

# THE BOOK REVIEW

JANUARY 1993

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## GARNERING THE PAST

प्रजा सुखे सुखं राज्ञः प्रजानां च हिते हितम्।  
नात्मप्रियं हितं राज्ञः प्रजानां तु प्रिये हितम्॥

In the happiness of his subjects lies the king's happiness; in their welfare his welfare. He shall not consider as good only that which pleases him but treat as beneficial to him whatever pleases his subjects.

*Kautilya's Arthashastra (1.19.34)*

**F**or some time now, there has been growing concern among scholars in various disciplines in India to go back into the past and to rediscover the ancient wisdom for which India had once been famous. There is a felt need to collect, translate, transcreate extant treatises and works of antiquity. The Indian publishing industry seems to be particularly tuned into this demand that the market seems to offer.

However, there is a wide gap between desire and implementation due to some obvious difficulties peculiar to the Indian situation. For one thing, much of the extant material—manuscripts, texts, and commentaries in any field, whether it be philosophy, politics, medicine, music, dance or art—is scattered throughout this vast land, often in the hands of private individuals who may not even realize the worth of what they hold. Therefore there is an urgent need to create a national bank of ancient treatises, along the lines of the National Archives, and to draw from various sources the material that may be in danger of getting lost. The old princely states which once housed invaluable material have been guilty in the post-independence period of disposing of much of it as waste material. In cases where the value has been recognized, the possessors have been holding out for disproportionately large compensation. A case in point is the Raigarh collection of the erstwhile Maharaja Chakradhar Singh which included, apart from his own original compositions of music and dance, rare old manuscripts and treatises. Unless such collections are immediately attached as national property, by statute, on payment of suitable compensation, they may be lost forever. Organizations like the INTACH, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Bharat Bhavan in Bhopal and the Ministry of Culture which is engaged in drawing up a national cultural policy, should join hands to retrieve, store and preserve manuscripts and documents in one place.

The next step would be to form a large panel of scholars in Sanskrit, Persian and Prakrit to embark on translating the material thus garnered into English and other Indian languages and to publish them. The entire process is likely to be an expensive one and hence a subsidy programme to help this venture would have to be thought of.

It is in this context that Penguin India's publication of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, edited and translated by L.N. Rangarajan is very welcome. Basing his work on the earlier translations by Dr Shamasastri and Dr Kangle, Rangarajan's painstaking effort has been born out of his conviction in the continuing relevance and universal applicability of Kautilya's precepts in the areas of just administration, economy or relations between states. Steering clear of two extreme points of view of either, like A.B. Keith, denying that Kautilya said anything useful at all—"It would, indeed, be melancholy if this were the best that India could show against the *Republic* of Plato or the *Politics* of Aristotle"—or holding that Kautilya was a lone genius, Rangarajan has attempted to correct the popular image of Kautilya born out of ignorance of what he actually wrote and to let Kautilya speak for himself.

The members of the editorial advisory board wish the readers of *The Book Review* a very happy New Year.

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**C**omparative Political Philosophy is perhaps the maiden venture in putting together analyses of political philosophy from different cultures. In doing so, it breaks the taboo of treating non-western political thinking as something untouchable in comparison to the western political philosophy. In the opinion of one of the editors of the volume under review, Anthony J. Parel, this taboo applies only with reference to the modern western political philosophy which has staked, for at least the last three hundred years, its claim to universality. By modern western political philosophy Parel means liberalism/utilitarianism and socialism. As he notes, "It is as if these are not just products of modern West, but that they are products of universal reason itself" (p.1). However, as Parel himself recognizes, modernity is the great subverter of classical and medieval traditions of political philosophy even in the West. In view of this, the modern western political philosophy as a reigning perspective is the subverter not only of non-western political philosophy but also of a particular mode of perceiving political reality—a mode usually characterized as the classical perspective. Viewed thus, it is not certain that it is the modern western political philosophy which has been the cause of the exclusion of non-western political philosophy from the world community of ideas.

It is interesting to note that even as perceptive a political philosopher as Eric Voegelin, who has written so much against the modern approach to politics, has no hesitation in relegating Indian, Chinese and other non-western traditions of political thinking to the background characterizing them as non-philosophical. The antipathy to non-western traditions of political philosophy is not really, then, modern; it is deeply ingrained in the West and not easily erased or overcome. Viewed in this context, the publication of *Comparative Political Philosophy* is an act of courage and a landmark in the literature on political philosophy. It is doubly so because it rejects the claim of universality of the modern western philosophy, on the one hand, and brings together analyses of four—western, Chinese, Indian and the Islamic—traditions of philosophical thinking on things political under one cover.

Undoubtedly, *Comparative Political Philosophy* constitutes a decisive break from the past. It is expected that this break will now bring to an end the two baneful consequences of western superciliousness. It is expected that cross-fertilization of political philosophical stances, approaches and ideas, that was blocked at the source and has remained so for long, would now become possible. It is true that each of these non-western traditions has been profusely written about and commented upon. However, they have been seldom put together in juxtaposition to western political philosophy. Also, the denigration of indigenous traditions

## Breaking a Taboo

Ramashray Roy

COMPARATIVE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: STUDIES UNDER THE UPAS TREE

Edited by Anthony J. Parel and Ronald C. Keith

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 260 including Index, Rs. 225.00

of philosophical thinking about political life as a consequence of the ascendancy of the modern western political philosophy as a dominant ideology would, it is hoped, now come to an end. But it all depends on the extent to which political philosophy becomes comparable across culture. Parel himself recognizes the difficulties bedeviling such a comparative endeavour. However, he is confident that these difficulties can be successfully overcome if, following Leo Strauss, one views political philosophy as the quest for "knowledge of political phenomena—"knowledge" as distinct from "opinion" or mere ideology or social science theory."

One can appreciate the need to make the distinction between knowledge and opinion. However, such a distinction alone does not solve the problem. Apart from the question of how we know knowledge when we have it, there is also the question of how we construct knowledge. Parel avers that knowledge of things political "is the product, ultimately, of rational reflection on the data of *insight* and *experience*. Each culture has its own basic insights about what constitutes the good life and the good regime; it has its own peculiar experiences which give institutional and intellectual expression to these insights. True, political philosophy emerges as a result of the interaction between such insights and experiences.

But the question of "insight into what" must be raised. This Parel does not do. However, the answer comes forth in chapter 2. As Barry Cooper notes, political philosophy proceeds on the assumption that there is an order of being and that it has or can have access to it; that is, beyond the realities of the world, the lasting and passing of things, there is the world-transcendent source or ground of these things or of their being (p. 34).

This is, no doubt, a pure Voegelinian vintage and one need not dispute the proposition that insight into order is derived from the soul's attunement to the divine ground of being. However, one needs to raise the question of whether this insight into order and its experience can be fully articulated and expressed through rational reflection. It is true that philosophy is a public activity and must be communicable in order to be understood, evaluated, and shared or rejected. However, the insight into and experiences of order are not entirely affable; they cannot, as such, be completely explained or communicated through rational reflection. One needs to go beyond ratiocination and logical analysis, whether of dialectical variety or not, in order to articulate an experience that is personal, to be sure, but which resonates with a shareable commonality. To insist on affability as the sole criterion of political philoso-

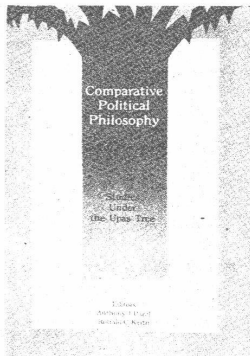
phy is to leave certain experiences and their articulation in non-"rational" modes out of reckoning. The love of wisdom does not always translate itself into or make its appearance in a logical rational mode.

It is not to denigrate the role of rational reflection in knowledge construction. However, to treat it as the only way of knowledge construction is to truncate philosophy. Also, political philosophy does concern itself with the question of the good regime. However, can this question be separated from the question of what constitutes the good life? If the conception of the good regime cannot be delinked from that of the good life, clarity about the status of the political becomes necessary. If by the political is meant something distinct from and autonomous of other areas of life, then there is always the danger of politics making a claim to autotelism and perverting human existence as it has done in modern times. If, on the other hand, the political is simply a link between the sheer givens of nature and society on the one side, and the transcendental ends towards which men aspire on the other, the question of the nature of this link must be resolved. What principles should govern the functioning of this link is a question that cannot be resolved by a reference to the distinction between knowledge and opinion. Also, it can be left neither to the working of the givens of nature and society nor to values men aspire for. This is so for the reason that while these givens themselves need to be transformed in the light of some values, the realization of these values depends on how the political as a link operates.

It can also be argued that manifestation of these values and the proper working of the political is dependent on the degree to which the primordial insight into the structure of order is internalized and institutionalized. Two questions assume importance here. First, is it necessary or desirable to give a central place to politics in promoting and regulating social life? The relevance of the distinction Rabindra Nath Tagore makes between Universal Empire and Universal Society comes readily to mind. Second, while philosophy grows out of the insight into the structure of order, it is not necessary that the nature or apprehension of this insight be invariant in time and space. As a matter of fact, this insight differs in time and space. As Parel himself admits, "the emergence of political philosophy is conditioned by the cultural and linguistic traditions within which it occurs. And these traditions tend to produce, among other things, texts which are recognizably political. . . . "However, their study, taken in their historical and intellectual contexts, reveals that "they contain differences as well as similarities with respect to their key ideas" (p. 2). As such, on what grounds do we compare political philosophical writings arising in or derived from different cultures?

*By restoration of political science is meant a return to the consciousness of principles, not perhaps a return to the content of an earlier attempt. Much can be learned, to be sure, from the earlier philosophers concerning the range of problems, as well as concerning their theoretical treatment; but the very historicity of human existence, that is, the unfolding of the typical in meaningful concreteness, precludes a valid reformulation of principles through return to a former concreteness. Hence, political science cannot be restored to the dignity of theoretical science in the strict sense by means of a literary renaissance of philosophical achievements of the past; the principles must be regained by a work of theoretization which starts from the concrete, historical situation of the age, taking into account the full amplitude of our empirical knowledge.*

—Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics*



*Political Philosophy, as Leo Strauss states, is the quest for 'knowledge' of the political phenomena—'knowledge' as distinct from 'opinion', or mere ideology or social science theory. Such 'knowledge' is the product, ultimately, of rational reflection on the data of insight and experience. Each culture has its own basic insights about what constitutes the good life and the good regime, it has its own peculiar experiences which give institutional and intellectual expression to these insights. A political philosophy emerges as a result of the interaction between such insights and experiences.*

*But the emergence of political philosophy is conditioned by the cultural and linguistic traditions within which it occurs.*

—Anthony J. Parel, *Comparative Political Philosophy*

Parel hopes that the path for comparative political philosophy can be cleared by identifying what Voegelin calls the "phenomenon of equivalences". As examples of such equivalences, Parel refers to Aristotelian *politikos* and the Confucian *junzi*, Indian *dharma* and the pre-modern western notion of "natural justice", Islamic prophet-legislator and the Platonic philosopher-king (p.12). This is no place to examine in any detail the merit of these equivalences. However, it can be argued that, even while such equivalences are articulated through similar ontological categories, the structure of reality apprehended through these categories and its psychological and institutional moorings and requirements are differentially conceived and articulated in different cultures. As such, it is not clear as to what the term "equivalences" actually refers to. Does it refer to the structure of order apprehended through insight, the articulation and institutionalization of this insight, or the labels with the help of which the reality underlying them is sought to be communicated? As the five volume study of *Order and History* by Voegelin reveals, the insight into and experience of order are highly differentiated and have differential pragmatic consequences. It is not, therefore, possible to compare these differentiated insights and their institutional expressions without evolving proper and effective categories for comparing political philosophy across time and space.

It is not surprising, then, that Parel himself recognizes the difficulties confronting comparative political philosophy. These difficulties cannot be easily overcome. The resource to equivalences is unavailing insofar as the very concept of equivalence is problematic because it is ambiguous. Moreover, even if we succeed in discovering real equivalences, it is not certain that the difficulties associated with comparing political philosophical writings across cultures will dissolve.

Comparison requires the identifications of something transcending individual lives and social existence with reference to which evaluation of different insights into the structure of order and their institutional expressions can be made. As long as we lack such a referent, comparative political philosophy will not get off the ground.

It is in the light of these considerations that the use of the metaphor of the Upas tree is interesting. Parel refers specifically to the baleful "effect of modernity in thought and action" which has, because of its self-aggrandizing tendency, prevented other thought systems to compete for articulation, ascendance and control. It is again this modernity which has, in the view of the editors of this book, blocked the development of comparative

*The philosophy of order and history is a western symbolism because western society has received its historical form through Christianity. And the Patres of early Christianity could create the symbolism because they could draw on the resources of Israel and Hellas when they articulated their own modes of existence. As Clement of Alexandria formulated it: "To the barbarians God has given the Law and the Prophets; to the Hellens he has given philosophy; so that the ears of both might be prepared to hear the Gospel." And on the same relation in retrospect: "To us he gave the New Testament; those of the Judaeans and Hellens are the old ones."*

—Eric Voegelin,  
*Order and History: The World of Polis, II*

political philosophy. But if the preceding analysis has any significance, the trouble lies deeper. The Upas tree of modernity is slowly dying of its own poisonous emissions. The relevant question here is: What does take its place? Looking to the growing popularity in the West of what, for want of a better label, is known as post-modernism, it is very doubtful whether the kind of political philosophy the editors of the book under review have in mind will ever take off.

It should also be noted here that the title of the book is only normative; it has no real pragmatic significance insofar as comparing political philosophy across cultures is concerned. There is no evidence of any systematic attempt even in this book to identify the components of a comparative framework. What it does is to place in one volume perspectives on things political drawn from four different cultures, viz. the West, China, India and the Islamic. There is no doubt that even the putting together of these four different perspectives is something to be greatly lauded. And when these perspectives span over two different ages and stages in the development of each of the cultures included here, the fare becomes really very rich. However, putting together of different strands of political thinking under one cover does not amount to comparison. One can only hope that the book under review will supply the much needed impetus to the development of a comparative framework with respect to political philosophy.

If as a comparative exercise, *Comparative Political Philosophy* fails to exemplify its title, as a collection of discrete analytical and intellectual writings about four distinct cultures it is eminently useful and stimulating. One may cavil at the inability of Barry Cooper (chapter 3) to transcend the limitations of the Voegelinian framework; one may also find fault with Robert X. Ware (chapter 6) for his failure to set forth the true import of democracy and its relationship with the contemporary Chinese political experience; and one may also criticize Yusuf K. Umar (chapter 9) for abstaining from evaluating Al-Farabi's Platonic solution of the tension between Islamic religious orthodoxy and philosophical openness. However, each of the articles included in this collection is competently written and is of immense value to the students of political philosophy.

*Comparative Political Philosophy* announces the end of the domination of modern western political philosophy. This is itself something to be admired. Its utility, insofar as it throws in sharp relief the structure of both classical and modern political thinking in different cultures, is beyond any doubt. This is a welcome addition to the growing corpus of writings on political philosophy.

Ramashray Roy is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies.

## A Command Performance?

T.C.A. Ramanuja Chari

THE END OF HISTORY AND THE LAST MAN

By Francis Fukuyama  
Penguin Books, U.K., 1992,  
ppxxxiii+418, \$ 2.95

**T**he *End of History and the Last Man* is Fukuyama's paean for the victory of liberal democracy and economic liberalism and the winding up of the Leninist-Stalinist Soviet experiment. The enthusiasm is natural. But his Chilastic assertion that this victory is "the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution", that it has given "the only form of government that has survived intact to the end of the twentieth century", and that the two together constitute "the end of history" is priestcraft despite his claim of support by historical evidence of the kind summarized below.

First, are the facts of the survival and spread of liberal principles of economics proof that Socialist Central planning results only in backwardness and poverty? He points to the acceptance by China and the other Communist countries of the logic of technologically driven economic modernization, of the basic terms of the universal capitalist economic culture and of competition and determination of prices by market mechanisms (p. 96-97).

Second, modern science transmuted itself as technology guarantees increasing homogenization of all human societies regardless of their historical origins and cultural inheritances, by initiating and sustaining:

- i) the drive to reach ever higher levels of sophistication and efficiency to achieve a uniform horizon of economic production possibilities, limitless acquisition of wealth and the satisfaction of expanding human desires;
- ii) the competition for acquiring parity in military capability by defensive modernization with other countries which have acquired a decisive military advantage by most effectively developing, producing and deploying technology;
- iii) the imperative need for rational organization of labour;
- iv) the creation of global markets by creating parallel economic aspirations and practices; and
- v) consistent, large-scale changes in

social structures such as a centralized state, urbanization, displacement of traditional forms of social organization by economically rational units based on function and efficiency.

Thus, diverse and different societies around the world get linked to one another.

All this and more strewn over the first three parts of the book persuade Fukuyama to declare that the logic of modern natural science dictates evolution in a universal, single, coherent direction of capitalism. He asserts further that the central planning for socialistic objectives is totally inadequate to create or reach up to the post-industrial economic organization.

Third, the number of countries that have adopted liberal democracy has increased to sixty-one in 1990 from three in 1790, five in 1848, thirteen in 1900, twenty-five in 1919, and thirty-six in 1960. This is not a momentary upturn in the fortunes of liberal democracy.

Leaning heavily on Alexandre Kojève, the twentieth century interpreter of Hegel, Fukuyama concludes that History is directional, cumulative, unilinear, irreversible and is the story of man's progressive rise to full rationality. History is a dialogue between societies. This dialogue is resolved when the less contradictory side survives and those with grave internal contradictions fail and are succeeded by others that manage to overcome those contradictions.

He argues that liberal democratic societies are free from contradictions. Unlike the authoritarian states of the Right these succeed in controlling civil society as they have a reserve store of legitimacy and of serious ideas capable of sustaining internal cohesion and societal integrity. Unlike the authoritarianism of the Left, these do not seek to subordinate the whole of civil society to their control including what their citizens are allowed to think. These do not demand either loyalty to an ideology that provides a comprehensive view of human life or unquestioning obedience to that view of life as interpreted by the state represented by the Party or the Fuhrer or the Leader. These do not encompass terror, abrogation of civil and human rights or destruction of civil society in its entirety.

