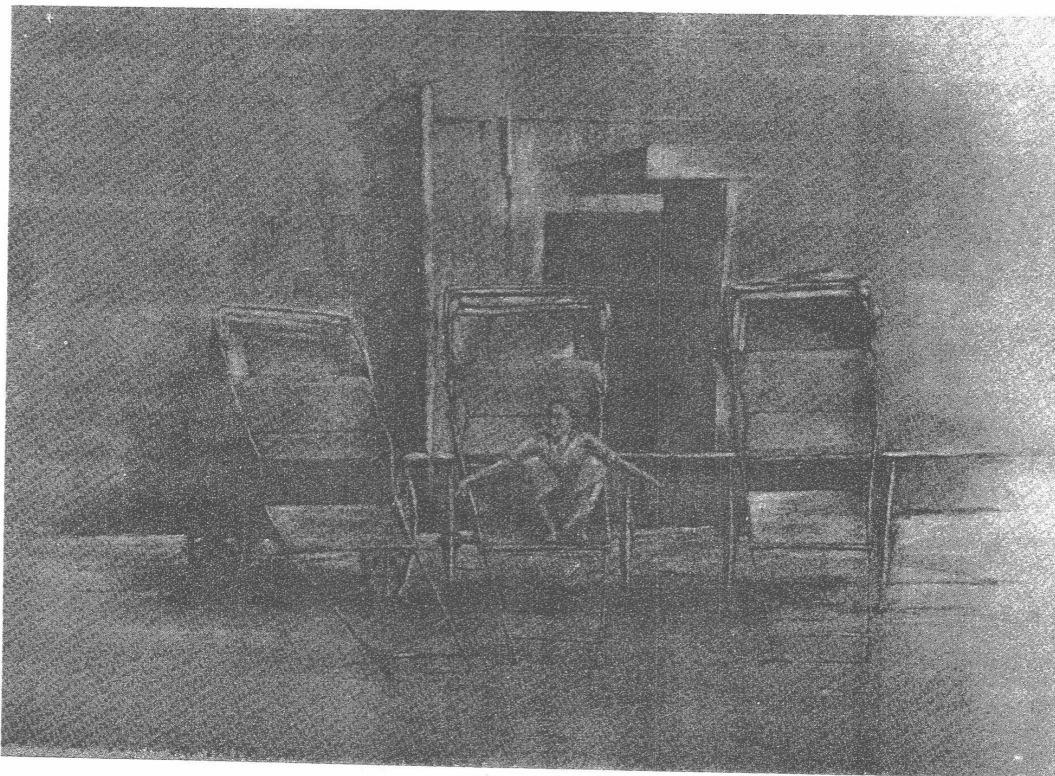


THE BOOK REVIEW

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VOLUME XIV - NUMBER 3



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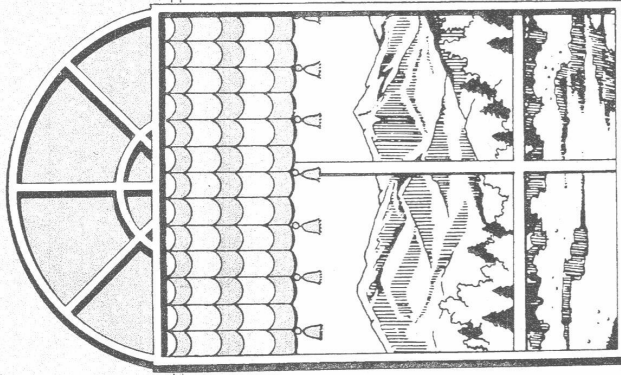
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
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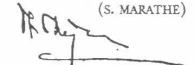

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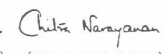
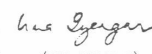

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Erratum

We regret that the P.O. Box No. was wrongly
printed as 5427 in the subscription form in the Jan./
Feb. 1990 issue of *The Book Review*. Please note
that the P.O. Box No. is 5247.

THE END OF COMMUNISM ?

Mohit Sen

Two essays which appeared recently dealt with the dramatic changes taking place in the Soviet Union, the Eastern bloc and their implications for the international system: the first, provocatively entitled "The End of History?" by Francis Fukuyama (*National Interest*, Summer 1989) and the second, "To the Stalin Mausoleum", (Daedalus, Winter 1990) by Z, described as a sometime observer of the Soviet scene. The review article published is a critical commentary by Mohit Sen, the well-known ideologue, on these two essays. □ Editor

Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History?* and Z's, introduced as "a sometime observer of the Soviet scene," *To the Stalin Mausoleum*, have one major common theme. According to both these authors, Communism has failed as an ideal and the Communist movement and its power has collapsed or about to do so without any hope of retrieval and revival.

The basis for this conclusion is, of course, the dramatic events in central and eastern Europe last year and the serious difficulties that perestroika is encountering in the Soviet Union.

Fukuyama sees in these developments the unfolding of Hegel's Idea which becomes material in the shape of the triumph of liberal democracy. "What is real is national" is interpreted by him in the conservative sense of the destination of humanity's progress having been reached. One is reminded of the exactly opposite sense in which Engels interpreted this aphorism—whatever is national has to be real and the existing reality has to be tested and judged in terms of historically evolved and evolving reason. And, therefore, for Engels and Marxists, in general, whatever exists has its reason but is transient because of the development of reason itself. It was the cofounder of Marxism who drew attention to the conservative and reactionary character of the Hegelian system in contrast to the revolutionary character of the Hegelian dialectic. Fukuyama has once again taken the conservative system of the great philosopher to try to give an ideological underpinning to his reactionary conclusion that the so called collapse of Communism is a return to liberalism. In his view this ideology of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been able to overcome the challenges of Communism and Fascism and looks likely to be able to do the same as far as nationalism and religious fundamentalism are concerned. History ends with liberal democracy triumphing

Mohit Sen is general secretary, United Communist Party of India.

in the Soviet Union, China and elsewhere.

Z, who has also read Fukuyama, is rather dismissive of the "endism" theory. One is inclined to agree with him through not for his reasons. Why Fukuyama had to drag in Hegel to celebrate the "triumph" of liberalism is not very clear. The only possible reason seems to be the correct assumption that though Hegel is little read, his obscure respectability might overawe many to accept as profound what is in fact the commonplace conclusion of most commentators that we are witnessing the "terminal crisis of Communism."

Z, somewhat along the lines of Kolakowski's *Main Currents of Marxism* of a decade ago and Bryezinski's book published last year, brings together quite one-sidedly aspects of the history of the Soviet Union and contemporary happenings, to make the point that Communism and the Soviet Union face the prospect of early mortality. This, however, in his view does not mean that their menace is over. He does make three practical suggestions for Western help to Gorbachev. Reduce the burden of armaments; use economic aid for piecemeal development of parallel structures in a private sector operating on market principles so as to promote economic and then political pluralism, "encourage the change of Soviet realities, while leaving the old labels intact" as a concession to Soviet national pride.

Z would not leave the subversion of communism to the Hegelian cunning of history. He would want the capitalist countries to do the job by economic intervention.

Fukuyama and Z, despite their differences, have three fundamental points of agreement. The first is that the capitalist economic system and its liberal democratic ideology have triumphed. The second one is that communism is an anti-utopia which has done tremendous evil. The third is that Communist movement and the socialist states are incapable of rectification, renewal and advance. All the three fundamentals are false premises from which wrong conclusions are bound to be reached. The need to combat these wrong conclusions is because they cater to and strengthen prejudices implanted by the propaganda of the ruling circles of capitalist countries, utilising the errors and crimes of Stalinism and its Brezhnevite culmination. They also help to sustain illusions among the decision makers of these countries that given a little more toughness and intervention the Soviet Union and other socialist countries can be made to grovel before being eliminated. Both the prejudices and illusions mentioned above prevent the realisation of the new world of peace, cooperation and freedom of choice.

The passing of Marxism-Leninism first from China and then from the Soviet Union will mean its death as a living ideology of world historical significance. For while there may be some isolated true believers left in places like Managua, Pyongyang, or Cambridge, Massachusetts, the fact that there is not a single large state in which it is a going concern undermines completely its pretensions to being in the vanguard of human history. And the death of this ideology means the growing "Common Marketization" of international relations, and the diminution of the likelihood of large-scale conflict between states.

From Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History?"

Anybody with the slightest nodding acquaintance with the history of capitalism would know that it has been qualitatively modified without, however, being transcended by socialism. Capitalism's first qualitative modification was when it entered the stage of monopoly and imperialism. Its second modification was when it accepted the need for constant and deliberate state intervention to offset the consequences of spontaneous market operations. In more recent times state intervention has gone together with the transnational control and regulation of markets. It is true that there has been a spectacular leap in productivity because capitalism was able to integrate with the scientific technological revolution but not without painful consequences especially in the sphere of employment. Its development has also been because of its capacity to continue to pump out vast surpluses from the developing countries. With all its advance capitalism has not been able to

avoid economic fluctuations. More importantly, it has the historic responsibility of using the atom bomb, of devastating Viet Nam and of bringing humanity to the very brink of total destruction.

Liberal democracy has an equally chequered history and limitations it has not been able to and cannot overcome. It started off with the congenital bloodstain of sustaining capitalist exploitation on its cheek. It went on to bless and benefit by imperialist exploitation of the overwhelming majority of mankind. It abetted the emergence of fascism and could be saved from total destruction only by allying with the Soviet Union. It was Viet Nam which saved it from subversion by the military industrial complex and the CIA.

Democracy is not to be confused with its par-



The history of scientific Communism starts at the end of 1847. In these nearly one-and-a-half centuries no other idea, theory and movement including its Soviet embodiment, has done more to change the world and emancipate the oppressed, downtrodden and deprived. Freedom and history's best friend has been communism. The 1917 breakthrough, the defeat of fascism, the Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions, the collapse of colonialism, above all, the revolution in India, is due either directly to it or to movements associated with it. To fail to even mention these facts and to pontificate about the end of history or the terminal crisis of Communism is grotesque and even nauseating. It is not an error of perception but a crime of intention.



tial, limited and limiting liberal form. Liberal democracy was not even the advocate of universal suffrage, was opposed to all forms of association, including trade unions and regarded women and the coloured peoples as being outside the pale of democracy. The democracy that has had an impact on capitalism and given rise to universal values is the democracy associated with socialism and anti-imperialist, anti-racist nationalism. This has taken birth in capitalist countries but as a challenge and as its grave digger.

The second fundamental error of Fukuyama and Z is their one sided presentation of the history of the Communist idea, theory, movement and, above all, its Soviet embodiment.

The history of scientific Communism starts at



As 1989 draws to a close, it is clear that it will enter history as the beginning of communism's terminal crisis, the year of the Second Great Break, but in the descending, not the ascending, phase of utopia in power; and this not just in Russia but from the Baltic to the China Sea, and from Berlin to Beijing. It is also clear that perestroika and glasnost, welcome as they are in their intention, have in their application only aggravated the systemic crisis they were intended to alleviate. And they have done so because like all forms of soft communism, they go against the logic of the system they are trying to save.

From Z's "To The Stalin Mausoleum"



the end of 1847. In these nearly one-and-a-half centuries no other idea, theory and movement including its Soviet embodiment, has done more to change the world and emancipate the oppressed, downtrodden and deprived. Freedom and history's best friend has been communism. The 1917 breakthrough, the defeat of fascism, the Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions, the collapse of colonialism, above all, the revolution in India, is due either directly to it or to movements associated with it. To fail to even mention these facts and to pontificate about the end of history or the terminal crisis of Communism is grotesque and even nauseating. It is not an error of perception but a crime of intention.

At the same time, the Communist movement has failed to reach its goal of an emancipated humanity. It has failed to prevent the committing of atrocious crimes by those who headed it for decades, above all against those who were its adherents and sympathisers. In a word, it failed to prevent the emergence and domination of Stalinism and as a system of views and methods of practice. The revolt against Das Kapital, i.e., mechanical determinism, which is how Gransci characterised the 1917 October Revolution, turned into a repudiation of Marxism. There are important historical circumstances which offer a partial explanation for this tragic phenomenon—the weakness of the world revolutionary forces, the savagery of counter-revolution and the backwardness of Russia and other components of what became the Soviet Union. But these are only partial explanations and by no means justify what happened.

Communism and the Communist movement cannot be identified with Stalinism. But it, too, is responsible for Stalinism. The reasons are many. But the most important is that in seeking to establish its own identity the Communist movement sought to prove its separateness from the rest of humanity. Stalin expressed this idea and mood in his oration at the funeral of Lenin—"we Communists are men of a special mould, we are made of special stuff." Following from this error was the apotheosis of the Party, the mystique around it and its leadership. To paraphrase Brecht, tragic

the movement which needs only heroes. This separation from the rest of humanity in order to bring about its emancipation is not necessary for the establishment of hegemony or the organisation of a vanguard. There are shades of this exclusiveness in some of the polemics of Marx and more so in those of Lenin. But neither forgot that what they wished to created in thought and action was born from and had to be carried forward as part of the mainstream of civilisation. And both believed in the creative capacity of the masses and opposed substitution of them by the party.

Finally, the capacity of the Communists and the Soviet Union for rectification, renewal and advance. This capacity flows from the great emancipator role that the movement has played for the thought and the total living of vast millions of humanity. It flows from the fact that Communism is not only and not mainly Stalinism. And its history is also that of struggle against Stalinism. It is not for nothing that the main victims of Stalin were Communists. And that there were Communists like Dimitrov, Mao of the thirties and forties, Tito, Togliatti, Ho Chi Minh and Castro who successfully opposed the exclusiveness and mystifications of Stalin. Though not so successful because not so opposed to exclusiveness but outstanding by all standards, as leaders and thinkers hunted by Stalin, were Bukharin and Trostsky.

Besides, nothing that has happened vitiates the basic conclusion of Marx that capitalism had a beginning and has an end, that history's progress is towards socialism and communism and that the creative search and revolutionary endeavour of the masses for freedom and a true human condition would lead to a society free of exploitation and alienation and demanding universal men and women.

The Soviet perestroika articulates this impulse and urge. It has enormous difficulties to overcome. There are bound to be setbacks and failures. The necessity for its success is as undoubted and its possibility of success exists. History is on its side and time remains a refreshing viewer. □

BRITISH IMPERIALISM IN ACTION

A. K. Damodaran

ANNEXATION OF THE PUNJAB

By Jagmohan Mahajan

Spantech Publishers Pvt., Ltd., New Delhi, 1989, pp.133, Rs. 150.00

The incorporation of the Sikh state into the Imperial system in north India can be seen today as the inevitable last step in the consolidation of the British rule in India. When the events were happening, however, month to month, skirmish to skirmish, and one complex treaty after the other, it did not appear to be a necessary progression of cause and effect. Jagmohan Mahajan's crisp, sharp narrative of the events between the end of the First Sikh War in 1842 and the annexation in 1846 gives us a detailed account of the several stages which led to the final treaty of Lahore and the exile of young Maharaja Dalip Singh and his mother to England. The great administrative and diplomatic achievements of Ranjit Singh had become only a memory now; a large number among the beneficiaries of his administrative genius saw in the British Raj a plausible enough excuse to retain their familial and clan affluence. This had been a continuing process. Since the great Maharaja had established a viable compromise in equal coexistence with the foreign power, there were always members of the feudal aristocracy who did not see the British in purely adversarial terms. The intrigues in the court, the rivalries between army commanders and the rebellious response of some among them to unreasonable demands from the foreigner led to a series of incidents and misunderstandings within the Sikh aristocracy and the Hindu-Muslim bureaucracy which was closely linked with it.

Mahajan's story is ideologically simple. His interior understanding of the thinking of the most sensitive British strategists in India enables him to trace a continuing link between the strategic approach of three Governor Generals, Ellenborough, Hardinge and Dalhousie. The hesitations and the realistic appreciation of the formidable professional quality of the Sikh soldier acted as a restraint on impetuous expansionism. Some brilliant local military commanders emerge on the scene, the most spectacular being Lord Gough.

A. K. Damodaran, a retired foreign service officer is a well-known commentator on international affairs.

The tension between the awareness of the man on the spot of immediate opportunities and the natural caution of his bosses far away in Calcutta or in London is brought out very well. The great battles of the two Sikh campaigns have been described in great detail—from Sobraon to Chillianwalla and Gujarat. The Chillianwalla battle has its own unique personal complexion. The Governor General, Lord Hardinge, who had been a professional soldier of his life led his troops into the field and won an "evening battle fought by a brave old man in passion". In the first battle the Sikh army had suffered enormous casualties; at Chillianwalla, it was the British who suffered heavily.

These battles are of unusual interest to the students of military strategy. Mahajan succeeds in conveying an impression of foes evenly matched from the purely strategic angle; the outcome, however, in every single engagement was favourable to the British because of the divided, even fractured nature of the Lahore administration. This makes the tortuous tale of diplomacy and deceit indulged by the Company Raj and its local representatives more fascinating than the military story. From the very beginning Mahajan shows that there was no serious option in the British calculations other than the ultimate incorporation of the Punjab territory. After the first Sikh War three alternatives were considered: annexation, a subsidiary alliance relationship, and a treaty which would permanently alter the balance in favour of the British without any visible institutional change. The first option was rejected as difficult at that time when the resources were taken into account; the subsidiary alliance policy, it was felt, would only embroil the British in actions which they could not control; and so, inevitably, to that clever ploy of an unequal treaty with the British Resident ensconced in Lahore and effectively in charge of the Regency. The private correspondence between Sir Frederic Currie first in his capacity as the Foreign Secretary in Calcutta and later as the Resident in Lahore, makes it absolutely clear that the British were involved in a holding operation during the whole period. The aim was clear. The Punjab had to become a part of the Empire to ensure total security against the Afghans and the Russians behind them in the far distance. The assumption of power in the Punjab would lead to some corollaries like a more reliable system of control in the Sind and the Pathan provinces. It also would make it possible for Kashmir to be detached from Lahore.

Mahajan describes how the local rebellion in Multan was exploited to achieve this purpose. By now, Dalhousie was in position in Calcutta with his very clear policy of annexation, if possible. In the outer marches of the Empire no other solution could be permanent. For this purpose duplicity was necessary to provoke rebellion among the War Lords who were not prepared to accept Lahore's comfortably subordinate status. And, thus, inexorably the Second Sikh War was manufactured. The real importance of this book is in demonstrating how the Second Sikh War was not by any definition a war between states at all. It was the story of external power intervening in the domestic difficulties of a sovereign country, fully utilizing the provisions of an earlier unequal treaty.

Apart from the limited Punjab interest and its significance for the future of the Raj, this book is most useful for a detailed story of the separation of Kashmir during the period between the two Sikh wars after the treaty of Lahore in March 1846. The detachment of a part of the Sikh Empire and its "sale" to the Dogra Commander, Gulab Singh, is familiar enough. Mahajan, however, brings out the genuine problems of patriotism and self-respect which bothered local leaders at that time when the headquarters in Lahore preferred the safer alternative. The non-annexation of Kashmir, Mahajan shows, was a necessity because of the incapacity of the British army to give logistical support in the distant mountains. Such an undertaking would have merited "a straight waistcoat and not a peerage". The man who comes out of the Kashmir embroglio with a certain degree of attractiveness is Sheikh Imamuddin, the Governor of Kashmir, who refused to accept orders from Lahore. He at least had self-respect. Sheikh Imamuddin was not alone. He claimed that he had been merely obeying the orders of Raja Lal Singh, Maharaja Dalip Singh's Wazir. The episode ends with the Raja being deposed from his wazarat. The Sheikh disappears from the scene and Gulab Singh takes over.

This is an exceptionally clear and detailed examination at the micro level of British imperialism in action at a major turning point of our history. The forties of the last century were crucial for the British presence in Asia. Again and again men like Hardinge see the Indian campaigns as not only being important in themselves but also as supportive of the British image in distant parts of the continent. It was a decade of major transitions. Persia had been successfully coerced into giving up its claims on Afghanistan and also its epochal friendly relationship with Russia. This was towards the end of the thirties. Also about the same time Afghan attempts to return to the Punjab had been successfully contained. Even more important was the totally unethical but effective manner in which the Sardars of the Sind had been defeated. It was a great period for unprincipled conquistadores because they were knowing less, in spite of

all their prattle about international law and justice. Even that is not the whole story. The Punjab annexation comes only two or three years after the definitive treaty of Nanking which finally put an end to China's self-perception and behaviour as the "Middle Kingdom". With the annexation of the Punjab, the British Empire was ready to meet new challenges from outside. Within 10 years, the challenge came from within the country in the heartland of Hindustan. The fortunes of the 'Mutiny' were profoundly affected by the successful manner in which the newly annexed state had been administered. The Sikh played no part in the various rebellions within the British Indian army. It was a question of insufficiently developed feelings of solidarity between former rival groups against the foreigner. In terms of group psychology there was not so much alienation as indifference. If the annexation had not been completed by Dalhousie there could have been effective lateral support to the mutineers from local leaders like Lal Singh. This was not an anticipated benefit. It was almost a case of serendipity. It was, however, destined to lead to many consequences, not the least of all being the composition of the post-1857 British Army. □

LITTLE ABOUT GOD, ALL ABOUT POWER

Bhabani Sen Gupta

The overall impression left by this book on the reader's mind is of an India that is vibrant with its ethnic plurality. Numerous minorities are moving forward, however slow may be the movement at any given time for any given community. The many-pronged forward movement of the diverse minorities threatens the majority community which is finding its predominance erode gradually. This is the basic impetus for Hindu fundamentalism. It also derives velocity from other factors such as sunset of the ideology of the nationalist movement, decline of Nehruvian ideology and political and social values, authoritarianism in the style of Congress rule since the Emergency, breakdown of the single dominant party system and its emergent substitute—coalition government decline of left ideologies and limited advance of the left movement in India and many others.

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RELIGION, STATE AND POLITICS IN INDIA

Edited by Moin Shakir

Ajanta Publications, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 504,
Rs. 350.00

The revival of religion all over the world, not so much as a renewed means of man's communion with God as religion's arrogant and assertive intrusion into the realm of political power, has baffled scholars as well as ordinary men and women.

Fundamentalism is perhaps an ugly and inadequate phrase to describe the current wave of political fanaticism in the name of religion. Fundamental truths of all religions are basically the same; and they broadly renounce worldly pleasures and privileges and prescribe a life of rigorous quest for the ultimate truth. Islamic fundamentalism has as little to do with the core teachings of the Prophet as has Hindu fundamentalism with the core teachings of the Upanishads and the Gita.

What we witness in the world today is a religious-political wave of radical activism in the name of God against a variety of targets depending upon in what particular political and social context is the battle joined. In Iran, the repressive policies sys-

tematised by the former Shah made effective political movements against his regime virtually impossible. The movement had to grow in the mosques. Its vanguard could be none other than religious leaders wearing the mantle of Islam.

