challenges here and there. The unique feature of the Congress Party is that it is a party system by itself, making room for a ruling, governmental wing and an opposition within the party. The Congress Party today is characterised by all-pervasive factionalism from the Mandal Congress Committee to the All-India Congress Committee and regional and caste pressures. Factions within the Congress Party based on loyalties to individual leaders or their power positions and regional and caste loyalties constitute the operative political categories in India and provide the substantive context within which political decision-making takes place in the country.²

It is now well-known that the political communication between the party leaders and the people in India is too general and amorphous and is not based on specific interests or social issues. The politics of the party is largely an autonomous process, having a peripheral and general relation to the interests and issues of society. This is because of the lack of responsibility or accountability of politics to society. The political leaders depend for their continuation in office not on the fulfilment of the programmes placed before the people, but on the local potentates, the 'key men' who control pockets of power in society and who constitute the 'voting banks'. This has led to the emergence of a new species of political intermediaries who wield social and economic power, men who can cajole, coerce or intimidate the local voters into casting the vote for this or that candidate. When a voter casts his vote, it is not based on any verdict on the outgoing government nor does the electoral mechanism reflect the voters' consent to the programmes or judgment on the competence of individuals contesting in the elections. The mechanics of acquiring political power is so geared that it is not necessary to have the approval of the people. Indeed the spectacle of an unpopular leader continuing in power unaffected by public opinion

is not infrequent. The political communication between the party and society is thus extremely general and amorphous.³

Political recruitment in the party has also a structure of its own. It is based more on the need to win power than on the need to build up a functioning hierarchy of political cadres and an effective political machine. The party dynamics does not encourage the entry of persons who could strengthen the organisation. Indeed the most vigorous of the intellectually endowed and highly educated go into administration, science, technology, teaching, journalism and industry; they have no attraction for politics because of the insecurity of political office and the fear of being steamrolled into the operative standards of the party. The political leadership that emerges at different levels in the party, with some exceptions, is consequently not the most competent available in society. It is failure on this front which explains failure on many fronts—in economic development, in administration and local government, in the application of research and in mobilising public cooperation. Thus the structure of both political communication and recruitment of the party does not enable the needs and interests of society to be assimilated in the framework of existing institutions. This has led to a wide cleavage between the party and society.

Politicisation of Society

It is paradoxical that while the cleavage between the party and society has widened, the control of the former on the latter has increased resulting in the politicisation of social processes. This results from the peculiar position occupied by the party politician in society. The politicians in India control all avenues of power. Office bearers of the Congress party man all agencies devoted to development work, their nominees find representation on the governing bodies of educational institutions, most charitable trusts which run

schools and hospitals are in their hands, their women take charge of most social welfare organisations and are able to procure substantial grants, and they or their kin become the authorised dealers of government products, issue licences and fix quotas. The patronage of the Congress boss extends far and wide. Anyone who wants a seat in a college or a licence to run a lorry or permit for cement is at his mercy. He controls the panchayats, various cooperative institutions, municipalities and other local agencies. He and his political colleagues in the government collect party funds from local and other industrialists and are able to oblige them in return. This monopolisation of power by the Congress boss and his alliance with industrialists creates vast scope for corruption, influence and patronage. He also wields influence on local administration which is afraid of him because of his connections with ministers and higher-ups in the party. Indeed, as Prof. D. R. Gadgil has shown, the triumvirate of the Congress politician, the industrialist and the civil servant forms the ruling class of society.⁴ If this trend increases, the Congress party will develop into a monolithic party, an *imperium in imperio*, controlling all vantage positions of political, social and economic power and signalling the end of progress towards a democratic party system.

Government and Bureaucracy

Factionalism, the poor calibre and quality of the party members and the insufficient political communication between the party leaders and society also leave their imprint on the performance of legislative bodies. Excepting a few Members of Parliament and the State Legislatures, members of the Legislatures in India hardly take serious interest in what C. Wright Mills calls 'publicly relevant issues' and make no significant contribution to the debates on these issues. Instead of making serious and analytical discussion of public issues, the members of the Legislatures in

India are generally interested in factional power politics. This does not enable them to carry out their constitutional responsibilities effectively.

The dominant castes and major party factions are well represented in the Cabinets. This basis of constituting the highest executive organ of governments does not always conform to the criterion of competence and ability. Even with regard to the Union Cabinet, as an observer points out, few ministers have been appointed on grounds of competence alone, fewer still have been removed on grounds of incompetence alone.⁵ In constituting his Cabinet, the Prime Minister has to take into account regional and communal representation; his choice of ministers is also governed by personal considerations. The result is governmental leadership at the Centre and in the States which generally does not show a good grasp of governmental and administrative processes and lacks the ability to tackle issues in a scientific and thorough manner. In this connection, Dr. C. D. Deshmukh has rightly pointed out that the basic problem in India is that of leadership in politics and government and has suggested that the ruling party should utilise the services of able persons from outside the party.

One of the problems in developing societies is that in the absence of sufficient channels of democratic political participation, the bureaucratic and rational institutions of government get politicized. It has been noted earlier that between the ruling party and society in India there exists a wide cleavage and that popular participation in politics is generally limited to casting votes only. In the absence of explicit channels for popular political participation, the administration in India is becoming heavily politicized. It is also being subjected to caste and regional pressures. These influences operating on the bureaucracy are an inevitable result of the interaction between the bureaucracy and society and by itself this is not a dangerous trend. It becomes dangerous only when

considerations of efficiency and merit are subordinated to regional, political or caste considerations. Recent studies like those by Selig Harrison indicate that regionalism and caste influences are a sufficiently operative force in Indian Government and administration to make it necessary to adopt appropriate measures to counteract its dangers.

With the growth of bureaucracy and the multiplication of administrative processes, a vast field of administrative action has been opened in which the administrative authority can misuse its power. That corruption has increased in India is evidenced recently by the findings of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption. Corruption is a ubiquitous phenomenon in India; it pervades all sectors of society—politics, administration, education, business and industry. By far the most important and demoralising impact of corruption is on the ruling party and its leadership. It has been rightly observed that it is the corruption in the political level to which a good part of the administrative corruption is directly or indirectly accountable. Following the report of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption, the Government of India have established the institution of the Central Vigilance Commission. Some State Governments have also established similar Commissions. While this is an admirable attempt to tackle the problem of corruption at the governmental and administrative level, these efforts need to be supported and strengthened by the public both at the higher and lower levels and extended to other spheres as well. These negative efforts also need to be accompanied by positive steps by various social, cultural and educational organisations to educate the citizen and develop in him 'the public philosophy'.

Another feature of the bureaucracy in India is its excessive attachment to established practices, rules and procedures which discourage initiative and challenge. Again, the bureaucracy is characterised by concentration of authority at the top, dif-

fused responsibility, barriers of communication between various services and grades and an irregular hierarchical structure which exhibits a wide gap between the calibre and quality of the higher and lower bureaucracy and lack of communication between the administration and society at all levels.

These characteristics of the Indian bureaucracy are partly inherited from the British traditions of administration and partly they arise out of the interaction between socio-political forces and the bureaucracy. The consequences of the interaction between socio-political forces and the administrative bureaucracy for democratic and efficient administration in India will be determined by the operative standards followed by the ruling party, the emerging equilibrium between the professional autonomy of the bureaucracy and the political control on it, the flexibility and dispersal of power to use discretion and initiative in the bureaucracy and the building up of active channels of communication both within the administration and between the administration and society.⁶

Inadequate Civic Amenities in Urban and Rural Areas

The quality of life of the average citizen and the conditions under which the citizens generally live in cities, towns and villages exercise a paralysing influence on their lives and discourage their participation in matters of civic or social importance or contribution to a solution of public problems.⁷ General frustration in securing proper employment even among those who are able and qualified, an atmosphere which places a premium on influence and 'connections', constant exposure to the strain of waiting for buses, the harassment caused in dealing with police and other officials, frustration in the matter of admission of children to schools and colleges and inadequate and inefficient medical and housing facilities have a deadening influence on the people. The common man often wond-

ers why the Municipal Corporations and Councils and the administration are not in a position to tackle these issues in an organised and thorough manner. The real malady in these organisations is the politics of power and influence among groups and individuals unrelated to public interest and their ineffective administration. Group politics and factionalism also pervade the Panchayati Raj institutions; this makes the rural administration excessively subservient to the politicians and reduces its effectiveness. In rural areas there is obviously a need for strengthening the civic amenities programme which, along with agricultural and industrial development, is a basic condition for any meaningful operation of local self-government in the Indian rural society.

The Role of the Citizen in National Development

It is clear that there is a wide gap between politics and society in India in terms of attempts to provide operative solutions to substantive public issues which makes popular participation a mere wishful ideal. Generally it is forgotten that it is the individual which is the real unit of social and economic progress. Democracy can have significance only in terms of the individual's freedom and participation. Although the Constitution of India is based on the Sovereignty of the People and their Fundamental Rights, the individual is eclipsed by utopian collectivist or mass ideals leading to 'fear of freedom' in the individual.

According to some Social Scientists like W. W. Rostow, Paul N. Rosentein-Rodan, Lucian Pye and Rajni Kothari, the fundamental problem in the developing States is to close this gap between society and politics and to establish a responsible national political process in which there is a greater consistency between power and values.⁸ Such a responsible national political process can be established only by providing for sufficient channels of democratic political participation. It is only on this basis that the people can be made to parti-

cipate in the development programmes since these programmes would reflect the decisions in the making of which they have participated.

For the majority of the Indian people living in the villages, the local self-governing institutions and various cultural and social organisations provide an opportunity to participate in the local decision-making process. In the towns and cities, there are educational, civic, professional and cultural organisations through which the citizens can participate in local and national decision-making. A citizen may be associated with only one organisation where he works; even in such cases the citizens have an opportunity of contributing to the standards of integrity and efficiency. The active and responsible participation by citizens in their respective civic, cultural, professional and other voluntary associations would limit the increasing powers of the executive, provide a democratic infrastructure of decision-making and close the wide gap which exists between society and the State. But such a role can be performed by the citizens if they develop certain qualities. Firstly, they have to develop an awareness of their role in building up a stable and democratic society and remain intelligently informed on matters of local and national importance. Secondly, they will have to develop courage and the habit of challenge and resistance to all undemocratic or immoral forces. And thirdly, the citizens need to develop 'the public philosophy' which will serve as a standard for both individual and social judgment and action. The development of these qualities in the citizens and the inculcation of 'the public philosophy' among them is a task of great magnitude but has a substantive relevance to the future of democracy in India. Partly this is a task of well-planned education; partly it can be achieved by the State through the establishment of external conditions; but the major role in such a social and cultural renaissance will have to be played by the present social, political and intellectual leadership.

NOTES:—

- ¹ *The Politics of Scarcity*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1963, p. 256.
- ² See Rajni Kothari's paper on "The Congress Party System", *Asian Survey*, December, 1964.
- ³ F. G. Bailey's paper on "Politics and Society in Contemporary Orissa", *Politics and Society in India*, Ed. C. H. Phillips, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1963.
- ⁴ In his *Convocation Address* delivered at the Nagpur University in 1962.
- ⁵ Nandan Kagal, "In Perspective: Mr. Nehru's Cabinet," *The Times of India*, June 28, 1963.
- ⁶ See Rajni Kothari's paper on "Administrative Institutions of Government", *The Economic Weekly*, March 1961 and my paper on "Substantive Forces in Indian Administration", *The Economic Weekly*, October 10, 1964.
- ⁷ On this question, see "The State of the Capital: Harassment of Citizens no Answer to Civic Inadequacies", by Argus, *The Hindustan Times*, May 24, 1965.
- ⁸ "The Transitional Process" by M. I. T. Study Group, *Comparative Politics — Notes and Readings*, Ed. Roy Macridis and Bernard Brown, Dorsey Press, Illinois, 1961 and "Meanings of Democracy", Rajni Kothari, *Quest*, Autumn, 1961.

for my daughter

as she hangs on to my flesh
 by what natural or unnatural wish
 I do not know and may never know,
 I watch a flower of sleep gently grow
 in those most compelling, helpless eyes
 and feel her body, a fruit beyond flies,
 rest limp, yet warm against my arms
 while out there the insect night squirms—
 then I remember all my childhood years
 and myself, though now a fruit of fear,
 then no less gentle than my daughter,
 as I swung like a dawn wish in that garden
 which no time no place no cause had begun—
 as every raining hour uncovers the desert without
 and each advancing minute clinches my city's route,
 all I am left to do is to clear up my street
 and pray it may be peopled by your sunny feet!

K. RAGHAVENDRA RAO

Implicit Socio-Economic Analysis in Gandhian Thought

AMRITANANDA DAS

SOCIAL Science often gains some of its most valuable insights by rephrasing and re-analysing the ideas of social reformers with more precision and logical rigour than they themselves could apply. This process is particularly likely to pay rich dividends when the influence of the reformer has been persistent, indicating that his ideas have a close relation with some important and powerful force in social reality. In view of the continued power and appeal of the 'Gandhian message', it seems, indeed, a pity that Gandhian socio-economic thought has not been given this kind of treatment.¹

This statement might appear somewhat surprising, considering the vast body of 'interpretative literature' on Gandhism. While I have not covered the entire corpus, I am familiar with enough of it to make the confident statement that the implicit analytic framework behind the concrete Gandhian policy-recommendations (Which are ex-definitio circumscribed and limited by the facts of the actual case) is not generally understood. This leads to the fact [which Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia notices with regret²] that Gandhiji has not been succeeded by a disciple who can interpret him in accordance with changing circumstances.*

*It is instructive to realise why Shri Jay Prakash Narayan and Acharya Vinoba Bhave do *not* form exceptions to this rule. It is because both Bhoodan and Sarvodaya are off-shoots of a particular line in Gandhian thought. The work of these two leaders (extremely valuable though it is) is in a sense a special pleading for a particular solution of the basic Gandhian problem. It is futile, therefore, to expect much insight into general Gandhian analytics from their work.

It is true that this re-appraisal of Gandhism has been delayed by some peculiarities in the mode of presentation of Gandhian thought. First, Gandhiji was pre-eminently a practical man interested more in the policy-problems of the moment than in systematic presentation of analytic schemata. It is doubtful whether even 'Hind Swaraj' is in any sense more than a programme'. But an even more important force in repelling serious scholarly attention was the fact that Gandhiji was a man of strongly held ethical convictions and equally stubborn fads.³ This makes his concrete policy recommendations take on a faddist colouring which has been behind the persistent opinion that Gandhism is nothing more than a compendium of reactionary prejudices.

If, however, we separate the socio-economic analysis implicit in Gandhian thought, we will find many elements that are valuable for a proper understanding of the dynamics of socio-economic transformation of underdeveloped countries as well as for the problems of evolving adequate policies for guiding and accelerating development. As we proceed in our analysis it will become clear that most of the Gandhian insights are not objectively new in the sense that they are not to be found in any part of the modern analyses of economic development. Nevertheless, the study of the Gandhian analysis is helpful not merely in suggesting a new interrelationship between known facts but also from a practical point of view.

The practical importance arises from the fact that a democratic planning process

cannot be successfully carried out unless it can be explained to and understood by leaders all down the line from the 'centre' to the 'village' level. It is important for the successful selling of ideas that they be cast in a thought-form conformable to the socio-cultural context in which the plan is to be implemented. The Gandhian 'thought form' can be easily understood by village-agrarian masses in any major traditional peasant society, particularly of course, by Indians and South-East Asians. The 'thought forms' of modern growth economics are developed in a cultural context alien to traditional peasant cultures and hence they face an almost impenetrable barrier of incomprehension.* Hence, from at least the didactic point of view an analysis cast in Gandhian terms and yet clarified and sophisticated by the modern analysis of the problems of development can be immensely valuable.⁶

II

In the rather limited scope of this article we cannot attempt to cover the whole of Gandhian socio-economic thought, the best we can do is to isolate the central problem of Gandhian analysis ('central' in the sense that the analysis of the possibility of equilibrium with involuntary unemployment is 'central' to Keynesian economics). This I believe to have been the problem of rural-urban conflict and village decay in underdeveloped economies. Of course Gandhiji examined the problem mostly in connection with the situation in British India, but his analysis can be easily generalised to embrace all overpopulated colonial economies.

*The idea of 'thought forms' and 'cultural contexts' and their conformability is derived of course from the work of Oswald Spengler⁴. There are numerous difficulties with this concept but it can serve as a convenient short-hand for describing the important semantic barriers to inter-cultural comprehension that undoubtedly exist. This truth has often been abused by writers of the Boeke School⁵ in order to demonstrate the need for "Eastern economics". The idea itself is valuable, however, within proper limits.

It was, of course, an undeniable fact that village India had been actively retrogressing during much of British rule, even though some fairly prosperous industrial areas and 'primate' cities like Calcutta, Bombay or Madras had been established. The pre-Gandhian analysis of the 'economic consequences of the British Empire' tended as a rule to ignore this phenomenon.

We may distinguish, broadly, two stages in pre-Gandhian thought. In the period corresponding to the Bengal Renaissance the 'Westernised' élite regarded the contact between Britain and India as beneficial. To a great extent this was due to the extreme importance they placed on 'modernisation' in all spheres, but to a very great extent this was also due to the rigid free-trade principles they imbibed.⁷

With the rise of an indigenous industrial bourgeoisie, the attitude towards the British underwent an important transformation. The analysis of the ways in which British colonialism was retarding the economic progress of India ran in terms of the deliberate destruction of Indian handicrafts, heavy and iniquitous tariffs and land-revenue systems, the transfer of surpluses from India to Great Britain by the system of Home Charges, discriminatory policies checking the growth of Indian industries, 'unfair' free trade and even the deliberate creation of a 'clerk mentality' through education.⁸

The analysis was neo-mercantilist in character and represented adequately the class-ideology of the rising Indian bourgeoisie. R. C. Dutt recognised the Listian character of much of this type of analysis and specifically quoted from List to support his 'infant economy' argument about India.⁹ As was perhaps only natural, the Indian 'neo-mercantilism', neglected the possibility of a conflict between village and urban interests relying on the spread-effects of urban industrialisation to 'ultimately' raise the level of economic development and the standard of living of the village. More often, however, they treated the Indian

economy as a collective and failed to recognise the problems inherent in the socio-economic dualism that was being created.

It was the great achievement of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi to recognise the existence of this conflict of interest. He arrived at it because he was the first Indian leader 'village minded' enough to look into the problems of the villagers' poverty in detail. He came to the conclusion that the villagers' growing poverty was due to the fact of excess pressure of population on agriculture and was perceptive enough not to be content with a pseudo-Malthusianist (cf. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya — 'Ramdhan Pote'),¹⁰ explanation of the process. He saw that the problem was not basically (though he recognised that population-increase may aggravate the situation) a matter of the so-called 'untrammelled fecundity of the Indian masses' ('Pro Bono Publico' — in *The Statesman* 1872 March 18th) but a consequence of the decay of alternative occupations.

III

Gandhiji realised that the loss of villagers' alternative occupations was not only due to 'Manchester' and 'Lancashire', but also to the rise of Indian mills mass-producing the commodities that had been traditionally produced by village handicrafts. The 'backwash' effects of urban economic growth were stronger than the 'spread effects'.¹¹ 'Strange as it may appear' he said, 'every mill generally is a menace to the villagers...' (p. 297). 'Bit by bit', he writes elsewhere in the same passage, 'the villagers are being confined only to the hand-to-mouth business of scratching the earth. Few know today (Nov. 16 1934) that agriculture in the small and irregular holdings of India is not a paying proposition' (p. 296-7). The 'extinction of village industries' he concludes 'will complete the ruin of... the villages of India'. (Page references, unless otherwise noted, are to M. K. Gandhi — *The Economic Thought of*

Mahatma Gandhi, compiled and edited by J. S. Mathur.)

The humanist in Mahatmajī refused to recognise this process as inevitable. It was a fundamental creed with him that social evil and economic exploitation go on because they are allowed to go on. Nothing was inevitable in social reality but thinking made it so. His examination of the problem was therefore incomplete until he had isolated the reason why the economic evil of the decaying villages did not automatically set in motion social forces that would result in an interference with the economic forces in the 'higher ethical interest'.

In analysing this problem Gandhiji had the important insight that the root of the problem lay in the emotional divorce of the city élite from the village masses. This dissociation was due to the fact that the élite had adopted the culture of the Western city-civilisation and had, thus, become even more 'foreign-minded' and indifferent to the village than is inevitable in city people of any other civilisation.¹²

This emotional dissociation of the city élite from 'the spirit of India' allowed the city industrialists to become an 'exclave' of the village-Indian economy and to behave in a way that was indistinguishable from the way in which a foreign exploiting power behaves towards an underdeveloped agrarian economy.

From this dualisation of the Indian economy into a modern westernised sector and a backward village economy arose subsidiary vicious circles that led to cumulative impoverisation of the village economy. Gandhiji noticed the fact that the 'lure of the city' was drawing away the more progressive elements of the village economy to the city, making the village population even more backward and weaker than it would otherwise have been.

Gandhiji also noticed that the westernisation of consumption patterns was diverting the demand of the richer sections of the village sector into the city market where foreign goods were available. This resulted

not only in robbing the village handicrafts of a steady market, but also led, via what would now be called the 'demonstration effect'.¹³ to the diversion of funds which might otherwise have led to capital formation within the village sector into unproductive consumption of foreign luxuries. The pernicious effects of the capital-drain from the villages into the cities due to higher returns on capital in the city-sector was also recognised.

It is against the background of this realisation that the city-industrial sector was 'parasitic' rather than 'generative'¹⁴ in its effects on the economy as a whole that we must consider the Gandhian programme. It was this realisation that led to his demand for organising the defence of the village sector against city exploitation that led to his much-misunderstood doctrine — the 'cult of village-mindedness'.

'For the city-dweller the villages have become untouchable. He does not know them and he will not live with them...' (p. 299), wrote Gandhiji analysing the process in his own terms, 'not unless you (the city-dwellers) switch your minds off the cities to the villages can you serve them' (p. 319). 'The cities have exploited the villages' he writes elsewhere, '...all I want is that they should readjust their lives so as as to cease sponging upon the poor village-folk' (p. 516-7).

It was his clear realisation that the process of city-village conflict was cumulative and that the continuation of the process could not be expected to automatically readjust the situation that led him to remark '... if British rule were replaced tomorrow by Indian rule based on modern methods, India would be no better except that she would be able to retain some of the money that is drained away to England' (p. 460).

IV

Since Gandhiji was faced with the problem of organising the defence of the village economy in the period of British

rule — while its end was still not in sight — he was forced to organise it by means that were available within the village sector itself. Once this is realised the message of the 'charkha and khadi' and village industrialisation through the development of traditional handicrafts acquire a rationality that a superficial study fails to disclose.

The fact that Gandhiji relied on the traditional handicrafts to defend the village sector has given rise to a widespread misconception that he was against modern technology qua modern technology. No doubt he often argued in a way that seemed to imply just this. But when the direct question was put to him his reply was revealing.

'Q. Do you think that cottage industries and big industries may be harmonised?

A. Yes, if they are planned so as to help the villages. Key-industries, industries which the nation needs may be centralised. But then I should not choose anything to be a key-industry that can be taken up by the villages with a little organising...' The operative phrase is — 'a little organising'. Gandhiji did not want to attempt the impossible in decentralisation — he, however, believed that there is an excessive degree of unplanned and unnecessary 'centralisation'.¹⁵

His concentration on traditional handicrafts must, therefore, in the truest sense be interpreted as his response to the overwhelming short-run need to utilise the surplus labour-power in the village-economy. In modern economic terminology he saw that the 'shadow-price' of labour in the village sector was zero and the 'shadow-price' of capital embodying modern techniques was extremely high. His 'khadi-economics' was therefore socially rational.

V

It is true that Gandhiji had an emotional distaste for modern megalopolitan civilisation as such. It is important to realise that this rejection was not a rejection of 'science'

or 'technology' qua science and technology. It was rather a rejection of the 'embodied technics', representing the production-relations of the megalopolitan civilisation. Since Gandhiji's time it has become a commonplace that the wide gap between the social structures and relative abundance of factors of production between developed and underdeveloped economies make the 'embodied technics' of the developed economies very unsuitable indeed for the underdeveloped countries. Modern science and technology can and must be borrowed — because, in abstract, they are equally applicable anywhere, but the actual machinery, particularly labour-saving machinery cannot be borrowed without creating a vast and unnecessary technological unemployment problem and exacerbating the social and moral costs of industrialisation.

Kenneth Ri ett¹⁶ has adequately analysed this aspect of Gandhian thought by formulating the question — 'what was Gandhiji against?' His answer is that the Mahatma was fundamentally not against the process of economic development, nor against machine civilisation as such but against the particular brand of 'capitalistic rationality' that leads to a neglect of the social and moral costs of over-urbanisation and lays an exclusive stress on the personal profitability of locating the next factory nearest to the major industrial centre. It is impossible not to recognise that Gandhiji had a point there. Most of the critics of the city civilisation and unplanned industrialism have, of course, made much the same point — he had an affinity here with Rousseau and Jefferson as well as with more contemporary critics like Lewis Mumford. But it is essential to recognise that even the complete rejection of this point of view makes absolutely no difference to the basic critique of rural-urban conflict in a pre-dominantly agrarian densely populated under-developed economy. It is important to realise this — otherwise the impression might be created that a socialist-minded city-planner renders the Gandhian analysis obsolete.

VI

Western analysis has only recently come to a realisation of the basic 'Gandhian' problem. When B. F. Hoselitz¹⁷ analyses the possibility of 'parasitic' cities and illustrates the concept by referring to cities established by colonial powers in Asia and Africa, we find an echo of Gandhian thought. But even then in Hoselitz we find a tendency to avoid the real problem by the comforting argument that in the (extreme) long run the 'parasitic' cities may turn into 'generative' cities.

There is an interesting parallelism here with the anti-Keynesian argument that 'after all' the Keynesian analysis of under-employment equilibrium is 'depression economics' and that over time the cyclical regenerative forces will lead to recovery and full employment. But this is no answer. Keynes's observation that in the long-run we are all dead applies a fortiori, to this situation in which the 'short-run', as Hoselitz recognises, may extend to a few generations.

A closer echo of Gandhian analysis can be found in Hans Singer's¹⁷ examination of the problems of rural-urban conflict in the North-West region of Brazil. In Singer we find the same realisation that the process cannot be relied on to work itself out. Even the analysis of the process has a 'Gandhian' ring.

Another Gandhian argument is now achieving recognition: the fact that 'rural-mindedness' is an essential precondition of the satisfactory solution of the problem of rural-urban conflict in under-developed countries. W. W. Rostow writes:

'So far as the developing nations are concerned it is not an accident that rural development should have been generally slighted in the first phase of growth. Typically, the modernising governments have been urban coalitions...'. He closes with the 'Gandhian' admonition that 'Rural development has been proving however, not merely (sic) a social duty in most of the developing countries but

a fundamental condition for the maintenance of a high rate of development for the society as a whole' (P. 50 *Development Revolution* — William R. Polk Edition).

It was Gandhiji's way to put the 'mere' social duty first. But even if this 'ethical' mode of expression is not to 'modern' taste — it should not prevent us from realising that in Rostow we have another example of the 'Gandhian contradiction' in rapid modernisation of the backward agrarian economy cropping up again. Even so cheerful a 'moderniser' as Professor Rostow cannot afford to neglect the Gandhian problem even though he has 'successfully emancipated' himself from the backward traditionalist ideology implicit in the Ruskinian rejection of modern machine civilisation.

Another important aspect of the Gandhian problem also comes to the forefront in the intense debate about inter-regional allocation of industries and investment. On the one hand we have the growing points thesis which avers that 'it is a paradoxical but inevitable fact that in order to accelerate the future development of retarded regions the growth of industrially more developed areas must be encouraged'.¹⁸ On the other, we have the group of theoreticians who stress the fact that once a backward region is created it is extremely difficult to bring it back into line with the rest of the economy no matter how developed the rest of the economy might have become. It is true, of course, that this complex problem has not been adequately resolved as yet. From the discussion, however, the conclusion has emerged that even if greater concentration of industrial resources in certain limited areas must be accepted, they can only be accepted within the framework of a rational long-range plan which specifically incorporates the process of revitalising backward areas after a time.

VII

The depth and complexity of this Gandhian problem is such that superficial

remedies like dilettantist 'Community Development' of rural communities may not be enough to readjust the vicious circular process of cumulative rural impoverisation. What is needed — if we want a solution not in terms of 'traditional handicrafts' — which are to some extent growth-hampering — is to develop an integrated plan of simultaneous rural-urban development which consciously tries to solve the Gandhian problem.

This process of solving the Gandhian problem will involve the integration of advanced Western science, technology and social science into the Gandhian framework — a process of separating the valuable and utilisable elements from Western culture, 'like the swan separates milk from water'. Of course, this is not the only way in which Gandhism may be integrated with Western 'development-planning'. The reverse integration — the attempt to use Gandhian motivations and techniques as tools in an essentially westernised process of economic development — is equally, if not more, tempting. To a certain extent the Indian attempts to graft Gandhian features on to an essentially non-Gandhian plan can be regarded as a step in this direction.

Dr. Milton Singer¹⁹ has suggested an interesting way in which the 'Gandhian ethic' might become an important factor in Indian economic growth. The fundamental problem in starting a growth process is the one of providing the right type of motivations. The difficulty, as is well known, is that people have to be motivated to desire economic goods and hence economic development, while, at the same time, their propensity to save must be raised in order to provide the domestic base for capital formation.

Max Weber's²⁰ famous analysis of the role the wordly asceticism embodied in the 'Protestant Ethic' played in the development of modern capitalism is a vivid description of how this problem was solved in the birth period of European capitalism. While admitting that Gandhism cannot serve as an ethic for emergent capitalism,

Dr. Singer suggests that the Gandhian ethic of simple living and hard, methodical and organised work in the service of the community, can be utilised to provide the motivation to worldly asceticism in a socialist framework. He anticipates that future students of social science will have to study 'the Hindu Ethic and the Spirit of Socialism'.

VIII

If Indian planners can solve this problem — they will be doing India as well as the underdeveloped countries of the world a great service. The exact nature of this solution cannot, of course, be foreseen but it is certain that it would involve Gandhian thinking rather than Gandhian policies.

There is an even wider context in which the solution of the Gandhian problem will be of extreme importance — in the field of International Peace and Co-operation. This follows from the realisation of the predatory nature of the Western machine civilisation.

Gandhiji realised that the imperialistic wars of the 20th century have their deepest cause, in the need that the 'metropolitan powers' have for backward agrarian countries to exploit. This is not merely a rehash of the Sismondi-Luxembourg argument of the need of capitalist economy for a foreign market but something that follows essentially from the 'predatory nature' of the city-industrial civilisation—from the category of violence and non-violence applied to the study of international economic relations.

Gandhiji has repeatedly emphasised that development along capitalist-industrial lines needs either the exploitation of the village sector of the country itself or the exploitation of other backward agrarian economies. Therefore, if the currently under-developed economies sought to develop on traditional capitalist lines they would inevitably intensify the imperialist struggle and pose a grave threat to world peace. The example of the Japanese-American struggle for markets in the Pacific area that led to the

rise of Japanese militarism which caused the Sino-Japanese war of the 1930-40's as well as the spectacular holocaust of Japanese imperialism in the 2nd World War affords at least a prima-facie case for the application of Gandhian analysis to the problems of international political economy.

IX

At this point it might be interesting to contrast the Gandhian analysis, with the Marxian view of the nature of colonialism and the destiny of ex-colonial peoples, with which it bears striking similarities as well as fundamental differences.

The Marxian view of colonialism (as well as Gandhism) recognises the fact that colonialism and the exploitation of under-developed economies is a basic necessity for mature capitalistic economies. (We are not going here into the question of whether colonialism is logically inseparable from developed capitalism, suffice it to notice that the demonstration of the abstract possibility of symbiosis between rich and poor countries involves such far-reaching changes in the advanced countries that capitalism as we know it will cease to exist).

Both views recognise, in addition, the fact that in old densely populated agrarian economies — colonial exploitation acts fundamentally as a destructive force, destroying the inoffensive village communities. Marx as well as Gandhi recognized that it is sickening 'to human feeling to witness these myriads of industrious patriarchal and inoffensive social organisations disorganised and dissolved into their units, thrown into a sea of woes, and their individual members losing at the same time their ancient form of civilisation, and their hereditary means of subsistence'. (Karl Marx: *The British Rule in India*. London June 10, 1853 Reprinted in Karl Marx and F. Engels 'On Britain'. Foreign Languages Publishing House Moscow 1962 p. 397).

Marx, however, regards the process as fundamentally progressive. To him the

establishment of capitalism in the place of feudalism is always progressive since it hastens the day of the socialist revolution, no matter whether the capitalism established is an indigenous growth or whether it is crippled colonial capitalism. Immediately following the above passage we find Marx arguing:

'The question is, can mankind fulfil its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever might have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution' (Ibid p. 398).

Marx, at least, added the qualifying 'if not' — though it was largely rhetorical. The Leninist development of the Marxian views on colonialism and imperialism categorically stated that both the colonising bourgeoisie and the 'national' bourgeoisie were progressive forces. In the Lenin-Stalin view, the national liberation movement led by the national bourgeoisie was a process in which Marxists should enthusiastically join.

To Gandhiji the process of capitalism conquering the village was a retrograde step since he was interested in reviving the rural way of life (not the old rural way of life, but a new way, at a higher ethical level). He was not bound to the Marxian sequence of 'feudalism-capitalism-socialism', which forced Marx to regard capitalism, as a step towards the establishment of socialism — an inevitable and therefore desirable step. From this orientation Marxian thought has still not emancipated itself.