Fukuyama asserts that the unique distinction of being the only coherent political aspiration is due to the fact that liberal democracy gives full scope to man's primordial desire for recognition of his identity, worth and dignity by his equals and peers. The first moment of that encounter between equals was a bloody battle unto death for prestige. When it ended in the surrender of one to the other, the victor became the master and the loser the slave. Thus society was divided into classes, not based on economic function but between masters who were willing to risk their lives, and slaves

## FRANCIS FUKUYAMA THE END OF HISTORY AND THE LAST MAN

who were not.

Both masters and slaves were dissatisfied with their lot because the former got recognition not from his peers but from the vanquished. The slaves' dissatisfaction drove them to discover modern natural science and thereby to create and enriching changes by conforming to the discipline of a work ethic. Thus both masters and slaves rid themselves of their respective dissatisfaction.

The desire for recognition therefore provides the missing link between liberal economics and liberal politics. Liberal societies are founded on reciprocal and equal agreement among citizens to mutually recognize each other and not to interfere with each other's lives and property. Thus the universal and homogenous state is born. The moment of its birth is the end of History.

Fukuyama's *Elisium* is vulnerable to disruption and subversion by a variety of factors and tensions. Some of these are:

- i) the total exclusion of any principle or element of economic justice from the connotation of economic liberalism (p. 42);
- ii) the total exclusion of "second and third generation" rights like the right to employment, housing or health care, and confining individual rights or freedom to Bryss's enumeration of individual civil rights to be exemption, except when needed to protect the interest of the state and community against present and imminent danger, from control by the State over the citizen's person, property, religious belief and practices and in all matters (p. 42-43);
- iii) the unresolved (unresolvable!) tension between democracy's demand for substantive equality of one and all, that is, equal treatment of unequals and liberalism's rationality of conceding differences amongst individuals relating to endowment, talent and capacity and therefore, conceding only legal or formal equality, namely, of the right to

compete;

- iv) the tension arising out of accommodating only Liberty and Equality but not "Fraternity" of the French Revolution triad out of which raises all kinds of economic and political rivalry and positive unwillingness to share knowledge and technology at domestic and international levels;
- v) the tensions arising out of the vested interest of developed countries in keeping the under- and least-developed countries (UDC and LDC) as such;
- vi) the tension arising out of democracy accepting the demands of present-oriented appetitive possessive consumerism, of instant satisfaction of desire for power and other wants with no concern or regard for the past or the future and liberalism accepting the demands of citizenship (pride in, fidelity to, and the instinct to protect and preserve roots, identity, heritage, mutuality of rights and obligations).

Any of these singly or in combination with one or more of the other factors is capable of disrupting Fukuyama's conception of the 'Ultimate' in the evolution of man's ideology and economic and political practice.

Fukuyama has elevated the contemporary situation to the status of the end of history conceived by Kant and given substance to by Hegel and Marx but without accounting for the disruptive factors, some of which have been mentioned above. Not only that. He has not, by design or lack of care, cleared up a legitimate doubt. That is, whether the contemporary situation, after the collapse of the socialist experiment, is not merely a more highly refined variant of capitalism, as envisioned by Marx, but is truly a new mutation of the structure and content of human socialization.

It is not clear how Fukuyama's 'Ultimate' can be real in the absence of a cogent showing that liberal democracy and economic liberalism provides the soil and environment for the emergence of

- a) non-class formations displacing the current division of society into the possessing and non-possessing classes.
- b) a just world order in place of the current North-South division of the world marked by enormous economic and technological imbalance.

There is no assurance that Fukuyama's Utopia will—

- i) ensure that the contemporary situation will not be utilised by the possessing governing classes and their associate elites to preserve, protect, consolidate and maintain their supremacy and the extant order in their own countries and internationally through

- ii) ensure that the mutation referred to above does not produce new variants of class cohesion of the non-possessing, deprived and backward majority at the domestic and international levels;
- iii) ensure that the two classes thus reorganized do not get engaged in Hegel's "Struggle for recognition";
- iv) ensure that a system of government based on an electoral process which sends up representatives who are not the electors' delegates or agents or surrogates but autonomous functionaries of the system of manipulative politics based on populism and one-upmanship can or have the will to reconcile or harmonize rival interests, aspirations and demands.

Fukuyama does not seem to recognize that the universal homogeneous state which accommodates Liberty and Equality but not Fraternity is one pattern of the configuration of power. There is a guaranteed insufficiency in any currently operative dominant and functional system. That insufficiency arises out of the fact that however versatile the system may be it cannot exhaust all social or political experience or eliminate the aspirations of human will, emotion, attachment or harmonize fully rival interests, aspirations, demand and satisfaction. It would be more so if Hegel's category of "becoming" and dialectic is of any significance and structural relevance.

Finally, this land of happiness is the preserve of the Christian Whites of the West because modern natural science had to be and was invented at a certain point in history by certain Europeans (p. 72). Luis de Moliner and Francesco Suarez taught that God dispenses His Grace to those with whom it will be most efficacious. Hegel, Neitzsche, Weber, et al., taught that there existed an objective relation between Christianity, the "absolute religion", and the emergence of liberal democracy in western Europe. Therefore, the Whites of the West are the divinely ordained messiahs and guardians of freedom, equality and human rights in the world.

As pointed out by *The Economist* recently in its 'Survey of Defence in the Twenty-first Century' (Sept. 5-11 '92) this White man's paradise must be ready to wage wars of interest if the flow of raw materials is interrupted by any rowdy non-white country and wars of conscience if any non-white country has the temerity to treat its citizens as the White man had treated the peoples of his colonies, Red Indians, and the Australian tribes.

End of history, indeed!!

*TCA Ramanujachari is a retired civil servant and a practicing lawyer.*

# An Analytical Study

Lt. Gen. S.K. Sinha

INDIA AND NEPAL: A CHANGING RELATIONSHIP

By S.D. Muni

Konark Publishers, 1992, pp. 237, Rs. 200.00

**S**D. Muni, a well known authority on South Asian affairs has given a comprehensive and erudite account of Indo-Nepal relations in his book *India and Nepal*. He has elaborated on the constant determinants and the variable factors which have a bearing on the bilateral relations of the two neighbours. Geography, history, culture, religion and matrimony have been the constant determinants. Internal political developments within the two countries and the global or regional power equations have been the variable factors. 1950 and 1990 have been the landmark years in Indo-Nepal relations. The understanding of 1950 came about in the wake of the approaching collapse of the anachronistic Rana regime in Nepal and after the emergence of Independent India. It was worked out against the backdrop of China's military intrusion in Tibet. Similarly, the bilateral agreement of 1950 followed the collapse of royal autocracy in Nepal and the change of governments in India, with the National Front replacing the Congress. It was reached at a time when the Cold War had ended and winds of change were blowing in several countries.

The demographic pattern in Nepal has an important bearing on bilateral relations between India and Nepal. This aspect has not been analyzed by the author. Forty-five per cent of the population of Nepal comprises plainmen living in the Terai area of Nepal who are commonly referred to as Madhesias. They are indistinguishable from the Indian population across the border in U.P. and Bihar. Their mother-tongue is Hindi and at home they converse in Indian dialects of Maithili, Avadhi or Bhojpuri. Through matrimony and their way of life they are far closer to their neighbours in India than their countrymen in the hill areas of Nepal. Hitherto they had been treated as second class citizens. They had been denied recruitment in the Army and they were grossly under-represented in other government services. Upto 1990, in a Panchayat Parliament of 140, Madhesias had only 18 seats when they constituted 45 per cent of the population of the country. The fear that uncontrolled influx of population from India may swell the ranks of Madhesias who may become the majority community of Nepal has been ever present among the hill people who have been the ruling elite of the country. This together with the asymmetry in the size

and resources of the two countries, has made the Nepalese very sensitive and touchy in their relations with India. Thus any talk of a special relationship with India has acquired a bad connotation in Nepal to the extent of compromising Nepal's sovereignty. There has been a growing demand among the intelligentsia to replace the special relationship with equal relationship with all countries.

The author has made an admirable analysis of the treaty of Peace and Friendship concluded in 1950, of Nepal's proposal of Zone of Peace and of India's aid strategy in Nepal. The 1950 treaty has been drawing a lot of flak in Nepal as an unequal and imperialistic treaty. Even the Nepali Congress, despite its closeness to India has not been coming out too strongly to defend this treaty for fear of being dubbed as lackeys of India. The fact that this treaty more than the 1923 treaty with British India, recognizes unambiguously Nepal's independence and sovereignty is lost sight of. Under this treaty half a million Nepalese are enjoying economic rights and employment opportunities in India at par with Indians themselves. Against this, 100,000 Indians living in Nepal have been extended restricted job opportunities and are denied the facility to acquire immovable property. The author has brought out that it does not suit either of the two countries to abrogate this treaty. He has also emphasized that the main purpose of the Zone of Peace proposal of King Birendra was to preserve royal autocracy in Nepal and to globalise Nepal's bilateral relations with India. The need for India to develop aid strategy beyond security concerns or hydel projects, has also been well brought out.

A unique aspect of Indo-Nepal relations is the provision for Nepalese subjects (commonly referred to as Gorkhas) enlisting in the Indian Army has been discussed. Gorkha soldiers had served in the British Indian Army for a century but the officer cadre of the Army was not open to them. After Independence, this lacuna was removed and Gorkhas could join the commissioned ranks of the Indian Army. Para 2 of Annexure 3 of the Agreement between the two countries quoted in the book states, "The Gorkha troops will be given every facility so that it (sic) might be officered by their own men and they should be eligible for commissioned ranks with no restrictions

whatsoever to the highest level to which qualified officers may be promoted." Despite this, while referring to equal treatment in employment afforded to Nepalese in India, the author states, "the only exception to this is the higher administrative services (IAS and IFS) and top military positions". This statement is not correct in regard to the military where top positions can be attained by them. In theory a Gorkha can become the Chief of the Army Staff of the Indian Army. Indeed a Gorkha rose to be a major-general in the Indian Army and was cleared for promotion to lieutenant-general but he unfortunately died in a helicopter crash.

It should have also been brought out that during the trade and treaty impasse, West Nepal was badly hit and the population here suffered great hardships: essential commodities like salt, kerosene, sugar and so on were not available to them. Without direct surface communication with the rest of the country and the transit points to India being closed, they could not market their agricultural produce. The bulk of Gorkha soldiers of the Indian Army come from West Nepal where their families were suffering acute difficulties. Yet these soldiers never faltered in their loyalty to India and gave their best at Siachen and Sri Lanka, many making the supreme sacrifice.

In an otherwise lucid and detailed presentation of Indo-Nepal relations the author has not been able to present the events of 1990 in their correct perspective. His reference to the National Front not having a coherent policy towards Nepal is misconceived. Despite being a minority government afflicted by conflicting pulls within the ruling party as also by its two supporting parties, namely the BJP and the CPI, the National Front Government handled a very delicate situation in Nepal with remarkable finesse. The Chandrashekhar group in the Janata Dal and the CPI wanted a tough line to be adopted towards the King. The V.P. Singh-Gujral group within the ruling party were for improving relations with Nepal making a departure from the tough policy pursued by the previous Congress regime. The BJP wanted a soft line to be pursued towards the King. Besides these contrary pulls in India, the fluid situation in Nepal had also to be taken into account. Nepali Congress and the Communist parties in Nepal had combined to launch a non-violent movement for restoring democracy. The King was still all powerful and the Army was solidly behind him. There were reports that China staunchly retaining one party rule was not happy at the prospect of a multi-party system emerging adjacent to its troubled backyard in Tibet. They were reported to be advising the King to crush the popular movement using his Army like what the Chinese had done at Tiananmen Square. One could no doubt anticipate that the movement for restoration of democracy would ultimately succeed but it was difficult to forecast how long that would take. The experience of conducting non-

violent movements in India showed that these take a long time.

During this period India could not allow her relations with Nepal to remain frozen. However, by restoring trade and transit relations, India would be encouraging the King and the Government not to concede the demands of the democratic forces and to that extent it would adversely affect the prospects of the movement for restoration of democracy. There was a line of thinking in India led by Chandrashekhar that India should actively assist the Nepalese people in their struggle against absolutism. India also had to keep in mind that any active interference by her within Nepal would have serious ramifications. The International community might perceive India to be interfering in Nepal as Pakistan was doing in Kashmir. That would not only damage

*The asymmetry in the size and resources of the two countries, has made the Nepalese very sensitive and touchy in their relations with India. Thus any talk of a special relationship with India has acquired a bad connotation in Nepal to the extent of compromising Nepal's sovereignty. There has been a growing demand among the intelligentsia to replace the special relationship with equal relationship with all countries.*

India's image but also weaken her case in Kashmir. Moreover, given the sensitivity of the Nepalese people, this could hurt their sense of national pride and in the long run be exploited to generate anti-India feelings. All these considerations had to be kept in view by the National Front Government while formulating its policy towards Nepal. The ingredients of the new Nepal policy were to cultivate cordial relations with the King and persuade him to come to terms with democracy while extending moral support for the democratic movement and expressing the hope that the King and the people of Nepal will be able to work out an amicable solution. High profile efforts were made to resolve the trade and transit dispute but this process was not allowed to be completed till a popular government came to power in Nepal.

This approach yielded a rich dividend. The popular movement reached a crescendo in early April 1990. A large number of people was shot in the streets of Kathmandu. Violence on this scale has never before erupted in Nepal. Acting on behalf of the King, the Foreign Minister of Nepal requested the Indian Ambassador to mediate and resolve the differences between the Government and the popular leaders. India wisely chose not to get directly involved but offered friendly advice and remained in the background. A settlement was soon reached and a popular government which was a coal-

tion of Nepali Congress and the Communists was installed. Within a fortnight of coming to power the interim coalition government faced a major crisis. Nine policemen were lynched in Kathmandu and the Nepal Police mutinied. Anti-social elements were on the rampage. This time both the Supreme Leader of the Movement for Democracy and the Prime Minister requested the Indian Ambassador to speak to the King and secure his help in resolving the crisis situation. These two incidents amply bring out how in a matter of only a few months, a sea change had come about in Nepal's attitude towards India. This was largely due to the carefully orchestrated 'Nepal policy' of the National Front Government.

After the crisis situation had blown over and the popular government was firmly in the saddle, the next stage was to resolve the trade and transit impasse. The new Government in Nepal urged India to restore status quo ante as on 23 March 1989, the date on which the treaties had snapped. The Indian bureaucracy was willing to give some concessions but wanted to hold back others to be used as a leverage for concluding formal treaties after an elected government had come to power in Nepal. The National Front Government chose to be generous. Nepal was persuaded to agree to restoring status quo ante as on 1 April 1987, instead of 23 March 1989. The former was the date from which bilateral relations between the two countries had begun to nosedive and the latter was the date on which they had snapped. The change in date had some major advantages from the point of view of India. It meant doing away with work permits for Indians in Nepal, removal of additional duties on Indian goods, retention of Indian school teachers and change in the policy of importing weapons from China. While restoring status quo ante to 1 April 1987, India also showed generosity in providing additional benefits both in terms of revolving credit and trade concessions which had not obtained earlier. The agreement reached between the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal in June 1990 dramatically raised the level of cordiality between the two countries to a much higher level than what had obtained in the previous three decades since 1960.

Notwithstanding the landmark events of 1990 being not presented in their correct perspective, this book is a masterly analysis of the problems affecting the bilateral relations of the two traditionally friendly neighbouring countries. It is imperative that those interested in this subject, particularly those connected with decision-making on bilateral relations between the two countries, make a close study of this highly informative and analytical book.

*Lt. Gen. S.K. Sinha, PVSM, was India's Ambassador in Nepal in the critical year of 1990.*

## A Study in Contrast

Parshotam Mehra

KASHMIR: A DISPUTED LEGACY, 1846-1990

By Alastair Lamb

Roxford Books, London, 1991, pp. 368, price not stated.

Racked by uncertainty and worse, both on the political as well as social planes, Kashmir's unedifying tale that captures today's headlines has in a manner of speaking been no whit different since India and Pakistan came into their own. Or, broadly for that matter, under a century or so of the Raj that preceded. And farther back when the Afghans or the Sikhs held sway. Or, even the Mughals. Something in the land or its people that breeds a singular lack of cohesion or continuity? Or, is it the alien hand from without that has not been able to come to terms with its inheritance?

A handful of titles, rigorously selective, may help recapture the valley's past. Mention must be made of P.M.K. Bamzai's twin volumes, *A History of Kashmir* (1962) and *Social and Economic History of Kashmir* (1987); even though overlapping, between them they provide an excellent backdrop. Not exactly unbiased, Michael Brecher's *The Struggle for Kashmir* (1953) furnishes a reasonable update on the first few years of the Kashmir dispute as does Sisir Gupta's *Kashmir: A Study in Indo-Pak Relations* (1966). A recent work by M.J. Akbar, *Kashmir* (1990), offers a cogent though by no means uncritical defence of New Delhi's policies and perspectives.

Lamb's *Kashmir* is a study in contrast. Highly critical and far from friendly to New Delhi, it leans over backwards as it were to buttress the contrary positions. In the event, it calls for careful scrutiny and, within the constraints of a review, detailed analysis.

The book falls into two unequal halves. The first, less voluminous, dealing with the 'Origins' spans almost a century of the Raj, 1846-1947; the second, bulkier in volume, with 'Conflict', a little over four decades of its sequel. Part one spins out an historical narrative delineating the major strands in the defence of British India in terms both of opening of the 'Treaty Road' in Ladakh and the 'Lease' of the Gilgit Agency. The high watermarks, understandably, are the 'Partition 1947' and 'Accession 1947'.

The second half of the study, a reshuffle of contemporary history, starts with the First Kashmir War (1947-8) and draws to a close with New Delhi's overall 'Failure', all the way to 1990. Tucked in between are

accounts of the Second Kashmir War (1965), the sequence of events from Tashkent (1966) to the Simla Conference (1972) and the last decade (1972-82) in the life and politics of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah.

