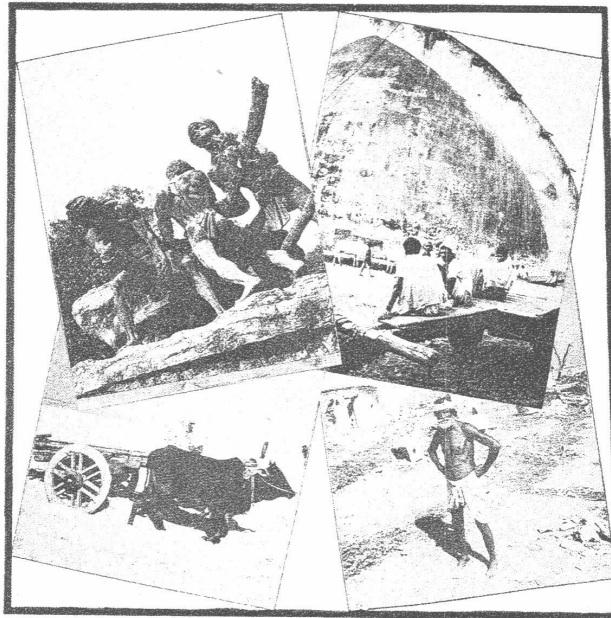


THE BOOK REVIEW

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Dialogue Between Publishers and the Press

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Book reviewing has come a long way in India since the seventies. Indian publishing too having come of age, publishers are now deeply concerned that reviews appearing in newspapers and journals should be balanced, objective even when they are critical. The seminar organized by the Federation of Publishers' and Booksellers' Associations (FPBA) on 15 January 1993 in New Delhi proved to be a fruitful dialogue on this subject. The publishers were naturally dismayed that so little space is available in newspapers for book reviews which they see as substitutes for advertisement (in newspapers, advertisement rates are too high to be affordable by any but the most affluent publishers). Critical reviews, they agreed, did a great deal to boost sales.

Review editors of newspapers however presented a wholly negative approach to book reviewing: It is difficult to get good reviewers and when you do, they do not deliver on time. A review-page editor is saddled with so many other responsibilities that not enough attention to book reviews (selection, follow-up, etc of books and reviewers) could be paid. The management of most newspapers view reviewing as an intellectual exercise which does not generate circulation. In short, the review-page editors felt that reviewing of books is *not* a priority for newspapers.

As a matter of fact, most of the objections voiced by the review-page editors may have been true twenty years ago but not any more, as the two or three book review journals in circulation in India have proved. Scholars and students are taking book reviewing seriously and only the most flippant think any longer that it is not necessary to read a book to review it. That there is a very real demand today for critical reviews is beyond doubt.

The review-page editors pointed out that very often there is no systematic policy regarding reviewing in newspapers. Hence continuity is often at a premium. Should reviews be academic or entertaining? Selection of books becomes erratic in the process. There is however no real dichotomy in expecting a review to perform the function of *incitory*, *anticipatory* criticism which could help to stimulate the further growth of literature on a given subject and for it to be entertaining and readable as well.

Inundated by hundreds of books every week, the harassed review-page editors of several newspapers felt that publishers should send only those books which are truly worth reviewing. This may certainly make their own job easier but in saying this, they are forgetting that one important function of a critic is to be a middleman between the author and the public. Criticism must needs act as a screen.

Book reviewing must be seen as a public service. Readers in remote corners of the country where access to books is difficult often look to reviews as substitutes for books. The reviewer could, just by mastering the art of enjoying books and of enriching and refining his own impression of them, communicate his responses to the public.

It is clear that instead of dismissing book reviews as a low priority, newspapers in India must seriously think of publishing literary supplements, every month to begin with if fortnightly is financially non-viable, complete with book-news columns containing information about books released on various subjects. Such an exercise would attract advertisements from publishers if special rates were thought of. Publishers look to newspapers rather than journals because of their wider circulation to promote their books. Therefore a more professional approach to reviewing of books is what we need from the press.

The visual media too has to move with the times and regular debates on television on important books would do a great deal for the print medium. This is specially important in today's world because of the tremendous explosion of knowledge that we are witnessing. There is an ever-widening circle of middle class intelligentsia which has to be wooed into the joy of reading. This is true above all for books written for children. The response of Doordarshan to the one attempt made by *The Book Review* three years ago to show a book review programme on TV (four such programmes were screened before the idea was shot down) was to dismiss it as an advertisement for the publishers. Perhaps the FPBA should consider sponsoring such events on television.

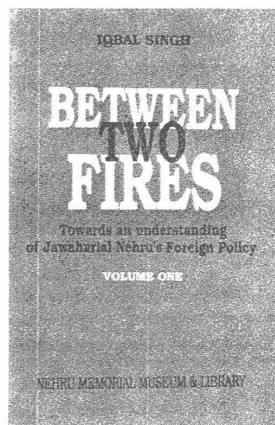
Of Vision and Sensibility

A.K. Damodaran

BETWEEN TWO FIRES: TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S FOREIGN POLICY—VOLUME I

By Iqbal Singh

Orient Longman and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 1992,
pp. 376, Rs 225.00



This attempt to reach an understanding of Jawaharlal Nehru's policy is rooted in the history of the national movement and the external awareness of the world outside in the Indian elite during the British Raj. This first volume ends with the actual transfer of power on August 15, 1947. The eleven months of the interim government when Nehru as the Vice President of the Viceroy's Executive Council had the unusual, sometimes demanding, and sometimes frustrating, experience of exploring the country's relations with all types of entities, states, international organizations and private pressure groups form the subject matter of the second half of the book. It is a detailed study of a very significant interlude. The next volume would be dealing with Jawaharlal Nehru in the years of power, the Congress government after partition having total responsibility for the conduct of foreign relations. Several books have been written about Nehru's years in office and he himself has provided abundant testimony about his activities in the years before Independence when he had the time and the energy to develop his personal analysis of the changing Indian scene against the moving tragedy of Europe and the world in the thirties. The first half of this volume deals with the earlier impulses behind the extraordinary interest evinced by the national movement and its leaders in the world outside. It is not intended to be a complete record of the pre-history of independent India's foreign policy but it does help us to understand the intellectual baggage which the Congress leadership and Nehru carried at the time of assuming office.

Iqbal Singh has taken a great deal of trouble to locate the foreshadowing of the country's foreign policy in the early nineteenth century. Of these examples, Ram-mohun Roy's letter to the French Prime Minister in 1832 putting forward a case for passports for private citizens travelling to other states is a piquant reminder of the problems faced by British subjects in those days. One of the permanent concerns of foreign policy is the issue of passports and the obtaining of visas. Travellers in those distant days had their difficulties and, to a subject of a colonial state, these problems could be irritating.

There is no record of the French Government responding. Something must have happened for within 15 years Dwarkanath Tagore did travel throughout Europe and call on the Pope in Rome. Here, however, Roy's "petition" is fascinating because of its ambitious agenda. It proposes nothing less than the creation of a Congress consisting of an equal number from the Parliament of both the concerned countries, in this case, France and England. Roy even suggests that they could meet alternately in Dover and Calais in England and France! All in all, this is an interesting document giving us an insight into the state of the world more than a century ago and India's position in that difficult world.

The other early document which Singh has located is a letter from Tilak to Clemenceau, the French Prime Minister and the President of the Versailles Peace Conference. This is an important statement of the Indian position as an aspirant state at a time of transition. It goes into some details about the political situation in the country and demands that India's voice be heard in the councils of the world. Here again, unfortunately, there is no evidence that Clemenceau took notice of the letter. Singh notes with wry humour that the emissary who carried the letter was none else than Edgar Wallace, the popular writer.

Iqbal Singh discusses the major concerns of the Congress in its foreign policy resolutions during those years. Overseas Indians were, of course, the most important single item of interest to the national movement especially after Gandhi brought it into the centre of the picture when he was still in South Africa. The Congress resolution in the first session on

Marx has said somewhere that man makes his own history. He was, however, careful immediately to qualify this axiom by adding: "But he does not make it under circumstances of his choosing", or words to that effect. Nehru and the Congress leadership were to discover this self-evident truth the hard way when they came to wield the substance of power and test the validity of their ideas and policies against the touchstone of post-Second World War realities in the realm of foreign affairs.

From *Between Two Fires*

Certainly, he brought even to the performance of prosaic departmental chores not only a certain grace and elegance of style, but a poetic sensibility and imagination and a visionary quality. That, according to his critic was a fatal flaw in his conduct of India's foreign policy from the start. They may well prove right. But, on the other hand, it can be argued that this visionary quality may well come to be recognized by future generations, when the dust of contemporary controversies has settled, as the source of the enduring strength of his foreign policy.

From *Between Two Fires*

and the Asian Relations Conference in 1947 with which the book concludes.

In the meantime, however, Jawaharlal Nehru takes over as primary exponent of the country's external relations. During the thirties, Nehru became the official spokesman of the Congress on foreign policy. This was the period when he visited Europe twice and Iqbal Singh summarises with great effect his contribution to making India known to the world outside. Gandhi had already become a celebrity. But it was Nehru who put India and Indian nationalism on the political map of the world when democracy, socialism and fascism were immediate concerns. The differences with Subhas Babu are noted and the refusal of the Congress to join the war effort in 1939 because India had not been consulted before the declaration of the War is also discussed in some detail. The text of the Congress Resolution of 14th September 1939 is included in the Appendix. Here, there is a little problem. Of equal importance was the Quit India Resolution of 1942 with its remarkable expression of support for the idea of a world federation which could have been included.

The second half of the book deals in great detail with the manner in which Nehru and the Congress responded to the need for a foreign policy for the country in the years before Independence. The duration of the Interim Government between September 2, 1946 and August 15, 1947 is discussed in depth. The country was preparing for Independence and the government had to provide the institutional and philosophical support for an active foreign policy for the country after full independence. There was an unusual degree of understanding between Nehru and his immediate subordinates, mostly British officers in the External Affairs and Commonwealth Departments. There was, always the problem of the Muslim League members being uninterested in or hostile to any foreign policy initiative. There were problems with Lord Wavell, the Viceroy.

This disappeared when Mountbatten took over in March 1947. The Congress organisation had also its own contribution to make. Sometimes it felt left out and Nehru had to be tactful with the Congress President, Kripalani, and his colleagues.

Iqbal Singh discusses four to five major problems during this period. The Asian Relations Conference is dealt with at great length, its ambitious preparations, the actual drama in Purana Qila in March with Gandhi's personal participation and the link with the Indonesian problem. The United Nations and India's role in it were studied by Nehru with great care specially in relation to the Indonesian problem. On the very eve of transfer of power, India moved a resolution asking the Security Council to take interest in the new situation created by the Dutch military action. Then there was the South Africa problem. The Indian delegation under Mrs. Pandit succeeded in its efforts to highlight the problem of racial discrimination. There were other developments also like the foreign possessions in India. The conditions in Goa are discussed at some length. Chander Nagar and Pondicherry formed the subject matter of active diplomacy with the new French Embassy.

During these encounters with reality, Nehru slowly developed his policy of non-alignment between the two blocs. There was a certain inevitability about it all. From the famous first broadcast to the policies adopted on Indonesia and Vietnam, new India refused to be identified with either of the two blocs, officially confronting each other by the time Nehru took over the reins of government.

Iqbal Singh brings a new meaning to this evolution of ideology as well as practice. The title of his book is taken from the quotation used by Jawaharlal to illustrate the difficulties of the time at the Faizpur Session of the Congress in December 1936:

"Move with new desires.

For where we used to build and love
Is no man's land, and only ghosts, can live
Between two fires."

The authorship is not attributed either in the Nehru text or by Iqbal Singh but merely says that it was written by the "most gifted among his generation". It sounds like Auden. The necessary response of the "victim spectators" in a conflict between Titans and to escape from the horrors of no-man's-land in between is to summon new energies from internal resources. This is "to move with new desires". In the post-war world with the powerful nations ranged against each other, it was necessary to have a new desire, a new agenda, a new plan of action. This was nonalignment. It is a tenuous link but it serves to explain the subconscious impulses behind Nehru's concept of nonalignment "between two fires".

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

Complex Realities

P.R. Chari

STUDIES IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

By M.S. Rajan

ABC Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 353, Rs. 295.00

NUCLEAR INDIA

By Brigadier Vijai K. Nair V.S.M. (Retd.)

Lancer International, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 267, Rs. 350.00

In the first volume under review Dr. Rajan has re-published 18 essays; of these 7 address India's foreign policy, five its nonalignment facet, and the remaining a cluster of related issues. These essays were published between 1962 and 1981, and possess a period flavour. About their relevance the author concedes that, whilst the facts might be dated, the analysis and judgments informing them are still valid because "the fundamental basis of India's [foreign] policy, determined in the Nehru years (1946-64), have largely remained the basis of the policy of the governments that succeeded. . .".

In an initial essay, intended to discuss the current phase, the author finds a greater element of continuity rather than change in India's foreign policy, which basically reflects the obtaining national consensus in this regard. In another brief essay, "Jawaharlal Nehru and Non-alignment", he is quoted to explain its rationale: "Every country has a right to choose its own path and go along it. We have chosen our path and we propose to go along it, and vary as and when we choose, not at somebody's dictate or pressure. . ." Dr. Rajan has written extensively on nonalignment, but his view that nonalignment was undoubtedly catalyzed by the Cold War and is not its product would seem to be needless sophistry.

Nonalignment was imperative for seeking world peace and also India's national interests for, as Nehru declared ". . . the art of conducting the foreign affairs of a country lies in finding out what is most advantageous to the country". Arguing in terms of Nehru's beliefs the author correlates nonalignment with national dignity, and stresses its dynamic nature in contra-distinction to isolationism or passivity or neutralism. In two other essays Dr. Rajan seeks to establish, with considerable persuasiveness, that India's policy of nonalignment was not compromised by the Sino-Indian crisis of 1962 or the Indo-Pak conflict in 1971 when India turned to the Western bloc

and the Soviet Union respectively: no country, he argues, can forsake its basic national interests and nonalignment is, in any case, an evolving concept!

In a major essay "India and Pakistan as Factors in Each Other's Foreign Policy and Relations" published in 1962 the author finds their estrangement over Kashmir symbolic of their essential relationship. The military aid barometer measures the level of cordiality in U.S.-Pak relations, but, inversely, the deterioration in Indo-Pak relations. Dr. Rajan takes a rather manichaean view of Pakistan's motivations and actions by holding it responsible for several acts of hostility towards India like calls for Jihad, rejection of the no-war pact, opposition to India in external forums, exaggerating fears of India's hegemonistic designs, entry into SEATO, CENTO and religious-political Muslim alliances and so on. Pakistan's domestic and foreign policy is believed to be grounded in implacable hostility to India. It has perceptively been noted that Pakistan favours third-party intervention in Indo-Pak disputes because the end-result has generally been advantageous to Pakistan eg. canal water dispute and Tashkent Agreement.

In "India: A Case of Power without Force", published in 1975 after the Pokharan explosion, the author ably defends its peaceful nature, whilst holding that India's basic nuclear policy has been to keep its option open, despite the grave provocation it had in 1964 when China conducted its first, but clearly military, nuclear test. Whilst urging that India has no reason to use nuclear energy for non-peaceful purposes the author also believes that, ". . . its future actions depend as much on the intentions and actions of the other states as its own". Obviously Pakistan's intentions and actions are called to question here.

Dr. Rajan's scholarship and balanced analysis are evident in these essays. He comes through as being strongly India-centric in his views, with an uncritical faith in nonalignment as the touchstone

of Indian foreign policy. His otherwise graceful and lucid writing style is somewhat marred by an excessive use of parentheses, which introduces a quality of hesitancy in his prose that is surely unintended. Altogether a book which students of international relations would like to keep within easy reach on their bookshelves.

In contrast to Dr. Rajan's qualified position on India's nuclear option Brigadier Nair, in the second book under review, proceeds on the assumption that "security imperatives will leave no choice but to go nuclear within the next decade", and, further, that "India is on the threshold of exercising her nuclear options (sic)". In the penultimate chapter, however, the author broadens India's policy options to four choices which comprise, briefly stated, signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a Non-Nuclear Weapons State (NNWS), maintaining the status quo of keeping the option open, joining the NPT as a Nuclear Weapons State (NWS), and negotiating the proposition with the United States that ". . . while India would be willing to join the NPT as a NWS, she would not be averse to maintaining the status quo. . ." The author's own preference is the last negotiatory option or, in the alternative, joining the NPT as a "full fledged NWS". Exercise of the nuclear option should be calibrated with a declaratory policy and weapons development programme that would generally reassure the region and the international system.

The nuclear threat is perceived to emanate from China which has a major territorial dispute with India, but mainly from Pakistan which has recently declared its nuclear weapons capability, and less clearly from nuclear-armed naval forces in the Indian Ocean plus the likely inimical reaction of extra-regional countries following India's establishment of a military nuclear status. The last generalised nuclear threat includes the United States that would perceive a danger to its Middle East interests, Central Command bases, Seventh Fleet and so on. All this may seem quite neurotic, but these threats could become a self-fulfilling prophecy if the author's further suggestions regarding the weapons capabilities needed by India are accepted. These would include nuclear forces capable of destroying seven-teen population/military/economic targets in Pakistan, and eight similar targets in China.

Translated into warheads the numbers required are estimated at 132, including reserves, mounted on intermediate-range, intercontinental-range and submarine-launched missiles, apart from aircraft deliverable bombs. Naturally such a nuclear force would require secure C³I (command, control, communications, intelligence) arrangements, and further capabilities being derived from surveillance, early warning and identification of possible attack by nuclear adversaries. In turn, this would require

The nuclear threat is perceived to emanate from China which has a major territorial dispute with India, but mainly from Pakistan which has recently declared its nuclear weapons capability, and less clearly from nuclear-armed naval forces in the Indian Ocean plus the likely inimical reaction of extra-regional countries following India's establishment of a military nuclear status. The last generalised nuclear threat includes the United States that would perceive a danger to its Middle East interests, Central Command bases, Seventh Fleet and so on. All this may seem quite neurotic, but these threats could become a self-fulfilling prophecy if the author's further suggestions regarding the weapons capabilities needed by India are accepted.

satellites, electronic intelligence and photo reconnaissance equipment to be procured and failsafe communication links to be established. In short, India, after becoming an overt nuclear power should traverse the same technological route hallowed by the United States and the Soviet Union.

The promise of this book lay in the author's initial observation that, since there are large differences in the circumstances of a nascent nuclear India and the Western nuclear powers, the latter's nuclear doctrines have little relevance. The foregoing would make it clear that this promise is not fulfilled. When it comes to strategic theory the author argues his case again on such hardy perennials as 'massive retaliation', 'mutual assured destruction', 'flexible response', 'limited nuclear options' et al. Perhaps the author cannot be faulted in being unable to escape from the tyranny of Western strategic theory. Nuclear weapons impose a logic of their own, and the first step taken on the path of nuclear deterrence leads steadily onwards to force structures based on the nuclear triad to C³I arrangements and finally to problems of ultimate 'release authority'.