From this difference again follows a fundamental difference between the Gandhian and the Marxian views of the destiny of colonial economies. To Marx it was inevitable that the colonial economies would eventually tend to develop into replicas (allowing, of course, for differences in environment) of Western socialist economies. That is why Engels even envisaged temporary tutelage of ex-colonial economies by developed socialist countries.

Gandhiji was antipathetic to the idea of an inevitable movement towards modern machine civilisation (whether capitalistic or socialistic, though he would have preferred socialism). He did not regard the problem as one of laying bare the process of an inevitable historical development but as one of developing the right ethical orientation for making the right choice of alternative paths of development. To Gandhiji the right choice was not to plunge into capitalist development but to develop a 'communaucratic' social economy, based on decentralised rural life.

To this extent, the Gandhian framework is at once non-Marxian and more general than Marxian. The Marx-Lenin process is a special case of the Gandhian analysis — an account of the process or rather one of the several processes — that will take place if the principle of non-violence in economic life is rejected. Gandhism can therefore take up certain typically 'Marxian' analyses of the conflict between colonial and monopoly-capitalist economies, whereas Marxism must inevitably reject the Gandhian idea that there exists a way out of the impasse of a choice between violent socialistic development, and violent capitalistic development. It must also reject, being bound to the unilinear progress ideology, the possibility that a new and higher civilisation might grow in the colonial areas — which might dispense with some of the 'advanced' technology, some of the 'terrifying triumphs' of the machine age.

X

If the Gandhian analysis be truer — it proves something that is even more interesting. It creates a strong presumption that the simultaneous attempt by the major underdeveloped countries to develop into mature capitalist powers is ecologically inefficient. In a limited environment — in which there is a limited number of entities to be preyed upon, only a limited number of predators can efficiently co-exist. As soon

as more and more predators come into the environment (the international situation is even worse since the victims turn into predators) the predatory way of life becomes less and less successful. Ultimately there must occur an inter-predator fight to the finish. The catastrophic consequences of this in the age of modern weaponry is obvious.

In Gandhian terms we can say that the only way in which economies can co-exist in the international sphere is for predators and preyed-upon to adopt a non-violent way of economic life, for it is obviously idle to expect that the victims will meekly continue to consent to be victims for any great length of time.

Some idea of the 'insoluble' problems inherent in the ideal of international economic co-operation while the predator-preyed upon orientation continues has been clearly projected on the screen of world consciousness (Gandhiji would have said — the 'World conscience') by the degeneration of the UNCTAD²¹ into a North-South confrontation. It has at least done us the service of dispelling naïve illusions about international co-operation while no 'change of heart and way of life' has occurred.

What has been demonstrated anew at the UNCTAD is the overwhelming need to develop a symbiotic rather than parasite-host relationship between metropolitan-industrial and agrarian-rural economies.

The problem before the world is to devise a scheme of international economic co-existence in which it is possible to be rural-agrarian as well as prosperous and urban-industrial as well as non-exploiting. Again the solution cannot be specified but we can be virtually sure that it will involve the application of Gandhian ideas of need-limitation, way of living and non-violence. Only then would the Gandhian ideal of a non-violent *sarvodaya* economic world be achieved, freed from the dilemma that you cannot be truly non-violent unless you live in a non-violent way.

XI — CONCLUSION

In conclusion let me emphasise that the preceding argument carries no implication that the specific Gandhian policies are the best way of solving the Gandhian contradictions. That is about as sensible as saying that the first pathologist to have analysed a disease must necessarily have given the best method for curing it. In fact the basic need for separating Gandhian analysis and diagnosis from Gandhian prescriptions is based on the anticipation that there may exist better solutions. What we have been trying to prove is that an international-humanist orientation to the economic problems of the modern world cannot afford to remain ignorant of the Gandhian problems and the Gandhian way of thinking about them.

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The Nature of Meaning

PUNYA SLOKA RAY

ANYBODY who has ever learnt a language knows that a dictionary is so much more useful than a grammar, and that a grammar that states the meanings of the available choices in selection and combination of the dictionary items is so much more useful than a grammar that merely catalogues mechanical rules. And yet such a profound student of language as Leonard Bloomfield came to conclude that the meaning of a linguistic form is 'the situation in which the speaker utters it and the response it calls forth in the hearer', and that since these situations and responses in relation to even a single linguistic form 'include every object and happening in their universe', and since the actual extent of human knowledge is 'small' compared to this needed 'scientifically accurate knowledge of everything in the speakers' world', it was sad but intelligible that 'the statement of meanings is therefore the weak point in language study'.

In other words, what we need most urgently, and do actually manage to acquire a great deal, is intellectually the least reputable part of language study! The conclusion should be carried out to its logical implication. 'Everything' in the world of the speaker is not only an utterly elastic notion, but also an explosive one. Since scientific knowledge of 'everything' of any even so delimited part of the real universe cannot be proved to be convergent to a finite limit, a study of meanings cannot begin at all until after an infinitely long time. Bloomfield had confused the everything of postulation with the everything of discovery, as well as the merely very large with the infinite. He hoped that as the finite aggregate grew in size it would improve in its approximation to infinity. He

failed to see what his successors could not neglect to see, namely that given a definition of meaning in terms of an unsurveyable totality, it must become a holy miracle that anybody could ever state even so inadequately the tiniest fraction of any meaning. The study of meaning must on this assumption be deprived not only of respectability but of existence. It would be not just an efficient but sub-honest short cut, but simply a dead end.

This divergence between actual experience and methodological legitimacy has been responsible for a stony silence, interrupted only by infrequent, bizarre and inconsequential excursions. Professional linguists go on learning and using languages, translating and explaining texts, making dictionaries and even stating grammatical meanings much like the happily uninformed amateurs. The only perceptible difference is that the happily uninformed amateurs are not terrified about criticizing and comparing meaning descriptions as more or less necessary, more or less adequate, more or less economical, good or bad or indifferent. The professional linguist is not above judgement, merely because he has tried not to make any judgement himself. He has therefore to be asked to revoke the *de jure* abdication from reasons and give a defensible account of his *de facto* activities. In Platonic terms, he has to be brought back from intellectual savagery into civilization.

A theory of meaning cannot be wanted for the production of meaning statements. People do not need an ethical theory to live rightly, or an epistemology to make good science. In our days it is even a point of honour to be a hypocrite, an inverted hypocrite whose practice is regularly better

than his preachings. If we still wish to have a general theory of meaning, then it should be only because we sometimes get a little tired of the pervasive hypercracy, of the perpetual need to sacrifice the intellect for the supposed good of science.

The root of the trouble seems to be in the desire to know *the nature* of meaning, and a consequent despair that such knowledge is not available. When it is granted that meaning has a *nature* to be known, what is implied is a determinate class of empirically demonstrable items to correspond in one-to-one manner with the linguistic forms. It is necessary to insist on the empirical demonstrability of the items, for otherwise we might as well rest content with identifying each meaning with a finite aggregate of finite numbers and so match the entire universe of meanings with one of the many infinite universes of finite numbers. If we know what *the nature* of meaning is, we will have achieved a direction to a certain tangibly isolable subclass of empirically demonstrable items, whether mediated by number or not.

Compared with this fundamental demand, it is much less interesting whether meanings are wanted to be objects, relations, functions, operations, situations, responses, causes, effects, images, intentions, purposes, closed inventories or projected curves. None of the various isms is as significant as the question whether we are given a procedure to reach a decision in regard to inclusion or exclusion in the class into which the meanings are mapped in a consensual and economical manner.

Yet there has been not the least sign of progress towards fulfilling this demand. Meaning seems to have either no *nature* at all, or a multiplicity of partially and variably overlapping *natures*. If we can point out with index fingers what the meanings of 'cat' and 'shoes' are, we cannot stick to the same method in finding the meanings of 'unicorn' and 'real number'. If we can 'define' in the mathematical sense the meanings of 'real number' and 'plus' we have to shift from the method in finding

the meanings of 'dinosaur' and 'jealousy'. Further, even any arbitrary individual word seems to have always more than one kind of meaning. If 'a cat' is this tomcat of my neighbour, it is also the tiger in the zoo, the whip on an Elizabethan ship, the malicious girl on the campus etc. If 'a product' means one thing in arithmetic, it means also a quite different thing in set theory. All meanings do not have the same *nature*, and there are few words in any language that do not straddle across different *natures* of meaning.

That there is something more to this state of affairs than mere failure of science may be shown up if we consider how we actually operate with meaningful forms. There are four basic operations that must be performable with a linguistic form, if it is to be said to have any meaning at all. Firstly, one must be able to repeat it. If I know what a 'pig' is, I should be able to say not only 'This is a pig.', but also 'This is the same pig.' Even with proper names, I should be able to find Harold MacMillan more than once in my experience, direct or indirect, own or vicarious, if the noise 'Harold MacMillan' it to be a linguistic form. There would be no such thing as meaning, if either the word or its referent were unique or transient in experience.

Secondly, one must be able to limit it. I must be able to say not only 'This is a pig' but also 'This is not a pig.' That is, I should be able to say where the word fails to apply as well as where it applies, if the word is to have any meaning at all. There would be no such thing as meaning if I did not know what to exclude, where to stop, when to say no, that is, if either the word or its referent lacked contrast in our experience.

Thirdly, one must be able to substitute it. I must be able to say not only 'This is a pig.' but also 'This is that well-known four-footed mudloving domesticated small animal.' or 'Dieser ist ein Schwein.' or like. That is, I should be able to say the same thing in other words. There would be no such thing as meaning, if either the word

or its referent did not ever overlap in their correspondences, if homonymy and synonymy were on principle impossible.

Fourthly, one must be able to extend it. I must be able to say not only 'This is a pig,' but also 'This is also a pig,' or 'This is another kind of pig.' That is, I should be able to add indefinitely to the list of items comprised in the class. Proper names have meaning only doubtfully, simply because of the helplessness in which I am placed when I try to add to the list of exemplars. But even proper names have some sort of meaning, through the fact that a person has different roles to play in society, different stages in his life, different dimensions of being etc., so that I may identify Harold MacMillan by his former official position and then proceed to measure the height in inches of his physical existence or vice versa. If such extension were not possible, words would have no more meaning than cloakroom tags have. Another way of making the same point is to say that there would be no meaning if the distribution were either completely known or completely unknown. There is no meaning if it is not also marginally vague.

It has all been summed up beautifully in the famous principle of arbitrariness of Ferdinand de Saussure, which Bloomfield himself accepted in this formulation: 'The connection of linguistic forms with their meanings is wholly arbitrary.' There is nothing in nature, or in abstract reason, why 'horse' should mean in English what 'cheval' means in French. The customary association, or convention, is based on nothing but brute irrationality, or, if we prefer to phrase it differently, on pure freedom.

The obvious objections to this statement should be considered. We may argue that although such general meaning as the English word 'horse' might have should be admitted to be wholly arbitrary, the application of the word to particular items of experience may not be wholly arbitrary. Suppose you have just taught me the meaning of the word 'horse' by showing

one. In the next moment we see another horse which I then point out to you. Is there nothing in nature to guide me in this new but correct application of the word? There is certainly a visible similarity between the two horses. Similarities in nature do guide the recurrence of a linguistic form.

In a parallel way, we may argue that causalities and functions in nature also contribute to the guidance. If I proceed from 'left hand' and 'right hand' towards 'He writes a steady hand,' I am guided by observed causalities in nature from cause to effect, from a human hand to a specimen of handwriting. Similarly, if I continue to speak of the 'University of Chicago High School' in spite of its relocation in a new building, I am guided by observed functions in the external world. Associations between form and meanings do not occur in complete disorder, but in fairly extensive patterns or systems which may be made objects of investigation.

These platitudes do not, however, add up to a rejection of the principle of arbitrariness. There is obviously both freedom and orderliness in the form-meaning association. The question is rather about the methodological starting point. If we start from the fact of order, we are embarrassed by the fragmentation and the overlaps of orderliness. We are then tempted either to talk about an unconscionably long infancy of the science of language or to set up a grand pseudo-science of meaning about as respectable as palmistry. Given order, freedom can occur only in so far as order fails.

If, on the other hand, we start from the fact of freedom then no additional hypotheses are required to account for the fact of order. Arbitrariness may arbitrarily restrict itself, and freedom may freely vary in extent. The fragments and semblances of order may be regarded as positive products of freedom instead of as its failures. At the very worst, these partial orders may be classified into those which contradict and those which confirm the freedom.

There is then no symmetry. Given order, freedom appears as purely negative; but given freedom, order appears as partly positive. There are then two advantages in starting from freedom instead of from order: firstly, the dispensability of additional hypotheses, and secondly, the limitation of the conflict between order and freedom.

It is because meaning has *nature* that it may exhibit fragmentarily and overlappingly a multiplicity of *natures*, which may all be made separate objects of empirical investigation. This state of affairs is not due to any alleged immaturity of the science, but rather to the splits between the many different directions of empirical science as such. The special difficulty of the student of meaning, whether he is a grammarian or a lexicographer or a translator, is that he has to know and to use such a large variety of empirical sciences. He need not attain the full professional standard in any of them except in his own, but the variety of the things and the extent in each direction that he has to know are certainly prov-

ing increasingly burdensome. But this burden is the same as that of all general knowledge, whether in a humanistic education or in a unity of science movement. Our knowledge is accumulating with an explosive acceleration in all directions, and yet we cannot live as human beings without increasing knowledge in all these directions.

The theory of meaning will no longer be persuasive as a stable and uniform structure matching an equally stable and uniform *nature*. It will not be persuasive even as a system of policing different *natures*, pushing back recalcitrant intruders into their appropriate intellectual ghettos. Every nameable branch or sub-branch of empirical science is now recognizably in the process of splitting and reclassifying. The idea of a *nature* of meaning may only serve to light up the path of some one direction of enquiry among the increasingly many. If one is to be guided here by theories, then these theories should show how to think enquiringly without restricting oneself to an overspecialist theory, or reverting to an outdated theory or relapsing to no theory.

Inner Resonance

A Note on the Odes of John Keats

DEVINDRA KOHLI

THE excellence of every art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate, from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth' (Keats).¹ The poetic development of Keats himself is a sure movement towards the achievement of a warmer and more palpable intensity, of an accumulation of sensitive details with a sense of palatable luxury – the dominating feature of Keat's earlier phase. This process, this movement towards 'intensity', is happily coextensive with a resurgence of human interest, the coming to the surface of a potentiality for tragic experience, whose poignance and depth gives to his Odes the form and substance, not to speak of mere contours, of enduring art. And the force of this developing vision, this 'deepening of the inner resonance of the soul' is essentially moral unless we are inclined to hedge the word with a rather narrow meaning. One feels the necessity of offering a reversal (on their own terms, of course) of the opinions propounded by Arthur Symonds² when he said that 'He (Keats) was not troubled about his soul, or any other metaphysical questions' and by Matthew Arnold³ when he said that Keats's genius was not 'ripe' for the moral interpretation of human ex-

perience because of its hypertrophy in the field of naturalistic interpretation. However, at the risk of contradicting himself, Arnold elsewhere labels Keats's line 'For ever wilt thou love and she be fair' as expressing a moral idea, and places it, in terms of its quality, beside Shakespeare's 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on...'

II

I believe that the Odes of Keats are great precisely because they achieve in greater or lesser degree, both individually and in totality, the fusion of both the interpretations – the naturalistic and the moral. They are specimens not only of the well-praised 'felicity of expression' but also of the kind of moral insight which Arnold so much insisted upon. I also believe that the quality of 'the felicity of expression' has already been adequately pin-pointed.⁴ My intention here is, therefore, a limited one: it is to attempt to show how the Odes (I deal with four of them) are energized by a deepened moral insight into life.

The moral interpretation for Arnold consisted in the application to the subject-matter of poetry of ideas 'on man, on nature, and on human life'⁵ which the poet has acquired for himself through experience and observation rather than books. And the fact, that Arnold himself desired such an application under 'the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth', indicates the extent to which he insisted upon loyalty to the Muses rather than to the pulpit. I think Keats was never more intolerant than when he spoke indignantly

¹ Letter to George and Thomas Keats, December 21, 1817.

² 'The Romantic Movement in English Poetry'.

³ 'John Keats' in *Essays in Criticism*: Second Series (London, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1960) p. 72.

⁴ See Ridley, M. R.: *Keats's Craftsmanship*, (Oxford, 1933) Bates, W. J.: *The Stylistic Development of Keats* (London 1945).

⁵ "Wordsworth" in *Essays in Criticism*: Second Series, ed. Littlewood (London, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1960) p. 83.

of 'poetry that has a palpable design upon us'. For Keats, poetry in order to be great must have not only intensity but also unobtrusiveness. And to write such poetry, the poet must be capable of that devotion to the Muses, that 'self-concentration—selfishness perhaps' of which he wrote to Shelley; though even this is not enough, for great poetry 'does not startle or amaze it (the human soul) with itself, but with its subject'. And this subject, in order to be noble in the Arnoldian sense, must be enriched with ideas. Now the way in which ideas 'on man, on nature, and on human life', are acquired is complex and gradual and demands a fine sense of humility and self-awareness, because this sifting of ideas from the ore of experience is also a process of self-education and self-realization. Maturity of any kind is, I think, impossible without this quality of humility. 'I feel assured', wrote Keats to Richard Woodhouse, 'I should write from the mere yearning and fondness I have for the beautiful even if my night's labours should be burnt every morning, and no eye ever shine upon them.'

Again, in view of Omar Khayyam's poetry, Arnold emphatically says that 'a poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against life; a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards life.' But surely Keats neither revolted against life nor did he show any culpable indifference towards life. Rather—as I hope to make clear—he was too much in love with life—life not as ideally conceived but as actually realized; not as contemplated in solitude even in the manner of a hermit, but as almost physically felt and grasped. The growth of his poetry is, in a sense, the supplementation of love by understanding.

The notable point is that Keats had little use for those ideas which are merely the product of 'cold philosophy' and which, having mere speculative value, cannot be

'proved upon our pulses.' It is unfortunate that the exclamation 'O for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts' has received a kind of emphasis as if it were an epitome of Keats's view of life itself. In fact, the sentence is found in a wider context⁶ than as it is usually understood. It is unfair to depreciate or even judge Keats solely in terms of an over-exuberant fondness for sensuous pleasure as Professor Garrod seems to do. The fact is that the major poetry of Keats suggests the operation of what Keats himself defined as a 'complex Mind—one that is imaginative and at the same time careful of its fruits—who would exist *partly on sensation, partly on thought*—to whom it is *necessary* that years should bring the *philosophic Mind*'⁷ (*italics mine*).

I am convinced that the Odes are stamped with the cumulative pressure of an active and impressionable participation in life. And it would simply be shocking to believe, as Arnold would have us, that a poet whose poetry captures him in the act of knowing life with all its fluctuating rhythms, or rather in the act of transcending in the sense of mastering it (despite many detours which are a part of the process) by the grandeur of a tragic vision, had remained unfermented by 'moral ideas.'

III

In 'Ode to Psyche', Keats is troubled about his soul in precisely the same sense in which Symonds thought he was not. The fact that a mythical story gathers an intensely Keatsian meaning is a measure of the success of the poem and an indication of Keats's poetic development. Unlike 'Endymion', in which the mythical story is an integral part of the whole design, the use of the Greek myth in 'Ode to Psyche' is, I believe, functional: as a frame of reference, it helps vivify the idea of tragic suffering with an impersonal flavour. The story sinks into the background leaving its

⁶ See Letter to Benjamin Bailey, November 22, 1817.

⁷ *Ibid.*

symbolic reverberations to shape the meaning of the poem.

In the very first line, Psyche is invoked to hear the 'tuneless numbers' of the Ode itself. They are 'tuneless' because they are not sung to 'the sensual ear'; they are 'ditties of no tone' (to use a phrase from 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'), sung to the spirit. The Ode deals with Psyche as a character only in a marginal way; for as the poem moves, Psyche grows into a symbol of a neglected soul beautified and baptized by suffering and the Ode becomes an Ode to the 'inner resonance' of Keats: a resonance which cannot be 'piped' to the 'sensual ear'.

The Ode is Keats's commitment to the tragic. Though 'too late for antique vows' and neglected by poets in favour of more attractive themes, so deep is Keats's identification with the suffering soul, so instantaneous is his 'magnanimity' (in the sense of sympathy) that Keats promises to be her 'voice', 'lute', and 'priest'. The 'secrets' (line 3) which Keats wishes to celebrate, through these tuneless numbers, and which he has known through 'remembrance dear', as if they were his own, are the secrets of human suffering. This anticipates the central motif of 'Ode on Melancholy', that not only 'she dwells with Beauty' but 'in the very temple of Delight/Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine'. And surely Keats's melancholy is not to be interpreted as romantic *Weltschmerz*; it is what accompanies inevitably an involvement in life and gives it the rhythm of what Wordsworth aptly called 'the still, sad music'.

What follows the invocation is a vision of soul's happy experience, of 'the tender eye-dawn of aurean love', of the awakening of the soul's eye with the birth, dawning of love—an experience which makes the soul 'faint with surprise'. The image of the embracing, half-kissing lovers 'mid hush'd, coolrooted, flowers, fragrant-eyed' is symbolic of the soul's innocent, harmoni-

ously happy experience which contains within it the *possibility* of the tragic. And this sense of the tragic within the joyous and of the joyous within the tragic is peculiarly Keatsian which finds an intenser affirmation in the following Odes. Indeed, the story of Psyche is a tragic drama in itself: Cupid's falling in love with Psyche at first sight, his forbidding her to see him in light, Psyche's attempt to see and her consequent desertion by Cupid followed by her loneliness and a series of sorrowful experiences. Taking Psyche as symbolic of a solitary, suffering soul, one is tempted, at the risk of stretching, to take Cupid as the agent, first, of happiness, and then of suffering. At any rate, the Ode emphasizes suffering not only as a fit subject for the poet but also as necessary for the purification of the self, for the attainment of that vision in which the disagreeable is accepted as a part of beauty.

'I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspir'd' (line 43) suggests, in the first instance, Keats's romantic trust of personal inspiration. And this is true in so far as he is conscious of his poetic powers. But there is another layer of meaning which is central to Keats's vision. His eyes inspire him not only because they have been both participants in and witnesses of the tragic drama of life, not only because they are eyes which have kept 'watch o'er man's mortality' in a world

Where youth grows pale, and
spectre-thin, and dies;

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;

Where Beauty cannot keep her
lustrous eyes,

Or new love pine at them beyond
tomorrow.⁸

but his eyes inspire him in another and a more important way. Whether a man is vibrantly ecstatic or poignantly unhappy, his eyes are the most obvious index of the state of his mind. Tears come not only when he is very unhappy but also when he is very happy indicating the co-existence of pain and joy in one mood, 'We begin

⁸ "Ode to a Nightingale".

to live', said Yeats, 'When we have conceived of life as tragedy', but 'the supreme aim' is 'an act of faith and reason to make one rejoice in the midst of tragedy'. 'Eyes' which here inspire Keats are symbolic of the tears of tragic joy or 'the joy of grief'⁹ to use a phrase from an otherwise immature and clumsy poem: the tragedy of suffering, when made the subject-matter of poetry, is followed by the joy of creation: '... I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my mind,
Where branch'd thoughts, new-grown
with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind.'

'Branch'd thoughts, new-grown with pleasant pain' is what Eliot would have called a sensuous embodiment of the *idea* in the image, the idea that new thoughts and insights—what is more, great art (here the Ode itself) originate from tragic suffering. And the image of child-birth with its mingled feelings of pain and joy is the only image from the human world which could come to mind spontaneously.

IV

To be aware of 'the ache at the very heart of felicity' is the kind of vision which gives centrality to Keats's experience. Acceptance of life with its assonance and dissonance is the imaginative conclusion of Keats's preoccupation with the haunting chasms of life. And the ceaseless longing

to prolong joy which itself is transient is one such chasm which is tragically bound up with Arnold's favourite question 'How to live?' the overriding implication of which is how to be happy.

'Ode to a Nightingale' is neither an adolescent poem¹⁰ nor an escapist's obsession with death.¹¹ It is a vibrant expression of a mood in which one considers the possibility of seizing any formula that can, first, free the individual from the fear of transitoriness, and then perpetuate the joy of the moment. The nightingale, no less than Shelley's skylark, seems, in a moment of intense imagination, a towering symbol of pure joy and immutability. 'The weariness, the fever, and the fret' which disturb Keats's joy and which he wishes to 'forget', is precisely 'what thou among the leaves hast known'. What is more

'Thou was not born for death, immortal
Bird!

No hungry generations tread thee down,' And, given Keats's empathic imagination, he can enjoy a temporary feeling of the nightingale's imagined security. 'My heart aches' of the first line is charged with double significance. First, it balances 'Being too happy in thine happiness' and we understand that it is the ache of joy. It is only when the sense of tragedy, of 'the weariness, the fever, and the fret' (one of the most haunting phrases of Keats) intrudes upon the poet's mood of intense transport that we *feel* the tragic reverberation of 'My heart aches' fulfilling itself in the painful reality of the third stanza.

Keats is, unmistakably, a poet of the human condition. And thus, in the fourth stanza, there is another level of fantasy, another effort to seize a formula since both 'vintage' and 'warm South' (Stanza II) do not offer a sustaining solution. Moments of intoxication break down as easily as the 'beaded bubbles winking at the brim'. Perhaps, the painful reality can be evaded and the joy of the moment perpetuated through a deliberately created world of poetic fancy—a world which, by implication, will have nothing to do with 'the

⁹ "Fill for me a brimming bowl" line 24, *The Poetical Works of Keats*, ed. H. W. Garrod (Oxford, 1939) p. 539.

¹⁰ "What I wish to maintain, against both the denigrators of Keats and those who proclaim his maturity, is that he remains in his most characteristic works not just the supreme poet for adolescents, but supremely the adolescent poet": "Keats and the Young Lovers"; Sharrock, Roger, "A Review of English Literature" ed. A. N. Jeffares, January, 1961.

¹¹ "... the 'Ode to a Nightingale' is a work of a poet who, at least when he composed it, was much obsessed with death. At any rate Keats was more concerned with death than he was with mystical ecstasy or the apprehension of the 'Eternal Moment'". E. C. Pettet *On the Poetry of Keats* (Cambridge, 1957) p. 281.

weariness, the fever, and the fret', with any moral awareness that is to say. The phrase 'viewless wings' should make it clear that Keats is here thinking of a specific kind of poetry, — poetry which flees from or to use Arnold's phrase, shows 'indifference' to life — and not the kind of poetry to which he is actually committed and to which the Ode itself belongs. That such a sensuous world of illusory happiness can rescue the poet from the 'fever', at least, for a few moments, is illustrated by the almost hypnotic success of 'the embalmed darkness' so much so that

'I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the
boughs,'

Nor is this moment inviolable or total because although he cannot see, he can still 'guess': 'the dull brain still perplexes and retards'. And so it is not surprising that the sense of tragedy, of death, which had found a dominant expression in Stanza 3, should intrude again. But suddenly death is seen in a new perspective: it is welcome now because it is better, perhaps luckier, ('rich' is Keats's word) to die in joy. It is a romantic way of coming to terms with death, which is so unwelcome otherwise; in, more or less, the same way as Emily Dickinson does in 'Because I could not stop for Death/He kindly stopped for me'¹² in which the painful reality of death melts into the joyous sense of eternity obtained through the loving kindness of death.

To conceive of death as one of the possible agents of perpetuating the iridescence of the moment, when actually overwhelmed by the latter is, I think, a triumph and not a defeat of Keats's mood. While at other times, he was 'half in love', now he is fully in love with death for

'Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,

While thou art pouring forth thy soul
abroad
In such an ecstasy!' (italics mine)

Death is welcome first as a liberating agent — liberation from the painful actuality. But it is also a moment of the culminating fulfilment of the almost mystical identification between the spiritual intensity with which the nightingale sings and that with which Keats is listening to her. Keats contemplates death, it seems to me, in the same spirit as the protagonist of Browning's 'The Last Ride Together'¹³ a contemplation motivated by the desire to convert the 'instant' into 'eternity'. Satisfied that 'one day more am I deified', he thinks for a moment: 'who knows but the world may end tonight?' But suddenly with Keats there is the realization (which one misses in Browning's poem) that this may also be an illusion for

'Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears
in vain —

To thy high requiem become a sod.'

And so neither wine, nor poetic fancy, nor even death, can eternalize the moment of joy or totally salvage it from the obtruding sense of tragedy. And it is this realization towards which the poem moves, for the conclusion of the Ode is the inevitable return to actuality. That the possibility of escape has been rejected in the so-called 'escapist' poem is not without significance. And it is this significance which the denigrators of the poem seem to have missed. The conclusion of the poem is that any refusal to accept pain as part of joy is an inadequate understanding of life and would amount to 'escape' which is impossible for a person who has felt and known tragedy. Even imagination, and the sense of life — its joy and its beauty — that it can create, are acceptable to Keats only in so far as they take full cognizance of 'the weariness, the fever, and the fret' of life. The ecstasy of the beautiful and the beauty of the ecstatic receive their value and justification from their painful counterparts alone.

Here is the poem's central irony: to share

¹² *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* (ed.) Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge Massachusetts, 1958) Vol. II, Poem No. 712, p. 546.

¹³ *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning*, (London, 1960) p. 335.

the joy of the nightingale requires, as an inescapable precondition, an intense awareness of the tragic pressure which seems to dissolve that transport or, for that matter, any other transport. But this irony cannot be resolved because it is the condition of our living. It is the nature of things that pain and joy, light and shade, are interwoven (one should have the courage to say, beautifully) into the texture of life. And it is impossible to eternalize the joyous moment by isolating it from the tragic. Nor is it desirable to do so because then one is in danger of obtaining an eternity which involves the very negation of life, or which is coldly transcendental. It is instructive to note how this irony is more dramatically embodied in the sonnet 'Bright Star'¹⁴ in which Keats rejects the 'lone splendour' symbolized by the star — 'nature's Eremit' — whose immutability, though lofty, knows little of the natural, human life — its beauty bound up with its tragedy — in favour of an imaginative sense of eternity seized, in a moment of ecstasy, through the transient itself. The moment when his head is pillow'd upon the breast of his beloved (both the moment and the beloved are transient) and when his whole being throbs with the rhythmic rise and fall of her bosom, can offer to the poet not absolute permanence — beyond time and beyond space — the kind of permanence which is symbolized by the star and by the golden bird in Yeats's 'Sailing to Byzantium', but a sense of permanence which is implicitly contained in a fully, sensuously lived life, however transient and tragic, to which he is committed. And it is this passionate commitment to life as it is, even in the face of despair, this religion of life, so to speak, which is the moral force behind the experience and vision of the Odes.

V

'Ode on a Grecian Urn' takes its cue from 'Ode to a Nightingale' but, unlike it,

ends in a poetic resolution of the paradox of the fleeting and the desire for the permanent, of which resolution the urn is an achieved entity, and accomplished emblem. In the silence of its stone, it encompasses the very tumult, the very moment, so to speak, of the ceaseless struggle of humanity. In 'Ode to Psyche', Keats saw Psyche and Cupid — the lovers of the myth — in an embrace and although their lips 'touch'd not' and seemed 'disjoined by soft-handed slumber', yet they had not 'bade adieu' and were 'ready still past kisses to outnumber'. Now again he sees on the urn the 'Bold Lover' who, 'though winning near the goal', can never kiss his beloved. But then comes the saving realization 'Do not grieve' for

'She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,

For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!
What if there is no concrete, tangible achievement, the process of potential fulfilment is ceaseless, the sense of struggle towards a definite goal is not submerged. It is in this metaphorical, rather metaphysical, sense of a continued process that the suggestion compressed so brilliantly in the line 'For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair' operates.

The contradiction is resolved in somewhat paradoxical terms: a kind of 'mystic oxymoron' to quote Kenneth Burke. Experience or the pursuits, which belong to the world of time and transience, have been given the colouring of beauty by imagination; and those experiences by the fact of their being arrested on the urn, in the very gesture of movement, and thus suggesting the unending ecstasy of struggle, have become truth in the poem and in the world of time itself. It is a poetic truth after all; and the sincerity with which it is made *felt* in the poem and is given a poetic compulsion is reminiscent of what Yeats does in 'Sailing to Byzantium', which deals with a kindred theme. Notwithstanding the objectivity and detachment of Keats's Ode, its metaphysical motive — the poet's preference for the un-

¹⁴ *The Poetical Works of Keats* (ed.) H. W. Garrod (Oxford, at the Clarendon Press) p. 475.

heard melodies to the heard ones, his request to the pipes 'to play on/Not to the sensual ear but to the spirit ditties of no tone' — is echoed in Yeats's depreciation of 'that sensual music' which makes the 'dying generations' ignore 'monuments of unageing intellect', and his idea (emotionally communicated, of course) that 'unless soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing', the life of an old man who is no more satisfied with 'whatever is begotten, born, and dies', is meaningless and futile. In both the poems, there operates a sharp tragic sense of things which adds dramatic inevitability to the emotional process of reaching the central affirmations within the respective poems.