The book starts with the proposition that in comparison with other princely states, Kashmir was 'rather better situated geographically'. The acquisition by the Dogra rulers of Dardistan, including Gilgit and Hunza, came to constitute what the Raj was to call the Northern Areas; and in the bargain, created a totally new polity with its common boundary with Tibet and China and close proximity to Afghanistan and the former Soviet Union. It 'added greatly' to the attractions of the idea of independence after 15 August 1947.

A brief survey of its population, economy and geography convinces the author of the 'fundamental grounds' for the Pakistani claim to Kashmir (p. 11). Again, had British annexation of the State been completed in the 1880s as was 'rather

tigious Muslim majority area of the kind which would go to Pakistan'.

Lamb makes no effort to disguise his conviction that Mountbatten's handling of the accession of the State in the final weeks of the Raj left a lot to be desired for he (or his advisors) 'seem to have accepted Jawaharlal Nehru's views about Kashmiri politics and to have failed to explore the Muslim dimension'. Moreover, Mountbatten accepted the Maharaja's accession on the basis of a falsification of the record: This charade, of course, of which Mountbatten must have been aware (unless he had been shown a fraudulently signed letter from the Maharaja, and, perhaps, Menon had lied to him about the journey to Kashmir with Mahajan on 26 October) would have required a measure of falsification of the record both as to chronology and as to the origination of the proposals. 'Nor were such manipulations of documentation... unknown' in the Raj's conduct of political matters. That was not all. For with the tribal attack in progress, Mountbatten 'lost what detachment he may have had' and came to view Jinnah and Pakistan 'as the enemy'.

Pointing out that the 'havoc wrecked (sic) upon the unfortunate population' in the valley by the Pathan 'aggressors' had become part of the folklore of the Kashmiri dispute, two facts that 'should be remembered', are heavily underlined. One, that the Indian side committed its share of atrocities in the process of repelling the 'invaders' which, sadly, are 'rarely mentioned in the literature of the Kashmiri dispute'; two, that the Kashmiri casualties suffered in 1947 'were certainly far less' than those inflicted upon the inhabitants of the valley 'by the Indian security forces since 1989'.

The oft-repeated Pakistani charge that the Radcliffe Award concerning the three eastern tehsils of the Gurdaspur district where the tract concerned should, by virtue of its Muslim majority, have gone to Pakistan 'was somehow manipulated' so that it was placed in India, finds a deep resonance in these pages. To Lamb, Radcliffe's silence connotes guilt and his stay with Mountbatten under the same roof reason enough for influencing his award against Pakistan! Again, the documents, he avers, 'leave room for a degree of

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favoured at the time'—in 1879, Maharaja Pratap Singh had been virtually deposed—the 'whole state (with possible exception of parts of Jammu and Ladakh) would have gone to Pakistan' under the terms of the Partition in 1947. Or better still, if Kashmir's transfer to the Maharaja (1846) had been treated as a lease that would lapse with the transfer of power. In which case, the Raj might have partitioned the State with the valley reverting to British India 'thereby becoming a con-



reasonable doubt' that with the potential failure of the State in mind, the Governor General or some of his senior advisors ensured that political—not judicial criteria were applied in decision-making. The study affirms that official documents 'fail to show that justice was done whatever the underlying verities might be'.

Lamb has another bone to pick. The alleged presence on or about 17 October of some Patiala troops in Srinagar viz. before the tribal incursions (22 October) or the Indian airlift (27 October). In the event, the tribal crossing into the State at Domel 'was not that of forced entry by the tribesmen but of a gate being opened, as it were, by rebels within the State of Jammu and Kashmir in the interest of an entity which in two days was to declare itself the independent state of Azad Kashmir.' More, the participation of the tribesmen in what amounted to a civil war 'could well be considered to represent an error of political judgement on the part of those who sought their assistance. But it would be difficult in these particular circumstances to classify it as an act of external "aggression" by Pakistan.' The obvious deduction: 'there is no simple legalistic explanation of the origins of the Kashmir dispute; and none which confers absolute moral right on one side only' (pp. 155-6).

For keen observers of the Kashmir scene most of what the preceding paragraphs retail is pretty hackneyed. What is new is the stridency with which the issues are aired afresh. A reputable Pakistani scholar, Ayesha Jalal, has in her study established the fact that the 1947 tribal raids were planned and aided by Pakistani army regulars.<sup>3</sup> Oddly, Lamb's own research in Pakistan to which a friendly reviewer makes a pointed reference as having greatly enhanced his book,<sup>4</sup> does not appear to have yielded him such evidence, archival or otherwise.

Again a contemporary account, the personal diary of Sir George Cunningham who, in August 1947, was hand-picked by Jinnah to be Governor of NWFP may give the reader thought for some sobering reflection. Extensively used by this reviewer in the course of his research at the India Office Library in London, some of its entries make for interesting reading. Only a couple are reproduced:

29th October (1947): Had a message from Jinnah's Secretary at 8 a.m. that Nehru was 'indisposed' in Delhi, and today's meeting here was off . . . . When I went in Jinnah was very angry with Mountbatten and Nehru, and said this was just a plot to delay things . . . . Very probably true.

We then talked for one-and-a-half hours. He said he felt his hands were now free, legally as well as morally to take any line he liked about Kashmir as the accession of Kashmir to India was a 'fraudulent' transaction. I could not get him to define exactly where the 'fraud' came in, except that the method

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of acceding, combined by instant occupation of troops, was against the whole principle by which, it had been mutually agreed, accession would take place. . . .

He then said it was essential for Mudie<sup>5</sup> and myself, and Gracey<sup>6</sup> as C.-in-C. too to enter into the full spirit of this struggle for safeguarding of the lives and rights of the Kashmir people. I was not quite sure whether he implied that I was not quite playing up, so I pointed out that until four or five days ago I did not even know whether the entry of my tribes into Kashmir was in accordance with his and Liaquat's policy or not; and that my last orders—on which I was still working—were that the tribes were not wanted until Pakistan asked for them, that I had not yet been told that they were wanted, and that I had told all my officers therefore not to assist—though they could not prevent—the movement. If this was his definitive policy I was quite prepared to support it, provided I didn't have to do one thing and say another. . . .

Later that day there was another meeting in the bedroom of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali where apart from Cunningham and Jinnah Mudie was present:

All the foregoing talk was repeated at this conference. The list of our conclusions was:

- a) We should try to maintain about 5,000 tribesmen at Baramula, sending up drafts to relieve tired men.
- b) Rations and ammunition would be sent from the Punjab; I would supply 1,00,000 rounds from village defence stocks.
- c) Cash payments would be made to

tribesmen on return.

- d) We should strengthen Poonch with arms and ammunition. They probably had enough men already.
- e) Bodies of tribesmen should not go to Poonch or the Jhelum valley through the Punjab (this would be too blatant!!) but via Hazara.

By November (1947) Cunningham confided in his diary: 'I could have found half a dozen excellent grounds for resigning in the last two weeks or so'; he finally quit, in March (1948).

A word about the British Indian penchant—which New Delhi inherited from the Raj—for 'manipulation' of official records. While this reviewer holds no brief for the Raj's moral scruples or those of its political legatees, Lamb's specific instances deserve scrutiny. Here apart from what Mountbatten is reported to have done, two others cited in the book relate to Sir Olaf Caroe's alleged tampering (1938) with vol 14 of Aitchison's *Treaties* and Nehru's 'misquotation' that the MacDonald note of March 1899 'signified that the whole of Aksai Chin lay in Indian territory.' In actual fact, the note had proposed inter alia that if China should sever all links with Hunza, India would be willing to recognize 'a large tract of country to the north of the great dividing range (viz. Aksai Chin) . . . as Chinese territory.' Clearly someone in the foreign office had not done his homework and failed to spell out the correct position in the Prime Minister's letter of 26 September 1959 to his Chinese counterpart. Nor does Lamb's much-laboured version (pp. 72-3) mention the over-riding fact that the 1899 offer, and the cession of Aksai Chin, were conditional. He would nonetheless have us believe that 'the misquotation was deliberate, a consequence

of policy dilemmas' which New Delhi was then up against. And with Caroe's 'technique of "cooking books"' setting the precedent, all this was of relevance to 'the documentary evidence as to the genesis of the Indo-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir (p. 74). The insinuation is much too obvious to be missed.

Mountbatten's alleged bias against Pakistan and its rulers and his 'manipulation' of the Radcliffe award need not detain us here. The charge was stoutly repudiated by India's last British Governor General. Nor has documentary evidence, on Lamb's own showing, found him conclusively guilty. Caroe's alleged tampering has been exhaustively dealt with in the present writer's earlier work.<sup>7</sup>

Interestingly Lamb's strange fixation with Caroe has him plotting the 'physical occupation' of the Tawang area in 1946-7 (pp. 80-1) when in actual fact he had left the External Affairs Department two years earlier (viz. 1945) and taken over as Governor of NWFP (March 1946)! The worst about Nehru's 'sleight of hand' (p. 72) may be that his words lacked clarification and could be misconstrued.

To impute motives of bad faith and worse to individuals on evidence wanting in conviction sounds a little unfair. For nearer home, Lamb may discover not a few instances of deliberate suppression and distortion of official records at the behest of the highest in the land. The present writer knows from first-hand acquaintance about the partisan manner in which HMG's White Papers on Tibet and Outer Mongolia were compiled in the British Foreign Office in the opening decades of the century. Or the notoriously familiar coloured versions of the blue books on the origins of the two world wars. No nation, including the British, have pleaded innocence in the worst possible distortions of the historical truth to wage their unscrupulous propaganda wars.

The burden of Lamb's song, as may be evident, is that Kashmir has been 'the most dominant force' in shaping the foreign policies of India as well as Pakistan and if only the Raj had taken 'different decisions' both as to its policy and course of action in 1947, the problem 'might never have arisen.' In the event, one must go back to the roots as it were and resolve 'the key issues of 1947.' Or else, continue to inflict serious damage on the body politic of both countries.

As to the present scenario, no objective assessment could deny that New Delhi's singularly inept handling of men and affairs in the valley has been largely responsible for today's sorry state of affairs. So indeed has Pakistan's inveterate hostility and relentless abetment of subversion. Not for our author though. For while it is 'quite possible' that Sikh separatists in the Punjab received a measure of 'unofficial assistance' by way of Pakistan or 'a few individuals' on the other side of the cease-fire line aided and assisted the opposition to Indian rule in Kashmir, 'in

neither case' was it Pakistan's policy 'to destabilize India.' For the central issues both in the Punjab and Kashmir, 'derived from Indian policy and Indian actions of which Pakistan was in the main a spectator.' Nor anything that Islamabad could do 'would alter fundamentally' the attitude towards New Delhi of either the Sikh extremists or the Muslims of the valley. To meet Indian demands, implicit or explicit, Pakistan 'would have to accept some form of public humiliation, admit to a non-existent guilt, promise to remedy a fault the presence of which was not accepted.' In the event, Lamb concludes, 'it was unlikely' that direct Indo-Pak negotiations 'at any level' could produce 'results of significant value.' Nor is Rajiv Gandhi or Narasimha Rao in New Delhi and their counter-parts in Benazir Bhutto or Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad, 'likely to make any difference' (p. 340).

In his 'Final Word' the author makes out a strong case why New Delhi should act the way he has so painstakingly charted. India's legal position in Kashmir is dubious—indeed a good case can be made' that it has no business at all to be there. The Chinese in Aksai Chin 'pose no danger to Indian security' nor could the 'rate of disintegration of the Indian union . . . now inevitable' be altered for the worse by yielding Kashmir. Again, the

state can no longer stay together as a single entity and, as in his earlier study, *Crisis in Kashmir* (1966), Lamb cites with approval Sir Owen Dixon's analysis (1950) that Kashmir consisted of a variety of components 'each capable of being dealt with in a different way'. In sum, the best for New Delhi would be to give up its charade of governance and hand over the valley to Pakistan.

With such friendly advice from a third party academic, no detailed comment is called for. Nor is his conclusion a surprise. For the refrain from the very outset is loud and clear. This is rather sad for an author with a respectable expertise on Asian frontiers in general and the Sino-Indian border in particular—to use his undoubted talent in a far from objective presentation and analysis. A knowledgeable critic who is otherwise at pains to treat the work with kid gloves is constrained to remark that Lamb 'should have been more open-handed' and 'regretfully' concludes that 'when he is biased he bases it on supposition than fact.'<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly Lamb's stance today does not differ materially from his conclusions reached almost a quarter century earlier:

Once it is admitted that Pakistan has a right to exist at all, then it cannot be denied that she has every reason to

be interested in the future of Jammu and Kashmir. . . . To deny. . . . that such an interest exists is to ignore completely the realities of the situation. It would have been logical in 1947 to consider how the principles of partition could be applied to Jammu and Kashmir state. There is still a case for doing so in 1966.

At one level, Lamb's book is an odd mixture of some of his earlier work with a few fresh sketch maps and some additional material; unlike them, it suffers from poor editing and, surprisingly, some errors in spelling and punctuation. Do such exercises, one half wonders, yield desired dividends? That Islamabad has a case of sorts would be hard to deny but that New Delhi has none may be difficult to accept.

#### NOTES

1. V.P. Menon, then Secretary, ministry of states, New Delhi.
2. Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan, Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir.
3. Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Law: Pakistan's political economy of*

*Defence*, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

4. Amar Jasbir Kaur, 'More on the Kashmir Dispute', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 10 January 1992, pp. 93-5.
5. Sir Alexander Francis Mudie, governor of West Punjab.
6. Lt Gen Sir Douglas Gracey, Chief of Staff and later C-in-C, Pakistan.
7. *India Office Library and Records*, MSS Eur D 670 (Cunningham Papers). Cunningham's diary draws to a close on 30 March 1948.
8. Parshotam Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, Macmillan, 1974. See also his 'India-China Border: A Review and Critique', *EOW*, 15 May 1982, pp. 834-8.
9. For a balanced assessment, far from friendly to New Delhi, see David Taylor, *Asian Affairs* (London), 22, 3, October 1991, pp. 304-13.
10. Amar Jasbir Kaur, *op.cit.*
11. Alastair Lamb, *Crisis in Kashmir: 1947 to 1966*, London, 1966, p. 145.

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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. 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.

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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### Alien Homage

E.P. THOMPSON

The present study by E.P. Thompson—the internationally famous historian and Peace Movement campaigner—draws upon the extensive correspondence and manuscripts in the Thompson Collection, and throws light on unfamiliar (sometimes painful) aspects of an interface between Bengali and British culture.

E.P. THOMPSON is the son of Edward J. Thompson and is well known for his prominent part in the British and European peace movements.

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## The Valley of Fear

Jagmohan

THE KASHMIR TANGLE

By Rajesh Kadian

Vision Books, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 200, Rs. 190.00

This book offers a synoptic view of the Kashmir problem. The area which it traverses is delineated clearly and the style is generally simple and lucid. The common reader can sustain his interest throughout and also acquaint himself with the basic issues involved and the options available. But the book adds little to what is known on the subject.

The events that can be seen on the surface and are of recent origin are described in a fairly accurate manner. Examples: "New Delhi misread the intensity of the developing threat. So India tried to placate rather than crush the growing insurgency. In July 1989 Dr. Farooq Abdullah released 23 well known militants. . . . About 50 others were likewise freed over the next four months despite the ominous developments of August that year. . . . At least five thousand people thronged to the Ghani Stadium in Srinagar and Shabbir Shah, the underground leader of the People's League took the salute. . . . By then targeted killings had begun. . . . little action was taken following the 1,600 violent incidents and of the 351 bomb blasts during 1989."

However, one looks in vain for any in-depth examination of the underlying forces that have caused the present turmoil in the Valley.

The roots of the current crisis lie embedded in the soft and permissive attitude of the state, in the politics of deception, in the spurious democracy, in the habit of nursing illusions, in the fundamentalization of religion, in the infirmities of administration, in public corruption, in regional differences, in disintegrative constitutional relationship, and in the overall dynamics of negative forces.

Pakistan took full advantage of these fundamental infirmities and started engineering internal subversion and terrorism. It understood that the foundation of our edifice was made of spurious material which could be infested with white ants from within and brought down by a gale of low intensity.

A well-considered plan, having three phases, was drawn up. In Phase I, all the components of the power structure had to be infiltrated and subverted from within. In Phase II, pressure had to be mounted on the Indian Army in Siachen, Kargil and other vulnerable areas and in Phase III, the possession of Kashmir Valley had to be secured by intensifying internal subversion and attack from across

the border.

None of the above facts, which are of crucial significance, are adequately brought out.

Sheikh Abdullah's duplicity is touched in passing. The author says, "His (Sheikh's) presentation portrayed the dispute to be a problem between Kashmir and Pakistan with India merely playing a peripheral role" (p. 101). He does not analyze fully the adverse impact of the Sheikh's deception and numerous complications it created. Nor does he assess the harmful effect of the State and Central leadership's total indifference to the need for rejuvenation of social and cultural forces that could make the politics stable and scrupulous and administrative institutions responsive and result-oriented. The nature and pattern of subversion and terrorism in the Valley, too, are side-tracked. A close study of these aspects is absolutely necessary for understanding the ground level conditions and for formulating a comprehensive strategy to deal with deep-rooted problems. A

case for the abrogation of Article 370 is made out (p. 153) but no new or original idea is presented.

More often than not, the author does not take the trouble to indicate the precise source on the basis of which he makes his assertions. For instance, at page 24, he refers to 1,600 violent incidents, without specifying any document from which this data has been derived.

The author also tends to make observations which lead the reader nowhere. In regard to the migration of the Kashmiri Pandits (p. 34), for example, he writes, "Some Kashmiri Muslim organizations alleged that the Governor deliberately encouraged this so as to rid the Valley of its Hindu population; once done, he could then reduce it to a killing ground for the Muslims left behind."