The Ayatollah Khomeini waged a political struggle against American imperialism allied with the repressive and modernising regime of the late Reza Shah Pahlavi. The Iranian revolution succeeded where revolutionary activities conducted by the Tedeh party and other left groups proved to be miserable failure. Because the Khomeini revolution could topple a regime that was the mainstay of American imperialism in a crucial strategic region in West Asia, it was exalted to a very high altitude of power and glory by American publicists and scholars. Only a gigantic force of the size of a tornado could have swept off the ramparts of American imperialism in Iran. Thanks to American propaganda, born partly out of fear and partly in self-defence, Islamic fundamentalism was cast in the role of a modern frankenstein.

I do not for a moment defend Islamic or any other religious fundamentalism. My point is that insufficient efforts have so far been made to appreciate and penetrate the phenomenon of religiously oriented political movements in our time. The attempt is to club all religious fundamentalisms together and not to analytically differentiate them. Each religious-political movement is contextual, its growth and direction determined by the socio-economic and political dy-

Bhabani Sen Gupta is a commentator on international affairs and is the author of several books.

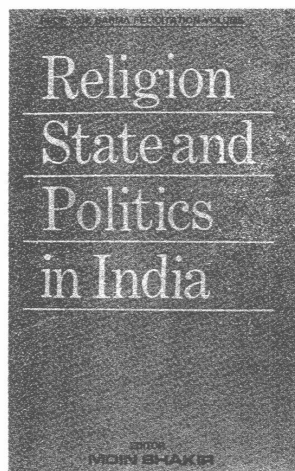
namics of the given society. Thus, there are almost half a dozen Islamic fundamentalisms in today's Muslim countries. Hindu fundamentalism which is raising its head in India has little in common with its Islamic variety. Christian fundamentalism wears different shape and substance in different countries; and its manifestation in Latin America in the form of liberation theology draws the ire of the Pope. Buddhist fundamentalism in Sri Lanka is not a replica of Buddhist fundamentalism in Thailand or Japan.

The very fact that religion-based politics has emerged as a volatile phenomenon in several countries including India must, however, be taken into account. This phenomenon has to be subjected to sociological, political and psychological scrutiny. *Religion, State and Politics in India*, edited by the late Moin Shaker, who was for many years professor of political science at Marathwada University, Aurangabad, and who has left behind several studies of Islamic politics in India, is therefore, a timely addition to the steadily growing literature on Indian politics and society. Moin Shaker mobilised 25 scholars and analysts to write the book's as many chapters. Perhaps he was baffled by the diversity of religious manifestations of politics in India and thought that the phenomenon had to be discussed in its many interlinked manifestations. The result is stimulating but not satisfactory. The different chapters do stimulate our mind about the great variety of layers of fundamentalism, but hardly any one treats a particular aspect of the phenomenon to the satisfaction of the reader's curiosity.

At the end of the papers, the basic question remains still unanswered. Why is the modern mind returning to religion? Why does the rationality of science and technology fail to give deeper satisfaction to the human mind? Why did communism fail to build a creative atheism in the Soviet Union and other hitherto socialist countries that could really replace the quest for God through religion? Why does the Church return triumphantly in Gorbachev's USSR?

For answers to these baffling questions, several paper-writers in this volume turn to Karl Marx. His famous interpretation of religion is quoted in a number of essays at different lengths. But is Marx the eternal answer or failure of an answer to the question: why should man turn to religion even when his material needs are met by a modern society, when he is liberated from the shackles of feudal or capitalist exploitation, is deeply under the influence of the rationalising forces of science and technology? What we know today but do not always wish to concede is that religion is not necessarily the opium of the people in the sense in which Marx used that oft-quoted aphorism. Religion is also the great tranquilliser in the madness of modern civilisation, even in its tumultuous rationalism.

But religion in this case is an individual's com-



Unfortunately, however, secularism here, from the very start, has been made to wear a paradoxical garb, which, in effect, has robbed it of its true content. Although shipped from west like a host of modern concepts, secularism on the Indian soil underwent a transfer of meaning. Deft politicians twisted the humanistic idea into a convenient jargon, implying not the anti-religious, or the extra-religious, but rather a multi-religious approach.

In fact secularism, in a distorted sense, actually provided the founders of New India with a handy formula to allay and appease conflicting groups. Thus the constitution of the 'secular' State of India did not exclude religion; the special feature of our constitution is that it has tried to ensure religious disparity, to incorporate the right to retain separate religious social entities while acknowledging in the same breath the necessity of a secular uniformity.

From Rama Kundu's, "Common Civil Code" in *Religion, State and Politics*.

munion with the God of his or her free or group choice. It does not intrude into politics except that it does influence the individual's attitude to politics. Politics of religious fundamentalism is a different matter altogether. Gail Omvedt, with whose brief paper opens the study, identifies two polar, mutually antagonistic political uses of religion. "We may see today's 'fundamentalism' and 'liberation theology' as conscious political projects, one of which seeks to consolidate and protect religion's conservative aspects, the other of which seeks to consolidate and expand religion's radical forms of expression and functions to join revolutionary movements.

Sure enough, but a highly unsatisfactory dichotomy. In Iran, we have witnessed the same religious movement play first a revolutionary role and then the role of conservation and consolidation of the gains. Indeed even in the post-liberation phase, Iranian fundamentalism has continued to retain a liberationist thrust—against the feudal lords of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf emirates, indeed against the entire gaggle of conservative, basically pro-imperialist Arab rulers of the Middle East. At the same time it has restored the atavistic

social norms of the past. Even this atavism is a kind of radical protest against Western materialism, a forced return to the rigours and simplicities of a long bygone past. In Iran, at any rate, Islamic fundamentalism has cast itself into a dual role, one opposed to the other. Its anti-imperialist thrust is a liberating force that has delivered the people of Iran from the binds of American imperialism and Reza Pahlavi type of militarist, oppressive, enforced modernism. At the same time, its atavistic social manifestations blockade the evolution of Iran into a liberal modern capitalist society and to that extent acts as a brake on history.

Neera Chandoke, citing the enlightening study of political and societal dynamics of religion by Peter L. Berger, makes the alarming statement that religion in its revivalist forms "challenges the legitimacy of the state." This too is an inadequate statement. If the state is an oppressive and regressive institution, the challenge to its legitimacy is not an undesirable thrust on the part of religious fundamentalism. Once again, one is reminded of the role of Iranian fundamentalism in overthrowing the state founded by the Pahlavis. However, fundamentalism also challenges the secular demo-

cratic legitimacy of the state in several countries including India, where Hindu fundamentalists wish to convert the state into a Hindu state. More to the point is Berger's own analysis. The dynamics of modern development, whether they are found in developed or developing nations, tend to diminish and destroy institutions and values to which people have been deeply rooted for hundreds of years. The human mind is "liberated" without being given a safe alternative anchor. The vacuum thus created is often filled by religious cults and movements harking back to the bygone past, reviving the legends of stable social and moral regimes in which men and women were supposedly at peace with society. In other words, fundamentalism exploits the social, psychological as well as moral convulsions of rapid social change, and induces human beings to look for a better future in their ancient past.

Each of the papers in this book carries sparks of political, social and philosophical insight, but each, as already noted, leaves the reader with an unsatisfied curiosity. K.Ragheendra Rao examines the Nehruvian model of secularism both in its historical background and its manifestations in independent India. One of his conclusions is that in India, the social context sets severe limits to any practice of secularism (social here includes economic as well). In a country where every group considers every other group as unfair and thus implies its own unfairness, secularism looks like a near impossibility. "More to the point is the failure of the state, that is, of the people in power, to maintain strict impartiality between one religion and another. In India of the last 20 years, the democratic secular rulers have been progressively leaning towards the dominant Hindu religion—not to its true spirit but to its icons, rituals and symbols, thereby provoking corresponding action by other religious groups.

T.K.Sharma's essay on religion and politics in India is a rather sketchy historical overview. His discovery, not a startling one, is that "there has always been a very close linkage between religion and politics from the earliest time to the present." The links have become stronger after independence and will not snap in a long while and not without strong secular struggles.

The bulk of the papers deal with local manifestations of religious fundamentalism. Four papers throw light on Sikh fundamentalism in Punjab. While Harish Puri writes about religion and politics in Punjab as a historical continuum, and shows how they have interacted with one another, each profoundly influencing the other, M.S.Dhami offers an interesting analysis of the religious dynamics of the 1985 elections to the Punjab legislature. Satya Pal Dang brings his Marxist persuasions to bear upon a readable analysis of Hindu politics in Punjab, while Gurbhagat Singh throws light on the politics of cultural associations both Sikh and Hindu to show how deeply meshed is culture with

religion.

There are several other interesting papers. Ajit Roy puts the RSS under a rigorous Marxist scrutiny and opens up its amorphous social and economic base which is by no means static. Three papers are devoted to Maharashtra. One of them, written by Gopal Guru, examines the role of Buddhism in Maharashtra politics. A.H.Doctor's essay on the Parsis makes charming reading. P.M. Mathew shows the interaction of Christianity and politics largely in Kerala. R.Srinivasan writes about communal politics in Tamil Nadu. Recent conversions to Islam in Tamil Nadu is treated sociologically and politically by George Mathew, while Valerian Rodrigues's topic is the role of the Catholic Church in Dakshin Kannada.

Three macro-papers deserve special mention. Asghar Ali Engineer, the warhorse of secular politics in Bombay, who has been keeping the state of the Muslim society in India under continuing clinical survey, has contributed a paper in this volume on Islam in India's multi-religious society. Once again, Engineer builds the image of benign, tolerant, compassionate, inclusive Islam, which is in contrast with fundamentalism. He correctly writes that "As far as our country is concerned, it is not the practice of religion that causes acute problems but the assertion of religious community identity that does... In a democratic set-up where votes and numbers count, such an assertion provides a religious community with an important leverage. The political and religious elite within the community promote this sense of religious identity more and more aggressively. Such an attitude starts an unhealthy competition between rival communities for assertion of their respective identities leading to severe communal strain." In Engineer's analysis, then, fundamentalism is part of the Indian democratic process; it is a political thrust of communal aspirations and has very little to do with religion.

Rama Kundu's essay on a common civil code deals extensively with the Supreme Court judgement on the famous Shah Bano case. The issue touched a raw nerve of Indian secularism and exposes its contradictions. For political expediency, the country's uniform civil code does not apply to the Muslim community. Kundu affirms that this contradiction has robbed Indian secularism of its "true content." It "actually provided the founders of New India with a handy formula to allay and appease conflicting groups." That's true. But could it have been different? The polarised politics of the pre-independence decade, the partition, and the consequent population upheavals made it exceedingly difficult for the leaders to enforce a common civil code on the very large Muslim community that was neither ready nor equipped for secular change. Kundu concedes this at the end of the essay. In India, "we have to do the work piecemeal, step by step. It's a very difficult task indeed! But is there any other alternative?

This review concludes with a note on Bashiruddin Ahmed's fine-grained analysis of the "Muslim Problem." He poses the basic dilemma: should India handle the problem of multi-ethnicity with an enlightened recognition of plurality or with an aggressive design of assimilation? India, he rightly points out, has opted for the former. Bashiruddin shows how the Constitution has crafted a pluralistic society and carpentered a legal framework for their peaceful competitive co-existence. If there are still tensions and conflicts, often gory, it is because the actual political and social process is larger than the framework laid out by the Constitution. Building of multi-ethnic nation is no easy job; even the command-control Soviet system hasn't really worked and is now being severely strained by assertive nationalism. The Muslims are not just another minority in India. More than 100 million strong, India has the world's third largest Muslim population. Bashiruddin shows with the help of the data revealed in an opinion poll how diverse is the community's own outlook about its political status, about how it should mobilise to compete with other large population groups, how it can develop and deploy its distinctive identity to secure and expand its sociopolitical gains.

His brief picture of the Muslims shows a community that is far from static. Indeed the Muslims in India have been coming out of their centuries-long social and political backwardness, and steadily joining the national milieu. This is indeed remarkable because there is tremendous resistance of the predominantly Hindu society to let the Muslims move forward.

The overall impression left by this book on the reader's mind is of an India that is vibrant with its ethnic plurality. Numerous minorities are moving forward, however slow may be the movement at any given time for any given community. The many-pronged forward movement of the diverse minorities threatens the majority community which is finding its predominance erode gradually. This is the basic impetus for Hindu fundamentalism. It also derives velocity from other factors such as sunset of the ideology of the nationalist movement, decline of Nehruvian ideology and political and social values, authoritarianism in the style of Congress rule since the Emergency, breakdown of the single dominant party system and its emergent substitute—coalition government decline of left ideologies and limited advance of the left movement in India and many others.

It is remarkable that hardly any of the contributors to this volume takes an apocalyptic view of India's multiethnic future. Religion is creating political problems, but at least here is a group of scholars who do not see the Indian secular democratic system collapsing under the strains. These scholars are refreshingly free of paranoia. □

DISPOSSESSED BY HISTORY

A. H. H. Abidi

CHEATED BY THE WORLD: THE
PALESTINIAN EXPERIENCE

By Punyapriya Dasgupta

Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1988, pp. 367,
Rs. 150.00

The title of the book under review has been derived from the murmur of a Palestinian writer. According to the author the idea of the study occurred in the midst of Israel's bitter war in the Lebanon in 1982. The author is a well-known Indian journalist who served as a press correspondent for seven years in West Asia and North Africa. During the stint he developed acquaintance with the Palestinian problem and, over the years, this interest grew into the conviction, widely shared, that historical and monumental injustice has been done to the people of Palestine since the 1920s. The book has a wide span as it traces the central problem from its origin and follows its ramifications right upto the 18th session of the Palestine National Council (PNC) in April 1987. Its twenty chapters cover most of the important aspects of the problem.

Punyapriya Dasgupta makes it clear that although more and more people are now inclined to see the truth in the Palestine problem, the Palestinians' tragedy has been that they were, and are, buffeted and exploited by others, used as instruments and pawns of policy, and unable to counteract world-wide disinformation campaign mounted all through. He asserts that almost the whole world helped—by design or error—in the usurpation of their land and the dispossession of the Palestinians. Dasgupta does not ignore either the weaknesses of the Palestinian national movement such as fantastic rhetorics and there being neither policy-makers nor coterie around them, or the serious schisms, rivalries and rifts among the Palestinian leaders who also cheated. What emerges prominent is that despite their international cohesion and clout, the Zionists, on their own strength, could neither take over Palestine nor could they obliterate the Palestinian people nor erase the Palestinian problem. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), though shaken, has not bro-

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ken apart. The Palestinian people have shown remarkable instinct of self-preservation.

In its present-century diasporas, the Palestinian Resistance Movement (PRM) has undergone a traumatic metamorphosis. In the early phase, the Palestinians were sidelined and their problem was inter-Arabized as non-Palestinian Arabs moved in to exploit it for their parochial ends. The suffering Palestinians were obscured and they remained so for seventeen long years when, in 1964, they decided to take their destiny into their own hands and the PLO emerged phoenix-like as the spearhead of the PRM. A legitimate question is: why did it not arise earlier? For four years, the PLO was a "dubious body" under "undependable" Ahmad Shukeiry. When Yasser Arafat appeared at the helm, other Arab leaders were wary of him. It is notable that whereas the Arab masses have been sympathetic to and supportive of the Palestinians, the regimes, by and large, remained calculating. The author sees the surreptitious Israeli hand in such an attitude leading to the decimation of the Palestinians. It became evident in Jordan and the Lebanon. President Sadat's peace initiative with Israel proved his conviction that Palestinians were expendable.



This book traces the history of the Palestinian problem from its early beginnings after the First World War and the Palestine Mandate to the present, from the days of terrorist activity. The author discusses the radicalization of the Palestine calling attention to the suffering of the Palestinians, leading to the not inconsiderable volume of literature supporting the Palestinian cause. A heartening feature is the discussion on dissident groups within Israel which are attempting to reach out to the dispossessed Palestinians, acknowledging their right to this 'promised land'.



The Palestinians drew little comfort from the umpteen UN resolutions which were either flouted by Israelis or interpreted variously. The US remained firm in supporting Israel's intransigence. As regards the Soviet attitude to the Palestinian problem, the author holds that it fluctuated and he wonders as to "why the Russians, in spite of the clearest anti-Zionist position, adopted by Marxism throughout history, chose to throw their considerable weight behind the creation of Israel ...". Although giving some well-known reasons he considers it a "mystery nobody, even today, has been able to explain definitively." The oil weapon and the Euro-Arab dialogue fell short of the Palestinians' demands and expectations. The "Angels" in the Non-Aligned Movement were also ineffective.

Being disillusioned with the international fora, Arafat gradually veered to the idea of engineering a negotiated peace settlement in which recognition of Israel was implicit. He also reposed greater hope and faith in the US good offices. Arafat accordingly dressed up the position of the PLO although he has had detractors.

Although the PRM remains in the "dark tunnel" the author perceives signs of a possible breakthrough in certain bridge-building movements and individuals that opens prospects for hope and fulfillment of the long-cherished dream of peaceful homelands for the two peoples.

Since the time the book was completed, momentous developments such as the Intifadah, proclamation of the State of Israel, and Arafat's unprecedented peace offensive occurred in quick succession. In spite of the author's "Update" they could not be covered adequately. That is understandable and one hopes that Dasgupta has already planned the sister volume.

The present book is an extremely useful contribution to the existing volume of literature on the subject. Its merit is that it reflects the Third World perspective. Apart from being a study of the Palestinian problem it is also an account of Zionism—its mythology, history, and methods. Dasgupta has excelled in mixing his journalistic expertise and personal observations, contacts, and experiences with deft scholarship. He has a lucid style. The book is admirably produced.

Lastly, the present reviewer should point out an obvious factual error in the 16th chapter. Writing about President Kennedy's "principled stand against Israel's immoral politics", the author adds that "... certain facts testify that after his election for the second term he saw the injustice done to the Palestinian refugees..." (p. 269). One wishes the Expert Reader of the manuscript had detected and corrected it!

There are few parallels in history to the injustice done to the Palestinians or indeed to the courage with which they have borne their travails. □

JUSTICE DELAYED

Raju Ramachandran

VALIANT VICTIMS AND LETHAL LITIGATION: THE BHOPAL CASE

By Upendra Baxi and Amita Dhanda

Published by Indian Law Institute, New Delhi, 1990, pp. 379, Rs. 350.00

If the tragedy was macabre, the course of the litigation has been bizarre. Five and a half years after the event, the victims of the world's worst industrial disaster are still to receive compensation. At the time when this review appears the Supreme Court will be on vacation. When it reopens in July, the hearings in the petitions challenging the settlement of February 1989 will be resumed. Fortunately, the V.P. Singh Government has decided to provide some succour to the victims by giving interim relief to the residents of the 36 severely affected wards of Bhopal.

The book under review is the third in the series of works produced by the Indian Law Institute on the Bhopal Case. Each of the books contains a collection of documents pertaining to the litigation. The first one (*Mass Disaster and Multinational Liability: The Bhopal Case*) was published in May 1986 at a stage when the suit filed by the Union of India against the Union Carbide Corporation was pending before Judge John F. Keenan of the United States District Court, Southern District of New York. Judge Keenan was to decide whether he would assume jurisdiction or refuse to take up the case on the ground of forum non conveniens and send the case to India for trial. It was a situation bristling with "extraordinary inversions", to borrow Baxi's exquisite phrasing. The Government of India, in order to justify its decision to file the suit in America denigrated the Indian legal system, and it was left to Union Carbide to sing paeans of praise about the Indian legal system, with N.A. Palkhivala and J.B. Dadachanji filing affidavits in its support. At that stage Baxi had said in his introduction: "This much is clear: vindication of community interests requires that the Bhopal Litigation must be allowed to proceed on merits: absolutely unmovable by the blandishments and pressures for an out of Court settlement. At issue is the absolute multinational enterprise liability for avoidable human suffering and the mimmal

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human obligation on the part of multinationals to take human life and environment everywhere seriously".

On 12th May 1986 Judge Keenan decided to dismiss the suit and send the case to India for trial, taking the view that the Indian courts were in a far better position than the American courts to determine the cause of the tragedy and thereby fix liability. Judge Keenan referred to the Government of India's contention that the Indian justice system had not yet cast off the burden of colonialism to meet the emerging needs of a democratic people (!!) and said, "In the court's view, to retain the litigation in this forum, as plaintiff's request would be yet another example of imperialism, another

but unsuccessfully.

The suit was then filed in the Court of the District Judge of Bhopal in September 1986. Judge Deo, an imaginative District Judge made a path-breaking order in December 1987 directing Carbide to pay Rs. 350 crores as interim compensation. To the argument of Carbide that there was no earlier case in the history of the law of torts where such interim compensation had been granted, Judge Deo replied, quoting Lord Denning in *Packer V Packer*, "if we never do anything which has not been done before, we shall never get anywhere. The law will stand still, whilst the rest of the world goes on and that will be bad for both".

Predictably, Carbide went in appeal to the

If the tragedy was macabre, the course of the litigation has been bizarre. Five and a half years after the event, the victims of the world's worst industrial disaster are still to receive compensation. At the time when this review appears the Supreme Court will be on vacation. When it reopens in July, the hearings in the petitions challenging the settlement of February 1989 will be resumed. Fortunately, the V.P. Singh Government has decided to provide some succour to the victims by giving interim relief to the residents of the 36 severely affected wards of Bhopal.

situation in which an established sovereign inflicted its rules, its standards and values, on a developing nation. This Court declines to play such a role. The Union of India is a world power in 1986, and its courts have the proven capacity to mete out fair and equal justice. To deprive the Indian judiciary of this opportunity to stand tall before the world and to pass judgement on behalf of its own people would be to revive a history of subservience and subjugation from which India has emerged. India and its people can and must vindicate their claims before the independent and legitimate judiciary created there since the independence of 1947. This Court defers to the adequacy and ability of the courts of India."

In his introduction to the second book (*Inconvenient Forum and Convenient Catastrophe: The Bhopal Case*) Baxi had suggested that Judge Keenan's decision be challenged in appeal. It was,

Madhya Pradesh High Court, which reduced the compensation to Rs. 250 crores in August 1988. The Government of India challenged the reduction of interim compensation and Carbide challenged the grant of any interim compensation, by moving the Supreme Court. No stay was granted by the apex court, but Carbide did not pay. In February 1989, in the course of hearings, in the case relating to interim compensation, the Supreme Court directed settlement of the main suit for 470 million US Dollars. A massive public outcry followed. Serious doubts were raised about the adequacy of the settlement amount. Admittedly, the victim groups had not been heard before the settlement. The Supreme Court was yet to hear the challenge to the constitutional validity of the Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster (Registration and Processing of Claims) Act, 1985 which gave to the Government of India the exclusive right to represent the vic-

tims. If that Act was unconstitutional, the whole settlement would have to go. Under the settlement, criminal proceedings against Carbide stood quashed. Apart from question of the legality of such quashing, the settlement put the Government of India in a piquant situation: it was to defend Carbide in criminal proceedings. Review petitions were filed challenging the settlement.