There is the question of costs. Assuming that the infrastructure to derive fissionable materials and discrete missile capabilities are available, only incremental expenditure would be necessary to deploy the proposed nuclear force. This has been computed by the author at Rs. 7000 crores, but over three Five Year Plan periods, which is clearly within India's grasp, particularly if economies in conventional forces expenditure is also attempted. The empirical evidence suggests that reduction of expenditure on conventional forces has rarely accompanied the establishment of nuclear forces because, arguing within the arcane nuclear ethic, nuclear arms are last resort weapons serving the ends of deterrence. Consequently, to avoid their use until no other choice remains, it becomes necessary to qualitatively upgrade the conventional forces so that they might serve the purposes of defence and, hopefully, de-

terrence, to the maximum extent possible. Furthermore, the question of costs to India must include the likely stoppage of future loans and aid from O.E.C.D. countries and international financial institutions, apart from sanctions being imposed on technology transfers. The bill of costs would look very different if estimated in this comprehensive way.

In an important way, therefore, this book typifies the inadequacies of the purely military approach to India's nuclear dilemma. It has no discussion of the political dimensions of this problem such as the prospects of regional peace initiatives being taken which, under U.S.-led U.N. auspices, have achieved notable successes in southern Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia. Neither has the growing adherence to the NPT been taken note of, which includes China and France among the NWS, and threshold NNWS like South Africa, Brazil, Argentina, Spain, Taiwan and South Korea; exercising the option in this milieu would leave India wholly isolated in the international system. For that matter, purely operational difficulties arise in conjuring up an Indo-Pak conflict scenario, due to the vagaries of wind and rainfall patterns in South Asia. It is, therefore, more than conceivable that the attacker's population, as possibly neighbouring countries, would suffer unpredictably from radiation effects, which suggests that a subcontinental nuclear exchange could only be planned for as a seasonal activity!

Nevertheless, this book holds up a revealing mirror to inform us how the Indian military grapples with the complexities of the nuclear age and India's nuclear option therein, and reduces them to its bare essentials. It would be disconcerting to reflect upon the likelihood that the Pakistani military probably thinks likewise, and the Indian civil has yet to start thinking.

P.R. Chari is a research professor at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi.

Soldier and Diplomat

Major General D.K. Palit

A SOLDIER RECALLS

By Lt. Gen. S.K. Sinha

Lancer International, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 390, Rs. 300.00

An unfortunate feature of the de-colonisation process set off by World War II was the spate of military take-overs in newly liberated backward countries. This process, of a host of army generals usurping political power and setting themselves up as military dictators, served to undermine the status and respectability of military leaders even in democratic societies. Furthermore, it tended to obscure that rare phenomenon of history—the military leader who, by his maturity, ability and vision, is able to transcend the confines of his unidisciplinarian profession to play a constructive role on the national stage. The World War threw up a handful of such men in the western world, military leaders who were elected by their people to lead their nations in the post-war era. There has been none of note since, certainly not in the Third World.

We are fortunate that in the one great and enduring democracy of the developing world our soldiers have never displayed any penchant or proclivity for political office; but at the same time, we have not been able to produce any generals (or equivalent) who were able to widen their vocational horizon sufficiently to be called upon to play a significant part in democratic forums of national policy-making and development. There have been many, of course, whose professional services were rewarded by emeritus appointments to bureaucratic offices of eminence, such as governors and ambassadors; others successfully contested seats in Parliament; but none who made a meaningful contribution, at the top level, to national or international affairs. One who comes nearest to such distinction is Lieutenant-General S.K. Sinha, who retired in the early 1980s from the post of Vice-Chief of the Army Staff after he was unfairly and spitefully denied Chiefship and virtually run out of the Army. The latter's loss was the nation's gain. As the Janata Government's Ambassador to Nepal, General Sinha was mainly (if not solely) responsible for ending the decades long Indo-Nepal confrontation during the Indira-Rajiv years. He was also to a great degree responsible for the peaceful change-over from an authoritarian to a democratic regime in that country—a unique role for an ambassador from another country to play; and he was able to do so while retaining its good-will and gratitude.

General Sinha hails from a family of pre-eminent policemen of Bihar. Towards the end of World War II, after a particularly brilliant academic career, he decided to join the Army, though he was too late to take part in any of the fighting. Unfortunately, as he records in his memoir, this was to be his fate throughout his career—just missing the thick of the action in the many wars that India has had to fight since independence.

I first knew "Manne" Sinha (as he was known in the Army) when he was a young staff officer during the 1947-48 war in Kashmir. He served a long tenure in a key section of the General Staff in HQ Western Command. Although still lowly in rank, his maturity and wisdom enabled him to play an important and sometimes even an advisory role to his seniors. In all he did he displayed wisdom and *savoir faire* remarkable in a young army officer. Two specific instances of his personal contribution: the first was when, against persistent denials by Pakistan, he was able to provide proof to the U.N. commission on India and Pakistan of the involvement of Pakistan's regular army in the invasion of, and continued fighting in, Kashmir; and the second in the crucial operation to capture the 10,000-foot high Zoji-la pass, when the infantry failed to get through the curtain of Pakistani fire from the surrounding heights, it was his suggestion of taking off turrets of the tanks of 7th Cavalry that made it possible for the tanks to negotiate the primitive mountain tracks and wooden bridges to reach Zoji-la and cover the infantry on to their objectives. His innovative mind spawned a signal (and unprecedented) tactical coup in high altitude operations.

A tidbit of information he supplies about Western Command's defensive plans in the Punjab plains in 1950 could well explain a near-disastrous development in the war against Pakistan fifteen years later. Sinha was then serving as a General Staff officer of the brigade at Amritsar. He writes that during a war game to test the sector's defence plans, his brigade was surprised to learn that in case of a Pakistani attack on the Amritsar front, the Army HQ plan was that after offering token resistance the brigade would fall back behind the Beas river! His Brigade Commander was "not too happy" with the operational role given to our brigade. . . the tactical plan was a hang-over from the military thinking of the

Lt Gen SK SINHA,
PVSM (Retd)

A Soldier Recalls



Second World War. Sarda Nand (Brigade Commander) rightly advocated a forward defensive policy and I am glad his views were accepted by the higher authorities. This is interesting, because in 1965 when the Pakistanis did launch an attack at Khem Karan, the Army Chief, General Chaudhuri reverted to the old thinking and ordered a withdrawal to the east of the Beas—in contravention of the approved plan. It was left to the then Western Army Commander to veto this panicky proposal. Coincidentally, the Chief of General Staff in 1950, the authority who must have sanctioned the initial tactics of withdrawal to the Beas, was none other than the same General Muchu Chaudhuri, Army Chief in 1965.

Sinha provides us with another example of ill-considered and potentially disastrous defence planning at the highest level. In 1960 he was serving in the operational (logistical) section of Army HQ under General Kaul, the Quarter Master General. One of the crucial tasks of the logistical section was to ensure that in the event of war the "Strike Force"—the Armoured Division located at Jhansi—would be "rushed" by rail to the Punjab front. To his astonishment Sinha discovered that the plan as it then existed envisaged that the "rushing" forward of Armoured Division to the Punjab would be completed in three weeks! Till then no one seemed to have questioned this absurd time-table. Sinha comments: "Kaul maintained that in three weeks a war would be won or lost, without the Strike Force participating in it. . . Kaul undertook to arrange for the concentration of the Armoured Division in the Punjab in 72 hours. For the next three months we were working on this project. . . the required rolling stock was collected. . . passenger and goods traffic were to be suspended. . . overhead signal wires. . . loading and unloading ramps at each end and. . . special sidings were constructed. . . At the end we prepared a comprehen-

sive move plan providing for the concentration of the Armoured Division in 72 hours."

Imagination boggles at how the 1965 war, which lasted only 21 days, would have ended if it had had to be fought without our only Armoured Division.

In 1961 Sinha attended the middle-level Joint Services Staff College course at Latimer in England. It is a tribute to his wordly sophistication and maturity that, even though he was the only Major among fellow-students who ranged from Colonels to Generals, he was able to hold his own when confronted with snide or critical remarks about India—a common enough occurrence in British or American official milieus. Whether he interacted with Mountbatten or Slim or other V.I.P. visitors, Sinha's deportment in countering India-baiting pin-pricks was balanced, unruffled, humorous—and always effective; so much so that after a particularly forceful exchange with a V.I.P. British lecturer, a Foreign Office Minister, on the subject of India's liberation of Goa, the British Commandant felt constrained to remark to the Minister: "listening to him [Sinha] . . . I wondered whether, had I been the only British officer at an Indian Staff College during the Suez War (1956), I could have got up and spoken in that manner."

In the course of his swift climb up the ladder of promotion, Sinha's comments and suggestions are always interesting, weighty and evidential. On the controversial subject of Intelligence: ". . . when I took over as Director of Military Intelligence, I went through our old records and discovered to my surprise that we had not carried out any study-in-depth of Chinese capabilities and intentions in the Himalayas. The Joint Intelligence Committee (the top civil-military authority in Government responsible for making such assessments) had not met even once during the critical period!" This was some years after 1962; so much for Government apologies on Intelligence organizations.

A subject of which Sinha had made detailed study, and also written and spoken widely on, during the latter stages of his career, is "Higher Defence Organi-

zation." Severely critical of the Indian system, his main objections were, firstly, that the status and influence of the military had been gradually eroded and too much power and authority concentrated in the hands of the bureaucrats of Defence Ministry; secondly, the persistent refusal of the Defence and Prime Ministers to sanction the appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff (C.D.S.) Both points are valid *per se*, but Sinha seems to have failed to realise that the *main* drawback of our decision-making system in defence matters is that the three Service Chiefs and their Headquarters have, since the day of Independence, remained outside the government and have been granted no prescriptive right to be heard in government forums. Ours is the only country, for instance, where the Chiefs have no access to the head of government. So long as this system of quarantining the military continues, neither civil-military bureaucratic balance nor the appointment of a C.D.S. can make a deal of difference.

The fact that power and authority are concentrated in the hands of the civilian bureaucracy is not the crucial issue (except from the point of view of personal piques or mutual rivalries). What is crucial is that in the Indian governmental system there is no constitutional interface between the Service Chiefs and the senior civilian bureaucrats; between Service and civilian staffs; and, most significantly, even between the three Service headquarters. This is the main drawback of an organisation in which the three Service HQ—unlike in any other major democratic administration of the world—not only function outside the government but each Service exists as a self-contained cell isolated from the other two. The only common link between these disparate entities is the person of the Defence Minister. General Sinha's efforts (when he was Vice-Chief) lay in a canvassing support from eminent personages such as G. Parthasarathy, L.K. Jha and ex-Chief Kumaramangalam to have the appointment of C.D.S. sanctioned by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi; but in a dysfunctional regimen such as ours, the injection of a Chief of Defence Staff can make

only a marginal difference. The main reform that is required is for the three Service Chiefs and their General Staffs to be brought under one umbrella in the Ministry of Defence. Until that happens, defence decisions in war as well as in peace will continue to be taken haphazardly, without benefit of joint-staff analyses and, therefore, basically *ad hoc*—as they were in 1948, 1962, 1965 and, to an extent, even in 1971.

The circumstances leading to Sinha's supersession make sorry reading. No other promotion high-handedness has ever been so widely commented in the media and elsewhere as the denial to Sinha of his virtually prescriptive right—the office of the Army Chief after Krishna Rao. No official reason was ever offered, but it is well known that the Sinha family's acquaintance with and respect for Loknaik J.P. Narain was not looked upon with favour. A vindictive Prime Minister and a flunkeyish Army Chief connived to justify the supersession and give the job to a more complaisant junior.

The sage and dignified deportment with which Sinha faced the crushing disappointment will remain a fitting testimonial to his character. Never by word or deed did he criticise the government or his former Chief for the injustice done to him. Even when he finally decided to run for Parliament, he eschewed alluring offers from opposition parties and insisted on standing as an independent. Being a Bihari he of all people should have known that an Army innocent running as an independent from Patna could never receive fair treatment from election manipulators in Bihar politics.

When the National Front came to power in 1989, one of V.P. Singh's priority items was to remove Krishna Rao (from the post of Governor of Jammu and Kashmir) on grounds of non-performance. It was poetic justice of a sort that Sinha was selected to relieve him. However, a last minute change of circumstance decreed that Sinha would be more useful as Ambassador to Nepal. It was a fortunate decision. Even during the extremely brief tenure he served in the appointment, Sinha was able to bring about one of the most timely and successful diplomatic coups in the history of our Foreign Ministry.

The office of a Grade I Ambassador, entrusted with a sensitive diplomatic mission, was for the first time given to a retired soldier. No other ambassador carries such a load of responsibility as does Our Man in Kathmandu—ranging from river water negotiations to the welfare of a hundred thousand pensioners from some of our most famous infantry regiments, from "open border" policies to a host of other matters.

It is not necessary to describe the sudden and abysmal deterioration in Indo-Nepal relations from 1987 onwards. The Trade treaty had been pending for some time, much to Nepal's disadvantage (and a sad commentary on our diplo-

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We are fortunate that in the one great and enduring democracy of the developing world our soldiers have never displayed any penchant or proclivity for political office; but at the same time, we have not been able to produce any generals (or equivalent) who were able to widen their vocational horizon sufficiently to be called upon to play a significant part in democratic forums of national policy-making and development.

macy). The V.P. Government was determined to enter into a mutually satisfactory agreement between the two countries.

Sinha had a lot going for him: he hailed from the contiguous state of Bihar, with which Nepal has many cultural links going back for thousands of years; his family had been acquainted with the Koirala brothers; and, above all, he had spent almost the whole of his army service with Gorkha troops. But even so, his wisdom, tact and firm handling of ordinary and critical events during his brief stay in Kathamandu are an object lesson in diplomatic firmness and finesse.

Sinha's diplomatic successes were not confined to negotiating a new and mutually satisfactory treaty. From the beginning of his stay in Nepal he established a close, almost avuncular relationship with King Birendra. The respect with which he was treated by the monarch was unprecedented—not only in Nepal but, perhaps, in the history of modern diplomacy. Thus it was that when Sinha took it upon himself to advise the King on political reforms in his government—more specifically, to institute constitutional monarchy—not only was such blatant interference in Nepal's domestic politics not resented by the King, he was persuaded to accept the advice given by the Ambassador from India and set his country on the path of parliamentary democracy: truly a miracle.

When Chandrasekhar came into power and established his ministry, Sinha—as one would expect from him—promptly resigned. The prompt manner of and procedure for its acceptance, however, was anything but graceful. Albeit, the brief eleven months of Sinha's stay in Nepal proved long enough to bring about a major and welcome change in South Asian international relations.

Major General D.K. Palit, Director of Operations during the Chinese War, retired from the Indian Army in 1969 and is a prolific writer with some fourteen books to his credit.

Of Hannibal And Piracy

Lt. Gen. S.L. Menezes

GREAT CAPTAINS—HANNIBAL

By Colonel T.A. Dodge

Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1891, reprinted by Lancer International, New Delhi, 1992, 2 Vols, pp. 682, Rs. 225.00 each

THE PIRATES OF MALABAR AND AN ENGLISHWOMAN IN INDIA TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO

By Colonel John Biddulph

Smith Elder and Company, London, 1907, reprinted by Lancer International, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 327, Rs. 180.00

No biographer of Hannibal (247 bc—circa 182 bc), prior to Colonel Dodge, appears to have studied his campaigns in their entirety on the ground. Almost all previous accounts of his extraordinary marches, from Spain, across France and the Alps into Italy, as well as his manoeuvres and battles in the Second Punic War (218 bc—201 bc), based their topography on some previous account, many errors thus creeping in. Colonel Dodge, however, with copies of Polybius and Livy in his hands, from Cartagena (Carthage Nova, the capital of Carthaginian Spain) across the Pyrenees, and thereafter the Rhone and the Alps, visited every concerned region in Italy, pertaining to the Punic leader's achievements. Till Colonel Dodge, no historian had mapped out Hannibal's tremendous marches. The 227 charts and illustrations he has included show every essential feature of Hannibal's life and campaigns.

Hannibal was the son of the great Carthaginian general, Hamilcar. Taken from North Africa to Spain at an early age, Hannibal was sworn to eternal hostility to Rome. Thus from the death of his father in circa 229 bc, to his death by his own hand in circa 182 bc, Hannibal's life was one of constant struggle against Rome, being proclaimed Commander-in-Chief in 221 bc at the age of twenty-six, on the assassination of his brother-in-law. According to Polybius, Hannibal set out from Cartagena with 90,000 infantry, 12,000 cavalry (Polybius' figures were possibly exaggerated; half the aggregate was more likely), and thirty-eight elephants. After marching and skirmishing for 750 miles in four months, he reached the Alps. Attacked repeatedly during his passage of the Alps, he debouched into the Po Valley only with half his pre-crossing strength and some elephants, storming Turin, having been impeded by snow, ice and landslides. Volume 1 concludes with the battle of Lake Trasimene, circa 217 bc. Volume 2 encompasses his ravaging the Romans for 15 years, includ-

ing his victory at Cannae, a military classic tactically, many since trying to adapt this tactical manoeuvre to their battles. His own Carthaginian government did not give him the unstinted support he needed. Hannibal's forces were thus always insufficient to invest Rome itself, for, in addition, the Roman navy still had control of the Mediterranean.

It is perhaps impossible for a soldier to write about Hannibal or any great captain without exhibiting hero worship. That the author is subject to this sentiment, he has not attempted to conceal, but the sum of what all authors tell us, describes a man on whom hero worship is not wasted. Especial praise is due to the chapter on crossing the Alps, and to the general summing up of Hannibal's career and character. These two volumes are an example of how life can be infused into an apparently closed historical subject, and are a splendid historical portraiture of Hannibal, a master in the art of war, and one of the greatest military leaders of history.

During the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, piracy was indulged in on a global scale. From the day of departure from Europe, Africa or Asia, till the day of casting anchor at the destination, ships were never safe from British, French, Dutch, Danish, Portuguese, Moor, Arab, Malay and other pirates, many with headquarters in Madagascar. In addition, scurvy, limited fresh water, and mutinous crews were only some of the other hazards, apart from shipwreck being frequent, and every coast being inhospitable. Wars in Europe rendered it almost impossible for the maritime powers to check these pirates effectively. Whatever their nationality, they were, in their way, courageous seamen, who handled their ships better than any merchantmen. Their lives were an alternation between debauchery and privation, and monotony and adventure, yet the pecuniary attractions being great, even women, and impecunious men of position, took to

piracy. Among these pirates, chiefly British, the most notorious were Edward Teach alias Blackbeard, William Kidd and Bartholomew Roberts. The latter was credited with capturing as many as eleven ships in a single day, and destroying twenty-one in one port alone despite drinking only tea; he was eventually killed by the British Navy, having destroyed 400 trading vessels in his three year piratical career. However, for this 1907 book to include Kanhoji Angre among these pirates is inappropriate, as he was a prince in his own right, and was appointed the Maratha admiral by Shivaji. Along the West Coast, he bested the East India Company at sea.