It is expected of a careful author to study the written records and inform the reader of the true position. In this case, hard evidence exists. First, much before I went to the State for my second term, a number of eminent leaders of the Pandit community, such as Tikka Lal Taploo, N.K. Ganjoo, P.N. Bhat etc., were brutally murdered; and the exodus of Pandits from the Valley began. Secondly, in a memorandum dated January 16, 1990, submitted to my predecessor, General K.V. Krishna Rao (Retd.), the Kashmiri Pandit Sabha referred to acceleration in the pace of exodus. Thirdly, written warnings were administered by terrorist organizations like Hizbul Mujahideen, through widely circulated dailies—*Aftab* and *Alsafa*—

asking the Pandits to leave the Valley within 48 hours or face the consequences. Fourthly, the State Government's Press Note of March 7, 1990, which was duly published in the newspapers, speaks eloquently of the efforts made by me to keep the Kashmiri Pandit community in the Valley.

Another weakness of the book is that the author fails to note a basic fact spelt out in *My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir*, namely, the disinformation was in-built not only in the technique of subversion but also in the petty politics of the vested interests. These interests, in cynical disregard of their own pronouncements in the past, particularly in respect of my first term of governorship of the State, strained every nerve to tarnish my efforts to end terrorism when I was sent to the State for the second term. The wrong end of the stick was intentionally picked up and even concocted stories were planted in the press. A book published in 1992, which does not separate propaganda from documented facts and merely makes casual reference to the "versions", can evoke only transitory interest. The author tends to forget that truth has only one version; in any case, he should not have left the reader clueless about the solid facts that can be easily distilled from the contemporaneous records.

Jag Mohan is the former Governor of Jammu and Kashmir and is the author of *My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir*.

### JAMMU AND KASHMIR

By Somnath Dhar

National Book Trust, India, 1991, p. 212, Rs. 34.00

It is a pretty little book which presents basic, though elementary, information on the State of Jammu and Kashmir. History, geography, language, literature and other social and cultural traits of all the regions—Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh—are given in a gentle and easily readable style. It will be particularly useful to those who have no knowledge about the State's chequered past.

The chapter on cultural heritage is fascinating and invites attention to important aspects. It brings out, albeit briefly, how "for upward of two thousand years, Kashmir has been the home of Sanskrit learning" and how "from this Valley have issued masterpieces of history, poetry, romance, fables and philosophy" (p. 67). These days, the centuries' old cultural bonds between the State and the Union, which are as important as the constitutional links, are usually lost sight of. Few people know that "it was at Sharadapeeth in Kashmir that Sri Shankara

started his meteoric career of preaching, after he paid obeisance to the goddess, Sharada, in the temple" (p. 70).

The significant role of the Sufi and Rishi saints who came on the scene in the fourteenth century, in shaping the mind-scape of the Valley has been highlighted. The mystic outpouring of the two great harbingers of the new age, Lal Ded and Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, have been carefully chosen and quoted. Example:

*Idol is of stone, temple is of stone,  
Above (temple) and below (idol) are one,  
Which of them shall thou worship,  
O foolish Pandit?  
Cause thou the union of mind with soul.*

The romantic movement in Kashmiri poetry, beginning with the sixteenth century's celebrated poetess, Habba Khatoon, who has been compared with the English poet, Shelley, in lyrical spontaneity and with the Mughal Empress, Nur Jahan, in beauty, has also been touched and its lasting impact on local language and literature discussed. Habba's simple lyrics are even now hummed in every village and town of the Valley. A sample of her poetry follows:

*I came of peasant parentage  
I made a name as Habba Khatoon.*

*I passed through crowds, drawing tight  
my veil,  
But people flocked to see me,  
And even the ascetics hurried out of woods,  
To catch a glimpse of me.*

The modern poets, too, are not forgotten. Mahjoor, Azad and Zinda Kaul, all come in. In the context of the current conditions, Mahjoor's passionate plea for unity is appropriately recalled:

*Who is the friend and who the foe of your  
native land?  
Let you among yourselves thoughtfully  
make out. . . .  
Let us mingle milk and sugar once again,  
Hindus will man the helm and Muslims  
ply the oars,  
Let us together row (ashore) the boat of this  
country.*

The chapters dealing with the activities of the State Government in the sphere of planning, education, tourism etc., are weak. They read more like hand-outs of the State's Publicity Department than the pieces written by a scholar or a perceptive analyst. The book also does not take note of the present upheaval in the State or its origin.

Jag Mohan

## Traditional Stereotypes Highlighted

R. Champakalakshmi

SOCIETY IN INDIA IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY A.D.

By Ranjana Bajpai

S. Chand and Co., New Delhi, 1992, pp. 344, Rs. 150.00

Indian historiography has made significant progress in the last two decades towards a more meaningful research reaching a stage, where books of the present variety have no serious contribution to make either by way of interpretation or by way of analysis. Much of what is contained in the present work in the form of data from texts and inscriptions has already been used in major works on society and economy in early medieval India.

Ranjana Bajpai's study is limited in its research value for she has chosen to give what she calls "a comprehensive picture of society" within a restricted chronological span viz a single century, the seventh century being the focus of her work. The justification, provided by her for the choice of the period is that she aims to make "an intensive study of society during this period" with the main focus on North India, because, according to her, no specific work dealing with society in India during the seventh century exists, although a number of scholars have dealt with the political history of the century with special reference to Harsha. However, it has been made clear in the scholarly works of historians like R.S. Sharma, B.N.S. Yadava and others that the 7th century represents one point (or stage) in the continuum of social and economic developments in early medieval India and that the seventh century material can be best used for studying aspects of early medieval society as a part of the wider socio-economic processes but not as representing evidence of a terminal point or high point in such developments. What the book under review presents, therefore, is only a frozen and out of context picture of the seventh century.

It is rather difficult to do a detailed review of a book which deals with a specific point of time in history without trying to set it within an interpretational or analytical framework. The author does not seem to understand the need for stating, in clear terms, the scope of the work, the parameters within which the sources of the seventh century are examined (as also the texts of the previous and following centuries), or a hypothesis that is being tested with the help of such sources.

The choice of the seventh century may perhaps be attributed to the richness of the indigenous texts and foreign accounts available for that century, which is,

however, not equally rich in inscriptional records. The author has also used a lot more of earlier and later texts in Sanskrit covering a fairly wide range—*Smritis*, *Puranas*, commentaries, canonical works, texts on architecture and encyclopaedic works—many of whose dates are not quite fixed and are not capable of being fixed. They in fact represent growing traditions and were authored by people of different regions, sometimes by more than one person, compiled at different points of time, elaborated, and added to as per the requirements of a given situation. For example, the *Manasara*, a text on architecture, is dated in the 6th-7th century A.D., a date which is far too early for the whole text which contains a veritable mine of data on a style of architecture developing upto the 17th century A.D.

The only merit of the book lies in bringing into use a number of less known texts in Sanskrit and thus, to this extent, it will have the value of a reference book to a researcher, as also in providing interesting information from many literary, legal and canonical texts, apart from the seventh century works including biographies, plays and foreign accounts. The heavy reliance on literary sources is explained in the author's statement that the literature of a period "is the mirror of contemporary life and society", which is too simplistic an approach to the use of textual data, showing the author's lack of familiarity with the methodological significance or recent historiography using sophisticated tools of analysis to study literature as a source. Given the varying contexts in which texts are produced, the context and text have to be constantly correlated before such studies can be made.

The author is also not free from the golden age syndrome for the Gupta period or the post-Gupta anarchy and disorder, the emergence of Harsha as a stabilizing or re-integrating factor again followed by disorder and disintegration after Harsha.

Cast in the traditional mould of historical writing, the book has rigidly compartmentalized chapters such as I. Castes, Classes and Family, II. Marriage and Position of Women, III. Education and Learning, IV. Economic Life, V. Daily Life of the People and VI. Religion.

The caste categories are discussed (rather described as given in the normative texts) under the usual four *varna*

scheme with the *Sankirna Jatis* (mixed castes) added to it, and the subdivisions of each *varna*. The Rajputs are given a separate section under the *Kshatriyas*, as it was in the 7th century that the Rajput clans emerged. 'Caste' and 'Class' are used as interchangeable categories and the caste system it is claimed had become extremely rigid in the seventh century. The *Kayasthas* are treated as occupational groups, while tribal groups are classified under the untouchable castes on the basis of the *Nisitha Curni*. This has been done with least regard for how the processes of the expansion and adoption or imposition of *varna* framework brought many of the ethnic, tribal and other groups into the caste structure. Even within North India, the different regional structures of caste can be explicated only when such processes are understood.

The economic and social position of the *Sudras* is stated to have improved in the seventh century but how this came about is not discussed. One of the stereotypes in the work is the "unity in diversity" explanation for the complexity of society, bound, however, by uniformity of institutional forms. Social harmony among all *varnas* and social groups is yet another stereotype constantly used to characterize the state of society.

All the other chapters follow the same pattern in their detailed information on other aspects of society and economy, and anyone looking for neatly compiled information will not be disappointed. Yet what relevance do these bits of information or even the neatly classified data have unless the chronology of many of the texts used is definitive or clearly established and also unless such data is set forth to explain historical processes even within a single century with a retrospective view of its past and a predictive assessment of its future?

To take just a few examples, in chapter II, the references to women, forms of marriage, remarriage of women, the practice of *niyoga* (levirate)—which is believed to have gone out of use in this period), *sati*, *stridhana* and its uses could have thrown a great deal of light on women, property rights and their position in a patriarchal society, if the treatment had included a discussion on society evolving as an integrated whole and not as fragmented into various aspects and forms. In other words, the inter-relationships between economic aspects and social relations are ignored. Similarly, in the chapter on Education and Learning, the nature of education and institutions, curricula, etc., for different castes and peoples could well be an area wherein the comparative study of the education systems (formal and technical education) for different castes and religious communities (Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain) could provide useful insights into social hierarchies and the purposes of education.

In the chapter on Economic Life, land rights, distribution of landed property, ownership, grants, tenure, revenue and

taxation etc. are duly mentioned. Yet interpretations of terms by other scholars are carefully recorded without any attempt to provide alternative ones where possible or supportive discussion where necessary. In other words, the author is hardly aware of the continuing debate on land relations, agrarian organization, the production base and managerial aspects during the period in question. So is the case with the author's approach to trade and commerce, in which area, there has been considerable work done on both North and South India. It is essential to be familiar with this work in order to discuss the nature of inland trade and its organization and the enlarging network of South Asian trade which became a major interest of Indian traders, particularly of the corporate trading organizations. The author has interestingly brought into the data presented by her on the guilds some useful pointers to the nature of relationship between the guild organization with its own rules and royal or political control over their functioning. This is based on Bharuci's comments on Manu, which has been used in this work in a large measure.

Chapter VI on Religion talks about Saivism, Vaishnavism, Saktism, Buddhism, and Jainism, briefly touching upon various sects within each, the nature of worship, ritual, pilgrimage and iconographic forms. While there is hardly any doubt that the seventh century situation was one in which all the major religious systems of India had emerged, it is more important to look at the processes by which Puranic religion (Brahmanical) emerged as the dominant form and the impact of its development over Indian society and its regional structures *vis a vis* the decline of Buddhism which began at this point of time and the survival of Jainism as a less important part of the religious systems in the subsequent periods. These are hardly the concerns of the present study, which ends its survey of religion in the last chapter by saying that it was a period of religious toleration and growing spirit of harmony, which is yet another stereotype of the traditional historiography preventing any meaningful approach to the study of the synchronic processes of religious development in early medieval India.

The bibliography (16 pages) is indeed very impressive. Yet, one cannot help but notice that some of the works have no relevance, direct or indirect to the period under study (e.g. A. Appadorai, *Economic Conditions in South India* c. A.D. 1000-1500 which is in two volumes and not one as listed in the bibliography). While some certainly have a relevance only as works providing the necessary background and perspective for the 7th century situation, some lack the much needed information on the place and date of their publication.

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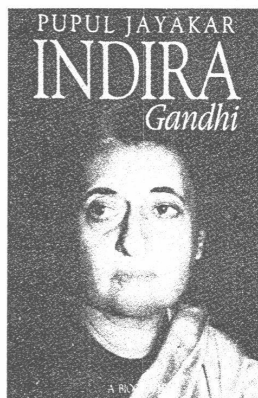
## The Personality That Was Indira

Renu Chakravartty

INDIRA GANDHI

By Pupul Jayakar

Viking, Penguin India, 1992, pp. 535, Rs. 295.00



Pupul Jayakar's biography of Indira Gandhi is an eminently readable book. Not only does it chronicle her life and activities spanning more than two thirds of a century, but brings to the fore many interesting hitherto undisclosed happenings in her life, personal and otherwise, which delineates a very complex personality.

Being a woman deeply influenced by the teachings of J. Krishnamurthy seeking "self-knowledge", Pupul Jayakar, in spite of a fairly balanced approach to one she loved so deeply, has also seen in Indira Gandhi practising Krishnamurthy's teachings of trying to distance herself from herself to act in the way she did, which did not always carry approbation of even this biographer of hers. Maybe a character so complex as Indira's readily yielded to such interpretation, though it may be unacceptable to many.

In the portion where she deals with Indira's childhood at Anand Bhawan as well as her girlhood by the side of her ailing mother whom she lost at such an early age, her school days in a foreign country away from father and relations in India, the analysis she makes of Indira's character reminded me of a chrysalis—a thing of beauty yet to emanate from its unattractive shell. She was shy, withdrawn, ordinary, slowly emerging, taking in all that her father's friends, surroundings, activities could give her. But she took it all in in silence. That is where possibly she learnt she could put in so much in her famous "silence" whenever faced with intrigues, difficult situations requiring her interventions. There is a beautiful description of what these silences meant and whence they came, in one of Pupul's most beautiful etchings of Indira's characteristic "silences" which became famous. To quote: "The silences of Indira Gandhi became famous silences which could be opaque, could presage ruthless responses and silences which were limpid and like clear sweet lake water could assuage fears and welcome," and there were many instances she quotes eg. when

Kamraj gave her support to become prime minister she was clever enough to see it was not her capabilities which recommended her but that they felt she could be manipulated. She kept silent. She needed Kamraj's support and therefore she assumed the role of a pupil, agreeing to all moves suggested by him. After she was sure the Chief Minister supported her, joy and confidence rose as one whose destiny was fulfilled. A very apt summing up of Indira Gandhi is made by Pupul Jayakar where her silences spoke volumes and her ambitions burst forth which the author has caught with all its myriad intonations. Pupul with all her admiration for Indira saw her fairly with all her ambitiousness: "It struck me" she says "how soon a Prime Minister loses innocence. She was already withdrawn, her mind busy working on many permutations and combinations. Individuals had become expensable."

Her overpowering self-confidence and ambition showed through a soft exterior when writing to her son Rajiv on the eve of her election she quoted Robert Frost: "How hard it is to keep from being king, When it is you and the situation."

That about sums up the important facets of Indira Gandhi's character—her shrewdness in working out her goals, her soaring ambitiousness and her inability to tolerate any whom she felt would oppose her, which lay at the root of her sense of insecurity.

That explains to a large extent her clinging to her younger son Sanjay. Her Achilles was Sanjay whom she identified with herself so much that she said an attack on Sanjay was an attack on herself as she did when Devraj Urs attacked her son Sanjay, facing her first expulsion from the Congress and throwing herself into tensions which tore her apart. It is this sense of insecurity that had a lot to do with her promulgation of Emergency. She saw ghosts of enemies all around and with Sanjay at her side together they searched for every weakness, every crisis in the Janata; they were determined to

bring the Janata down and knowing their internal differences Sanjay worked on Raj Narain to tell him they would support Charan Singh in his efforts to become Prime Minister. Chanakya like mother and son worked. The strategy of opening a channel to contact Bahuguna was to be Indira's job. She felt he could provide the lever to detach the socialists from the Janata front. Secret meetings were held between Indira and Bahuguna, Kamal Nath was sent to get Jagjivan Ram's son Suresh to meet Sanjay. Janata's internal weaknesses aggravated by the subtle subterfuge of Indira and Sanjay brought down the Janata.

Indira's courage and adamant facing of the hatred roused by the Shah Commission showed the other side of Indira's character which could not but evoke admiration. But all these left their scars—a suspicion of people, a lack of trust and in its place a fiercely protective mantle around those she felt had stood by her during her years in the wilderness.

This in effect made the death of Sanjay doubly unbearable for her. She lay down all the wrong doings of Sanjay to his youth. Pupul too seems to have been influenced by this analysis of this self-willed turbulent young man who cared not to distinguish between right and wrong. Indira turned more to astrology and superstition and Pupul gently spoke to her to turn away and see the good and not always the evil, to no avail. Here Indira's unfortunate behaviour towards Sanjay's young widow Maneka has been described in the book and showed that Indira's behaviour was inexplicable and to say the least reprehensible except to say that two women with strong wills, spirit and ambition could not live under the same roof. Maneka was not prepared to withdraw into anonymity and that is what Indira wanted. To me she was behaving like the traditional mother-in-law in our backward Indian society. The example quoted by Pupul is Indira refusing to write a foreword to the book the young widow had written on Sanjay. While ac-

knowledging that the book was very well conceived Indira saying she was determined not to write the foreword is inexplicable. She said she had erased Maneka from her cherished ones. But Feroze Varun was her blood. It was nothing but ruthlessness returning to Indira. Whatever Maneka's shortcomings how could one expect such behaviour from an experienced and highly sophisticated person like Indira who had seen life in the raw? Indira at the same age wanting to marry Feroze had rebelled against her father. At the same age when Maneka rebelled it did not evoke any understanding from Indira. She gave ultimatums to her that if she went to address a particular meeting she had to leave her house. She sent circulars that the 'Induct Maneka' campaign must be stopped immediately, the way she ordered the publishers of Maneka's book to stop printing the book without changing the captions—all these heartless and unnecessary attacks on a young widow that too her daughter-in-law showed a side of Indira very little known of the frail, suave, soft spoken Indira. But this was the totality of Indira's character and one has to admire Pupul Jayakar's

*The silences of Indira Gandhi became famous silences which could be opaque, could presage ruthless responses and silences which were limpid and like clear sweet lake water could assuage fears . . .*

fair-mindedness as a biographer.

Before the end, I have to admit that for a reviewer who knew Feroze Gandhi from his days in London, till the day he died, Pupul Jayakar's portrayal of this man is something that is more true to life than depicted in other biographies of Indira Gandhi and there are dozens of them. They all paint him all white or black with nothing in between.