While the review petitions were pending, another Bench of the Supreme Court (the "Validity Bench" for short) began hearing the challenge to the constitutionality of the Act. As that Bench was concluding its hearing, the "Settlement Bench" pronounced reasons in support of its order directing settlement. The main reason for directing settlement, the Court said, was the urgent need for interim relief. The Court, in effect, upheld the stand of the previous Government before Judge Keenan, when it observed, "The laws" delays are indeed, proverbial. It had been the unfortunate bane of the judicial process that even ordinary cases, where evidence consists of a few documents and the oral testimony of a few witnesses, require some years to realise the fruits of litigation. This is so even in cases of great and unquestionable urgency such as fatal accident actions brought by the dependents. These are hard realities. The present case is one where damages are sought on behalf of the victims of a mass disaster, and, having regard to the complexities and the legal questions involved, any person with an unbiased vision would not miss the time consuming prospect for the course of the

The February settlement surrendered this great initiative, substituting judicial fatigue for judicial creativity as a response. . . . either way, the decision would have contributed to the jurisprudence of multinational liability for mass disasters. Judicial escapism has deprived us of this endowment.

litigation in its sojourn through the various courts, both in India and later in the United States".

In December 1989, the Validity Bench upheld the Act, but read into it the duty of the Government to provide interim relief and to hear the victims before the settlement. The Court, however, made further observations on the settlement itself (which it ought not to have done, since the reference to the Bench was on the sole question of the validity of the Act) and indicated that it was permissible to do "a little wrong" in order to do a "great right".

Now the Review Bench has commenced its hearings on the challenge to the settlement. The legal issues thrown up by the settlement threaten to overshadow the issues raised in the main suit against Carbide. But the fact that there is confusion is not a matter for lament: this is the first case of its kind, and there are no perfect answers.

The book under review comes at the right time. It updates the documentation and, along with its two earlier companions, serves as a complete handbook for anyone concerned with the Bhopal litigation. Upendra Baxi's 69-page Introduction is a master-piece of analysis. He does not hide his anguish over the February settlement. He commends India's enunciation of the principle of multinational enterprise liability, but laments, that "the February settlement surrendered this great initiative, substituting judicial fatigue for judicial creativity as a response. This is not to say at all that the Indian judiciary should have on due consideration produced any resounding affirmation of the self-evident nature of the principle of absolute multinational liability. It might have negated or trimmed it. Either way, the decision would have contributed to the jurisprudence of multinational liability for mass disasters. Judicial escapism has deprived us of this endowment".

Baxi points out that neither the February settlement orders nor the Supreme Court's order of 4th May setting out the reasons for the settlement refers to the available scientific evidence on short, medium and long term effects of the MIC exposure. The settlement, he says, does not take into account the following issues:

- a) who counts as a victim?
- b) what is one a victim of?
- c) are all victims similarly victimized?
- d) how many were there who needed or were eligible for the final relief?
- e) is monetary, notionally allocated financial relief all there is to relief in such a mass disaster?

In addition to these questions and the question of the legality of quashing criminal liability, which the Settlement Bench has itself recognised as meriting consideration, Baxi also finds fault with the arithmetic which was used to justify the settlement.

The notion of *obiter dicta* structures judicial law saying: it is not a charter for judicial indiscipline. Judicial discipline a valued resource for rights, justice and progress in development of the law by judges—Judicial incoherence violates the minima of justice according to the law and the rule of law standards.

Baxi comes down heavily on the Validity Bench for making observations on the settlement beyond the scope of the reference to it. He says, "It is simply not enough to say that these observations are at best or worst *obiter dicta*: In legal logic, *obiter* has to have some rational relevance, though not sufficient to belong to the realm of the ration, to issues at hand. The validity of the settlement was not such an issue. Nor was the Bench at all constituted for allowing the victims to have their say on matters outside the sole question referred to it. The notion of *obiter dicta* structures judicial law saying: it is not a charter for judicial indiscipline. Judicial discipline is a valued resource for rights, justice and progress in development of the law by judges—Judicial incoherence violates the minima of justice according to the law and the rule of law standards".

To be fair to the Supreme Court, it has never claimed to be infallible. In its order of May 4, it says that it is setting out its reasons so that those who have sought a review may be able effectively to assist the court in satisfactorily dealing with the case. It acknowledges that like all other human institutions it is fallible, but assures us that "those who trust this Court will not have cause for despair". Baxi's trenchant criticism will be of help to all those who are involved in persuading the Court that it erred. □

CORPORATE WISDOM

Makarand Paranjape

RELIEF AND EXPERIENCE: VIEWS FROM THE TOP OF INDIAN MANAGEMENT

Edited by Arabinda Ray

UCS Consultants, Calcutta, 1989, pp 118, Rs. 100.00

Jay Dubashi, the well-known business columnist, once lamented the paucity of biographies of Indian businessmen and entrepreneurs. His remarks were made in the context of the astounding success of Lee Iacocca's books. The sales of the autobiographies alone would make its already wealthy and legendary author a millionaire many times over. Dubashi's point, however, was not about money alone but about role models. He considered India's businessmen to be as talented and inspiring as their American counterparts, but regretted the fact that the public knew so little about them and their values.

This book is not biographical, nor is it about top businessmen or industrialists. But it goes a great way towards filling the void that Dubashi spoke of. This book is about some of the best of India's professional managers and what makes them tick. It is about their values and philosophy of life and hence an account of the secret springs of their phenomenal success and achievement. Besides the introduction by the editor of the volume, Arabinda Ray, the collection contains eleven free-flowing, informal and usually autobiographical essays by some of India's most distinguished executives—P.L. Tandon, H.T. Parekh, R.H. Mody, N.P. Sen, V. Kurien, A.N. Haksar, V. Krishnamoorthy, T. Thomas, S.S. Nadkarni, A.S. Ganguly, and Gurcharan Das—a veritable who's who of India's top managers.

In his introduction Ray provides a rationale for the book. He argues that the tradition of professional excellence in management fosters national integration and serves as an important instrument of modernisation. He paints an attractive picture of the profession of management, holding up a belief in high values and an unrelenting quest for quality as the goals that a young manager should strive for. In addition, he stresses the social responsibility that must go with success, especially in a poor country such as India. These are the qualities that he discovers to be the common denominators in the careers of the contributors.

The best essay in the piece is undoubtedly that of Prakash Tandon, who is perhaps the doyen of

Makarand Paranjape is Reader in English, The University of Hyderabad.

Indian managers. He was chairman of Hindustan Lever from 1961-1988, held several other distinguished positions, and is the author of classics such as *Punjabi Century* and *Punjab Saga*. He is as well known all over the world for his achievement in letters as he is for his achievements as a manager in the business circles of India. Tandon's is the longest and most thoughtful essay in the book, though some people may consider his tone pompous. He starts with a definition of professionalism, and then provides a historical perspective of professionalism in India. He then goes on to offer his views on the Indian manager and those qualities which he has and those he needs to cultivate. Tandon's analysis is penetrating; he is never content with clichés and platitudes, but goes to the

This book is not biographical, nor is it about top businessmen or industrialists. But it goes a great way towards filling the void that Dubashi spoke of. This book is about some of the best of India's professional managers and what makes them tick. It is about their values and philosophy of life and hence an account of the secret springs of their phenomenal success and achievement. Besides the introduction by the editor of the volume, Arabinda Ray, the collection contains eleven free-flowing, informal and usually autobiographical essays by some of India's most distinguished executives—P.L. Tandon, H.T. Parekh, R.H. Mody, N.P. Sen, V. Kurien, A.N. Haksar, V. Krishnamoorthy, T. Thomas, S.S. Nadkarni, A.S. Ganguly, and Gurcharan Das—a veritable who's who of India's top managers.

root of the problem. Consider his reading of the basic ambivalence and contradiction in the life of the Indian manager, the conflict as he calls it between "Dharam" and "Karam":

We will go to temples, raise temples, lead a deeply religious life; but when we go to work, we can exploit ruthlessly and make money out of a famine; and promptly put part of the money into a temple or a college, and sometimes make money out of both.

Such contradictions run right down the fabric of Indian society and are responsible for the terrible disparities which plague our country. Tandon concludes his essay with an outline of the qualities that make up the "man at the top":

The man at the top has also to acquire a certain aloofness, call it loneliness. This is often misunderstood. He has to learn to keep his own counsel in many matters, which if conveyed, even to his close colleagues, may create anxieties. Like a shock absorber he has to absorb the impacts from without and not transmit them automatically to the organisation. ... Somehow, he must rise above the common clichés of optimism-pessimism but believe in realism.

This essay confirms the idea that Tandon is an exceptionally gifted man as not only a "doer," but also as a "thinker."

The same cannot be said of another legend in Indian management, Russi Mody, the supremo of the largest private sector company in India, the venerable Tata Iron and Steel Company. His essay is disappointingly trite, though his emphasis on the humanitarian obligations of management is well taken. He ends his short essay with a homily on "3 Cs"—"Credibility, Compassion, and Courage" which he sums up as the essence of a good Chairman. This reminds one of the pep talk we got in locker rooms before a game, a lot of simple-minded, public school philosophy which we soon discovered was practically useless in the rough and tumble of the real world. However talented Mody might be, his gifts are not reflected in this essay.

What is true of Mody also applies to a majority of the remaining essays. Most of the managers stress the same things: idealism, courage, sincerity, honesty, social commitment, humility, and so on as the qualities that they, and by implication a successful manager must have. However, what makes their essays unconvincing is their inability to apply these abstractions to real events or to provide a convincing analysis of what is happening to our country today. In fact, the lack of clarity and originality in many of the essays underscores the suspicion that rising to the top of a company or bureaucracy often entails an ossification and deadening of one's intellect and creativity. The essays abound in generalizations and clichés. They fail to convey a personal voice and often end up sounding like brochures or pamphlets.

H.T. Parekh's piece is full of gems like, "Government's role must not be to regulate and control industry but facilitate development and expansion," "Poverty and unemployment go together," and "Sense of social responsibility in business should be encouraged, even forcibly to some extent". Wise words, no doubt, but without adequate elaboration and exemplification, quite unconvincing.

N.P. Sen's essay is similarly replete with "I believes"—for instance, "I believe management has an obligation to find gainful employment for everybody it has employed". The redundancy and careless phrasing of this sentence is characteristic of the entire article. Such an unimaginative and predictable essay does not become a former Principal of the Administrative Staff College of India.

A.N. Haksar's article is written equally badly, though its autobiographical indulgences make it

slightly more interesting. He has sentences which begin like this: "Firstly, the influence of guide-posts in life which were a family legacy and circumstance of birth. . .". How can guide-posts influence and how can "family legacy" and "circumstance of birth" be guide-posts? Doesn't such careless writing indicate careless thinking habits?

V. Krishnamoorthy, the much lauded chairman of SAIL, harps on "Human Resource Development" and "Quality" in his essay. The latter becomes a kind of all-purpose buzz word, a panacea for all ills. However, the author defines it in a somewhat naive and romantic way:

"To me, quality is an inner resolve to do one's job, no matter how routine and rule-bound it may seem and to do it better each succeeding day. . . to impart to each element of a job an intangible aura, a perfection. . . Our work should glow with the inner illumination that is the result of a labour of love."

It would be very hard to practise this if one were an assembly line worker.

T. Thomas's "An International Manager" reads like a speech. He offers a Swiftian "modest proposal" to overcome India's ills:

1. Abolish/wind up public sector industry and bring in privatisation;
2. Population control in some form—not by coercion but by persuasion, education.

Haven't we heard these ideas before? Don't they smack of an extreme right-wing, capitalist programme of social change, betraying a total insensitivity to India's past? The rest of Thomas's remarks are autobiographical and the title seems

to apply only to the author's present status, not to the content of the essay.

S.S. Nadkarni's insights begin with some "Old-Time Virtues" to which he attributes his success, "HARD WORK," "INTEGRITY," "ETHICS," and "SINCERITY". Perhaps the bold type heightens the author's faith in them, but surely "INTEGRITY" and "ETHICS" overlap? A personal ethics could include all the other features, surely. Neither Nadkarni nor A.S. Ganguly, whose essay, "The Scientist's Drive Towards Social Justice" follows, have anything new to say.

That leaves two essays, Verghese Kurien's "The Grass Roots Professional" and Gurcharan Das's "Leading from the Front" I like both of them, though the title of the latter is a bit silly—where else can one lead from except the front? Both essays are autobiographical and opinionated, Kurien's slightly arrogant in tone, but it is this personal quality and conviction which makes them valuable. Kurien tells us a little about how both circumstances and personal choices led him to the challenge of Anad and the subsequent successes of "Operation Flood." He stresses the personal job satisfaction and meaningful work over monetary rewards:

Making "green shampoo" is a triviality, particularly in a country where there is not enough water to drink. There is some absurdity in the young Indian spending his talent in the pursuance of clothes, cosmetics and the like.

I only hope that some of our young managers agree! The nation would be grateful to them if they employed their talents to solving its problems

instead of automatically opting for the high-profile yuppie lifestyles that are so conspicuous in their self-assertiveness.

Das, who runs Proctor and Gamble, India, is also a writer. He wrote the prize-winning play, *Larins Saheb*, and more recently a novel, *A Fine Family*. Das emphasizes the value that businessmen need to place on the individual, both within the organization and outside it. In the latter instance, the consumer is king and Das believes that the product must satisfy those millions of housewives who use them. Within the organization, a respect for the individual worker translates into a delegation of responsibility, an environment of trust, the sharing of information—in short, of teamwork. If I were a young manager, I would like to work for a boss like Das.

The best thing about his book is that it is a beginning in a very important direction. It is thoroughly readable and should be compulsory for aspiring managers as well as established managers. The real significance of a book like this is the role it can play in the formation of a healthy, viable, innovative, and progressive corporate culture because it is, ultimately, about successful people and what makes them so. Hence, it is about values and philosophies, not just about careers. I only wish that a book about professionalism in Indian management had been edited and produced more professionally; the book would improve if the Publisher's Preface were deleted, if the form, structure, and style of the articles, including the headings and titles, were rationalised and standardised, and if the printing was more attractive. □

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AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO SHELTER ISSUES

S. K. Sharma

METROPOLITAN HOUSING MARKET:
A STUDY OF AHMEDABAD

Edited by Meera Mehta and Dinesh Mehta

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 208,
Rs. 180.00

Metropolitan Housing Market—A Study of Ahmedabad is an excellent and timely contribution to the growing literature on shelter issues in the recent years. It is one of the few books to date that comprehensively addresses itself to a detailed analysis of a local housing market, at the same time placing the study in a broader national perspective. The professional expertise apparent in dealing with the subject is unique in its multi-disciplinary appeal. By integrating uncanny insights into the physical and spatial as well as the socio-economic aspects of the housing situation, it invites the interests of economists, architects, planners and policy-makers.

The stated objectives of the study are to help in the identification of housing strategies and programmes at the local level and also provide significant guidelines for national and state level policies. The study becomes significant in the context of the recent changes occurring in the national policy perspective—especially the shift in the role of state from one of a provider to that of a facilitator of housing.

Given that state intervention strategies lie on the supply side, most of the existing literature on housing markets, tend to focus on the demand side of the equation while fewer studies have looked at both supply and demand aspects. Fully recognising this need, the authors examine both the supply processes and the demand behaviour and their interaction under various changing sets of conditions on the basis of a stratified sample survey undertaken in Ahmedabad.

The authors begin by critically reviewing India's housing policies including those related to the informal sector. The political dimension to the urban housing market with particular reference to self-help is emphasised. They observe that there are certain contradictions in the entire approach to the housing policies in India reflecting not only the conflicting attitudes of planners and academicians

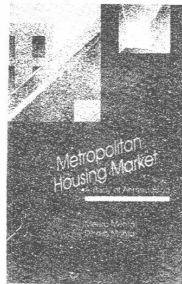
S. K. Sharma, a civil servant by profession, is the chairman and managing director of Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd., and has taken various innovative steps to promote housing as a people's programme using low-cost technologies.

but also the dependence of housing policies on political forces as much or even more than the techno-economic solutions to issues of rising prices and unaffordabilities. They consider that illegal settlements act as a safety valve to social tension and that the state through action or inaction tends to reflect the interests of the establishment. Such a radical view on the self-help debate, is often subject to criticism for a preoccupation with the structural processes on an abstract level.

The authors examine the growth of the city population, economy and housing situation very comprehensively by considering housing within the context of social, political, and economic structures as opposed to the inadequate demand-based approaches of many earlier studies. The trends

sub-typology is developed within the informal market. Some interesting observations have been made in this regard. The study reveals that the most dominant sub-markets in Ahmedabad have been the formal private sector and the informal sector, despite the intensified public sector housing efforts in the last decade. The private sector's role has increased to such an extent that it outpaced even the informal sector in this process. "... in the 1971-81 decade, the private sector contributed almost 60 per cent to the net decade increase compared to just 20 per cent by the informal sector ...". Contrary to the experiences of other cities, the role of slum housing in Ahmedabad has declined in the last decade. "... Within the formal private sector, the trends are towards "a growing importance of the private commercial sector, at the expense of more genuine popular sector with housing organised and built by the housing co-operatives consisting of the community or users themselves". More than the commercialization of the formal private sector, the authors note the increasing role of the growing petty-capitalist class in the formal housing market that has strong links to the

... the textile industry in Ahmedabad was probably at its peak in the early seventies
... the flight of capital from textiles started in the second half of seventies. This



provided a boost to the upcoming housing industry in the city, which had begun in the early seventies but flourished during the later half ... at the same time, the speculative demand in housing was probably quite high. This was because the substantial rise in prices during the seventies ensured a high return from capital gains. On one hand then, these factors probably led to a high level of housing investment in the city, which was also backed by a consumption-based demand. The latter was probably steady as despite moderate population growth rates, incomes were high and access to institutional financing through the co-operative sector was ensured, especially for the upper and middle classes.

From Metropolitan Housing Market: A Study of Ahmedabad

identified show that the housing activity in Ahmedabad was governed by the fortunes of the textile industry and the related economic health of the city. Further, the authors throw up an interesting insight into the interrelationship between land, economy and housing while examining the impact of the Urban Land (Ceiling Control) Act of the 1976 on the housing situation in Ahmedabad.

In examining the contribution of the various segments of suppliers, the authors develop a detailed typology of housing sub-markets that takes into consideration the actors and activities involved, the commodity type and the ways and means adopted for its production as also the prevalent housing types in the local market. A similar

local polity. Their criticism of this pattern of development in terms of the loss of popular control over housing for a large proportion of the population and the gradual 'commodification' of the housing product does not seem to appreciate the affordability levels, the flexibility of procedures and the locational advantages that it provides showing a less pragmatic and more ideological viewpoint. Also the study does not attempt to understand the reasons for their success or the relative costs of what they provide compared to other sub-markets.

In the context of housing demand behaviour, the need for comparative work is becoming increasingly important as more and more cities are

facing similar economic and social problems. While the study evolves an excellent research framework that can be replicated to generate similar studies in other cities, the section dealing with housing demand parameters for Ahmedabad also compares the results with international evidence for developing countries, thereby extending the findings to a broader market context. The analysis of housing demand presents estimates of income and price elasticities for tenure and income classes. They also conduct a hedonic analysis to highlight the fact that the market valuation of housing is based on a variety of attributes related to location, dwelling characteristics, type of dwelling, amenities and legal status.

Affordability calculations for target populations are a critical element of project design. The results from the study amply demonstrate the inadequacy of any rule of thumb or a single ratio to predict consumption for different income and tenure groups in the city. Similarly most current public sector housing projects contain subsidies, explicit or implicit. How inefficient these subsidies are critically depends on the demand and price elasticities of the participants. The present study helps

in evolving a range of estimates to examine the costs and benefits of alternative programmes qualitatively.

The behavioural study throws light on the preference structure of different household groups, their housing adjustment processes, the constraints

are brought out in the context of the local housing market. The four stylised typologies include 'early achievers', 'middle-age or late achievers', 'constrained adjusters' and 'downward mobile'. The distribution of households in these groups is critically linked both to the buoyancy of the economy and to the public policy.

In the discussion on the direction that emerge from the study, the authors suggest various direct and indirect measures for state intervention on the issues of land and services, housing finance, the rental market, institutional mechanisms, all within the perspective of a housing support policy framework. In conclusion they reiterate that the housing question will continue to be under political pressures for a long time to come. And alternatively suggest the need for strengthening the organisational capacities of the poor as an essential element of the overall housing strategy towards the turn

of the century. All things considered, this book is an extremely valuable and timely contribution to the literature on this subject and should pave way for more studies at the local level. □

... on the whole, the Urban Land Ceiling Act despite its progressive ambitions towards a more equitable society, has not benefited the real low-income groups in the city. In the short-run, however, it did lead to a largely unintended effect of a spurt in the housing activity in the city, further aided by the transfer of finances from the Textile industry and a buoyant private sector developer group in the city. . . . As compared to the other metropolitan cities, the building cost index of Ahmedabad shows the least increase. This may be partly reflected in the high rate of building activity in Ahmedabad especially during the seventies. . . .

From Metropolitan Housing Market: A Study of Ahmedabad

faced by various household groups in attaining the preferred housing characteristics, their intra-urban mobility and incremental housing as modes of housing adjustment. Based on these findings, certain distinct patterns of household behaviour

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The author argues that peasants can organise collectively under certain conditions. Privatisation or state regulation are therefore not the only ways of preventing degrading of common property resources in peasant societies.

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ECLECTIC THEOLOGIAN

Pavan K. Varma

THE SHRINE AND CULT OF MU'IN AL-DIN CHISHTI OF AJMER

By P.M. Currie

Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 220, Rs.190.00

LETTERS FROM MANERI: SUFI SAINT OF MEDIEVAL INDIA

Translated by Paul Jackson.

Horizon Books India, 1990, pp. 478, (hardback) Rs. 395.00

Sufism (tasaawwuf) emerged as a distinct movement within the movement of Islam around the eleventh century. Its essential profile was that of a protest movement against the tendency of ritualistic Islam to strangle a devotee's spiritual spontaneity. Its basic tenet was the right of each spiritual aspirant to have direct communication with the Almighty without intermediaries. Its mystical and ascetic profile was a challenge to organised religion on orthodox lines. In the early stages the Sufi tariqah was looked upon with hostility by Muslim theocracy. However, as the movement gained in strength, its existence came to be accepted. By the 13th Century there were several orders of mystical education within the Sufi framework. Each order (khanaqah) was headed by a Shaikh (perceptor or master) with his own murids (disciples), following a distinct path (tariqa), transmitted generationally (silsila).

A pervasive weakness of modern life is what I call the acceptable threshold of shallowness of knowledge in everything that we consider substantive and important, be it literature or music, religion or spirituality. I have not been on a pilgrimage to Ajmer as yet, but if I go, as I would like to, the reading of Dr Currie's book would make it an infinitely more meaningful experience.