The last two polemical lines, far from disturbing the artistic integrity of the poem and far from being insincere as critics like Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Middleton Murry and Eliot think, also help us in re-grasping the basis of Keats's vision. If 'beauty' is the beauty of the experience of actuality and 'truth' the truth of the eternalization of the transient experience in the world of time itself, the double equation — 'beauty is truth, truth beauty' must be taken to suggest the acceptance of both the fleeting and the permanent in the same moment of consciousness. And although the 'silent form dost tease us out of thought/As doth eternity', although it shall remain 'when old age shall this generation waste', yet the figures are cold, and the urn as well as the poem is cold: 'Cold Pastoral'. The urn, like Yeats's 'golden bird', is after all, an 'artifice'. It is significant to find the lines 'Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought/As doth eternity; Cold Pastoral!' expressing two opposite attitudes towards the urn. The ironical sense of judgment compressed so skilfully in two words undercuts that silent perfection of the urn which, in a sense, seems to mock our transient life. But cannot life itself mock back at the cold perfection of the urn? Indeed, it is the reverberation of the phrase 'Cold Pastoral' which makes the poem so characteristically

Keatsian just as that of the phrase 'artifice of eternity' makes 'Sailing to Byzantium' so characteristically Yeatsian. The ode apotheosizes the 'sylvan historian' for its interpretative value, its imaginative crystallization of life into a more enduring form. But Life is beauty and its realization truth: and the realization which the urn symbolizes is cold and detached and not throbbing and palpable: it simply has not been proved upon our pulses. Implicitly, at least, 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' shares the conclusion of 'Ode to a Nightingale'.

VI

The undertones of the above vision mingle so exquisitely into the peaceful mood of acceptance or, to use a phrase from 'Ode to Psyche', of 'wide quietness', as to enable Keats, in 'Ode to Autumn', to perceive the truth that the beauty of life is continuous and that its rhythms can never be 'harsh and grating' and that they can always be trusted for they are always elevating.

Superficially, the ode suggests perhaps an indulgence in the sensuous luxuriance of the season, just as 'Ode to Psyche' suggests an indulgence in myth-decoration. The first stanza, especially, re-creates vividly the 'mellow fruitfulness', 'the ripeness to the core', the physical richness so to speak, of the season. The rich interplay of abundantly used sibilants and liquid sounds, under the dense weight of compound words, creates the sense of drooping cottage-trees, drooping under the weight of the swelling fruit. The fact that Keats celebrates autumn and not spring and emphasizes the beauty and music of the former is another aspect of that tragic vision which accepts the contradictions of life in one and the same breath. 'This area', says Earl Wasserman, 'where mortal and immortal become one without destroying each other is the goal that almost everywhere conditions Keats's perceptions to such a degree that his poetry must be read

in the light of the ontology its oxymoronic nature implies.¹⁵

If the first stanza celebrates the static, vegetative fullness of the season, the second captures another aspect of its beauty in its peaceful movement. The rhythms of the season are arrested in terms of the rhythms of ordinary existence, and the continuity of the one is therefore made true and felt in terms of the continuity of the other. The sense of eternity is made felt not only in the world of time but in terms of the fleeting itself, with a contemplative serenity which is ennobling. I have spoken earlier of Keats's love for life. This love finds its completest and richest expression in 'Ode to Autumn', for in contemplating the season he is contemplating life itself: life which, despite its variations, is essentially the same not only in all the seasons of the year, but at all times. If the reference to 'mists' and the 'maturing sun' in the first stanza can be symbolically connected with the morning of life, the second portrays its noon, while the 'barred clouds' which bloom 'the soft-dying day' of the third bring us face to face with the sunset of life.

The imagery of the ode is either of stillness or of peaceful movement. The second stanza conveys, with a sureness of grasp, a sense of quietness, of softness, mingling most equably into the sense of movement; hence peaceful movement. This imagery of 'peaceful movement' may be accepted unhesitatingly as the 'objective correlative' of the solemnity of Keats's vision. One may push the comparison with Shakespeare a little further by saying that, in 'Ode to Autumn', qualitatively, Keats's vision finds a similar culmination as Shakespeare's in his last plays whose themes are woven round the ideas of regeneration and growth. Keats rapt in the rhythms of the autumn (Keats himself in one of his letters says, 'I scarcely remember counting upon any

happiness—I look not for it if it be not in the present hour — nothing startles me beyond the moment'),¹⁶ finds compensation for the songs of spring that have either passed or will come:

'Where are the songs of spring? Ay,
where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy hast
music too.'

The spontaneity and the sense of indulgent acceptance with which 'thou hast thy music too' silences the rising questions is surely a measure of the sincerity of Keats's mood. And are the lines

'While barred clouds bloom the soft-
dying day,

And touch the stubble-plains with rosy
hue.'

not reminiscent, in terms of the feeling, of Wordsworth's

'The clouds that gather round the setting
sun

Do take a sober colouring from an eye

That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality'.

Indeed to reach the mood of 'Ode to Autumn' and the total vision animating it one requires 'an eye that hath kept watch o'er man's mortality'. And this 'eye' Keats unquestionably possessed. What surprises is the acute sensitivity of perception that it was endowed with. Dr. Leavis finds it possible to relate the 'objectivity' of 'Ode to Autumn' to the 'tragic impersonality' of the Moneta passage in 'The Fall of Hyperion' and suggests as the source of the serenity of the mood of the above ode, a 'moral and spiritual discipline' which may be taken as Leavis's own phraseology to suggest what we have been calling the Keatsian vision. 'The un-Byronic and the un-Shelleyan note in the contemplation of human suffering' which Dr. Leavis finds in the Moneta passage is not absent from these odes. In fact, this note is the strongest thread that unifies Keats's preoccupation with life in the major odes. 'The strength', he goes on to say, 'that makes the sensuous Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' so different from the spiritual Shelley's 'To a Skylark'

¹⁵ *The Finer Tone*: Keats' Major Poems (Baltimore, 1953), p. 16.

¹⁶ Letter to Benjamin Bailey, November 22, 1817.

— the grasp of the object, the firm sense of actuality, the character and critical intelligence implied... in the artist's touch and his related command of total effect — now manifests itself in the field of tragic experience. His own acute and inescapable distresses, including the pain of watching helplessly the suffering of persons dear to him, he can, without feeling them the less, contemplate at the same time from (as it were) the outside, as objects, as facts; and the contemplation of the inevitable and endless human suffering to which his more immediately personal experience leads him has a like impersonal strength."¹⁷ Dr. Leavis's appreciation is so brilliantly exact

¹⁷ "John Keats" in *Revaluation* (London, 1959) p. 271.

¹⁸ Letter to Benjamin Bailey, November 22, 1817.

and Keats's odes so suggestive of the vision which I have been trying to explore that I cannot help thinking that Leavis's criticism of the Moneta passage is an equally appropriate criticism of the odes I have discussed.

The fact that Keats composed 'Ode to Autumn' when the hopes of a healthy and happy future seemed to be dim is a measure of the greatness of this vision. It is the reflection of the same attitude which would accept the contradictions of human experience — pain and joy, light and shade, as the two facets of the same coin; it is the reflection of the same flexibility of genius that would write 'Hamlet' as well as 'As you Like it'. Keats who writes about the indescribably sweet music of the nightingale could also say that 'if a sparrow come to my window I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel.'¹⁸



Rural Songs in Nineteenth Century Bengal

PRADIP SINHA

THE nineteenth century, and particularly its later half, offers in some respects special opportunities for the study of rural modes of expression which still had considerable vitality and capacity for expansion. The availability of contemporary or near-contemporary sources makes such a study possible. The traditional rural songs of Bengal of a purely lyrical character — the Bhatiali and Bhowaia in particular — reveal what may be described as an essentially plaintive strain in the Bengali mind — a reflection perhaps of its great rivers and the endless monotony of its landscape. Bengali folk music is not characterised by a virile rhythmic pattern. A sense of restfulness is its main feature and its limitation probably lies in a lack of robust approach to life. It reveals a mind not strong enough to face a harsher environment. Vaishnavism has been an ideal answer to this frame of mind. Islam has lost its West Asian ruggedness and the Quranic theme has put on a strange soft garb in the Jari songs which are meant to have a martial setting.¹

Any study of traditional Bengal has to take into account the pervasive influence of Vaishnavism. The old agricultural society maintained what now appears to be a disproportionately large number of men with no ostensible means of livelihood. The vast community of mendicant singers of Bengal was mainly composed of Vaishnava or at least partly Vaishnava minstrels. In an unorthodox devotional form Vaishnavism appealed to both religious communities in Bengal. Muslim exponents of devotionalism since the 16th century like Faqir Habib, Kabir Alawal, Sayid Murtaja, Nasir

Mahmud, Ali Raja Dewan Hasan Choudhury and many others enriched Vaishnava literature. The assimilative force of Bengali regional culture brought about a considerable identification of outlook between the two communities at a purely rural level. The external influence both of North Indian Hinduism and of Islam tended to take on a local colour in the remote villages of North and East Bengal.

The influence was not, however, from one direction only. The songs about Gajis and Pirs, so deeply embedded in the popular traditions of East Bengal, also attracted the Hindu mind. But, on the whole, it was Islam, arriving at a rather developed stage of regional culture, which had to make greater adjustment. The conclusion, however, does not follow that religious differences were of no great significance. Islam is fundamentally assertive. The Hindu ceremonies and festivals (Durga Puja, for example), associated as they were primarily with change of season, used to draw all rural folk. But the ritualistic aspect was foreign to Islam. The teachings of the Quran and the legends of Islam gave rise to a category of literature and songs more or less confined to the Islamic community. The use of Islamic terminology was their main feature. The nineteenth century is especially noted for the growth of certain puritanical sects among the Muhammadans of East Bengal, e.g. the Ferazis or the Ta'ajiyuni sect.

In predominantly rural cultures, however, the force of unorthodoxy tends to play an important role. The rigidity of established religions and their institutionalised forms does not satisfy certain basic needs of the rural people. They tend to put their own interpretation on the spiritual principles underlying the established religions. The Bauls of Bengal in this respect manifest a basic tendency of all rural cultures.

¹ See Introduction to *Haramani* (a collection of traditional rural songs, the word *Haramani* literally meaning "lost jewels") by Muhammad Mansuruddin, published in 1942.

² *Haramani*, Introduction.

But they are also peculiarly representative of traditional Bengal. Geographically, they were distributed over the entire Bengal-speaking region and appear to have been a very large community in the last century.

The Bauls are associated with a cult which in its essence represents the Tantric tradition in Bengal that mingled with Vaishnava and Sufist strains of thinking at a certain stage of historical evolution.³ The Baul has his own uncommon modes which he repeatedly emphasises in his songs. A Baul song describes the ideal devotee as following reverse modes. His behaviour is unpredictable. He is unaffected by ordinary emotions because he has realised the true emotion. He laughs and weeps by himself on pure impulse and his eyes reflect the profound joy in his heart. He has the key to happiness in his hands but he does not seek happiness. All worldly things are immaterial to him. He builds his home in the sky even if all the world is burnt by fire.⁴ A spirit of detachment from the ordinary pursuits of life and from society in general characterises the true Baul. He considers himself to be 'dead in life', i.e. so far as society is concerned he is all but dead. That justifies his extraordinary approach to life.

The greatest and the most representative of the Bengal Bauls was Lalan Faqir, a 19th century personality, whose songs came to be sung by Bauls in widely separated districts of Bengal. Lalan was a Sufistic poet who had once been a Hindu. He was fundamentally heterodox. The outwards forms of both Hinduism and Islam (Shariat) had no

appeal for him. In one of his songs Lalan thus ridicules the idea of social and religious differences. 'Everybody asks,' sings Lalan, 'What caste or creed Lalan belongs to. Lalan says the question of belonging to a caste or creed always eludes him. If circumcision makes a Muhammadan, then what about women? If the sacred thread is the mark of a Brahmin, then what about the wife of a Brahmin. While coming to or leaving the world, where has been the mark of social distinction? . . . Water, whether in a well or in the Ganges, is basically the same water. . . .'⁵ In another song Lalan says that God does not make any distinction between Hindus and Mussalmans. One moon illumines the entire universe. One seed gave birth to all. In still another song he says that he would put caste and creed into the flames if he could hold them in his hands.⁶

The Baul finds the infinite within the finite body of man. It is the Inner Man, the Man of the Heart, the Man of God residing within the physical form of man. Lalan Sings:

That Man resides within this man;
How many saints and mystics have
been looking for him
All these four ages!
The moon can be seen in water,
But who can hold it?⁷

'Oh mind!' says Lalan in another song, 'here in man is to be found the Jewel of Man'⁸ To Lalan as to all Bauls, the unknown can be realised once 'you know yourself'. It is useless to search for Him 'all over Dacca and Delhi'.⁹ The 'Vedas and Vedantas' only add to complexity. The key to divine beauty is in the hands of Sri-rupa (the human form and personality)¹⁰

The Baul often expresses wonder about the 'unknown bird' within the human body. One of the famous songs of Lalan Faqir is about the elusiveness of the bird which comes into and flies away from the cage. Though it lives within the cage of the human body, its thirst for the infinite impels it to break out. The life-long quest of the Baul is for this 'unknown bird'.¹¹

³ For a detailed treatment of the Baul cult see *Banglar Baul O Baul Gan* (Bengali) by Upendranath Bhattacharyya and *Obscure Religious Cults* by Dr. Sashibhusan Das Gupta.

⁴ *Vividha-dharma Sangit* (published in 1907); song No. 461, also *Banglar Baul O Baul Gan*; song No. 413.

⁵ *Banglar Baul O Baul Gan*, song No. 160.

⁶ *Ibid.*, song No. 102 and 122.

⁷ *Ibid.*, song No. 50.

⁸ *Haramani*; part. I, song No. 6.

⁹ *Banglar Baul O Baul Gan*; song No. 82.

¹⁰ *Haramani* (Part I, 1930), song No. 7.

¹¹ *Banglar Baul O Baul Gan*, song No. 67.

Faqir Panj Sha became a prominent Baul towards the end of the nineteenth century, especially after Lalan's death in 1891. The Faqir, according to the short biographical sketch furnished by his son, was born in 1851. He belonged to an orthodox Muslim family but came under the influence of the heterodox Sufi-Vaishnava culture of his native village Harishpur of Jessore. It was customary for Sufi Faqirs and Vaishnavas to meet together and discuss spiritual matters and sing devotional songs. Panj Sha came under their influence and composed songs in the true spirit of the Bauls.¹²

The Baul tradition seems to have possessed remarkable vitality in the 19th century. A characteristic of the songs associated with this tradition which distinguishes them from the general body of rural songs, is that they are generally associated with original composers whose names frequently occur in the songs. The number of such composers in the 19th century was phenomenally large. Their disciples and followers disseminated the songs throughout rural Bengal. The present-day collections of Baul songs are mainly anthologies of compositions of 19th century and early 20th century Bauls. A specialist on the Baul tradition considers the beginning of the present century as a period of rapid decline for the community. This vitality of the Baul community and the cognate sects is essentially a feature of the 19th century history of rural Bengal.

Apart from the Baul songs, other categories of rural song, deeply embedded in the traditions of Bengal, have each a special importance of their own. These songs, however, are not so clearly associated with any particular period of time; nor do they have specific composers. Yet it would not be incorrect to say that the available or surviving specimens of such songs emanate

from the more vigorous folk traditions of the last century.

The famous Mymensingh ballads are a case in point. The difficulties faced by the collectors in the second decade of the present century in their search for these ballads are undoubtedly evidence of their declining circulation. In his introduction to the *East Bengal Ballads* (Mymensingh Ballads), Professor D. C. Sen the editor, remarks, 'Chandrakumar says that these songs are losing public favour every day. Even a hundredth part of what was heard twenty years ago does not exist to-day. In every village there were singers and in fact Mymensingh was a veritable nest of singing birds in those days. It is difficult, wrote Chandrakumar, to get one singer in ten or fifteen villages now-a-days, and if by chance you meet one he will sing five or six songs and then stop, saying that he does not remember the rest. His memory must needs be rusty when his songs have run out of fashion and his services are not required even once a year'.¹³

The problem of the authenticity of these ballads has been debated for more than a generation. A recent critical work on Mymensingh ballads by Dr. Dusan Zbavítel, a Czech Orientalist, has strengthened the school which believes in their authenticity. Traces of the ballads, remarks Dr. Zbavítel, are still found in rural Mymensingh in the form of *Lamba git*, *kissa*, etc. They differ from the ballads mainly in that they are much more easily sung or recited because they are reproduced by gifted singers and narrators more or less extempore. 'Many of the *kissas* have been collected and preserved in the Bengali Academy, Dacca... I found there, for instance, a variant of the balled Mahua... collected in Mymensingh (though considerably different from the printed verse) and many of the '*kissas*' or epic counterparts have much in common with the Mymensingh ballads'.¹⁴

Dr. Zbavítel remarks that there is no reason to doubt the existence of the ballads at all. The obvious explanation is that the

¹² Ibid, pp. 183-185 (Second part).

¹³ *Eastern Bengal Ballads* (Mymensingh ballads) — vol. I (1922), pp. xciii-xciv.

¹⁴ *Bengali folk ballads from Mymensingh and the problem of their authenticity* by Dr. Dusan Zbavítel, p. 10.

ballads as such died out shortly after they were recorded by Chandra Kumar De and his collaborators. The ballads, as testified by the collectors, were never the common property of the village community in the sense that anybody could reproduce them, as is the case with lyrical songs; they were too long to be simply picked up and remembered by ordinary persons. Their knowledge was always the hereditary property of certain singers or groups, who at most passed them on to their pupils. They were seldom sung solo. Performance required a whole group, professional to a degree.

East Bengal, and particularly Mymensingh, has been traditionally noted for the richness of its folklore and folk-songs. Some of the finest specimens of Bengali folklore have been collected from the region. The ballads of Mymensingh are particularly remarkable for their freedom from religious influence, or for what may be called an unusually secular treatment of love. In this respect, the ballads differ from the general body of both classical and traditional literature in Bengal where love has nearly always been associated with that eternally amorous couple Radha and Krishna. From the social and cultural point of view, the region of what may be called the Brahmaputra Valley had certain distinctive features. A European critic of the ballads called it the 'Marches of Bengal'. The ballads might be regarded as the product of this somewhat distinctive milieu.

The date of the Mymensingh ballads has been variously assumed. A very early date, as suggested by Professor D. C. Sen, seems to be unlikely. It may be that a skeleton of the ballads existed in the eighteenth century. But the form in which they have been found may be associated with the

nineteenth century. A reason for the decline of the ballads might have been the gradual encroachment of Puranic or, Vaishnavite themes in the form of 'Yatras' which might have deprived the balladeers of their gentry clientele.¹⁵

A different category of ballads was discovered by Sir George Grierson in the district of Rangpur in North Bengal. The ballads were first published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1878 under the title *Manik Chandra Rajar Gan* or 'Songs of Raja Manikchandra'. Different versions of the songs have been found both in Rangpur and other parts of North and East Bengal. In all these songs there is frequent reference to Gorakhnath, a great figure of the Nath cult.¹⁶ The stories associated with the cult appear to have been the common heritage of Hindus and converted Muhammadans. The ascendancy of Sanskrit and Puranic themes, as also the tide of the Vaishnava movement, might have detached the Hindus of higher castes from these traditional vernacular songs which were preserved by the Sufistic Muhammadans and people of the lowest Hindu castes like the Yogis.¹⁷

The Baul and Nath songs, on the one hand, and the Mymensingh ballads, on the other, represent two distinct strains of the rural mind of Bengal in which the demarcation between the two religions was blurred to a considerable extent. While the former category of songs was the product of a peculiar communal synthesis at a religious level, the latter, independent of religion, was the product of a 'common Bengali folk culture' to which Dr. Zbavitel draws our attention.

It is, however, undeniable that the richness of Hindu mythology, as distinct from religious cults, inspired the vast bulk of rural song literature of Bengal. The theme of Radha and Krishna proved an inexhaustible source of inspiration. In the traditional songs inspired by Krishna-Radha mythology, Krishna becomes a truant village youth and Radha a village bride. The soft, moist soil of Bengal becomes the

¹⁵ A suggestion to this effect occurs in Prof. D. C. Sen's introduction to the *Mymensingh Ballads*.

¹⁶ The Nath cult is an ancient form of Saiva cult with some features similar to those of Tantric Buddhism (See *Obscure Religious cults*).

¹⁷ *Obscure Religious cults* by Shashibhusan Dasgupta, Appendix B, pp. 359-370.

soil of Vrindaban and the village pond takes the place of the Jamuna.¹⁸ The Vaishnava singers were ubiquitous in rural Bengal. In the Dacca district alone, according to the statistical account of Bengal (1875), Volume five, there were as many as 11,000 caste-rejecting Vaishnavas, many of whom must have been minstrels. A Bengali proverb states there is no song without Kanu (Krishna).

The Vaishnava songs reflect the inherent tendency of the rural mind of Bengal to stress the spirit of love and tenderness as distinguished from the harsher instincts of human nature. The Vaishnava spirit is essentially the feminine spirit. In the words of Newman 'if thy soul is to go on into higher spiritual blessedness, it must become a woman, however manly thou may be among men'. This is perhaps the underlying idea of both Vaishnava and Baul songs. It is surprising how little the themes of heroism and manly achievement inspire even the ballads of Bengal, a form of expression which offers scope for dwelling on heroic virtues.

The traditional song forms of Bengal, the songs of the Bhats or Kathaks, the Agamani songs, and the plaintive story of Behula, woven into what is called 'the songs of Manasa', the snake goddess, are songs of tenderness, love and affection. Even themes full of heroic possibilities have been brought down to a tender denouement.

The story of the Ramayana, when recited to a village audience by the Kathak singers, has to appeal to the sentimental village bride as also to her virtuous in-laws. The

theme that makes the greatest impression has to be the story of Sita deserted by Rama and living only on the solace offered by young Laba, the son of Rama, in the sylvan cottage of Rishi Valmiki. But one day, while Sita goes to bring water for the household, Valmiki does not find Laba. Full of dark forebodings that the unhappy Sita's son, her only solace amidst so much sorrow, must have been lost, Valmiki creates another son for her. When Sita returns, Laba accompanying her, she finds another beautiful boy playing near the cottage. Her motherly instincts at once pour over along with the milk in her breast. The two children grow up together, they go to 'pathsala' (the village school). The other boys ask their father's name but they do not know their father, nor his name. The boys laugh at them. They come to their mother and want to know about their father. Sita embraces her children and weeps. The two brothers forget their own sorrow and console their mother. The musical poetry of the Kathak reaches a highly emotional pitch by this time and the audience responds with wet eyes and emotional exclamations.

The accent on emotion in Kathak poetry is typical of traditional rural songs and entertainments. In the Agamani songs (songs welcoming Durga)²⁰ the goddess is presented as a Duhita or daughter. The general tendency in devotional Hinduism is to imagine goddesses as mothers, often mothers of the world. But the conception of a majestic goddess like Durga as a minor village girl creates a strikingly human atmosphere.

In the Agamani songs, as in Hindu mythology, Gauri is the daughter of Giriraja Himalaya (king of the Himalayas) and Menoka. Fundamentally, this is a lofty conception full of possibilities of grandeur. But in the Agamani songs the family of Giriraja has to descend to the moist and soft earth of Bengal. Giriraja becomes a peace-loving householder and Menoka, a loving mother, not always soft-spoken but with a vast reservoir of affection. Menoka

¹⁸ *Palligiti O Purbabanga* by Chittaranjan Deb; also *Haramani* (Pt. II) Introd. (see examples of Jag and Ghatu songs).

¹⁹ *Pallichitra* (sketches of a village) by Dinendra Kumar Roy. First published in 1904; pp. 138-141.

²⁰ The tradition of Agamani songs is basically rural: see *Pallichitra*, p. 182, *Haramani*: Introduction; also *Autobiography of an unknown Indian* by Nirod Chaudhury who comments on the Agamani tradition in a Mymensingh village in the opening decade of this century. (The story underlying the Agamani songs has been reconstructed here from the *Shakta Padabali* which contains the more sophisticated compositions based on this tradition.)

is in a sense a very fortunate mother, for Gauri, her darling Uma, returns every year to her parents' home. In the golden autumn, when fields undulate with grain and nature takes on a golden look, the earth throbs with the expectation of Uma's return. Menoka dreams of her dear daughter. The dream of Menoka is a prelude to the whole series of Agamani songs.

Menoka entreats Giriraja not to waste time but to start immediately for Kailasa where Uma (Gauri) lives with her eccentric husband. It has never been very easy for a father to bring his daughter home from her husband's place, for a daughter, once married, cannot act independently. This causes Giriraja some anxiety. He, however, proceeds to Kailasa with various kinds of sweetmeats which Menoka has prepared for her daughter and son-in-law. After some initial trouble, Giriraja succeeds in bringing Uma with him but only for three days.

Mother Menoka eagerly rushes out of her home to embrace her sweet Uma. "My darling, did you forget your poor mother?" She asks in tears. To Menoka, Uma is only a child, helpless, needing a mother's protection. She can never comprehend that Uma has grown, that she has become a woman. Menoka always imagines that Uma needs solace after the careworn days spent in her husband's home. In her eagerness to welcome Uma, she becomes selfish and forgets to enquire about her son-in-law, Shiva. Her sole concern is to disarm Uma's imaginary anger. 'Abhiman' is the anger of the beloved which has its basis in love. A mother takes a keen delight in mollifying her angry child and often imagines her child to be angry for it gives her an excuse for kissing and embracing her beloved little daughter or son. 'Are you angry, dear?' Menoka anxiously enquires, 'that I have neglected you for so long?' It appears sur-

prising to her that she could spend a whole year without seeing Uma's sweet moonlike face. How cruel it was of her not to send for Uma earlier!

Menoka knows that Uma, her beloved Gauri, cannot stay in her parents' home very long. But she wants Gauri to stay eternally. And in her anxiety to keep her before her eyes for all time to come she plans to bring Shiva to the home of Giriraja and persuade him to live there for ever. But that does not appear to be a very easy thing for Shiva has an obdurate self-respect. In despair Menoka decides to tell Shiva, when he comes to take Gauri home, that Gauri is lost — she cannot be found. The fourth day, the last of Gauri's stay, inexorably arrives. A deep sorrow pervades the air and spirits become melancholy. But the time of separation associated with Vjaya, the day of Gauri's farewell, is not one of absolute sorrow. For Gauri will come again, though on a painfully short visit. The tunes of welcome and separation thus merge into one another and leave a curious feeling — melancholy blended with hope.

The story of Behula and Lakhindar has also been deeply embedded in rural tradition. Its appeal to the peasant mind and to the rural mind in general has been striking. The sacrifices of Behula for her husband, the depths of her sorrow and her optimism about the power of her love, tended to bridge the gap between the lower and upper strata of society, making equal appeal to all.

The tendency to impart purely human features to even the most majestic figures of the Hindu pantheon has been a very deep one in the rural mind of Bengal. In the songs about Shiva, he is represented as a simple peasant or a weaver or an ordinary family man.²¹ The village composers did not suffer from any inhibitions about the Creator and Destroyer of the World. Hindu mythology at the rural level has been in Bengal like her temple architecture — an extension of the cottage so peculiar in simplicity.

²¹ *Bangalir Gan* (1905) — a collection of old Bengali songs — p. 1040; also *Adyer Gambhira* (1912) by Haridas Palit.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Indian Foreign Policy—Review and Perspective

A. B. SHAH

THE uneasy cease-fire between India and Pakistan has given the leaders of both countries and the West, especially the U. S., some badly needed time for reassessing their policies in the light of a new situation. As a matter of fact, the situation is not altogether new. It started manifesting itself in the autumn of 1962 with the Russian retreat from Cuba, the Chinese invasion of India and the first flaring up of the Sino-Soviet differences in public. The only major new elements, from the standpoint of India's defence, are: the growing desperation of the Pakistani leadership over Kashmir and its willingness to risk walking into the Chinese web to spite India;¹ the definitive commitment of the U. S. in South Vietnam and Southeast Asia in general despite the advice of her blue-eyed academics, who would, in effect, prefer appeasement of China in this region; and the current Indonesian experience of 'national unity' on the basis of co-operation with communists at home.

These developments mark an unmistakable turning point in the world balance of power. One may now hope that unless the West is incredibly remiss the Soviet Union will not seek to extend her sphere of influence by an overt use of force nor will she be able to restore the unity of the communist in its confrontation with the non-communist world. Also, the danger of a major war in which the U. S. and U. S. S. R. are on opposite sides is no longer

serious. Consequently, the cracks in the two blocs will continue to grow and their individual members will seek to develop varying degrees of closer relationship with one another in increasing disregard of the wishes of the U. S. and U. S. S. R. The strictly military guarantees embodied in the NATO, CENTO and Warsaw pacts will continue to provide an unobtrusive background to what Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski last year called a 'peaceful engagement in Europe'.

The implications of this development for India and Pakistan are clear. First, the foreign policies of both countries have become irrelevant to their national interests, and especially so in India's case. This has been forcefully, if ironically, brought home to India during the last three years. For instance, in October 1962 Russia distinguished between 'brotherly China' and 'friendly India' and there is even reason to believe that she had an advance inkling of the Chinese invasion. She certainly gave China ground to believe that the latter would be justified in invading India². On the other hand, in spite of India's Orwellian neutrality in the East-West Cold War of the pre-Cuba period, the U. S. and other Western powers immediately offered unconditional military assistance to enable India to withstand the Chinese attack. One would have expected a reversal of roles on the part of the U. S. and U. S. S. R. during last September's Indo-Pakistani war. This time, however, almost the entire world has refused to sit in judgment and name the aggressor. It has, rather, contented itself with unanimously appealing for a cease-fire and a peaceful settlement of the dispute.

While India's sense of isolation is understandable, she should have been prepared

¹ In 1962, on the other hand, President Ayub Khan is reported to have assured India that she could move her troops from the Western to the Northern front without fearing that Pakistan might take advantage of the redeployment.

² Cf. William E. Griffith, *The Sino-Soviet Rift*, Allen & Unwin, London 1964, pp. 58-59.

for it. The attitude of the West is not new, for she has not yet been reconciled to Kashmir's becoming a part of India. Her failure to condemn Pakistan as aggressor, though not justifiable even by her own standards, was not quite unexpected. Besides, by refusing to judge between the aggressor and the victim of aggression she was merely flattering India by imitation. Had not India adopted a similar attitude on a number of occasions in the past—Berlin, Korea, Vietnam, Hungary and, most important of all, even Tibet which had a direct bearing on India's own defence? The West has no doubt been criminally short-sighted in missing the crucial distinction between the essentially defensive action of a democracy and the cynical use of force by a military regime in the name of religion and the right of self-determination for Kashmir. But her stand had the merit of predictability: it was foreseen, especially after Pakistan's aggression in the Rann of Kutch, by all who were not misled by self-righteousness and ignorance of the particular type of strategic interest that the U. S. has in Asia.

What was not expected by most Indians was the Russian stand. At the time of the Chinese invasion in 1962 the Sino-Soviet dispute—for which sometimes credit is wrongly given to India's policy of non-alignment—was just beginning to break out in the open and perhaps Khrushchev still had the hope that it would soon be resolved by 'comradely' discussions with the Chinese. By the beginning of 1965, and even before the palace revolution in the Kremlin, it was clear that the subjective element in the quarrel was not so important as some commentators had earlier believed and that the gulf between Russia and China was unbridgeable in the foreseeable future.

³ Cf. my review article (written on 7th October 1964), *The Kashmir Imbroglio in Opinion*, October 1964, p. 26. (Events since April 1965 have led me to modify my views on the question of plebiscite in Kashmir.)

⁴ As *Safa*, Beirut, 3rd September, 1965, (Added in the proofs) See also the *Novosty* release of November 12, 1965 in Karachi, emphasizing Russian 'impartiality' vis-a-vis India and Pakistan.

Hence it was logical to expect that Russia would therefore try to win new friends in Asia lest they be seduced or browbeaten by her revolutionary rival. This was particularly true of Pakistan and was indicated even before Khrushchev's fall.³ Recent events have only confirmed this view. For instance, a Cairo report of dateline 2nd September 1965 published in a Lebanese newspaper,⁴ which is generally pro-India, stated: 'the Soviets have...privately promised Pakistan that Russia would withhold its veto on any future discussion of the Kashmir issue before the Security Council of the U.N. The Soviets apparently are quite confident that India is in no position to object to these new Soviet manoeuvres.the Soviets have hinted at even broader support to Pakistan, both material and political'. According to the correspondent, diplomatic sources in Karachi corroborated his findings in Algiers and talked of 'several concrete offers of Soviet assistance to Pakistan and a proposal for talks in the near future to further strengthen ties between the two nations'. The despatch concluded with the observation: 'As these moves are made at a time when the fighting in Kashmir is escalating dangerously, it is not hard for observers to discern the priority Moscow is giving to what little gains it may glean in the Sino-Soviet rivalry. Obviously, Moscow must have put alternatives in the scale and found itself willing to go ahead whatever the cost may amount to'.

Events after the publication of this despatch have borne out the correspondent in more than one respect.

II

The political gains of non-alignment have thus been negligible so far as India is concerned. However, it is sometimes argued that by following this policy India was able to secure military and/or economic aid from members of both the *blocs* and thus build up her strength better than Pakistan. It would be instructive to examine

this contention before attempting to define the policy that India should henceforth adopt.

During the decade 1954-64 Pakistan received military assistance from the U.S. worth about Rs. 700 crore. Being non-aligned, India refused a similar offer, which could have been of nearly double the size, till the Chinese invasion sent her on a frantic shopping expedition round the world's capitals. The result was less than Rs. 40 crore worth of equipment from the U.S., some from other Western powers, and six MIGs from the U.S.S.R. *to be sent by ship* with the offer of setting up a MIG factory in India, which will start production at the earliest in 1966.⁵

One comes to a similar conclusion regarding economic aid also. Pakistan has received nearly three times as much per capita aid as India from the Western bloc. The Russian economic aid to India does not make much difference in view of the magnitudes involved. The *net* aid received by her till September 1964 was Rs. 1930.55 crore from the U.S. as against Rs. 152.63 crore from the U.S.S.R., giving a ratio of 12.65 : 1.⁶ And as mentioned earlier, Russia is now keen on giving economic aid to Pakistan too.