The second part of this book is a short biography of Catherine Cooke, recording what an Englishwoman contended with in India 280 years ago. Married for the first time at the age of fourteen to a man old enough to be her grandfather, she had been widowed twice by the age of eighteen. Within this period she had also been captured at sea by the Marathas and held to be ransomed. She was widowed for the third time, within eleven years of her first marriage, two of her husbands suffering violent deaths. Despite all these vicissitudes she was not cowed and stood up to the Company amidst a welter of claims and counter-claims in the Court of Chancery.

The link thus between the two narrations in this book is the East India Company making enormous profits by all available means, but vigorously resisting any demands on it, whether by pirates, or Catherine Cooke! A good read for those interested in India Britannica along the West Coast in the eighteenth century.

Lt. Gen. S.L. Menezes is the former Vice-Chief of Army Staff and the author of Fidelity and Honour—The Indian Army from 17th to 21st century.

In the recent war with Iraq, the establishment of American air superiority was crucial in minimizing the casualties of American (and other so-called allied) forces, preparing the ground for a swift advance by land forces, and bringing the war to a rapid and decisive end. In what is perhaps the most intensive air campaign ever launched in history, a mission was flown by American fighter jets against enemy 'targets' every minute from the conception of the war to its finish. The stated policy of the Bush administration was to bomb the Iraqis into submission, compel the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, and thus achieve the liberation of Kuwait. The American air force was set with the goal of reducing Iraq's military 'capability' to resist an American attack or launch one of its own by eliminating Iraq's air force or otherwise rendering it ineffective, destroying the command and communication centers, and eradicating the factories and sites believed to be housing materials with which Iraq was said to be capable of waging a biological, chemical and nuclear war. In supposed pursuit of these goals, major cities in Iraq were submitted to 'carpet bombing' as tens of thousands of sorties were flown, and though the entire infrastructure of Iraq's economy was destroyed, and its ability to assure its citizens safe water, food, electricity, and housing and other elementary necessities seriously compromised, the Americans persisted in airing the view that the destruction of the enemy had been wrought with 'surgical' precision. The anomaly of employing a metaphor from medicine, which presumably serves to save and prolong life, appears not to have left any impression upon the American military high command. The colossal loss of civilian lives likewise seems not to have deterred the American media from speaking of 'surgical' strikes.

The Middle East, and particularly Iraq, has always been the 'happy hunting ground' for the air forces of Western powers. The relentless bombing to which Iraq's citizens were subjected in the recent war is a species of the 'frightfulness', as David Omissi's timely *Air Power and Colonial Control* suggests, with which the colonial powers in the first half of this century sought to retain their mastery over their ill-begotten possessions in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. In his preface, Omissi states that 'in colonies, mandates and protectorates, from Ireland to Africa, and above all in India and the Middle East, the Royal Air force tried to intimidate, to bomb and to machine gun dissident subjects into submission to imperial power' (p.ix). Between the two world wars, the Royal Air Force had no greater function than that of policing the British Empire, and just how this control was wrought is the subject of Omissi's inquiry, which also provides a comparative perspective on the similar use of air power as a means to colonial control by France and Italy. The emergence of the

Instrument Of Terrorism

Vinay Lal

AIR POWER AND COLONIAL CONTROL: THE ROYAL AIR FORCE, 1919-1939: STUDIES IN IMPERIALISM

By David E. Omissi

Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1990, pp. 260, price not stated.

Royal Air Force, according to Omissi, "owed nothing to colonial conflict" (p.7), for the Great War had already shown the shortcomings of British military aviation, which it was felt could only be ameliorated by endowing the air force with independence, and freeing it from the tentacles of the army and the navy. Nonetheless, the growth of the RAF into an independent arm of the nation's defence services was indisputably tied to its ability to help retain control over colonial possessions, bring new ones under the control of the Empire, and overcoming the resistance to colonial ambitions hitherto put up by the terrain, climate, and other environmental factors.

From its very inception, the military aircraft was viewed as an invaluable vehicle for instilling fear into the natives, causing terror, and creating a 'moral effect'. Major (later General) Baden-Powell, more widely known as the affable founder of the Boy Scouts, advised in a lecture he gave in 1909 that in "savage warfare" the "moral effect on an ignorant enemy" of using military aircraft "would be great, and a few bombs would cause serious panic" (p.5). The Italians, not to be outdone, resorted to widespread aerial bombing during their conquest of Libya

in 1911-12. Omissi points out that the Italian High Command was inclined to the view that though the bombing did no serious damage, it had a "wonderful moral effect" on the natives. Their "belief", he adds, "foreshadowed that of the British Air Staff in the 1920s" (p.5), and in one respect Omissi's book can be read as a work that adduces a great deal of testimony pointing to the 'frightfulness' of air policing and its creation of a "moral effect" (pp.57, 152-154, 160). Thus Field Marshal Henry Wilson could speak with equanimity of air power as "an instrument of terrorism" (p.28), while Air Marshal Peirse readily held to the belief that his bombers, by making "a good example" of Palestinian Arabs, could "cow the country" (p.46). Between 1918 and 1945, 'frightfulness', or the attempted submission of the tribes in the North-West Frontier Province of undivided India, the Nuers in Sudan, and of Arabs in Iraq, Egypt, and other parts of the Middle East to British rule by terrorizing these populations from the air, became so ingrained a part of Britain's conduct towards its colonies that Orwell, in his essay on "Politics and the English Language", an euphemism for the bombardment from the air of defenceless villages

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and setting huts on fire with incendiary bullets, had entered the English language. It was this very 'frightfulness', this creation of a 'moral effect', which could engender such debased beliefs as those which held that the natives were capable of "adjust[ing] their life to air attack" (p.119), or that—to cite Marshal of the RAF Lord Trenchard's assessment of the Frontier tribes—they had "no objection to being killed" (p.170). The Senior Air Staff Officer in Iraq in the late 1920s, in trying to better his superiors in London, justified the bombing of Iraqi villages with the observation that "either in this world or the next" the natives would realize that the bombing had been done only for the good of their community (p.176).

Just as underlying this reign of terror that colonial air power unleashed upon India, Africa, Iraq, and Palestine was the racial attitude that in these parts life was cheap, and that the 'Oriental' and the African rather expected the superordinate authority to take away his life on a whim, so by contrast repressive air power was never employed in the British Isles, even though the possibility of subjecting striking workers, or the 'dammed Irish', to air control was raised on a few occasions. The Englishman was held to be too free a creature to tolerate such intrusions upon his life. Here, in any case, is a concrete instance of where the practices of the colonial state differed from those of the 'mother' country. What made air power as a means of colonial control possible, however, were certain material considerations which in the aftermath of World War I acquired renewed importance. The considerable expenses required to defend (and keep) the Empire, particularly at a time when Britain's declining economic importance in the world was apparent, and an enormous public debt had accumulated, were the subject of debate in and outside government, and air power was championed as a cheaper method of suppressing rebellious activity in the colonies, as a way of lengthening one arm of the government while shortening the reach of the other arm as it dipped into the treasury. In Iraq, for example, British military expenditure fell from over 20 million to less than 3.5 million in 1925, and elsewhere too the RAF was able to accomplish at a much lower cost what a punitive expedition or military operation with ground forces might not even have achieved at a greater cost. Omissi writes that "by 1925 it was clear that air control had successfully maintained British influence in Iraq without the heavy expenditure implied by an army garrison" (p.35). Bombing was "cheap, quick and often effective", and not surprisingly officers indulged in the temptation to order an air attack when it was unnecessary (p.94).

Aircraft helped to expand the power of the colonial state to swamplands, mountains, and particularly deserts. The immunity which geography had

provided to the Nuers in Sudan, the tribes of the North-West Frontier Province, and the Bedouin, Wahabis and Hijazis in Arabia was rudely and effectively shattered (pp.4, 86-105). The environment might still prove resistant, and clouds might obscure targets from the air, but in a terrain like the desert aircraft were swift, and their pilots and crew far less affected by the heat than the men on a ponderous march extending over days. The 'conquest' over time and space that aircraft affected appeared to endow them with 'magical properties. The supposed invulnerability of the aeroplane was often contrasted with the vulnerability of ground troops (p.111), and the Empire once again must have seemed, to its advocates as much as to its foes, omnipotent. Secretary of Air Samuel Hoare who toured the empire by aircraft in 1927, wrote that "there was a British Minister descending from the clouds, and visiting, in the course of a few weeks, the whole line of British influence from Malta to Chitral" (p.95). If a mere horse could help to topple the Inca Empire, what could not an aeroplane do?

'Magical' as air power may have been, it could not hide the brute reality that from the air everyone was a target, and that when the bombs burst women and children as much as men, civilians as much as military personnel, were likely to be hurt and killed. As early as 1921 the Air Staff concluded that "it may be thought better . . . to preserve appearances by formulating milder rules and by still nominally confining bombardment to targets which are strictly military in character. . . to avoid emphasizing the truth that air warfare has made such restrictions obsolete and impossible." Here was a clear recognition that no attack from the air can render immunity to civilians, but this admission has been ignored to this day, as the bombing of Libya in 1986, which killed among others Gaddafi's infant daughter, and the recent bombing of Iraq, shows only too well. The refusal of the American government and media to discuss civilian casualties and the terrible hardship under bombing of many millions of Iraqis must surely constitute one of the most disturbing features of the Gulf War. Nor is this altogether surprising, when we consider that a once great imperial power, Great Britain, could defend the bombing of entire tribal areas in the North-West Frontier with the ingenuous argument that as Pathan society recognized only collective responsibility, it would be doing the Pathans less than justice to bomb the hostile elements and spare the innocent ones. Some such argument will no doubt be advanced to explain Iraqi civilian casualties, and Omissi's book will aid us immeasurably in historicizing the modern discourse of 'frightfulness'.

Vinay Lal teaches history at Columbia University, U.S.A.

Through Different Prisms

Prashant Kidambi

OXFORD IN INDIA READINGS—THEMES
IN INDIAN HISTORY

THE MAKING OF AGRARIAN POLICY
1770-1900

Edited by Burton Stein
1992, pp. 240, Rs 240.00

THE WORLD OF THE RURAL LABOURER
IN COLONIAL INDIA

Edited by Gyan Prakash
1992, pp. 310, Rs 275.00

PEASANT RESISTANCE IN INDIA
1858-1914

Edited by David Hardiman
1992, pp. 304, Rs 240.00
All published by Oxford University Press.

The series under review attempts to present an overview of the trends in modern Indian history. It focusses on some of the more important themes which have engaged the attention of historians and traces the broad historiographical developments within each theme. Each volume looks at the key issues addressed by historians, the kinds of questions they have posed and in the process tries to open up new lines of inquiry. The format employed in these volumes is consistent in that the essays selected reflect the changing frameworks through which historians have viewed these themes. Each volume is prefaced by an introduction written by a well-known authority on the subject which engages in a dialogue with the essays presented therein.

The volume edited by Burton Stein examines one of the most intensely debated issues of modern Indian history, namely colonial agrarian policy. This emerged as a theme in modern Indian historiography, with the publication in 1817, of James Mill's *History of British India*. For Mill, nothing exemplified the worth of British rule better than the order that they had been able to introduce in the

land revenue administration of India which contrasted favourably with the chaos and tyranny that had preceded it. By the turn of the century, however, British agrarian policy had become a matter of heated debate between colonial officials and nationalist writers. The polemical nature of this exchange was to exercise a great deal of influence on much of the subsequent scholarship on the subject. In his introduction, Burton Stein presents a brief survey of the historiography on the theme. He is especially critical of the *Cambridge Economic History of India* (vol. 2) which "shifts the debate on agrarian and other policies in fundamental ways, away from the manner in which imperialist historians and nationalist treated them" (p. 3). Stein points out, rightly, that the CEHI (vol. 2) ignores many of the political and imperial imperatives underlying colonial policy, preferring instead to focus on detailed statistical analyses of income and agricultural prices. He proceeds to locate the British search for an appropriate agrarian policy in the need of the colonial state to maintain stability, especially following the accelerated capitalist penetration of the countryside in the 19th century. He argues, however, that a combination of politico-historical factors rendered a well-defined and consistent colonial policy well-nigh impossible. Moreover, the impact of policies varied depending upon ecological diversity, upon when a region was incorporated into the evolving company regime in India and upon the nature of pre-colonial agrarian relations.

Stein also reiterates one of the pet themes of much of the recent 'revisionist' history, notably, that capitalist development pre-dated colonialism in India. In his view, it was the interaction between the evolving indigenous capitalist relations and the more powerful forces of colonial capitalism that formed the backdrop for the development of agrarian capitalism in India during and after the late 19th century. Stein's framework, however, can be questioned. He seems to posit a very straightforward continuity between the pre-colonial and colonial periods. While formal similarities may no doubt have existed between the two periods, it can be argued that capitalist development under colonial rule was restructured in crucial ways which rendered it different from anything that had preceded it.

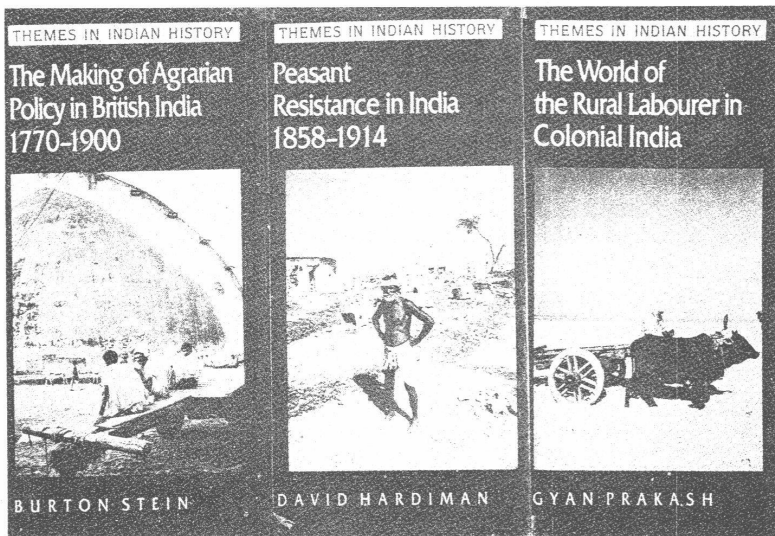
The essays in this volume examine the imperatives which underlay colonial policy formulation from a variety of standpoints. The book tries to understand both the intellectual influences on policy-making, as well as the extent to which policy was shaped by pragmatic considerations. The complex interplay between ideas, policy and local considerations is well brought out by the essays. Especially noteworthy in this regard are the contributions of David Ludden, Neeladri Bhattacharya, Sumit Guha and Rajat and Ratna Ray. Their essays reveal the historiogra-

phical shifts on the theme, from a purely British-centred perspective, to one which sees matters from the standpoint of those who were affected by colonial policy. Policy is thus sought to be placed in the broader context of its interrelationship with society. In the process, a range of important issues are examined: how the colonial state was forced to negotiate with pre-colonial elites, how they sought to incorporate such elites into the new system, the ways in which the powers and privileges of the old order were redefined in the new context, and lastly how the impact of policy was mediated by ecological conditions.

Like agrarian policy, agricultural labour also emerged as an important theme in modern Indian historiography during the course of the historical debates on the nature of the colonial impact. The volume edited by Gyan Prakash addresses itself to this issue. In his introductory essay, Prakash analyses both the emergence of agricultural labourers as a theme in historiography, as well as the different frameworks through which they have been studied. Agricultural labourers, Prakash observes, became available as 'a category of knowledge' in the late 19th century, when the first modern all-India census was introduced. The introduction of census enumeration in 1871-2 set in place a new colonial sociology which depicted India as a configuration of occupational groups. Within this new sociology, agricultural labourers emerged as a separate category from the census of 1881. Although the category of agricultural labourers was constantly redefined in later census enumerations, its position as a category of knowledge was undisputed. Furthermore, the emergence and subsequent redefinition of the identity of agricultural labourers within the discursive field drew sustenance from the crystallisation of colonial capitalism. This development reinforced the role of the economy as the basis around which social relations were ordered. The new found importance of the economy facilitated the emergence of labour as a key category of analysis.

However, according to Prakash, the growing body of knowledge on the economically constituted groups were placed alongside the more traditional categories through which Indian society had been viewed, namely, religion, caste and the village community. The opposition and coalescence between these three categories gave rise over time to a variety of interpretations about rural labour. Scholars, in his view, "have contrasted old theories and descriptions with facts and classifications generated by the census, combined and reinterpreted them, and dismissed them one in favour of the other." (p.2)

Initially, the debates on agricultural labourers were concerned primarily with numbers. In the nationalist argument for instance, agricultural labourers did not exist in pre-colonial times, whereas their



numbers increased dramatically under colonial rule. S.J. Patel's essay was a pioneering one in this regard, wherein he indicted colonial rule for creating a class of rural landless labourers. Later historians drew a somewhat different picture. Dharma Kumar, for instance, put forward a revisionist argument in her work *Land and Caste in South India*, in which she tried to show that contrary to Patel's understanding, landless agricultural labourers were a characteristic of the pre-colonial period too. These differences in interpretation were a result of different readings of colonial documents and their juxtaposition with the facts and figures collected through the census. Thus, while Patel put together British writing on 'village communities' and contrasted them with census data, Dharma Kumar relied upon British writings on slavery in early 19th century South India in analysing pre-colonial society. Thus, her argument assumed a basic identity between the labourers of the census and the 'slaves' and 'agrestic serfs' to whom earlier accounts had referred. Prakash's essay reveals how a retrospective reading of colonial records of an earlier era, and the consequent separation of these records from the conceptual frameworks prevalent at the time they were written, resulted in these documents speaking in 'the language of an economic discourse'. In other words, an overweening concern with numbers tended to obscure the social context in which the world of the rural labourer was embedded.

Subsequent studies on the subject, however, shifted the focus on to the social forms of existence among agricultural labourers, the structures of power and the social institutions within which they were located, and the transformations

that these underwent. The essays by Jairus Banaji, Sujata Bose and Neeladri Bhattacharya address precisely these issues. They show that the category of rural labourers included not just the landless labourers, but also small peasants. Existing under a variety of social forms, these landless labourers and small peasants bore new relations of labour that arose as a result of the structural changes brought about by colonialism. This point is further substantiated by the studies of labour migration within India and to overseas plantations.