In India the most influential Sufi order was that of Mu'in al-din Chishti of Ajmer. P.M. Currie's work is a historical study of the origins of the shrine and cult of Mu'in al-din Chishti, attempting to separate history from myth, fact from legend. Currie deals also with the factual aspects of the actual pilgrimage to Ajmer, the administration of the dargah and its endowments and finances. The book is a worthy compendium of facts and anecdote. It is essential reading for scholars both of history and theology. The meticulous and copious

Pavan K. Varma, a member of the Indian Foreign Service, is the author of Chhalib, The Man, The Times.

research that has gone into its making is both its strength and its weakness: strength because the scholar would find all the information that he is seeking on this subject between its covers; weakness because the lay reader may find himself swamped by the preponderance of footnotes and academic minutiae.

As one goes through the book, there is the slightest feeling that, even the serious reader, in his quest to know more about the great saint, may miss the wood for the trees. This is of course not to belittle the many valuable academic insights provided by Dr Currie and the wealth of folklore, culled from a great diversity of textual material, which he has put together. The first chapter on 'The Role of Saints in Islam', wherein Dr Currie examines the plurality of Arabic, Persian and Urdu terms to describe a saint (wali, murshid, shaykh, darvish, sufi, pir) is an appropriate initial setting for the following chapters. As Dr Currie writes: 'Only against such a background does the emergence of this historically shadowy figure (Mu'in al-din Chishti) become intelligible.'

A particularly interesting aspect of Dr Currie's work in his attempt to profile the political and social status of Mu'in al-din Chishti's devotees, from the Emperors Akbar and Jehangir down to present day dignitaries and the importance of Shaikh Mu'in al-din in the social and cultural life of India and Pakistan.

A pervasive weakness of modern life is what I call the acceptable threshold of shallowness of knowledge in everything that we consider substantive and important, be it literature or music, religion or spirituality. I have not been on a pilgrimage to Ajmer as yet, but if I go, as I would like to, the reading of Dr Currie's book would make it an infinitely more meaningful experience. It would give me a sense of historical perspective to know, for instance, that Mohammad bin Tughlaq was the first recorded visitor to the shrine; a detailed map of the shrine complex with notes to explain the significance and history of each area, which is given in Chapter 4 of the book, would be of great help; so would a knowledge of the various symbolism associated with the pilgrimage, such as the offering of the chadar, or the 'looting' of the 'degs'; to know in advance about the institution of the 'Sajjada-Nishin', the spiritual leader of the shrine, and the 'Khuddam', the servants of the shrine, and about how the dargah is administered, would undoubtedly also be of great value. I remain conscious however of the fact that, armed with all this knowledge, I may still have a much poorer spiritual experience than an unread peasant. That indeed is the credo of Sufism.

Horizon Books have brought out an excellent edition of the letters of Sharafuddin Maneri, who was born in Bihar around 1290 and is regarded as one of India's most well-known Sufi saints. Maneri's sway is particularly strong in Bihar where his followers came to eclipse the more well entrenched Chishti, Qadari and Naqshbandi Sufi orders. The 100 letters were originally written in Persian between the period 1346 to 1347, to a prominent disciple, Qazi Shamsuddin. It is ironical that it is a foreigner, Paul Jackson, who has finally brought this treasure-house of Sufi wisdom to an English readership. Paul Jackson, who is Australian, came to India in 1960 and is a recognised authority on Islam and Sufism. Maneri's letters cover the entire gamut of Sufi theology—if such a word as theology can be used in the context of Sufism. They discuss in terms of lyrical simplicity, the concept of the unity of God, the nature of saintliness, the origins of human error, the concepts of truth and purity, the virtues which constitute good behaviour and the bondage of worldly possessions. What emerges with abundant clarity is the role of the spiritual guide in the Sufi tariqah: both father and friend, critic and supporter, admonishing at one step, encouraging at another. It is a relationship which has a mesmerising quality, a bond of faith that must have provided great solace.

The earliest compilation of these letters was apparently made almost immediately after the death of Maneri, because there is evidence that Mohammed bin Tughlaq read them. The present translation has been made from a manuscript of the 16th century, which is still preserved in the Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library, Patna. Abul Fazl, author of the Ain-i-Akbari, has recorded that he read portions of *The Hundred Letters* to Emperor Akbar, while Hamiduddin, secretary to Aurangzeb, relates that Aurangzeb always kept a copy of the work with him.

There is one slight note of concern that imperceptibly grows somewhere along the line in the mind of the reader of both these volumes. This concern rests on the fact that

while Sufism originated essentially as a movement away from the thralldom of organised religion, stressing on direct, ecstatic communication with God, at some stage along its evolution, the creation of spiritual guides and distinct orders, led to restrictions on the free thinking and freedom of judgement which had been the movement's greatest strength. The more Sufism became

organised, the more it became a religious order with its own constricting rules and regulations. The more it began to evolve a sub-theology of its own, the more it began to approximate the rigid features against which it had originally rebelled. Some of the letters of Maneri bring out this aspect. But, fortunately, such letters are in a minority and by and large the compilation elaborates an

ecletic strain which alone accounts for the fact that Maneri has followers both among Hindus and Muslims.

That indeed is the transcendent strength of the spiritual legacy of Muin al-din Chishti as well. It is significant though, that in delineating the history and legend of the Pir of Ajmer, P.M. Currie has brought forward material to show that in the initial stages, traditional Muslims looked

upon Chishti as Islam's sword to convert infidels to the faith. Their interpretation was subject to their historical situation and is of course not a commentary on the larger faith and credo with which this great saint has ultimately come to be associated. □

There is one slight note of concern that imperceptibly grows somewhere along the line in the mind of the reader of both these volumes. This concern rests on the fact that while Sufism originated essentially as a movement away from the thralldom of organised religion, stressing on direct, ecstatic communication with God, at some stage along its evolution, the creation of spiritual guides and distinct orders, led to restrictions on the free thinking and freedom of judgement which had been the movement's greatest strength. The more Sufism became organised, the more it became a religious order with its own constricting rules and regulations. The more it began to evolve a sub-theology of its own, the more it began to approximate the rigid features against which it had originally rebelled. Some of the letters of Maneri bring out this aspect. But, fortunately, such letters are in a minority and by and large the compilation elaborates an eclectic strain which alone accounts for the fact that Maneri has followers both among Hindus and Muslims.



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BOOKS AND THE PRESS

A Seminar Report

We bring to our readers in the following pages some excerpts of a seminar on Books And The Press held in Madras last year. The need for a journal devoted solely to book-reviewing was emphasized by publishers, editors of newspapers, distributors, booksellers and critics alike. The fact that such a journal, *The Book Review*, has existed for fourteen years was not adequately highlighted in this seminar, which must be attributed to a proper distribution network not being available to us. We are happy to inform our readers that the situation has improved since the setting up of *The Book Review* literary Trust, and the journal in its new format is being widely distributed.

Of some of the other ideas expressed at the seminar, it must be pointed out that *The Book Review* has already taken the initiative independently to implement them. The idea of book-review programmes on television was taken up on an experimental basis in November-December 1988 by *The Book Review* when panelists (among whom were Dr. Meenakshi Mukherjee, Khushwant Singh, Gopal Gandhi, K. Subrahmanyam, Dileep Padgaonkar, A.K. Damodaran, Dr. Dharm

Kumar, Dr. Kaushik Basu and T.C.A. Srinivasa-Raghavan) reviewed books by Indian writers in English, Gorbachev's Perestroika, and some important books in economics on television. The mandarins of Mandi House however did not feel that book-reviewing had a place on television, and the experiment was given up.

The Book Review highlights regional languages publications regularly in its columns. That we are making an impact in this field is borne out by letters we receive from publishers who have taken up translations of works reviewed by us from the regional language into English.

Ms. Susan Ram's idea of a workshop to educate critics in the art of reviewing struck a chord in the long-suffering hearts of the editors of *The Book Review*. A seminar is being planned by us to be scheduled at the end of the year or thereabouts along the lines suggested by Ms. Ram and others.

Editor

We, publishers and publishers' agents representing major English publishers the world over as wholesalers and stockists and as booksellers experience difficulties in making the reading public aware of the new books that are being put out day after day. New titles will be taken note of by prospective readers only if they are reviewed by responsible newspapers and journals. Not only reviewed, but reviewed promptly and properly. I am not saying that reviews should be only favourable. Fulsome praise can do as much harm to a book as not being reviewed or totally ignored. What I mean is a critical appraisal, weighing the good and bad points in a book so that the reader of the review will be able to form a proper assessment of the title and enable him or her to decide whether to purchase the book or not. Unless such reviews come out when the books are on the stands, there is every likelihood of the volumes languishing on the shelves of bookshops and just collecting dust. All reviews need not be reviews in depth—that really depends on the content and subject matter and is best left to discriminating reviewers and the editors of the papers and journals concerned. Nor should they be reproductions of the blurbs, very often a sign that the reviewer has not gone beyond the dust jacket. They can even be brief notices just to make readers aware that the book has been published— Notices that would be enough to whet the appetites of readers who will go on from there to decide whether they want the books or not.

Reviewing and publishing go hand in hand in the developed countries and rightly so. It is as if new intellectual and creative efforts of authors are being

led by the hand by the Press and introduced to the reading public. After that it is upto the readers to decide whether the newcomer should be cultivated or left alone. Even if what is said in a new book may not be acceptable to a reader, he may still read it because it gives a point of view which deserves to be taken note of, if at least to differ from. Although Indian newspapers and journals realise the importance of carrying reviews in their pages, we feel adequate thought is not being given to this essential service which should be offered by the media, especially the Press. Most Indian newspapers, particularly the English press, do have a book page or two once a week but we feel that sufficient thought is not bestowed on them. We hope that our discussion here will enable representatives of the press to realise the importance of the service they will be doing to the reading public by presenting review columns with the responsibility and care they deserve.

In fact we would go one step further and request our newspapers to bring out weekly, or at least fortnightly, literary supplements which would carry articles by leading writers and critics along with reviews. Distinguished prototypes like the *London Times Literary Supplement* (TLS as it is popularly called) and the *Observer Supplement* come to one's mind. If full fledged supplements pose any problems, a tabloid format could be thought of. Another point we would like to emphasise here is that these supplements should offer advertisement space at concessional tariff for advertising books, old and new, as in the weekly Shopping Window supplements offered by many newspapers now.

On their part, Indian publishing houses should put their house in order and see that publishing schedules are adhered to and advance copies sent to the press so that the books would be on the stands when the reviews come out. The reader of a review should be in a position to purchase the book reviewed straightaway if he is so minded. It would be of advantage if publishers are informed when a review is slated for publication so that they could advertise the book in the same issue to derive the maximum advantage.

There is or should be a special affinity and understanding between the periodical press and the book industry, because both are in the world of communications. The journalist is a professional communicator, who writes to be read, to influence and in some way affect the course of events. Hence members of the Press can understand that writing which is not read is not communication. Publishers and booksellers are similarly in the field of communication. Though they do not produce the words, i.e. do not write the contents of the books, they shape and influence the production of the books, through editing, designing and printing, at every stage with an eye to the dissemination of the book among the widest readership attainable. The justification for having a publisher to produce the writing of an author, and for having a network of booksellers to sell the books, is that these are professionals, who can ensure a wide sale and wide readership for the product of the author's mind. Every media of communication has its professionals who serve to ensure that the work does get communicated. We in the book trade fill that role for the printed word in book form.

Traditionally books are sold through bookshops and to some extent by direct mail. Except for certain types of reference books, door to door selling of books is rare. For books to be purchased from bookshops, it is necessary not only that the books are physically disseminated and displayed, it is also necessary that the reading public should know or hear about the books and have an interest in seeing, buying and reading them. Without news about books being circulated, prospective buyers will not seek out such books. It is in this vital function of disseminating book information that the book industry looks to the periodical Press, and also to other media, for help. While it is true that the book industry has a financial stake and a monetary motivation in seeking sales, it must be remembered that we are motivated by an enlightened self-interest, because only a book that sells will produce royalties for its author, and only a book that is read will transmit the ideas or message of its author, however eminent he may be.

A book that is not sold or not read is in effect a non-book. It is a failure in communication. This realisation is what has brought the book trade and the periodical Press together, because we believe in the value of the written word, just as you of the Press do, and we think you will play your part in ensuring that the author's creative work is communicated to its appropriate audience.

■ VICTOR ABDULLAH

President of the Booksellers & Publishers Association of South India.

Books and writers of books and publishers of books on the one hand, and editors, book reviewers, and readers of newspapers and journals on the other, have obviously marched to greet each other. It is generally thought that the writers of books and the readers of newspaper articles and reviews have different standards and different obligations. The journalist of course has to write for the immediate moment and he has a dateline to meet and he has to deal with problems of urgency. An author on the other hand can take his own time to try and establish a long term view, and he can spread himself out. And the worst criticism of an author, he or she fears to have, is to say that what has

been written is journalese. Now I would suggest that perhaps this is going a bit too far and much benefit could result on both sides, if there was a little more cooperation. Of course the author likes to get reviews, he likes to get good reviews naturally, but even a bad review is better than no review, for at least people should be made aware of the existence of the book and even if the review is poor, many people react by saying 'I would like to judge for myself'. I would like to suggest that more time and attention should be given by members of the Press to the reviewing of books. I do not think they should limit themselves to such books as happen to be sent to them for review. It is worthwhile and certainly the practice elsewhere that the Editors of those managing the book review hear of a particular book, even if it has not been sent to them, should follow it up, and try and see if they can get a review done by a knowledgeable person.

In India at the moment, however poor the quality of the printing or the binding and the editing of book, more books are being published in India every year, than ever before and looking at the world, India comes only third, after Britain and the United States in the number of Indian publications issued every year. Also the number of newspapers and magazines and journals are multiplying so that we have the base on both sides. We have the number of books increasing and the number of journals also increasing. What is lacking is communication, not only are these two agencies communicators, but there is a paucity of communication between them. If a greater relationship could be established between book publishers and book-

sellers on the one hand, and newspapers and journalists on the other, certainly I think it would be of consequence to not only authors and pressmen but also to the reading public.

What I finally say is that while Pressmen write from vocation and write in a hurry, yet it has been felt that perhaps journalists and editors would also benefit by a little more reading, a greater breadth of vision and greater sense of the deeper issues involved.

■ DR. S. GOPAL

Noted historian and biographer.

There are in other parts of the country and in other metropolitan centres where newspapers wield some influence people who feel the same kind of dissatisfaction some of us share here about what goes on in the interaction of books and the Press. Mr Abdulla told me there was an attempt, a somewhat unsuccessful attempt to involve what we would consider the non-independent media, the state manipulated, the state controlled media. But it is important to tap these sources in the media, particularly television and video and because of those subjects on which most books are published today there should be no objection to doing some kind of justice to this activity, the life of mind, the writing of books and so on, because too little is seen in the non-independent media, even compared with the little that we do in the press, but I think that is the deficiency that must be made up, although the rules of the game are totally different, so different that we can hardly talk about the media in India as a category, as you can of western Europe or America—they do some of the same kinds of things and some of the same rules of the game apply, whereas here it is different, like, as soon as you take up a book like Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* or the unfortunate practice of mutilating or censoring portions or lines of encyclopedias and the moment you break into TV time, not even prime time, you will have some objection. However the Press does perform some role in bringing to the attention of the public and there we would claim quality superiority so far as the role and credibility of our function is concerned. But that is something that should be tapped. The reach

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From a humble beginning in 1970,
we have created
a unique niche for ourselves
in the field of housing finance
technical developments in
cost effective building materials
training artisans through Building Centres
and HSMI Regional Training Network



hudco

Reaching homes
to the people

HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD
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Tlx : 031-61037 HUDC IN Gram : HUDCO Fax : 625308
Zonal Office : Madras Regional Office : Ahmedabad Bombay Bangalore Calcutta
Chandigarh Delhi Guwahati Jaipur
Development Offices : Bhopal Bhubaneswar Bombay Hyderabad Lucknow Patna
Port Blair Trivandrum

of television in particular or the radio is enormous in our country and to the extent books are mentioned in some of the broadcast, to the extent they highlight the themes, the qualities, I think we can benefit a great deal.

Publishers and publishers agents representing major publishers around the world, do experience difficulties in the Indian context in making the book-reading public aware of new books being brought out, some of them are worthwhile, new titles have come to the attention of the public only because they are noticed and reviewed by influential newspapers and journals. The problems with reviews is that although they serve some useful function, even as they are presently developed, there is a great deal of superficiality. This is obvious even to those of us in the Press who recognise intensive superficial traits in journalism who have a tendency to dilly-dallism, lack of specialisation, if you wanted to be sympathetic, the problem of having to write in a hurry to meet the deadline and so on, these impose tremendous constraints as anyone knows, who is familiar with journalism with journalistic minds and habits, and I think even allowing for it, we feel that there is something wrong with the way Book Page reviewing, planning and editing is conducted in our country. There are papers who may consider devoting more pages not necessarily to book reviews but to book articles even highlighting particular themes and authors and so on. The trouble is that as far as I can make out in most newspapers including our own, the one I work with, the Book Page and book reviews do not get enough attention.

For books to be purchased from bookshops, it is necessary not only that the books are physically disseminated and displayed, it is also necessary that the reading public should know or hear about the books and have an interest in seeing, buying and reading them. Without news about books being circulated, prospective buyers will not seek out such books. It is in this vital function of disseminating book information that the book industry looks to the periodical Press, and also to other media, for help.

Fortunately there is a tradition of noticing and reviewing books which is fairly rooted in India, for historical reasons, it has a fairly long standing practice. If you look at the old reviews and book review pages you do get the feeling that although the times were different, although they were writing to different audiences, the rules of the game were quite different in those times, habits of mind, the attitude to literature, it was more restricted and rarified—although that is so, there is a clear tendency to be careless with this part of journalism in India, so that you do have the problem of even living up to the older standards. If you look at the Literary Page, the Book Page, etc. the current tendency is to adopt a routine, an unexcited state and style of the book page. I think there are honourable interesting exceptions including some young people who do get excited to this activity. The number of papers and the sections of pages that go beyond the conventional, short, matter of fact, business-like approaches to reviews, I think these are very limited, occasionally magazines do a modicum of justice to the field of publishing, but they do

not do this as a regular activity in any systematic conscious sense, I think, in the Indian context. I think this contrasts rather unfavourably with the potential there is, the advantage there is in the composition of readership in the Indian newspapers. Changes are taking place in the profile of newspaper readership in India, but the advantage of dealing with the fairly serious, attentive, alive core of serious readers, who are fairly serious about intellectual matters—I think this is an advantage which some of the other journalistic professionals around us do not possess. Journalism professors and thoughtful media persons from other countries, who come into some contact with the Indian press, at least in my knowledge, do note the serious concerns, the fairly sustained preoccupation with serious issues including intellectual subjects that our Press has and this must be seen in interaction with readership, if the readership can bear this.

Secondly, although I do not know how many publishers realise that although in general assessments and so on the Indian press is supposed to wield only a limited influence, I do not think that is so either historically or in contemporary situation. While newspapers have a limited reach and influence in relation to a population of 800 million in 1988 in absolute terms they do make a considerable difference. In terms of the absolute numbers and in terms of the base these provide for the development of an Indian professional activity. I think this is quite considerable and upto date and some of you may be surprised by the fact that the latest figures indicate that the total circulation of all newspapers (this I think is somewhat inflated) would be of the order of 68-69 million, you have the surprising figure brought out by the Registrar of Newspapers in India, that there are about 20,000 registered newspapers in the country. It's a ridiculous figure, but I think it is about 2000 registered newspapers, about 1/10 of that number.

I would like to draw your attention to these figures because they would go against the superficial impression that the Press counts for very little in terms of reach and input in comparison with the nonindependent media in our country. Therefore it is quite worthwhile to interact with the Press to improve its performance on books on publishing and on the kinds of issues we are concerned with here, in this seminar.

Added to this, the fact that many readers take the serious components of newspapers and the life of the mind fairly seriously, looking for things in the newspapers such as news and assessments of books, intellectual and academic, and noteworthy events in the field of literature and music, etc.. The controversies surrounding Salman Rushdie's recent book, and the lawless censoring and the mutilation of passages and lines of books imported—in our country these do raise profound profile of publishing and the profile of writing in a rather useful way I think in the contemporary Indian context. I believe that such controversies as they are featured in the more serious sections of the Press have a worthwhile and healthy impact on the readership attitudes. It raises the profile of intellectual questions and issues such as role of the writer limits and legitimacy of allowing freeplay of literary imagination, the issue of free intellectual expression, social problems, intra religious, linguistic, ethnic and other sensitivities, fundamentalism and chauvinism, being a threat to the writers freedom of expression.

Coming to the subject on hand, the more serious concern here, to make a concrete start we must recognise I think when we are talking about newspapers and books that you have the useful thing called an established or institutional sense, and the routine way books and reviewing are dealt with in the editorial offices and the production departments of newspapers in a sense testify to this. Having said this one would immediately place on record a sense of dissatisfaction of the performance of newspapers from a qualitative strong point in relation to books. One has merely to skip through the pages of serious books and publications like the *New York Review Of Books* or sections or even supplements of the better newspapers abroad for the pages given to books and quality magazines to realise with embarrassment how much better we can do for books, literature and the life of the mind in our country. I speak with a real knowledge of space constraints, problems of slotting these items in our rather rigid framework and so on and even allowing all this, this comment was on hold, and the quality of the reviews is highly variable. The

Book Page or Review Editor is usually I think in my experience quite an experienced and competent person. People who are in love with books and take reviewing very earnestly and who is himself or herself a consumer of books, come to the person for reviews. The problem is that in many newspapers including in *The Hindu* looking after the Book Page is only one of the tasks assigned to an experienced correspondent. This I think is a genuine problem and not judged to be, I think in most cases, a real full time activity, an activity in which you become totally committed in terms of time, in terms of your energies, in terms of our intellect and sources and professional skills.

My own view is that it is pretty obvious that looking after planning and editing a substantial book and literary page must become a full time professional activity, the assignment being not merely a recognition of seniority of attitude but a recognition that specialisation would be in order. As tendencies of specialisation are beginning to develop, in Indian journalism, reporting, reviewing and writing of books, looking after the book page on literary journalism must be recognised as a distinctive field of specialisation. It is at the moment looked on as a rather soft side of journalism unfortunately. I think only this will be a progressive response to the problem, attitudes—interests, knowledge, enthusiasm, must be developed to the challenge of doing the minimum amount of justice to worthwhile books.

The other well known problem is that the economics are rather underdeveloped, the remuneration for reviewers is extremely poor, compared to what photographers get when applied to a newspaper. One slide is worth several reviews, several papers, there is a real problem in the development—unbalanced development, we are acutely aware of this, particularly those who look after the Book Page. I tried my best to find out how it works abroad, asking and tickling the brains of journalists and reviewers, and authors in fact, and one answer they give is, you let them have the book, of course the book must be worthwhile, that's the first condition, and preferably an expensive book you got free and particularly if it's a duplicate, then I think you would make it a rule that the reviewer keeps the book and you can go to reviewers and provide some incentive.