The foregoing analysis does not imply that India could have afforded to forgo the

aid it did receive from any country, communist or non-communist. It is only meant to show that *non-alignment has not yielded significant differential gains in any field of real importance for India as a developing modern, secular democracy*. All that it seems to have secured her is the passing approbation of some pacifist intellectuals in the West. As against this dubious advantage, it had two major disadvantages for India. First, being rooted in wishful thinking rather than an understanding of modern totalitarianism, it prevented Indian statesmen from recognizing the leading role that geopolitics has determined for India and the possibility of her playing it satisfactorily in the interests of peace and stability in Southeast Asia. The second largest nation in the world and the only major democratic state in the Afro-Asian land mass can only be either the pace-setter and model for other free nations threatened by communist aggression or subversion in this region, or a camp-follower of one of the two super-powers. It cannot remain aloof from the global struggle between democracy and totalitarianism, for even its mere existence as a democracy is a constant challenge to Communist China and a counter-example to the smaller nations of the Third World. To withdraw from the conflicts of this world in order to pursue one's own salvation, while it may be in keeping with the Hindu tradition, is not possible for a nation like India. For, in both size and potentialities, she is too important to be left alone by those who are not so other-worldly in their approach to international life. One cannot be a saint and a statesman at the same time and yet non-alignment, even in its purest form, required precisely this of those who led India till 1962.

But India's non-alignment was no longer pure after 1954. Being touchy over Kashmir, she was forced to rely on the Russian veto and the diplomatic support of the Arab bloc led by Egypt. Also, an outdated conception of communism made Nehru lean 'more towards the Soviet Union and, for a

⁵ It should not cause surprise if before the factory is completed, the U.S.S.R. too, like the West, once again advises India to solve the Kashmir dispute with Pakistan to mutual satisfaction by political means. This would not be inconsistent with continued Russian aid to India in view of the magnitude of the Chinese threat and the clear breach between China and Russia.

⁶ (Added in the proofs) Cf. also: 'Out of the total foreign assistance of Rs. 5,200 crores (by way of loans, grants and P. L. 480 arrangements) authorized in the postwar period upto March 1965 the Soviet Union's share was 9.3 per cent, as against 52.2 per cent for the U.S., 12.2 per cent for the World Bank, 7.7 per cent for West Germany, 6.4 per cent for the U.K.; aid authorizations under the American P.L. 480 assistance alone amounted to Rs. 1,386 crores or about 50 per cent of the total U.S. share of Rs. 2,720 crores.' — The Financial Editor of the *Times of India* in the issue of November 25, 1965.

considerable time, towards Communist China.⁷ Consequently, he could not seriously imagine that India might ever be required to fight a major war. Defence was neglected and the purpose of foreign policy came to be identified with that of keeping certain governments in sufficiently good humour for ensuring economic assistance or political support on the issue of Kashmir. Other countries were neglected and other issues brushed aside as not relevant to India. In practice this meant that Indian foreign policy revolved round Moscow, Peking and Cairo⁸ rather than strike out a path of its own. There was no corresponding need to please the West, especially the U.S.; its commitment to defend the free world against communist aggression could be taken for granted. One could also count on the greater tolerance that a democratic government was likely to show toward its critics even if the criticism was not always honest and helpful.

III

The suicidal implications of this naive, narcissistic and self-righteous foreign policy were partially made clear by the Chinese invasion of 1962. It promised to jolt Indians out of the 'artificial world of our own creation'⁹ but, in fact, proved only a temporary prod. The prompt Western response to India's cry for succour was of immeasurable significance for sustaining her morale, but it was also responsible for an oversimplification of India's real problem. The crux of this problem was, not the aggressive designs and relatively great military strength of China but India's persistent refusal to recognize the nature of the world in which she had to live, her tendency to project her own romantic idealism con-

cerning peace and economic development onto other nations regardless of their social systems and cultural traditions, and her inability to see the beam in her own eye while pointing to the mote in her friends'. Added to this was the absence of an articulate and strong enough will to live as a self-respecting democracy and to pay the price thereof. The assurance of immediate American assistance for defence and development in the face of the Chinese threat inhibited the full realization of this problem. As a matter of fact, it enabled most Indians (though not the Defence Ministry) soon to relapse into smug complacency as though the events of 1962 were but a bad dream.

One should be grateful to Pakistan for accomplishing for India what China only partially did three years ago. The undeclared war of September last, though child's play when judged by the standards of modern warfare, is likely to prove a major turning point in the evolution of Indian character. It has brought home to Indians many truths which for centuries they had failed to understand and has, partly at least, released them from the tyranny of words. They have learnt, for instance, that friendliness is not always a reciprocating quality and that relations among nations are governed by criteria different from those that are relevant at the interpersonal level. They have found, even if to their chagrin, that the policy of non-alignment does not ensure in a crisis the automatic and unambiguous support of its admirers, and that it can even boomerang on its practitioner. A policy of alignment, on the other hand, does not necessarily imply that the junior partner in the alliance has to become a satellite of the senior. The behaviour of the BBC, the British press, and a section of the American press has made it clear that one's own conviction regarding the justice of one's cause does not by itself induce a sympathetic belief in others. Equally, it does not help to fly into self-righteous rage over the partisanship of the

⁷ Frank Moraes, *A New Foreign Policy* in "The Indian Express", October 11, 1965.

⁸ Cf. 'Sometimes an Indian watching his Government's attitude to Israel is forced to ask: "From where is India ruled? From Cairo or New Delhi?"' Frank Moraes, *op. cit.*

⁹ Jawaharlal Nehru, at the meeting of State Information Ministers on October 25, 1962.

foreign press. What is necessary is the realization of the truth that the preparation for defence, in the public forum as in the battlefield, has to be ceaselessly carried on in times of peace. Even then one may not succeed in winning the support of others on a particular issue. After all, the Indian press has not always been a model of fair reporting and sound judgment on questions where its own prejudices were involved, nor has the Government of India invariably shown great consideration for the susceptibilities and interests of India's friends in mounting moralistic offensives when they were in a difficulty. Indeed, nations rarely have all their interests in common. It would therefore be naive to expect even the most friendly of them to support one on every issue. A mature nation would not mind criticism, even non-co-operation, on certain occasions so long as nothing fundamentally hostile to its vital interests was attempted by its critics. Most Indians, even in high places, have yet to understand that friendship between nations is subject to a number of qualifications of this type.¹⁰

The realization of the limits of friendship in international affairs would lead to a better grasp of two further truths. First,

¹⁰ However, there are signs that such understanding is developing of late and that Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri had it even before the Indo-Pakistani war. For significant reactions from the national press, Cf. Frank Moraes, *op. cit.* and N. J. Nanporia, *Wanted: An Asian Ally* in "The Times of India", 27 September 1965.

¹¹ The Russian attitude too was more positive this time than three years ago, though it is difficult to guess what Russia would do if the U.S. were to be involved in a massive way in a Sino-Indian war that threatened the very existence of the communist régime in China.

¹² The self-restraint shown even by Mr Swaran Singh on the U.S. action in South Vietnam after the uncalled for contrast he struck between Kashmir and Vietnam in early September in Parliament is an instance in point. However, some of the broadcasts on the A.I.R., at least in August and September, showed a lack of restraint and a clear attempt to exploit the situation—not in India's interest but in that of a certain group in the Congress party.

¹³ Prohibition, the linguistic reorganization of States and Tibet are a few examples, each from a different field.

no nation can live with self-respect unless it is prepared to go it alone on certain occasions. And, secondly, going it alone implies the willingness to do without assistance even from those who, on other occasions, would gladly extend it on a much larger scale and take much greater risks for its sake. The American reaction to the Chinese ultimatum to India showed that denial of aid in one context need not preclude it in another.¹¹ Statesmanship would therefore seem to lie in so controlling the expression of one's disappointment and even anger that such co-operation is not rendered unnecessarily difficult. The playing down of the anti-American feeling by the Government,¹² especially by the Prime Minister, and a section of the press is a welcome sign of rapidly growing maturity in this respect under the impact of recent events.

There still remains a considerable degree of naiveness as illustrated by the demand for a public expression of regret by the U.S. Government for its failure to foresee and prevent the Pakistani use of American arms against India. Those who make this demand do not seem to understand that in public life mistakes are only rectified, they are seldom admitted. The Indian Government too has not behaved differently in the past¹³ and, in any case, what is more important now is to ensure that such mistakes are not committed again. By itself this particular example has little significance, but the attitude it illustrates has proved—and it can still prove—a serious block in the way of India's evolving a foreign policy best calculated to serve her national interests.

The answer to the question, 'What should India's foreign policy be?' will depend on the assumptions one makes regarding the purpose it is expected to serve and the context in which it is designed to operate. A third factor, which we shall briefly consider first, would be the character and competence of the men who are called upon to implement this policy. Much would depend on the degree of self-confi-

dence they bring to their task, their understanding of international affairs (especially the main forces shaping the modern world), and their ability to free themselves from the 'bewitchment of language' without losing their sense of values. If the men at the helm of the nation's affairs are not capable of playing the game of power politics with the requisite degree of patience, detachment and idealism no policy, however wisely conceived, is likely to be of much use. If Indian democracy cannot throw up the right type of men out of the present generation of leaders, one has to resign oneself to a period of continued bungling with an uncertain outcome. There are grounds for optimism here, for recent events have demonstrated that Nehru's successors can take unpleasant major decisions and implement them with confidence and *aplomb*. Compared to 1962, there was little hysteria and no panic this time. And, paradoxical as it may sound, the recent armed conflict with Pakistan will perhaps contribute to the growth of a good-neighbourly relationship between her and India. The reason is simple: co-operation presupposes, among other things, a healthy mutual respect for each other. This was lacking on Pakistan's part till Indian troops marched into her territory. Before then China and Pakistan had been counting on the almost pathological inhibition that India had against a full-scale war.¹⁴

Even the West seemed to have started writing off Indian democracy as doomed to go the Kuomintang way. Tacitly accepting as valid the statistics of Communist China's economic growth and the standards of evaluation of national progress as formulated by her admirers, peripatetic intellectuals and 'progressive' journalists from

the West had begun predicting a dire end to the Indian experiment.¹⁵ They would come to India for a month or a year, visit the same big cities, meet the same set of officials, university professors and sophisticated editors and arrive at identical conclusions—without knowing a single indigenous language or seeing for themselves what was happening in the mofussil, outside the big cities. The non-communist press in Western Europe, reflecting a different interest — that of expanding trade with Communist China—had also come to the same position. A depressing consequence of all this was the growing demoralization of the Indian intelligentsia, most of whose members, in spite of their political chauvinism, continue to look to Western commentators for finding out the condition of their own nation's health. This mutual reinforcement of each other's pessimism over the future of Indian democracy had gone so far among Western intellectuals and their Indian counterparts that it had even become a minor causal factor in bringing nearer the very disaster which they were ostensibly concerned about. Having been used to looking upon Nehru as the sole symbol of Indian democracy and the only guarantee of its survival, they could not imagine anything but the deluge to follow his death. Most of them were the flotsam of the Leftist tide of the 'thirties, or the new sophisticates of the post-War boom to whom 'progressivism' is a convenient climbing ladder to popularity and influence. For these people there was only one of two fates in store for post-Nehru India: a take-over by a left or right dictatorship, or economic stagnation and political disintegration due to a variety of divisive forces in the absence of a dynamic, towering *paterfamilias* who could keep the feuding children together. The survival of India as a democratic nation and the controlled but effective response it gave to Pakistan's aggression and China's ultimatum was not in the book that they had read. One may hope that they too have

¹⁴ Possibly the incident in the Rann of Kutch was an attempt at probing the mood of the Shastri Government and confirmed the belief of Pakistan's leaders that, as Indian leaders themselves repeatedly asserted, there was no real break from the tradition of the Nehru age.

¹⁵ Cf., for example, Ronald Segal, *The Crisis of India*, Penguin Books, London 1965.

learnt something now and will not be shocked again.

It is only against this changed background that the purpose and context of India's foreign policy can be outlined.

V

A country's foreign policy, like any of its other policies, is an instrument of its national interests and would therefore be determined by the conception it holds of these interests. In the order of their importance in terms of means-ends relationships, I would list democracy, secularism, economic growth and social justice as among the major goals of India's national policy.

India's foreign policy should therefore seek, besides other things, to strengthen democracy everywhere in the world without necessarily turning a blind eye to its defects or weaknesses. This does *not* imply that *she* should everytime take up cudgels against a dictatorship, but it does mean that in a struggle between democracy and dictatorship, be it on a local or on a global scale, her sympathies would unmistakably be on the democratic side. This is necessary because the survival of democracy or the weakening of dictatorship is not only demanded by the values that India professes but is also *in her own national interest*. If as sometimes happens, the nature of a particular conflict is complicated or partly vitiated by local factors (as in the case of Vietnam), it is all the more necessary to view local events in a world perspective and assess their significance for one's own country before deciding one's position.

The conflict in South Vietnam illustrates the context in which India's foreign policy has to operate. This context is characterized by the existence of two super-powers, the U.S. and U.S.S.R., each committed to a broadly distinguishable set of values and each enjoying in varying degrees the support of a number of other nations. Secondly, both the *blocs* have developed

serious cracks following upon the Soviet realization that the age of Red Napoleonism is already over and that peaceful competition in non-military fields is now the only possible mode of the spread of Russian influence. Also, as time passes the Soviet Union will increasingly realize that the real threat to her power stems, not from the U.S. but from Communist China. Consequently, Russian policy in Southeast Asia will operate at two levels. If she can, the U.S.S.R. will try to extend her hegemony at the cost of the U.S. and China. She would therefore make special efforts to cultivate the friendship of non-aligned nations and wean the aligned ones away from both the U.S. and China. But if she has to choose between these two rivals, she would generally support the U.S. in a passive manner as long as the latter does not pose a serious threat to the very existence of the communist régime in China. For Russia, a militarily and diplomatically *weakened but communist* China would be preferable to a non-communist or strong communist China. It is difficult to ensure this without at the same time strengthening either India or the U.S. in this region. But this is a dilemma of the Soviet position to which there seems to be no satisfactory answer.

A related feature of the context of Indian foreign policy is the emergence of Communist China as an aggressive, revolutionary dictatorship which seeks to overthrow, by force or subversion, such governments as are not willing to act as her satellites. It is clear that the free countries of Southeast Asia have only two choices. Either they should come to terms with Peking and thus seal their future with their own hands, or they should band themselves together for meeting the Chinese challenge. Since none of these countries except India is even potentially strong enough to offer successful resistance by itself or to function as the rallying point for a concert of free Asian nations, there can be no peace or stability in this region unless India herself or, failing her, the U.S. decides to fill this

role. The disadvantages of the latter's doing so are obvious and need not be detailed here. It follows that it is both India's privilege and her obligation to take the initiative in this field. In any case, as stated earlier, India herself has no choice but to take such an initiative. Otherwise she must face a gradual erosion of her status as a free nation.

The question of India's relationship with the other countries in this region has to be considered from the standpoint outlined above. It would mean, for example, that in certain respects the interests of India as a politically stable and economically and militarily viable democratic state will claim priority over some of the usual considerations of international life.

Thus the question of self-determination for a border state like Kashmir has to be viewed not only from the standpoint of political principles in the abstract but also from that of its implications for the security and defence of India. No major state can afford the moral satisfaction of granting the right of self-determination to a small border state, however unpleasant the necessity of such denial may be. Similarly, the other smaller states on the borders of India should, in their own interest, be willing to order their defence and foreign policies in co-operation with India so that their independence and the stability of the region as a whole are not undermined. These considerations would be valid regardless of China, but they assume special significance in view of her declared long-term objective in relation to Southeast Asia.

If India's foreign policy is to develop successfully on these lines, besides inspiring confidence in the smaller states of the region, she will have to come to a certain understanding with the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Their assistance can be of incalculable value provided India can get it without compromising any of the major goals of her national policy. Subject to this proviso, if American and Russian co-operation is available it should be welcome without reservation. However, if for any

reasons, such as a difference of opinion on how best the Chinese threat can be contained and by whom, India should be prepared to go ahead on its own. There is, as a matter of fact, no reason to believe that the U.S. would not feel relieved at such a development. Russia, too, will probably prefer to play a friendly but supporting rather than an initiating role in maintaining the peace and stability of this region.

If the argument so far is sound, certain conclusions would seem to follow. First, India's foreign policy should henceforth be positive, forward-looking and better oriented to countries of Southeast Asia than it has till now been. This does not mean that she should sever or allow to fall into desuetude her ties with the West. On the contrary, she is the only major non-Western society in which the historically Western values of modern liberal democracy have taken root and thus demonstrated their universality. Culturally, too, and in the growth of political institutions and economic development she has to gain more from the West than from any other group of nations. Hence whatever the irritations of the present, it would be against India's interest to weaken her relationship with the West. At the same time, India's defence and security are inextricably tied up with those of the other non-communist nations of Asia, including Japan, Taiwan and, for the purpose under discussion, Australia and New Zealand. She is therefore uniquely qualified to act as a bridge between the East and the West, not in the anaemic and negative manner of the last eighteen years but as a creative interpreter standing midway between the two. What is required is, thus, not a transfer but a widening of her foreign policy interests so as to embrace the countries whose co-operation is most vital to India's defence and, maybe in a few years' time, her economy too.

Secondly, India should clearly distinguish between countries whose national interests are basically in harmony with her own and those whose interests are essentially diffe-

rent from hers. *'National interests' does not mean material interests alone in the usual sense; it also includes the way of life that a nation has chosen for itself.* Consequently, a country that is governed by a dictatorship—be it communist, theocratic or secular and non-ideological—is *prima facie* unlikely to have any but some specific interests in common with India. Also, equally among democracies and dictatorships there is bound to be at any given time a whole spectrum of affinities and incompatibilities of interest, among themselves and in relation to India. The benefit or harm that may come from any of them would vary with each country and the situation in which it is activated. India's foreign policy should be based on a clear grasp of these differences—between, say, the U.S. and the U.K., Communist China and the U.S.S.R., the U.A.R. and Indonesia, Japan and Taiwan—and, without loss of moorings, be flexible enough to yield the optimum result in a given situation.

Communist China and Pakistan are in a special category, illustrating as they do the incompatibility of a democracy and dictatorship if they are neighbours of comparable strength. The only basis on which a workable good-neighbourly relationship can develop with them is one of respect born out of a healthy fear of effective retaliation. However, it would be wrong to lump China and Pakistan together, the most important difference between the two being the potentially incomparable strength of India in relation to Pakistan. Thus Pakistan by herself can only have a nuisance value for India. It is only if she succeeds in involving China actively on her side in a war with India that Pakistan can become a real menace to Indian democracy.

¹⁶ *Military Balance 1964-65*, quoted in D. E. Kennedy, *The Security of Southern Asia*, Chatto and Windus, London 1965.

¹⁷ And yet there were Indians who condemned the patrolling of the Indian Ocean by the American Seventh Fleet after the Chinese invasion of 1962!

¹⁸ For details of the military strength of India, Pakistan and Communist China see the appendix at the end of the article.

It follows that India should try at least to neutralize Pakistan's hostility, if not convert it into friendship. Secondly, India should be able to contain China effectively, by political means if possible and by military ones if necessary.

VI

It is in this respect that India's defence problem becomes directly relevant to her foreign policy. A wrong conception of this problem has, till only the other day, been responsible for her pursuing a foreign policy (and an economic strategy) that can only be described as romantic at best, suicidal at worst. It will therefore be helpful to have some quantitative idea of the tasks involved in working out a viable defence policy as the indispensable complement of a sensible foreign policy.

According to a study published by the Institute for Strategic Studies,¹⁶ Communist China had at the end of October 1964 about three times as large an army and air force as India. The disparity in naval strength was still worse.¹⁷ If Pakistan and Indonesia were to be actively involved on China's side in a Sino-Indian war their combined might would be overwhelming against India even after allowing for the limitations that considerations of logistics and home security would impose on the deployment of Chinese troops.¹⁸ In other words, India cannot expect to muster in the near future sufficient military strength to be able to teach Communist China a lesson without large-scale assistance from friendly countries. Such assistance can only come from the U.S. The Soviet Union, though at present sympathetic to India and willing to give her military equipment, cannot be expected to go all out in her support in the case of a shooting war with China. The reasons are easy to see, one of them being the possibility of a revolt in the party leadership if the Russian Government were to be directly involved, *on behalf of a non-communist country*, in hostile military action against a fellow-communist

state. Nor would it be safe for India to have the U.S.S.R. so involved beyond the supply of military hardware. The experience of East European countries liberated by Russian as against those liberated by British and American troops from the Nazi yoke should serve as a corrective to the current pro-Soviet mood among army and government circles in India. 'He should have a long spoon that sups with the Devil.'

One of the main goals of India's foreign policy will therefore have to be the cultivation of a close understanding with the U.S. (this does *not* imply the necessity of India's joining any *bloc* in the old sense) — if possible, without alienating the U.S.S.R. but, if necessary, even at the risk of incurring her temporary displeasure. However, mere willingness will not suffice. India will have to be prepared to remove the two major hurdles that have so far lain in the way of her developing a dynamic and co-operative, as contrasted with a mere doner-and-donee relationship with the U.S. One of these has been the Indian failure to understand the nature of the Chinese threat and the magnitude and variety of the preparation necessary to meet it. Even today Indian pronouncements do not show a clear grasp of the political and military problems involved in the containment of China. Or, if such an understanding were there, apparently the Government of India lacks the moral courage to take up the position implicit in it. In either case, it will need considerable effort to convince the U.S. of India's new determination, and this effort will have to include a frank disownment of some important elements of the foreign policy tradition inherited by the present administration.

The Kashmir question is the other hurdle. With all that has been happening during the last eighteen years it would be naive to imagine that once the dispute over Kashmir is resolved to the satisfaction of both the parties, Pakistan will suddenly become friendly to India. At the same time it is equally true that a mutually satis-

factory solution of this dispute is a precondition for the normalization of their relationship. This is not a question solely of right and wrong as Indians have all along sought to make it out. The real problem in politics is one of striking a balance between what is right and what is practicable, since the two do not always coincide. Now it is clear that a neutral, if not friendly, Pakistan will be of great value to India both in a Sino-Indian war and in her role as the rallying point for free Asia. This is precisely what China has realized in her relationship with the smaller nations of this region. There is no reason why India should not learn something from her enemy and isolate *her* instead of herself being isolated. If anything, the objective situation now is remarkably favourable to India provided only she can take a larger and long-term view of it. Perhaps it will not even take so long as one may initially believe before such a policy begins to bear fruit.

It is estimated by experts that in about ten years from now, if not earlier, China will be a full-fledged nuclear power. She will then be in a position to give an ultimatum to India — either openly, or through Pakistan in order to avoid American retaliation on India's behalf. Even if India were to decide on the manufacture of nuclear weapons, it is obvious that without American co-operation it will be difficult to overtake China in the near future. A political solution of the Kashmir dispute is therefore desirable in the interests of Indian defence. It is out of the question today because of Pakistan's insistence on a plebiscite and her recourse to armed aggression. However, it is likely that with the passage of time events of the last two months (i.e. September and October 1965) — the drubbing that the Pakistani army received, the stoppage of American arms aid, the exposure of China as an unreliable ally, the refusal of the Kashmiris to rise in revolt against India, the danger of a separatist movement in East Pakistan, the Chinese-inspired military *coup* in Indonesia

— will seriously weaken the extremist, pro-China group represented by Mr Bhutto and strengthen the more sober group in the Pakistani leadership. Indian policy should unobtrusively encourage such a development.

When such a development takes place in Pakistan, the time would have come for India and Pakistan to listen to the advice of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. and seek for a mutually satisfactory solution of the Kashmir problem. What shape such a solution would take is difficult to foresee at present. Perhaps a partition of Kashmir as reportedly suggested at different times by Nehru and Ayub Khan, with adequate arrangements for safeguarding India's defence interests, would be a possible way out. President Ayub Khan's talk of a 'meaningful solution' — as distinguished from his and Mr Bhutto's earlier demand for a plebiscite—may also, in the end, prove not to be very different from this. Such a solution would have the merit of regularizing the situation that India has never sought to alter by force. It would also enable both countries to save face and to that extent facilitate the evolution of a good-neighbourly relationship between India and Pakistan.

Alternatively, if a permanent partition of Kashmir were to be avoided an arrangement under which she would enjoy a special status of the type that Sikkim has, or of the type that has sometimes been suggested for Nagaland, would have to be considered. Pakistan is not now likely to accept such an arrangement, but it would absolve India from blame in the eyes of well-meaning critics abroad and secure the

loyalty of the people of Kashmir. The only plausible objection that Pakistan can raise to it would be based on the fear of a possible Indian use of Kashmir in a future war with her. The only satisfactory reply to this would be a no-war declaration by both countries and sustained efforts by them to evolve ultimately a programme of joint defence of the sub-continent.

A solution of this type rules out a plebiscite, and there is no reason why India should go on offering legalistic arguments, however valid, for disowning her conditional commitment of an earlier age. What is important from the standpoint of democracy is, not the exercise of the right of self-determination by a small border region but the creation of a stable and democratic administration in the interest of its inhabitants. Such a matter-of-fact approach, which frankly places the requirements of the defence and stability of a large democratic state above formal considerations, need not appear strange to other nations — certainly not to those who can accept continued Russian military presence in Eastern Europe, British rule in Gibraltar, Aden and Hongkong, or American action in Cuba, Vietnam and Latin America. It is time that Western statesmen who are more interested in Indian democracy than in trade with China recognized the needs of its defence — just as it is also time that Indians came out of their shell of self-righteous virtue and took a more realistic view of the global context of Indian democracy. For unless they did this, no amount of heroism and sacrifice would enable them to save the ideals in whose name they justify their stand.¹⁹

21 October 1965

¹⁹Many articulate Indians, including a large proportion of the leading members of the ruling party, would be unwilling to entertain any doubt regarding the *wisdom*, let alone the *validity*, of the official Indian stand on Kashmir—all the greater reason for introspection and modesty instead of indiscriminate condemnation of every dissent as unpatriotic! Ironically enough, the Swatantra and Left Communist parties would probably agree — though for different reasons — on the types of solution of the Kashmir problem suggested above.

(The original draft of this article contained a brief section dealing with the defence and economic policies appropriate to the foreign policy advocated here. It has been omitted from this text with a view to giving it a less cursory treatment at a later date. *The author alone is responsible for the views expressed here.*)

The paper was the basis of discussion at a seminar on *Indian Foreign Policy* convened by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom at New Delhi on November 14, 1965 and by it and Wilson College at Bombay on December 6-7, 1965.)

Appendix

MILITARY STRENGTH OF INDIA, CHINA AND PAKISTAN

(as on October 31, 1964)

(Source. *Military Balance* 1964-65, quoted in D. E. Kennedy, *The Security of Southern Asia*, Chatto and Windus, London 1965)

India

1. *Population*. 470,000,000.
- *2. *Defence estimates* (1964-65).
Rs. 8,937,700,000 (= \$ 1,970 million).
3. *Army*. Total sanctioned strength: 825,000 plus 47,000 in volunteer reserve.
4. *Navy*. Total strength: 16,000. The ships include: 1 16,000-ton carrier, 2 cruisers, 3 destroyers, 5 anti-submarine frigates, 5 other escort ships, 6 mine-sweepers, 13 light coastal vessels, 2 amphibious warfare ships, 5 survey vessels. Naval aircraft includes 24 Sea Hawk strike/interceptor planes and 15 Alize ASW planes.

5. *Air Force*. Total strength: 28,000 (sanctioned strength, 45 squadrons). The planes include:

2 HF-24 Marut fighter-bombers, 4 interceptor squadrons with 25 Mystere IV. each, 4 interceptor squadrons with 25 Gnats each, 4 bomber squadrons with 20 Canberras each, 6 fighter-bomber squadrons with 25 Hunters each, several Ouragan and Vampire fighter-bomber squadrons, 1 reconnaissance squadron with 8 Canberras.

China

1. *Population*. 750,000,000 (estimated).
2. *Defence budget*. Not known.
3. *Army*. Total strength: 2,250,000 plus 250,000 para-military forces backed up by a civilian militia of many millions. 4 armoured divisions and 1 or 2 air-borne divisions.

4. *Navy*. Total strength: 136,000 including naval infantry. The ships include:

28 submarines, 4 destroyer escorts, 800 other vessels, some high-speed MTBs. 500 naval aircraft. Amphibious capability is primitive.

5. *Air Force*. Total strength: 90,000. There were 2300 aircraft, most of them being MIG interceptors, mainly MIG-15s and MIG-17s with a small number of MIG-19s. There was a force of light bombers, mainly IL-28s and a small number of transport planes, including a few *recently* acquired IL-28s. The Civil Air Bureau had about 350 aircraft.

Pakistan

1. *Population*. 98,570,000.
2. *Defence budget* (1964-65). Rs. 1,290,000,000 (= \$ 269 million).
3. *Army*. Total strength: 230,000 plus 250,000 lightly armed militia and 30,000 Azad Kashmir troops. 8 divisions organized on a triangular basis and equipped with M-47 tanks.
4. *Navy*. Total strength: 7,700. The ships include: 1 light cruiser, 5 destroyers, 2 ASW frigates, 8 minesweepers, 10 other ships.
5. *Air Force*. Total strength: 17,000-25,000. There were 200 aircraft, which included: 30 B-57A Canberras in two squadrons, 1 F-104 star-fighter squadron (a second was to be formed), 4 F-86F Sabre squadrons. RT-33As are used for tactical reconnaissance. The transport force includes 4 C-130 B Hercules.

What is Wrong with our Foreign Policy

M. R. MASANI, M. P.

AT the end of the recent debate in the General Assembly of the UN, the Press Trust of India made an analysis of the trends in regard to our dispute with Pakistan. I am quoting from the *Hindustan Times* of 23rd October: The Spokesmen of 63 nations were neutral and did not go beyond appealing for peace. 19 were hostile to India and, of these 19, 11 were Arab States. 3 made passing references, but did not say anything. 25 ignored the issue. Out of 110, not one spoke up for us. This is something that cannot be side-tracked by recording satisfaction at our 'success' in the Security Council. This has left our people bewildered; it has left some of our people rather angry. But it is no good flying into a rage when nobody else can see our point of view. It reminds me of the story of the fond mother who went to see a military parade. At the end of the parade, her comment was; 'Everybody was out of step except my Johnny'. We cannot afford to be Johnny. We are living in a world community, where we must be in step with democratic nations whose friendship we regard. We cannot resign from the Human Race and turn our back on humanity. In a way, let us console ourselves that, since imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, other nations have copied us and remained non-aligned in our dispute. Over the last fifteen years we have often taken the stand that we will not judge what is right or wrong. We should take sportingly the fact that other countries are now giving us back a little of our own medicine!

The important thing is: why did this happen and how do we prevent a recurrence of such isolation? Let us look the facts in the face. Was it only bad public relations, as some of our leaders allege? Was it the fault of our diplomats? It must be said in all fairness that it was not a failure of public relations or diplomacy. I

have been a practitioner of public relations. You cannot sell a product if the product is no good. The first thing in public relations is to have a saleable product. There is no point in blaming our diplomats and ambassadors. We did not give them a product they could successfully sell in the councils of the world.

What was wrong with our foreign policy? It had three basic weaknesses. First of all, it was naive. Our Pancha Sheela pact with Communist China was the most notorious example of our political innocence. The betrayal of Tibet, for which we are now paying, was the result of it. Our naivete in another direction was to believe that, if we only turned our backs on Israel, all the Arab nations would support us against Pakistan. But, as I said just now, eleven of the Arab States spoke against us in the U.N. General Assembly. What is more, at Algiers, President Nasser joined the Chinese Communists in defeating our move to hold the Conference. The second thing from which our foreign policy suffered was its narcissistic character — watching ourselves in the mirror and admiring ourselves, assuming all the while that the rest of the world saw us as we saw ourselves. We have now learnt that the image existed only in our imagination.

The third thing which was wrong was our self-righteousness, the air of moral superiority we adopted towards every body else, teaching them lessons, talking down at them, refusing to judge between right and wrong — whether it was in Berlin or Hungary or Tibet, talking of Peace, when other people were fighting for Freedom and Justice. The latest example was that for the last twelve months, we needled those in Vietnam who were trying to defend that country against the aggression of Communist China and its satellite. We kept on telling them: 'You must not cross the frontier; defence must be on your own territory'. And then, history caught up with us, and we had to cross the frontier our-

* Based on a speech in the Lok Sabha on November 15, 1965.

selves! These are the basic defects of our foreign policy for which we are paying the price of being isolated. That foreign policy has ceased to have any relevance to our present needs. We have to come to terms with reality. As was said before, 'Too long have we lived in an artificial world of our own creation'.

What is the reality? The reality is that the biggest threat to our independence, our way of life and our survival comes from Communist China. The minor threat is the one which comes from its ally, Pakistan. I do not discount the malice of Pakistan; but I do doubt its capability to do us very much harm. Pakistan by itself we have taken the measure of. We have shown that we can put it in its place. But the challenge of Communist China is a more permanent and more fundamental challenge, not only to our survival, but to our democratic way of life. The only choice for us, along with the other countries of this region, is to stand up to Communist China or succumb and become its satellite. Of all the countries of this region, except Japan, ours is the only country that can take the initiative and lead in bringing about arrangements for the security of South and South-East Asia. India, along with Japan, is cast by geopolitics, by her position, by her size, by her democratic institutions, by her maturity, to lead the countries of this region. The question before us is whether we are going to accept this role or become a miserable camp-follower. I have no doubt that the people of India would wish our Government to assume that role.