In recent times, the focus has shifted to the realm of culture. Historians are now beginning to study both the 'culture of domination' and the 'domination of culture'. According to Prakash, "the first points to the discursive logic articulated in a range of practices—economic, social, ideological—and it involves such issues as patterns of relationships, wage, rent, credit, work, collective association and affinities and beliefs. The second alludes to the practices and forms of their normalisation and contestation." (p.30) The essays by Jan Breman and Gyan Prakash are representative of this shift towards cultural analysis. Their arguments are persuasive, yet it might not be out of place to point out that just as earlier studies on rural labour tended towards economic reductionism, present studies seem to have swung to the other extreme by emphasising a form of cultural determinism.

Peasant resistance in the period 1858-1914 is the theme of the volume edited by David Hardiman. It is a well-documented fact that peasant resistance in this period was fragmented and localised, both in terms of their aims and the impact that they had. In other words, they were "a

collection of histories of local agrarian relationships and struggles, each of which had its own timetable of revolt." (p.1) However, despite their isolated nature and poor organisation, these movements were a constant source of worry for the colonial state. Colonial officials were quick to denounce these movements as 'irrational', 'unprogressive' and backward-looking. Such a view was unquestioningly accepted by many later historians who tended to study these movements largely in relation to British policy. No effort was made to analyse and understand the motives of the peasants nor was there any attempt to look deeper and study the forms of mobilisation in these movements.

In his review of the literature, Hardiman looks at the different perspectives from which historians have studied this theme. He is critical of much of the scholarship on peasant resistance in the 1960s and 1970s, which in its zeal to show that socio-economic realities underpinned the dynamics of peasant resistance, completely marginalised the 'religious and community content of this resistance'. In his view, the time has come to reexamine this community consciousness which provided the inner dynamic for peasant resistance. In this, he is echoing the views of writers like Partha Chatterjee and others who have also challenged the attempt to explain all peasant resistance in terms of 'essential' class interests.

Hardiman argues that any discussion of community-based political action must make a clear distinction between communities as actual social groups and "the community" as a form of consciousness. "The community", he says, "exists in a relationship of opposition to those who are not of the community. Its boundaries

will shift and change according to context and circumstance. Thus, in a conflict between moneylenders and peasants 'the peasant community' would include all those who are exploited by the moneylenders. Hardiman goes on to argue that, if subsequently, in the same region there was a conflict between a dominant landed peasantry and agricultural labourers, the two groups would tend to see themselves as communities rather than classes. Hardiman's emphasis on community consciousness is a refutation of conventional class-based analyses of peasant resistance. It also opens up new ways of conceptualising peasant resistance. However, his account seems to downplay the contested character of this community consciousness.

The essays in the book focus on peasant resistance against outside exploitation, and not on struggles within the peasant community based on divisions of class, caste, gender etc. In an attempt to look for broader patterns to the peasant resistance of this period, Hardiman demarcates particular areas of resistance, each of which related to specific relations of domination and subordination. The chief areas of resistance looked at here are: (1) peasants against European planters; (2) peasants against indigenous landlords; (3) peasants against professional moneylenders (sahukars); (4) peasants against the land-tax bureaucracy; and (5) peasants against forest officials. Analysed in these terms, each movement discussed in this volume can be seen as representative of a certain type of resistance. Thus, the indigo rebellion can be seen as an opposition to the depredations of European planters, Pabna as a revolt against oppressive landlordism, the Deccan Riots as a symbol of resistance to sahuakar domination and the forest movements as a critique of colonial forest policy and its practitioners. One can see in the process an underlying order which ties together these seemingly disparate movements.

There is a problem however in reconciling Hardiman's notion of 'community consciousness' as the defining feature of peasant resistance, with the periodization (1858-1914) adopted in this volume. One can argue that peasants have opposed the state, landlords or for that matter any other elements who were considered to be outside the community even before the colonial period. Unless it can be shown that the community consciousness in the colonial period was different from the period preceding it, the periodization in this volume becomes problematic.

On the whole, however, this series should prove useful to both students of history, as well as the layman, for the insights it offers into some of the important themes which have dominated the agenda of modern Indian historiography.

Prashant Kidambi is an M. Phil student in the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Belied Hopes

B.P. Singh

BROKEN PROMISES: POPULAR PROTEST, INDIAN NATIONALISM AND THE
CONGRESS PARTY IN BIHAR 1935-1946

By Vinita Damodaran

Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992, pp. 398, Rs. 400.00

Both Western colonialism and Indian freedom struggle were human creations. It is true that colonialism in its history has shown tremendous capacities for renewal. But faced with the new challenges of the freedom struggle in India it suffered several cracks and ultimately it was destroyed by its excesses and contradictions. The cause of the freedom struggle was furthered by the human wisdom of India's leaders and massive support from the Indian population. In many ways Bihar was in the vanguard of the freedom struggle. It provided maximum number of activists in promoting the cause of freedom than elsewhere in the country and also a number of top leaders.

Bihar is situated between Uttar Pradesh on the west and West Bengal on the east. There are three natural divisions of the State: (i) the districts north of the Ganga or north Bihar having boundaries with Nepal and West Bengal; (ii) the non-tribal districts south of the Ganga river popularly referred to as Central Bihar and south Bihar, having boundaries with both West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh; and (iii) the tribal districts of Chhota Nagpur plateau, having boundaries with West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

Vinita Damodaran's book titled *Broken Promises: Popular Protest, Indian Nationalism and the Congress Party in Bihar, 1935-46* makes a study of the freedom struggle in Bihar in its social context primarily of north Bihar and south Bihar districts. As the author says, "The study has emerged from an understanding of the shortcomings within existing historical analyses of the interaction between 'elite' and 'popular' groups in the context of social change and rebellion. It aims, instead, to recreate a more 'rounded history' by reconstructing the world of elite politics and by examining the impact of the state, institutions and economic and social change on the peasantry and other subordinate rural classes. In this way one may begin to understand the historical processes that have formed and informed popular consciousness and actions. The work also seeks to examine the evolution of the economic and social conditions in

which these actions were generated". (p.7) The author extends the study to the performance of the Congress Party in mutually contradictory roles of a party in power and a party of protest and the impact of these roles on the country-side.

There is wide convergence of views among historians and political scientists that the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century provided vital inputs in the formation of the social order of modern India, and one in which indigenous forces of change continued to flow strongly even though the Indian subcontinent was completely incorporated into the capitalist world system. Despite the pressures inherent in the system of permanent settlement and the periodic toll of revolt and repression, the peasantry continued to adapt in a creative way to their environment. Resistance movements were directed not only against the British but also against more privileged groups of Indians. It was another matter that the Indian National Congress worked assiduously and succeeded in a great measure in preventing conflict between the peasants and the Indian Zamindars and between the factory workers and the Indian mill-owners. This was the strategy that the Congress adopted in order to channelize all its energies against the British. This policy was to a great extent due to the hold the landlords and the capitalists had over the decision-making apparatus of the Indian National Congress.

From the early years of the twentieth century, the Rajputs and the Bhumihar Brahmins in Bihar and UP in the north like Kamma and Reddi cultivators in the Deccan in the south played important intermediary roles in politics and social organization between urban political centres and village institutions. The case of Bihar in certain ways was unique for it witnessed an intense Kisan Sabha movement under the leadership of Swami Sahajananda. Some British indigo planters to whom nothing was more important than their share in the profit that the international trade in indigo delivered provided a cause for organization of kisans in Bihar. Later it was against con-

trol over *bakhast* (Government) land that witnessed kisan rallies and government repression. Chapter II of the book brings out all aspects of this matter very clearly. The increase in land rent, and declining public access to forests, grazing lands and water resources created great hardships for the peasants. The fight of the farmers for restoration of *bakhast* lands during 1935-39 in Bihar could well be a subject matter of a full-fledged study by itself. However, the author has singled out several agitations in this behalf in Bihar including the one in Barahiya Tal in Monghyr district in 1939 led by Karyanand Sharma who successfully prevented the agents of the landlords from forcible occupation of *bakhast* land and in the process was mercilessly beaten up by lathials of the Zamindars. The reviewer had the privilege of knowing Karyanand Sharma over the years and talking to him on more than one occasion and would like to mention that in Sharmaji's perception the physical injuries that he received at the hands of the lathials of the landlords was as severe as the apathetic treatment meted out to his cause by the Congress leaders of Monghyr as well as that of Bihar province. In this background the author is justified in contending that in the Zamindar-peasant conflict, the Congress used "the tactics of the colonial state to handicap the opposition" (p. 138).

How much of this 'handicap' was on account of the distance the Congress had travelled as the guardians of the peasants to its new role of the master of the State apparatus has been discussed in the book at different places. To quote, "Despite the conciliatory attitude adopted by the left after war had broken out, the kisan movement had already seriously challenged the nascent Congress government in Bihar. The agitation had been fuelled at a fundamental level by an escalation in oppressive landlord actions and by the subsequent exacerbation of basic subsistence difficulties and ecological pressures upon an already hard-pressed peasantry. It was this very peasantry which had voted a popular Congress government to power in the specific hope that the party would redress their most immediate grievances. Once in power, the Congress proved too conciliatory to the landlords. The resulting legislative compromise led directly to unrest among the majority of the rural population so that the party found itself resorting more and more to the coercive methods of the imperial state. Equally, the Congress government in power succeeded in antagonizing the kisan movement to an extraordinary degree. Surprisingly, however, the challenge posed by the Kisan Sabha leadership did not culminate in its breakaway from the Congress. Instead the movement itself declined with the outbreak of the war and the changing priorities of the leadership. Betrayed by the Congress and let down by their own movement, the poorest peasants of Bihar were thus left to face their steadily worsening economic

and ecological predicament without any effective political lobby."

The role of the Indian National Congress in Bihar has received a detailed treatment by the author. This could be viewed in the following framework:

1. The formation of the Congress Ministry in 1937;
2. The Quit India movement of 1942;
3. The underground activity in Bihar during 1942-44;
4. Communal riots in Bihar; and
5. Acceptance of office by the Congress again in 1946.

The leadership was offered to S.K. Sinha, a Bhumihar Brahmin. The other contenders were A.N. Sinha, a Rajput and Syed Mahmud, a Muslim. The Ministry offered S.K. Sinha an opportunity to acquire administrative experience and he in turn gave Bihar a stable polity till his death in 1961.

The Quit India movement in Bihar has received the attention of several scholars and has been viewed as the most powerful nationalist movement anywhere in the subcontinent during that period. After Mahatma Gandhi's "Do or die" speech on 8th August, 1942 in Bombay, the All India Congress Committee passed the Quit India resolution by an overwhelming majority calling for immediate transfer of power to Indians. This led to the emergence of a mass movement of considerable dimensions all over Bihar. In several parts of north Bihar, particularly in Begusarai, there was no Government worth the name for a number of days. Patna witnessed widespread hartal and processions leading to the martyrdom of several persons in front of the Secretariat. The author has given a detailed description of these events including the economic conditions prevailing in Bihar at that time.

Chapter V of the book, read with the author's article entitled "Azad Dastas and Dalit Gangs: The Congress and Underground Activity in Bihar, 1942-44" published in the July 1992 issue of *Modern Asian Studies* makes fascinating reading. "The mass movement lasted for only 2 weeks in August, we carried it much beyond that" quotes the author as Havildar Tripathi's statement made before her in March, 1986. By September 1942, the British had completely repressed the mass movement, the Congress organization had been banned and all political activity had come to a standstill. However, the terrorist organizations carried the task forward by occasionally attacking a police post, looting a post office, uprooting railway lines and raiding a government treasury. All this was done in the name of the Congress and an official disclaimer from the Congress came much later. The author in giving details of underground activities in Bihar has substantially enriched the existing literature on the subject.

The failure of understanding between the Indian National Congress and the

Muslim League had an adverse impact on the communal situation in the country. "Widespread agrarian agitation over the restoration of bakasht land against the exploitative incursions of the zamindars was occurring in several districts in Bihar from the summer of 1946 onward. These peasant actions included both Hindu and Muslim peasants, who frequently made common cause against the zamindars. On many occasions Hindu and Muslim peasants collaborated (in Monghyr, as well as elsewhere), in the forcible cutting of crops on disputed land. In November, 1946, however, a strange new dimension developed in the popular actions in rural Bihar, that of communal killing. Between October and December 1946 Bihar witnessed one of the worst communal outrages in its history" (pp. 337-338). The rest of the history is well-known.

The election in 1946 was keenly contested between the Congress, the Communist Party, the Kissan Sabha and the Muslim League. The new Ministry was sworn in soon after the election on 16th April, 1946 with S.K. Sinha as the Prime Minister. The Congress faced widespread agrarian and urban unrest in the wake of severe food shortages and labour strikes. The land question again assumed criticality and the Congress Government at various places acted decisively in favour of the zamindars.

The book is full of facts as well as analysis about the nature of colonial rule, peasant action and the character of the Congress response to the grievances of the peasants. However, it does not deal with the wider spectrum of society in which forces of culture and education play a major role. The freedom struggle had ushered in a new value system through schools in the countryside, khadi movement, removal of untouchability and regular singing of patriotic songs through *prabhat pheris*. A new society was being born and a new generation of poets and authors came upon the scene along with peasant leaders and politicians. The rich heritage of Bihar received a new orientation during this period. It is another matter that the values of the freedom struggle declined sharply after '60s in Bihar but this is true more or less of the other states in the country as well.

The attractive title is an apt appellation for the failure of the elite and political leadership of Bihar from 1937 onwards in respect of fulfilment of promises made by them to the people of Bihar. The book is well researched and well presented and makes a very useful contribution to existing literature on Bihar.

B.P. Singh, a senior civil servant currently working in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi is the author of Problem of Change: A Study of North-East India.

Towards A New World

Vandana Swami

WHEN DEMOCRACY MAKES SENSE: STUDIES IN THE DEMOCRATIC POTENTIAL OF THIRD WORLD POPULAR MOVEMENTS

Edited by Lars Rudebeck

Working Group for the study of Development Strategies (AKUT), Uppsala University, Sweden, 1992, pp 399 + xii, \$ 20

In all corners of the globe today, one word has ignited a multitude of hopes across political and geographic lines of division—Democracy. A word that holds hope and promise as well as anguish for everybody concerned. It is exactly these feelings among people that are captured beautifully by the book under review.

The volume has grown out of a post-graduate seminar in 1987, at the Department of Political Science, Uppsala University, Sweden, called the "Working Group for the Study of Development Strategies (AKUT). This research collective is interested in studying the relationship between political power and economic and social transformation in Third World societies, as well as in the class nature of state power and popular movements. Contributors to the volume come from eleven different countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. Specifically, the book revolves around the theme of popular movements and democracy in the countries just mentioned. It brings together experiences from the lives of peasants, farmers, workers, men, women, intellectuals, each in their societal context, in order to assess the democratic content and potential of their lives *vis-à-vis* state and society. This potential has been assessed from three vantage points—the level of mode of production, the historical experiences and practices of concrete social groups and that of cultural identities, value-systems and ideologies, including those based on nation (ality), gender and religion (p. 3). Among other levels, the class-level of society constitutes a key point of analytical entry throughout the volume.

As the title of the book suggests, the collection of articles tries to explore the conditions under which democracy "makes sense", i.e. the specific conditions under which people demand democracy, and also, what makes for the success or failure of these demands. While doing so, the book makes its own point—that democracy has to be strongly backed by legitimacy in order to be meaningful—

"people demand democracy, including political rights, most strongly when they think it is right and just, and when they believe at the same time, that such a system of rules will help improve their lives." (p. 8)

The book is divided into three sections, of several essays each accompanied by a rich bibliography at the end. The first section deals with the relationship between movements, state and democracy. Most developing nations are experiencing movements involving labourers, peasants, farmers, women, deprived castes, ethnic groups and also those which betray secessionist overtones. The essays by Partha N. Mukerji and Ishtiaq Ahmed try to comprehend the phenomena of class and ethnic movements in the Third World from the perspective of state and nation-building. In a lucid and comprehensive essay, Ishtiaq Ahmed examines separatism in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka from various angles, discussing its possible causes and solutions. While exhorting the state to provide guarantees for equal opportunities for development and modernization, he concludes that a democratic and secular polity can best respond to political unity, through cultural pluralism and autonomy (p. 65). He points out that India has, in principle a greater capacity to manage and accommodate ethnic tension.

In other essays in this section, Yusuf Bangura, an African scholar, looks at the genesis of authoritarian rule in Africa, and the future of struggles for democratization and popular rule, especially in the context of the ongoing liberalization. Focussing on the state, accumulation process and the democratic forces in Nigeria, Jibrin Ibrahim, a political scientist from Nigeria, asserts that despite military rule, a democratic tradition exists in Nigeria. He explains how, despite all odds, Nigerians have demonstrated a will to preserve hard non-democratic rights. This, he feels, could become the basis for the evolution towards an open and regulative democracy in Nigeria.

Bjorn Beckman reviews a very inter-

esting debate among African radical democrats about the prospects of liberal democracy in Africa. He notes that unlike before, forces of the left are beginning to accept liberal-democratic platforms as a mode of ensuring the survival of popular democratic groups, thereby expanding the "democratic space".

The next section looks at the dynamics between rural politics, the peasantry and democracy. The New Peasant Movements or farmers agitations in India have been demanding a fairer deal from the state in terms of remunerative prices in the market and lower costs on inputs etc, thus constituting a sizeable "demand group." Staffan Linkberg looks at the implications of this on the democratic process. He considers the contradiction to be between the peasantry as a whole and the state and urban industrial interests (p. 211). However, he notes that the landless labourers and poor peasants are not much involved in these movements, and in fact, the farmers' agitations have not touched issues like land reform, agricultural wages, debt bondage, poverty etc. (p. 214).

Undoubtedly, the position of the state will determine whether they become temporary or permanent features of the political scene in India. Kirsten Westergaard, in his essay, has shown how the Panchayati Raj institutions in West Bengal and Bangladesh have served to broaden the political base and open up for reforms in the former, while in the

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Lars Rudebeck demonstrates, with empirical evidence, the impact of "structural adjustment" on a village in West Africa. He makes a debatable but interesting point that structural adjustment programmes may lead to democratization, mainly because of the resistance put up by people against the hardships imposed on them by these programmes.

A Primary Source of Islamic History

Zafarul-Islam Khan

THE HISTORY OF AL-TABARI VOL. IX: THE LAST YEARS OF THE PROPHET

Translated by Ismail K. Poonawala

State University of New York Press, New York, 1990, pp. xiii + 250, Bibliography, US \$ 19.95

latter, they continue the traditional patron-client relationships. In both cases, even though the poor may be represented in the local bodies, this has not brought about any increase in control on their part. Nevertheless, the broadening of the base of the panchayats can be seen as initiating the process of democratization in the panchayats.