■ N. RAM
Associate Editor, *The Hindu*

I belong to the group of people who have substantive interest in book reviews and the role of presentation of information on books. I think all the previous speakers who mentioned the press, the authors, the publishers, did not mention in their summaries the word Librarian, we always get forgotten. Well, I gather from some friends that India imported something like 26 crores worth of foreign books last year. This means that vast amounts, which India also produces, not so bad, something like 50-60,000 books a year. Faced with this ocean of material, how do librarians set about the task of selecting books, not just for himself or herself, but for a vast public, the public will come back again and again to read the books they have selected. So this is really tight-rope walking and in this I think book reviews do sometimes come to their help. I think most reviewers are of two types, either they are gutters, this is some base type which is put together, or people who just do a skillful skim of the blurb and without any regard for pages, just reproduce something. This is the kind of review that comes in papers. But in spite of all that, we have to think of reviews, because this is the only sort of indication of what the contents of the books are. Quite often reviews not only clear up what books we should acquire, but more often they show us what books we can avoid, or tell us all about the books which we shall certainly not have the time to read at all. So

As tendencies of specialisation are beginning to develop in Indian journalism, reporting, reviewing and writing of books, looking after the book page, literary journalism must be recognised as a distinctive field of specialisation.

what makes a good review? I think a good review should give in as compact form as possible the distilled essence of the book. But what quite often happens is that the reviewer just uses the title as a peg on which to nail. As you know there are as a rule, different types of reviews, there are what I can call the mini review which appear in reviews like in *The Book seller* or in specific columns of newspapers. Then there are various kinds of fuller reviews which are longer, almost articles, scholarly in approach, which tell us a lot more about the book. Then there are universal

reviews when people club together with their recent choices, say four or five books and speak about it, and then there is lastly the very excellent survey reviews, where we can survey a whole class of books. These give you a bird's-eye view, but then they are not restricted to just new books. They cover books which are produced over a period of years but they have their use for librarians because we do a retrospective stock editing to make sure that the content of the libraries has not been deficient in one respect or the other. These kinds of articles are of great use. Now when we look at reviewers in our own country, one of the reasons why book reviews have not been the relied pictographical tool or dependable, is that good reviewers are very scarce in attitude, just like the attitudes in books and libraries, it is the same with book reviews. It is thought by very many people that if anybody can handle a friend they can write a review. But is it so? Because if a person has to write a book review, he should be able to place the book in its context, of the books which have preceded the class of books, what sort of books are already available and then say whether it covers the ground, are there any obvious errors, what are its good points and bad points—all these need to be highlighted and these are I am afraid for some reason or the other our reviewers in India, are either cowards or they want to find favour with the publishers who have sent them the copies or the Press gives them the hundred rupees or whatever it is, they are not able to come out with incisive remarks about the sort of context the book has. This is why most of the reviews are hardly worth reading.

The reviewer should realise that he is not just operating on his own. He is one of a quartet of people—there is the author, the publisher, the editor, and then the reviewer. So he should take note of these things when he writes his review. However small and precise it is, the review has to be readable. A person who sets himself up to be a reviewer, essentially be one who is capable of expressing himself in a very readable vein. It is no use indulging in a lot of jargon or being too scholarly for the normal run of people. Above all a review should appear as soon as possible of the publication of the book. This is where I am afraid we are very badly off, because those newspapers which are the largest receivers of books from publishers, they don't receive the books on time, they haven't got the reviewers on tap, to whom they can send, and even if they do there are some people who sleep over them, so it comes very very late so it might as well not appear at all, for all the effect it could have. Sometime ago, almost seven years ago in Britain, one of the book firms, they carried out a survey of about a dozen of the daily and weekly newspapers like *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Observer*, *The Sunday Observer*, etc. they found that within a period of three months, about 4000 reviews had appeared and what they did was to survey the types of books which had appeared, and they listed them and in the magic order as one would expect, it has been found that fiction, biography, headed the list, followed closely by children's books, art books, then history, natural sciences, and so on. Surprisingly politics was way down the list. They were able to see which were the sort of subjects they were able to get people to review or books that are available to them and what they did further was to keep statistics about the number of book reviews, about individual titles and here the local librarians took their own statistics to see whether the number of reviews about a book had any effect at all on the borrowing, the booksellers for their part came up with the result on their

VIEWPOINTS

bookselling, on the book reservations and the book requests, because for a librarian apart from the reviews appearing in the papers, what appears in the journals, what appears in the scholarly journals, what the users of the library most of whom are specialists in their own fields, what they ask for are very good guides. The newspaper offices and book publishers should get together and do this kind of survey to see what are the types of book which are being reviewed and get from librarians a feed-back. Now that most newspaper offices I think are computerising all their housekeeping operations, it should not all that difficult to put together lists of all the books reviewed and have classified lists of these ready on tap. One of the most difficult things for anybody wishing to review a book is to find or to buy a book or to decide if they should but it is for a library to trace a review. In western countries I think even the *American Book Review Index* and *The Book Review Digest* list all the reviews of books. But I don't believe we have a similar thing at all in India, and it will be a good thing if large papers like *The Hindu* could take on this task of preparing reviews of book reviews.

■ SUSHILA KUMAR
President, Madras Library Association

This year happens to be the 300th anniversary of the first published Book Review. It was published in 1689 in a paper called London Mercury. Those days of course people who could pay for reviews got very good reviews. Since then of course things have changed. I have 3, 4 points to make. One is about the timeliness of book reviews. The main point I think is we don't get sufficient advance information of a book. In the US and UK bound galleys are distributed to major reviewers, and the publication date is set and the most important reviews would come out on or around the publication dates, based on bound galleys, may be for important books Indian companies could also think about this option.

Coming to the question of reviews themselves, I find that in many small publications, have problems in access to good books, especially the important ones. The problem obviously is that these books are expensive and the publishers cannot distribute them as widely as they would like to, and here again if bound galleys can be obtained from the original publisher, it might be of some help.

■ C. S. G. PRASAD
Aside Magazine

In advertising, publishers in India face a problem. The cost of the book maybe 35-40 rupees. We print about 4000-5000 copies. When we advertise, we hope that by advertising we may be able to sell about 2000 copies. But for the kind of ad. charges we pay, the results have not been positive. For instance, for the Madras Book Fair we gave two advertisements, one was about the dictionary that is meant for children, *The Mini School Dictionary*. I think with that ad. which cost me Rs. 2500 I could hardly sell 50 copies, whereas by direct mailing and by going to schools we were able to sell 6000 copies.

■ VEMBU IYER
Publisher

Krishnamurthy of *Dinamalar*, whom we approached, asked me to make a point on his behalf. His paper does review quite a few Tamil books, every week. It is his point of view that readers have come and complained to him that seeing the reviews of Tamil books in his newspaper, they are unable to find any of those Tamil books in any bookshops. His particular point is except for Higginbothams no other bookshop has devoted any space for Tamil books' display and sale. He says there is a need for bookshops selling Tamil books.

It should be well located and well displayed, but all the bookshops should carry books in Tamil and other regional languages. Coming to my own point of view in terms of advertisements, I think our members would be interested to hear that last year the FPBA took up the matter with the Press all over India and they persuaded them and gave them the idea of giving some concessional tariff for advertising books, and the *Times of India* group of publications, have indeed come out with a 25% concession for books, ads. on books. Also they place these ads. in the Book Review pages without any extra charge. I think other members of the Press should look at it and see if it is feasible. Now our experience is even if I release an advertisement on a day when I know this particular paper carries a review page, unless I pay 50% extra it doesn't come into that page at all.

Another problem we have always faced is in the shopping pages. For eg., some papers have some policy like we will—if there is a bookshop and I want to advertise for a bookshop, there are papers which refuse to take it, they say we will accept only consumer durables there. Finally, a very practical point, we tell the publishers and distributors that the reviews will appear on such and such a day that books will be made available in bookshops. Now I as a bookseller have this experience. Suddenly books get reviewed, and some people ring up and say this morning such and such a book got reviewed I would like to have a copy. We don't even know if the review is appearing. If the distributor or the publisher is taken into confidence and informed in advance of the appearance of the review, copies can be made available in the bookshops, people can have access to it.

■ SRINIVASAMURTHY
Book-seller.

There has been a lot of talk on book reviews, there are various newspapers and books in Tamil coming out. They do not know about reviews. There are several newspapers like *The Express*, *The Hindu*, *Dinamalar* which review books. *The Hindu* gives two pages to English books but they allot only 2 columns to South Indian books, that too for four languages. Someone talked about the sales of Tamil books in Madras. Higginbothams are selling Tamil books and keeping them, but I don't know why the others don't keep Tamil books. Some come and buy from us and keep them in their shops, but they don't come regularly. If they would keep books they will sell.

■ CHELLAPPA
Book-seller

In November during the NBT Book Fair, we undertook a survey of bookshops and we had a seminar on promoting book-mindedness in various cities. Promoting Book-mindedness. That was the topic of the seminar. There was a seminar in Lucknow, which I attended. There we gathered a lot of information on metropolitan cities. Now we have seen how in the last five years real estate prices have gone up, by 500%. So the rents rates have gone up too. Space has become expensive and that's one main reason for this. The second reason is that Tamil publishers are scattered all over south India, say Madurai, Coimbatore, Tirunelveli, they don't have a wholesaling system as such, in the major metropolitan cities. They should have a wholesaling system which will enable them to have a service centre of availability of all publishers' books. Suppose I want to buy a book on Saiva Siddhanta I have to go to the publishers and they don't even have a main centre. Some years back P.T. Bell or Tirumalai or somebody used to do it. But now it has become uneconomical for them. So the Tamil publishers could come forward and make some kind of arrangement where they can trust one individual company to do the wholesaling. That's one solution for this—books not being available in bookshops.

■ R. SHESHADRI
Area Manager, Routledge, Chapman & Hall

We have heard from various contributors in this seminar about the cost of advertising. The publishers or wholesaler/distributors in India don't have anything against advertising. The cost-benefit ratio has to be worked out. In the case of mass market paperbacks it is really not worth advertising, but when it comes to any specialised books we feel it is easier for us to sell more number of copies by reviews appearing in newspapers, or by direct mail promotion, so that it goes to the right target audience. That is the reason why there is some hesitation in ads. The other problem is, we find whenever we give any ads. in the newspapers, as somebody commented it is the location of the ad. Oftentimes the ad. is lost among all the tender notices which appear in the newspapers. If only it is ensured that the ads. do appear on the Book Review pages where people who are interested in books do look at it, that will go a long way. But if we want to do it now, what happens is, our ad. agents say we have to pay 25% more. If at least there is the first step that the 25% surcharge on the location of an ad. is eliminated, I think that will be an incentive for many of us to give ads.

Now about delayed book reviews, not only the sale of the book suffers, but the image of the bookshop also suffers. When the review gets delayed and after a year or two the review appears, the person who reads the review walks into a bookshop which he considers a good bookshop and the book reviewed is not available, his immediate comment is that it is a useless bookshop. Similarly the bookseller in turn approaches the distributors or that particular publisher, and if the distributor says the book is no longer available, then we get a bad name in the process. So as Mr Ram commented if only the review could be published within 3 months, or if not the book review can be avoided, it would be a good thing for the trade. Just like justice delayed is justice denied, a book review delayed is a book review denied.

Coming to review copies, Mr Ram commented about giving away review copies to the reviewers, here again I think no publisher or book distributor will hesitate in giving two copies to the newspaper if it is asked for so that it would be reviewed. Perhaps giving five copies would be better than to advertise in the newspapers.

■ K.S. PADMANABHAN
Affiliated East-West Press Pvt. Ltd.

About some of you who have done some reviewing this is just a practical suggestion about how we might try to upgrade the book reviews that appear and also begin to regard reviewing as something of a specialisation. We were talking about looking at developments within journalism, about specialists in book page, book journalism and so on, obviously we have to upgrade the quality of materials that is going into such a page. I remember when I started reviewing here, being given instructions to centre around the book, and finish reviewing within 900 words of which approximately 700 words should be the summary of the text and on those lines. I think this is one of the problems reviewers face, that they are working in isolation with very few guidelines, and sometimes with overlarge egos and so on, that go with this type of work. Isn't there some way in which the press and the publishing industry could collaborate, to help reviewers and also to identify potential new reviewers, thinking perhaps along the lines of book review workshops which could be recognised easily whereby you might enlist the services of reliable and competent reviewers, and try and attract some new people maybe from colleges, and younger people who are working in the smaller magazines, and so on. We could have a half day session in which we could get together and talk and maybe some good reviews which appeared in reputed journals could be examined and see what the reviewer done, how he has been able to cover the ground within a limited space and given a really good feel of the material. For eg. I remember a review about a year ago, the Literary Editor of the *Financial Times* was here on a British Council tour and he gave an extremely

useful talk for about half an hour, about what makes for a good review. This was very useful to me in my own work, but I am sure we could start at an early stage and generate this type of discussion and this would be certainly a first step about what could appear professionally on the Book Page of a newspaper or magazines. Thank you.

■ SUSAN RAM
Oxford University Press, Madras

I think I shall sum this up. We have been talking about the quality of book reviews that have appeared in the past. To this I think there is one very solid suggestion which has been made and that is to organise a review workshop, a Reviewers Workshop.

Having worked on 3 sides of the fence, having been with the Press at one time, now in publishing and in printing, and I must say wherever I have there has been a sad lack in reviewing. A lot of reviewers have the tendency either to take the blurb or rewrite it and publish it. I think this is happening far too much and I think we should do something about it. At least on the Editorial level, reviews which come out like this should really be thrown out. This is one suggestion I have to make.

The other thing we have been talking about is the space given to reviews and here I can understand the newspapers point of view, the pressures it has for space, the very little advertising it receives from publishers, but equally I think it needs a better understanding of the publishing industry. I know people have been talking about 3 times, 5 times mark-ups in prices, if you analyse the mark-ups in prices in terms of books not sold, then you will really find out that compared to the consumer product industry which spends less than 5% on a product for advertising, the publishers have to spend, if we have to spend on advertising on books, about 15-20%. And that I think is an unbearable cost for the publishing industry.

This is an area which has to be looked at, and here again I would like to think of a workshop merely to educate a large section of the public who feel that book prices are far too high. If you look at a book and find the cost is Rs. 150, maybe out of 2000 copies only 150-200 sell. So this is one area which has to be looked at.

I am glad there has been an opportunity to discuss advertising costs, and I think the Publishers Association and the newspaper association could get together and discuss something. I disagree with Srinivasmurthy's suggestion that 25% will be adequate. But this is the area we should look into.

■ S. MUTHIAH
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The Prince of Denmark Didn't Make Much

H. Y. Sharada Prasad

A great book means more to the reader than to the author. This truth struck me when I recently read that *Hamlet* fetched only five pounds to Shakespeare and *Paradise Lost* the same sum to Milton. At the other end, the publisher advanced 1.3 million dollars to E.L. Doctorow for *Ragtime*. Colleen McCollough got 1.9 million dollars for *The Thorn Birds*. Evidently the material returns have little relation to the inner worth. I found these and other facts and figures in a book with the rather unattractive title: *The Book of Literary Lists* (Nicholas Parsons, Fontana) It is a book which would enable one to answer many of the questions that are often to be asked by bright quiz masters. For example:

Which book has had the highest sale?

Answer: Outside the Bible (and the two modern-day Bibles, Lenin and Mao), Benjamin Spock's *Pocket Book of Baby and Child Care*, 23,285,000 copies since 1946.

And the second, third and fourth best selling books?

Answer: *Better Homes and Gardens Cook Book*, 18,685,926 copies; *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*: 18,500,000 copies; and *The Guinness Book of World Records*: 16,457,000 copies.

These according to *Eighty Years of Best Sellers* covering 1895 to 1975. But *Bestsellers* (Routledge 1971) tells us that Harold Robbins has sold 200 million copies in all and Alistair Maclean and Mickey Spillane 150 million each.

Who is the world's most prolific writer?

Answer: Lope de Vega, the sixteenth century Spaniard, who reportedly wrote 2200 works, and Dumas Sr. whose complete works run to 1500 volumes.

Which is the largest selling novel?

Answer: Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* (12,140,000 copies) followed by William Blatty's *The Exorcist* (11,702,097 copies).

Who are the most translated authors?

Answer: The first ten according to the *Unesco Statistical Yearbook*, in 1980:

V.I. Lenin 468

Walt Disney (Productions) 285

Agatha Christie 185

Jules Verne 172

Enid Blyton 147

Karl Marx 136

Barbara Cartland 135

Sharada Prasad worked in the Indian Express, and was later Editor Yojana. He was Information Adviser to the Prime Minister for over eighteen years.

Friedrich Engels 132

William Shakespeare 112.

That really tells you something about tastes and compulsions, doesn't it?

Which is the first book printed from movable type?

Answer: Most easy, you will say and mention the Gutenberg Bible, c.1456, but this book tells you that in all likelihood it is *Donatus Latin Grammar* brought out five years earlier. We are reminded, further, that printing from movable type was known in China long before Europe "invented" it. At any rate, the earliest printed book is a Buddhist work narrating a conversation between the Buddha and Subhuti, printed in 868 A.D. It was found, with a colophon, in 1900 in the Cave of the Thousand Buddhas in Turkestan.

Besides such statistics, the book is rich in anecdotes about authors, vanities and quarrels (with publishers, critics and fellow authors), about lost manuscripts and about inane rejections and assessments, as well as gaffes, gags, witticisms and quotable quotes.

It is only a few authors who are modest. Most are very conscious about the first person singular. Victor Hugo thought that Paris should be renamed after him after *Les Miserables* was published simultaneously in nine languages on the same day in April 1862.

Lost manuscripts are always fascinating to read about. The book recounts a number of stories. Two of them—one lost, one almost—involves Thomas Carlyle and Charles Dickens. John Stuart Mill had borrowed the first volume of *The French Revolution* from Carlyle. Some days later, there was a knock at the Carlyles' door. When they opened it, it was an ashen-faced, tongue-tied Mill. Little by little, the story came out. Mill had left the manuscript spread in his study. His maid, a fastidious woman, took it to be waste paper and burned the lot.

Carlyle had not only to swallow the news but pacify Mill. Mill offered 200 pounds by way of compensation but Carlyle accepted only half. Painfully and heroically he rewrote it all.

When Dickens had completed the first part of *Our Mutual Friend*, he was returning from France. The train was derailed over a bridge. Miraculously his compartment was intact. Dickens chivalrously rescued two ladies. Then he remembered his book and his flask of brandy and, risking danger, he climbed the carriage again and retrieved them.

But a manuscript which was irretrievably lost on a train was T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Always a reluctant author, he reported to friends with relief: "I have lost the damned thing".

He was persuaded with great difficulty to re-do it.

Why does a publisher accept a book? John Baker has been candid and given six reasons:

-Because the firm has published the author before.

-Because the book is in line with the firm's policy.

-As a service to scholarship or literature (which means the Managing Director likes it).

-Because the author is a friend.

-Because "if we don't, someone else will".

-To cover the overheads.

Yet the list of books and authors that later became famous but found it hard to catch the publisher's kindly eye is quite long.

Dubliners of James Joyce is said to have been rejected by twenty-two publishers. His frustrations did not end there. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* also found no takers and he threw it into the fire but his wife saved it. E.E. Cummings dedicated his *No Thanks* to the fourteen publishers who had rejected it and his mother who paid for its printing. Even John Creasy who went on to write 564 thrillers (hence the publishers' sales pitch "Creasy for Crime") had, to begin with, received 743 rejection slips.

Some authors' thoughts on books, authorship and critics' role:

Anatole France: *There are no bad books any more than there are ugly women.*

H.L. Mencken: *In the main there are two sorts of books: those that no one reads and those that no one ought to read.*

Benjamin Disraeli: *Nine-tenths of existing books are nonsense and the clever books are the refutation of that nonsense.*

Ernest Hemingway: *All the good books have one thing in common—they are truer than if they had really happened.*

George Simenon: *Writing is not a profession, but a vocation of unhappiness.*

George Orwell: *Writing a book is a long, exhaustive struggle, like a long bout of illness. One would never undertake such a thing if one were not driven by some demon whom one can neither resist nor understand.*

Norman Douglas: *Publishers are like wives. Everyone wants someone else's—but when you have them, where's the difference?*

Logan Pearsall Smith: *A best seller is the gilded tomb of mediocre talent. (Most of us would agree, having seen the statistics given earlier on).*

E.M. Forster: *One always tends to over-praise a long book because one has gone through it.*

Sydney Smith: *I never read a book before reviewing;*

it prejudices a man so.

This brings us to the relationship between authors and critics. It has never been a comfortable one. All students of literature know how critics hurt Keats and Shelley. Byron hit back at critics in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers". W.B. Yeats was turned down by Macmillan because the redoubtable John Morley said he found neither rhyme nor reason in one single page of his. Yeats himself did not include Wilfred Owen in an anthology because "I consider him unworthy of poets". F.L. Lucas said of *The Waste Land* that it "was unintelligible, the borrowings cheap and the notes useless". To Joseph Conard, D.H. Lawrence was "filth, nothing but obscenities."

Nicholas' book takes its title from the fact that he asked a large number of well-known writers of various genres to make lists of books they liked most. He also culled out famous authors' favourite books.

The philosopher, Sir Alfred Ayer, said the following had most influenced him:

Bertrand Russell's *Sceptical Essays*.

W.H. Lecky's *A History of European Morals*.

Voltaire's *Candide*.

David Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature*.

J.S. Mill's *Autobiography*.

Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*.

P.D. James has offered this list of six greatest masters or mistresses of detective fiction:

Wilkie Collins, Conan Doyle, Dashiell Hammett, Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers and Margery Allingham.

The architect Sir Hugh Casson said he had most enjoyed:

As a child, Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*.

As a student, Kenneth Clark's *The Gothic Revival*.

As a young man, Harold Nicolson's *Some People*.

As a middle aged man, Evelyn Waugh's *The War Trilogy*.

As an elderly man, John Ruskin's *Praeterita*.

As an old man, John Betjeman's *Summoned by Bells*.

Tom Rosenthal's list of six books he would have liked to have published:

Tristram Shandy, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, *Nastro, David Copperfield* and *Ulysses*.

Arnold Bennet thought that the twelve best novels ever published were:

The Brothers Karamazov, *The Idiot*, *The House of the Dead*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Anna Karenina*, *War and Peace*, *Ressurrection*, *Torrents of Spring*, *Virgin Soil Upturned*, *On the Eve*, *Fathers and Children* and *Dead Souls*.

Note that all are Russian.

Bernard Crick's list of books which had influenced him most:

Harold Laski's *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*.

Montaigne's *Essays*.

T.S. Elliot's *Collected Poems*.

Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*.

Hasek's *The Good Soldier Schweik*.

Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

Machiavelli's *Discourses*.

Parsons also asked some writers which books they would like to have with them if shipwrecked on a desert island. One made the commonsensical remark that they should be long books. But the wittiest reply by Quentin Crisp was:

A manual on how to build a seaworthy boat.

A manual on how to navigate a small craft in high seas.

A manual on how to attract the attention of rescue teams.

A manual on recipes requiring no food and no stove.

A tailoring manual on making clothes from palm leaves, preferably by Pierre Cardin.