If that is agreed, then the question arises: what should be our attitude and posture as one of the leaders of Free Asia? If we want to be a Power, we must behave like a Power; just talking like one is not enough. Our obligation is to join with Japan in rallying the countries of South and South-East Asia which lie between us to defend the free way of life which is menaced by Chinese imperialism and its allies. We have to provide that solidarity to

them which we have failed to do in the last fifteen years. We have turned our back on our neighbours. We dealt with China unilaterally; we never consulted Burma, or Pakistan when we signed the Pancha Sheela treaty. Other countries in Asia feel that the Himalayas are not only our frontier, but the frontier of all the South and South-East Asian countries. They will join in its defence if we give them that opportunity.

What is required is a regional security arrangement with all countries within the triangle made by India at one end, Japan at another and Australasia at the third. Let us give up this caste system of judging between non-aligned and aligned nations which we have followed to our disaster so far. We made friends with Indonesia because it was non-aligned. Look how she has treated us! We turned our back upon Japan and Malaysia because they were aligned. And yet it is they who have given us friendship and support.

So far as Pakistan is concerned, we shall have to have two policies: a short term and a long-term policy. In the short-term, our firm posture of resisting any aggression or infiltration must be maintained. This limited objective of the armed conflict with Pakistan in September, as defined by our President and the Prime Minister, has, I think, been fulfilled. The aggressor has been taught a lesson. He has been shown that this country is not prepared to be pushed around any more. I, for one, do not believe that Pakistan has the capability, placed as she is today, to launch any major attack on this country by herself. If that happens, the attempt will be defeated in the same way as it was last time.

Our long-term policy should be to keep the door open to normal friendly relations which are so demonstrably necessary in the interest of both countries. These must be established some day, even if it takes months or years, if the two countries are not to take the wrong path and go down in mutual destruction. Geography has made us intimate neighbours. If I do not like my

neighbour in a house or a flat I can move to another, but a country does not enjoy that luxury of moving away from a neighbour. Sooner or later, therefore — let us hope, sooner rather than later — the two countries have to learn to co-exist. For this to come about, however, there will have to be a change of heart first on the part of the present Government of Pakistan.

So far as Kashmir is concerned, I believe that Pakistan, as a result of its wicked collusion with Communist China and its aggression against us, has lost whatever *locus standi* it had. There can be no concession made to Pakistan in regard to Kashmir which may be misconstrued as a reward for the misdeeds of Pakistan. But surely we will not forget the obligations we have undertaken towards the people of Kashmir. A solution of the problem has, therefore, to be worked out, but this should be done on our own initiative and at the proper time. Whatever the solution, it will have to be mutually acceptable to, and in the interests of, both the people of India and the people of Kashmir. What does this mean? It means that whatever the future status of Kashmir and its relationship with the Indian Union, it can only be one which, as in the case of Nagaland, is acceptable to India, which fits in with our national interests and our national security.

In conditions of infiltration and guerilla warfare, it is wellknown that the goodwill of the civilian population can, in the long run, be decisive. It is, therefore, essential that all steps should be taken to win over those in Kashmir who are as yet uncommitted or who are opposed to that part of the country going to Pakistan. These are the people whom we must consult and with whom we shall have to work out a solution. In some sections of our Press and public opinion there has been an unfortunate failure to make this distinction between those who are pro-Pakistani and those who are opposed to Pakistan whatever else their views may be. If we are to defeat the enemy, we shall have to learn

to make this distinction and we shall have to avoid the folly of saying 'he who is not with me is against me'. In our own national interest, it is essential that a policy of conciliation should be instituted in Kashmir without any further delay.

I come now to a very important point, and that is about our future relations with two great powers — the United States of America and the Soviet Union. If the Chinese and Pakistani combination is to be resisted successfully, I believe that the help of the great powers is essential. Any talk of going it alone in the face of this combination is unrealistic and would be disastrous to our national interest. Both these great powers have in the last few months played a constructive role in bringing about a cease-fire. We need the friendship and goodwill of both these powers. In the changed circumstances, it would be a mistake to think in terms of exclusive friendship, friendship with one as against the other. But the fact has to be faced that both these powers function under certain limitations.

In the case of the United States, its limitation is that it cannot take sides in a dispute between two countries in the non-Communist world. This has happened in many parts of the world. I give the recent example of Cyprus where Turkey and Greece, both its allies, were at loggerheads. The United States did not take sides and tried to reconcile them. This is the role of the leading power in the non-Communist world. It is no good quarrelling with that; it has got to be accepted. 'The USA was on the horns of a dilemma in her relations with Pakistan', as Mr. M. C. Chagla remarked at the time, 'on the one hand there was growing disillusionment about the latter's role in South-East Asia, especially vis-a-vis China, and on the other the fear that any pressure on Pakistan now might only drive her closer to China'.

Nonetheless, we need US help; let us make no bones about it. We need it for three very specific reasons. The first is that today the United States is the only power

which has the capability and willingness to deter Communist China from attacking India, if necessary by force of arms. It is the only power with the capability and willingness to provide us with a nuclear shield against nuclear blackmail by China. That help was readily given in 1962 and it would have been available, if necessary, this year. There can be no system of regional security in South and South-East Asia without the support of the United States.

The second reason why we want US co-operation is food. Thanks to our bad policies and neglect of agriculture, we are not and will not, for a couple of years at least, even if good policies are followed, be in a position to avoid starvation deaths and distress to our people. The only country that can give us the amount of food that we require is the United States. The Soviet Union, unfortunately, has a food deficit and is selling gold very heavily in the world market to buy food for its own people.

Thirdly, this country needs economic aid and foreign capital. Again, while we may accept economic aid from any country we like, and rightly so, there is no country that could give us economic aid of the size that we require except the United States. Let me give some figures. Out of the Third Plan's external assistance, 59 per cent came from the United States and only 8.2 per cent from the Soviet Union. And in the present state of the Soviet economy, which is in a bit of a mess, it is in no condition to help us. An article in *Le Monde*, the well-known neutralist anti-American French newspaper of October 27, says:

'The crisis the Soviet Union is now undergoing in its gold and foreign-currency reserves, in its economy and in its relations with several Communist countries is profoundly changing the balance of forces in the world... Another striking aspect of the crisis of the system is the increasing paralysis of the economy'.

This is no time when Russia, even if it wanted to, could help us economically in a big way.

The interests of the Soviet Union coincide with ours up to a point. We should take full advantage of that identity of interest. Like the United States, the Soviet Union has played a constructive role in the Indo-Pakistan conflict. Strongly opposed to Communism as I am, I for one would unreservedly welcome Mr. Kosygin's mediation in the quarrel between us and Pakistan. I would wish him well and I would hail him as a good friend of this country if he could bring this quarrel to an end and restore friendship between the two countries.

Now, what are the Soviet objectives in this part of the world? I think they are three. The first is to avoid an open clash with China. Though China does not want it, the Soviet Union has kept the door open to a *detente*. In other words, the schism between China and Russia is not irreversible. The second thing is that the Soviet Union wants to keep Communist China and the United States out of the entire region. The third thing is that the Soviet Union wants to stop Pakistan from falling completely into the arms of Communist China.

These are the limitations of the Soviet Union and we must appreciate them, just as we appreciate the limitations of the United States. I say this because it would be disastrous if we let ourselves build another illusion in place of that illusion of 'Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai', which brought us to such a disastrous pass. I say that because there are some signs that that illusion may be replaced by another illusion or hypnosis of the same kind. There is the ridiculous talk by my friend, Mr. Ashok Mehta, of devetailing our economy and planning to the Soviet system of planning which is itself in disarray. The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, went to Moscow recently. While he was speaking to the Russians in Moscow at one of these functions he said: '...I am not in the habit

of speaking in the language of exaggeration. But I wish to tell you that today every corner, every class of India is full of love and affection and gratitude to the Soviet Union which was never seen before'. The language of hyperbole is all right at diplomatic functions, but we must not become victims of that language. I shall also quote what he said before going to Russia. Speaking in Delhi, as reported by the *Indian Express* of 19th October, he said: 'The Soviet Union was a hundred per cent true friend of India'. Let me say clearly, what every student of international affairs knows, that there are no hundred per cent true friends for any country. Not even the United States, I will agree quite cheerfully, is a hundred per cent true friend of India. Let me remind the House of what happened in 1962. In 1962, when we were attacked by Communist China, two countries came readily to our assistance, while Mr. Khrushchev was still sitting on the fence, and they were the United States and the United Kingdom. We may be forgiven if in our excitement at that time we described them as a hundred per cent true friends. But what has happened in three years? See how the situation has changed. Therefore, if there is a hundred per cent friend, it is only for the moment, only for the occasion. Countries are not hundred per cent friends. They follow their own national interests and they change their friendships from time to time.

Now, the USSR is neutral and it has been neutral between India and Pakistan in the Kashmir dispute. There has been a shift in its policy, not to our advantage, over Kashmir. We know the Veto is gone, the Veto for which we paid a heavy price for several years. I can quote from article after article in *Pravda*, from statement after statement by Brezhnev and Kosygin, equating us with Pakistan.

It is interesting to recall that when, on 6th September, Mr. Harold Wilson, the British Prime Minister, made a remark disapproving of our crossing the frontier bet-

ween Amritsar and Lahore, we got excited about it, and some M.Ps. even brought a motion to leave the Commonwealth! But it is very interesting that about the same time Mr. Kosygin wrote a letter to our Prime Minister. I have not seen either the letter or the Prime Minister's reply. So, all I can do is to quote, from the *Hindustan Times* of 11th September a UNI message from New Delhi, which was never contradicted. It said, *inter alia*:

In his letter, received by the Prime Minister some days ago, Mr. Kosygin had taken exception to India's crossing of the international border in West Pakistan. He had requested New Delhi to immediately order a ceasefire and withdraw its forces behind the cease-fire line in Jammu and Kashmir and the international border elsewhere.

It is to be noted that Mr. Kosygin said exactly what Mr. Harold Wilson had said, but there was a deafening silence not only from the Communist Party but from those others who are frothing in their rage against the British! If one was to blame, both were to blame. Let us not have these double standards.

The last thing that I would say about the Soviet attitude is that on November 14 the *Patriot* carried a very interesting article from the well-known journal, of the international communist movement, *Problems of Socialism and Peace*:

Following the conflict, both India and Pakistan are increasing their military expenditure at the expense of economic development. The Shastri Government was already taking steps to lower the rate of economic development and increase the tax burden on the working masses... War Hysteria has gripped both countries drawing away the attention of labouring masses from the fight for their vital interests. The new situation considerably lightens the task of reaction to take revenge on the democratic movement.

This is not pointed out in criticism of the USSR. I am asking for sympathetic understanding of its limitations. I am only pointing out that the capacity of the Soviet Union to help us is very much more limited, very much more circumscribed than that of the United States.

Indo-Indonesian Relations

SUDHANSU BIMAL MOOKERJEE

INDO-INDONESIAN contacts date back to the first millennium of the Christian era. Java, the most important island of the Indonesian archipelago, is painted as a land flowing with milk and honey in an ancient Indian doggerel.¹ Tagore had these age-old Indo-Indonesian relations in mind when he wrote in 1925: 'In a dim distinct unrecorded age we had met, thou and I (India and Java), when my speech became tangled in thine and my life in thy life'. We have it on the authority of an eminent Javanese authority on linguistics² that between seventy and eighty percent of the old Javanese words are either pure Sanskrit or of Sanskrit origin.³ The Javanese script is of South Indian origin. Javanese and Balinese music, dance, sculpture and architecture bear distinct traces of Indian origin. But political turmoil, centuries of foreign rule in India and Indonesia and the latter's conversion to Islam choked the stream of Indo-Indonesian friendship with 'weeds of oblivion' and they moved away from each other.

India and Indonesia re-discovered each other in the current century. Indian nationalist leaders in general and Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru in particular, more particularly the latter, were a source of

inspiration to Indonesian nationalists. President Soekarno was a serious student and admiring observer of the course of events in India during the twenties, thirties and forties of the present century. The works of Swami Vivekananda once used to be on the shelves of the President's library. He declared during the Vivekananda Centenary celebrations in Djakarta that he drew strength from the Swami's writings. India extended full moral support to Indonesia's struggle against Dutch colonialism. Time and again she took up the cudgel for Indonesia in the United Nations.

After the first Dutch police action against the infant Indonesian Republic in 1947, the Nehru Government banned K.L.M. flights via India and refused landing and fuelling facilities to all K.L.M. planes. After the second Dutch police action against the Republic in December 1948, Prime Minister Nehru convened the Afro-Asian-Australasian Conference, which met at New Delhi on January 20, 1949. Representatives of eighteen nations — delegates and observers — attended the Conference. Nehru told the assembled delegates and observers in course of his inaugural address:

We meet today because the independence of a sister-country of ours has been imperilled and a dying colonialism of the past has raised its head again and challenged all the forces that are struggling to build up a new structure of the world. That challenge . . . is a challenge to a newly awakened Asia which has so long suffered under various forms of colonialism. It is also a challenge to the spirit of man and to all the progressive forces of a divided and distracted world. . . .⁴

India and Indonesia were good friends for many years after their independence. But those halcyon days are now a matter of

¹ "Yo Yava Jabe, so na abe,

Aur abe to paudi paudi khabe", i.e. He who goes to Java, will not come back. (Even) if he does, (his descendants) will live for generations (on the wealth he brings from Java).

² Dr. Poerbatjoroko, formerly Dean of the Faculty of Culture and Literature, Gadjah Mada State University, Jogjakarta.

³ Soedarto (brother), taruna (youngman), taruni (young woman), purnama (for purnima or full-moon), dasa (ten), swami (husband), isteri (for stri=wife), guru (teacher) and the like.

⁴ Jawaharlal Nehru: *India's Foreign Policy*, pp. 407-9.

history. The first signs of the parting of the ways were noticed at the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference, 1955. They were more clearly visible at the Belgrade Non-aligned Summit, 1961. The shameful anti-Indian incidents at Djakarta during and after the so-called Fourth Asian Games (August-September 1962) left no room for doubt that Indo-Indonesian relations had entered troubled waters. Indonesia's non-committal attitude to China's treacherous aggression against India in the fall of 1962, the almost vulgar jubilation of the Indonesian Communist boss Aidit over the Chinese aggression, Indonesia's refusal to support the U.A.R. proposal at the Colombo Conference in December 1962, the stands taken by India and Indonesia at the Cairo Non-aligned Summit of 1964, President Soekarno's recent threat to set up a parallel world organisation outside the United Nations — he has not consulted India in the matter — and last but not least Indonesia's hobnobbing with Red China and Pakistan prove beyond doubt that something must have gone seriously wrong with Indo-Indonesian relations.

A Calcutta daily pin-pointed the issue when it wrote with reference to the anti-Indian incidents at Djakarta in August-September 1962 that Indian sportsmen at Djakarta 'were victims of a feeling the roots of which go back a long way beyond the Asian Games'. India made the initial mistake of taking for granted the friendship of Indonesia and forgot that keeping friends is no less difficult — perhaps more difficult — than winning friends. Much has been made of the long historical link between India and Indonesia, so often proclaimed to be a guarantee of mutual friendship. It must be remembered, however, that the relationship between the two has been a wholly one-way traffic, Indonesia being exclusively at the receiving end of art, epics, culture and religious thought from India. Like the rest of South-East

Asia, Indonesia has been always a 'low-pressure area' from ethnological, socio-religious, cultural, political and economic points of view. Throughout its centuries-old history influences have poured into Indonesia from China, India, Arabia, Japan, Europe and America. But no influence has ever emanated from Indonesia to these countries. But new Indonesia does not relish this incontrovertible fact of its history. In recent years political indebtedness has been added to the cultural indebtedness of the distant past.

The memory of benefits received often generates a feeling of inferiority. The more so when no return is possible. Least of all does a nation appreciate reminders from representatives of nations from which benefits have been received. But most unfortunately some of the first Indian diplomats sent to Indonesia used to remind the Indonesians rather frequently of the Indian contribution to the Indonesian nationalist cause and to Indonesian culture. Indonesia, naturally enough, claims all the credit for her liberation. But India's contribution to the cause is an incontrovertible historical fact. Indonesia's inability to deny it honestly led to a feeling of irritating indebtedness. The eighteen-nation conference at New Delhi, January 1949, which threw the weight of resurgent Asia and Africa and a none too sympathetic Australia on the side of Indonesian nationalism and did much to focus the attention of the world on the Indonesian struggle, has been played down in official Indonesian histories.

Both India and Indonesia are non-aligned countries. Both have so far refused to join either Power Bloc. But the Indian conception of non-alignment is basically different from the Indonesian and this difference led to sharp exchanges at the Belgrade Non-aligned Summit in 1961. Indonesia in common with many other non-aligned countries believes that non-alignment means neutrality in all conflicts. Non-alignment of the Indian conception, on the other hand, does

not hesitate to support the party or parties on whose side justice seems to be.⁵

India's progress since independence is another irritant in Indo-Indonesian relations. It is admitted by all neutral observers that India is forging ahead, however slow the tempo of the progress. Indonesia lags leagues behind India in the march towards national development. She is unhappy over the fact that while India has been moving forward, she herself has been falling back in the march towards progress. Not a few foreign economists are of the opinion that Indonesia may ultimately revert to the traditional 'kampong' (village) economy in which every one produces for himself plus a little extra, and in which large-scale economy manufacturers and currency are unknown, barter being the only medium of exchange. India's progress makes Indonesian nationalists unhappy, particularly for the reason that India and Indonesia attained nationhood at about the same time — India in 1947 and Indonesia in 1949. Many Indonesian nationalists do not believe or pretend not to that India has made any progress.⁶

Furthermore, the rise of Red China in October 1949, her naked demonstration of brute force against India in 1962 and the latter's poor performance in the encounter, the recent nuclear bang at Lop Nor and Indonesia's knowledge of history have

pushed her to the fringe of the Chinese orbit, if not actually into it: self-preservation is the first law of nature. Neither Burma, Cambodia nor Indonesia can ignore the lengthening shadow of the Red colossus to their north.* Malaysia, the youngest Asian state ushered into existence in September 1963, is the latest irritant in Indo-Indonesian relations. President Soekarno with his policy of 'konfrontasi' (confrontation) is bent on crushing Malaysia. He is actually playing Red China's game in the matter. He has gone to the length of quitting the United Nations because Malaysia has been elected to the Security Council. India, on the other hand, has recognized Malaysia and is friendly to her. President Soekarno has been thereby provoked to say a few more unpleasant things about India.

There are about 30,000 Indians in Indonesia. By and large, they are wholly untouched by the dynamism of free India. The past lingers on in their attitude. They do not 'assimilate easily or gracefully into the political or social life' of Indonesia where many of them have lived for decades. A great majority of them have a standard of living much higher than that of their indigenous neighbours, which inevitably causes heart-burning. The Indian money-lender and shop-keeper produce an unpleasant emotional response everywhere in South-East Asia. The prosecution and conviction of some Indians for questionable commercial and financial transactions have contributed not a little to the deterioration of Indo-Indonesian relations.

India has been assailed for years by Pakistani and Red Chinese propaganda. She has been charged with fantastic misdeeds. President Ayub Khan's fulmination against India at the Bandung mass rally during his visit to Indonesia in December 1960 is an illustration. The Pakistani President began with an attack on India and emphasized that 'Pakistan was created because of the fear of persecution by the Hindus. He charged that 100 million Muslims in (undivided) India feared being

⁵ Cf. "We are neither blind to reality nor do we propose to acquiesce in any challenge to man's freedom from whatever quarter it may come. Where freedom is menaced or justice threatened or where aggression takes place, we cannot be and shall not be neutral. What we plead for and endeavour to exercise in our own imperfect way is a binding faith in peace and an unflinching endeavour of thought and action to ensure it". —Ibid, pp. 591-92.

⁶ Cf. "...a modest display of light industry manufacturers in the Indian pavilion at a trade fair at Djakarta a few years ago produced patronizing and wholly disbelieving smiles from the Indonesian visitors — they knew that the wireless sets, for instance, were not really made in India, but in Holland" —*The Statesman*, October 18, 1962.

* This article was written before the recent Communist-inspired attempt at a coup, which provoked the wrath of the army, widespread anti-Chinese demonstrations and a shift in Indonesian policy towards China.

placed under the Hindus of (undivided) India and that they would be turning from one slavery to another and treated worse than untouchables'.⁷ The spate of false and malicious propaganda of this type has done much to spoil the mental image of India in the eyes of Indonesia and other friendly countries.

We live in a world where friendship, like everything else, is assessed in terms of material benefits. India has so far given plenty of good wishes and a profusion of fine words to Indonesia, but little material aid. Many nations — large and small — have given much more in cash and kind. Small wonder then if Indonesia cares more for the latter's friendship than India's.

In the light of all these developments which have made the two countries near enemies, how can Indo-Indonesian relations be improved? First, the Indian Information Service in Indonesia must be toned up. Its bulletin prints little but the speeches of Ministers and other high-ups in the Government of India, accounts of their tours abroad and of the visits of foreign V.I.P.'s to India. But the average Indonesian is appallingly ignorant of India. I have myself been asked by educated Indonesians if there are Muslims in India and it has not been always very easy for me to convince my questioners that India is the home of millions of Muslims, that the Muslims are the largest minority in India and that India is not a Hindu state though an overwhelming majority of its inhabitants are Hindus. Not a few Indonesians believe that India has forcibly seized Kashmir and that she has no moral or legal right to be there. Instances may be multiplied. Such ignorance can only be removed by giving factual news about India. Indian publicity must also counter-vail propaganda, not by villifying the villifiers, but by acquainting the outside world

with the real state of affairs in India.

Rich natural resources notwithstanding, the Indonesian Government is one of the poorest in the world. External aid is necessary to place the economy on a healthy footing. Centuries of foreign rule deflected the course of Indonesia's economic development and subjected her to a system of colonial economy. Imperialism meant hard work and starvation wages for the native population and fantastic profits and pensions for affluent westerners. It meant the end of local subsistence farming and the introduction of crops for export... It subjected cottage industries to the competition of foreign-made consumption goods. It changed a self-reliant individualistic farmer into a tiny, dependent, helpless cog in a gigantic alien economic system. The peasants and tenants remained poor, while landlords, traders, government bureaucrats and aliens waxed rich.⁸ It is, therefore, not surprising that Indonesia emerged from colonial status economically backwards. She is confronted with serious problems of clothing and housing her rapidly multiplying population, curing her sick and educating her unlettered millions. They need almost everything which gives meaning to life.

Indonesia is in need of capital, capital goods, technical know-how and managerial skill for her industries; food and clothes for her people; teachers, text-books and teaching appliances for her students; and doctors to keep her health services going, to mention only a few urgent requirements. I have seen people in shirts without backs and in jackets of gunny sheets, students laboriously typing out whole text-books from cover to cover or selected portions, university teachers summarising text-books for the benefit of their students. India must think seriously of giving more material aid to Indonesia, of lending at least some teachers, scientists, engineers, technicians and doctors, though she herself is in short supply of these. But unless the Indonesian is convinced that he is regarded as an equal and the aid given is unconditioned and dis-

⁷ Article by K. R. Ramanath in the *Indonesian Daily News*, Surabaya, Indonesia, December 17, 1960.

⁸ Claude A. Buss: *Southeast Asia and the World Today*, p. 13.

⁹ Vide Claude A. Buss: *op. cit.*, pp. 92,3.

interested, it will be impossible to win his heart.⁹

The Government of India presents books on Indian history and culture and allied subjects to Indonesian universities and other institutions from time to time. Written in English, they are 'honey untasted, flowers unsmelt' to Indonesian readers at large, most of whom do not know much English. Attempts should therefore be made to make the history and culture of India available to the Indonesian intelligentsia in his own language. The Indonesian intelligentsia are inquisitive about India. Some of the stalwarts of modern Indian history — Tagore, Vivekananda, Gandhi and Nehru — are held in high esteem by educated Indonesians. Solo, an important city in Central Java, has a road named after Tagore. Opened by the Poet during his visit to Java in 1925, it is known as *Djalan Tagore* (Tagore Road). It would be a thousand pities if India failed to build up a strong and lasting friendship with Indonesia when there are strong foundations to build on.

The Government of India may, by arrangement with its Indonesian counterpart, institute Professorships and Lecturer-ships in Indonesian universities for the study of the philosophy and teachings of Tagore, Gandhi and other representative Indians. Outstanding works by Indian authors may be translated into Bahasa Indonesia. Indonesian students should be attracted to India for higher studies by a liberal offer of scholarships. There are at present only a few Indian scholarships for Indonesian students. There should be more. Eminent Indonesian scholars should be invited to India to lecture on Indonesian history and culture. Cultural delegations should be sent out to Indonesia and invited from that country. The difficulties should not daunt us.

Reference has been made above to the

scarcity of text-books in Indonesia. The Government of India can do much to remove this want. Not text-books alone: Indonesia faces a serious shortage of paper and printing presses. By arrangement with the Government of Indonesia, the Government of India could undertake the printing of books, specially text-books, in Bahasa Indonesia. Manuscripts and proof-readers are to be supplied by the former, paper, compositors and printing facilities, by the latter. Books thus produced by joint efforts could be purchased by the Government of Indonesia from its Indian counter-part. The former should be allowed to make payments for the books purchased in its own currency (Rupiah). The sale proceeds may be utilized by the Government of India to meet the expenses of its Embassy and Consulates in Indonesia. India is one of the very few countries which pay their employees in Indonesia the bulk of their emoluments in local currency.

The nearly thirty thousand Indians in Indonesia can also play their part in rehabilitating Indo-Indonesian relations. They should realize, if they have not realized already, that they are neither liked, respected, nor feared in the country of their sojourn. The fault is not entirely theirs. They should, however, remember that more often than not a country is judged by the conduct of its nationals. Tagore, Gandhi and other stalwarts of Indian history are only names to Indonesians and many have not even heard of them. They judge India by the Indians with whom they come in contact. These Indians must, therefore, turn the searchlight inward and try honestly to remove the causes of their unpopularity with Indonesians. A searching enquiry for one's own faults, rather than attacking the faults of others, is the basis of all improvement in human relationships—personal and international.

DISCUSSION

Indian Foreign Policy Need for a Non-Doctrinaire Perspective

RAJNI KOTHARI

MUCH of the discussion on foreign policy in India suffers from a frightful illusion: that it is possible to reduce the conduct of foreign relations to a neat formula. Both the opponents and the defenders of 'non-alignment' suffer from this illusion. Prof. Shah's paper is no exception to this. His tirade against non-alignment is not only uncalled for, but misleading. Shah shows a keen awareness of the forces that are shaping and must shape our attitudes, yet casts his case in a mould so characteristic of the negativistic strain in intellectual thinking in India which, one would have hoped, should have been shaken by recent events. In a sense, perhaps, he symptomises the crisis through which the more sensitive among our intellectuals will have to pass before internalising in their thought patterns the reality of living under independent nationhood.

Shah's criticism of Nehru's policy of non-alignment is, first, that it was a wrong policy (suicidal, naive, narcissist) and, second, that it was not 'pure', that is, it was not *really* non-aligned. However, apart from repeating the universally admitted fact that Mr. Nehru neglected problems of defence, there is no other evidence that Shah brings forth to support his main contention. He says: 'non-alignment has not yielded significant differential gains in any field of real importance for her (India) as a developing modern, secular democracy.

... The second largest nation in the world and the only major democratic state in the Afro-Asian land mass can only be either the pace-setter and model for other free nations threatened by communist aggression or subversion in this region, or a camp-follower of one of the two super-powers'. It follows from this analysis that for a time — until the industrial base was built and political stability ensured — only the latter course was possible. Then, is it not significant that the policy called non-alignment allowed us to mitigate our fate as Russia's camp-follower (to be America's was out of question under the Dulles dispensation), to build our 'developing modern, secular democracy', and indeed to build ourselves such that we are now in a position to think of ourselves as potentially a leading power? Surely, no pattern of alignment would have brought us to exercise such a role: consider the tantrums through which in different ways Japan, France, Pakistan, even China are passing. It is clear that so long as the stranglehold of the cold war existed, the only course open to us in turning the situation to our advantage was to be free of its essential polarity; with this now loosening, and with our own strength more secure, we can start thinking of a more confident and positive posture in foreign affairs.

In following this course, there was no reason why we should have kept our defences weak. That we did so was the con-

sequence on the one hand of a colossal miscalculation on Nehru's part as regards China; and, on the other hand, of an understandable hesitation on his part to get into the opposite (Russian) camp following Mr. Dulles's animosity towards us. That Nehru retained his sanity vis-a-vis the West in spite of the Dulles threat does great credit to his political sense; that he also felt complacent at the Chinese military build-up turned out to be his great 'Himalayan blunder'. His government hastened to amend the situation following the scathing 1962 experience, in an inconspicuous and non-belligerent manner. We can now see the full impact of this cautious approach; we have been able to meet the threat of the massive war machine built by the U.S. across our borders, and this without losing our integrity as a secular democratic society. Viewed in the perspective of nation-building, does all this add up to the charge-sheet against the policy begun by Mr. Nehru as brought out in Shah's paper?

Indeed, it seems to me that the paper suffers from a lack of understanding of what is involved in political and institutional development in the absence of which the building of a strong military base can do as much harm in one area as good in another. Nehru's achievement lies in giving to this country a durable political base and institutional legitimacy: it has integrated, mobilised, organised, opened up this society far more than any other nation can boast of in such a short period. He also, by insisting on modernisation as a paramount value, and by creating an industrial infra-structure for its realisation, laid the basis of strong nationhood. Without these achievements, for which undoubtedly Nehru drew upon the intellectual and organisational foundations left behind by his predecessors, and without the freedom of manoeuvre that Nehru's policies secured for us, it is difficult to see how we could think with equanimity of a major military build-up within the framework of (and indeed with a view to strengthening) our democratic polity.

This brings me to Shah's approach to 'democracy' as a determining principle of international commitments and to his advocacy of a basic understanding with the United States. Going through sections iv and v of his paper makes fascinating reading: one can see how weak has been the impact of democratic politics on our intellectuals. To them, democracy is still no more than an idea, a dogma, an article of faith. From such an awareness it is easy to abstract outward towards a whole *system* of 'democratic' power — something like a Democratic International — in which India would provide an important link by role-playing in south and south-east Asia. Apart from the general fallacy of all romanticist appeals, there are two other fallacies in such an approach. The first stems from the confusion between institutional and ideological commitments of a people and their foreign policy; there is an unspelled assumption here that international relations are simply a projection of domestic political arrangements. This is a variant of the familiar fallacy which confuses politics with systems of thought. The second fallacy stems from the notion that the wars led by democratic nations are necessarily just wars: there is ample evidence to the contrary. It seems to me that Shah oversimplifies the position because he still thinks of foreign policy in essentially ideological terms: in this he does not seem too far away from the intellectuals of the Left whom he castigates so vehemently. But my complaint here is not that Shah is naive but that the position he takes is dangerous for the very cause of freedom which motivates him. It is a position almost reminiscent of John Foster Dulles. There is no need for me to dilate upon the insufferable consequences of the system built by Dulles. Good motives are not sufficient to ensure good life, and when democracy degenerates into a dogma, there is no doubt that it ceases to promote the freedom it is generally identified with.

In considering our approach to the big powers, again, Shah is dominated by

deductive reasoning. The argument runs like this: we must at all costs contain China; this calls for a massive defence effort; only *large-scale* assistance from the U.S. can do this; but this is only possible if there is a 'frank disownment' of our foreign policy and the announcement of a 'new foreign policy' backed by a 'new defence and economic policy', and, of course, we should also agree to a political settlement of the Kashmir issue. (Although found elsewhere too, I have picked the threads of this argument from Shah's paper. The italics are Shah's.) Now the pitfalls in such a line of argument are, one, that it naively believes that the United States is itself interested in a closer political and military alliance with us (and is prepared to trust us with massive armaments), two, that this can be done irrespective of other factors in the situation (that USSR will be indifferent, that China will not be able to reap any benefits out of it, that Indian public opinion will itself be malleable: these are large assumptions) and, three, that it is a simple matter for an independent and self-respecting government to wake up one fine morning and disavow its foreign, defence and economic policies. None of these assumptions stands even a superficial scrutiny of facts.

In advocating any policy towards the U.S., we have to grasp the all-important point that we deal here with a global power riding on a highly complex structure of power relations, and it is not from our wishing that better relations will result. It is also important to realise that American policy itself is often highly confused in this matter; much of the animosity found in the Indian sub-continent is a direct result of the massive American military thrust coupled with an utter lack of political sense in the area. But more important than all this at this moment is the situation of relative stalemate on the Sino-Indian and Indo-Pakistan problem, largely because of growing sensitisation of world politics to Soviet policy. Under these conditions, for India to look for positive U.S. involvement

would be to follow an unrealistic policy (Kashmir notwithstanding). In fact, we ought to develop a policy which makes the minimum of demands politically and militarily on the U.S. (except to counter-check China in the case of another invasion) and instead to reorient our approach so as to make economic development and economic collaboration the chief plank of Indo-American relations. Not only would this be in tune with the institutional structure of our economy and our agriculture; the Americans too understand the language of economic relations (both commercial and philanthropic) better than they do the language of politics. Such a non-political approach to technical and economic cooperation on the part of our politicians and especially the press is clearly desirable, and overdue. Similarly, it is necessary to deal independently with our political problems, and not allow them to be influenced by short-term considerations of food and economic aid. It would indeed be unfortunate if we allowed the latter to dominate our long-term interests as a nation.