Lars Rudebeck demonstrates, with empirical evidence, the impact of "structural adjustment" on a village in West Africa. He makes a debatable but interesting point that structural adjustment programmes may lead to democratization, mainly because of the resistance put up by people against the hardships imposed on them by these programmes.

In the last section on Labour and Democracy, Lars Lindstorm and Laurids S. Lauridsen look at the labour movement in the two "Asian Tigers"—South Korea and Taiwan respectively. Lindstorm writes that in South Korea, the State has strictly regulated the avenues for workers to organize (p. 325) and has passed laws to that effect. However, since 1987, the democratization process has somewhat improved the situation *vis-à-vis* the labour movement, which can now, in alliance with other disadvantaged groups, contribute towards sustaining and expanding this process. In Taiwan, on the other hand, prior to 1987, the trade unions merely administered worker services and enforced labour discipline under the diktat of paternalistic state. Workers were excluded from decision-making at all levels. Despite this, 'labour peace' has prevailed and workers' resistance has taken indirect, personal and non-collective forms. Family-based employment systems have played a crucial role in preventing mass-labour unrest. But, like elsewhere, the situation here is also changing, and the author sums up the changes as "Taiwanization, Liberalization and Democratization" (p. 353), behind each of which the workers are becoming major forces. In such circumstances, the state may become an agent of social security and economic equality.

When Democracy Makes Sense, in its effort to understand the current socio-economic situation across the Third World succinctly brings out the hardships and trying circumstances that the marginalized sections are facing in the transition towards Democracy and Liberalization. What the outcome of their struggles may be remains to be seen, and there is no doubt that this struggle will be a long and painful one, but the contributors to the volume have all struck a hopeful note for the future. Despite the turbulence and discontent that democracy has brought in tow, it has become a worthwhile goal to pursue.

Vandana Swami is doing her Master's Degree in Political Science at the University of Delhi.

This is the ninth volume of *The History of al-Tabari* in the Bibliotheca Persica series. It covers approximately the last two and a half years of the Prophet's life as the head of the State of Medina (from 1 May 629 to 7 June 632 when the Prophet, upon whom peace, died).

The book is an annotated translation of Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari's *Tarikh al-Tabari*, which is the most comprehensive early work on Islamic history. It is a commendable effort to translate this primary reference work into English for the benefit of scholars and readers unable to consult the original Arabic work which is available in various published editions. Poonawala has used the edition prepared by de Goeje et al (Leiden 1879-1901) in 15 volumes. A better edition has been brought out by Muhammad Abu'l-Fadl Ibrahim (Cairo 1960-9) in 10 volumes.

Al-Tabari was born in the town of Amul in the Persian province of Tabaristan in 224/839, in a wealthy family. This background helped him all his life and allowed him to devote himself almost totally to acquire and disseminate knowledge (only once he is reported to have taught the son of a minister for some time).

At the age of seven he had memorized the *Qur'an* and soon left his home-town for Rayy, Baghdad, Kufa, Basra, Damascus and al-Fustat to master religious and temporal sciences. He lived most of his life in Baghdad, where he died on 26 Shawwal 310/923 at the age of 86. Al-Tabari was a prolific and versatile writer. Apart from *tafsir*, history and *fiqh*, his areas of interest included poetry, lexicography, grammar, ethics, medicine and mathematics. His *tafsir (Jami al-Bayan)* is as important, pioneering and authoritative as his work on history. Both are mines of information and continue to inspire scholars to this day. His other published works include: *Al-Tiqad* on his *fiqh* school the *Jaririyyah*; *Dhayl al-Mudhayyal*, biographies of the Prophet's companions, *Iktihaf al-Fuqaha'*, on the differences and their reasons between *fuqaha'*.

In this monumental work, al-Tabari has collected the histories of ancient peoples and prophets before starting to treat in great detail the history of Islam down to Dhu'l-Hijjah 302/July 915. He has arranged his material annalistically from the beginning of the Muslim era, under the *hijri* calendar.

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In a way al-Tabari's account of early Islamic history is more authoritative than Ibn Hisham's *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, because, among other sources, al-Tabari's narration is based on the complete work of Ibn Ishaq's *Sirah* (which did not survive, while Ibn Hisham's is an abridged and annotated version. Dr Muhammad Hamidullah discovered segments of Ibn Ishaq's original work in the Qarawiyyin and the Zahiriyyah libraries and published them as *Sirat Ibn Ishaq*. . . (Rabat 1976)). Poonawala has collated al-Tabari's text with Ibn Hisham's and discovered that, 'on the whole, there is remarkable agreement between the two *riwayas*' (p.x).

Poonawala has also collated al-Tabari's account with other sources he quotes, *viz.* al-Waqidi's *Kitab al-Maghazi*, Ibn Sa'd's *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* and the first volume of al-Baladhuri's *Ansab al-Ashraf*.

Slight variations in translation were observed when texts chosen at random were compared. For example: (a) 'intending to fight him' (p.2, line 5) occurs a sentence later in the Arabic text (Beirut ed., n.d. II, 344). Five lines later 'occupied Mecca' is not the correct translation of '*nazala Makkah*' which would mean 'taking up quarters' or 'lodging' at Mecca. (b) The name 'Khalid b. al-Walid' (p. 82, line 3) does not exist in the original (it occurs later). Six lines later a direct order to Khalid has been turned into an indirect one (Beirut ed. p. 385). (c) 'The Prophet put Abu Bakr in command of the pilgrimage in the year 9/631 and explained to him its rites' (p. 208, lines 12-13; Beirut ed. p. 455). Here the last part of the sentence should have been translated as follows: 'he (i.e. Abu Bakr) explained to them (i.e. pilgrims) its rites' (*fa arahum manasikahum*). Five lines later, 'He received the revelation' (*wa ustanbi'ya*), should have been translated as 'was made a prophet.' (d) In the last two lines of the book (p. 209) 'they' should have been translated as 'we'.

Ibn Hisham's *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah* should not have been attributed to Ibn Ishaq (bibliography, p. 214). For all purposes, it is Ibn Hisham's book and the editors of the standard Arabic edition (al-Saqqā et al) have clearly attributed it to Ibn Hisham. The title page of this edition bears the following: '*Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah li-ibn Hisham*', i.e. 'The Prophet's life by Ibn Hisham'. A. Guillaume (*The Life of Muhammad*, Oxford University Press, 1955) uses this very edition of Ibn Hisham's work (p. xii) but insists on attributing it to Ibn Ishaq!

Dr Zafarul-Islam Khan is director, The Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies, New Delhi.

Sustainable Development: A Progressive Gender Perspective

Hema Balasubramanian

THE POWER TO CHANGE: WOMEN IN THE THIRD WORLD
REDEFINE THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Women's Feature Service, Kali for Women, 1992, pp. 227, Rs. 90.00

The Power to Change is a presentation of a collection of down-to-earth experiences by rural poor women who are often at the receiving end of the "fall-out" from ill-conceived plans for economic development. They are drawn from actual in-field research studies spanning several years and covering several countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Using first-person narratives by some of the more articulate among the target beneficiary groups of the rural poor women, as well as reports of the researchers and women activists, they portray very succinctly the long term negative impact of the pursuit of lop-sided 'top down' policies for development, on the environment.

Policy planners and others interested in sustainable economic development will be happy to know this the Women's Feature Service has put together a very readable and illuminating treatise on a topic of vital importance. A lot has been said, discussed and written about development in various international forums and seminars; however, it is becoming increasingly evident that traditional approaches to this problem using the "trickle-down" theory of economics alone is no longer conducive to sustainable development. It is in this context that I consider this book of timely importance; for perhaps the first time, we now have access to a concise, simple presentation of a realistic alternative approach to the problem, incorporating a progressive, gender perspective.

Examples of the negative impact of lop-sided development policies on everyday life and the devastation of the environment in which society lives, abound all over the place. Perhaps, the reality of this has been felt to the maximum extent by the poor, rural women. Studies by anthropologists, social workers and other researchers among the various cross-sections of the minorities in all societies have borne out the validity of

this hypothesis. In the case of the developing and the less developed countries, the problem has been exacerbated by the imposition of developed country norms, which are steeped in the vested interests of feeding their voracious appetite for consumption of mother nature's finite resources. The meek acceptance of such policies by the poorer countries are also a reflection of and a tacit admission of their own necessity for day-to-day economic survival. Fortunately, this experience appears to have had a positive effect, in so far at least, as the poor rural women are concerned; the Women's Movement has indeed been among the few which gave early recognition to the imperative logic for looking at development issues from an overall perspective that links macro-level policy measures and the everyday realities of the need for economic security, human dignity and integration into the mainstream of society, with the necessary concerns for the long term impact of the policies on the environment in which they live.

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ment. They are drawn from actual in-field research studies spanning several years and covering several countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Using first-person narratives by some of the more articulate among the target beneficiary groups of the rural poor women, as well as reports of the researchers and women activists, they portray very succinctly the long term negative impact of the pursuit of lop-sided 'top down' policies for development, on the environment. More close to home, these narratives effectively illustrate the fallacy of indulging in planning from the ivory tower, without the actual involvement of and consultation with the target beneficiary groups for whom these programmes are intended.

The readers, who are perhaps likely to be policy planners and/or active members of non-governmental organizations, would appreciate that these presentations help to demonstrate that positive benefits of change can indeed be realistically brought about by the active participation, involvement and commitment of the women themselves. Women too have a desire to control their own destiny, like any other member of the mainstream society.

The Power to Change emphasizes the critical urgency in involving women at the centre of the Development and Environment debate, be it in the definition of the problem, or in the search for and the evolution of sustainable solutions. The overviews in each section are analytical to the extent that the women's struggles are presented in a socio-political framework. The linkages for action at the grassroots level with the development policies, also keeping pace with the winds of change that are sweeping the thinking within the Women's Development and Ecology movements themselves, are clearly set out. The thread is finally woven round global economic and environmental concerns, to present a well designed fabric.

In a United Nations seminar in Nairobi in 1990 on "Global Strategy for Shelter by the year 2000", some thirty "Experts" participated. "But the stars of the show were three Kenyan women who were attending an international conference for the first time in their lives. Unlike the rest, they were uneducated. They had only worked with women's groups in their communities. But they had something that none of the other participants could claim: practical experience of inadequate shelter and poor sanitation". The book contains many such illuminating passages which help to make a very strong case for a much needed alternative approach to development strategies for ensuring sustainability and equality.

In Kenya, the Greenbelt Movement has planted ten million trees. The architect of the movement, Ms. Wangari Maathai, perhaps one of the most articulate among African environmentalists, ever ready to speak out, sometimes even

courting arrest, on the occasion of her receiving the Africa Prize for Leadership for the Sustainable End of Hunger administered by the US based Hunger project in 1991, posed the question, "And why are the hungry masses forced to repay loans that they never received, and debts that they never incurred?" She continued, "For Africa to avoid its own holocaust, the continent requires brave, responsible, accountable leaders. It cannot afford the greed, the irresponsible leadership, the corruption, the plunder, the autocratic rule of fear and small wars".

Clearly, the foundation of the book is the definite appreciation that the impact of development is different on women and on men. This theme is built up based on an evaluation of the alarming trends discernible in the so called "Development Decades", which have helped only in the 'Feminization' of poverty, and perhaps, even in its self-perpetualization. The various features highlight the point that the women's attempts at rebuilding their environment, through collective action and innovative programmes, can indeed go a long way in demonstrating that equitable and sustainable life styles are within the realms of possibility. The features should also help in lending a high degree of credibility to the growing belief that macro-level planning must necessarily synchronise with micro-level living, and must be inextricably interwoven with the environment in which we live. For, only then can any movement for change would have a chance to be successful as well as sustainable.

A few words here about Women's Feature Service and its excellent track record in the area of news reporting, editing and compiling an interesting dossier on women-related issues. From humble beginnings as a project of the Third World news agency, Inter Press Service in 1978, it was encouraged to move into its own. With the full support of UNESCO, IPS helped to provide a framework in which the concerns voiced over the UN Decade for Women and the New International Information and Communication Order could be addressed. Today, after nearly fifteen years of existence, the Women's Feature Service is an accepted, credible, strong and influential voice in the mainstream media.

As a member of various women's organizations and a keen student of the Women's Movement over the past several years, this reviewer is convinced that the many journalistic and other well wishers of the Women's Feature Service would feel truly vindicated on the day the service becomes redundant, when women's issues become mainstream issues, the concern of all journalists.

Hema Balasubramanian is an independent consultant based in Delhi and working in many areas for the development of women.

NEW FROM OXFORD

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SATYA SHEEL PACHORI is Chairman and Professor of English, Department of Language and Literature, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, USA.
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In the last decade, international feminist scholarship has undergone a paradigm shift as the women's movement has adopted a more militant and radically analytic stance in Third World societies, in none more so than those of South Asia. As women from many walks of life now consciously struggle with the inequitable burdens they bear in relation to their livelihood and their political voice, these burdens are increasingly understood as being imposed on them by systems that support their subordination, both to men as well as in a larger sense.

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This volume is intended to form a bridge between those engaged in gender studies on a world scale, and those engaged in studies of South Asian societies and cultures.

ALICE W. CLARK is a historian and demographer trained at the Universities of Wisconsin and California.
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The cooperatives have supported not only a rapid expansion in production and employment, but also a major increase in facilities for irrigation, education, and health care.

DONALD ATTWOOD is Associate Professor of Anthropology at McGill University.
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This book gives a succinct account of the way in which Aksai Chin and other parts of this remote and forbidding territory first became known a hundred years ago, when the British attempted to explore, define and delimit the northern borders of their Indian empire. The author shows that it was personalities, as much as political factors and strategic considerations, that were instrumental in the drawing of the boundaries of Ladakh.

Drawing on archival material and illustrating his argument with detailed maps, the author has provided a concise yet carefully researched study of an exciting and complex period, and of issues interesting to both the layman and the policy-maker cum strategist.

PARSHOTAM MEHRA was formerly Professor and Chairman, Department of History and Central Asian Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh.
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The translations in this volume have been handled with competence and sensitivity, preserving the flavour and the power of the Marathi originals.

VIJAY TENDULKAR has been in the vanguard of Indian theatre for almost forty years. This prolific writer has 28 full-length plays to his credit, many of which have been published in major Indian languages besides Marathi.
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IRFAN HABIB is Professor, Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University.
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Lord Curzon

NAYANA GORADIA

Dazzling, dedicated, some would say cast in an heroic mould, Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Viceroy of India, was the last of the great British Moghuls. British imperialism was to reach its high noon with Curzon's viceroyalty. But it was also Curzon who was responsible for the partitioning of Bengal, an act which was to fuel widespread resentment and foreshadow the Raj's demise. At thirty-nine, Curzon was the youngest Viceroy to be sent out to India. Yet, seven years later, he was to return home a broken man, his viceroyalty in shambles, only to be later dispossessed of the Prime Ministership he thought rightfully his. Was this the result of some fatal flaw in Curzon's personality?

Nayana Goradia is the first of Curzon's biographers to examine the effects on Curzon of being continually feted throughout his childhood, firstly by an adoring mother, and later by his male teachers and fellow pupils and students. Though he rose to every challenge, what bordered on narcissism was to tragically pursue him throughout adulthood—in his first marriage to Mary, the first American-born Vicereine, and most particularly in the struggle for power with Lord Kitchner, in his eight-year affair with Elinor Glyn, and in his hopes of becoming Prime Minister. The author shows that there is also evidence of sado-masochistic tendencies. Lord Kitchner was to say of Curzon, 'There is only one thing that Curzon likes more than hurting others; [and that is] to persuade others to humiliate him.'

NAYANA GORADIA read English literature at Washington State University and Girton College, Cambridge. She received her Ph.D. in history from the University of Calcutta.
322 pages

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Rough Road to Limited Freedom

Nandu Ram

ROAD TO FREEDOM: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE ABOLITION OF
SCAVENGING IN INDIA

By Bindeshwar Pathak

Motilal Banarasisass Delhi, 1991, pp. 254, Rs. 300.00

The problem of scavenging in India, as elsewhere, is very old but when it actually originated as a customary occupation assigned to the members of a particular caste or community is still not known authentically. It is also not known by which specific historical compulsion(s) these people were forced to carry out this filthy, inhuman and derogatory occupation which not only brought them the status of their being untouchable, unapproachable and even unseeable but also forced them into wretched conditions of poverty, ignorance and insulation. It is true that some commendable efforts have been made in the past to ameliorate the scavengers from their pitiable condition but the fact remains that their complete liberation and social, economic and occupational rehabilitation are still a far cry and even their own efforts to achieve occupational social mobility are marred by their continuing association with a degrading occupation, stigmatized social identity and by their most downgraded social status. The processes of industrialization, urbanization, modernization and economic development have not succeeded in removing their cumulative miseries.

It is in this perspective that the book, which is a revised version of the author's Ph.D thesis, has to be seen. The book divided into eight chapters, contains eighteen plates depicting various aspects of scavenging and scavengers' liberation, two maps indicating two types of Sulabh Shauchalaya and a census of towns covered by it in Bihar. There are also seventy six tables giving statistics about both socio-personal background of liberated and unliberated scavengers and of adopters and non-adopters of Sulabh Shauchalayas or low cost sanitation, as well as a brief bibliography of studies referred to in the text and index.

The study is concerned with analysis of attitudes, values, levels of aspirations and the underlying causes of adoption and non-adoption of low cost sanitation. The introduction begins with a description of the Sulabh Shauchalaya programme initiated by the author during 1974-84 with the main idea of liberating

scavengers in Bihar state and is followed by a full discussion on scavenging and the pitiable condition of scavengers. Assuming mythological sanctions imposed on the Bhangis (scavenging caste) the author tries unsuccessfully to trace the origin and status of the Bhangi caste in the Indian social tradition and obliquely proves that their status is determined by the dirty occupation. This he discusses again unsatisfactorily, in the next chapter (pp. 36-43). The different schemes and techniques adopted for the disposal of human waste along with technical aspects of the Sulabh Shauchalaya have been discussed in chapter 4, preceded by a justification of its adoption of suiting to the traditional social and cultural values and norms of a backward state like Bihar in chapter 3. As a prelude to what he intends to do with the theme, he tries to project in the introduction, the sociological significance of the analysis of scavenging by promising to probe into the people's (both liberated and unliberated scavengers and adopters and non-adopters of low cost sanitation) experiences, attitudes and responses to the low cost sanitation scheme and the problems of rehabilitation of the liberated scavengers. However, his claim that "this theoretical analysis precedes the analysis of the objective of the study, methodology and field data" is not substantiated. But his statement is in order when he says that "with the rationalization of the social structure and propagation of the ideals of social justice, protection of the weaker sections of society and uplift of the down-trodden people, an idea has developed in the present age to liberate scavengers and to help them get rid of this sub-human occupation".