An L.P. saying "Help".

Parsons lists some unbelievable gaffes that even careful authors have been guilty of. Two of them should suffice. Elliot in *The Mill on the Floss*: "Mrs Glegg had doubtless the glossiest and crispest brown curls in her drawer, as well as curls in various degrees of fuzzy laxness." Dr. Johnson in his *Preface to Shakespeare*: "That confidence which presumes to do, by surveying the surface, what labour can perform, by penetrating the bottom."

There are accounts of the calamities that befell authors. Specially painful to read are the life stories of Tasso, De Quincey and Dostoevsky, and the circumstances in which Oscar Wilde, Rupert Brooke and Arnold Bennett died. Bennett wanted to demonstrate that the water of Paris was quite safe. He drank from a carafe in a Paris hotel in 1936 and died from typhoid.

There is humour in books, even when no humour is intended. A group wishing to lighten the solemnity of the Frankfurt Book Fair has instituted prizes for the most improbable title among the books on display during any given year. The top awards, taking only three years, have gone to *Proceedings of the Second International Workshop on Nude Mice* (University of Tokyo Press) in 1979, *The Madam as Entrepreneur, Career Management in House Prostitution* (Transaction Press) in 1979, and *Joy of Chickens* (Prentice Hall) in 1980. Among the runners up have been *Ethics of Bureaucrats, Do it Yourself Brain Surgery, Where do Babies Come From and How to Keep Them There, The Water of Life—A Treatise on Urine Therapy* (Yes, that's from our own India), *Wife Beating: A Systems Theory Approach and Natural Bust Enlargement: How to Use the Other 90 per cent of your Mind to Increase the Size of Your Breasts*.

The Bible is not considered a source of humour. But the printer's devil played a prank when a particular Bible was being printed in 1631. In Exodus 20: 14 the negative got dropped and the line read: "Thou shalt commit adultery."

But the book is not all jokes and jollity. After sections dealing with "Authors", "Books", "Publishers" and "Readers and Reviewers", there is a

fifth section entitled "Books and Their Enemies". It is a sombre and chastening experience to read it. Man has worshipped books and burnt them. Authors have been hailed and jailed. Those who have been pilloried, tortured and hanged or shot make a long list. They are a tribute to the power of the book. Book burning has a long history. A Chinese emperor in 212 B.C. destroyed all books, including those of Confucius, because he wanted recorded history to begin with himself. Caliph Omar in 640 A.D. ordered the torch to be put to 200,000 volumes of the Alexandria Library. Savonarola thought that books were vanities and there were huge bonfires of books in Florence, including those of Dante. The Nazis organised a countrywide burning of books by Jews and Communists on 10 May 1933.

Books have been maimed, mutilated or muffled in the name of morality. Everyone knows of the exertions of Dr. Thomas Bowdler. It has now been discovered that the driving force behind him was his sister, Henrietta Maria. Between them, brother and sister removed "everything that can raise a blush on the cheek of modesty" in Shakespeare, in the process lopping off 10 per cent of all that was in the original. They tried their hand at even editing Gibbon.

Walt Whitman had a robust comment on this kind of mutilation: "Damn all expurgated books. The dirtiest book of all is the expurgated book."

It is not governments and churches alone who have practised censorship. Families have practised it too. The heirs burnt Byron's memoirs and Sir Richard Burton's papers. Even publishers have enforced their own brand of thought control. Orwell's *Animal Farm* was rejected by Victor Gollancz, Faber and Cape on the grounds that its publication would embarrass Britain's wartime ally.

Parsons gives a long account of banned books and an impressive roll-call of persecuted authors, who include Shelley, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Bradlaugh, Annie Besant, Walt Whitman and Havelock Ellis. The books of D.H. Lawrence, Samuel Beckett and Vladimir Nabokov have been seized and destroyed by British and American customs authorities. In Boston, home of the bean and the cod and of Puritanism, Bertrand Russell's *What I Believe* and Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* were considered corrupting.

Persecutors of authors have sometimes done a service to literature. Parsons lists some of the well-known master pieces written in jail: Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World*, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*. Had he known India, he would not have failed to mention the great books written by our nation-builders in British jails. And what about the books written in the last sixty years in lands where the whole country was a jail? □

Hindi Theatre at the Crossroads

Reeta Sondhi

Natrang, a quarterly Hindi theatre magazine, Edited by N. C. Jain. Fiftieth Special Number (Vol. XIII, No. 50-52, Mar-Dec. 1989), pp. 236, Rs. 30.00, (Annual Subscription; Rs. 30.00 (Individuals) & Rs. 40.00 (Institutions & Libraries))

The fiftieth special number of *Natrang* commemorates a quarter century of contemporary Hindi theatre and recreates the spirit of the times. The richest decade of those twenty-five years was perhaps the 1970s, a period of much flux: perversely a period of a loss of innocence. Though nothing fantastic was done by artists or audience as protest, their anguish had shown. Companions in theatre had sat together, sometimes surreptitiously, to weep in unison over a Brechtian *Galileo* or an *Uddhavasta Dharmashala*:

That to one's mind is what a theatre movement is all about: a sharing of one's angst; a live communication made through a deeply involving artistic endeavour. And that is what could not be sustained. When it came down to the sheer economics of supporting a thinking, feeling group which could best survive in its togetherness, patrons shrugged the theatre artists off. It became more profitable to shower crores of rupees on melas and utsavas—a consumeristic activity—rather than to follow a nurturant approach. In all this money splash and art splash (points M.K. Raina in his article) not one single new production got sponsored. Three or four old plays which had proved popular about ten or fifteen years earlier were recommissioned for export. No forum was created for serious discussion. No scheme was initiated for setting up new repertoires or providing deserving artists with the means to work. The latter part of the 80s was an era of middlemen and kickbacks. An era of middlemen and kickbacks it remained.

This deliberate lack of vision on the part of the government is the one single factor which has depleted talent. The National School of Drama has not succeeded in doing much for its students ei-

Reeta Sondhi, who works in mobile creches as a voluntary worker, has been writing critical assessments of theatre for many years.

ther. It did establish one professional repertory, the first of its kind, in 1964, but after that nothing more was pursued. There should have been several repertoires by now spread all over the country.

The drift into television in the mid-80s was the second reason for the decline of the movement. But this is a trend which does not seem to alarm the artists. Rajendranath, director, iterates that theatre never dies. Uttara Baokar, actress, is convinced that the lure of theatre would bring back artists if only they were provided with some security and promise of work.

The *Natrang* number which has been meticulously structured through a set of probing questions and topical controversies is presented in the form of interviews and articles. It covers a large group of eminent playwrights, directors, actors, translators, Sanskrit scholars and a few interested artists from other disciplines. Love's labour is provided by N.C. Jain (editor), Devendra Raj Ankur, Mahesh Anand and Kirti Jain (interviewers). The document which resurrects the evolution of Hindi theatre (in fact the evolution of a pan-Indian theatre movement) has Habib Tanvir's article spanning 60 years of his acting career as the focal point. Tanvir discusses the Parsi Theatre in an indulgent mock-Parsi theatre style and the IPT luminaries with requisite regard and intimacy. In his own period he finds the Nacha artists from Chhatisgarh, Dharmavir Bharti's *Andha Yug* and the plays of Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad and Badal Sircar, as source material for structuring a training programme for the actors. He acknowledges the contribution of NSD in using the dramatic literature mentioned above for the purpose, but finds the end product limited. The exceptions according to him are Nasiruddin Shah, Om Puri, Manohar Singh, Uttara Baokar and Surekha Sikri. What he does not mention is that the two most important theatre personalities that the period has produced are he himself and E. Alkazi. Their work has shaped the work and thought of those following them and even as early as in the 60s, when they had just about commenced their careers in earnest, there was evidence of the future directions that the course of the movement would

take. It was a search for an Indian identity both folk and urban inspired—an impulse to break away from the western proscenium, an urge to review and replace the existing rhetoric with common speech and a viable theatre language which could give expression to the contemporary man. In this last mentioned effort Mohan Rakesh's contribution cannot be minimised. In fact, it is the rhythm of the speech pattern devised by him which has become the most credible verbal idiom of urban communication on stage as well as in the new wave film.

Alkazi's influence started becoming evident almost as soon as he took over as Director, National School of Drama (NSD). He developed a methodology of training, evolved a syllabus, introduced various styles of production—and even set up systems of administration. He lost little time in creating a library of scripts by putting his students to work on translations of world classics. He began looking for original Indian scripts and working with Hindi playwrights. As for design and stage techniques, the concept had never before been introduced in quite this manner of elegance or scale.

In 1962-63 he produced Rakesh's *Ashad Ka Ek Din* in an open air arena bringing the Delhi audience out of the proscenium for the first time. It was looking at theatre from different angles. It was finding for the actor, the playwright and the audience, different levels of experience, different types of relationships—all redefined by different types of space used. The play to be mentioned here would be *Andha Yug* as it has opened up several layers of consciousness in terms of space. Alkazi's choice fell on this modern classic because it drew its immanent contemporaneity from tradition. It was endowed with great relevance both for the psyche of a liberated nation and an emergent theatre movement in the process of probing its metaphysical roots. It was not quite a readymade script in terms of production techniques but Bharti and Alkazi worked on it together, starting the collaborative approach between playwright and director.

Coming to Habib Tanvir, his search was much more individualistic; his impact much slower. He

himself belonged to an urban milieu despite his childhood exposure to the Nacha artistes. Therefore, in order to be credible he had to first learn their art and then internalise their culture and tradition. Starting as early as in the 1950s, it took him over twenty years to work out a method of plausible intervention.

There are others who have been inspired like him and at least one among them is an NSD alumni. Due, therefore, to his exposure to a liberal course of theatre education, Rattan Thiyam takes the lead in Manipur and is closely followed by Kanhai Lal and Ebonombi in the creation of their quaint theatric symphonies and lyrics. In Kerala there is K.M. Pannikar who uses the minimal script as base material and gives it the epical treatment. All these artistes are engrossed in their individualistic "riyaz" with groups and repertoires of their own. The grammar of their theatre is based on the vocabulary of the local performing arts of which they themselves are intimate parts.

However, the bureaucratic intellect in the form of Sangeet Natak Academi (SNA), failed to comprehend the reasons of their singular success and decided to replicate. They created a scheme of assistance for young theatre workers who could gate-crash into a folk form and work with it for a year. At the end of it they were expected to produce an indigenous form-oriented play which would identify with the modern sensibility. While there is a deliberate ambiguity in the term "modern sensibility" the emphasis on form precludes the story of the psychological man who is in a permanent state of strife with his surroundings. In other words, the theme of our times did not get written. Instead, a rambling sort of revivalism, reinforced by song, dance and colourful rituals got pushed centre-stage. Fortunately the end product was so bad that the audience did not get hooked on to it. But in the process, the carefully built theatre movement of the previous two decades got dismissed. The artistes dispersed!

The scheme has lasted five years, having supported on an average twenty-four directors per year. There are perhaps three plays out of the lot that are good. One of them, a master-piece, is of course, Rattan Thiyam's *Chakravayuh*, which would have been produced any way. However, with the advent of two theatre persons, Girish Karnad (playwright) and Rajinder Paul (critic) into SNA, the scope of the scheme has been rationalised. From this year, an attempt has been made to offer assistance to deserving candidates according to their individual predilections and training. The only stipulation is that the productions should be new and the plays should be original Hindi scripts or translations/adaptations of original works from

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other Indian languages. A serious effort is also being made for stimulating playwriting.

There are several other issues that have been discussed in the Natrang special as possible causes of the decline of Hindi theatre. The one which comes up time and again pertains to the lack of original scripts and the overdependence on translations/adaptations of foreign plays as well as plays from other Indian languages. Playrights are agreed that though they have the literature they do not have the skills that a theatre production entails. Therefore, the necessity of a collaborative effort. But the concept of playwright as part of a performing group can become viable only if the economic status of theatre is realistically assessed. Theatre as a part time is a valiant endeavour but it is time it was recognised as a full fledged profession. As for translations, particularly of foreign scripts (a theme which has always caused theatre workers immense discomfiture) it is heartening to note that the playwrights interviewed have themselves maintained the validity of these, claiming that they are a source of enrichment and exposure for theatre in all its aspects and should therefore continue.

The other reason given for the decline of Hindi theatre is that it has failed to mobilise a large audience. Bansi Kaul (director) does not find merit in this argument and gives his supportive viewpoint a refreshingly positive turn. He contends that a large, established audience is a liability for experimentation as the compulsion to maintain the occupancy rate in the auditorium is great. He cites the examples of Maharashtra and Bengal where extremely talented stage artistes have to stoop to conquer in order to retain their massive following. The audience in the Hindi belt is small enough to accommodate experimentation and large enough to keep it going. He clinches this line of thought by pointing out that it was because of the Hindi theatre's orientation towards experimentation that original Indian scripts first got translated into Hindi and then, after acceptance at the national level, found their way into languages and dialects of other states. A chain reaction of this sort has created for the country a common literature, a cross-cultural growth and perhaps a national theatre.

Other interesting areas which Natrang has covered and which one would have to preclude from the scope of this review due to the lack of space are the dynamic use of dialects, particularly in adaptations of foreign scripts, the evolution and reach of street theatre and the release of Sanskrit drama from the confines of a Ravi Verma canvas. □

Home-spun Excellence

Geeta Dharmarajan

THE PENGUIN BOOK OF MODERN
INDIAN SHORT STORIES

Edited by Stephen Alter and Wimal Dissanayake
Penguin (India), 1989, pp. 255, Rs. 55.00

One magical morning in May you sit under the freshly-washed peepul tree whose leaves quiver in answer to some unfelt breeze, and discover Telenapota. You have, of course, heard much about Pritish Nandy's translation of Premendra Mitra. You get a taste of it when you read, "The Discovery of Telenapota," now, and are promptly drawn into a world depicted in the future tense. . . You will try to sit up. A strange sensation will once again make you feel as if you have left behind the world of the living and entered a phantom universe peopled only by memories. You are the reader, the narrator, and the strange person who makes an impossible promise to a dying blind woman. You are astounded at the genuineness of the promise, and the simplicity of it all. And then, once out of Telenapota, the magic ceases to be and "Telenapota, discovered for one brief moment, will be lost again in the timeless dark of night." Telenapota seems to stand for all that is human in a crass, urban world.

"Relax. Concentrate. Dispel every other thought. Let the world around you fade," Italo Calvino exhorts his reader, (again "you,") at the start of his *If on a Winter's Night, a Traveller*. You remember these words as you read "Telenapota". Metafiction techniques intrude in Calvino; they strengthen the story in Mitra. Mitra crosses the boundaries between real life and fiction, dream and action, challenging our very basic notions of what is real. This warm, wonderfully nostalgic story starts off the Penguin *Book of Modern Indian Stories* and helps you suspend judgement and read on.

As you read on, moving into new worlds, new imaginary lives, new explorations of the human conditions, you wonder why there are not more short story collections. There is an immediacy to the short story that is not always present in the novel; and they come in chewable bits! What more can anyone ask for than, say, Mahadevi Verma's "Ghisa" (translated from the Hindi), "The Wart," (from the Malayalam) by O.V. Vijayan, "The Somersault," (from the Oriya) by Gopinath Mohanty, or P.S. Rege's "Savitri," written originally in Marathi and translated with great felicity and

Geeta Dharmarajan is a writer of fiction for children and has recently published a collection of stories entitled Super Brat and Other Stories.

poise by Kumud Mehta.

From letters written by a woman who steadfastly refuses to say anything much about herself, "Savitri" unfolds. You get tantalising glimpses of people—Gurupadaswamy, Lore, Appa, Edgeworth, Rajama, Namura and the someone called "you," of course. You hear snippets of information: "Prof. Joshi has just got married. His bride is a well-known tennis star from Poona. She used to be his pupil. But he says there was no love or anything of the sort before. From this one may safely conclude that their life will be happy. Going by the photograph, she appears very smart and practical." A little later, you get a whole story in 11 words: "Draupadi tore off her gorgeous saree to bandage Krishna's injured finger." Ah, is that so? you think as you read on and collect one more piece of useless information. The story rambles on and then ends with a peacock, as it started with one: "When you come to think of it, does the peacock himself know how to dance? He lifts up a foot. . . then loses his balance, and to regain it he sets it down. . . and lifts the other. This goes on in the same fashion over and over again, *ad infinitum*. Those who look on call it dance." The story seems to be a nonstarter from the word go, yet, how does it manage to stay in the memory? The translation could not have been better if Rege had written this originally in English. Maybe this will become your one main reason for buying this book.

Nirmal Verma's "Deliverance," is almost as old as the hills where it is located, yet, the story is such that you read right through, again. A good story should be just so. Rereading, you may find that the

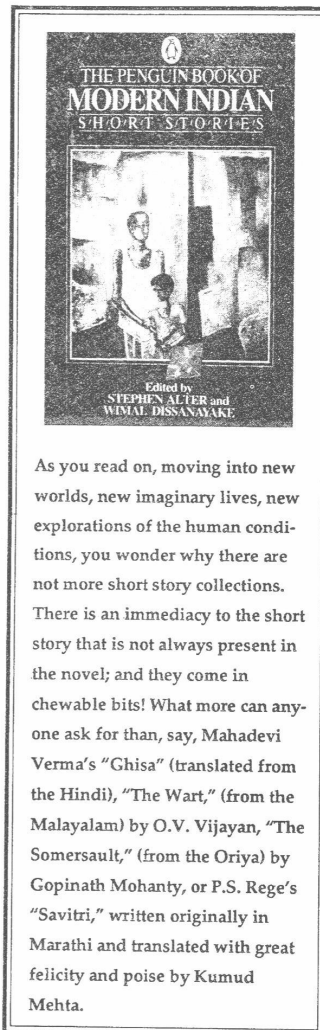
images are not new. "The stars shone as if scrubbed clean by rain"; the wind "lashed at the walls and shook the roof"; and whenever a bus goes by it, as expected, throws "shadows of trees conjured up by its headlights" on the wall and the "hiss" of the bus tyres, of course, "lingered in the air." Authentic but mundane descriptions. Problems with the translation? Sujit Mukherjee says in his book that the originality of a story in an Indian language is revealed when it is translated into English, but surely this cannot be the problem with such a well-

loved story as "Deliverance," and, as you come to the end and "the sun, straining through the branches of the plane tree beside the elder brother's cell, "falls across his feet," the narrator bends down to pay his respects, "... and felt the hand on my head, his fingers stroking my hair, his burning touch sending waves of heat through my body", a lump rises in your throat. Your eyes burn. Indian sentimentality at play, but then, any story that can touch one so is world class, whatever be the power of its English-translation description!

And so we come to the eighteenth story, "Amasa," by Devanuru Mahadeva. A mere fragment with many interesting touches, and you, who accepted the loose ends and abrupt phrases of "Savitri" wonder if this is part of a novel. Is it here because A.K. Ramanujam is one of the translators? Why is it the last story? Isn't the last story as important as the first?

Yet, finally, it does not matter and you close the book, place fingers over your eyes and, like the headman before whose eyes Amasa's Tiger Dance "came dancing its many and wondrous dance" you sit back and savour the stories.

The judgmental me comes into play later. The stories in this collection, eighteen of them, vary in quality of story and translation. The editors concede that many of the stories here have "already been widely antholo-



As you read on, moving into new worlds, new imaginary lives, new explorations of the human conditions, you wonder why there are not more short story collections. There is an immediacy to the short story that is not always present in the novel; and they come in chewable bits! What more can anyone ask for than, say, Mahadevi Verma's "Ghisa" (translated from the Hindi), "The Wart," (from the Malayalam) by O.V. Vijayan, "The Somersault," (from the Oriya) by Gopinath Mohanty, or P.S. Rege's "Savitri," written originally in Marathi and translated with great felicity and poise by Kumud Mehta.

gized," and I find fault with them for this because India does not lack in creative writing or in world class stories.

Indians do not speak with a unified voice, and in that lies our strength and interest. Each short story comes as part of a tradition that is as different, often, as the script of the language it is written in; thus, the Urdu story has a lineage that is different from, say, the Tamil, the Bengali or the Malayalam, and, though, many of the individualities have been rubbed out of many of them due to the often unacknowledged influence of the Western short story form, yet, in translation, the best stand out, as they talk for themselves. I only wish that Bharati Mukherjee's story, "Nostalgia," (in spite of her assured place in the world of short story writers) had been reexamined by the editors before inclusion. It sounds alien amongst the Indian stories, and, if I may say so, a little artificial. Even Amrita Pritam's story, which is scanty, and Anita Desai's story, which I consider one of my lesser favourites from her collection, *Games at Twilight*, stay longer in the memory.

It was in reading "Savitri," more than in reading any other that I felt it was quite unjust on the part of Penguin not to have put in a little something about the translators. It would have added a certain value to the book.

Doing a collection of short stories is difficult. Only a publisher like Penguin could have undertaken such a tremendous time-consuming task of choosing outstanding stories from the regional languages and getting excellent translations of the same. Yet, I wonder if the editors even looked at any stories in the languages in which they were originally written. Maybe, maybe, an Indian editor would have done it differently since, finally, all editors' choices are subjective. I wonder why Penguin needed to go in for foreigners as editors; can you imagine a collection of British, American or French stories in their native language being edited by an Indian? I also wonder why Alter and Dissanayake say that "the three most glaring omissions would be Rabindranath Tagore, Prem Chand, and Sadat Hasan Manto." Anyone, familiar with Indian language writing can name at least half a dozen more. But, again, the editors seem to be only thinking of those who have been translated already. It might have been better if they had not mentioned any names at all. I would like to think that this book is one more appetizer that prepares you for what is in store in the many Indian languages.

After having read the whole book, over many days, turning to stories that interested me as of that moment, I went through the rather challenging task of marking the stories with stars. Three stars for the outstanding, amongst the stories here; two-and-a-half-star stories next, and so on. Seven got three-star rating; three got half stars. But, I will not impose my taste on yours. The good becomes better when one discovers it for oneself. So. Happy reading! ☐

Forging an Epistemology of Resistance: Dalit Writing in Gujarati

Svati Joshi

SARVANAM (An anthology of Gujarati Dalit Literature)

Edited by Neerav Patel and Chandu Maheria for *Swaman*,

Foundation for Dalit Literature, 1989, pp. 176, Rs. 20.00

The Dalit movement in Gujarat has not been a sustained political activity, as, say, in Maharashtra, partly perhaps because of the lack of a historical tradition with leaders like Jyotiba Phule and Ambedkar and partly because of the absence of a socialist tradition in Gujarat. The fact that the two major anti-reservation movements in Gujarat in the eighties have failed to mobilise and consolidate the Dalits into a political force reveals the contradictions that exist in the social and political life of Gujarat. The two major ruling caste groups in Gujarat, the Patels, the middle-class business and agrarian community who spearheaded the anti-reservation movements and the Kshatriyas who provided leadership to the Congress rule in the state since 1984 until the recent elections, have effectively managed to keep the backward classes divided and it may perhaps be long before they can organise themselves into a collective struggle.