External assistance in economic development has been made much of in discussion on foreign policy in India both by the socialists and the non-socialists among our intellectuals, though the two groups start from quite different ideological underpinnings. For the former, economic development being the ultimate salvation of a 'backward society' (a diagnosis that undoubtedly receives patronising acceptance from Western scholars), all other considerations are subordinated to, and appear to be a distraction from, the economic goal. Those who are not socialists, on the other hand, are convinced that the Indian leadership is incapable of defending democracy in this country and think of India's salvation as closely linked up with the emulation of the West and, *ipso facto*, with American aid. Now it seems to me that both these approaches have harmed the shaping of our political and economic

policies. The importance of economic and technical assistance in national planning is undoubtedly critical but to have made it the *desiderata* of our development as a nation (or as a democracy) has caused great confusion. On the one hand economic policy (including foreign aid) has been intertwined with useless disputations on ideological grounds within the country; on the other hand, it has given a convenient handle to the assisting powers in pursuing their own big power interests. It is high time that we extricated our permanent interests as a nation from the specific problems we face in the economic sphere. This is not an impossible aim: good economic relations with, say, the U.S.A., does not necessarily imply that we have also to seek their mediation or patronage in our political problems. Indeed, the more independent we become politically, and the more stable is our institutional structure, the more easy it would be to attract both foreign capital and foreign aid.

Let me concretise the arguments advanced above. Our aim should be to neutralise the American political presence in the sub-continent (though not in the rest of Asia) and to show initiative ourselves by building our own military and industrial strength, buttressed on the one hand by large-scale economic and technical co-operation with American government, capital and agricultural know-how, and on the other hand by critical armaments and military and industrial equipment from Russia and other sources; and further buttressed by our opening out beyond the super-powers by cultivating close economic and political ties with the newly developed and relatively independent powers such as Japan and Australia in the south and some of the Eastern and Western European powers in the north. At the same time, we can count on the Americans to check Chinese power in south-east Asia and on the Russians to check both America and China. Only by combining such a flexible, realistic and non-doctrinaire external policy can we hope to strengthen our-

selves internally and meet the inevitable strains that we will have to encounter as we advance towards more strength and power.

The approach indicated above differs from Shah's in many respects and agrees with his in some. But there are two important aspects in Shah's handling of foreign policy issues from which my differences are basic. (I should like to spell these out because his views characterise the thinking of many liberals and humanists both here and in other countries.) First, he seems to think of international relations in terms of systems of ideas: democracy versus communism. Secondly, he would like to think of the United States as the sheet-anchor of democracy in the world. Both of these are familiar notions, they are also noble thoughts, but I think they are both misleading. It is always an easy approach to think of politics in terms of a set of common ideas and beliefs; it is even simpler to think that there is a central culture point from which we can all draw our strength. The idea of such a 'metropolis' has attracted men in different ages: Athens, Rome, Paris, London, Washington. Today the metropolis is Washington and the 'common idea' is democracy.

Now it seems to me that this is an erroneous line of thinking even from the point of view of democracy. If freedom and democracy are things we cherish, let us be clear in our minds on the only way in which we can enjoy them in their full strength and glory. This way is not of declared allegiances or of security arrangements with some super-power but rather of strengthening and stabilising our own political system, building our national power, and acquiring a position in the world on the basis of that power. Whenever our interests coincide with those of other democracies, we should certainly have an agreed stand (as for instance with the U.S. over the Chinese threat) but the survival of our democratic order is not a function of such an alignment of interests. What is more, the alignment may often-

times be with powers that have a totally different political system: indeed international alignments are hardly ever designed to serve ideological purposes. When it appears that they are so designed, the reality is more complex than it seems. This is true in our own as in the case of many others too. I agree with Shah that India provides a viable base of regional power. But it seems to me that the days when nations had to rely on security pacts or ideological camps are gone. We have arrived at a more fluid and uncertain period of human history, the situation is full of possibilities as well as pitfalls, and it is just as well that we wake up to what it means to be an independent nation.

Shah's analysis of our situation is rather simplistic and part of the reason for this comes from the world perspective he has. It is a perspective which, strangely enough, still continues to be bi-polar. The fact of the matter, however, is that the 'cold war' has entered into a far more subtle and uncertain phase, and world politics is undergoing profound changes: the Western alliance is in disarray; the new masters of Russia have yet to chalk out an identifiable world posture; Mao's China is hemmed in by conflicting pressures and unpredicted setbacks; the new nations of Africa and Asia are certainly a new force but are still in turmoil and suffer from an acute crisis of identity on the world stage. Through all this fluidity there are, of course, new alignments in the making but these have yet to crystallise. The single most important factor that emerges from these developments is that the period of international tutelage is over. This means two things. Only those who can show clear evidence of their own strength and self-confidence will qualify for support from others. This is not a new lesson in international politics but it needs to be re-emphasised. Secondly,

the two world titans are increasingly being subjected to competing pressures and are in effect becoming cautious mediators of relations between states rather than initiators of policies themselves.

Against such a perspective, India's coming of age politically and militarily is an important portent. The 22-day undeclared war with Pakistan has put on the defensive more than one enemy and indeed some of our democratic friends too. It has also opened up for us entirely new vistas both of freedom of manoeuvre externally and political mobilisation internally, at the same time imparting to the new leadership a shrewd sense of the possible and a heightened awareness of the details and complexity of the task. They are no longer complacent about our problems, and this is a net gain. At the same time, there is a dilemma we face here: it is the dilemma of a nation with limited resources trying both to meet the demands made on a democratic society and prepare a modern military machine. The task is not going to be easy at all and we will be compelled to break the dilemma by bringing into service every resource that we can lay our hands on. It is this that makes the Indian problem one of a continuous coordination between diplomatic activity, military preparedness, political developments and social and economic mobilisation. It will take considerable effort and trained rigour before we can construct an adequate machinery of government and intelligence to meet these requirements. Meanwhile, if only we can conserve our capacities and not fall for a fancy for a 'new foreign policy', we will soon reap the fruits of our military achievement. What we have got here is a major political breakthrough and let us not mess it all up by unnecessary intellectual exercises in geopolitics.

REPORTAGE

Western and Indian Approaches to Literature

DAVID MCCUTCHION

I

SANSKRIT poetics have never received the acclaim accorded in the West to ancient Indian religion, philosophy, art and literature. Consequently even in India today the theories of Sanskrit literary criticism have been largely confined to courses of Sanskrit, and had little influence on Modern Indian studies. General opinion holds that Sanskrit poetics consists of little more than pettifogging rules and minute classifications of rhetorical figures. Even Dr. S. K. De, who has done so much to create interest in this field beyond the narrow range of Sanskrit specialization, confesses that the study of *Alamkara-Sastra* is like reading the index of a book instead of the book itself.

All the more interest therefore attaches to a recent Seminar at Mysore University (1-7 June, 1965), which sought to investigate the possible relevance of Sanskrit theories to modern literary interests, and to accommodate Sanskrit with Western aesthetic theories in a joint approach. As the organizer, Professor C. D. Narasimhaiah, Head of the Post-graduate English Department, put it in his opening address: 'This Seminar is conceived as the attempt to forge links with a past with which today we have lost any vital connection.' Why seek enlightenment from Aristotle when our own theorists have given us *rasanubhava*? — joy is nearer to our hearts than purgation! There was no question of abandoning all that had been learnt from the West, but of integrating it with our own traditions. And Professor Narasimhaiah concluded by indicating various points of contacts, as in Arnold's theory of detachment, or Eliot's idea of the extinction of personality in poetic utterance.

The Seminar first raised the fundamental question whether universal standards are at all possible. Yes, declared Dr. Mulk Raj Anand in the opening paper — firstly because of universal humanness ('the genes which are the pooled energies of life are similar in character'), and secondly because of universal evolution. In all societies there is the same progression from man the victim of fate to man the maker of his destiny. Writers must accept this progression: 'sensitive spirits' may regret the machine age, but the 'more positive humanists... wished to master the age of mechanisation to love every individual intimately, to honour and worship the people'. Just as cultural chauvinism must give way to world culture, so defeatism must be replaced by vision, even though this may bring the writer into conflict with 'those societies which live by custom and dead habit'. He becomes a rebel and 'inspires, by his new vision of the land after his heart's desire, all those who have not dared to look beyond their noses'. The critic must ally himself with vision—in fact he is the 'perfector of vision'.

In the discussion that followed, Professor Lal (St. Xavier's, Calcutta) immediately raised the key question: how do you define 'humanness'? Dr. Anand reaffirmed: 'man in all his weaknesses and strength', but it was never made clear how this could constitute a universal criterion — defeatism, for example is as human as progressivism — so that although Dr. Anand explicitly classified 'doctrinaire criticism' as 'misleading', he nevertheless appeared to be committed to some kind of doctrine. Further objections stressed the personal element in response: as Professor Ramaswami (Presidency, Madras) put it, the rational

agnostic may find the *Ramayana* a 'mass of extravagance', whereas to the Hindu believer it is a beautiful embodiment of the spirit of worship. So how do we decide who is right? demanded Professor Lal, and Dr. Anand replied: 'Corroboration.' But 'universal' does not mean 'unanimous', objected Dr. Krishna Vaid (Punjab) — it refers to those qualities which lift a work above local interest. He proposed Prem Chand's *Godan* as an example: is it good by universal standards? Yes, affirmed Dr. Anand, for it has 'a certain maturity, the depths are stirred, the humanness of the characters rises above the local conditions of U.P.' Professor Lal on the other hand, who had translated it into English in collaboration with Jai Ratan, declared that they had found it 'repetitive and diffuse' for all its humanness. Dr. Anand replied that content achieved its own form, and that if a work is 'intensely human, sensitive', it will be great in spite of 'mistakes'. And so universal standards gave way to personal affirmation. Let us admit, concluded Dr. Sisir Ghose (Visva-Bharati) that the perfect critic is a hypothesis, and universal standards are a hypothesis, and what we really have are fallible human beings with multiple purposes.

This more or less was the position taken up by the following paper. Mr. D. J. McCutcheon (Jadavpur) argued that critical appreciation is not bound though it may well be influenced by religion, country and tradition. There is a universal humanness transcending cultural frontiers, but people differ personally, creating a variety of needs and tastes, and there is no criterion by which we may elevate a particular taste to the universal. Mr. McCutcheon saw changing styles (Renaissance — Classicism — Romanticism — Realism, etc.) not so much in terms of progressive evolution as of the 'dynamics of renewal' — a literary rather than a social process. He suggested that the difference between his own and Dr. Anand's position was an example of the way beliefs in fact

do modify critical approaches. Having shown how religion may affect judgement (Eliot, Claudel, Kierkegaard), he raised the question whether the reader is bound to share the beliefs of an author. Is it true, as Richards says, that *The Divine Comedy* is obsolescent for all but 'adequately equipped readers who can imaginatively reproduce the world outlook of Aquinas, and certain attitudes to women and to chastity, which are even more inaccessible' (*Principles*, p. 222)? The key word here is 'imaginatively'. Mr. McCutcheon argued that the imaginative world of moral 'acceptables' for any single reader is far wider than the actual world in which he must live his moral choices. But not infinitely wider. For we are morally engaged in the aesthetic experience (of literature at any rate), and Mr. McCutcheon indicated limits to what he personally could accept, e.g. a poem celebrating the Nazi gassing of the Jews 'however marvellously structured'. Each man must realize for himself these limits ('I can tolerate dacoits as heroes but not fascists').

But Mr. McCutcheon, quoting Eliot, warned against confusing the moral with the literary worth of a piece of writing. To say a poem is 'transcendental' or 'life-affirming' tells us nothing about its literary qualities (e.g. Poe and Baudelaire following the same stated theories). And although we may argue about moral values (whether life-affirming is preferable to life-denying poetry), we can only intuit the purely aesthetic, and if others do not respond, attempts to prove 'the wonderful quality of a line like "That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea"' can be little more than emotive persuasion. Nevertheless we do wish to persuade others, and in the process inevitably elevate our preferences to universal standards. Finally Mr. McCutcheon attempted to distinguish more from less valid approaches, e.g. partisan approaches (Marxist, Aurobindian), or intrinsically limited (e.g. 18th century to Shakespeare), from those which combine both the wider preoccupations

and taste of the age with appreciation of the author's unique contribution.

Mr. McCutcheon was immediately taken to task for attempting to maintain incompatible positions: on one hand that literary worth is aesthetic and a work must only be appreciated for its 'intrinsic purposes', on the other that moral criteria condition judgement and a work must be related to the preoccupations of the age. What do you mean by 'intrinsic purposes'? demanded Professor Lal. Is 'greatness' extra-literary then? queried Professor Ramaswami. It was suggested that evil and aesthetic form were incompatible — that a person capable of celebrating the gassing of Jews would be incapable of writing a poem. But Professor Ramaswami thought this was a matter of cultural relativism: evils differ, but patriotism may be sympathised with universally. In his attempt to distinguish valid from less valid approaches, Mr. McCutcheon had quoted F. R. Leavis ('The business of the literary critic is to attain a peculiar completeness of response and to observe a peculiarly strict relevance in developing his responses into commentary'), which prompted Professor Narasimhaiah to wonder: 'Relevance to what?' 'Relevance to what is in the work,' replied Mr. McCutcheon. 'But that's not enough!' protested Professor Narasimhaiah, remembering all those exterior criteria by which Dr. Leavis dismissed so much that he considered insignificant or irresponsible. Indeed a certain theoretical ambiguity seemed to be revealed here, which enabled Mr. Narayanachar (Mysore) in a subsequent paper to create a sensation by characterising the standpoint of Dr. Leavis as that of Arts for Art's sake! (Professor Narasimhaiah, an old student of Dr. Leavis, lost a little of his chairman's poise in setting him right on this).

The question whether a work of art exists autonomously and may be judged by standards outside the culture which produced it, was further discussed by two more papers from Calcutta towards the end of the Seminar. Dr. Naresh Guha

(Jadavpur) raised the Indian dilemma forcefully: 'Our question is, we who have read Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Wordsworth, Scott and Dickens on the one hand, and Henry Morley, Leslie Stephens, W. J. Courthop, Edmund Gosse, John Aldington Symonds, Arthur Symonds and George Saintsbury on the other, how can we evaluate our own literature?' Quoting the case of Bankimchandra who lamented the fact that 'pure Bengali' poets are no longer possible, Dr. Guha went on to show how a strange split in the literary consciousness arose whereby two independent sets of criteria operated: one set preferred a work for its 'literary excellence', the other for the values it enshrined. Thus Rabin-dranath stated his preference for *Sakuntala*, but really believed that Shakespeare was a greater Master than Kalidasa. But does a Hindu or a Chinaman have to 'get infected by the values and ways of life of a Dante or a Milton or Eliot and then function as a critic? Alternatively: 'How can a critic who values only the classical genres of Western drama react favourably to a Sanskrit or a Japanese Noh drama? Clearly we have to rid ourselves of exterior preconceptions and criteria, whether moral or formal. Thus Dr. Guha came down strongly in favour of regarding poems, plays, etc. as 'autonomous, self-sufficient artefacts': the work determines its own values and form. So much for 'all those good people, though really simpletons, who hunt for morals in poetry' (as Dhananjaya says). Literature is to be enjoyed *for what it is*: organization, form. 'There is nothing, including ethical and didactic ideas, that cannot enter into such an organization' — but these are mere bricks, which cannot be discussed in relation to any context of values outside the work. So 'the final evaluation should depend not upon its conformity to some allegedly "mature" view of life, but on the noble complexity of its organization.'

To this the objection was immediately raised that mere complexity is not permanently satisfying: it would lead to the

pursuit of more and more novel forms of complexity, like the pursuit of the 'strange' in Art for Art's sake, ending up in fetishism and bizarrerie. And what did Dr. Guha mean by a 'noble' complexity? is it a nobility intrinsic only to the work, or is it a moral consideration 'simplemindedly' slipping in through the back door? Dr. Guha explained that by complexity he did not mean complexity for its own sake, but for the nobility of the structure. And by nobility he meant an ordering of the outstanding questions of human life — but not from any particular viewpoint (Christian or otherwise). The ordering is important, not the answer given. In the ensuing discussion it was doubted whether a reader could so easily approach a work free of prejudice and preconception. Professor Amalendu Bose gave the example of a N. W. Frontier audience who clapped the murder of Desdemona — they thought that was the right way to deal with such a woman! How can we condemn a Marxist critic who praises a Marxist work? — the way of life of a whole people is involved here: this was the 'honest doubt' of Professor Narasimhaiah. But as Professor Ramaswami swiftly rejoined, loyalty to life and loyalty to Marx are not necessarily the same — and Dr. Guha elaborated the point. The Seminar finally agreed with Dr. Kantak (Baroda) that a certain acceptance of the context of a work (implying race and milieu) was necessary for understanding, but Professor Narasimhaiah added that this context must be assimilated into a wider scheme of things — a sense of the whole history and destiny of man, as Richards has it.

This position was taken up the following afternoon by Dr. Amalendu Bose (Calcutta), who agreed that literary criticism and literary history are interdependent. After reviewing the development of literary criticism from abuse and fault-finding to disciplined evaluation, Dr. Bose came out strongly for the moral role of the critic and teacher ('an agent properly qualified to help other men grow into better and

healthier men'). But although insisting on the historical perspective, Dr. Bose specifically opposed any subordinating of literature to processes other than literary (as in Hegel, Carlyle, Marx). Literary history will trace the development of themes, attitudes, genres, etc., and also of language (Elizabethan variety, Victorian bulbousness), so as to perceive but not impose a pattern. In value judgement and historical sense lies the discipline of the critic: 'Without the historical sense, criticism becomes irresponsible, wishful, impressionistic, opinionative; without value-judgement, history becomes what an English father, one Francis Osborne, described in a letter to his son in 1656 as 'lumber and formes'. Professor Ramaswami raised the objection that our understanding of the past is false, conditioned by what we desire to see there: to the 18th century the Elizabethan Age was 'anarchic', to the Victorians 'spacious', to the moderns 'vital'. Professor Bose agreed there was a good deal of confusion, but hoped that with further research in a few years' time 'a certain amount of objective knowledge will be acquired.' This is necessary: Hamlet's psychology, for instance, is only to be understood in terms of Elizabethan psychology. In reply to another question, he made quite clear his preference for Saintsbury to Croce!

Thus the formalists were becoming increasingly silent, and the moralists increasingly vocal. The shade of Matthew Arnold, which had been hovering about the table from the beginning of the week, became incarnate on the last morning when Professor Narasimhaiah launched into 'Criticism and Culture.' A critic is 'one who cares for the health of the mind'. He therefore cannot confine himself to literature alone: his concern is 'the transformation of the individual and society'. And Professor Narasimhaiah proceeded to prove himself just such a critic by denouncing all the agencies destroying contemporary Indian culture and society — the Institutes of Culture and Government Academies,

politicians telling poets to write patriotic epics, centenary and birth celebrations which neglect the work and foster the myth (Tagore reduced to a set of platitudes), wandering saints selecting new Valmikis, students tools of parties, politicians dictating educational decisions (e.g. the 14 language formula for the U.P.S.C. examinations)... How do they get away with it? Because: 'Responsible criticism isn't there'. Why not? Because: 'Power and culture reside in the same caste — today in India it is the politician and the bureaucrat from whom the intellectual takes his cue in intellectual matters.' Somehow we have got to break the spirit of conformism, revive the innate questioning faculty, for criticism is *a way of life*.

This vigorous commitment to a social role mostly drew support from the participants, though not without pointing to the danger that such a critic runs the risk of ending up a politician himself. Professor Lal pointed to the strain which led a Matthiesson to suicide. Dr. Vaid referred to French *engagement* and feared that extra-literary commitment led to loss of quality. To Professor Ramaswami the support of a Kamaraj by Madras intellectuals was 'proof of the separation of culture and politics in our society'. Professor Visvanathan (Waltair) declared that faith, not culture, moves mountains — the Christs and Gandhijis are superior to the Shakespeares and Tagores. 'The peddlars of criticism have done little good to the world.' — Arnold was merely supporting the interests of his own minority culture. But Dr. Bose pointed out that culture is a totality embracing both Christ and Shakespeare. At this point Professor Damodar Thakur (Patna) felt we were saddling the critic with too great a responsibility: a distinction was necessary between his *direct* responsibility to the work of art and his *indirect* responsibility to wider spheres. Dr. Bose and Professor Ramaswami denied this: the mind cannot function compartmentally — the consequence is treason of the intellectuals as in France. A similar

compartmentalisation divides the university from the community, added Professor Narasimhaiah. But Dr. Kantak and Dr. Vaid doubted whether specialisation was altogether avoidable, e.g. in cultivating science or judging the language issue. 'Would you at all distinguish between a critic and an intellectual?' asked Mr. McCutcheon. 'The intellectual life does not exclude the highest intellect,' rejoined Professor Narasimhaiah.

II

It was somewhat paradoxical that a Seminar dedicated to the accommodation of Western and Sanskrit approaches should lead up to this full-throated commitment to the social responsibility of the critic, for this is precisely where the Indian tradition failed. As Professor Narasimhaiah put it: 'Indian poetics does not get down to the uses of poetry.' Nor indeed is it sufficiently *critical*. It is more preoccupied with analysis than judgement, reverence prevents reassessment: the Vedas are treated as the revealed word of God rather than the foundation of a poetic tradition. So too with criticism itself: the followers merely echo the Masters. Romaniero Gnoli, for instance, has even doubted whether after Abhinavagupta the study of aesthetics in India received any further creative stimulus. Professor Narasimhaiah approved T. S. Eliot's call for a periodic review of the past, a revaluation and reordering every hundred years or so to keep the past alive as an inspiration to the present. Because this never happened in India, we are reduced to our present state of 'critical debility' — lacking that historical sense of change which had been stressed by Dr. Bose. Ka Naa Subramaniam's paper revealed a similar state of affairs in Tamil literature, which apparently had no criticism worth the name until 1959! It was therefore not surprising that Sanskrit poetics came out strongest in the fields of general aesthetics and descriptive analysis. Dr. Guha was able to enlist full support for his formalist position from the *Alamkara-*

Sastra, the *Dhvanibadis*, and the *Rasabadis*. Mr. K. S. Narayanachar, dealing with the theme of poetry as instruction or delight, showed that the English critics and poets come closest to their Sanskrit brethren when they lay more emphasis on the pleasures than the legislations of poetry, and he insisted that Wordsworth is better to be appreciated in terms of *rasa* than nature-philosophy.

Kuntala in particular was referred to in several papers, for he offers the most striking similarities with modern Western analytic criticism. Professor Thakur drew a parallel between Kuntala's emphasis on 'indirectness' and Empson's on 'ambiguity'. 'Notwithstanding that there is only one word,' says the *Vakroktijivitam*, 'many purposes or shades of meaning exist within it.' Where Empson has seven types of ambiguity, Kuntala has six kinds of indirectness. Kuntala contrasts poetic statements with common-life statements in a way which reminds us of Richards' distinction between statements and pseudo-statements, and lays a similar emphasis on tone. For Kuntala as for modern Western critics there can be no separation of content and form: the *alamkaras* are not added on to any poetic 'body'; as Richards says, the ornaments *are* the body. Poetry is thus a shaping, ordering activity — Kuntala is a formalist — and its purpose is delight, not only in organized complexity but in novelty: 'that strange quality of feeling that creates unusual pleasures on account of a very particular newness of use is called ornament in literature'. This emphasis on strangeness, obscurity, he shares with the 20th century rediscoverers of Donne. And in this strange newness lies the creativity or 'growing tip' of poetic energy.

Professor Thakur's paper was not without its own ambiguities. As Professor Lal immediately pointed out, he had referred to *vakrokti* in different places as a 'theory', a 'training of the attention', a 'shaping activity', a 'statement with an inflection', a 'pleasure in linguistic energy', and a

'union of mobility and refinement'. Professor Thakur replied, after some indirection, that *vakrokti* is the imaginative use of language. A later paper by Dr. V. N. Dhavale (Mysore) covered much the same ground, indicating how the modern Western concern with *meaning* had been anticipated in a variety of Sanskrit schools.

Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy's exposition of the *dhvani* theory also revealed affinities with formalist and 'organic' positions. The poem is *sui generis* with a realised inner meaning over and above its logical meanings, a complex fusion of emotion (*rasa*), imagination (*alamkara*), and thought (*vastu*), without any practical relation to life. But as Dr. Krishnamoorthy later insisted in discussion, the *dhvani* theory is not really formalist but expressionist, its chief concern with qualitative not normative analysis. The beauty of poetry lies in its suggestiveness (*dhvani*): 'If the suggested feeling or image or idea becomes subordinate to the beauty of the direct meaning, we get second rate poetry.' Suggestiveness may be of *rasa*, or of *alamkara*, or of *vastu*, but '*rasa* and *rasa* alone is *dhvani* par excellence.' It is *rasa* that binds the disparate elements into an organic whole. This break with the classificatory *alamkara* schools reminds us of the rejection of prescriptive neo-classicism by the European Romantics. And like the Romantics, Anandavardhana was led to base judgement on subjective feeling. For by his emphasis on *rasa* as the soul of poetry, he was led to the conclusion that poetry could not be communicated to those who do not already feel it. Hence the importance of being a *sahridaya* or 'one with the temperament of a poet'. Such a concept makes criticism a school of initiation rather than analysis, although as Dr. Krishnamoorthy insisted, the *Dhvani* school 'also admits of intellectual analysis to cover every essential aspect of poetic experience.'

Dr. Bose was later to contrast the intellectual bias (Aristotle, etc.) of the Western tradition, with Indian emphasis on the heart and '*tanmayibhavana yogyata*, the

ability to become one with the artefact, the chameleon-like ability of which Keats wrote...'. But the danger of the *sahridaya* position is that it may very well put an end to criticism and communication, by encouraging a take-it-on-trust mentality or the disdain of 'beyond the pale'. Such self-sufficiency was strikingly illustrated by Professor Ramaswami's paper, an exercise in erudite wit, which saw all art, including that supreme artefact the universe itself, as equally pointless and delightful. For Professor Ramaswami perception was 'untaught and unteachable' imaginative sensibility — that faculty which sent the rishis into raptures when they heard Kusa and Lava singing the Ramayana, or achieved 'the matchless facility and felicity of response which my revered guru, the Sankaracharya of Kanchi made to things literary.' Neither the rishis nor the Sankaracharya went to any university — their only literary principles were 'knowledge of life' enriched by *tapas*. All other principles are 'obsessions', like Dr. Johnson's objections to Lycidas, and lead straight to authoritarianism. But intuitive perception is a matter of luck — 'If you aren't lucky, kneel and pray. If you are still unlucky, kneel and pray again.'

Of course this position is not exclusively Indian, and poets themselves will tend to take the *sahridaya* line in any country. Mr. McCutcheon had quoted Ezra Pound: 'You can take a man to Perugia or to Borgo San Sepolcro, but you can't make him prefer one kind of painting to another.' Stendhal said much the same thing. And R. K. Narayan delivered a short address on 'The Abuse of Criticism': according to him critics were no help whatever to writers, misleading to readers, but enjoyed a minor usefulness in enabling students to pass exams without reading the set books. Narayan's humour had some point — unlike Henry James, he found critical self-consciousness inhibiting — but Professor Ramaswami's paper roused protests on all sides: this was betrayal from within. He remained adamant, however: 'The truth is

more precious than our jobs', the groundlings understood Shakespeare best.

Another and more characteristically Indian approach was taken by Dr. Sisir Ghose of Santiniketan and Pondicherry: true reality is transcendental, life is play. Dr. Ghose began by lamenting a lost ideal age when art was a way of life and beauty a path to transcendence. Now 'chaos rules' and art is mere advertisement — 'reduced to the level of sensation and opinion'. The only way to bring back beauty is to bring meaning back to life. For this we must turn to Ancient India when 'action, thought, and aesthetics were one'. Here we find a mystical uniting (*yoga*) as opposed to a rational dissecting view of art: knowledge by identity. This experience is open to any race, or any poet, of any nation with 'vision and maturity'. All may dance with Nataraja.

Dr. Katak was the first to 'break the spell', as he said, and point out that Dr. Ghose had only been concerned with the aesthetic experience as such, and not with the problem of criticism at all. Professor Ramaswami thought that Dr. Ghose was confusing art and spirituality. The *concept* of Nataraja is marvellous no doubt, remarked Professor Lal, but how are we to decide which particular statue of Nataraja is great art and which mediocre imitation? 'In an age of disintegration, it is better to proceed from the empirical,' roundly declared Dr. Anand: Tagore was a transcendentalist, but he came to realise that art must also accommodate the earthy, the ugly, and the exuberant energy of an individual's experience. Dr. Vaid agreed with Dr. Anand that there was little point in recommending an integral aesthetics for a disintegrated society; nor is there a single reference in Sanskrit until the 10th century that an artist can reach the absolute through art. But Dr. Ghose, his roots in heaven, firmly declined these earthly recommendations.

The danger of theorizing at this level of abstraction is that contact may be lost with reality. Well might Dr. Vaid ask: when was this Indian Golden Age when action, thought, and aesthetic were one? A similar

danger is that when discussing Sanskrit and Western poetics, similarities may appear to emerge in verbal description which are not similarities in practice. Thus it may be established that both Western and Sanskrit theorists have been much concerned with 'meaning', or 'ambiguity', or 'impersonality', but there may be a world of difference between the suppositions behind these concerns, the way they were applied, or the judgements they led to. In the discussion which followed Mr. Dhavale's paper the point was well made that a poetics of ambiguity which led to poems in which both the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* could be read simultaneously, is remote from Empson's conception. Similarly when Dr. Krishnamoorthy bravely attempted to apply the *dhvani* theory to English poetry, it was revealed as a descriptive rather than a discriminatory method. All sorts of unspoken assumptions emerge as soon as the attempt is made to apply a theory: the *dhvani* theory would seriously limit understanding of Western drama for instance, as it does not admit involvement in the action (this was revealed in Dr. Krishnamoorthy's comments on 'Macbeth'). Indeed Sanskrit poetics has no word for 'tragedy', which it more or less confuses with pathos (*karuna-rasa*). The Sanskrit analogy of aesthetic pleasure-in-pain with the pleasure-in-pain of 'the lover's stroke', so memorably expounded by Professor Visvanathan (with apologies to the ladies, thank you!), is really quite inapplicable to Western tragedy, which is a different kind of *lila* altogether. Similarly *catharsis* is quite inapplicable to Sanskrit drama. It became increasingly plain that it is much easier to accommodate the two traditions at the theoretical than the practical level. A paper which drew particular attention to the dangers of purely theoretical discussion was Professor Lal's examination of *catharsis*, *rasa*, and *objective correlative*. As he bemusedly demonstrated, nobody really knows what these labels mean: they may only acquire meaning — or their inadequacy

be revealed — by reference to actual plays.

All the more interesting therefore were those papers which raised practical problems, or looked to actual works for illustration. Dr. Kantak prefaced his paper on Western and Indian concepts of drama by a warning against 'submerging differences'. He found the origin of Western realistic bias in Aristotle's insistence on an *action* in time and space, although ironically enough Attic drama itself was more lyrical and ritualistic. Indian drama on the other hand imitates 'states, sentiments — the essence, the being', which are eternal. Hence the Western interest in character, and Eastern presentation of the type — 'moved out as it were of his native matrix of bestiality'. Hence too the Indian preoccupation with design (*pramana*): the aim is 'spiritual equilibrium'. So tragedy is ruled out and plays end in reunion. This normative, formal bias supported a conventionalism which reached its extreme limit in the Japanese Noh. Acceptance of the Aristotelian standard as a norm has often incapacitated Western critics from understanding Eastern drama. On the other hand the contemporary Western movement away from realism towards 'poetic' and 'absurd' drama may prove a fatal betrayal of Western genius, which is rooted in time. Dr. Krishnamoorthy pointed out that although Sanskrit theory laid emphasis on *rasa* and states, in practice there might be emphasis on plot, e.g. *Mudra-Rakshasa*. Dr. Bose wondered whether the Noh could be considered drama at all. Otherwise the Seminar accepted this fundamental contrast between the two traditions, oriented respectively to time and eternity. And as Dandin insists, as Dr. Krishnamoorthy reminded us, *sub specie aeternitatis* even Ravana can be a great hero.

Two papers raised interesting practical problems arising out of these fundamental differences. Dr. M. G. Krishnamurthi, who teaches Indian literature at the University of Wisconsin, spoke of the different national assumptions and attitudes we bring to the writings of other countries.

He contrasted American and non-American reactions to Hawthorne or Faulkner, and referred to the dispute between Maurice Bewley and F. R. Leavis about Henry James. Judgement is affected because we ask different questions, take different things for granted. Finally Dr. Krishnamurthi spoke of his experiences in teaching Kannarese poetry (in translation) to American students. In the case of a religious poem, an American student is more likely to respond to the verbal ingenuity (after explanation), and a Hindu to its philosophical rightness. The ensuing discussion largely emphasised that this was only part of a wider problem with a variety of complex factors — personal taste, levels of sensibility, historical change, and above all language. Some critics are parochial (especially Dr. Leavis, even Professor Narasimhaiah admitted), others develop intercultural sympathies. Norman Brown called Tagore 'a second rate Victorian poet repeating clichés', and Professor Narasimhaiah agreed—in translation. But Yeats and Pound had admired these same translations.