Feroze no doubt had the "roving eye" and Pupul Jayakar has mentioned it more than once. But the fact that a man who was deeply committed, nursing Indira's mother through long lonely hours, rushing to Indira when she fell ill and needed him much, is mentioned by her.

That his children loved their father deeply is acknowledged in the book and how he took care to give them of his time, playing with them, teaching them to use their hands etc. They felt their mother had not treated their father well and her neglect registered with them in a way that they were unable to give her much solace when he died so suddenly.

Pupul has not forgotten to mention the brilliance with which he illuminated his Parliamentary career especially through the Mundra episode. Assiduously he built up the dossier against M.O. Mathai, Nehru's Secretary which

inevitably led to his resignation, and the isolation of Nehru. Indira's anger against Feroze reached a peak during 1958-59.

At the end of the book, the biographer mentions Indira's reminiscences on her relations with Feroze and her own feelings which is hardly to be found in any other biography. "Feroze was very attached to me" she had said. On the other hand she said "Feroze had made her feel very possessive . . . it was very difficult to strike a balance in our relationship." It is this which makes the biography without any jarring exaggerations sound true.

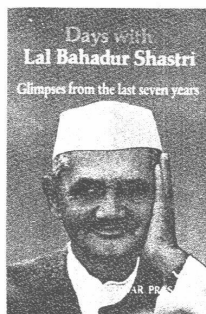
Pupul has in one paragraph summed up the complex character of Indira which shows her to be a fair and incisive biographer which adds value to her book. "I lay awake thinking of . . . (Indira), a woman so complex, so skillful, so far seeing . . . so capable of an insightful listening, so moved by beauty and yet at times so primeval, so obsessive, so brittle, even trivial—a woman who refused to be measured, who laid her own ground rules.

She was no democrat, but she loved her country. Her courage was epic . . . She dared, refused to be intimidated. . . She made grave mistakes. The intelligentsia never forgave her for the Emergency. But if she sinned 'she sinned bravely'."

Those last words were added to glorify even her sins. This no doubt is the infection that the biographer caught from the widespread 'Indiraphiles' who were responsible in no small degree for her deterioration. But it must be said that seen as a whole, Pupul's admiration for Indira was not blind and she has added a degree of fairness not always seen in biographers.

The end of the biography again weaves itself around the Ganga and the hidden Saraswati as the fitting requiem to Indira Gandhi's life. As a babe, she had been taken by her grandmother Swaroop Rani to the waters of the sacred Ganga to be sprinkled by its holy waters and it was to Prayag Pupul returns to end the pilgrimage of Indira's life. As she says: "I have attempted to trace as in a river, Indira Gandhi's life from its source; to identify forces that lurked in her unconscious that determined and at times distorted her moods and actions. As a river vanishes from view when it enters impenetrable gorges, it becomes arduous to discover its stormy flow, its whirlpools and its waterfalls, so in Indira too, there were when dark moods overwhelmed her, periods she disappeared into herself, became secretive and it was no longer possible to contact her or come close." This is how the eminent daughter of the Ganga came to be seen delineated by one of her best friends. Pupul Jayakar beautifully describes the complex character that was Indira Gandhi.

*Renu Chakravarty, CPI MP (1952-67) and Minister in the West Bengal government (1969), is at present a leading figure in the National Federation of Indian Women.*



## An Uncompromising Man

D.N. Kaul

DAYS WITH LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI: GLIMPSES FROM THE LAST SEVEN YEARS

By Rajeshwar Prasad

Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1991, pp. 95,  
Rs. 125.00

In the Valhalla of Indian political leaders, especially of those who lived to share the fruits of independence, Lal Bahadur Shastri will occupy an honoured niche. Of course, the halo around his name will perhaps be less bright than those of his great predecessor or even most of his successors. This will primarily be because of the complete absence of politico-intellectual appeal and charisma in his personality. The only redoubtable event of his career as India's Prime Minister was his determined leadership during the 1965 Indo-Pak war.

This is precisely the picture of this great man as it emerges from the pages of the book under review. Rajeshwar Prasad, a senior civil servant from Uttar Pradesh, had the opportunity of being associated with Mr. Shastri as his Special Assistant for nearly seven years. During this long period he had the opportunity to study and evaluate this eminent man, both inside the office and to a great extent outside it, domestically and socially.

When assessing a man whom fate—perhaps not talent—catapulted into the position of the highest executive of a country teeming with myriad problems, one naturally asks the question: Was Shastri Prime Ministerial stuff? Frederic Masson, the reputed French historian and biographer of Napoleon has said that people have a right to know the man behind the public figure, his human traits, his fortes and his foibles. The author has quoted innumerable instances of Shastri's humility which often went to the limits of self-effacement. While visiting the states, he is reported as having remarked very often, "Why do you make 1st class arrangements for a 3rd rate man?" Humility may be good to a certain extent,

but when carried too far, it can become a handicap and later, by habit, a pose. Apparently, Shastri had an exaggerated consciousness of his shortcomings. This arose partly out of his diminutive physical stature. When asked what he thought of Attlee claiming to be humble, Winston Churchill remarked, "Yes, Clement has a lot to be humble about". This could apply mutatis mutandis to Shastri.

However, Shastri was gifted with the patience of a Job. His capacity to wait and bide his time was almost superhuman. This made him an incomparable negotiator. He could go on and on talking to the rival factions of a controversy for any length of time. Perhaps in the process, the factions got exasperated and sank their differences as a riddance of endless discussions. This attitude arose partly because of his desire to hurt no one. The Calcutta Chamber of Commerce made uncharitable and scathing criticism of the P.M. but he spoke to them in highly conciliatory tones to their mortification. His role in the identification of the Holy Relic in Kashmir or sorting out differences with the government of Nepal are crowning achievements of his negotiating skill.

Shastri was a workaholic and worked himself to a premature death. He seems to have been a one-dimensional man who had no hobbies, no urges, no frolic. This made him drive inadvertently his personal staff and family to the point of distraction. He hardly ever left his office before midnight. Says Prasad, "In fact, the manner in which Shastri carried on at times was so exhausting, so taxing on his staff, that in moments of agony and exasperation the only way I could console myself was with the reflection that if only he had been working under me,

instead of my working under him, I would have dismissed him from service." What candour!

Shastri had quaint fads. He was steeped in the Hindu ethos and was naturally austere, puritanical and a killjoy. He regretted agreeing to open a cattle fair because there was a reference to poultry. It hurt his uncompromising vegetarianism. He insisted on wearing worn-out and frayed jackets and would not touch a pair of pyjamas, not withstanding Jawaharlal Nehru's jocular gibes at him.

Shastri showed his mettle during the Indo-Pak war of 1965. He asked his generals to open a second front against Pakistan in Punjab, though I know, he was egged on to that stand by Mr. Sidiqi, the then Kashmir Chief Minister.

This book naturally compels comparison with some other books of the same genre. The one which comes readily to mind is M.O. Mathai's: *My years with Nehru*. Mathai's book is more juicy and anecdotal. Writer's style apart, Mathai was writing about a colourful, many-faceted man who bubbled with *joie de vivre*. Prasad has had to delineate a one-dimensional, colourless man who thought he owed no duty to himself and for whom life was an endless saga of unrelieved dry file work. It is said that he revised drafts two dozen times; not that he was a perfectionist; he just lacked the quickness of certainty and a surety of touch.

The book throws no light whatever on Shastri's vision of India or of a global order. There is not even a remote hint of his creativity. Obviously while the substance within was mediocre, the packaging was even worse. Apart from integrity and humility, a Prime Minister must have panache. He must impress. We look in vain for these traits.

The last but one chapter of the book has been very poignantly written. Perhaps, dismayed at the thought of his countrymen not endorsing the results of his confabulations at Tashkent, his ailing and already damaged heart decided to call it a day. This harmless sincere man met an agonising death with excruciating pain and what is worse, with nobody nearby to comfort him in that hour. What a man, and what an end? Perhaps there could be no fitter epitaph to Shastri the man than the quotation from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* with which Prasad ends his book.

... His life was gentle  
And elements so mixed in him  
That Nature might stand up and say to  
all the world,  
This was a man.

The book is written in simple language in what Bernard Shaw called "the newspaper every dayness". There are no turns of phrase, no purple patches. But the book, nonetheless, is very readable.

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## Caste and Class in India

Sharit K. Bhowmik

### SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Edited by Dipankar Gupta

Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992  
(second enlarged edition), pp. xvii+518,  
Rs. 150.00

This book comprises a collection of articles on various aspects of stratification in Indian society. The collection is preceded by an introduction on hierarchy and difference by the editor. In this essay Gupta effectively argues that stratification cannot be viewed mainly as hierarchies but should be viewed also as differences between social groups. He emphasizes that the layers comprising social stratification are not necessarily arranged horizontally but more often are arranged vertically or separately. This can be found in the case of language, religion or nationality where differences are horizontal and not vertical. The caste system is viewed by some sociologists as a hierarchical ordering. This, Gupta points out, is a brahmanical view—a view from the top. If one examines castes from the bottom then one finds that it is the differences rather than the hierarchies which distinguish one caste from the other. Gupta proceeds to examine social classes in the same light. Such a view accepts the role of conflicts between castes and between classes whereas a hierarchy which is accepted as such by all its constituents will not have conflicts. Hierarchy and difference can coexist. One of the manifestations of dif-

*"To sum up then, social stratification is the ordering of social differences with the help of a set of criteria or just a single criterion (which is generally the case) which ties the differentiated strata into a system. Secondly, systems of social stratification just do not exist. They emerge only after a deliberate act on the part of the observer or analyst to opt for that common criterion or criteria. Thirdly, because these systems of social stratification are pivoted on mental constructions there is often a good deal of heart burning, house burning and even wife burning on this account. Different people have different reckonings of stratification, and when these systems do not match there is friction, often fire."*

Dipankar Gupta in 'Introduction'

ference is conflict which in most cases challenges the hierarchical relations between the constituents. This shows that the relations between castes are dynamic, not static and conflict-free as the brahmanical view may want us to believe. Gupta's introduction may initially overawe the lay reader who is not familiar with sociological studies on caste but on going through the readings its significance will become clear.

The first section has articles on caste. M.N. Srinivas' article on "Varna and Caste" and G.S. Churye's article on "Features of the Caste System" stress on *Jati* as the unit of the caste system. Srinivas explains that the four-fold Varna system is essentially a book view and it does not exist in reality in most parts of the country. *Jati* is the reality and it should form the unit of caste. The articles by Marriot, Kolenda and Bougle describe the various aspects of the caste system while Madan lucidly explains Dumont's interpretation of the caste system as a hierarchy. The last three articles by Berreman, Mancher and Gupta are effective critiques of Dumont's brahmanical view on the caste system.

The section on caste profiles covers a wide range which collectively proves that the caste system is not as cut and dried as the brahmanical view makes it out to be. It contains an extract from Beteille's pioneering work on a Tamil village and an interesting article on the Bengali *bhadralok* by S.K. Mukherjee. Pettigrew's essay on the *Jats* is significant in the sense that she shows how they consider themselves superior to the brahmins because of their valour and their skills in agriculture. Khare explains that the untouchables too have their own views of caste hierarchy and purity. The articles by Ahmed and Fuller deal with the influence of caste on Muslims and Christians respectively.

The section on class contains extracts from well known works on agrarian structure. Dhanagare's categorization of classes in rural India is an important landmark in agrarian studies. It clears the ambiguity in defining classes in rural societies and is more comprehensive than the scheme suggested by Thorner. Dhanagare in fact improves on Thorner's classification. Gough's work on class in a Thanjavur village is a departure from the static model adopted by most sociologists who have written on village studies in the 1950s. The dynamic approaches of Dhanagare and Gough is mainly a result of their applying the Marxian method to study agrarian structure. Ghanshyam Shah's study examines class formation among the Chaudhri tribe in Gujarat. He shows how differentiation in tribal communities is a result of the uneven capitalist development in the country. This article and another by Thapar and Siddiqi are the two dealing with stratification and change among tribal communities.

The last section covers caste, class and conflict and is well developed integration of the views in the earlier sections. It has

*"What then separates our real lived-in world from the 'best of all possible worlds' is our understanding of social stratification. . . . By social stratification we mean not just the differences that separate fellow human beings in society, whether on grounds of culture, economy or biology, but we also include within its scope hierarchical rankings which ordain positions of superiority and inferiority within the society."*

Dipankar Gupta in 'Preface'

readings on caste mobility by Srinivas, Beteille and Rowe. The other readings by Von Heschel and Bandhopadhyay, Pradip Bose and Breman deal with the ensuing violent conflicts which result when the oppressed castes attempt to articulate their problems. Bailey's reading is from his well known work on caste conflicts in Orissa resulting from the monetization of the economy which enables some of the "inferior" castes to improve their access to resources. This is resented by the castes which traditionally controlled the resources (mainly land).

The editor has included an appendix which explores the main theoretical formulations on social stratification. Gavin Smith analyses the Marxian approach while the conflict free functionalist approach is expounded in Davis and Moore's widely criticized article. The other two approaches included are those of Weber and of course Dumont.

The readings by and large focus on the caste system in rural India. The industrial sector has been almost ignored. Of the thirty readings in this volume only two are on industrial workers. These are Morris' study on the formation of the labour force in Bombay and Jamshedpur and Holmstrom's essay on "Who are the Working Class?" which examines the symbiotic and exploitative relationship between the organized sector and the unorganized, informal sector wherein Holmstrom modifies his earlier formulation on the independence of the two sectors. One would have expected a few more readings on industrial workers which examine the relationship between caste, class and tribe. In fact another weakness in the collection is that there is hardly any emphasis on stratification among tribes. These two omissions would give one the impression that the problems of social stratification in India are centred around castes which is not entirely correct.

In spite of these shortcomings this collection certainly deserves being read. It will prove useful for students of sociology and the general reader. The editor has given a list of books for further reading after each section with notes on their significance. One is especially impressed by the sequencing of the readings which gives the collection a coherent shape.

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## The Unacceptable Cost

Enakshi Ganguly Thukral

### THE VIOLENCE OF THE GREEN REVOLUTION

By Vandana Shiva

Third World Network, 1991, 2nd edition, distributed in India by the Other India Bookstore, Mapusa, Goa, (published in 1989 by The Research Foundation for Science and Ecology, Dehradun), pp. 264, Rs. 95.00

As Indians, from our childhood, we have been recounted the glories of the Green Revolution and have been subjected to answering innumerable general knowledge questions on how the Green Revolution was responsible for making Punjab the granary of India. While one could see the success achieved by new agricultural methods being introduced, what we had not been told was that there was another side to this picture. Shiva's book, *The Violence Of The Green Revolution* breaks many of the myths surrounding the 'success' of the Green Revolution.

Man's desire to gain more and more control over nature to meet his growing needs have resulted in major human tragedies.

*The Green Revolution was promoted as a strategy that would create material abundance in agricultural societies and reduce agrarian conflict.*

Man's tampering with nature and its processes has not only led to ecological imbalances in a particular area, it has unleashed a chain reaction of events that has affected society as a whole. The experience of the Green Revolution was based on the assumption

that technology is a superior substitute for nature and hence a means of producing limitless growth, unconstrained by nature's limits. Experiences with large

*We in India do not seem to learn our lessons. Our new economic and agricultural policies seem to reflect the same philosophy. Our experiences with other development projects like large dams are not taken as lessons and construction of these projects with aid from international bilateral funding bodies resulting in more and more indebtedness continues unabated.*

dams, nuclear power plants, large-scale deforestation, trawler fishing along the coastline are other such examples.

Related to this is the whole question of transfer of technology and international funding which are major issues of debate today.

Our experience with the Green Revolution exemplifies all these processes and their impact. Agriculture in India, as it was in most of the world before technology was adopted, was based on a symbiotic relationship with nature. Due to the use of "superior technology" there was a sudden spurt in agricultural production in Punjab. Lush green fields with high yielding varieties of crops, rich farmers in their tractors—all became symbols of a prosperous Punjab. Shiva traces the whole process from the 1950's that slowly led to the transfer. There were three groups of international agencies involved in transferring the American model of agriculture to India—private American foundations, the American Government and the World Bank. However it was in 1966 that the pressure tactics adopted by the American Government in the face of the growing scarcity due to the droughts that year, that forced India to adopt new agricultural policies. U.S. President Lyndon Johnson refused to commit food aid beyond one month in advance until an agreement to adopt the Green Revolution Package was signed. There were a number of people including the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri who cautioned against rushing into agriculture based on new varieties. But words of caution were thrown to the winds. Shastri's sudden demise in 1966 made it easier to introduce the new strategy. Even the Planning Commission was bypassed since it was viewed as a bottleneck. The American model of agriculture, which had not done too well in its own country, and was in fact responsible to a large measure for the creation of the American Dust Bowl of the 1930's, was adopted by India.

Shiva analyses in detail the impact of each component of the Green Revolution—the miracle HYV (High Yielding Variety) seeds, the intensive irrigation, pesticides and chemical fertilizers—had on agriculture, productivity and on the society at large. "The Green Revolution was promoted as a strategy that would create material abundance in agricultural

societies and reduce agrarian conflict". In other words, it offered technology to substitute both nature and policies for creation of abundance and peace. It was almost as if the Green Revolution was seen as the panacea for all ills—economic, social and political. Little did one realize it would create many more ills.

After two decades there is scarcity, not abundance, and the political costs of the Green Revolution have become visible. Nothing can condone the insane killing of people, but a situation has to be understood in its historical perspective. Shiva traces the connection between the present day political conflict and rising of terrorism in Punjab to the change in agriculture policy.

Destruction of genetic diversity thanks to the miracle seeds, new species of pests, diseased and infertile soil, falling crops, desertification through salinisation and water logging because of intensive irrigation, fragmented land holdings, indebted and discontented farmers are all linked to the success of the Green Revolution. Needless to say such a situation is a fertile breeding ground for political unrest.

The problems arising out of the 'successes' of the Green Revolution cannot and should not be viewed in isolation. It is part of a vicious cycle of bad planning resulting in involuntary displacement of large populations from their existing lifestyles without viable alternatives, forcing them to join the ever increasing pools of migrant and most often bonded labour. These are of course related to questions regarding models of development, and our experiences with the green revolution is only one such example.