In the absence of an organised political activity literature has been the usual form of protest the Dalits have taken. In 1981, for instance, when a Dalit youth was brutally murdered in Jethalpur village in North Gujarat, the incident which coincided with the anti-reservation riots, *Aakrosh*, a dalit journal started in 1978, brought out a special number on the event. Recognised as a potential threat, the state immediately had the copies of the journal confiscated and the leading writers sent to prison. The foundation for Dalit Literature at the end or nearly a decade old literary activity is a conscious and concerted attempt by the Dalit writers at the formation of their ideology with a clear objective of interrogating the dominant literary tradition as well as the historical and social configurations which have produced it and have consistently sought to marginalise them. *Sarvanam*, its first publication, has opened up a discursive space that has never fully existed in Gujarati where the intricate and often invisible relation between knowledge and power can be laid out and examined at the same time when strategies of struggle can be forged towards a meaningful social reconstruction.

An important way in which *Sarvanam* undertakes to analyse the given literary tradition is to question the validity of the category 'Literature' itself, and the hierarchical and elitist ways in which different literary productions are valued. This it achieves, first, by including texts which are not usually considered 'literary', texts such as news reports and archival documents on the oppression of the Dalits, resolutions passed by various Dalit communities to fight oppressive social customs, petitions presented to local authorities for improvement in their working conditions, and public manifestos. Second, the collection has essays which engage in a debate with some Gujarati literary texts and writers and interpret them not in the formalist categories of style and structure but as products of larger historical and cultural configurations, thus also redefining the function of criticism as an ideological practice. And third, there are richly documented essays on the Dalit folk tradition as well as essays on aspects of social history of the Dalits which together re-collect a shared imaginative and historical heritage of a community that has been suppressed and marginalised by the dominant tradition.

The collection has two important theoretical essays, a paper by Neerav Patel, an Ahmedabad based leading Dalit writer, presented at a literary conference organised by Sahitya Parishad, a dominant literary organisation in Gujarat, and the other by Manishi Jani, a student leader in the Navnirman movement of 1974, which set out to formulate the premises and parameters within which a genuinely effective discourse for social change can be generated. Both essays caution against the critical and political complacency that tends to treat the Dalit question in isolation and is informed by such liberal notions as equality and reform in the status of the Dalits which have only further eliminated them from any meaningful participation in social processes. Both insist on the need for a different object of enquiry, directed towards analysing and questioning the essentially Brahministic and Aryan identity of the traditional literary and philosophical discourses which have pushed them to the margins. Jani refers to the *Saarth Gujarati Jodanikosh*, the standard Gujarati Dictionary published by Gujarat Vidyapith founded by Gandhi, which defines words like 'Dhedh', 'Bhangio', 'Vaghari', words used for the Dalits, as uncivilised, uncouth, lowly, stupid and so on. It is here, Jani suggests, that the site for the struggle must

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be located for it is here that the knowledge about the Dalits in its most dangerous form is produced. This involves, for Jani, recognising and laying bare the often invisible, because also often unconsciously internalised even by the oppressed, structures of dominant ideology that is informed and reinforced by the complicity of the dominant economic and political systems and the hierarchical caste formations. If it is necessary to constantly question and dismantle the received structures of knowledge, both Patel and Jani equally emphasise the importance of a conscious reworking of the narratives of the oppressed, largely preserved in oral and folk forms, not, of course, in order to create a fixed and fetishized counter tradition, but in order to reappropriate those resources of language and behavior which have resisted contamination and destruction, and which have also most resolutely sought to alter history. In fact the oral and folk performances often become an arena for subversive strategies. Patel gives an example of a folk performance in which the theatrical space was suddenly transformed into the real social space in which an actual, bloodless revolution occurred! A king is engaged in a dialogue with his chief-minister:

King: Pradhanji, our victory procession shall pass through all the streets and corners of the city.
 Minister: But, my lord, what about this wall?
 King: Knock it down instantly. That is my order.

And while the audience consisting of the Dalits and Caste Hindus were absorbed in watching the performance the actual wall separating the Dalit and Hindu residences was knocked down by the performers!

Sarvanam has several texts which set out to reinterpret and reappropriate the past so as to alter the dominant narrative of history. In a poem called "Identity", Yashwant Vaghela traces his genealogy through the socially outcasts from the beginning of the hierarchical Brahminical society:

Here
 My identity
 They have established,
 Even then
 Unknowingly someone
 Asks me -
 'Who are you?'
 I say:
 This head is Sambook,
 This hand is Eklavya,
 The heart is Kabir,
 I am Satyakam Jabali.
 And yet
 These feet still belong to a Shudra.
 But
 Today
 I am a human being.
 Is that not enough?
 and you - ?

The poem recalls those untouchables who were excluded from sharing knowledge and power by the ruling classes and were brutally punished for having defied structures of dominance. In thus re-collecting the history of those who provided

counter structures of resistance and affiliating himself with them the poet feels empowered to resist oppression in a resolute and responsible manner.

The play, "Sanjay and 'A'" by Dalpat Chauhan, one of the leading Dalit writers in Gujarati, brilliantly revamps the myth of the golden age of the past by placing it under the scrutiny of the emerging epistemology of the revolutionary struggle of the present. Sanjay, the clairvoyant narrator of the war in the *Mahabharat* is seen, as the play opens, trapped between the demonstration of mill workers shouting soulful slogans for justice and the police firing. Frightened by the spectacle, Sanjay tries to escape from this 'kaliyug' to the golden age of the past but is stopped by 'A', a Dalit who has yet not acquired a name but who is gripped with the oppressive social reality of the present. While Sanjay desperately tries to regress into the past, 'A' relentlessly struggles to push the present of the collective revolutionary struggles into a future of emancipatory possibilities. During the course of the play Sanjay sees characters of ancient myths like Draupadi and Harishchandra transformed when placed in the present context as if history was being rewritten. When a woman stripped naked in public is admonished that as a slave's wife she becomes the ruler's property, she curses her husband as an impotent hypocrite and longs to burn the religious texts which have always described her as a man's property and excluded her from participation in public life. An innocent minor boy of eight serving at a tea shop brings to 'A' 's mind his prototype Rohit whose father King Harishchandra had sold him and his mother for the sake of 'truth'. This provokes 'A's' wrath against the king and all those who perpetuate exploitation of children and women in the name of truth. As the play draws to a close the past is clearly seen as the most oppressive, hierarchical religious society from the perspective of the revolutionary ideology of the present. With the revamping of the retrospective narrative the play is able to project into the prospective horizon of the future as more than an empty Utopia.

Pravin Gadhavi's story "Matsyagandha" is the retelling of the life of the shudra daughter of a fisherman whom Shantanu, the king of Hastinapur married and who thus became the queen mother of the Aryavart. Here also the normal narrative ordering of history is reversed as a new set of facts and relations are foregrounded. At the end of her life Matsyagandha returns to her native woods on the banks of the river Ganga to find them emptied of the Shudra population. Unable to pay tax, not having the right to fish in the river, weaponless and untouchable, they have fled southward. She is gripped with despair that happened as she was within the palace and a mere object of the kings erotic desire she did not do anything even to condone their taxes. But she soon realises that no meaningful freedom could be granted to them from within the palace. For that she should have lived and fought with them. It is this awareness and the deep sense of pain that accompanies it

which give Matsyagandha a special kind of dignity and self-respect that she is denied in the master discourse.

The Dalit question is inextricably linked with the gender question for since the beginning of the Brahminical tradition Shudras and women have always been bracketed together and excluded from all hierarchical power structures. There are two personal accounts in *Sarvanam* by women who struggle against all odds to acquire education and survive in a caste-ridden patriarchal society, and yet find themselves doubly trapped as women and Dalits. Dr. Taraben Chauhan recounts how when she finds a job in a village health centre and arrives in the village with a year old son, leaving the husband behind in the city, she finds herself literally ostracized as nobody offers her a place to stay. In spite of her learning and experience she still remains on the periphery of the social life of the village. As the village shopkeeper, who always sprinkled water on the money before taking it from her, puts it: "She may be a doctor but she still is a harijan woman. Touching her would be a sin." Manjula Solanki's life is one of endless strife to continue studies against pressures from home and outside. Being a girl she is expected to do all the household work and barely manages to attend college and lives under a constant threat from aunt of discontinuing her studies. Being a Dalit woman she feels a sense of embarrassment with her teachers and friends whom she cannot even invite home because of her low caste. The lives of Taraben and Manjula are lives of women who refuse to be victims of history and are determined to participate in it and change it.

In a literary ambience of individualistic obsession with despair and alienation, and the linguistic profusion which usually accompanies it, such questions of social belonging and resistance to oppression have never fully been raised in Gujarati. What *Sarvanam* has achieved indeed is that it has introduced a critical practice in the literary debate which has brought literature under the scrutiny of history and politics for the first time in such an impelling manner. This is certainly a significant gain for Dalit writing and it may also force the mainstream writers to at least recognise this as a problem. Neerav Patel considers the invitation to present a paper at the mainstream literary conference a real achievement for the Dalits since the old times when they were not even allowed to listen to the Brahminical texts and thinks that under mounting pressures contemporary Gujarati writing which has its ideological moorings in western modernism will have eventually to confront questions which have been suppressed for far too long. And yet, at the same time he cautions against the danger of assimilation of Dalit writing into the dominant tradition in a state that is politically so impoverished. But then, this is also precisely why such imaginative forms of resistance as *Sarvanam* assume tremendous importance and responsibility, for in the absence of effective political life, they can generate spaces where meaningful political activity may become possible. □

BOOKS IN BRIEF

OUTLINES OF ANCIENT HINDU JURISPRUDENCE

By Prof. M.S. Pandit

N.M. Tripathi, Pvt. Ltd., Bombay, 1989,
pp. 64, Rs. 30.00

This book, small in size, like the head of Oliver God Smith's Village School Master, contains an efficient statement of the basics of Hindu Jurisprudence. By expounding the basic similarity of jural concepts, categories and principles it provides a corrective to facile assertions that indigenous legal systems, including Hindu jurisprudence of ancient pedigree, are being expropriated and/or displaced.

Professor Pandit, like the ancient Hindu sutrakars, explains clearly but with a great economy of words in orderly sequence the foundations of ancient Hindu jurisprudence.

It is thus:

Purushartha (aims of human existence) are Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha. But the main objects of human endeavour are Artha (economic well being) and Kama (happiness and enjoyment of life). The pursuit of these two objectives is governed and regulated by guidelines and injunctions regarding duty (Karthavya) and some of these are of positive import (Vidhi) and others prohibitory (Nished) in content. These constitute a part of the secular aspect of Dharma (Social and Moral Obligations and Code of Conduct). Dharma in this sense is the stabilising force (Dharma Vishvasaya Jagatah Pratishta). Dharma helps to adjust the relative claims for priority of Artha and Kama and reconcile the conflicts that arise in the pursuit of Artha and Kama.

Dharma is the Sovereign Protective Power and is binding on all including rulers (Dharmam Kshatrasya Kshatra—Kshatram = power). Medhatithi emphasises the positive aspect of Dharma (Vidhi = commands to perform duty (Karthavya). Kanada emphasises that Dharma (Law) is the instrument for realising material (Abhudhya) and spiritual (Nishrayas) well being. Thus the Hindu concept of Dharma embraces both the positivist and natural law schools of Western Jurisprudence.

Dharma is classified as Achara (Principles and rules of conduct and social relations), Vyavahara (Law as administered by the King's courts) and Prayaschita (relief against redress in respect of and compensation for injury, civil and criminal).

Hindu jurists of yore recognised the need for a mechanism that would moderate the rigidity that would normally afflict any code of conduct over a period of time. They also recognised the need to accommodate the diversities natural to the vast Bharat with its diverse communities and cultures. They assigned this twin task to Custom (Sadachar,

Sishtachar, Sheel, Samya, Paurasharhi Vyavastha). Thus custom, which is classified as Deshachara, Jatyachara and Kulachara, was an instrument of both stability and change.

In seven brief chapters entitled "Family Relations", "The Joint Family", "The Law of Property", "The Law of contracts", "Torts and Crimes", "Administration of Justice," and "The State" Professor Pandit expounds the basics of Hindu Jurisprudence and gives a glimpse of the level of the sophistication of analysis in regard to these subjects. His presentation gives further indication of the comprehensive appreciation by the ancient Jurists of the infinite variety of human situations and the manner in which they regulated these.

Eight forms of marriage, four of them approved forms and the rest irregular; eleven kinds of sons, three classes of heirs, Sapinda, Samanodaka, Bandhu; liability for maintenance arising out of personal relationship and possession of property; recognition of property rights of woman by the concept of stridhana; comprehensive provisions relating to ownership (svatva) which exists only when there is a thing which can be owned (sva) and a person who can own it (Swami) and the seven sources of ownership (inheritance, acquisition, purchase, conquest, investment, work done by self or through others and gifts; mortgage (Aadhi), pledge, bailment, lease, exchange, easements, nuisance; and thus runs the subjects of discourse.

Shri Y V Chandra Chud, former Chief Justice of India rightly observes in its introduction that this book "will be useful in presenting to students of legal theory a true account of ancient Hindu Jurisprudence" and that "it strives to show how the influence of ancient Hindu Law on its modern development through parliamentary legislation is a tribute to the resilience of the Hindu social order and its genius for stability and, yet for change."

T.C.A. Ramanujachari is a retired civil servant who has specialised in jurisprudence and constitutional law.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF ANCIENT KASHMIR

Edited by Pratapaditya Pal

Marg Publications, Bombay, 1989, colour and black and white illustrations, Rs. 550.00

From the earliest times till about the 14th century, when the process of Islamisation was complete, Kashmir was one of the leading centres of Hindu and Buddhist learning, the home of learned pandits who composed outstanding works such as the *Vishnudharmottara* and *Nilamata Puranas*, and one of the prominent Shakti pithas.

On account of its strategic geographic location, it was open to and attracted diverse foreign elements. The Tibetans, the Chinese, the Central Asians, the Persians, the Afghans, and nearer home the Himachalis, owe considerably to this valley which is better known for its scenic beauty than for its outstanding achievements in the field of art and architecture, for its remarkable contribution to the human spirit. Today, in spite of heavy destruction of Hindu and Buddhist temples and artefacts, it is still possible to piece together a fairly comprehensive history of its temple architecture, sculptures and terracottas.

For quite a few decades, the noted art historian Pratapaditya Pal based in the USA has been researching in the diverse aspects of Kashmiri art and architecture in the pre-Islamic period. He and his team consisting of Robert E. Fisher, John Siudmak, Stanislav Czuma and Chandra L. Reedy have unearthed quite a few hitherto unknown facts regarding architecture and sculpture in diverse materials such as metal, stone, ivory and terracotta. All the carefully researched write-ups give us an insight into the architectural and sculptural wealth of this beautiful valley from the fifth to the end of the 13th century A.D. The Kashmiri sculptures stand out by themselves on account of their distinctive features. There are striking affinities between the sculptures in metal, ivory stone and terracottas. It is curious that in spite of the plentiful availability of deodar wood in the valley, not a single specimen of wood sculpture has come down to us, although numerous such specimens exist in the Buddhist monasteries of Kinnaur, Lahul-Spiti and Tibet. Even the large number of ivory and metal statues have remained preserved over the centuries in the Tibetan monasteries and this is precisely the reason for all the specimens being Buddhist. The same is true of the illuminated manuscripts from Gilgit and Tholing in Tibet.

Only the terracottas, mostly from Akhanur, display distinctive Gandharan style. It is true that the origins of Kashmiri sculpture lay in Gandharan art, a region not far from Kashmir. The delicate maturity and sensitive modelling of Gandharan sculptures is discernible in those of Kashmir as well. The same reason accounts for the large number of ivory sculptures, the discovery of which has created quite a sensation in the art world in recent years. It should be emphasised that the Gandharan sculptures belonging to the Indian tradition seem to have influenced all these sculptures. Only a few terracottas display Hellenistic influence. It is doubtful, that a mutilated image reproduced on page 45 which is in pure Hellenistic style can be that of Durga.

Equally thought-provoking and stimulating is the write-up by Chandra L. Reedy on the analysis of the casting techniques adopted by Kashmiri

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metal workers. Her analytical observations will open a new avenue for future research. The x-ray laboratory tests support Pratapaditya Pal's views on the dating of the sculptures. This chapter shows the extent to which science can be made use of in piecing together the scattered threads of art history.

There are quite a few sculptural specimens that have been reproduced for the first time. Pratapaditya Pal has the advantage of access to private and public American collections which have preserved some of the best specimens of Kashmiri art. He has correctly stated that these write-ups provide a framework for a more comprehensive evaluation of an artistic tradition that had wide influence over a vast region of Asia.

The editors and publisher of Marg publications deserve a creditable mention for maintaining their standard consistently for four decades. This volume is a prize possession for scholars, art historians and all art lovers.

Dr. Subhashini Aryan is an expert on Himachal/ Himalayan art and architecture, and has written several books on the subject.

SOCIALIST ECONOMIES: DEVELOPMENT AND PROBLEMS

Edited by R.G. Gidadhuldi

Somaiya Publications, Bombay, 1989, price not stated.

Capitalism and socialism are the two facets of the same coin. The USSR and East European countries are the best examples of socialism in the world.

However, these economies have started exposing their economies and are gradually and steadily deviating from the concept of controlled economies. The USSR itself is committed to economic reforms and the recent example of Hungary is an eye opener to other socialist countries of the world.

The book under review is the outcome of a refresher course organised by the Centre of Soviet Studies, University of Bombay, in January 1987 wherein faculty members belonging to different universities presented papers for the benefit of 30 to 40 teachers of Economics in the Western Region of Maharashtra and Gujarat. The book contains 10 well drafted and informative papers, one appendix (three tables) and a detailed bibliography.

The central theme of the book is to bring to light some important papers contributed by the specialists on the various facets of development of socialist economies. The basic issues which have been discussed are theoretical issues, economic development, economic reforms and USSR and the

third world.

The paper on "Ground Rent and Socialism" contains two sections and analyses the relationship of rent in the light of Marxian theory of Ground Rent.

Another paper deals with some problems of accumulation and growth in a socialist economy and much emphasis has been given to the theory of investment planning in a socialist economy during the extensive and intensive phases of its growth. It also reveals that investment policy "was the key feature of accumulation during the extensive phase—this policy has largely been carried over to the intensive period".

The paper captioned "Demographic Trends in Eastern Europe" shows demographic trends in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia. It brings to light the fact that "population projections tend to show a gradual decline in mortality for all age-groups in the said economies except Hungary and life expectancy at birth is expected to increase in all the said countries. The general phenomenon of the ageing of the population in Eastern Europe is expected to continue. Male/female ratios are not expected to change much".

Two short papers on Soviet industrial and agricultural economies point out that "western view of prospects for industrial growth in the Soviet Union is one of pessimism and there are also many problems confronting Soviet leadership on the agricultural front".

Another paper on International Banks reveals that "Eastern European economies continue to follow a conservative debt policy with respect of loans from international Banks in future".

Two papers deal with the issues related to Economic Reforms and the contribution of Soviet leader Gorbachev in a detailed manner which is highly impressive and critical in nature.

Two other papers attempt to highlight the role of the USSR and the USA in the third world and much of the discussion is on foodgrains and petroleum. These papers have used extensive data on the various facets of the third world economies in relation to foodgrains and petroleum which are their two major problems.

The entire discussion is informative and interesting. On the whole the book is a timely addition. However, a balanced approach in relation to Eastern Europe has been the missing link. Very little discussion on the various facets of development in other socialist economies except the USSR is a serious lacuna in this study.

Dr. Badar Alam Iqbal is an Associate Professor in the Department of Commerce, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

MUGHAL DOCUMENTS 1526-1627

By S.A.I. Tirmizi

Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 1989,
pp. 255, Rs. 200.00.

Professor Tirmizi, former Director of the National Archives of India, has brought his formidable expertise in handling medieval Indian documents to bear on this important publication. He has followed in the footsteps of many distinguished predecessors who gave as much of their time to editing and publishing historical documents as to the practice of history itself ever since the early years of this century. Even so, all these publications put together comprise a mere scratch of the literally millions of documents, in Persian as in regional languages, lying around in and outside the various archives, not always in the best of conditions. Therefore, we medievalists find every little effort in this direction an occasion for expression of gratitude, for these documents add a valuable corrective to the perspective derived from general statements made in the court chronicles and the European travelers' accounts.

Professor Tirmizi has put 350 documents together in a chronological order beginning with the reign of Babur and terminating with that of Jahangir. In between fall 8 documents of the Sur dynasty included as an Appendix and another 10 of "doubtful validity" as another Appendix. He has also added an erudite Introduction of 40 odd pages in which he has discussed the historical context as well as the technical aspects of the documents, taking in the pre-medieval forms of documentation in the process. One is immediately struck by the continuity of several of these forms, though the terminology and nomenclature understandably undergo changes. In about a hundred pages Professor Tirmizi has provided an extremely detailed annotation to just about any name, date or term that occurs in the documents.

The collection includes a very wide range of documents from imperial farmans to *nishans* (orders issued by a prince or princess), *parwanchas*, *parwanas* (administrative orders issued by high nobles), *sanads* (deeds, permits, etc.), *qaulnamas* (agreements), etc., etc. Wisely, Professor Tirmizi has given the substance of each of the 350 documents he has included, instead of a literal translation of the whole although one sample of each type might not have been out of place.

A good number of documents deal with sales of property as well as of superior rights in land. Sale could include high value property such as a three-roomed single storey house in Ahmedabad by one Bhoja to one Vishnu in 1574 at the formidable price of tankas 47000; another house was sold for a mere

BOOKS IN BRIEF

13 in the same year. Several documents refer to the sale of *khoti*, headship of a village, and often it is part headship which is on sale. Thus one lady, Baiji Jahan sold off a fifth part of her *khoti* obtained by her as *mahr*. This was in 1556. Farlier in 1530 the *khoti* of an entire village was put on sale. In still another case there was a dispute of claims over 3/20 parts of a village headmanship. Professor Tirmizi's rendering seems to suggest that it was part or whole of *land* which was on sale. He may perhaps be right, but phrases like the *khoti* of "all the 20 *biswas*" or "4 *biswas*" usually suggests the headmanship of "the entire village" or "4/20 parts of the village" and not land itself.

There are a number of typographical errors which were avoidable with good proof-reading: ninth, [p. 18], coal [for coral, p. 22], alineated [p. 25] etc. Besides Professor Tirmizi has a predilection for the use of modern terms not quite suitable for the medieval context: *ransit visa*, Supreme Court etc. His dilemma is understandable of course for one has to make a choice when rendering terms from one language to another. But by now medieval historians have more or less decided to stick to the originals in the absence of appropriate terms in the other language.

We look forward to more such volumes from Professor Tirmizi.