Pathak accepts scavenging as a value and imputes to scavengers faith-oriented socialization which is certainly not based on accepting scavenging as a sacred value. Here, he unnecessarily misplaces the sociological concepts of sacred and profane in the context of values cherished by scavengers which are not mentioned or substantiated by data in his subsequent chapters. Actually, these dichotomous concepts have been analysed by Emile Durkheim in his study of religion where

he differentiates one element (sacred) of religion which is taboo from the other (profane) which is related to material objects. Sacred is separated from profane and is "an object of aspiration, love and respect" and also "a source of constraint (taboo) and respect (authority)". The sacred embodies the "collective force" and inculcates "the ideas of commonness in individual consciousness" whereas the profane is "linked with man's everyday life, and everyday individual occupations, private interests and egoistic passions".

At the value level, Pathak promises to analyse a trio of traditional values, the emergence of modern values and the resultant value-conflict and value-judgement in the context of scavenging as a value and the degree of desirability of the scavengers to stick to the "traditional normative patterns." Treating liberation of scavengers as an ideology—which again he fails to substantiate either logically or even empirically—as a programme of action, he makes the odd reference to action sociology towards the end of the book (p.185) but does not provide any theoretico-methodological perspective on this subject which is already a developed branch of sociology in the west. Then, he examines though superficially in Chapter 6 (pp.95-139) the association between low cost sanitation system and thereby liberation of scavengers and their occupational mobility leading to change in their social status, economic condition and social relationships. He expects that this, in turn, would bring change not only in the social climate but also in the traditional social structure and social system (p.13). He also visualises that this may result in conflict between traditional and modern values and, hence, such changes will be resisted by the dominant elements in the traditional society. But this is not supported by his data presented in Chapter 7 on adopters and non-adopters of low cost sanitation. In the same sequence, he intends to examine conflict, social alienation and change in social relationships between liberated and unliberated scavengers through changes in attitudes but the same could have been analysed more meaningfully and authentically by analysing changes in their behaviour. Pathak accepts liberation of scavengers as a multi-lateral and multi-dimensional process in which it requires reciprocity from scavengers and voluntary and official agencies and the members of community.

The author considers the educational background, economic condition, degree of religiosity and orthodoxy, caste-orientation, sex, occupation, place of residence and the degree of media exposure as independent variables and the acceptability and adoption of low cost sanitation scheme as dependent variables. More precisely, two sets of variables have been selected: objective aspects of family size, family income, education, age of scavenger, place of defecation; and subjective issues like attitudes, values, patterns of

relationship, acceptance and adoption levels of low cost sanitation and levels of ambitions of liberated scavengers (p.21).

The units of the present study are households and all the four samples of liberated and unliberated scavengers, and adopters and non-adopters of low cost sanitation scheme are drawn from Patna, Musaffarpur and Arrah; the liberated scavengers and adopters of low cost sanitation scheme from Patna, Ranchi and Purnea; and finally, adopters of low cost sanitation scheme from Patna, Madhubani and Chaibesa. Though these heterogeneous universes and samples should have provided a comparative perspective (which is entirely missing in the book), the author mentions at no stage how these differentiations were identified before selecting the representative samples.

Data has been collected partly through observation (which author calls his perception) and partly through a formal structured interview technique administering four different types of interview schedules on the four samples drawn from four different universes.

The author claims his study as an "action-oriented research and research-oriented action" and his survey design is to meet both requirements leading this study to a borderline empirical sociology and applied sociology. This calls upon sociologists to provide a breeding ground to action sociology and form an Indian Association of Action Sociologists. But all these are irrelevant in the context of the present study in which data used are entirely different and both data and analyses do not support the concept of "action oriented research or research oriented action."

The second chapter on scavenging through ages is very brief and does not do full justice to the origin and nature of scavenging as an occupation.

The author imputes the occupational group and class character (with openness and mobility) or scavengers in earlier time who developed later into a caste or sub-caste occupying the lowest status, with their immobility and hereditary filthy occupation in the Hindu social system. But he does not explain the actual forces which influenced their social formation and brought them to the most downgraded level in the society. He also talks incomprehensively about scavenging practised outside India especially in pre-Islamic days in Arabia, and also in European and American countries (42-43).

Chapter three covers a sparse discussion on different techniques of sanitation and disposal of night soil (45-52) but there is hardly any social or sociological insight. Likewise, the feasibility and adoption of Sulabh Shauchalaya Scheme, against other techniques of sanitation and disposal of night soil, have been discussed in the following chapter (53-66). Chapter five describes efforts made by various national and international governments and voluntary organizations, since 1930,

to improve the sanitation system and liberate scavengers in different states of India.

Field data have been used only in Chapters 6 and 7. Describing the social life of the liberated and unliberated scavengers in Chapter 6, the author finds no variations in family size, its structures and (low) income of the unliberated ones who are mostly illiterate and live in ill-maintained single room houses. But there are a couple of points which have either been missed or misplaced. For instance, the author has missed the point that in a scavenger family even children are engaged in scavenging and thereby they contribute to the family income. Similarly, when he says that the scavengers are unaware of the importance of educating the younger generation (101), he should have probed why this state of affair exists. Rather, he should understand that the younger generation of scavengers also suffers from the stigma of untouchability and prejudices of teachers, fellow students and of society as a whole.

One may broadly agree with the author's perception about the problem of unemployment being less serious among the *Bhangis due* to nature of their job (103) but one can also take note of the stigmatized status of their jobs and low emoluments which these jobs yield for them. Their occupational immobility is attributed more to their illiteracy, lack of orientation, unawareness of various government and non-government opportunities, and lack of commitment of the implementing machinery than solely to 'grab' posts reservation facilities by other Scheduled Caste people who also do not have their proper and adequate share in such facilities.

It is true that their low levels of political socialization and political participation are due to their socio-economic and educational backwardness (p.109). Mere voting in general elections is no indicator of political consciousness and political participation of scavengers. But it is ironic to say that "they do not understand the importance and innovational significance of political affiliation, political socialization and political participation" particularly looking at their socio-cultural and spatial locations. Similarly, one may not buy the argument that in spite of efforts of Central and State governments for generating political consciousness among the weaker sections of society, the unliberated scavengers have not been benefited. In fact, one would like to know from the author about various schemes of the governments for making the people politically conscious.

The author's claim about 100 per cent scavengers knowing about Sulabh Shauchalaya Scheme seems to be self-gratification in the absence of any mention of the sources of their knowledge. More interesting, though disputed, is the claim of rank by a caste in the inter-caste hierarchy. In his sample the scavengers consider Chamars, Dusads, Mushars and

Dom as their social inferior and Pasi and Dhobi as superior. On the basis of subjective views of his respondents, he repeats the cliché that "scavengers complain of caste discrimination shown by the upper and lower caste people and desire to be recognized as social equal" (this needs to be thoroughly examined in his study). "But they themselves possess this concept (of inferiority and superiority) and consider some or the Scheduled Castes superior and others inferior to them" (122-23). In fact, this is to be seen in the light of a more appropriate statement made by the author that "the discrimination and distinction on the basis of birth and the notion of caste inequality is so deep rooted in the socio-cultural life of the Indians that even the victims (like scavengers) of caste inequality believe in socially superior and inferior castes" (123).

Further, in response to a question about facing discrimination by his respondents in renting a house, in school/college and in the office and his assertion that "In the office (or in School/College and neighbourhood) every incumbent has a specific and well defined role to perform and hence there is no question of discrimination" is factually incorrect as these are not always governed by institutional norms. The 'liberated' scavengers are engaged in sweeping, cleaning of the roads and nullas and handling the garbage and there is not much improvement in their style of life in comparison to the unliberated ones. Though there was not much change in their social relations with other caste people, they certainly discontinued their relation with the unliberated scavengers (133). The author's finding that children of liberated scavengers did not face any discrimination by classmates or teachers (135) seems to be factually incorrect and is contradicted by the author's findings mentioned on p.139 that they did not mix freely with caste Hindus. In other words, the data pertaining to both liberated and unliberated scavengers should have been compared and cross-examined by ascertaining data from caste Hindus on such issues.

Chapter seven analyses, though inadequately, the data pertaining to 150 non-adopters of Sulabh Shauchalaya Scheme in Patna, Muzaffarpur and Arrah towns in relations to socio-personal background of the respondents which does not make any significant variation (147).

No doubt, the liberation and rehabilitation of scavengers would bring some changes among them and also in society but to achieve equality and distributive justice through it is a very highly unrealistic expectation. There cannot be a second opinion about the socio-economic backwardness and lowly position of unliberated scavengers in society but to say that "the other Harijan sub-castes are more advanced, more conscious and more aware of these (reservation) facilities and they enjoy the benefits" (165) is methodologically untenable as these are not part of the present study.

Liberated and unliberated scavengers would undoubtedly want to improve their socio-economic status and social relations but it would be an exaggeration to portray them as enjoying liberty and social prestige in terms of visiting Hindu temples, engaging Brahmin priest to supervise their religious ceremonies, inviting other caste people on ceremonial occasions, taking water and food from public places, etc. (173). The author has uncritically relied on his data obtained through interview technique which obviously provides partial or sometimes even false and biased information. The author is also over-optimistic about the banishing of social barriers and stigma practised against scavengers in the following generation particularly in light of the fact that most of children of scavengers are not studying and are also unemployed. Such optimism seems to be attributed only to the process of liberation of scavengers through the Sulabh Shauchalaya which may not be accepted as panacea of their liberation from socio-political backwardness, social degradation and economic exploitation.

The author's obsession with his research to be considered a sociological piece forces him to compare in the end, the result of his scheme of Sulabh Shauchalaya with positive thinking and more so (though unnecessarily) with Auguste Comte's programme of social development under his philosophy of positivism. In fact, this is grossly misplaced and also shows the author's ignorance of Comte's scheme of positivism as he was a social thinker and not an actor or implementer of any scheme. Similarly, his claim that the "action aspect of the scheme (or Sulabh Shauchalaya) presented by sociologists has added a new dimension (of action sociology) to the discipline (of sociology) which is ahead of the spheres of theoretical sociology, empirical sociology and applied sociology" which the author has developed and popularized is again something which may not be easily digested by a serious discipline like sociology.

Road to Freedom is an interesting study of the most neglected people—scavengers—in the society. It unfolds various important tenets of their social and personal life. Their liberation from scavenging and rehabilitation to sweeping and cleaning roads and drainage is certainly a step in their social uplift but may not provide social equality, fraternity and full justice to them as any road(s) to even their limited freedom seems to be rough and rugged in the absence of a total transformation of society in India. The book will however, draw the attentions of researchers, social workers and policy-makers.

Dr Nandu Ram teaches at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Interface of Reality with Myth

Susnigdha Dey

ONE EARTH, FOUR OR FIVE WORLDS: REFLECTIONS ON CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

Translated by Helen R. Lane
ON POETS AND OTHERS: ESSAYS ON BAUDELAIRE, BUNUEL, DOSTOYEVSKY, FROST, SARTRE, SOLZHENITSYN, WHITMAN AND OTHERS

Translated by Michael Schmidt

THE COLLECTED POEMS (1957-1987)

Edited by Eliot Weinberger

All Three Volumes by Octavio Paz

Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers
India, 1992, pp. 213, 219 & 669, Rs. 70.00, Rs 70.00 & Rs 100.00.

There has been a fantastic upsurge of outstanding literary activities in Latin America mostly in the Spanish language and partly in the Portuguese. This phenomenon has taken hold of the creative world especially in the latter half of the present century. In the last previous five decades there have been five Nobel Laureate authors from Latin America. Literature produced in the major part of the New World lying south of the Rio Grande has, of late, been promptly translated into various European idioms. Undoubtedly, one of the 2 authors who has found this kind of wide acceptance is Octavio Paz, the Mexican poet and essayist. The other, obviously, is Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the Colombian novelist. In both, and many other writers of the vast region, we find the interface of myth with reality in a scenario where one would not know if the mask could be less real than the subject it is supposed to hide.

Octavio Paz, born in that fateful year, when the first World War broke out, has had much to do with culture in its broadest sense of his immediate reality, i.e., the Aztec and the Hispanic as far as his native country Mexico was concerned, and was involved deeply with the West in its two dimensions of the Continent and Anglo-Saxon America and apart from the Orient, especially in its Chinese, Japanese and, above all, the Indian manifestations.

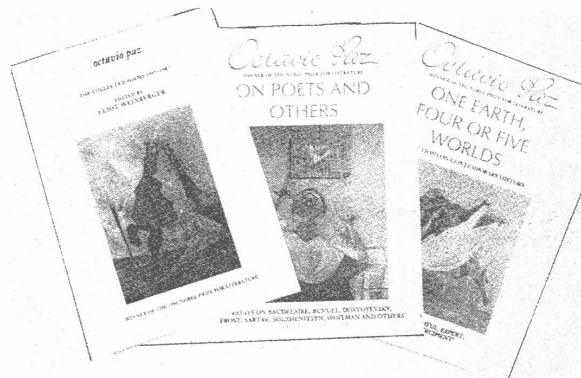
The reader of these two volumes of prose and one of his collected poetry would happily recall that he had been his country's Ambassador from 1962 to 1968 which was interrupted by his poetical

denunciation of the massacre of students in the 1968 student-upheaval in Mexico shortly before the Olympics were to begin in that at once contaminated and rarefied air of Mexico city. These six years did not go in vain. The author not only delved deep into the tantric and Buddhist scriptures but at the same time struck up meaningful acquaintances, including that of a few painters and intellectuals of the sub-continent as well as finding a woman who could bring fulfilment to both his life and letters. However, when one reads the volume entitled *One Earth, Four or Five Worlds*, one realises that he has distanced himself from the ideology which is conveniently known as left and liberal.

There has been a long tradition among Latin American authors to identify themselves unequivocally with the political events of their part of the world. Some like Romulo Gallegos and Mario Vargas Llosa had also been candidates for the highest office of their respective countries. While the former, a Venezuelan, was successful, the latter, a Peruvian, lost to Fujimori who is now battling to rectify the economy caught in a run-away inflation and curb terrorism of the variety of "The Shining Path". Though Octavio Paz did not stand for any political office, yet nonetheless he had flaunted his passion for democracy and subsequently distanced himself from the two ideological extremes. In fact, while he laments the fate of Latin America's urge for independence, modernity and democracy because of the inherent limitations of its movements being restricted to the adoption of the doctrines and programmes by others, such as the War of American independence and the French Revolution, he believes that the absence of relevant social classes and necessary economic structures of the Latin American countries wouldn't make it possible for the performance to be repeated *ad infinitum* in such fragmented realities that exist in Mexico and a score of countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

In the essay "Latin America and Democracy", he says: "Ideology converts ideas into masks: they hide the person who wears them, and at the same time they keep him from seeing reality. They deceive both others and ourselves" (p. 166).

Not only did he make his dislike of Fidel Castro's Cuba and the erstwhile Daniel Ortega's Nicaragua rather obvious, but at the same time, he has pointed out that though American democracy inspired the fathers of the Latin American independence movements such as that of Sarmiento and Juarez, yet unfortunately "the United States has been in Latin America the protector of tyrants and the ally of the enemies of democracy" (p. 169). For that matter he shows little sympathy for the Non-aligned Movement because he finds that some very aligned partners undermined the concept which was put forth by Nehru and Tito in a very ideal contextualization. Perhaps, he might have been trying to make a distinction between the Nehru of the early 50s and the



one at the beginning of the 60s.

His essay on "Grafts & Rebirths" refers to with India, which he had earlier dealt with in two of his prose works entitled *Alternative Current and Conjunctions and Disjunctions*. However, his reading of George Dumézil made him see India not so much as a political entity but as a religious and social conglomeration. It would be interesting to note his emphasis on the vocation of India tied to its religion and metaphysics and not to its historical action or the rule of national forces. Therefore, according to Paz, India was largely polytheistic as opposed to the severe intransigence found in both Christian and Semitic civilizations.

"The originality of India as compared with the other two great Indo-European communities—the Iranian and the European properly speaking—is twofold. On the one hand, many of the original institutions and ideas of the Indo-Europeans appear in India almost intact, with a sort of immobility that, though it may not be that of death, is at the same time not that of real life either. On the other hand, unlike Europeans and Iranians, polytheistic India has, for 8 centuries, found coexistence with a severe and intransigent monotheism extremely difficult" (p. 105).

Curiously, he goes on with his analysis of the interplay of the two major civilizations, that of the Hindu and the Islamic along with other cultures, such as the Sikhs. He ignores the fact that Christianity had also an important role to play in this make-up of the nation-state. But, one would have to concede that it is not the narrative of a political animal but mainly that of a poet, though not a visionary or romantic type that Plato would, without reluctance, ban from his Republic. But, Octavio Paz has conceived of literature "as a dialogue with the world, with the reader and with himself, and the dialogue is the opposite of the noise that denies us and the silence that ignores us." We would not, nonetheless, know how to react to such simplification or prophecy as when he observes; "Doubtless it is too late now to unite what was separated; but it is not too late to create a sort of federation of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh that will guarantee the peaceful coexistence of the two communities." (p. 107)

On Poets and Others is a collection of essays on such writers from the Western tradition as Robert Frost, Walt Whitman, William Carlos, Charles Tomlinson, Jean-Paul Sartre, Baudelaire, Andre Breton, Henri Michaux, Dostoyevsky, Solzhenitsyn and the Spanish poet Luis Cernuda. He has also considered the cinema-genius Luis Bunuel and the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset who was very much influenced by the German love for order and discipline.

The essay "Jose Ortega y Gasset: The Why and the Wherefore" first appeared in a special issue of the Madrid daily *El Pais* dedicated to the memory of the Spanish philosopher and essayist on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death twelve years ago. Paz defends Ortega y Gasset who was known for his clarity of vision and a brilliant forceful prose when he dwelt on an astonishing diversity of themes that touched his country and its somewhat confused and lethargic people. The Mexican defends the Spaniard in the following vein, "His prose marshals verbs such as *incite, instigate, provoke, goad*. Some have reproached him for certain harshness and arrogances. Though, I, too, lament these acrimonies, I understand that our countries—always rowdy, especially when they are possessed, as they now are, by violent agitations—need those goadings and stabs. Others criticize him because he did not know how to speak quietly. That is also true. I still ask myself how to resist raising one's voice in countries that are violent and lethargic. I add that his best writings, above and beyond the stimulus they give us, also give us illumination" (p. 141). The pedestrian English translation has robbed the Spanish original of much of its lucid brilliance.