Therefore Shiva's well researched book is a very good example of what short-sighted 'development' measures can do to us. But we in India do not seem to learn our lessons. Our new economic and agricultural policies seem to reflect the same philosophy. Our experiences with other development projects like large dams are not taken as lessons and construction of these projects with aid from international bi-lateral funding bodies resulting in more and more indebtedness, continues unabated. When will we ever learn?

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## A Competent Factual Study

Kiran Datar

IMPERIALISM AND MEDICINE IN BENGAL: A SOCIO-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

By Poonam Bala

Sage Publications, 1991, pp. 174, Rs 185.00

*With the introduction of English, it was well-nigh impossible for training in Indian medicine to follow a format that would meet the approval of the British State. This may have been founded upon imperialistic hauteur at its best, but the rise of the chemical and drug industry and the growing profession of medicine in Britain created a vast gulf between Indian and western medical sciences which was getting wider every day so that by the second decade of this century, many Indians too believed that it could not be breached.*

It is a welcome change to see the proliferation in the numbers of monographs seeking to study aspects of society, which have earlier been left neglected by professional historians. The work under review emerges out of a doctoral degree awarded by the University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom. It seeks to analyse the social and historical dimensions of the character of medicine in Bengal in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. The impact of the state on indigenous medicine and western medicine, and the political and economic environment in which policies were framed, are the themes which run through the book.

Information relating to indigenous medicine is found in the Vedas, and in the post-Vedic period it was codified in the Ayurveda. In the early post-Vedic period, the Brahmins acted to stigmatise the growing medical knowledge and practice, and to appropriate it. With the Muslim conquest came the Greco-Arab or Unani system of medicine. In the early nineteenth century Bengal, the British sought to utilise the indigenous forms of medicine for training and research. In 1822 was established the Native Medical Institution, followed by the Calcutta Sanskrit College and the Calcutta Madrasa, where parallel instructions were carried out in indigenous and translated western texts. In the 1830s however, a fierce debate raged between the Orientalists and the Anglicists on the value of indigenous versus a western system of medicine, resulting in a victory of the latter. The position of the Anglicists was "... a knowledge of the English language we consider as a *sine qua non*, because that language combines the circle of all the sciences and incalculable wealth of all the

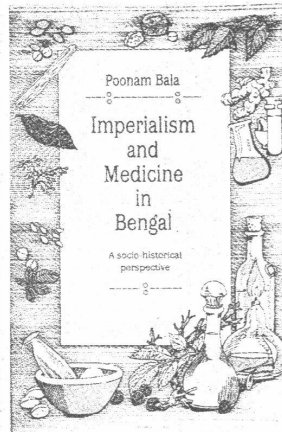
printed works and illustrations, circumstances which give it obvious advantages over Oriental languages, in which are only to be found the crudest elements of science, or the most irrational substitutes for it." It resulted in the abolition of the Native Medical Institute and its replacement with the Calcutta Medical College.

Interest in indigenous drugs continued however, specially in medicines such as *kala dana* and *kut keliga* and in drugs using opium and calomel in the cholera epidemic of 1839-1840. In contrast though, the British drug industry underwent far more significant changes, because of a concerted move towards the standardisation of drugs. The listing of official drugs which came to be recognised by the General Medical Council in 1858 was compiled as the British Pharmacopoeia. The criticism of the lack of standardisation in the indigenous drug industry, and the differences in the approach towards diagnostic treatment led to a growing distance between western and indigenous medicine.

In nineteenth century industrial Britain there was a rapid growth in the numbers, skills and organisation of professions based on technology. The Medical Act of 1858 organised the profession of medicine, and gave it a monopoly. It created the General Medical Council and set up a register of practitioners. Within India also, there was a concerted attempt by British and Indian physicians of western medicine, to secure registration acts in each province, and a series of Medical Registration Acts were passed between 1912 and 1919. This was strongly resented by the indigenous medical groups and the nationalists. Advocates of the non-cooperation movement prevented people from attending western medical hospi-



The consolidation of the British Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century roughly coincided with the growth of professionalism in Britain. This was also the period during which the major professions in Britain, namely, medicine, law, architecture, accountancy and engineering, were undergoing rapid transformation. Professionalisation of medicine in India was a part of the colonial nature and represented British attempts to carry over the medical practices of an industrial society into a vastly different developing society.



tals and championed the cause of indigenous methods of treatment. This led to the Ayurvedic movement and the formation of the All India Ayurvedic Congress in 1907, which became the leading organisation of *vaids* in India. In 1921, a national university was established in Bengal, Gaudiya Sarvavidyalaya, as part of the non-cooperation movement. The nationalists were bringing increasing pressure on the government to encourage Indian systems of medicine. In 1931, indigenous practitioners established a General Council and State Faculty of Ayurvedic medicine in Bengal for regulating the standards of instructions in Ayurvedic medicine. However, indigenous practitioners were excluded from the Medical Council of India which was set up in 1936. On the one hand, there was pushing to control diverse forms of medicine, and on the other hand the various systems were pressuring for further recognition and support.

State and public health policies in Britain and Bengal also showed a great divergence. In Britain the development of medical bacteriology and the recognition of the relationship between filth and disease stimulated the reforms of the nineteenth century, and the legislation for improving health conditions. The state intervened to improve housing and sanitary conditions. This was not paralleled in India. Religious and social prejudices created problems in the implementation of vaccination and inoculation policies. Changes in the economy of India (brought about by the colonial state) was also creating the environment for the spread of epidemic and endemic diseases. There was the increased mobility of the Indian population with a shift of labour from villages to the industrial town of Calcutta and the tea estates of Assam. The building of transport and irrigation facilities changed the environment. Construction

of railway networks interfered with the natural drainage systems where embankments and bridges had acted as a dam. From the 1890s to 1921 malaria claimed about 20 million lives. The lack of sensitivity to the social conditions prevalent in India resulted in opposition by the indigenous population, and hence the unsatisfactory implementation of health policies.

For most of the nineteenth century, western medicine was advantaged by its near monopoly of government positions. The advances in western medicine increased its popularity among some sections of the indigenous population familiar with the English language and institutions, i.e. the *bhadralok*. As western medicine, in common with other professions, in India required a facility in English, it was concentrated among the *bhadralok*. By the 1890s all government schools were requiring competence in English as an entry requirement. Between 1923 and 1937 the marked preponderance of Bengali Hindus was noticeable in the Calcutta Medical College. There were efforts at various times to move resources towards the less privileged groups, but the privileged *bhadralok* managed to re-establish and even advance their level of privilege. The enquiry that the author has made with respect to ethnic profile and imperial medical policy is an interesting one. However apart from showing the position of the *bhadralok* in this respect, she has not really explored the wider issue of imperial medical policy in relation to colonial ideology and social control. The reader is left feeling a little disappointed as the issue is posed but not discussed within the context of the social and historical perspective of the work. The manner and extent to which western medicine was part of the ideology and accountancy of empire, receives only a cursory treatment. Again a support of the

*bhadralok* to western medicine within the context of the nationalist support and its tensions to the Ayurvedic movement thereon is not touched on at all.

*Imperialism and Medicine in Bengal* is a competent factual study but though it offers a historical sketch, it is not so successful in showing the connection between the policies of the colonial state, and the indigenous social and economic environment. The author starts to deal with the problems of the dislocation of the traditional economy (p 108) but it is a cursory treatment. Also the issue of pro-

fessionalisation which is claimed to "form a significant feature in this study" is not really brought out. The value of the work however lies in the claim of the author "to initiate, through this work, further studies on the trajectories of indigenous medicine in modern times and the response of the people to structural transformations in Indian medicine."

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## The Intellectual Aesthete

Meenakshi Mukherji

VICTORIA OCAMPO

Compiled and edited by the Embassy of Argentina in India and Susnigdha Dey

B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1992, pp. 148, Rs. 110.00



Volumes compiled from papers presented at centenary celebrations generally tend to be eulogistic. But the present book surprises the reader with its variety of approaches—ranging from hagiographic to sharp and stringently critical—in assessing Victoria Ocampo, the Argentine literary figure whose connections with India are well-known. Editor of an influential journal *Sur*, author of nine volumes of *Testimonies* and other books, a mediator between Argentina and the aesthetic traditions of other civilisations of the world, Ocampo was a figure to

reckon with in the literary culture of her own country, but her celebrated friendship with Rabindranath, and to a lesser extent her correspondence with Gahdhi, Nehru, and her meeting with Indira Gandhi in Buenos Aires in 1968 (two years after Ocampo wrote a piece on her in *Sur*) link her in several ways with India. Maria Renée Cura's essay in this volume maps out a detailed account of these connections.

The present book is the product of a 1991 seminar held in the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, to mark Victoria

Ocampo's (1890-1989) birth centenary. This is not the first book on Ocampo published in India. In this volume Aparajit Chattopadhyay reviews two of the earlier books—both full length studies (in Bengali)—by Ketaki Kushari Dyson and Shankho Ghosh. In 1989 Sahitya Akademi published a volume on her in English *In Your Blossoming Flower Garden*, also by Dyson. The present collection of papers may however be the first attempt to assess Ocampo in her totality, and not only in terms of her relationship with Rabindranath. Most Bengali readers know about Tagore's stay at San Isidro as the guest of the gracious Victoria Ocampo and his subsequent poems addressed to her as 'Bijoya'. It was necessary to remind the non-Spanish knowing reader in India that Ocampo's trajectory was much wider than this brief encounter and her far ranging intellectual and literary friendships included those with Ortega Y Gasset, Keyserling, André Malraux, Virginia Woolf, Gabriella Mistral, Jean Cocteau and Sergei Eisenstein.

One of the most interesting essays in the volume by R. Narayanan focuses on the Argentine critique of *Sur* as an elitist enterprise, reflecting the editor's "very personal tastes and class background". Allegedly, this journal gave more space to European literature and ideas than to Latin American writing, and published local writers only when during the Second World War foreign writings became scarce. The aristocratic, beautiful and brilliant woman who edited it had evidently a very Eurocentric upbringing because her first prose pieces were written in French rather than in Spanish. Narayanan's essay documents the subsequent debate on the liberal humanist and universalist stand of *Sur* whose "reflections on the ongoing ideological debate were admittedly circumscribed, giving very little sense of the conflict in the Argentine history of the time". The "disengaged" tone of the journal, the critique implies, is supported by an unstated political orthodoxy which feared the erosion of cultural standards through contact with the indigenous masses.

The volume gains by having side by side with Narayanan's sharp analysis, the warm personal reminiscences of Mony Chadha, our former Ambassador to Argentina. Chadha writes with nostalgia and elegance about the afternoons at the Ocampo Villa where intellectuals were brought together and good food was "graciously served with old world charm by her loyal family retainers". Yet another perspective is provided by the Peruvian writer Javier Sologuren who admires Victoria Ocampo for choosing to be a non-conformist, for taking up the feminist cause long before it was fashionable to do so, or for reaching out to unfamiliar cultures, when her "exclusive high class bourgeoisie" background, much wealth and beauty could easily have "imprisoned her in the gilded cage of a smug and material existence". Shyama Prasad

Ganguly also makes a similar point in his paper by insisting that "if the privilege from exclusive family or class background was channelised" the way Ocampo channelised her resources and energy, criticism of elitism loses its edge.

These arguments and counter arguments add interest to the volume and through competing discursive claims, this controversial woman emerges as a human being.

Susnigdha Dey's essay brings together Ocampo and Octavio Paz, writers coming from the two extremities of Latin America—Argentina and Mexico, who "have been able to erode the insularity of the Occidental base of Latin America to a great extent". He looks at them through the 'self' and 'other' paradigm of Saidian critical discourse and attempts to break down the dichotomy of the centre and periphery metaphor.

Malabika Bhattacharya makes some important critical observations about the one-sidedness of the Tagore-Ocampo relationship, regretting Rabindranath's mistake "in identifying Latin America with the West". While Ocampo had read Tagore and tried to understand India through him, Tagore "did not recognize Victoria's true inner self" and showed no interest in understanding her culture or getting to know the literature of Latin America, confessing "I have not the energy and strength needed for knowing a strange country". It is generally recognized today that Tagore's own inadequate translations of his poems were responsible for the devaluation of his currency in the West, despite the Nobel Prize. Malabika Bhattacharya's essay narrates a telling anecdote describing this "falsification of his own coins". Victoria Ocampo was very moved by Tagore's impromptu oral English translation of a Bengali poem ('Kankal') that he wrote at San Isidro. Next day he disappointed her by showing her a sanitised and bloodless written version in English. When she asked him why in this translation he omitted parts of the original, "he replied that in his opinion that would not interest westerners. The blood rose to my cheeks as if I had been slapped." This paper argues persuasively that homogenizing "The West" to include Europe, North America as well as South America, and dismissing this "West" as insensitive to philosophical subtleties were Tagore's two-fold errors of judgement.

Barring a few clichéd pieces (one by Durga Shirali for example) most of the essays in one way or another contribute to the construction of Ocampo's image. Considering its specialized nature, the volume is remarkably readable, and even those with no prior knowledge of the subject will end up being fascinated by this woman of untrusting aesthetic enthusiasm and intellectual drive.

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## Cool, Speckled Shells

Shobhana Bhattacharji

THE OXFORD INDIA ANTHOLOGY OF TWELVE MODERN INDIAN POETS

By Arvind Krishna Mehrotra

Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992, Rs. 100.00

*Poetry cannot be a matter of rhyme and rhythm, because Ramanujan's "Moulting," included in this anthology, has neither. Nor does a poem have to be esoteric, because the anguished prayer for the rites of passage of a young son in "Moulting" is almost as well said in the John Martyn song, "May you never. Readability is probably a good test, but it must go along with a pleasure in savouring the poem. Readability? For whom? There are only elitist answers to that, but Vikram Seth's Golden Gate passes the test for many.*

It is a truth yet to be universally acknowledged that the most basic questions about poetry have never been satisfactorily answered. Perhaps for that reason, it is *infra dig* to ask what poetry is or how it works. It cannot be a matter of rhyme and rhythm, because Ramanujan's "Moulting," included in this anthology, has neither. Nor does a poem have to be esoteric, because the anguished prayer for the rites of passage of a young son in "Moulting" is almost as well said in the John Martyn song, "May you never". Readability is probably a good test, but it must go along with a pleasure in savouring the poem. Readability? For whom? There are only elitist answers to that, but Vikram Seth's *Golden Gate* passes the test for many.

It is characteristic of *The Golden Gate* to surprise you at every reading with its accuracy. The otherwise boring phrase of lit. crit. that poetry must delight is true of the poem. Even when it moves you to tears, the pleasure of words perfectly containing the event described is strong. Imagine my joy, then, that *The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets* has extracts from Seth's poem. In so brief an anthology, it was probably not possible to have more than the nine stanzas included here, but they are something, even if they leave out the context for "Heroic, silly whichever they have gathered here. In the pre-dawn, dew-damp and chilly." Seth's great strength is that he never generalises without first giving you a precise set of events to fit the generalisation. Here, however, we learn that dawn is breaking after a solstice but we do not know who these people are, why they have gathered together, or why

they have lighted candles and are singing. Fortunately, there are other poems to correct the impression that Seth is a confused writer:

I'd thought I was free. Wrong from the start.  
I found I loved him entirely instead.  
There was no real hope. Guy loving guy?  
Man—that's a wierd trip—and not for me.  
I accepted that. But next day, warily,  
We coiled to snap or spring, Rash truth.  
To lie  
Still could have spared the trust; the warmth as well,  
I left his room that day, I try to tell  
Myself this sorrow like this ink will dry.

(From "Guest".)

Of Agha Shahid Ali's poems, two are outstanding. The mother in "The Season of the Plain" speaks about the monsoon when

messages pass between lovers,  
Heer and Ranjha and others  
of legends, their love forbidden,  
burned incense all night,  
waiting for answers, My mother  
hummed Heer's lament  
but never told me if she  
also burned sticks  
of jasmine that, dying,  
kept raising soft necks  
of ash. . . . She only  
said: The monsoons never cross  
the mountains into Kashmir.

The encapsulation of relationships in an Indian family—the reticence of the

mother, the unslaked curiosity and wise suspicion of the son—are delicately handled. In "Cracked Portraits", we have the impotent rage of an old man:

He wound the gramophone (sic) to a  
fury,  
the needles grazing Malika Pukhraj's  
songs,  
as he, drunk, tore his shirts  
and wept at the refrain,  
'I am still young.'

Despite the terrible inadequacy of the English language to capture the harshness of Pukhraj's song, the poem works because her shattering defiance is in the old man's actions.

Poets are generally good on poetry, especially when they speak of their struggles with writing and the possibility that although they must write poetry, the poems are of no use to anyone. Keats was eventually able to calm the fever and fret of his questioning with the stripped and confident statement that

Poetry alone can tell her dreams,  
With the fine spell of words alone can  
save  
Imagination from the Cable chain of  
dumb enchantment.

Byron was more concerned with official and unofficial censorship when he angrily asked his critics who was ever changed by a poem.

The contexts may differ, but this anthology has a bunch of poems on the problem. Here is Dilip Chitre on it:

Often, in the middle of a poem, I would  
kill  
Bugs and roaches with a powerful  
spray. A poem hardly  
Upsets the balance of nature, O my  
effluents  
Polluting the minds of others.  
(from "Travelling in a Cage")

The despair is stronger in another poem:

Poetry is the strangest form of incest  
People making love to the same idea  
With so many different bodies  
And always feeling  
Next to nothing as soon as they are  
done.  
(from "In Limbo")

Giving the issue a slightly different slant, Eunice de Souza has a wonderful piece on "Meeting Poets":

Meeting poets I am disconcerted  
sometimes  
by the colour of their socks  
The suspicion of a wig  
the wasp in the voice  
and an air, sometimes, of dankness.

Best to meet in poems:  
cool speckled shells  
in which one hears  
a sad but distant sea.