Professor Harbans Mukhia teaches medieval history at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE AND WESTERN POLICY

Edited by Gregory Flynn

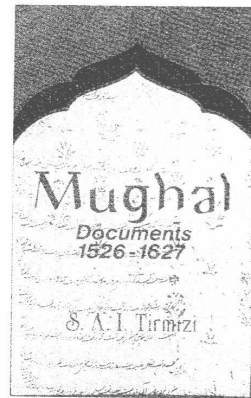
Routledge, 1989, pp. xi + 418, price not stated.

That strategic policy is premised on perceptions of the adversary's military doctrine is apparent, which may be illustrated from the course of post-war superpower relations. During the early Cold War years the prevailing American belief system was founded on an implacably hostile Soviet Union, with a military doctrine premised on blitzkrieg attack and without

“The Mughal harem enjoyed considerable prestige but neither the queens nor the princesses could wield the sceptre. Notwithstanding this handicap, Maham Begam, wife of Babur, enjoyed exalted position and was allowed to sit side by side of her husband on the throne of Delhi. It is interesting to note in this connection that when Humayun offered to marry Hamidia Banu, she is reported to have first refused to consider the proposal of a person who occupied too elevated a social position for her own rank and observed, "I would rather marry a man whose lapel I can hold than one whose pedestal I can not reach." After her marriage she enjoyed the title of *Maryam Makani* and stood by Humayun through thick and thin. She used to issue *hukms* confirming the *farmans* issued by her son, Akbar. It was through the efforts of Hamidia Banu and Gulbadan, sister of Humayun, that reconciliation was brought about between Akbar and Salim when the latter rebelled against his father in 1601. A.D.”¹¹²

¹¹² S. A. I. Tirmizi, *Edicts from the Mughal Harem* (New Delhi, 1979) p. x-xiii, 41.

From *Mughal Documents 1526-1627*



any concern for the enormous destructiveness of nuclear conflict. These beliefs occasioned the evolution of the 'containment' policy. Later, the Berlin and Cuban Missile crises strengthened American convictions regarding the adventurous and risk-taking basis of Soviet military doctrine, leading to a conscious conflict-avoidance policy being developed. Thereafter, and following the acceptance of nuclear parity by the United States, the pursuit of arms control was deemed a suitable response to a perceived, growing Soviet understanding of the ramifications of nuclear deterrence. Traditionally, however, the Soviets have evaluated Soviet-American relations through the prism of an evolving "correlation of forces", or the sum of economic, political, moral and military forces that establish a true balance between adversaries in the international system. This perceptual dichotomy in comprehending each other's military doctrine, leading to attendant problems in meaningful communications, has bedeviled policy-making by the superpowers in the strategic area. Nevertheless, it is imperative for the superpowers, as indeed other adversaries locked in hostile-pair interactions, to seek an understanding of each other's military doctrine to evolve alternative options, and not premise their strategic policy on worst case scenario.

The six chapters in this book explore various aspects of these dilemmas. In an introductory chapter Gregory Flynn draws attention to the difficulties facing Western scholars of Soviet military doctrine and the role of images and perceptions in formulating the same. Two essays by Peter Vigor and Falk Bomsdorf explore how Western scholars reach differing assessments regarding Soviet military thought and doctrine. Both writers come to

similar conclusions that such analyses reach inferences that reflect the analyst's own preferences regarding U.S. and Western strategic choices. Raymond Carthoff presents the situation from the other side of the hill viz. how Moscow's view of Western military thought and doctrine is affected by its own policy preferences. Douglas Hart and Barry Blechman describe how Western incomprehension and misreading of Soviet military doctrine have tended to overemphasize doctrinal asymmetries which has adversely affected arms control negotiations. Finally, Lawrence Martin argues that Western understanding of Soviet military doctrine has influenced its force posture planning.

It could be argued with justification that these studies are somewhat dated in the light of the cataclysmic changes wrought in the international system by Gorbachev's unceasing peace offensive. Also, that the nature of these studies in quite arcane. Nuclear weapons, on which the Central Strategic Balance between the superpowers is based, however, inscribe a logic of their own. With the establishment of nuclear parity questions such as nuclear superiority, assured destruction, nuclear equivalence, nuclear sufficiency and so on become extremely relevant for the preservation of stability and the atomic peace. These are questions that should interest all students of international relations and national security, and there are many lessons in these essays for the protagonists and antagonists of the Bomb in the sub-continent.

P.R. Chari is a former director of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.

Potted Biographies for the Young

Anita Kohli

REMEMBERING OUR LEADERS

Children's Book Trust, 1989, pp. 24, Rs. 25.00

FOREVER NEHRU

By Alaka Shankar

Children's Book Trust, 1989, pp. 144, Rs. 17.00

THUS SPOKE JAWAHARLAL NEHRU:
INDIA AND THE WORLD

Children's Book Trust, 1989, pp. 128, Rs. 15.00

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: YEARS OF STRUGGLE

Compiled by Arjun Dev

National Book Trust, 1989, pp. 329 Rs. 37.00

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

By Tara Ali Baig

National Book Trust, 1989, Rs. 8.50

The summer vacations are here and while the sun beats down outside, there is time for children to catch up on some reading removed from the heavy school bags that during the school year leave no time for indulgences.

With the freedom movement having blurred in the memory after 43 years of freedom, even grandparents barely remember stories of nationalist heroes to tell their grandchildren. Even the name Gandhi can be a confusing one and Rajendra Prasad, Subramania Bharati, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Vallabhai Patel, Lala Lajpat Rai, etc. are only static images from the pages of history books or statues in public parks.

In an attempt to remedy this the Children's Book Trust has brought out two series of profiles of the great men and women who helped India's awakening. Each set contains eight short biographies. One contains biographies of 16 pages each of Bankim Chandra, Annie Besant, Bhikhaiji Cama, Sarojini Naidu, Abul Kalam Azad, C.V. Raman, Kamala Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri. The other set contains 24 page biographies of Lokmanya Tilak, Annasaheb Karve, Visvesvarayya, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sri Aurobindo, Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhai Patel and Subramania Bharati. Each short biography has been written by a different writer, but the editing and subtitling has ensured a uniformity of length and presentation.

One had hoped that these biographies would have a presentation more palatable and inspiring

Anita Kohli teaches English in a school in Delhi.

for children than the sketches one finds in standard history books but this does not seem to be the case. Trite phrases like "one of the greatest sons of mother India" (Lajpat Rai), "on August 1, 1920 Lokmanya breathed his last", "It was a token of gratitude to a son of its soil who had followed the call of his soul to serve his motherland" (Rajendra Prasad) abound and most of them read like a chronology of historical events in lives of plaster saints. The books merely reflect our own attitude to our leaders. Deify them, so that you can hang their pictures on your walls and garland them. If you allowed them to remain human, then the question would automatically arise: If they could do it why can't you! Putting them way above you creates a gap that is happily left unbridged.

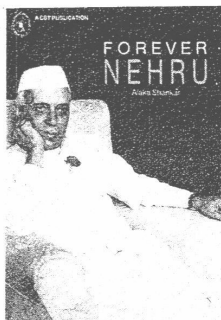
There is also an attempt by CBT in this set of books to ensure that all parts of India and religion find adequate representation, though it might have been a good idea to have included a Sikh nationalist as well.

The most interestingly written biography is that of Bankim Chandra by Shukhamoy Bhattacharjee. It is presented through a series of anecdotes, in a conversational style, easy to read and striking the right chord. Even though Bankim Chandra also 'breathed his last' and we pay 'silent homage too this great man', in the context of the rest of the text the triteness melts and the words assume their real meaning.

In an age where children have become disillusioned early about the nation's leaders and where the virtues of sacrifice, hard work, simplicity and patriotism are merely catchwords confined within the covers of a dictionary, *Remembering Our Leaders* takes a new meaning. One only wishes the books spoke more from the heart so that they could touch and inspire rather than serve as mere reminders.

The Nehru Birth Centenary celebrations brought Nehru back into sharp focus. His charm, his dedication and his deep and abiding love for the Indian people and Indian children blew like a soothing breeze reassuring and healing. There was a revival of interest in his life and thoughts reflected in the number of publications that were released. The Children's Book Trust brought out *Forever Nehru* by Alaka Shankar and *Thus Spoke Nehru: India and the World*.

Forever Nehru is an easy to read biography of a man whose only great love was India. The book is interspersed with his writings, his letters and thoughts. It is a very worthwhile book for children as it shows Nehru hitting out at religious bigotry, superstition and exploitation. It shows him as



truly secular, a patriot par excellence, a humanist, a democrat and a man with deep pride in his country and its cultural roots. The book also has enough photographs, quotations and remarks on Nehru to make the reader feel that he is getting a true insight into the character of India's first Prime Minister.

Thus Spoke Jawaharlal Nehru: India and the World is a collection of Jawaharlal Nehru's thoughts and writings culled from *The Discovery of India*, Vol. 1-5 of Jawaharlal Nehru's speeches, Jawaharlal

Nehru on science and society, *Jawaharlal Nehru: An Anthology and India's Foreign Policy*. They attempt to take the child through a journey of India's historical past and cultural inheritance to an understanding of her suffering under the British colonial rule, the awakening that led to the freedom struggle, the ultimate realisation of freedom and then a plan for the future.

What is remarkable about this book is its stress on the importance of a wide world view and the tasks before India after independence. While one third of the book is devoted to our past, two thirds is to our present and future. The book tries to mould the minds of children towards the realisation of an India, closer to the dreams of one of her most committed servants. Shankar's cartoons are a delightful addition.

The National Book Trust has also brought out two interesting books on Nehru. *Jawaharlal Nehru: Years of Struggle* and *Jawaharlal Nehru*. The former is edited by Arjun Dev and the latter written by Tara Ali Baig.

Jawaharlal Nehru: Years of Struggle is an anthology of Nehru's writings. It is the collected thoughts and writings of Nehru on himself, the struggle for freedom, socialism and planning, religion, culture and communal politics, international perspectives and civil liberties. It ends with a letter to his daughter Indira which is so moving in its universality and topicality that it could have been written today. It plumbs the very depths of man emerging from darkness to light and with a ray of hope for the future. Today one needs to have that ray of hope as much as it was needed in those dark days of freedom struggle.

However, this book can be best appreciated by older children. It can give them a direction and a beginning and a sense of deep pride in their country.

Tara Ali Baig's book on Jawaharlal Nehru is a child's delight, full of pictures that speak of the man as eloquently as does the text. The text is brief and gives the essence of the man in the minimum number of words. Reading it is like spending an afternoon with Nehru, and a very pleasant one indeed.

I wonder whether the quality of writings on Nehru are a measure of the man himself or of the Indian people's great and abiding love for a very human, but a very charming and noble man. □

Titles carried in these columns are of books received during 1989-90

■ ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

The Indian Economy And Its Performance Since Independence—edited by R.A. Choudhury, Shama Gamkar & Aurobindo Ghose. A useful study in a broad perspective of the Indian economy in modern times, this volume looks at the interface of politics and economics as well as of development both the rural and urban, agriculture and industry, development policy and government strategy. Oxford University Press, 1990, Rs. 240.00.

The Indian Population Problem: A Household Economics Approach—Bahnsikha Ghosh. Using a new home economics approach in tandem with other quantitative approaches, Dr. Ghosh examines the relationship between economic and demographic forces in India and focuses on both the inherent conflict and the complementarity between them. Sage Publications, 1990, hardback Rs. 180.00.

Dairy Aid And Development: India's Operation Flood—Martin Doornbos, Frank van Dorsten, Manoshi Mitra & Piet Terhal. This study, which forms a part of the Indo-Dutch Studies on Development Alternatives, focusses on the processes of social and economic change which are associated with Operation Flood. Sage Publications, 1990, Rs. 250.00.

The Political Economy of Agrarian Change: Nanchilnadu 1880-1939—M.S.S. Pandian. Based on a detailed study of one region over a period of sixty years, this major study seeks to overcome the methodological inadequacies of the mode of production debate. Sage Publications, 1990, Rs. 175.00.

■ HABITAT & URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Making of a Metropolis: Planning And Growth of Delhi—A.K. Jain. The subject of the book is urban policy in the national context in terms of housing in urban India and land resources in urban development. The book also goes into the concept of National Capital Region—its contradictions and perspectives. National Book Organization, 1990, Rs. 450.00.

Bombay: Can It House Its Millions—P.S.A. Sundaram. A new approach to solving the housing problems of third world cities by the one time administrator of MHADA, the chief housing management agency of the government of Maharashtra. Clarion Books, 1989, Rs. 190.00.

Of Men And His Settlement—M.N. Buch. The author addresses himself to the problems relating to the settlements of men in an urban context, the environment in which he lives and the administrative systems which he has evolved to manage his affairs. Sanchar Publishing House, forthcoming.

■ POLITICS & HISTORICAL STUDIES

Sati: Historical And Phenomenological Essays—Arvind Sharma with Ajit Ray, Alaka Hejib & Katherine K. Young. This study brings to bear methodological sophistication to the phenomenon of Sati in all its dramatic and tragic element. Motilal Banarsidass, 1988, Rs. 45.00 (paper).

The Dust In The Balance: British Women In India—1905-1945—Pat Barr. This is not yet another stereotype of the *Memsahibs* but the story of the British women who tried to understand the complex realities of India. Hamish Hamilton, 1989, distributed by Rupa & Co., Rs. 425.00.

Babri Masjid—Ram Janmabhoomi Controversy—Asgar Ali Engineer. A timely study by a truly secular scholar of Islamic studies. Ajanta Publications, 1989, Rs. 175.00.

My Peking Memoirs Of The Chinese Invasion Of India—Purnendu Kumar Banerjee. New light by India's envoy to China on those critical years of our history. Clarion Books, 1990, Rs. 145.00.

French Studies In History-Vol. II—The Departures—Maurice Aymard & Harbans Mukhia. Together with the first volume of this anthology, *The Inheritance*, this volume traces the growth of an important perspective on the study of history. Orient Longman, 1990, Rs. 105.00.

Techniques To Technology: A French Historiography Of Technology—edited by Sabyasachi Bhattacharya & Pietro Redondi. The papers in this volume sum up the debate on the nature of the history of technology which evolved in French thought in our century. Orient Longman, 1990, price not stated.

■ SOCIOLOGY

Studies In Social Movements—T.K. Oommen. Lucid and clear in style, interdisciplinary in orientation, this book is an analysis of hitherto neglected themes in movement studies. Sage Publications, 1990, Rs.235.00 (hardback).

■ RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

The Scientific Foundations Of Jainism—K.V. Mardia. This volume forms part of the Lala S. T. Jain Research series and attempts to decedate the point that Jainism is a science with religion. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, Rs.140.00.

Ganadharavada: The Essentials Of Bhagavan Mahavir's Philosophy—Acharya Vijay Bhuvanhanusri. Seeks to portray the resolution of doubts posed by eleven scholars to Mahavir. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1989, Rs.70.00 (paper), Rs. 125.000 (cloth)

The Mechanics Of G.O.D.: A Theory On The Transition Of Species And Events—Thomas Easley. It examines the practicality of our having a better understanding of metaphysics and the reality of the psychological drama being acted out in man's psyche by forces and laws which are both known and unknown. Garutman Books, Allied Publishers, 1990, Rs. 175.00.

Philosophy And Religion: Essays In Interpretation—J.L. Mehta. A seminal collection of papers which highlights the richness of Indian thought in which philosophy, religion and poetry interfuse. Published by the Indian Council of Philosophical Research in association with Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi, 1990, Rs. 175.00.

■ EDUCATION

The Dividends Of Learning: World Bank Support For Education. A booklet prepared by the Population and Human Resources Department, Education and Employment Division Of the World Bank. February 1990.

■ PSYCHOLOGY

Applied Social Psychology In India—edited by Girishwar Misra. This volume provides comprehensive analyses of research on deprivation, poverty, competence, population, political behaviour, achievement motivation, social tension, multilingualism, marginality of weaker sections, as also conceptualizations of endogenous development. Sage Publications, 1990, Hardback Rs.195.00.

■ LITERATURE & FICTION

The Buddha Of Suburbia—Hanif Kureishi. The novel is a perceptive account of England's bitter class struggles. With savage satire, Kureishi portrays both the indigenous British and the immigrants and their offspring. Faber & Faber, 1989, Rs. 150.00 (Indian price).

Hero: A Fable—I. Allan Sealey. The themes are the two major Indian obsessions—films and politics. Viking, 1989, Rs. 125.00.

Snake And Other Stories—Premendra Mehta. Translated by Rina & Pritish Nandy. A collection of twelve Bengali short stories translated into English. Seagull Books, 1989, Rs. 100.00.

The Fig Tree—Aubrey Menon. The theme centres around a scientist Harry Wesley whose gravity of demeanour and equally compelling desire to have a statue erected in his honour spur him to invent an oral contraceptive. Penguin (India), 1989, Rs. 50.00.

A Summons To Memphis—Peter Taylor. The book has been awarded the Ritz Hemingway award and the Pulitzer prize. The novel treats in a comically ironic way the internal conflicts of its central character who is torn between memories of his childhood spent in Nashville, then Memphis and his present life in New York. Penguin, London, 1989, £ 4.99.

Mrityanujaya: The Death Conqueror—Shivaji Sawant. Translated from Marathi by P. Lal & Nandini Nopaney, this is a fictionalized version of the life of Karna, the great hero of the Mahabharat War. Writers Workshop, 1989, Rs. 400.00.

We Have Arrived In Amritsar And Other Stories—Bhisham Sahni. Translated by Jai Ratan. This collection of short stories tells of the horrors of partition, life in Delhi's slums and suburbs, of monks, thieves and migrant-women, with an honesty, a simplicity of expression and the deep compassion of a secular mind. Disha Books, Orient Longman, 1990, Rs. 60.00.

Trying To Crow—Firdaus Kanga. Built around the experiences of a physically handicapped boy turning into manhood, this is a deeply-moving work with a remarkable blend of directness, humour and irreverence. Ravi Dayal Publisher, Delhi, 1990, Rs. 95.00.

Alien Heart—K.S. Duggal. Translation by Jai Ratan of the author's classic Punjabi novel *Man Pardesi* about a family of nationalist Muslims in the years following Partition. Disha Books, Orient Longman, 1990, Rs.40.00.

Looking Back—Sanjiv Bhatla. A first book of poems by one who is an engineer by training. Disha Books, Orient Longman, 1990, Rs. 25.00.

India, Mystic, Complex And Real—An Interpretation Of E.M. Forster's A Passage To India—Adwaita P. Ganguly. Foreword by John Beer. A multi-dimensional study of a twentieth-century classic. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1990, Rs. 300.00.

■ INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

India And The World—V.P. Dutt. A study by a former pro-vice chancellor of Delhi University, a former MP and the author of *China's Foreign Policy, China and the World, India's Foreign Policy*, which underscores the relevance and validity of the Nehruvian foreign policy framework in the present-day world. Sanchar Publishing House, 1990, Rs.140.00.

■ ART & CULTURE

Mahishasuramardini In Indian Art—Shanti Lal Nagar. This well-illustrated books stimulates many lines of useful enquiry about the goddess in her many-splendoured forms. Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989, Rs. 450.00.

Muslims In India—edited by Ratna Sahai. A beautifully designed hand-book on the history, culture and socio-economic background of Muslims in India. Produced for the Ministry of External Affairs by Format, 1990, Rs. 150.00

■ GENERAL

The Big Train Ride—Eric Newky. A detailed description of how the trans-Siberian railway came to be built interspersed with irreverent jibes at the Soviet bureaucracy. Picador, 1989, £4.99.

Heart To Heart—Dr. H.S. Wazir. Explains how the common man can deal with various symptoms pertaining to heart diseases. Vikas, 1989, Rs. 150.00.

B.G. Kher: The Gentleman Premier—M.V. Kamath. Kamath draws a fascinating portrait of B.G. Kher as a freedom fighter, a humanist, a Gandhian and a gentleman to his finger tips. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1989, Rs. 200.00.

Audit In India's Democracy—Y. Krishnan. Yuvraj Krishnan, a retired deputy-comptroller and auditor-general has dealt with the importance of audit for the healthy functioning of democracy. Clarion Books, 1989, Rs. 160.00.

Consumer Rights—M.J. Antony. This book tells you all about the law, the areas where you can sue the cheat, and how. Clarion Books, 1990, Rs. 120.00.

Drugs: The Evil Addiction—Beena Menon, *Aids: Humanity's Gravest Challenge*—Dr. Pushpa Khurana. Both published by Clarion Books, 1990, Rs.120.00.

The above-mentioned volumes from Clarion Books form part of the *Public Concerns* series, editor, Mahendra Kulasreshtha.

Festivals Fairs And Fasts Of India—Shakti M. Gupta. A lavishly illustrated work that describes festivals of all eight religions practised in India. Clarion Books, 1990, Rs.58.00.

Steps To Success—Mahatma Devesh Bhikshu. A guide to success through the lives of great and successful men. Sultan Chand & Sons, 1990, Rs.100.00.

Tourism Development And Resource Conservation—Dr. Jagmohan Negi. The volume caters to the growing interest in these areas of development. Metropolitan, 1989, Rs. 300.00.

■ BIOGRAPHY

Henry James: A Life—Leon Edel. The book condenses the author's earlier monumental biography into a more sharply-focused, easier-to-read edition, which retains all the richness of James' life. Affiliated East-West Press Pvt. Ltd., 1989, Rs.110.00.

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Dr Misra is a former Vice-Chancellor of Bhagalpur University, has been a Visiting Smuts Fellow at Cambridge, and Professor of History, University of Delhi.

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Oleg Volobuyev and Sergei Kuleshov

With perestroika and glasnost, the transformation of social consciousness in the Soviet Union has acquired a universal and comprehensive character. Before our eyes, the outlines of a new economic, legal and political thinking (on the part of the masses, not just the elite) are taking shape. Vast changes have taken place in the cultural sphere. A fresh look is being

taken at foreign policy and military doctrine.

This book takes up an important aspect of the revolutionary 'renewal' going on in what the authors refer to as the alteration of the Soviet people's historical, social memory'. It is this process that the authors choose to term *purification*—the liberation of social consciousness from falsifications and stereotypes. Dogmas and myths are being done away with.

In terms of composition, the chapters in the book can be divided into three parts. The introduction reflects the authors' thoughts on separate aspects of scientific and mass historical consciousness, which should put the material in perspective for the reader. The next subject cycle is dedicated to a discussion of political history in the period from the 1920s to the 1950s and the complex process of democratisation in the country's socio-political life starting from the 20th Congress until perestroika. Finally, the conclusion deals with contemporary problems—the authors examine unrealized alternatives for the country's historical development, and the progress of perestroika.

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NATIONALISM UNVEILED

Jayantamaja Banayopadhyaya

The book aims to be an original contribution to the literature of nationalism and political theory. The central argument is that nationalism is a synthetic ideology fabricated by the ruling classes out of certain pre-existing ideologies in order to perpetuate societal stratification and prompt their own class interests. Relentless propaganda is used for this purpose. The masses are indoctrinated into the ideology on account of the insecurity and dependency generated by stratified societal structures. This general theory of nationalism, the author argues, applies to capitalist, socialist and Third World societies.

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