Dr. Krishna Vaid, a practicing Hindi novelist, raised some problems of his craft. The novel is a product of the West and can only be judged in the Western tradition — *not* by theories of *rasa* and *dhvani*. But this leads to a conflict between ancient and modern ideals — the devotees of tradition will not buy his books! A further consequence is subordination to the West, and worse still patronizing encouragement from the West (William Walsh, etc.). The temptations of writing in English with the foreign reader in mind is partly responsible for this. Only by a deeply-felt commitment to the contemporary Indian theme ('a tradition-oppressed society in the throes of an unprecedented transmutation') in all its psychological ramifications, may the Indian novelist throw off his bondage and achieve maturity. Ka Naa Subramaniam, as another practitioner, agreed with this analysis, but P. Lal expressed some concern at the

imputation of 'foreignness' to Indian writing in English.

The Seminar ended with recommendations for a Literary Criticism syllabus combining Western and Sanskrit poetics. The emphasis was on texts rather than secondary sources, but opposed to exercises in practical criticism. These proposals, like the Seminar itself, were tentative and experimental. A great deal had been achieved so far as agreeing on the desirability of working in both traditions was concerned, and indicating its feasibility. The Seminar acknowledged the importance of the comparative method in the special Indian situation, and recommended the study of Comparative Aesthetics and Comparative Literature. On the other hand the distinction between poetics (theory of literature) and criticism (evaluation of individual works) was not very clearly maintained. A strong English bias was also noticeable. Messers Eliot, Richards and Leavis more or less dominated the proceedings; Father Fleury's paper on the later developments of French classicism was marginal; even so important a German theory as that of the sublime in art, offering similarities with the Indian comparison of the art experience with *moksha*, received only passing mention. But the Seminar could not take on too much: the importance of continental European criticism was acknowledged in principle, and indeed also of Persian, Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese. Another problem was the difficulty of making the Sanskrit tradition available in modern terms. Dr. Krishnamoorthy of Karnatak University here performed outstanding service, but he was the only Sanskritist at the Seminar — the others were all professors of English. Most Sanskrit pundits move in a closed world, unaware of modern criticism or modern literature. Nevertheless a beginning had been made, the entire proceedings will be published, and it is to be hoped this will prove an inspiration to more such investigation.

POETRY

PIETA

Death, placed together
my hands, formed a long closed lip,
puckered with pain.

I cannot understand this. All
the world, people, love,
the spreading of light and day!

I walked beside you, after you
spoke, and so much I never
understood, filled my ears...

And I was full of joy. The sparkle
I have seen in your eyes!
I remember

The grief and joy, which was
mine to give and receive
from you.
All this you have

taken away. The
world has changed...,

I feel the pain of another birth!
An umbilical chord is being
cut inside me!

Standing alone...
I wish to learn once
more from you.
The past has become more real to me, than ever.
All this present you have taken!

But strangely, my eyes are aching!
 I cannot stand the glare, yes...
 really it is this glare that
 I wish to dim: this light like emptiness, like
 silence, I wish to break, and scatter
 like broken glass...

son, can't you see, how I stand,
 open-eyed, perplexed, before this world? o why
 is this, I feel another birth? your lips don't move!
 something like a child
 wept in me! what is it?

your silence, and me, are all that is.
 I wish to understand,
 I feel, Yes! all these

years I used to hide behind you...
 now, I am in the open world, now I know
 I should thank you... Yes,

I see two men
 who are
 blind with pain.
 Who are
 they?

Shall I go down to
 the town, and fetch
 their mothers?

I see now
 with my own eyes.

My life you had written.
 my fears you had deadened,
 my grief and my life. Now!
 I see you...

your nails, this cross like an
 upright key, o my SON!

your bloody
 nails, like closed, aching lips!

You have taken all shade with
 you! I no longer feel distant from you.
 Come, my heart is beating in your
 smile to tell me, yes; it is so!

I rest my head, upon the
 hard wood of your cross.

I understand this death and love.
 Now my heart aches
 for your suffering! Give me,
 this old bitter cup...

I bless these two, beside you. I bless you
 who are sinking into
 sleep! I see life's culmination...

Sleep...
 Last night nothing
 but a solitude was before you.
 Deserted, rejected, you saw
 the glare of our life with your eyes.

Now, with a son's love,
 offer me this cup! I wish to drink and
 wear your thorns in silence!

In all my life
 I was never so close to you!

Love, with this
 I shall join you,

with this, I shall
 join you, on your aching cross.

S. RAJEN

THE HUNTED

My father is a hunter.
 He shoots squirrels
 For training his eyesight.
 He shoots the beautiful deer in the wood
 For meat.
 And sometimes he shoots a lion
 For his pride.

Oh, Hunter greater than my father.
 You and all men's fate are linked together.
 When you get me,
 Will my death be that
 Of a squirrel, a deer, a lion?

And after all,
 What difference does it make?

WORDS

Only a handful of words.
 They are seashells
 And I put them in a pattern
 On the sand.
 The shells are the same
 The pattern changes.

Do I never get tired of these shells,
 Or am I a child
 Absorbed in a game
 My mother doesn't understand.

I would rather be a poet
 Who didn't write,
 If my shining shells
 Didn't bring you a message
 From the sea.

JETTE KJAERBOE

SHORT STORY

The Castle

H. R. PASRICHA

‘WHY do the Siamese call our house a castle?’ Ravi asked me. ‘Because their house is small and dilapidated,’ I replied, ‘Besides, they are our cousins and so rightfully jealous.’

Actually, there were no Siamese in our village, but some of our distant relations had started business in Bangkok and so were dubbed Siamese. Nor was our house a castle. It acquired its name from the solidity of its construction and its size. Its outer wall, I learnt later, was more than three feet thick, and one could ride through its front portal without dismounting. Grandfather once explained, ‘It was both prudent and convenient to ride straight into the courtyard because often I returned home late in the evening with saddle-bags full of cash. It was unwise to unload outside.’

Paper currency had not yet made its appearance in India, and a man’s house was his bank.

Ravi and I were both young: we had just joined school. We were seated on the two large, redstone seats on either side of the main gate. Grandfather often sat there and received people. It made us feel grown up to sit in those seats. It was a chilly Autumn evening, and hardly anyone was around. The peasants returned from their fields at dusk and turned indoors. The shops shut before dusk. Only milk-sellers kept open. The village people liked a drink of hot milk before retiring for the night. The village common in front of the castle

was all but deserted except for a lonely old man looking for fire for his hookah. Fire was always kept smouldering in one corner of the common for everyone to help himself. Safety matches were still a luxury. Abstractedly, I watched the old man bend over the fire and a wisp of thin blue smoke rise in the clear autumn air. The smeechy smell of the cowdung was in my nostrils.

Next day, I still recall, uncle Arjan came to the village. He had been studying Law in Lahore, and now he had obtained his degree. In the evening, Grandfather discussed with him and uncle Dewan, his eldest son, the problems of setting up a law practice.

‘The house is easily managed,’ I heard Grandfather say, ‘I shall speak to Ilahi Baksh. He has several houses in Sialkot.’

Ilahi Baksh was a great friend of Grandfather. He had spent the greater part of his life in contract work for the government and had become quite well-to-do. In his old age, he had retired to the village and bought up a great deal of property both in the village and Sialkot. Now and then, he and Grandfather would find time to sit together in the evening and talk of things spiritual. Sometimes I sat by but never followed their talk.

‘Munshi would be a problem.’ Uncle Arjan remarked.

‘Perhaps, you could pick one up at Sialkot.’ Uncle Dewan suggested.

Grandfather did not like the idea. ‘No, no use trusting a stranger from the city.

Better take a reliable fellow from here; someone attached to the family.'

'He must have some experience of law courts and clients,' Uncle Arjan stipulated.

'Clients. Your Munshi won't have to run after clients, and you won't have to worry about them; I shall send you the clients,' Uncle Dewan spoke confidently. 'We have influence in the district, boy. No case shall go to any other lawyer once you start your work.'

This seemed to cheer up uncle Arjan. 'I think, Gehna Mirasi would make you a very suitable munshi,' Grandfather declared. 'He is not doing well, and so many children to support; he needs a helping hand.'

In the village set-up of those days, Mirasis were the only ones who did not turn their hands to a job of work. They were total parasites: their vocation was to entertain people. They were all Muslims, and we had three families dependent on us.

'Gehna is no longer young,' Uncle Arjan remarked diffidently.

Grandfather, however, did not think there was anything wrong with his choice; Uncle Arjan had to be satisfied with Gehna. Years later, I remember, Gehna burgeoned into a very successful Lawyer's Clerk. He did well for himself and we were all very happy with him.

Similar problems were not so easily settled in the case of uncle Krishan, the youngest son of Grandfather. He graduated a few months after his elder brother. He had set his heart on a judicial career while Grandfather had other plans for him.

'But why can't I be a munsiff? It is a promising line: one can be a Sessions Judge one day,' Uncle Krishan argued his case persuasively. 'This offer is not going to remain open for long; I'm lucky to be offered such a job.'

I gathered some influential friend of the family had offered to get uncle into the judiciary.

'I do not like service,' Grandfather spoke softly and deliberately.'

'People are taking service now, father.'

'I daresay, but it has never been done in our family. We have lived like gentlemen and we shall continue to do so.'

'What am I supposed to do then?' Uncle Krishan asked rather disappointed.

'You go to Calcutta; I want a business office opened there.'

'I don't understand business, father.'

'You are educated; you can learn, can't you? I had no schooling; how did I learn?'

It was true. Grandfather had never been to school. He could read and write only the fantastic, cryptic shorthand in which business accounts were kept those days. Yet he had managed his business as well as his lands single-handed until his eldest son, uncle Dewan grew up to lend him a helping hand. He was now getting on in life; his figure had become corpulent and ungainly, but his ways were as gracious as those of a cultural man.

Since uncle Krishan remained undecided, Grandfather played his trumpcard. He told uncle Krishan to discuss the matter with his wife. Uncle Krishan's wife being a town-girl had never quite adjusted to our rural existence. She made up her husband's mind for him.

II

The headmaster at the village primary school was a gaunt figure with an outsize turban which made him look grotesque. We were always scared of him. One day he sent for our class to go to his classroom. He had spread a large map on the wall and was standing beside it. The whole school marched in. He explained to us where Germany was and how big it was compared to Britain. According to him, Germany had wantonly started war merely because an Austrian duke had been murdered in Sarajevo. Britain, he explained, was trying to fight the ogre. We were horrified at the wickedness of Germans, and that is how we learnt there was a war on.

In the evenings, sometimes we slouched together and tried to tell each other what

war was and how people fought in battle, but it never created a clear impression. A few young peasant lads went and joined up. One day the Tehsildar came to our village and made everyone contribute to the War fund. Labhu halvai (milk-seller) walked forlornly past our house. He looked a picture of unkemptness and misery. His clothes were all tattered and greasy and his long grey beard was studded with bits of the sweets he made in his shop. He was grumbling and muttering, 'He made me pay hundred rupees, me a poor man.' I suspected he had put on his filthiest to make the Tehsildar believe he was a poor man. But he was not really poor. Apart from these few incidents, we never really got to know what war was.

One day the glad tidings broke on the village: Germany had been defeated and the war won. To celebrate the victory, a huge log of wood was set on fire in the middle of the common. It supplied fire to many a hookah for many days.

All through winter and the following spring, Influenza raged in the village; people died like flies. Our head stableman was taken ill too. One day, Ravi and I decided to pay him a visit. We climbed up to the saddle room where he used to sleep. We had hardly stuck our noses in when he bellowed, 'What the Hell are you doing here?' We scampered back and ran into Grandmother. She told us to wait downstairs while she went into the saddle room with a pot of food.

Grandma was a very gentle creature, but she had a very severe expression on her face when she took us to task for entering the sickroom. Ravi and I were very scared we were going to be reported to Grandfather. It took us many days to figure out why grandma could not possibly report us. She was doing exactly what we were told not to do: she had been carrying food to the sick man on the sly all the time.

III

Uncle Chand took Ravi and me with him to the town where he had his business: we

were to be put to school there. It was our first train journey. The Second Class compartment in which we travelled was a new world; it had so many strange contrivances in it. We wanted to explore everything, but sleep overpowered us as soon as the train started.

Uncle Chand's house, we discovered, was close to the railway track which ran right through the town. At the noise of an approaching train, Ravi and I would drop everything and run out to watch the train go by. This went on for many days. Uncle Chand used to laugh at us and call us village louts.

Then one day the trains stopped; not a single train the livelong day. We were most disappointed and decided to ask uncle as soon as he got home. He looked preoccupied and serious when he got home, but we did not give him a moment.

'Uncle, no trains today?'

'There aren't going to be any trains for many days to come.'

'But why not? What will the people do; how will they travel?'

'Look, this is a very serious matter. The government has declared Martial Law.'

'What's that, uncle and why does it stop trains?'

'It is difficult to explain to you boys.' Uncle declared exasperatedly. 'There is military in the town. They have arrested a number of people. You be careful, and run home as soon as you see the soldiers coming. In Gujranwala, they have shot up people and dropped bombs from planes.'

Next day, the military arrived at our school. They were Indians, all of them on horseback, carrying lances with pennants. It was a pleasing sight to see. All the boys were drawn up in two rows and made to salute the Union Jack flying at the school mast. Saluting the flag became a daily routine and had to be repeated morning and evening.

When the school closed for summer vacation, it was a great relief: no more parades, no more saluting the flag. We had

not been away from the castle for so long before; it was pleasant to be back. We slipped smoothly back into the leisurely routine of village life: long walks in the morning; lazy afternoons spent under the shade of trees in the common watching the peasants play pasha with cowrie shells and bathing in the canal that went past our village. Days flew and soon it was time to go back to school.

In the autumn of that year, Mr. Gandhi came to pay our town a visit. A great deal was being talked about him; he was already a hero. They said he had just returned from South Africa to see how we had suffered under martial law. On a cold, and frosty morning, a largish crowd received him at the railway station shouting many slogans into the bargain. I got a good glimpse of him only when the crowd squatted outside the station to hear him speak. A thin lean figure wrapped in a sheet of homespun sat on a small, improvised stage. While he spoke to us of our hardships and indignities, I could not take my eyes off him. What a quaint figure. How clumsily tied his turban and what an unprepossessing appearance. The ground on which I squatted was cold and I was beginning to freeze. It was a great relief when the meeting finally broke up.

IV

Right up to 1938, there was not a cloud in our sky, and life ran smoothly in the castle. There was never a shadow of a doubt in our minds about our future; we were riding the crest of the wave and there was not a trough in sight. Early that year we received a jolt: Grandma fell ill. She was taken to Sialkot, to uncle Arjan's house, for treatment. It was no use, however. The doctors said it was cancer.

Without Grandma, the castle was an empty shell: its spirit had departed. With her gentleness, she had ruled the house, so that though her word was law it irked no one. Grandfather did not utter a word, but he was desolate. In the afternoons when

village life came to a standstill, he made us play cards with him. It was pathetic.

Tragedy followed tragedy. Uncle Chand died suddenly of heart failure. He was the most vivacious spirit in the family, always sparkling with humour. Grandfather was inclined to blame himself. 'It must be the punishment for my ignoble deeds that I am condemned to see my grown up son die in front of me.'

Next year, I went to war myself. Often, at night, when I lay myself down tired and disheartened in the desert sand, I thought of that first World War which I and the village boys found so hard to picture. Now war was all round me, real and tragic. In 1942, General Rommel bore down on us for the third time and smashed his way through to Alamein. In that gloomy hour, I heard of the sudden death of uncle Arjan. He had a bad heart, and he was overweight. Like most Punjabis, he had a weakness for food, and despite all warnings, he had eaten his way to death. News of the death of a dear one produces an eerie feeling of being surrounded by death, eagerly looking for more victims, ready to pounce. It is a disturbing experience: for a little while one becomes aware of the utter futility of the clash and clangour of life. That is why, in India, where funerals are not decorously conducted, the participants talk loudly of God and things divine. It has always struck me as a ludicrous attempt to ward off the clutches of hovering death. There was death all around me, but Uncle Arjan's death had given me a glimpse of the hovering face of death. All the afternoon, I sat limp in the Mess thinking of the desolate house and disconsolate Grandfather. Hope of seeing the family had buoyed me up through the early disasters of war, but, at this rate, it was unlikely that I would see many of them alive when I got back, if I did. One by one the other officers left to doze or read the hot afternoon off.

David and Templeton were the first to return. It was Tea time. I tried to wipe off the grief-stricken look from my face. I

could not have succeeded because Templeton remarked, 'It's never so bad as it seems at first, you know.' He was the more friendly of the two. David always put a little sting of sarcasm into his remarks as often as he could.

'It was so sudden and unexpected.' I replied.

'Such things are always unpredictable.' Templeton added.

'You'll soon find someone else to boil your rice for you.' David was true to himself. I decided to correct him.

'It was my uncle; died suddenly of heart failure.'

There was loud laughter from both of them.

'I thought it was a sweetheart.' David added.

It was difficult to explain to them. Perhaps, it was odd that family should mean so much to us.

V

Middle of 1947. I was back in the village after all. It was a relief and a pleasure to be back. The family, however, was reduced to a shadow. Two uncles dead. Uncle Dewan had had a stroke. He still dragged his left leg, and his left arm was almost useless. Uncle Krishan had wound up his Calcutta office during the communal riots of 1946 in which hundreds died. Grandfather would not let him stay there. He was completely frustrated and hardly knew what to do with himself. The house appeared to be full of women and children only. It was a pitiful sight. Nobody whispered a word, but financially we had suffered a great deal. Two business offices closed and uncle Dewan in no state to look after the lands. Things were going to rack and ruin.

The atmosphere of the village had undergone a complete change. People no longer sat together on the common and no friendly laughter was heard. Those who met talked in low tones, and there was grim anxiety in every face. Shopkeepers sat listlessly in their shops and mechani-

cally served their customers. Life was at a low ebb. The arrival of the newspapers in the afternoon was a signal for frenzied activity. The news was quickly devoured and discussed. The news was mainly of riots and killings; stoppings of trains and wholesale slaughter of the helpless.

Gehna Mirasi turned up one evening. Years had not been kind to Gehna; he was bent and bowed. He sat down on the floor in front of Grandfather. Conversation always proceeded slowly in the village, but he was unusually silent. Grandfather spoke first. 'How do you find it now that you have no job?'

'Allah is merciful, shahji. The boys are working and my needs are few. You have been our protection for so many years. I pray to Allah every day that he look after you and yours as you have looked after me and mine.'

Gehna lapsed into a prolonged silence. Yet Grandfather seemed to feel that he had more to say. He waited. Gehna seemed to be forming words and finding it difficult. He kept fidgeting. At last, he spoke, 'My family and I have eaten your salt for many years. We cannot forget.'

'There is nothing to forget, Gehna.' Grandfather said modestly.

'But the people have changed, Shahji. They are wicked; they are no longer human. There is God's curse on us. You can rely on them no longer.'

When Gehna left, grandfather was disturbed. Somehow he had made his meaning clear to Grandfather. He looked at me for an explanation.

'Grandfather, you have been living in a world that died a long while ago. Gehna was right.'

'Nonsense. I have great influence with the Muslims of this village. I have always looked after them. They have confidence in me; they even bring their domestic troubles to me.'

'Yes, Grandfather. I have heard that before many times. You have even prevented many a divorce among them. But, as Gehna

said, they have changed; you can rely on them no longer.'

I took courage to suggest that we leave the village, for it would not be possible for us to live in the new conditions, but that upset him.

'Leave the village; run away, are you crazy? Is that what you learnt in war? Leave my ancestral property and home? Thank God, I am not that craven.'

It was no use. In his eyes I was still a little boy of yesterday. My four years in war had not matured me.

I tried to take uncle Krishan into confidence and explain the urgency. Soon there would be no route of escape left: we were bound to get cut off sooner or later. But he refused to budge until Grandfather agreed.

The next two days were days of desperation and helplessness. Each day added its details of horror and gruesomeness. Each day made me more fearful. On the third day, Ilahi Baksh turned up at the house. His visits had become less and less frequent. He was very feeble and almost bent over: he could walk with difficulty. He was very pleased to see me.

'I heard of your return son, but it has taken me several days to muster strength to stir out. I am so glad to see you safe home. God heard my prayers,' His voice was warm with affection. I addressed him by the name his grandchildren called him, which I had picked up in my younger days when I played with them. I thanked him

and said, 'Babajan, You must talk to Grandfather; it is not safe for him to stay here any longer'.

'Son, it hurts me a great deal to hear what you say. I had hoped, he and I would spend our last days together here, breathing the same air and become part of the earth so dear to us both...' He broke off; he was too full of emotion.

'No one dare touch my friend,' he went on after a while, 'or his dear ones whilst I am alive. But I am old and have not many more days to live. I shall speak to him. God protect you all.'

When Ilahi Baksh left his eyes were moist with tears and he did not look towards me.

VI

It is many years now since we left our village for good, never to see it again. At first we received a few letters lamenting our departure but they soon stopped. We have no news of the Castle, what happened to it, or who lives in it now.

Grandfather, as long as he lived, uttered not a word about the home or the property he had left behind; never bemoaned the loss, never blamed anyone. But he took no interest in our new lives: we knew he had left his heart behind. We were grateful to God when his end came, for it was the end of his torture. He had gone through too much.

B O O K S

FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN INDIA (1858-1909)
by M. M. Ahluwalia (Ranjit Printers & Publishers, Delhi. 448 pp. Rs. 25.)

DILIGENCE devoid of discernment is the chief characteristic of the present work. This is in keeping with the majority of the theses which are yearly submitted and approved for the award of doctorates. It is surprising that such a work has been selected for publication in the 'Modern Historical Series' by the History Department of Delhi University.

Dr. Ahluwalia's tragic flaw is his lack of a sense of proportion, the *sine qua non* of historical writing. Having engaged himself in the impossible task of dealing with every conceivable aspect of this vast subject Dr. Ahluwalia is unable to perceive the relative importance of these different aspects. Consequently, he has done justice to nothing. For instance, no less than twenty-four pages have been devoted to the passing of India under the Crown; but the impact of the upheaval of 1857 has been dismissed in less than three pages. Even this scanty treatment is not a serious attempt to analyse the effect of this epoch-making movement on different sections of Indians and Europeans.

Similarly, it is surprising that while he refers to a rather insignificant *hartal* at Mathura, the author has satisfied himself with a passing and vague allusion to the movement organised by that valiant Maratha revolutionary, Vasudev Balwant Phadke. The account of the pre-Congress political associations is extremely sketchy, obsolete and useless. The omission of the two National Conferences which presaged

the Indian National Congress is difficult to account for. Incidentally, one of the founders of the Bombay Association was not Nowrosjee Surdoonjee, but Nowrojee Furdoonjee. Or is this also one of the countless misprints that have been allowed to disfigure this volume?

Dr. Ahluwalia also draws a picture, in parts vivid, of the economic exploitation of the people. The eventual rejection of the proposal for a country-wide extension of the Permanent Settlement and the adoption, instead, of the system of excessive and short-term assessments find adequate treatment. We are told how coercive methods were used for the realisation of an oppressive land revenue where the Government was an absentee landlord. This threw the peasant into the strangling grip of the mahajan, while the system of civil law unduly favoured the latter to the utter ruin of the former. The misfortunes of the peasant were further augmented by the destruction of the village handicrafts which had earlier provided him and his womenfolk with a source of supplementary income. Numerous cesses, forest laws and the encouragement of opium and alcohol also contributed to the poor man's intolerably hard lot. As if this were not enough, he had to pay anything between 500 to 2,500 per cent on the value of an article of absolute necessity — salt. The author also does not omit the stamp duties, huge wastage on public works and the heavy losses due to the adverse position of exchange.

All this is most industriously done. But history is not a mere jumbling of available

facts. It requires an intelligent interpretation thereof. This interpretation imparts a meaning to the collection of facts. So far as others have earlier performed this task, Dr. Ahluwalia goes on merrily. But where a new interpretation is required, he does not even make an attempt. Unfortunately, he has not even cared to brace himself up with some of the pioneering researches which have come out in recent years. The inevitable result, therefore, has been a faithful reproduction of the views of men like Sir Charles Trevelyan, Fawcett, Bright, Digby, Naoroji, Dutt and Gokhale.

A glaring drawback of the present work then, is the author's reliance on secondary works. A researcher cannot fulfil his duty if he derives his information second hand. This should be done only when inevitable. Every man is liable to miss something from any document. Moreover, the perusal of an extract may not give a correct idea of the original whole. An allied methodological defect has been the greater reliance of the author on parliamentary debates, reports of different commissions and the writings of non-Indians rather than on the speeches and writings of Indians and on the Indian Press. This is important because it vitally affects the standpoint of the writer. It should be readily admitted that a history of the freedom struggle in India must give an account of the ideas and aspirations that stirred Indians to think in terms of freedom and to strive for it. Since these ideas did not emerge all of a sudden and among all sections of Indians simultaneously, an attempt must be made to describe their development in different stages. Dr. Ahluwalia, on the contrary, has treated his subject as if the period between 1858 and 1909 were static. We get no idea of the Indian awakening as it gradually stalked the land.

Perhaps this failure stems from the very title of the book. In spite of isolated movements with their pretensions of aiming at the liberation of the country, it was only in the first decade of the present century that the idea of freedom from British rule

began to be put forward with some semblance of seriousness. The Indian National Movement, during the period covered by Dr. Ahluwalia, was not a war of liberation. Had the author focussed greater attention on the expanding ideas and interests of Indians, he would have succeeded in giving a lively account of the development of national consciousness in its different phases.

Nowhere have these fundamental defects of method landed the author into greater delusion and uncertainty than in his treatment of communalism in Indian politics. Arguing, as it were, backwards, he seems to have taken it for granted that since the British Indian Government followed the policy of using the Muslims as a counterpoise against the Nationalist Indians in the early years of the present century, they could not but have done so even earlier. For a scholar of history this is a most dangerous approach. It would have been better if Dr. Ahluwalia had relied on unassailable facts rather than on surmises based on hindsight. In that case, perhaps, he would have seen that far from being unduly generous to Muslim education, the Government was following a policy of strict impartiality in its grants to educational institutions. We have a large number of documents showing that contemporary Muslim leaders were frequently petitioning the Government against its policy of neglecting their interests; while the Government, instead of rejecting the charge, always replied that it was bound by its policy of religious neutrality to adopt an impartial attitude. It also made it clear that it was anxious to ameliorate the lot of the Muslims, but only insofar as it could do so without violating its principles. It is true that individual English officials in the 19th century suggested the extension to the Mussalmans of the policy of divide and rule. But the views of isolated individuals cannot be equated with the policy of a government.

It is impossible even to refer to everything that Dr. Ahluwalia has dealt with

in his book. What has been said earlier applies to the book as a whole. Our Universities and scholars may do well to ponder as to where our academic standards will go if such works are approved for the award of a doctorate and publication in the 'General Historical Series'. As a friend of mine remarked, it is a slur on scholarship.

SUDHIR CHANDRA

A Way of Life?

THE CRISIS OF INDIA by Ronald Segal
(Penguin Special, 326 pp. 5s.)

INDIANS in general and Hindus in particular are always on the defensive about what has been called their 'way of life'. I am sure many of us would react adversely to Ronald Segal's book, for the reason of its being too critical of India. The book only confirms the difficulties that a Western visitor encounters in the understanding of the Hindus. In fact, Nirad Chaudhury in a recent *Encounter* article followed up by *Quest* has tried to delineate the problem. Whether Ronald Segal has succeeded in analyzing the highly complex 'crisis' (I would prefer the word 'crises' in plural) is a question of opinion, but if he means to highlight the fact of Indian poverty, no one shall object to his assertions. My dispute with him is based not on his characterization of Indian backwardness as the consequence of Hinduism, but on his highly impressionistic observations and gross generalizations.

We may note, at the outset, the selection of books which have been of special value to the author in the preparation of the text and from which he has freely borrowed in formulating his own ideas. They are: *The Twice Born* by G. M. Carstairs, *The Hindu Woman* by Margaret Cormack, *Caste Today* by Taya Zinkin, *Hinduism* edited by Louis Renou, *The Politics of Scarcity* by Myron Weiner, *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster and the novels of R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and R. Praver Jhabvala. The line of development of thought is not

very different from Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* — a book that created a stir in the Indian intelligentsia. Mr. Segal's purpose, however, is not to denigrate India in the eyes of her own people or in the eyes of the world but to arouse the conscience of mankind to the elimination of our poverty even if it involves the surrender of democratic processes to ruthless dictatorship. He judges India by a single criterion and consequently sees her through the materialistic lense. He confesses, rather ruefully: 'I am an unregenerate materialist ...and nothing can compensate for the massive damage done by Indian hunger. That is my limitation' and also the limitation of the book. If, therefore the book is hurtful or hostile to the Indian people, he does not mean it to be so. He attacks in the belief that what he finds repulsive in their lives should be repugnant to them as well.

Segal's facts — the facts about caste, religion, history, economy, society, politics and corruption — cannot be controverted. His facts about the Indian poor are the most formidable. Nevertheless, one may not agree with his juxtaposition of facts and values on the one hand and facts and theories on the other. For example, when he says: 'I can see why others may believe it more important to be holy than to be fed', he has a basic disagreement — only superficial, I should think, because there is no antithesis between being holy and being fed — on values that are as much facts as the statistics of the magnitude of poverty. Understanding of India, in a way, implies an understanding of the inner conflicts, the motivations and the desires, the ambitions and aspirations of a people. While Mr. Segal has been most perceptive and revealing in his study of India, his crisis-oriented mental make up has, I suspect, stood in his way. We know where his sympathies lie and we all share his concern about the social and economic stagnation into which the country has fallen after fifteen years of planning. Yet, we may disagree with him as to his remedies. His

discovery of China as a model for economic development only underscores the values of a libertarian policy in India. His suggestion for the removal of sweepers as a remedy for insanitation seems to be just unrealistic and impractical. His wish to see a strong ruler installed in place of what he calls parliamentary 'trappings' would appear to many democrats as naive.

Of the pressures that make the Congress Government succumb, Segal writes incisively: 'For all their genuflections to democracy, they feel that they know what is best for the people they govern, without having to ask, and they treat any popular initiative as an ignorant affront. When fifteen million peasants quietly petition, the Congress leadership cannot hear, and when fifteen hundred rioters loot shops and fire trams, it stirs to respond'. The obvious moral drawn is that democracy is a subterfuge whereby the Congress, like the Kuomintang in pre-revolutionary China, is only postponing the revolution. Sarcasm on Gandhi and Nehru fall into the same line of argument. Selig Harrison's *'Dangerous Decades'*, seems, have caught Segal in a trap. Dangers to Indian unity notwithstanding, the forces of unity are gaining strength as seen in the emergency after the Chinese aggression. Favourite clichés abound in Segal's account of Indian situations.

All countries are unique, but Segal puts India in the sole class of the most unique and the uniqueness lies in the nature of India's poverty and its strange link with Hinduism. Such an equation has a great significance in terms of explanation. The 'fatalism of the Indian poor is different from the apathy, almost the atrophy, that is the mark of the poor in so many other places, just as the unconcern of the Indian rich is different from the callousness of the rich elsewhere'. So that poverty in India is a preparation and not a despair. And this is so for the doctrine of *Dharma* that stands at the centre of Hinduism enforcing 'absolute obedience to the rules of conduct' and the 'absolute acceptance of one's con-

dition.' Hinduism is both India's strength and weakness, less strength, more weakness. All Indian phenomena can be viewed in this light. Segal does so. But disgust with Indian ways ought not to make us as desperate for solutions as the author is. 'Unimpressed by the progress towards appropriate solutions... impatient with the laborious, sometimes seemingly self-defeating processes of democratic rule, a visitor (of Segal's preferences!) may catch himself longing for a ruthless government that would however authoritarily, tackle at least the crises of poverty and overpopulation, superstition and separatism, official corruption and crude self-seeking of the commercial classes.' That is the author's major theme. That is also the most vulnerable position. To seek a strong man for a diverse and large country like India having the character that Segal observes is to search for the impossible. He himself rules out the possibility of military rule. And no strong rule can be sustained without the help of the army. Hence, it seems appropriate to suggest that Segal's emotional and sentimental concern for the have-nots has led him into alleys of misunderstanding and half-truths. Oversimplification may be temporarily satisfying; sophistry may be good *journalese*; facts may be good guides to sponsor an ideology — all these fail in the face of scientific analysis and civilized modes of social engineering.

Segal has a lot of information up his sleeves to be distributed to the lay reader. He is at his best in his marshalling of facts and events and at his worst when profounding theories or feeding his ideology.

M. M. SANKHDHER

Words, words...

CONTRASTING CONCEPTIONS OF UNESCO
by T. V. Sathyamurthy (Librairie Droz, Geneva,
310 pp.)

THREE hundred and ten all-but-unreadable pages, including five appendices and a note to Appendix Five. It was tough

going, made far worse than it need have been by the truly appalling gobbledygook used throughout the book. Full of terrible words, such as 'minimal', 'dichotomy', 'continuum', 'isolable', and 'holistic', which certainly do exist — in dictionaries; and others such as 'self-conception' (coined by the author to convey 'the idea an organisation has of its own image') which do not; sentences, and I quote, like the following: "The United Nations can provide the necessary basis of American leadership for forging 'social' tissues of an integrated world community" — all these do but serve to darken counsel. (How, I wonder, is it possible to forge a tissue, 'social' or otherwise? It is a fascinating problem: special tissue-forging machinery, perhaps? It would, of course, be in short supply — extremely short. But I digress...) Dimly discernible within the impenetrable jungle of verbiage, there are some ideas which clearly do matter: just like the animals moving about in a State Forest Reserve, we know they must be there, but alas! we cannot come up close enough to catch them before they melt away into the distance.

It is possible that the self-frustrating style of this book is due to an unconscious desire for revenge on the part of the writer. My heart bleeds for him when I consider the hundreds of books, reports, memoranda, articles, and — for all I know to the contrary — the speeches, lectures, expositions, communiques, aide-memoires and general ear-and-mind-bashing to which he has been exposed; but all this is no reason why he should make his readers suffer.