De Souza, of course, is not afraid to

include more than a sad and distant world in her poem. Manohar Shetty can be equally precise about facts. A pigeon

Settles cosily by the window,  
Burping softly,

and a cockroach

Reappears, feelers  
Like miniature periscopes,  
Questioning the air.  
("Domestic Creatures")

You need to have surprised a cockroach in the kitchen at about 3 a.m. to appreciate that. More magical than the detail is the leisure implicit in hearing and watching the small accompaniments of life. Once you notice that, you find yourself slowing down to listen to pigeons burping. This burgeoning of effect is probably what the best poems achieve.

Jayant Mahapatra's "Abandoned British Cemetery at Balasore" is a powerful invocation of the confused feelings aroused by such cemeteries anywhere in India. The epitaphs repeat the story of British boys and girls who died of cholera at very young ages. Their graves wait "for the elaborate ceremonial of a coming generation/to keep history awake." When Mahapatra says that the graves "stifle the survivor's issuing cry," I feel chastised by his compassion because each time I have seen the graves of the hundreds who died young, I have wondered why the British stayed on for so long. Like Shetty's poems, this one begins in a specific situation from where it grows outwards to encompass British imperialism and the responses of those left with its effects. The difference is that Mahapatra channels the reader's mind in a particular direction. To adapt Brecht, this is not a legitimate function of poetry, it is its only function.

Three good points about the book which are not directly to do with the poetry strike one. It has that clean, generally free-of-mistakes text that is characteristic of OUP publications; how nice to find twelve Indian poets all in one place; and Arvind Mehrotra writes good English. Then the goblins start marching across one's reactions. For instance, must the poems be prefaced with comments? Why not have explanations after the reader has some opinions on the poems? And if Nissim Ezekiel is to be established as "a good poet", is it necessary to condemn Sarojini Naidu's work as "mellifluous drivel" to do so? (9).

Of course, introductory explanations have a respectable history. Consider, for instance, Dr. Johnson on Shakespeare, or Wordsworth's preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. They can even be helpful. Mehrotra's explanations, however, create moments of astonishment that belong to a different class. For instance, he quotes Walter Benjamin's thesis on history about a historical materialist blasting open the continuum of history, follows it with an extract from Jussawalla's poetry that does not illustrate the thesis, and then tops this

with the comment that through rhyme and assonance, Jussawalla transforms "Language into history" (127). This reviewer did not know that language was anything but history.

The choices that editors of anthologies make cannot be easy, especially when dealing with poets in India, modern or otherwise. Each of the terms modern, Indian, and poet, must have harassed Mehrotra. The published work, however, gives us the choices he has made, not his agonization over meanings. A caustic critic of Brian Aldiss' history of science fiction once said that three-fourths of the book are spent in getting to the 1930s, while the next forty years, when ninety-five per cent of all readable science fiction was written, are dismissed in a few pages. The effect is to virtually reject the bulk of sci-fi in favour of some well established works. With a little modification here and there, a similar criticism could be made of Mehrotra's *Twelve Modern Indian Poets*. He has had, he says, the "opportunity to revise the literary map, bring neglected works back into circulation, and shift the

emphasis from certain poets to others" (preface). Yet what we get in this book is the canonized (Ezekiel, Mahapatra, Ramanujam, Daruwalla, Moraes) and canonization in process (Agha Shahid Ali).

There would be nothing wrong with this except that of the twelve poets, eleven are men, eight have studied, lived, or still live in the US or England, nine are above fifty years old and the youngest will be forty next year. There must be some other answers to the difficult question of what modern and Indian mean. Maybe poets don't have to be alive to be modern. Maybe they don't have to be half a century old to be good. Maybe women can talk about India. Maybe, even, those who have not seen India as expatriates have a point or two to make. But let me not carp. There is, after all, much good in the selection.

*Shobhana Bhattacharji has been teaching English at the Jesus and Mary College, Delhi University since 1970, and is currently engaged in research on Byron's drama.*

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## Translator Silhouettes

Adil Jussawalla

### THE REBEL'S SILHOUETTE

By Faiz Ahmed Faiz. Translated by Agha Shahid Ali

Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 61, Rs 70.00

Readers in the English-speaking West have been lucky to have had at least three gifted translators of Faiz—V. G. Kiernan, Naomi Lazard and Agha Shahid Ali. They have also been a little unlucky. I can't recall Kiernan's introduction, but in their enthusiasm for their subject, both Lazard and Ali make Faiz out to be a subcontinental giant rather than what he quite specifically was—Hindustani, as much a product of Hindustani culture as, say, another important contemporary, Gopalkrishna Adiga, is of southern culture. The North hardly knows Adiga. So, when Ali speaks of Faiz being "a very popular poet in the Indian subcontinent, lionized by the literary elite as well as the masses", we know he is speaking of his popularity within a certain region of the North, Bangladesh, and the Urdu-speaking sectors of India. Western readers don't always know this because "the subcontinent" can be a wonderfully undifferentiated term. Lazard goes further. "In our (western) culture," she says, "poetry is occasionally set to music but then it is usually a form of high art, not for popular consumption. In the Hindu and Moslem world it is different. People who barely have an education know Faiz's poetry, not only because of the songs using his lyrics but also the poems themselves. This is testimony to the oral tradition of their culture but also to the universality of his appeal. . . . He was, by the British act of Partition, a Pakistani, but his people are the people of all India, Pakistan, the entire subcontinent. Anyone who knows any poetry at all in that vast region knows of Faiz."

We may wish it were true but we sense it differently. Many in this vast region—and it includes tribals—continue to compose poetry as though Faiz never existed. And even if we know of Faiz, there are fewer people who know him as a poet than western readers may be given to understand. My information tells me he hasn't been adequately translated in several Indian languages.

It may seem to be a trivial point—that western readers get a rosier picture of our poets than the situation warrants but I don't think it is. It is a matter of great importance both for us and for them to get the picture right. So much has not been done by getting it wrong. In our

understanding of subcontinental culture, translations should have played a pivotal role, but they haven't. In that sense, every new translation of Faiz has been welcome.

Lazard's and Ali's differ so much that it is sometimes difficult to believe that one is reading versions of the same poem. Ali's readings are more focussed than Lazard's and considerably lighten some of the more rhetorical devices of Urdu poetry, just as Faiz himself did. Ali confesses his difficulty with the *ghazal*, preferring a free verse form to the stringent order of the original Urdu. He is frank enough to admit that in the process, "the magic of the form is missing."

This brings us back to another problem of translation. If the *ghazal* is "just about impossible" to translate into English (Ali's words, though it seems, from the example of John Hollander whom he quotes and the Australian poet Christopher Mooney's work, that it is certainly possible to write one in English), then is it just about impossible to translate it into some subcontinental languages too? Would the metrical systems of Tamil, say, not be able to support it? Is there something so specific to certain poetic forms that they don't travel well, even within the subcontinent?

Such questions can only be resolved by fresh attempts at translation. One of Ali's virtues is that he makes even the best-known of Faiz's poems shine anew. Poems like "Don't Ask Me for that Love Again", "August 1952"? "A Prison Evening" and "Black Out" make at least this reader want to re-learn Urdu. Another virtue (a feat, I think, considering that it is the translator's greatest temptation) is that Ali studiously tries not to mix his own voice with Faiz's. The lyrical swoops and cadences by which his own impressive work proceeds is not part of the Faiz structure so he leaves them out, favouring neat, occasionally prosaic lines which come straight to the point. Readers may find Lazard's translations more sumptuous but Ali's are clearer. He unclothes Faiz for our gaze and without making a great deal of fuss over the silhouette makes us marvel at the man.

Adil Jussawalla is a poet of repute.

## ROOTED IN MODERNITY

Mohammed Ali Siddiqui

### THE NEW STORY

By Sukrita Paul Kumar

Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, in association with Allied Publishers Ltd., New Delhi, 1990, pp. 136, Rs. 100.00

Sukrita Paul Kumar had done well in her earlier book *Conversations On Modernism* to effectively elicit perceptions of well-known writers, critics and philosophers on literary modernism. She has earned a name for herself in the field of English literary criticism of Urdu and Hindi short stories. Her latest work *The New Story* is her own dispassionate scrutiny of modernism in Hindi and Urdu fiction.

A poet, painter, and a well-known critic in her own right, Dr. Kumar has tried to determine whether modernism in Urdu and Hindi fiction has evolved as a legitimate response to the changing social situation and the influence of western thought, or if it has roots in the subcontinental tradition of story-telling. She does not agree with critics who dismiss modernism in Indian literature as an offshoot of the colonial sway over our minds. Rather than thinking of it as a 'cultural sell-out' she suggests that a much greater critical attention be directed at examining the conceptual and philosophical framework within which modernism got evolved here along with its socio-

*"The Indian woman too has been caught in the clash between tradition and modernity. She has to bear the burden of the past along with the aspirations to clear her own path of existence. Her awakening consciousness seeps through the redefining of such images as that of Seeta, Rukmani and Draupadi. The generally rather resilient woman finds herself in conflicting situations, wondering how much to conform, how to break away to assert one's individuality and how to resolve the question of self-identity."*

Extract from 'The New Story'

political and cultural ethos.

This monograph, written for one of the most prestigious research institutes in the Third World, is a painstaking piece of work. Kumar has gleaned from a vast corpus of Urdu and Hindi fiction in an

attempt to prove that an important genre in these two literary traditions needs to be studied together. The author attempts a conceptual grasp of 'modernism' by keeping a number of modern short stories in Hindi and Urdu under a lens chosen and determined entirely by the kind of response the short story under scrutiny evokes.

The selection of stories that Kumar looks at seems to prove that modernity in Urdu and Hindi short story sits well with tradition. She contends that modernism does not make its appearance in Hindi and Urdu fiction in as dramatic a manner as it does in English literature. A courageous confrontation with the moment or the 'now' is what it is all about in the Indian context, not the make-believe world of the future, or a re-living of the obsolete past, though the awareness of 'now' as Wazir Agha puts it, contains in itself a sense of the past and a foresight into the future.

Some stories do sound a bit forced, as though tradition and modernity were not at home with each other. In this, the author has not identified the harvest of short stories which may be classed under fads that mushroom, soon to disappear. There is a great deal of difference between being 'modern' and being a 'modernist'. According to Roger Fry, the former is a way of improving upon a tradition and hence growing with it while the latter is a method of turning the tables on tradition and taking on a confrontationist posture.

The study is divided into 5 chapters: Tradition and the Modernist Temper; Literary Modernism and some Partition Stories; Cognition of the Self; Woman as Hero; The Use of Myths, and the Question of Form. Dr. Kumar has drawn upon the writings of eminent English, Hindi and Urdu critics and the extent of her referential support, given at the end of each chapter, is quite impressive. Though one cannot call this work definitive, Kumar has, in undertaking this work, established her credentials as a researcher of high calibre.

Her main contention is that modernism is not an offshoot of the British Raj but has indigenous roots. She has successfully driven her point home. The fact of the matter is that traditional moulds may prove insufficient when it comes to an exploration of contemporary reality. Modernism just relaxes those moulds to let the weeds grow along with the flowers. Kumar has done well to make a case for it.

*Mohammed Ali Siddiqui, a highly acclaimed literary critic from Pakistan in English and Urdu is an editor of a prestigious magazine dealing primarily with Third World economic issues. Writing as "Ariel" for the well-known Pakistan daily Dawn, he is a prolific writer probing into crucial literary questions. He has a number of critical works to his credit including his two well-known books, Nishanaat and Tawazun. He wields tremendous following in his pioneering studies of modern Urdu literature.*

# A HEROIC STRUGGLE REMEMBERED

Shama Futehally

ANANDI GOPAL

By S.J. Joshi. Translated from Marathi by Asha Damle

Stree Publications, Calcutta, 1992, pp. 271, Rs 85.00

**A**nandi Gopal is the name of a Marathi novel by the distinguished writer S.J. Joshi. Based on intense research, it recreates the life of Anandibai Gopal Joshi, one of the band of remarkable Maharashtrian women of the nineteenth century. In 1877 Anandi sailed to America with the goal of becoming India's first woman doctor. Three years later, having achieved her end, she returned "to help the women of India", but succumbed tragically to tuberculosis very shortly afterwards.

To understand what this book teaches us, it is necessary to examine the actual story in some detail. Anandi (Yamu as she was known in childhood) was born into the family of a down-and-out landlord of Kalyan, near Bombay. With the approach of puberty Yamu increasingly became a worry, especially as she was dark and slightly pock-marked. Fate presented itself in the form of a young man who was so eccentric that he wanted to marry a widow—obviously, therefore, he was one for whom anything would do. A match was set up. Gopalrao was a postal clerk—thin, slight and unprepossessing. Moreover he had wild ideas about educating his wife. It was, therefore, after a great deal of typically Indian confusion, evasiveness and mutual insult that the wedding took place. (There was also farce—from a variety of tangled motives Gopalrao hid away from his own wedding, causing the first trauma of Anandi's married life.)

Now Gopalrao was indeed a "reformer", at least under his own roof. Having failed in his reformist goal of marrying a widow, he became genuinely obsessed by the desire to educate a woman, i.e. the only woman available to him. The emerging portrait makes it clear—and this is one of the insights provided by this close viewing of life—that a reformer can be as demonic and oppressive as anyone else. At the time of the wedding, Gopalrao's in-laws had assumed that all that talk about education only meant that he was slightly touched in the head. When they found that it was serious, and that this was really going to be the fate of a good Brahmin girl, they naturally began to mourn as if she were dead. The little girl became a pawn in the tussle between the two, terrified of her husband's anger when she could not go

to him with her slate, and cruelly taunted by everyone else if she did. (Imagine, a wife going to her husband's room in the middle of the day!) Indeed, the description at this stage of Anandi's sheer physical *terror* is one of the most moving parts of the book.

Finally Gopalrao decided that he could bear his in-laws no longer and had himself transferred to Alibaug. There, isolated except for an unexpectedly cooperative grandmother who chose to stay with them, he was able to start on Anandi afresh. This time his tutoring lit an unexpected spark in his child-wife. Beginning with a jumble of geography and myths and sums, she was soon delirious with

*The facts of the story make it clear that Anandi was an extraordinarily intelligent and complex woman—capable of staunch loyalty to a very difficult husband, able to discard traditions with ease, yet following them for the sake of her close relationships, able finally to understand that the distortions in her husband's personality stemmed from his being far ahead of his time. However, we have to "divine" this complexity for ourselves from the myriad details given, rather than learn of it through analysis of any sort. This appears to be a particularly Indian method of story-telling—to supply hundreds of tiny pictures, as in a folk painting, leaving it to the viewer or reader to draw them together. Personally I find it a very charming method and much more complex than it appears, like a Bhupen Khakar painting.*

her new freedom to learn.

The rest of the book details their joint, and insatiable, quest for knowledge, and their unrelieved isolation from those around them. The hatred and vengeance of Brahmin society against Anandi comes out very strongly: if she went out for a walk the neighbours would collect at their windows to jeer. (I only learnt from this book that an immediate reason for the vicious prejudice against women's education was the assumption that as soon as a woman could read and write she would enter into adulterous correspondence.) Therefore the Joshis had no callers, no friends, no life other than their books. Anandi's only baby had died shortly after birth. Seeing almost no future for their efforts in India, Anandi decided to take the plunge and leave for medical studies in America when a chance encounter with

an American family gave her the opportunity to do so.

Her three years in America meant very great hardship, partly because of the unconcealed racial prejudice she faced and partly because of her own poverty. Bound by a promise to her husband, she continued to wear saris even in winter and to eat, although it was hardly available, vegetarian food so she was always cold and hungry. Her poverty compelled her to live in a smoke-filled room, which almost certainly contributed to the illness which brought such an early and futile end to her struggles.

The facts of the story make it clear that Anandi was an extraordinarily intelligent and complex woman—capable of staunch loyalty to a very difficult husband, able to discard traditions with ease, yet following them for the sake of her close relationships, able finally to understand that the distortions in her husband's personality stemmed from his being far ahead of his time. However, we have to "divine" this complexity for ourselves from the myriad details given, rather than learn of it through analysis of any sort. This appears to be a particularly Indian method of story-telling—to supply hundreds of tiny pictures, as in a folk painting, leaving it to the viewer or reader to draw them together. Personally I find it

all sleep and sleep and sleep." His tormenting of Anandi arose from a genuine terror that she would fall prey to the same lethargy—yet it was torment nonetheless. He wanted equality for her in theory but was incapable of an equal relationship in fact—their relation was one of teacher and pupil, with occasional sexual assaults on his part which were not unlike his intellectual assaults. Later, he reacted to her achievements with a combination of jealousy and emotional blackmail; and his reaction to the racial prejudice of the West was the weak one of reverting to Hindu dogma.

These are all factors of a mind in translation, and they demonstrate very clearly how social struggle is accompanied by distortion, contradiction, and lack of balance. The struggle remains heroic nonetheless. We have not progressed so very far that we can afford to forget about women like Anandi, and Asha Damle is to be thanked for making this carefully abridged version available to a non-Marathi readership.

I am sorry to have to end with the usual plaintive bleat about language. However, it is impossible not to notice the stilted vocabulary, monotonous rhythm and unvarying sentence-structure of this translation:

Gopalrao sat uncomfortably on the chair opposite. He felt so shabby and completely out of place. He wanted the whole episode to be over and done with as quickly as possible. He said hesitantly that he had come to see the girl.

This book, after all, is about overcoming the timidity and diffidence which comes from living in the colonial shadow. Its language should reflect the maturity and confidence of its theme.

Shama Futehally is a well-known writer and critic.

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Dr Dalip Kaur Tiwana is a counterpart of the poetess Amrita Pritam in Punjabi letters. What Amrita Pritam says in verse, Dr Tiwana depicts eminently in fiction; as much in short stories as in novels. Both are given to talking about the plight of the weaker sex in the man-made society around us. The only difference is that while Amrita Pritam's milieu is mainly urban, at times even universal, Dalip Tiwana is rooted in the soil, her own tradition and folklore, economic exploitation of and the social curbs inflicted upon the second sex in society in Punjab.

Author of 17 novels, Dalip Tiwana has also published her own autobiography in four parts of which the first part *Nange Pauran da Safar* (Barefoot Journey) has been published in translation in English and Hindi.