But the volume that would be treasured by the Indian readers most, without doubt, is *The Collected Poems 1957-1987*, edited and translated by Eliot Weinberger with additional translations by seven other renowned English language authors and translators. The bilingual edition of the foremost living poet of Latin America includes virtually all the poetry of Octavio Paz spanning 3 of the most productive decades of his creative period. However, one does miss the pithy prefaces written in a very revealing poetic

prose of some of his collections, which mark different phases and moods in the theme and style of the poet. Excerpts from *The Monkey Grammarian* written in prose—poetry set-off by the catalytic vermillion anointed Hanuman found on the road to Galta off Jaipur—would have certainly heightened the totality of the effect on the readers' mind. Similarly, one misses the slender volume of *Renga*, a poetical quartetto, harmoniously blended by four poets writing in 4 different languages, ie. Spanish, English, French and Italian.

Be that as it may, the reader, specially those with some knowledge of Spanish or even with one of the many Romance languages, will find the original on the even numbered pages and the English translation facing it on the odd ones, suggestive and subtle. Though translating poetry is quite an impossible task, the translators have gone about their job with competence. One may fail to understand when the verbatim English rendering in some places will do as well, then what is the necessity of putting different words and changing the order, such as, in "Words are bridges./And they are traps, jails, wells". "Tambien son" in the second line could better have been left as "Also are they" instead of "And they are." The Spanish subjunctive introduces an element of doubt and uncertainty, and in the subsequent clause gives it an air of "if that were to happen" situation. Therefore, in the same later long poem of "Letter of Testimony", the English version of "Words are uncertain/and speak uncertain things/But speaking this or that, /they speak us", appears a little away from the source language, specially in the last two lines, which might have looked better with a definitive translation of "digan", which is a first person plural form of "de ir" in the present indicative tense. Again, "decir" is usually translated as "to tell" and "hablar" would have fitted more the English equivalent of "to speak".

For us, reading Paz, would be specially rewarding if we turn to his Indian poems published under the title *Ladera Este*, which has been translated as *East Slope*. Such poems as "The Tomb of Amir Khusru", "The Mausoleum of Humayun", "In the Lodi Gardens", the three poems of "Himachal Pradesh", etc. do not merely bring the sights and sounds of far off places within reach of Spanish-speaking people on both sides of the Atlantic, but blend reality, and imagination in a close-knit textual discourse. This volume has a very revealing author's notes appended to it which reminds us of the notes and references appended to *The Wasteland* by T.S. Eliot.

Although the anthology was first published in Great Britain in 1988, the Indian edition has chosen not to take into account Paz's poetical output of the last 4 years.

Professor Susnigdha Dey teaches Spanish and Latin American Literature in Jawaharlal Nehru University and is at present Rector of the University.

Clash Of Cultures

Muriel Wasi

COME RAIN
By Jai Nimbkar

Disha Books (Orient Longman Ltd), Bombay, 1993, pp. 267, Rs. 70.00

It is a measure of how far we have travelled in novels of personal relations that involve a meeting and a clash of cultures, that *Come Rain* has a heroine and an American heroine, but no hero at all. Books of this genre have in the past tended to anatomise the Indian hero on his return to India from the UK or US, and have studied his predicament as he, his family and fellow-Indians see it rising inevitably from his wife's inability to come to terms with life in India. The Indian husband begins, first subconsciously, and then consciously to blame her country or his, on his wife. But in *Come Rain* the girl, Ann Palmer, an ordinary (or possibly not-so-ordinary) American girl demonstrates by her character, candour, steadfastness and openness that she is a far better human being than her academically able Maharashtrian husband, Ravi Gogte, her sister-in-law, Mohini, and Ravi's college girl-friend, Usha.

Jai Nimbkar tells a good story. *Come Rain* is easy to read, which generally means that it was not quite so easy to write. Ms Nimbkar is not a great stylist, and sometimes spells out her meaning a little too clearly for the sophisticated reader of 1993. There is little to read between the lines. Many readers may, however, regard Nimbkar's clarity as a virtue. To me, it seems to detract from the total impression that her book makes. For it is not, I believe, her intention just to tell a story.

What, then, is Nimbkar's purpose in addition to telling her story? It may well be to show that the seemingly ordinary Ann has married Ravi for the right reasons; has come to live in India with determination and courage; and has lived up to her own high standards of candour and courage when she makes her final decision. Her qualities are clearly not typical of contemporary American women of her age—two others appear, one a brash socialite who lives on the fat of the land in Bombay; the other, an alcoholic who commits suicide. But Ann, without being at all self-righteous, is admirable in her critical acceptance of conditions in a Maharashtrian small town, Sangampur, and, on the whole, adapts herself remarkably well to Ravi's family, his friends and acquaintances. Indeed, in due course they come to think better of her than they do of him. Jai Nimbkar



makes this entirely credible, so much so that we are on Ann's side from beginning to end. Ravi may occasionally win his arguments—he is rarely wanting in our celebrated Indian analytic skills—but he is weaker, less honourable and finally less successful in the best sense, than his American wife who, of her own volition, seeks Indian citizenship and wishes to raise their small son, Rahul, in India.

You do not have to be over-sensitively Indian or spuriously patriotic to take Ann's part or to applaud her adaptability. The novel describes the early cultural clashes between the couple and underscores them throughout. Here, for example, is a description of varying attitudes in husband and wife: "Their arguments got them nowhere because the differences in their attitudes were so fundamental that neither could convince the other of his point of view. Finally, by tacit agreement they dropped the subject." Ann's realization that a marriage in India is not just a prolonged and sustained love affair between two people, but a social relationship, is reflected in: "It didn't matter, because a marriage was not simply a contract between two people. It was only a small part of the much larger and all-encompassing life of the family. And so she (i.e. the mother) could not forgive the daughter who had not realized this and

had made her the laughing-stock of the extended family."

The plot, it may be inferred, is not over-intricate—I regard this as a strength, not a shortcoming. But there are characters in the novel, apart from Ann, who stand out because they are round and convincing. There is, for instance, Shri, Ravi's college peasant-friend, who chooses to remain and work in his village with periodic visits to Sangampur. He is wholly credible in his shyness and his wary attraction to Ann. So is the very different, more affluent Pathak. But the little masterpiece that will remain with me when I have closed Jai Nimbkar's book is the cameo of Mrs Gogte, Ravi's mother and Ann's mother-in-law. Cold, unimpressed to begin with by her American daughter-in-law "who isn't even beautiful," Mrs Gogte comes in time to admire and respect Ann and to promote a relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law that neither can possibly have foreseen. "Ann had the feeling that there was something left unsaid, something more her mother-in-law wanted to convey. What it was she could not guess. Perhaps in the days to come, they would become better friends. Mrs Gogte was essentially a cold woman. She was not capable of inspiring affection. Ann could imagine between them a relationship of mutual respect, but not much more. But she would be content with that."

We have the sensation as we read that old and rather cantankerous Mrs Gogte is not unwilling to learn, and that Ann's steadfastness has taught her a lesson for life that she has not expected to learn from a mere foreigner so much her junior in years and relevant experience. This unexpectedness, that is still credible, adds a dimension to the novel.

The conclusion that I must not give away is admirable and confirms everything that we have come to expect of the American Ann. To us, it is as if Nimbkar were saying: In that long run in which people are either dead or enlightened, perhaps a civilization and the things it stands for are even more important for thinking and sensitive people, than personal relations and the proverbial happy marriage.

Muriel Wasi is a freelance literary critic.

Dexterous Interplay of Good and Evil

G.P. Deshpande

CHIKAVEERA RAJENDRA: A NOVEL

By Masti Venkatesa Iyengar. Translated by Padma and Ramachandra Sharma
Penguin Books, (India), 1992, pp. XII + 280, Rs. 75.00

For some reason, I always tend to be a little sceptical of awards, both national and international. Khandekar got a Jnanpitha award, P.G. Rege did not. Singer got a nobel prize. Brecht never did. I therefore approached this 'novel' by Masti whom Girish Karnad honours in his preface as "the only modern writer in Kannada who could be described as 'classical' in all senses of that much-used adjective" with some trepidation. Karnad's description is formidable. I almost thought of a case of over-sell. But I must say that against that background for a non-Kannada reader like me *Chikaveera Rajendra* was a voyage of discovery and a pleasant one at that.

Set in the picturesque Kodagu (although the picturesque quality of Kodagu does not very much feature in the narrative), this is a novel of evil and good and also a novel of the declining fiefdoms and the rising British Empire. It is set in a period of transition that itself gives the notion of 'evil' in this novel a transitory character. As history it is unavoidable, irreversible. But as history it is also transitory.

Karnad is right in carefully distinguishing the evil in Masti's fictional world from the christian notion of evil. I am not certain if it is related to Masti's "personal" metaphysics. The novel made me believe otherwise. Here are the views of the evil which are person-specific (in that sense personal) and at the same time related to the *Dharmashastras* very much like *Vidura's* notion of evil and good. That's the reason why it differed from Duryodhana. In any event Masti's narrative brings out with remarkable skill and dexterity the interplay of good and evil in (also, by extension the rise and fall of) the traditional Hindu mind as it obtained just as the modernized and modernizing west was about to take it over.

Without ever crossing the limits of the narrative and therefore of Kodagu (with occasional voice or letter from Bangalore) Masti turns a personal story into a histori-

cal one and vice versa. It is a pity that neither the translators nor Penguin has given the full publications' history of this novel. When was this novel originally published? The translators would have done well to answer this question. It would have then been possible to view the narrative structure of this novel in the overall context of Indian fiction of that time.

Even so, the narrative structure of this novel (whatever be its time) is fascinating. It is very 'dramatic' in character. I also suspect that it must derive its roots from traditional story-telling patterns in South Western India, no doubt, chiselled and polished by the skilled hands of Masti. This novel could be a good example of what Bhalachandra Nemade (no Jnanpitha award winner this!) has described as nativism in literature. There is a break here from the Hardy-Dickens novel-form. The reason why I cite Nemade is that his *Kosla* (recently translated and published by the National Book Trust) made us aware of alternative and in this case native forms of the narrative. Masti's novel which, it would seem to me, predates *Kosla* and relates to a very different world also employs, I suspect 'oral' narrative forms rather than the form of novel celebrated in Lukac's *Theory of the Novel*. Chikaveera Rajendra has a king as its hero. But the no less fascinating characters in the novel are the women. The translators tell us that *Virsaiva* community had thought at one time that Masti had denigrated their faith. This statement is an old story now. I cite it mainly to make the point that it looks strange that the contemporary *Virsaiva* elite could not see the remarkable role that the *Virsaiva* women are playing in the story.

Sharmas have done an excellent translation of the narrative. The proof-readers have occasionally been less than helpful. But more important, it is not clear if any standard rules of transliteration have been employed to render Indian names/proper nouns in English. To cite just one example, Bharath Varsha and Bahuratna both have व and I am sure even Kannada uses the same consonant for both. Why transliterate the two वs differently, making it look as though व of Bharath Varsha is different from the व of Bahuratna? Following the rules of Sanskrit transliteration व should be व (व is व, व is व and व is व). I would have liked to have given Kannada illustrations but as I do not know that language I am unable to do so.

But then these are minor matters. A very fine book has been well-translated. It is gratifying to know that the publication has been timed to mark Masti's birth-centenary. The Sharmas could not have paid a better tribute to him and modern Kannada fiction than translating *Chikaveera Rajendra*.

Professor G P Deshpande teaches at the Jawaharlal Nehru University and is a Marathi playwright and critic.

Familiarizing Archaeology

B.D. Chattopadhyaya

ARCHAEOLOGY OF INDIA: RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

By Amarnath Khanna

Clarion Books, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 280, Rs. 450.00

There are, broadly speaking, two types of approach discernible in general works on Indian archaeology. In one, reflected in the syntheses of the ever-increasing volume of archaeological material attempted by such archaeologists as B. Subbarao, H.D. Sankalia, Bridget and Raymond Allchin, W. Fairservis and others, archaeology is the means for understanding stages of social evolution in pre-literate India. This approach has over the years made remarkable contributions to our understanding of the foundations of Indian civilization which till recently tended, in our history text books, to begin with the advent of the Aryans. However, the story of Indian archaeology in this approach is hardly ever taken beyond the middle of the first millennium B.C. which is generally perceived as the point of convergence between archaeological and literary evidence, and archaeologists seem to be happy to let historians take over from there. In recent years, R.S. Sharma has made a major departure from the existing practice by attempting a synthesis of data from excavated sites, surveying material cultures which extend well into the historical period. In the second approach, archaeology is treated as some kind of a mixed bag, encompassing as it does a wide range of antiquarian material from terracotta to temple architecture and from inscriptions to iconography.

The book under review does not easily fall into either of the two approaches. It is certainly not concerned with the problem of social evolution in early India, but, at the same time, it does not really subscribe to the notion of 'mixed-bag' archaeology either. Its author is also not out to highlight only what is spectacular in Indian archaeology. By way of trying to make out the objective of the book, one can then perhaps safely state that it is intended as an introduction, for the general reading public, to various types of archaeological cultures as known from select archaeological sites and to the institutional and other aspects which are inextricably linked up with the organization of archaeological work in any country.

Appropriately therefore, *Archaeology of India* begins with a chapter titled 'History of Archaeological Pursuits', which traces the beginnings of the search for Indian archaeology to the establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal but the

focus of which remains all through on the activities of and organizational changes in the Archaeological Survey of India till a very recent date. This emphasis may be well-placed but what this anecdotal treatment has more or less ignored is that the long history of the ASI—centred archaeology itself has been through significant phases of change not simply in terms of personnel and institutional organization but also in spheres of technical and ideological reorientations. Further, Indian archaeology today cannot be assessed satisfactorily without adequate reference to the contributions which various university departments have been making. Although the author does take note of the important work already done or being done by academic institutions outside the ASI in other chapters, one wishes that the scope and method of the archaeological pursuits of these institutions were adequately commented upon in this chapter itself.

In a way, the next chapter, 'Highlights of Indian Archaeology', presents a brief statement of the main cultures identified in Indian archaeology, preparing the ground as it were for details on individual sites in the following chapter on 'Important Excavated Sites'. This statement, which is combined with a section on conservation, does not strictly follow a chronological sequence, which is a failing affecting the organization of the data in the book, noticeable in its other parts as well. The chapter on 'Important Excavated Sites' covers a very wide time span and is really the most substantial part of the book. The excavated sites dismissed here are grouped into four categories: 1) Neolithic cultures; ii) Proto-historic cultures; iii) other proto-historic cultures, and iv) Historical and Medieval Sites. Expectedly, only a few major sites could be selected from each category, but taken together, they provide a useful introduction to the regional spread, variety and the very wide chronological span of the excavated sites of our country. Even the limited survey, by including such sites as Hampi, Champamer and Fatehpur Sikri, makes the points quite evident that archaeology is relevant for historical reconstruction not simply for the ancient period but for other culture phases as well and that the agenda for future archaeological work ought to keep the chronological dimension of the country's ar-

chaeological sites in view.

However, two points of criticism concerning this chapter need to be made. One, it is not at all clear how the sites are originally arranged. One finds that even within the same culture category, the arrangement of sites is arbitrary. Second, since many of the sites discussed in the chapter are multi-cultural, some kind of criterion ought to have been mentioned for including any particular site in a specified category. One conspicuous example of this is the inclusion of Sanghol in the category of proto-historic cultures dealing essentially with cultures of the Harappan phase. Although Sanghol has yielded evidence of Harappan and Painted Grey Ware phases, the major part of the discussion on Sanghol as an archaeological site relates to the early historical, particularly Kushana phase, and it ought therefore to have been included in the category of historical sites. The rest of the book is concerned with 'Present Undertakings and Future Prospects'; it also has four appendices, a glossary and a useful Bibliography—all intended to guide the curious reader to various dimensions of Indian archaeology. Despite the lapses pointed out during the course of the review and despite the long, avoidable quotations with which it abounds, one must mention that this well-produced book with a large number of appropriate line-drawings, site plans, maps and photographs will certainly be of interest to those who wish general familiarity with Indian archaeology and the range of possibilities it can offer as an area of both academic and general interest.

Professor B.D. Chattopadhyaya teaches at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

READERS

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Those of you who haven't renewed your subscription for this year please do so at the earliest.

The picture of a child on the book cover attracted me. As I started flicking through the book, a feeling of nostalgia gripped me. A whiff of the past and faint memories of a care-free childhood came crowding the mind. For here in this book were all those little fun things we all have made in our childhood to while away the time. These are the toys that even today village children can be seen playing with.

For the first time an attempt has been made to enlist all these indigenous toys which have their roots in Indian rural society. The author Sudarshan K. Khanna is a designer and educator at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. His earlier book, *Dynamic Folk Toys*, acclaimed by educationists and designers as a pace-setter was published in 1983. The present book is the result of a project sponsored jointly by the NID, Ahmedabad and the National Council of Science and Technology Communication, Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi.

This book is about toys which children can make and break freely. Perhaps many parents might shun the low-cost or rather no-cost toys documented in the book as 'junk'. Even the poorest of the poor can afford to make and play with them. The fact that these toys cost nothing and are made of the simplest materials, often recycled ones, does not mean they are inferior to the high-priced factory-made ones. In fact, they have an edge over the commercially produced playthings. This

Engendering Creativity

Chitra Mehta

JOY OF MAKING INDIAN TOYS

By Sudarshan Khanna

National Book Trust, India, 1992, pp. 125, Rs. 90.00

is because one of the unique features of these toys is that they introduce children to a scientific method of working. Unless everything is done according to certain specifications, the toys will not work at all or would work poorly. The child would then ponder over it, make changes and remove the shortcomings on their own or after consultation. This way, they are introduced to the basic ideas of 'experimentation' and 'creativity' in a subtle yet effective manner. These toys introduce children to the basics of science and technology with simplicity and directness. Learning becomes a part and parcel of the play and a joyful experience.

Where this book differs from the other books on toys is that the toys have been divided into sections such as sound and music. Timeless Devices, Spells of Mo-

tion and Mini Mysteries and the scientific principles underlying the toys are given in the appendix. A total of 101 toys have been listed. Some of the interesting ones are the puppeteer's whistle, wind-wheel, parrot in a cage, dancing eyes, magic water pot, fighting pencils, matchbox pistol and telephone ring. Some toys which need adult supervision while being played with have a warning given under the heading 'caution'.

The illustrations showing the making of each toy step-by-step are clear. Suggestions for variations possible for each toy are given. Little brain teasers are also given under the heading 'Find Out' with each toy.

One wishes the book cover was more imaginative. A book on Indian toys conjures up visions of colourful, gaily deco-

rated toys at a village fair. Except for the cover, the entire book is in black and white. The use of colour would have enhanced the visual appeal of the toys and given ideas for decorating the toys. An interesting variety of toys have been listed. It would have been a help to the parents and the children if a couple of lines explaining the main scientific principle underlying each toy were also included in the appendix.

It would be correct to assume that this book aims at a fairly affluent urban group of children. Certainly no rural family in India would purchase a book of such simple toys commonly made by village children, even if they could afford the price. As such, it is unlikely that these toys would attract the modern, blase town child, unless the book is illustrated in colour and the toys made prettier and more colourful. The actual measurement and shape of the paper used for a toy could also be given. This would prevent the frustration a child may experience when a toy doesn't work due to incorrect size or shape.