In fact, the book reads exactly like what it is admitted to be in the acknowledgements at the beginning: an expanded thesis by a highly educated Indian for a doctoral dissertation at an American University (the University of Illinois). As C. V. Wedgewood wrote: 'The religion, the political morality and the philosophies of his own time colour the outlook of every writer, however conscientious. No-one has ever been, or will ever be, omniscient in his knowledge or infallible in his deduc-

tions. None can see the whole and undivided truth.'

I hope, from the bottom of my heart, that Mr. Sathyamurthy achieved his doctorate. Such industry should not, in mere justice, go unrewarded; but I also hope, with equal fervour, that before he attempts to write another book, he does something drastic about his style.

Politics, as we know to our cost, is about power. There, is, however, very little mention here of 'who does what to whom': Why, for instance, was one of the first UNESCO special projects based on bringing primary education to South America? The writer must think poorly of the intelligence of his readers, if he imagines they are too naïve to realise who paid the piper to call that particular tune? Education, most of us will readily agree, is an excellent idea. But what do we mean by 'education'? Here, in this country, it is by no means certain even in which medium this highly desirable activity should take place. Leaving aside the medium, education is surely but an instrument — a means to an end? It may, eventually, 'make straight in the desert an highway', but what will come rumbling along that highway? Will it be a fully-loaded tank-carrier, or a pantechnicon bulging with baby grants?

Another important question Mr. Sathyamurthy asks is: how is it possible 'to transform a group of jealous, ethnocentric (there he goes again!) nation-states into a supranational community with supranational citizens.' If the object of this transformation is peace, all of us will concede, more or less readily, that peace is highly desirable; but what sort of peace have we in mind? Do we mean just 'absence of war', or do we mean, so to speak, 'total peace', the lion lying down with the lamb, and all that jazz? Even the first, highly limited type of peace (i.e. not —war) requires certain definite changes of thinking, and consequently certain new policies which no nation on earth is at

present prepared to consider for itself — however eagerly they may urge others to do so.

The final, dispassionate and authoritative history of how the first gropings towards 'peace' — whatever that may mean — were conducted, probably cannot be written until the problems of peace have ceased to matter; and by that time it will not be worth writing. The future historian will find this a useful source-book on the early years of UNESCO. If it leaves the impression that everything always seems to be decided somewhere else, that impression may well be correct. Puzzled by the variety and speed of events which press in upon us so confusingly, day after day, we steer our way jerkily by means of the imperfect judgments of our ill-informed minds. We may not know, or even suspect, all the influences that are at work now, but we do know what beliefs and interests we think at this moment are providing the motives for our actions. We also know one thing the future historian will only be able to imagine; we know what it feels like to be alive, now, at this moment, to experience particular doubts, fears and pressures as a part of our life. The day-to-day events of history arise, at least in part, from error and misjudgement; on this level, falsehood itself is part of truth. There is in all probability no final and correct solution to the contemporary human dilemma.

'Should an individual owe his allegiance to the human race as a whole? Should he allow his individual interests to be shaped by the nationality, race, community, religion or any one of those numerous limitations which confine his immediate existence? Or, is there a way to compromise the two contradictory demands so that the maximum possible advantages of belonging to the world and to one country can be secured simultaneously?'

Well: is there?

FRANCES BLANK

Politics of Scarcity

INDIAN ECONOMIC POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT by P. T. Baur (*Popular Prakashan, Bombay. 152 pp. Rs. 10.*)

MR. BAUER'S objective in presenting this study of the Indian economy and its development is to examine and analyse the main elements of the Indian economic policy with a critical assessment of its social, political, and economic implications. It confines its scope to an analysis of the economic situation in India existing during 1959 to 1960 and details the background in which it had arisen. The author concedes that 'the discussion and assessment of the probable results of economic policy are influenced by one's political position.'

Explicitly stating these limitations, Mr. Bauer illustrates the various aspects of the Indian economy such as the peculiarities of the population problem, social customs and attitudes, role of religion and the caste system, that constitute serious obstacles to material progress and perpetuate the state of poverty. These attitudes and modes of conduct are certainly restrictive in their influence but it is strange to hear from Mr. Bauer that 'they are very rarely mentioned in the literature on Indian planning.' As it is, even the text-books on Indian economics are now full of critical references to these obstacles. His reasons for the reticence or silence of the intellectuals on these obstacles are strange. According to him, these attitudes and customs present embarrassing dilemmas to Indian intellectuals who wish to present themselves as spokesmen and representatives of the masses. The social reforms movement in India is now more than a hundred years old. And intellectuals have been on the forefront of it always.

However, the author optimistically concedes that despite these restrictive forces obstructing material progress in India, there are in the country large reserves of latent talent and energy and the government, through the reorganisation of the educational system and the improvement

of communications, can certainly promote the emergence of new attitudes free from the bonds of custom and congenial to material progress. That, according to him is the proper sphere for the state to act.

This is followed by a critical examination of the Second Five Year Plan of India, the implications of public investment, land reforms and cottage industry in it and the scope accorded to the private sector. To the author the Second Five Year Plan was a conglomeration of paradoxes. Massive expenditure on heavy industry when the urgent need was increased agricultural production, encouragement to cottage industries at the cost of large-scale industry when the urgent requirement was efficient husbandry of scarce resources, exclusion of private enterprise and investment from a wide sphere of industrial and commercial activity in the face of the urgent need to encourage viable economic activity. From this he proceeds to conclude that Indian planning, perhaps, has some other overriding objective which takes precedence over the promotion of economic advance. In Indian planning there is such an overriding aim: 'the establishment of a socialist society.' But is this an altogether new finding of Mr. Bauer? Long before the Second Five Year Plan was launched, the ruling Congress Party had pledged itself to the establishment of a socialistic pattern of society in India at its Awadi session. Naturally, it follows, therefore, that economic planning in India has to be, in a sense, instrumental in realising that socio-political goal. This is so very explicit that it is futile to conceal anything about it, much less, not to bring it to the notice of opinion outside India. There could be an argument over the extent of state control in the economy but there can scarcely be any debate on the need for the deliberate organisation of resources to defeat the grip of stagnation in backward economies like that of India.

While discussing the appropriate policy for Western aid, Mr. Bauer carries the argument openly to the political plane.

Undoubtedly, foreign aid represents resources compulsorily taken from the citizens of the donor countries by their governments. It is certainly not a charity and should not be. But why should the granting of foreign aid necessarily draw the donor country into the internal politics of the recipient country? 'Even in the purest act of personal charity there is an element of selection.' Quite true, but in the case of foreign aid should it not be confined to economic objectives? It is this political involvement frequently accompanying Western aid that has made it a constant source of friction and resentment and, consequently, rendered a large part of it a waste, not only economically but also politically. In making their assistance conditional, the Western countries are making a great blunder. And it is precisely here that the Soviet Union, and recently China, have scored a vital point over the West. Their assistance to the developing countries, although meagre compared with that of the West, is largely unconditional. However, as a result, they have successfully induced the recipient countries to adopt the pattern of their economic system. It is high time that the West realised that the form of assistance they give should respect the receiving country and its political system. One of the basic provisions of the Marshall Plan, to which Mr. Bauer himself refers to on p. 131, was that the assistance from the U.S.A. was to be absolutely unconditional. George Marshall in his famous Harvard Speech said, 'Our policy is directed not against any country or any doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos.'

These views on political implications apart, Mr. Bauer has rightly questioned the propriety in the government's participation in a wide variety of fields when it is not in a position to discharge efficiently some of the basic functions such as provision of social overheads, efficient management of the monetary and fiscal systems, provision of basic health and education services etc. Also, there could not be two

arguments about Mr. Bauer's contention that the quantum and allocation of foreign aid to countries like India should be based on sound principles, acceptable to both, of course, that its distribution should be properly organised and that there should be continuity and consistency in the aid programme.

It is heartening to note that Mr. Bauer would not agree with Prof. Milton Friedman's drastic suggestion of putting an end to foreign economic aid altogether by the West after serving a terminal notice on the developing countries. He would always recommend its continuance as long as the aid programme is designed to help improve the standard of living of the masses and the emergence of a free and open society.

S. SABNIS

Stock Taking

ESSAYS PRESENTED TO AMY G. STOCK,
edited by R. K. Kaul (University of Rajasthan,
195 pp. Rs. 12.)

THIS collection has no binding principle except the common association of the contributors with Professor Stock — as students, colleagues, friends. There are thirteen essays in all, on various aspects of English literature, ranging from Shakespeare to R. K. Narayan. About half are documentation: obscure and little-read works are presented in their historical context with summary and quotation (Yashdip Singh Bains on Middleton's *Blurt, Master Constable*; Kashi Prasad on Margaret Cavendish's *Blazing World*; Norman Jeffares on George Moore's *A Drama in Muslin*). K. N. Bakaya similarly documents 'Tennyson's Use of the Dramatic Monologue', and Syed Ali Ashraf 'Rural Sentimentalism in English Poetry during the Inter-War Period'. All this is very useful: the scholars have coughed away in libraries and archives, saving us the trouble.

Of course documentation can bring in wider issues. Geoffrey Bullough ('Shakespeare and his Classics') points out that to the Elizabethans no distinction was clear

between ancient and medieval worlds: 'There was no opposition between classical and romantic in those days. Romance was Matter of Rome; the classics were treated romantically.' So Shakespeare's treatment of his classics is a matter of realism versus imagination, not classicism versus romanticism: first, acceptance — in terms of Ovid and Renaissance painting (*Taming of the Shrew, Venus and Adonis*); next, 'loving mockery' (*Love's Labour Lost* to *As You Like It*); then the bitter revulsion of *Troilus and Cressida* or *Coriolanus*; and finally a return to the romantic view (*Pericles, Cymbeline*). From sensual dreams to 'poignant wish-fulfilment'.

As is customary with a documentary approach, most of these essays pay more attention to ideas than language, and the emphasis is on elucidation rather than evaluation. M. M. Bhalla interprets Shelley's *Alastor* quite uncritically, without discussing its quality of language at all. Yet the theme of this poem (man as both social and imaginative, the need to love fellow-men as well as spiritual visions) is commonplace enough. Similarly Amalendu Bose treats Browning's *Ring and the Book* as if it were on a par with Shakespeare: 'Exhibiting warped personalities and corroded potentialities, both Shakespearean tragedy and Browning's Roman story penetrate through evil, pain and suffering to the affirmation of life.' But the same could be said of a James Bond story — and I don't believe Professor Bose shares the admiration of Kingsley Amis for Ian Fleming? To me the language of Browning is so brazen and hollow, so full of attitudes, that I cannot take him at his face value, as Professor Bose does (e.g. when Browning says '*That Art remains the one way possible/Of speaking truth, to mouths like mine at least...*'). But Professor Bose is interested in the *ideas* of the poem, the complexity of its imagery the moral issues raised, or the argument between Browning and Julia Wedgewood whether art should present 'life as it is' or 'the irradiation of hope'. All this is handled admirably

of course, but there is nothing to vindicate the 'consummate utterance' he finds in the poem. In fact, from his description *The Ring and the Book* might just as well have been a novel.

The most fascinating and lively article is from William Empson on the Byzantium poems of Yeats. This is because Professor Empson is uninhibitedly frank and personal in approach. He never shrinks from saying what the poem *means* to him, or pushing a thought to its conclusion at the risk of showing crude misunderstanding. He has Yeats' mummy — a 'fusspot' for postponing reincarnation so long — dance ahead untwirling its bandages like a thread of Ariadne to lead the poet back after his guided tour of the winding path. His concrete, commonsense approach, interpreting *Byzantium* as a poetically condensed 'Science-Fiction Narrative' is well calculated to shock the neo-Christian commentators who look for heaven and paradise in the holy city. For him Byzantium is a real (10th century) city, and must be understood as such before symbolic purposes are brought into play. But his colloquial off-hand style, with its occasional lapses into facetiousness, is backed up at every point by detailed knowledge of the Yeatsian background and the variants. Professor Empson's 'waking interest' springs from a living response which keeps every paragraph alive. Professor Stock will particularly appreciate this.

Apart from an occasional Sanskrit reference or insight, there is nothing particularly Indian about the Indian contributors. Nor can I agree with Dr. Kaul that Narayan's comic treatment of maladjusted individuals is essentially Indian'. He also makes the interesting suggestion that Narayan 'by the mere act of translating rural or suburban Indian into English makes it comic.' The material is thereby stripped of its 'film of familiarity', so that 'an experience common in itself becomes funny by being translated into English.' This has curious implications for translators from the regional languages!

The only contributor whose insight might have been prompted by Sanskrit poetics is V. Y. Katak on 'Shakespeare's Dramatic Design'. We usually contrast Western drama of *action* with Sanskrit drama of *being*, but Professor Katak proposes that Shakespeare also conceived character as 'being' — especially Hamlet ('the whole of that play is like the presentment of a state of mind, of *being* rather than *doing*'). In the great tragedies, at the crest of tumultuous action, Professor Katak finds a still point: 'the tumult ceases and we make contact, as it were, with another plane of reality.' Thus Othello, Macbeth, Lear, Antony, 'like the *sthithaprajnya* of the Indian conception,' all come to see life as a stage and themselves beyond it untouched. But even this specifically Indian insight had been anticipated by Wilson Knight: 'Full of action as Shakespeare's stage is, it yet continually works to transmute action into peace.'

Dr. Kaul and the University of Rajasthan earn our respect by gathering together a set of essays of this quality. A prefatory biographical sketch of Professor Stock recalls her lifelong dedication to teaching and especially to the task of distinguishing between fact and opinion. This volume is a fitting tribute to her efforts in India, and an indication of the respect she has earned by her open generous mind.

D.J.M.

Help for the Young

'PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING IN INDIA'

by J. M. Fuster S. J. (Macmillan and Co., 260 pp. Rs. 10.)

THIS book is divided into four parts, preceded by an introduction which underlines the need for psychological counselling in India and throws light on the extent of its practice at present. As you go through the book, you get the feeling that the chapters could have been presented in a more logical sequence. For example, Part I of the book, entitled 'Preparation' deals with the training of counsellors, the

minimum qualifications required, their code of ethics and also delves into the theoretical background of the development of mental disorder and of psychotherapy. However, it is only towards the end of Part II that the nature of psychological counselling is discussed. To this reviewer it seems that before wanting to know the nature of training required to qualify as a counsellor, a reader would want to know more about psychological counselling itself. The second chapter, therefore, should have preceded the one on training. The other two parts on 'Research' and 'Prevention', certainly contribute to a comprehensive treatment of the subject.

Psychological counselling, according to the author, 'is a procedure which consists in a personal relationship between the client and the counsellor in which the client aided by the counsellor examines the causes underlying the growth of his problem, and learns a new and satisfying way of adjusting himself to his real environment.' Though it lends itself to various settings, this book is written with the educational setting in mind. All the illustrations of practice are, therefore, drawn from colleges.

The book serves a useful purpose. It points out very clearly that problems of maladjustment shown by individuals in adult life are preventable provided that psychological services are available to them in their early years. And what better settings to detect problems in early life than schools and colleges? With school attendance becoming more or less compulsory and the child spending the majority of his waking hours in school, any problem that he has in his social functioning will manifest itself in the child's behaviour in school. What is more, the chances of his benefitting from psychological help are better during the tender years of schooling when problems have not struck deep roots.

In college, the adolescent is faced with new demands. He has to decide on his future vocation as well as make adjust-

ments in his social relationships with the opposite sex. Working out these tasks effectively becomes difficult for youths who are pressured with emotional problems rooted in unhealthy family relationships or in their own personality make-up. Thus psychological counselling is often essential during college years.

To forestall misapprehension about the role of psychological counselling vis-a-vis vocational counselling which is already available in most educational institutions, the author states that an individual may be capable of certain achievements and yet have emotional blocks which obstruct their realization. It is with the identification and removal of such blocks that psychological counselling is concerned. And to this degree, vocational and psychological counselling services complement each other. However, the author seems to regard vocational counselling as a role of the psychological counsellor, for he states that vocational counselling is 'a first step towards becoming a counsellor for personal problems.' This approach seems to show an inadequate appreciation of the unique contribution of each profession or field of specialization and the possibility of their functioning in a team, without each trying to usurp the role of the other. Since training in vocational counselling is offered as a separate course, on completion of which trainees find jobs as vocational counsellors, inclusion of this course in the training of psychological counsellors seems unnecessary. A psychological counsellor's *forte* is his ability to understand human behaviour and to help individuals in 'personality growth'. Where a client needing such help also requires vocational counselling, a psychological counsellor could very well help him to use such a service through an appropriate referral. This very procedure is followed by a psychological counsellor in relation to medical and psychiatric services.

As presented by Father Fuster, psychological counselling seems to suffer from severe limitations in scope due to the conditions listed as essential to it: viz, the client 'must be co-operative, genuinely motivated to seek help, able to express feelings verbally, and able to remain in the counselling situation long enough to achieve success.' This leaves untouched the large number of clients who, at the given moment, are not motivated to seek help with their problems and may in fact even deny their existence or attribute them to conditions outside of themselves. Yet these individuals need to seek help as much as, if not more than, the ones who are motivated to seek help on their own initiative. It is a recognition of this fact that has led social workers to reach out to the 'hard to reach' or the 'difficult to help' individuals. If the success of psychological counselling is to rest on the above mentioned conditions, educational settings employing psychological counsellors will need, in addition, trained social workers to help the uncooperative, unmotivated and non-verbalising types of students.

Lastly, though a course in group dynamics is taught to students of psychological counselling, no mention at all is made in the book of group psychological counselling. This method of counselling derives its effectiveness from the unique values of group association. Being in a group with others facing similar problems helps an individual realise that he is not the only one in a difficult situation and gives him strength to cope with his problem. In treatment, the individual receives help not only from the counsellor but also from other group members. The counsellor's position of authority which provokes, in a one-to-one relationship, varied feelings of fear, hostility and resistance in some clients gets undermined in group counselling where the counsellor is in a minority position. Help is therefore more readily accepted.

ZAHIDA NOORANI

Simplified Epic

THE BHAGAVAD GITA, a new translation by P. Lal (Writers Workshop, 70 pp. Rs. 20.)

TRANSLATIONS of the Bhagavad Gita appear to have fallen into two main categories. On the one hand we have the 'Epic' translation, best exemplified in Sir Edwin Arnold's 'The Song Celestial'. In such works his stately wording of the translation has been given as much importance as accuracy of rendering and, in consequence, the translation is very 'free'.

On the other hand we have the translation meant for the serious student of philosophy. Such translations are fully annotated. The relative values of various possible renderings of a word or passage are carefully weighed and explained. It follows that such works, the best of which is probably that by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, are erudite and even pedantic. They would fail in their purpose if they were anything else.

Now Mr. Lal has come up with his *new* translation. Arjuna says,

*'You bewilder me with confusing speech;
'Speak to me certainties, that I may reach
Brahman.'*

It is obvious that Mr Lal, in his rendering, has set out to eliminate all unnecessary circumlocution and verbiage.

It is an unfortunate but undeniable fact that any reviewer of a new translation of a well-known work comes to his task with his outlook coloured by the memory of previous translations and the review usually takes the form of a comparison between the old and the new. In reviewing Mr. Lal's work, however, it has been necessary to bear in mind the fact that his translation does not fall into either of the two main categories mentioned above. The reviewer is thus deprived of his good old standby, 'comparison', and is left only with the problem of deciding whether, in his view, Mr. Lal has carried out his objectives of

simplification and paring down to his, the reviewer's, satisfaction.

Let it be said, at the very start, that the paring down has, for the most part, been very effectively done. This is particularly noticeable in instances where two or more verses of the original have been telescoped and the essential meaning rendered into one or two sentences. A brilliant example of this is the first paragraph or chapter six.

In one or two cases, however, clarity seems to have become the victim of brevity. Let me quote one such case. Arjuna is made to say,

*'Dhritarashtra's sons are our enemies.
'Killing them would bring us lifelong
misery.'*

Note the full stop at the end of the first sentence. Read thus, the words would seem to indicate Arjuna's aversion to the killing of his enemies. In fact Arjuna's plea was against the killing of relatives and friends. This is clearly indicated in the dialogue which has gone before. Would not some such rendering as the following have made things more clear?

*'In this case our enemies are Dhritarashtra's
sons,
'the killing of whom would bring us lifelong
misery.'*

Mr. Lal's selection of words is, on the whole, excellent. May I mention a couple of cases where, in my opinion, the choice was rather unfortunate? Krishna says,

*'The untrue never is;
'The True never isn't.'*

The lesson which Krishna was trying to teach Arjuna is a very profound one. 'True', with the capital 'T', obviously refers to the ultimate Divine Principle and I cannot help feeling that the use of the abbreviation 'isn't' rather cheapens the whole thing. Then, again, Krishna says,

*'My invisible presence straddles this
universe.'*

The mind, or at any rate the mind of this reviewer, boggles at the idea of an *invisible* presence *straddling* the universe. Surely 'pervades' would have been a happier choice.

With pride, the host set before his guest a cobweb-and-dust-encrusted bottle. The guest, untutored in the matter of rare wines, looked hurt. 'Surely,' he said, 'you don't expect me to drink second-rate wine out of a dirty old bottle.' The host, determined to please his guest and at the same time give him the best, went out of the room and emptied the contents of the bottle into a shiny new decanter. 'That's better,' said the guest and drank with obvious relish. If Mr. Lal's presentation of old truths in new garb makes those truths more acceptable to the modern reader, not only will the translator have fulfilled his own avowed purpose but he will also have done a service to humanity, sorely in need of simple, understandable truth and wisdom in these troubled times.

A. H. MORTIMER

Problem Unsolved

**STUDIES IN ISLAMIC CULTURE IN THE
INDIAN ENVIRONMENT** by Aziz Ahmad
(Oxford University Press, 276 pp. Rs. 30.)

THE development of Islamic Culture in India is as much a regional formulation of universal Islamic culture as a response to the tensions arising out of its tenacious persistence for survival, its fear of submergence and the compromises it made from time to time in the overwhelmingly non-Muslim environment of India' writes Prof. Aziz Ahmad. His work is a study of this phenomenon in two parts; first in relation to the Muslim world at large, and next, in relation to Hindu India.

The Muslim of this sub-continent at once regards himself as part of the Islamic world and as a son of the local soil. For long he has co-existed with the Hindu and continues to do so despite the partition. Prof. Ahmad analyses his long history with a wealth of learning, bearing in mind Prof. Butterfield's famous dictum, 'The historian seeks to explain how the past came to be turned into the present, but there is a very real sense in which the only explanation he can give is to unfold the whole story and to reveal its complexity by telling it in detail.'

Prof. Ahmad's narrative begins with the time the Muslims first set foot in India and ends with the partition. Every major episode is analysed and commented on. The response of Muslim India to the Mongol pressure, the relationship between Mughal India and the Muslim world, and the course of Pan-Islamism in India. There is an excellent discussion of Jamal al-din al-Afghani's and Sir Syed's differing approaches.

However, three-fourths of the book deals with the second part. In the author's opinion, 'The history of medieval and modern India is to a very considerable extent a history of Hindu-Muslim religious-cultural tensions, interspersed with movements or individual efforts at understanding, harmony and even composite development. *The divisive forces have proved much more dynamic than the cohesive one.*' (italics mine)

This is the theme of the work. The inference is drawn from every major episode in our past. True, Prof. Ahmad does also set out the efforts in understanding, even synthesis, such as there were. In an excellent chapter on Early Muslim studies of Hindu Culture, he writes of Al-Biruni. 'He regarded the essence of Hindu religion as a form of monotheism and the Hindu idol-worship as merely the manifestation of the dark and ignorant passions of the crowd. He was the first to introduce the study of *Bhagvad*



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Gita to the Muslim World, and the first Muslim to study the *Puranas* and to translate Patanjali and Samkhya into a Muslim language.' It is vain to expect any similar effort by the present-day Muslim.

But the bias throughout is all for stressing the separateness. British rule was at once unifying and divisive, bringing as it did in train, the competition for power and the spirit of revivalism in both communities. This bias becomes all too patent when Prof. Ahmad discusses the modern period. He speaks of 'The instinctive acceptance by the overwhelming consensus of Muslim India of Syed Ahmad Khan's policy of separatism in Indian politics'.

Prof. Ahmad proceeds to write, 'A new generation of landed gentry, politically of modest stature, represented by Liaquat Ali Khan, Ismail Khan and Sikandar Hyat Khan filled the vacuum supported by a new set of professional politicians like Fazlul Haq in Bengal. In 1936, *they* resurrected the Muslim League to bring back Mr. Jinnah...' (italics mine). The truth, as every one knows, is that Liaquat Ali Khan persuaded Jinnah to return to politics and Jinnah resurrected the League using the 'landed gentry' as mere tools.

It speaks for the writer's scant familiarity with modern Muslim politics that he could write this ludicrous passage. 'Jinnah perhaps for the first time in his political career, went against the consensus of Muslim India in accepting the Cabinet Mission's proposals; only to reject them later, partly because of the Congress hesitation in accepting them, partly due to the pressure of the rank and file of the Muslim consensus and of the Muslim press. The secret of the success of Jinnah's leadership of Muslim India lay in essence in exactly the opposite of what appears to be the situation. He did not lead, but was led by the Muslim consensus. His role was that of a sincere and clear-headed lawyer who could formulate and articulate in precise constitutional terms what his client really wanted.'

The truth was the direct opposite. In 1935 Mr. Jinnah believed 'religion should not be allowed to come into politics,' but later he proceeded as a result of his disillusionment to propound the two-nation theory. When he accepted the Cabinet Mission's plan for a single centre there was not a murmur among the Muslims. The Qaid-e-Azam had decided and that was all there was to it. If ever a leader led it was Jinnah. The day he got Pakistan, he threw the two-nation theory out of the Constituent Assembly's windows. He realised its absurdity only too well. He now preferred as head of State two nations Indian and Pakistan, not Hindu and Muslim. A Pakistan based on the two-nation theory has proved to be no solution but an aggravation of a vexed problem. Worse, how does the theory deal with the status of the minorities in both countries?

All this may not be to the liking of the theorists of separatism but it is refreshing to note that their theories must do violence to facts. In this there is hope for us all.

A.G.N.

Backward Cities

A BACKWARD PLACE by R. Prawer Jhabvala
(John Murray, 18s.)

VOICES IN THE CITY by Anita Desai (Peter Owen, 25s.)

A TENUOUS link between these two novels is their sense of place. Both derive their titles from it but there the basis for comparison ends. Their transitory significance is assured as part of the English—medium humus now being laid in the Indian literary garden.

There was a time when a simple and sanguine correspondence was assumed between the western novel and its Indian offshoots, both Indo-Anglian and vernacular. The gulf now seems to have widened. In the west the novel continues to provide

flexible variations in modes of communication along with a widening range of internally perceived human pre-occupations; the vernacular novel in India remains constricted by linguistic limitations and by cramped sensibilities. Thus it is the Indo-Anglians who command an audience as 'authentic', though hybrid, interpreters of the contemporary scene.

The background to these differences would provide a salutary analysis, out of place in a review. One might throw out a hint by remarking that a marked characteristic of the characters of western fiction is a conscious sense of relation to their physical environment. To make a simple test, take a count in the vernacular novel of the number of personae shewn to exercise a critical awareness of their surroundings and its effects on them.

'Voices in the City' plants a foot in both worlds. An almost obsessive preoccupation with formalised relationships in the Indian social context is assailed by a westernised sensitivity to the influences of the *genius loci*. The plan of the novel is ideogrammatic, a composite of four sections. Each deals with members of a family quartet whose individual development provides momentum for the plot. Calcutta is the setting for their mother, on whom there is the least impact because she securely relates to a separate and clearly perceived existence in the foothills.

The impress of the city on the three younger people — educated, cultivated, sophisticated — is catastrophic in the context of its permanent and imaginatively constricted inhabitants. These include the family's relatives. Anita Desai presents a continuous interplay between the emotional disturbances generated in Nirode, Monisha, and through a diminished awareness in Amla by reactions to their total environment. This is certainly a step in the right direction despite the dissatisfactions of the novel's inconclusive achievement. The language of the novel frequently strives towards internal effects within a sentence, forfeiting a progressive expansion

of meaning and clear articulation of development or action. It does not carry the reader's mind clear of the minute of description and fails to sustain the interesting attempt, in the first section, to delineate the confusing torment of Nirode's kaleidoscopic emotions. The parts of the ideogram do not coalesce easily in the reader's imagination.

No such disqualification can be attributed to Mrs. Jhabvala's latest novel. With the literary crampons of her style lightly secured by an instinct for entertainment, she glides across the icy surface of social satire with a fluent insouciance. Her observations of life in the capital are neither dogmatic nor intrusive; the euphemism of her title merely suggests a write-off of its citizens. The significance of the action sporadically accumulates around the fortunes of Bal, an improvident dreamer, and his gamely struggling English wife Judy. Their varied circle shares an equal prominence in Mrs Jhabvala's dalliance. This grows in richness as one gradually convinces oneself that the characters might actually be identified. Lest further analysis should precipitate a libel, the reader would be best served by a felicitous account of an amateur Hindi version of *The Doll's House*. It is described in the novel by means of a reminiscent after-glow in the minds of the kindly Germans Dr. and Mrs. Hochstadt:

'...Of course, fair as always, they had to admit that they didn't know the language and so probably missed a lot of very fine nuances. But they could not help feeling that the production as a whole lacked that certain élan which makes for a really satisfying evening at the theatre. Mrs. Mahajan ... had several times forgotten her lines, which had not unnaturally flustered her and rendered her unable to understand the prompter though he spoke loud enough for most of the audience to hear him quite clearly. Captain Lakshman, as Torvald Helmer, had delivered all his lines with his right hand raised in the air:

which might, the Hochstadts didn't know, be an Indian dramatic convention... There had also been one or two technical hitches, such as the curtain not closing promptly enough at the end of an act, which had tended to undermine the dramatic impact of the last lines spoken and had left actors and audience staring at one another in some embarrassment; and the electrician, a large Sikh in striped underpants, had made his presence a little too conspicuous by casually strolling on to the stage — in pursuance, it was true, of his duties, but

unfortunately in the middle of a scene — fiddling about with a refractory light and, his task achieved, casually strolling off again...'

Despite Mrs. Jhabvala's obvious literary virtues there is, unfortunately, too little close *ensemble* observation of this calibre in her novel which culminates with an unworthily bagatelle flavour. Perhaps we may yet be rewarded with a more concentrated effort which will not require the residual reassurance of her past successes.

FOY NISSEN

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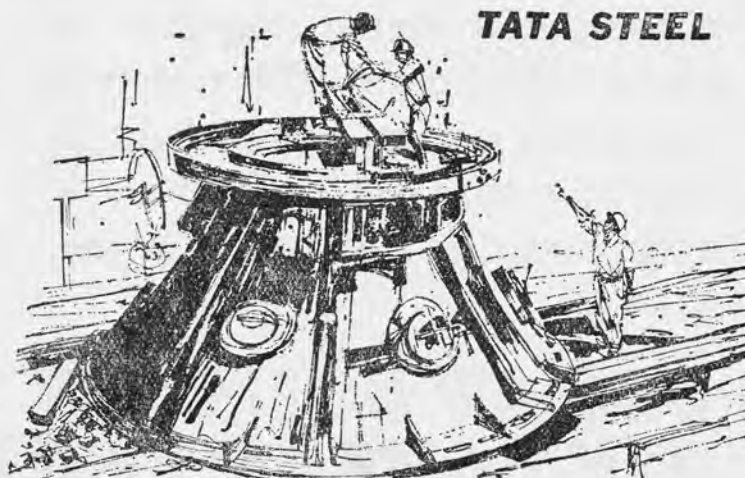
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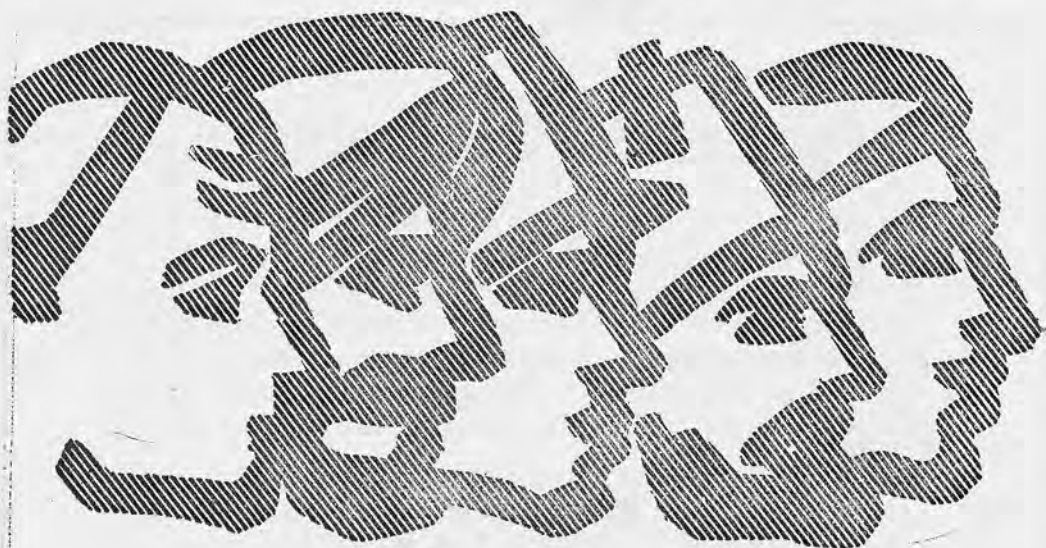
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