Dr Tiwana won the coveted Sahitya Akademi Award with her second novel *Eh Hamara Jeevna* (This My Life). And she has not looked back ever since, regaling her readers with volume after volume with a constant flow of creativity.

A university professor, having served as chairperson of the School of Punjabi Studies for several years, Dr Tiwana combines erudite scholarship with a facile pen; a simple, unsophisticated, transparent person, steering clear of the lime-light and unwarranted controversy, literary or otherwise.

With her doctorate on the Technique and Development of the short story in Punjabi, her grip over the genre is undoubtedly firm. As it is, the practitioners of fiction who write both novels and short stories are generally charged with making every chapter of the novel complete in itself, so that it reads like a short story; on the other hand Dalip Tiwana's novels are so tightly constructed that they appear to be long short stories.

This is most true of her latest works: *Lang Gae Darya* (The Rivers Crossed) and *Zimin Puchhe Asman* (The Earth Asks the Sky) published one after the other within a gap of a few months.

I have always believed that it is not only the thought and beliefs of a writer that find expression in his or her writing; the personality of the writer is also reflected in what comes out of his or her pen. This is exemplified in Dr Tiwana's work. Quiet and serene, gentle and suave, the reader can see her image in Dalip's writing. Emerging out of her preoccupation with the trials and tribulations of Punjabi womanhood, the author has of late involved herself in two most compelling themes of life in the Punjab today, more particularly the Malwa region to which she belongs.

*Lang Gae Darya* relates to the decadent society in the erstwhile princely state of Patiala. 'When people draw from life,' says Dr Tiwana, 'more than what they give, life demands from their children more than what they get.' Belonging to the class which had easy access to royalty, the author recreates vivid pictures of the time

## Landmarks in Punjabi Fiction

K.S. Duggal

under the rule of the legendary Maharaja Bhupinder Singh.

The river is in flood. There is imminent danger to the capital. The Maharaja is advised to propitiate the deity. With a tray full of gold bangles and a nose-ring, His Highness plunges into the roaring river in person. The surging waters are knee deep, then waist deep, then up to the neck when all of a sudden a wave rises and almost snatches the tray away from the hands of the Maharaja. Lo and behold, the miracle takes place. The water starts receding.

The performance of Shakti Puja, with the Maharaja and a select nobility participating in it, is a periodic practice in the palace. A Bengali tantrik would make a clay image and clothe it with rich garments and jewelry, then came the sacrificial slaughter of bulls, offering of liquor to the deity and its distribution among the participants—men and women—as Prasad, followed by a drinking spree. When it is past-midnight, a bevy of naked virgins come in singing and dancing. As the dance builds itself up to the climax, there is the enactment of the sequence of *Srishti Rachana* (the creation of universe) in drunken frenzy.

In the tradition of the ancient benevolent monarchs, the Maharaja along with one of his darbaris goes out in the night disguised as a commoner. He comes across a party singing to the accompaniment of *dholak* and cymbals. On inquiry, His Highness is told that they are devotees of Kali Mata and that they are going to Calcutta for celebration of Durga Pooja. The Maharaja takes the train the next morning and goes to Calcutta. A fortnight later when the royal special returns, it is with the deity purchased by the state along with the *pujari* (priest) duly employed. A temple is constructed on the outskirts of the capital and the image of Kali Mata installed in it.

At a banquet in Shimla, the Maharaja meets the Punjab Governor's charming daughter. Late in the night when everyone is dead drunk, the girl is whisked away and outraged. How could the British ruler permit it! The Maharaja had to part with Shimla and the adjoining territory of his state for his indiscretion.

The novel is packed with such startling anecdotes. No wonder that as the story moved towards the close, there is

neither the Maharaja nor the Raj and we find an erstwhile princess marrying her tutor, a commoner.

*Zimin Puchhe Asman* is a fascinating attempt at portraying the scenario in the strife-torn and militant-haunted Punjab today. The scene is laid in the Punjabi University, Patiala and its surroundings, with teachers and students figuring in it. One of them is the author, Dalip Tiwana herself. It shows how well-meaning youth are led astray and are sooner or later slaughtered by the security forces in genuine and not-so-genuine encounters. Since the participants are university dons and students, the argument is invariably at adult level. Some examples:

'Nowhere does the Anandpur Saheb Resolution demand a state for the Sikhs; what it asks for is the status for the Sikh community that it had been promised.'

'Madam, I have no interest in politics. I never say any prayers. I never go to the Gurudwara. I do not know what demands the Sikh people have put forward. I have never participated in any agitation but there is something in my blood. The desecration of Akal Takht has hurt me deeply. For the first time I have realized that I am a Sikh and I am proud of it.'

There are similar meaningful observations sprinkled all over the text:

'Of late, the role of the police has changed; they are there to serve the government only.'

'The state that has been blessed with rivers, has the prior right over their waters.'

'What have we gained with the coming into being of the Punjabi Suba? It is at best like the paw of a sparrow. And now they ask for Khalistan. The Centre should let them have their way. They would die fighting with each other.'

'If people say that Punjabi is not their language, why must we ram it down their throats? Let them forge links with Hindi and merge in the mainstream.'

'After all Guru Gobind Singh's children were also killed by the rulers of the day!'

Many such remarks made by the protagonists throw light on the conditions prevailing in the bedevilled state.

Author of more than 100 short stories, published in a number of collections and recently brought out in an omnibus volume entitled *Merian Sarian*

*Kahaniya*, Dr Dalip Kaur Tiwana's distinguishing feature as a short story writer is her uncommon approach to commonplace themes and her severe economy of expression. Even while talking about love, an oft-dealt with subject, she decides upon out-of-the-way aspects of social life for treatment in her writing like a squabbling attachment between a sister and a brother; quarrelling every moment, falling out at every step and yet bound with the silken thread of filial love: "Veera" (Brother) in *Vairage Nain* (Love-Sick Eyes), or an uncanny longing of two sisters in "Kurandi Koonj" (The Wailing Swallow). Indira finds that Shahshi, her younger sister loves Kamal from the core of her heart. Only a sensitive artist of Tiwana's background could devise how Indira resolves this dilemma. Even when it is mere infatuation between a man and a woman, Dalip's treatment of it is skilfully sober and yet in no way lacking in emotional intensity. In "Tera Kamra; Mera Kamra" (Your Room; My Room), a wall of bricks and cement separates the lovers who can never pick-up courage to divulge to each other their longing for each other. Eventually they seem to be reconciled to the fact that after all there was just a wall between them. Is it not a blessing!

The manner in which Dr Tiwana probes into the mind of the girl who was engaged to be married to the martyr Bhagat Singh in her short story entitled "Ik Kurri" (A Girl) in her collection *Satyam Sai* (They Are the Satis) would do credit to any practitioner of the short story. It is only a writer of Dr Tiwana's sensibility and moral candour who could delve into the unfathomable recesses of agony and dignity, steadfastness and devotion of a young Punjabi maid. Every word of the story appears to be soaked in tears.

Dr Dalip Kaur Tiwana made her debut as a short story writer in Punjabi letters with her story "Maran Rut" (The Death Season) in the fifties. It is the tale of a love-lorn young girl Rachna who finds the rainy season much too intoxicating to go to college for her studies; instead she takes a bus and goes to a nearby town to meet her lover. It is still too early. So what? She is going to meet Arvind to whom she has given her heart. On her way she ignores a bird hanging from an electric wire on the roadside. Arvind's apartment is not far from the bus stand. She scales the stairs. Knocks at the door. There is no response. She knocks again. The door opens and she finds another girl in Arvind's bed. 'She is Sushma, a stenographer in our office. . . I got late in the office last night. . . I suggested she stay here for the night. . .', Arvind tries to explain. 'My name is Rachna, Arvind's would-be-wife.' Rachna introduces herself to Sushma.

Undoubtedly Dr Tiwana is a consummate artist.

K.S. Duggal, a Punjabi writer, is the President of the Punjabi Writers Association.

■ ARCHAEOLOGY

*South Asian Archaeology Studies*  
 Edited by G.L. Possehl  
 The book contains 19 essays by leading international archaeologists in recognition of the exemplary work by Walter A. Fairservis.  
 Oxford & IBH., 1992, pp 266, Rs 450.00

■ ART & ARCHITECTURE

*Ellora. Concept and Style*  
 Text and photographs by Carmel Berkson  
 This is the first definitive co-ordinative treatment of the world-famous rock cut caves at Ellora. Its purpose is to introduce a methodology for the study of Indian art. Abhinav Publications and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts., 1992, pp. 391.

■ BIOGRAPHY

*The last days of Sardar Patel*  
 Vijay Tendulkar  
 This is the original film script written for the feature film *Sardar* focussing on the last years of his life. Focus Books, Popular Prakashan, 1993, pp. 216, Rs 75.00

■ CHILDRENS BOOKS

*Deep space and Other Stories:*  
 Jaya Paramasivan  
 Illustrated by Suddhasattwa Basu  
 Science fiction adventures for young readers.  
 Frank Educational Aids, 1992, pp, 72, Rs 25.00

■ CULTURE & PHILOSOPHY

*India and Japan. A study in Interaction during 5th Cent.-14th Cent. A.D.*  
 Upendra Thakur  
 The present monograph deals with cultural interaction between India and Japan in the field of religion, languages and literature, art and painting.  
 Abhinav Publications, 1992, pp 98, Rs 170.00

■ ECONOMICS

*Black Income in India*  
 Suraj B. Gupta  
 Black income constitutes a significant and fast growing element in India's economy and has affected the entire gamut of economic activity as well as the political system.  
 Sage Publications, 1992, pp. 187, Rs 215.00

*Planning for Social and Economic Development*  
 Edited by R. Bharadwaj and M.V. Nadkarni

The volume comprises eighteen original essays by eminent social scientists which highlight the problems involved in planning for India's social and economic development.  
 Sage Publications, 1992, pp 274, Rs 275.00

■ EDUCATION

*What is Worth Teaching?*  
 Krishna Kumar  
 This collection of lectures deals with the character of school knowledge or curriculum.  
 Orient Longman, 1992, pp. 74, Rs 45.00

*Towards a Redefinition of the Education Policy*  
 Edited by G. Ramakrishna  
 This book does not purport to be yet another critique of the New Education Policy- 1986 but it looks above and beyond to a larger perspective.  
 Madhu's Printers and Publishers, Bangalore, 1992, pp 320, Rs 300.00

■ GENERAL

*1000 North-Eastern Region Quiz*  
 Pramila Pandit Barooah  
 This book will test your knowledge and increase your understanding of the seven north-eastern states of India.  
 Rupa Paperbacks, Rupa and Co., 1992, pp. 181, Rs 30.00

*Flavours From India*  
 Thangam E. Philip  
 This book introduces the reader to the subtle flavours of traditional dishes from all over India.  
 Disha Books, Orient Longman Ltd. 1992, pp. 124, Rs 35.00

■ HISTORY & POLITICS

*Indian Politics Under Mrs. Gandhi: Reflective Essays*  
 P.M. Kamath  
 This is a collection of 22 essays written by the author between 1971 and 1985 reflecting on Mrs Gandhi's style of conducting national politics.  
 South Asian Publishers, Delhi, 1993, pp 166, Rs 150.00

■ INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

*Tears of Blood. A Cry for Tibet*  
 Mary Craig  
 This book tells the story of Tibet under Chinese occupation with candour and power. It is based on careful research and interviews with large numbers of refugees.  
 Indus Books, Harper Collins Publishers, 1992, pp. 374, Rs 100.00

*Ethnicity and Politics in Central Asia*  
 Edited by K. Warikoo and Dawa Norbu  
 This study presents an integrated view of

the developments taking place in Central Asia and has contributions from well known Indian specialists.  
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■ LAW

*M RTP Law. Principles, Provisions and Cases*  
 [Amended upto 2nd October 92.]  
 Dr D.P.S. Verma  
 Provides simple, concise and yet complete treatment of this fast growing area of law.  
 Manas Publications, 1992, pp. 279, Rs 110.00

*Dishonour of Cheques. Liability Civil and Criminal. II Edition.*  
 S.N. Gupta  
 The book will be an asset to members of the legal profession dealing with such cases on the civil or criminal side.  
 Universal Book Traders, 1992, pp 293, Rs. 145.00

■ LITERATURE

*In An Antique Land*  
 Amitav Ghosh  
 Packed with anecdote and exuberant detail, this traveller's tale provides magical insights into Egypt from the Crusades to Operation Desert Storm.  
 Ravi Dayal Publisher, 1992, pp. 393, Rs. 150.00

*On Poets and Others*  
 Octavio Paz  
 Essays on Baudelaire, Bunuel, Dostoyevsky, Frost, Sartre, Solzhenitsyn, Whitman and others translated by Michael Schmidt.  
 Indus Books, Harper Collins Publishers, 1992, pp 219, Rs 70.00

*One Earth, Four or Five Worlds. Reflections on Contemporary History*  
 Octavio Paz  
 Here Paz investigates with wit and incisive analysis the systems and nations that run our world.  
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*The Collected Poems 1957-1987 of Octavio Paz*  
 Edited by Eliot Weinberger  
 Paz is Latin America's foremost living poet and this work is a bilingual gathering of all the poetry he has published in book form since 1957.  
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*Stories and Poems*  
 S. Radhika  
 A first volume of writings by the author who started writing at a very young age.  
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*The Blue Devil. Indigo and Colonial Bengal*  
 Amiya Rao and B.G. Rao

*Neel Darpan* is a Bengali play written in the middle of the nineteenth century and has acquired a considerable reputation both for its revolutionary content and the kind of reaction it evoked from the colonial British government and its then colonised people. This volume contains a useful historical account followed by a translation of the play by Dinabandhu Mitra.  
 Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 271, Rs 280.00

*Masumatti And Other Stories*  
 Translated by Kadambi Hayagrivachar  
 A collection of Kannada short stories selected and translated by Prof. Hayagrivachar  
 Premasai Prakashana, 1992, pp. 196, Rs. 40.00

*Dimensions of Socio-linguistics in South Asia*  
 Papers in memory of Gerald Kelley.  
 Edited by Edward C. Dimock, Braj B. Kachru and Bh. Krishnamurti.  
 This volume brings together 24 specially commissioned papers on a rather neglected aspect of South Asian Linguistics.  
 Oxford of IBH., 1992, pp 347, Rs 395.00.

■ MANAGEMENT

*A Grammar of Public Enterprises: Exercises in Clarification*  
 Ramaswamy R. Iyer.  
 The book, as its title and subtitle indicate is essentially clarifactory in intention. It formulates certain basic questions and examines them.  
 Centre for Policy Research and Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1992, pp. 202, Rs 200.00

*Innovative Corporate Turnarounds*  
 Pradip N. Khandwalla  
 This book explores the phenomenology of turnaround management—the causes of sickness, the kinds of actions that characterise turnaround and the interrelationships between different turnaround actions.  
 Sage Publications, 1992, pp. 229, Rs 250.00

■ MEDIA

*Doordarshan Aur Samajik Vikas*  
 Jagdishwar Chaturvedi  
 W. Newman and Co. Ltd., Calcutta, 1991, pp. 192, Rs. 75.00

■ RELIGION

*An Introduction to the History of Sufism*  
 Arthur J. Arberry  
 Sufi studies have made considerable progress in the fifty years since this book was first published and yet the Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy Lectures by Dr Arberry is a classic work.  
 Orient Longman Ltd., 1992, pp. 84, Rs 60.00

## Gujarat secured second place in 20-Point Programme in the country.

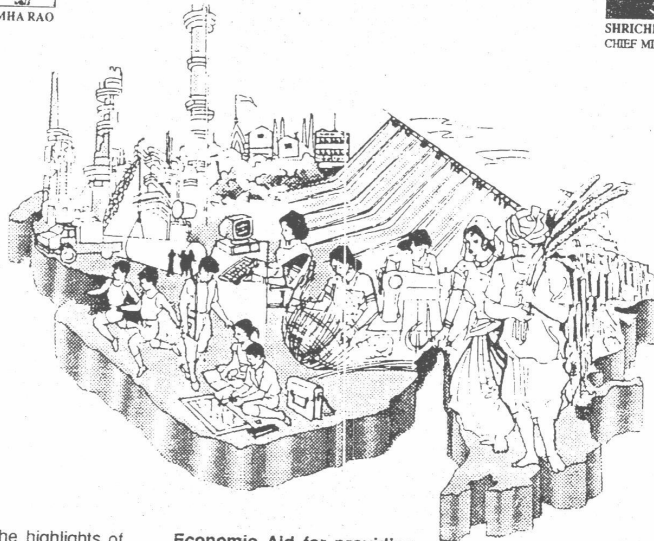


SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO  
PRIME MINISTER

UNDER THE DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP OF CHIEF MINISTER, SHRI CHIMANBHAI PATEL GUJARAT RANKS SECOND AMONG INDIAN STATES IN THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 20-POINT PROGRAMME.



SHRICHIMANBHAI PATEL  
CHIEF MINISTER



Following are the highlights of success in implementing various items of the Twenty Point Programme in Gujarat during 1991-92.

**Houses for Poor** : Set target of 1200. Achievement 1946. Success 162%

**Energising Wells** : Set target of 15,100. Achievement 23,771. Success 157%.

**Tree Plantation** : Set target of 2,400 lakh trees. Achievement 3,761.43 lakh trees, success 157%

**Allotment of House Plots** : Set target of 30,000. Achievement 39,795. Success 133%.

**Economic Aid for providing justice to Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes families** : Set target for benefiting families 70,000. Achievement 90,140. Success 129%.

**Providing facilities for construction of houses** : Set target for benefiting persons 20,000. Achievement 25,112. Success 126%.

**Installing Bio-gas Plants** : Set target of plants 28,000. Achievement 32,680. Success 117%.

**Integrated Rural Development Programme** : Set target of beneficiaries 68,228. Achievement 70,008. Success 103%.

**Providing Clean Drinking Water** : Set target villages 630. Achievement 638. Success 101%.

**Immunisation for Infants** : Set target of 10,23,175 infants. Achievement 10,21,926 infants. Success 100%.

**Providing seven basic facilities to Slum Dwellers**: Set target of Slum Dwellers 40,000. Achievement 40,129. Success 100%.

MAHITI