This is an interesting book, but more likely to remain on a library shelf than be used creatively by a child for whom it is intended.

Chitra Mehta who has been teaching in a leading public school in New Delhi for seventeen years, is now involved in organizing creative educational programmes for young children.

New Books From Orient Longman

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Brahma Chellaney : Foreign Policy Fellow at the University of Maryland, College Park, and is a visiting post-doctoral scholar at the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University.

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Iqbal Singh, editor of India Weekly published from London

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AN AFTERNOON AT THE NEW DELHI CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR '93

A REPORT

Preeti Gill

Winters in Delhi are associated with fairs, festivals and melas, international conferences, seminars and cultural events. The Children's Book Fair organized by the National Book Trust opened on the 2nd of January 1993 in the grounds outside the zoo. A visit to this being essential we set off one cold cloudy afternoon; neither the cold nor the gloomy grey sky could dampen the enthusiasm of my child companions.

A cursory glance around showed that all the well known big names in children's publishing had their display counters and most were doing brisk business as well with eager children and keen parents browsing among the stalls. We made our way to the NBT stall displaying row upon row of books on varied subjects like history, folk tales, festivals, biographies, fiction, ecology and the sciences and environment. The National Book Trust books of illustrations (no text) for pre-schooler are wonderful. The topics being familiar to the Indian child like Holi, Diwali or a common bird or animal, these would instil in the very young child the desire to hold a book and be able to understand all by himself what it was trying to tell him. Parents can weave their own magical stories around the pictures and the child can pass many an evening with one of these for company. For older children there were informative books on various subjects that may be of interest: *Romance of Stamp Collecting*, *Story of Our Newspapers*, *Snakes Around Us*, *The World of Trees* to name a few. Most of them are attractively presented and reasonably priced. The CBT display that we moved to next, had titles ranging from picture books to wild life and environment, from ancient tales and classics to popular science fiction and adventure stories. They had an extensive display of regional language books in Malayalam, Marathi, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil and Kannada.

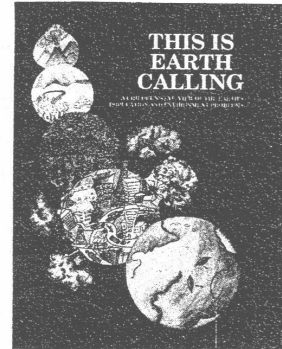
Ratna Sagar with their short story collections by well-loved children's writers like Sigrun Srivastava and Ruskin Bond and enthralling science fiction tales by Dilip M. Salvi, Rupa with the Julieni series modelled on Enid Blyton's St. Clare's Maillory Towers series on life in British boarding schools were all scrutinized carefully and selected by the children with me. Vikas Publishing House had an impressive list of literary classics on display under the imprint of Madhuban Educational Books. Dictionaries for children, science improvement series, understanding maths, general knowledge books were all there, a lot of them used as texts in schools.

We moved on next to the People's Publishing House and the Iran Culture House. Both these had low priced, colourful books, the Persian books at the latter had illustrations by international award winners. We picked up a couple of these in English translations with a simple story line and a moral at the end, something like our own *Panchatantra* tales.

At the Penguin stall the children were thrilled to see their all-time favourites. Their foreign as well as Indian (Puffin) titles for children are impressive in terms of printing, layout, illustrations and editing, with well designed attractive covers. They are of course priced higher than the average Indian book but worth it.

Besides these there were displays of low priced teaching aids, globes, maps and charts, educational toys and puzzles and general knowledge encyclopaedias.

Indian books for children have certainly come a long way, they are well illustrated, well written, relevant, informative and reasonably priced. There are alternatives to Enid Blyton, Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys, and children have discovered this.



THIS IS EARTH CALLING: A CHILDREN'S EYE VIEW OF THE EARTH'S POPULATION AND ENVIRONMENT PROBLEMS

Text by Subhadra Sen Gupta, Layout and Design by Dushyant Parashar

UNFPA in association with Konark Publishers, 1993, pp. 53, Rs. 150.00

'Let us work to save our planet now
It is the only one we have.'

This urgent message is flashed in poster after poster presented in this well-designed book which contains a representative selection from the entries to the International Poster contest held in 1992 by the United Nations Population Fund. Children between the ages of 5 and 18 participated: this book is evidence of their remarkable awareness of environmental issues.

The text by Subhadra Sen Gupta is lucid and simple and explains to children the whole gamut of environmental disasters that await the earth if the present rate of pollution and population remains unchecked. Environmental issues are tackled at a basic level and made understandable to children who will find this book interesting and immensely readable. These are concerns which we must make our children aware of as the inheritors of the future. The ideas are not new or original but they are of vital importance. A great deal is already being done to stop the over-exploitation and misuse of nature's wealth but much remains to be done, and by addressing a child audience

through posters and text this book can have a definite impact on young readers.

'Become a friend of the earth and 'conscious of the environment around you' the author says and the first step towards achieving this is to learn to use things carefully. Use products that can be recycled or are biodegradable. Make others around aware of the importance of these issues. To ensure sustainable development, we must work out ways to ease population pressure on environment and restore the delicate balance between nature and man. Our forefathers through myths and rituals of beliefs had managed to preserve this balance and there are still pockets of rural societies that display an awareness of these vital issues like the Bishnoi tribes of Rajasthan whose lands are oases of green in the arid desert wastes. But today we need more knowledge and more foresight than ever before to arrest the damage and though efforts are being made to better the situation there is a clear and definite role for women and children to play. It is here that this book makes a commendable contribution.

Preeti Gill is assistant editor, The Book Review.

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COMMUNICATIONS

ON THE SO-CALLED SPLINTERING OF TAMIL SENSIBILITY

N.S. Jagannathan prefaces his overview of Tamil writing today with a caveat that his is an expatriate's view. It is a caveat that should have been repeated, as it were, five times. For, at least five of the eight "perceptive observers with more intimate knowledge of the Tamil literary scene"—the contributors to the Tamil section of *The Book Review* (Nov./Dec. 1992) are based in Delhi for the past couple of decades. The sociological significance of this fact, and of course its implications for their assessment of modern Tamil writing, will not be easily missed by anyone who has even a nodding acquaintance with contemporary Tamil society. But, unfortunately, the Editor of *The Book Review*, it appears, has swallowed their views in their entirety, when the editorial pronounces, "Tamil... as a result of the conscious efforts of the political elite of the region to disown a socio-cultural past with a rich heritage, seems to be floundering, and for want of sustenance with past moorings complacently spearheading mediocrity."

The crux of Jagannathan's article is that Tamil society suffers from a serious disability of a fragmented sensibility which is the end-result of the Dravidian movement's repudiation of a historical continuity in literature and the world of ideas. It is nothing but a deft sleight of hand. For long, intellectuals of Jagannathan's ilk, have denied the antiquity of Tamil language and literature—a position that was reflected even in the recent debate in the pages of *Dinamani* and *Kanaiyazhi*. (Jagannathan contributes regularly to the latter. In fact, the article in question, 'Splintered Sensibility' was published in it well before *The Book Review* hit the stands.) But now, without batting an eyelid, he grants antiquity to Tamil and even goes so far as to emphasize the indispensable contribution made by the Tamils to a Pan-Indian culture. All this only to underline the so-called impoverishment that the modern Tamil writer supposedly suffers due to what Jagannathan represents as "the snapping of the vital links with an unbroken cultural and literary tradition."

It is indeed true that the Dravidian movement, in its struggle against Brahminic hegemony, marginalized (Jagannathan prefers 'expunction') a certain part of Tamil heritage. But what is conveniently concealed is the fact that as part of this process, the movement was able to claim an even earlier corpus of literature (of the Sangam period) which was more secular, egalitarian and democratic, and less sectarian and discriminatory, roping in a far larger section of the people than ever before. In fact, poems from Sangam literature and *Thirukkural* are so popular that debates (*pattimandram*) on them are conducted in every nook and cranny of Tamilnadu, drawing large crowds. To cite yet another example, when M. Karunanidhi wrote a series of exegesis on Sangam literature in the weekly *Kumkumam*, thousands of multicolour posters heralded the serial, every issue of it sold in lakhs. N.S.J. and Co., might squirm at Karunanidhi's interpretations, but can it be denied that millions of Tamils sipped at the fountain of a two-thousand-year-old literature which is supposed to be what "Anglo-Saxon is to a modern Englishman."? Imagine John Major writing a popular interpretation of *Beowulf*, and it will be clear how central ancient Tamil literature is to contemporary Tamil culture.

Given this context, if the works of N.S. Jagannathan's band of modern Tamil writers (domiciled in Delhi, or is it Mars?) fail to possess 'resonances' and 'reverberations', whose fault is it? As A.K. Ramanujan has written, in the specific context of his encounter with this very same Sangam corpus of literature,

Even one's own tradition is not one's own birthright; it has to be earned, repossessed. (Poems of Love and War: From the *Eight Anthologies*. *The Ten Long Poems of Classical Tamil*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1985, p.xvii)

And if one fails or refuses to do that, who is the loser, the culprit? If A.K. Ramanujan's *English* poetry can successfully allude to Sangam poems (See his *Second Sight*, OUP), what prevented modern Tamil writers from doing the same? Jagannathan himself suggests the answer: "the historic 'Brahmin-Non-Brahmin divide'" (p.23). A section of the Tamils, whose hegemony in Tamil society was challenged, sought to repudiate the more secular and progressive construction of the Tamil Classical canon put forward by the Dravidian movement. And now they lament that they are starved of classical nourishment. And when occasion suits them they speak of sensibilities, aesthetics and what not.

But Tamil readers will remember that when Su. Samuthiram, the dalit writer, was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in 1990, the *Kanaiyazhi* (to which, as we mentioned earlier, Jagannathan writes regularly and incidentally, it also gets a couple of favourable notices in *The Book Review* too) remarked, "(Caste) Reservations here too!" It is indeed an irony that they are the ones who now blame others for being caste-oriented.

What else can one make of Venkat Swaminathan's passage on the novels of C.M. Muthu which give, "an uncompromising, uninhibited picture of the bitter caste conflicts within the numerous sub-castes in his own backward community"? Swami-

nathan's well-known postures on "aesthetic values of a work" of art now take the backseat. Muthu gets a pat on the back for his "sincerity, truth and self-reflection"; for being "truthful in dealing with contemporary ugliness"; and of course for not "sing (ling) out the Brahmin community to launch his vituperative tirades on casteism." Similarly, Thoppil Mohammed Meeran too is applauded for his "remarkable expression of courage" in having "dared to reflect on the life of the Muslim community... with all its religious obscurantism, pride in its Arabic lineage and its cloistered existence." Where, one may ask, are sensibilities, resonances and aesthetics in these assessments?

In the end, all this hype about splintered sensibility is only a facade—a smokescreen to conveniently forget, nay, conceal the gains that Tamilnadu has made in terms of a more secular literary tradition that the Tamils can hark back to; and the wider democratization of their literature, society and polity to include a much wider section of the populace than ever before. And let it not be forgotten that Tamilnadu was exceptionally quiet during the frenzied and casteist anti-Mandal agitations; and even now, as the entire nation is engulfed in communal riots in the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri Masjid, Tamilnadu is more or less calm.

I have restricted myself to the general purport of the Tamil Section of *The Book Review*, as put forward by the Guest Editor. I have consciously avoided nitpicking. But lest it should go unrecorded, the articles abound in factual errors too. To mention just a few, S.V. Rajadurai's *Russia Puratchi*... (p.29) is not his latest book—he has brought out at least three full length books since. None of Cheran's poetry collections bear the title *Cheran Kavithaigal* (p.26). Ambai wrote only one of her short stories in *Kalachuvadu*. K.L. Rajanarayanan's award-winning novel is *Gopallapurathu Makkal* and not *Gopallagramathu Makkal* as mentioned twice (pp. 27 and 32). I shall not list the numerous misprints. But all these are mere trifles when compared to the gross misrepresentation of not just the Tamil literary scene, but Tamil history itself.

A.R. Venkatachalapathy
J.N.U., New Delhi.

I sincerely thank *The Book Review* for carrying a review of my book, *Trials, Tribulations and Triumphs of the Policemen* (May-June 1992) and my friend K.S. Dhillon (Kripal) to me for undertaking the arduous task of review.

As expected, he has been frank and forthright. It was his right and I appreciate it. But please permit me to comment on three aspects of his review.

Kripal refers to "almost intangible threads of grievances" which resulted in a "lack of balanced approach to narration of many events". I have referred to certain injustice due to me not for glorifying myself but because they highlighted the damage such injustice does to the organization itself. That is why I have spoken with great feelings of the humiliation to which P.C. Saksena, I.G. Police, was subjected, way back in 1952. That was the first terrible wound inflicted on the police-body. Thereafter, of course, many more stabbings have been done bringing a magnificent force to this sorry state. For the same reasons I have spoken of the booting out of I.Gs. Dave and Kukreja and of the lucrative business which transfers have become.

I firmly believe that if the police is damaged, the nation itself is harmed. Hence, I have exposed the black deeds of the politicians without mincing words. I also believe that it is the duty of officers to expose wayward politicians while in service or out of it. The country belongs to all of us and not only to politicians!

The second observation of Kripal I refer to is about my views on Emergency. He only repeats what the "Indian intellectuals" have been saying. But "Bharatiyas", the silent majority of over 80 per cent, have a different perception of Emergency. I have only applauded the discipline, the supremacy of and fear of law, that prevailed during that short period. That is the only path to progress in a country where self-discipline does not exist at all. Indians only bow to imposed discipline. The Bofors, the recent Bank scam of over 4000 crores; the terrorists and secessionists in various parts of the country; the corruption in and total collapse of the judicial system should open the eyes of everyone. The Bharatiyas are worried. The Indians, wallowing in riches and having the best of the East and the West, dining and winning in five star hotels with call girls in attendance, find this country as the heaven itself. To the Bharatiyas and to those who think of the poor and the deprived it is hell!

The third observation of Kripal I would like to refer to is about the handling of the agitation of the Railway staff in Guwahati. He says, "... instances seem quite bizarre and leave the reader not without a feeling of disbelief." Then he adds, "Perhaps a sense of balance is a natural casualty in such circumstances." Read together, it means that I was not being truthful! This, I consider, is hitting below the belt. Many persons, including the General Manager, N.N. Tandon are still there. If Kripal wanted, I could have put him in contact with Tandon and others. I am sorry that he could accuse me of moral dishonesty without caring for a verification.

In fact, I have deliberately underplayed my role because I am sure that it is the subordinate staff which deliver the results. Senior officers can only guide and advise.

K.D. Sharma
Bhopal

■ BIOGRAPHY

I am My Own Model. An Autobiography:
B.D. Jatti
A candid unfolding of the author's life, the book makes an interesting study of the social and political scenario of the period and of the different political personalities with whom he had to work.
Konark Publishers, 1992, pp. 146, Rs 150.00

■ CHILDRENS BOOKS

ABC Feelings
Frank Educational Aids, 1992, Rs 17.00
A to Z
Frank Educational Aids, 1992, Rs 17.00
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Tolerance in Indian Culture:
Edited by R. Balasubramanian
This volume analyses and examines important issues arising from the papers presented and discussed in a national seminar on 'The Concept and Role of Tolerance in Indian Culture.'
Indian Council of Philosophical Research, Distributors Affiliated East West Press, 1992, pp. 138, Rs. 60.00

■ ECONOMY

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Compiled by CENDIT (Centre for Development of Instructional Technology) with the assistance of CAPART (Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology).
Sage Publications, 1992, pp. 197, Rs. 220.00

The Politics of Textiles, The Indian Cotton-Mill Industry and the Legacy of Swadeshi 1900-1985
S.R.B. Leadbeater
This book traces the rise and fall of India's composite mill sector. The central question is why the mills in North India began to decline while those in the south have grown in number.
Sage Publications, 1992, pp 312, Rs 285.00

■ EDUCATION

National Policy on Library and Information Systems and Services for India. Perspectives and Projections:
B.P. Barua
A pathbreaking study that can revolutionise the information system in India, this book suggests policies and programmes to bring more Indians within the network of the national system of information.
Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1992, pp. 188, Rs 225.00

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Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 294, Rs 275.00

Buddha, His Life, His Doctrine, His Order:
Hermann Oldenberg
This book is a translation of a German work by Professor Oldenberg of Berlin, editor of the *Pali Texts of the Vinaya Pitakam and the Dipavamsa*.
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With passion and humour the author reveals a Singapore far different from the tourist brochures.
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also a painter and therefore naturally gifted with a painter's choice of phrase and word.
Writers Workshop, Calcutta, 1992, pp. 290, Rs. 300.00

The Other Tongue, English Across Cultures.
II Edition:
Edited by Braj B. Kachru
This revised volume contains 8 new chapters and is an attempt to integrate and address provocative issues relevant to a deeper understanding of the forms and functions of English.
University of Illinois Press, 1992, pp. 384, \$ 19.95.

After Amnesia. Tradition and Change in Indian Literary Criticism:
G.N. Devy
This original analysis attempts to describe what is recognised by common agreement to be a crisis in Indian criticism and to explain it in historical terms.
Orient Longman, 1992, pp. 147, Rs 125.00

Three Chinese Poets:
Translated by Vikram Seth
The poets translated here—Wang Wei, Li Bai and Du Fu—are among the greatest literary figures of China and crystallize the immense variety of China and the Chinese poetic tradition.
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Dom Moraes
This volume continues from where Moraes' celebrated first memoir left off. In *My Son's Father* he narrated the story of his life up to the age of 22, here he brings us all the way to the 1990s.
Viking Books, 1992, pp. 349, Rs 295.00

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Unshaking of Indian Industry. Towards Competitiveness Through Deregulation:
N.K. Sengupta
Based on a collection of papers the author advocates deregulation and decontrol of the governments economic administration.

Vision Books, Orient Paperbacks, 1992, pp. 264, Rs 280.00
Management Education in India:
Edited by Pramod Verma, S. Sreenivas Rao and D.M. Pestonjee
This book presents the views of management educators on the effectiveness of management education in India.
Oxford and IBH, 1992, pp. 165, Rs 165.00

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Tribals living in resource-rich regions have been deprived of their livelihood because of national development patterns that have resulted in the resource being transferred from the traditional communities to the corporate sector.
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This book traces the genesis and evolution of the women's movement in modern India. It focuses on its critical encounter with colonialism and highlights the implications of that encounter for the position and status of women today.
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The War Against Gender Bias:
Indira Kulshreshtha
This book attempts to identify the areas of bias against women prevailing in society and presents a global picture of the status of women in textual materials. The Indian situation has been discussed in detail.
Sterling Publishers, 1993, pp. 107, Rs. 125.00

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