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Displacement and Rehabilitation

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The construction of large dams has become a major issue in the development politics of Third World countries today. On the one hand are a whole range of issues and problems related to irrigation for agriculture, to increasing food productivity for populations growing at an alarming rate, to increasing power-generation and drinking water supply, in short, for a whole host of problems to which large dams are seen as viable solutions.

On the other hand are the terrible, unacceptable costs of development in terms of ecological damage and human misery, the physical and emotional trauma of displacement of large populations. This has rightly ranged environmentalists and NGOs into powerful pressure groups against the construction of big dams. Dialogue would seem to be almost non-existent.

It is against this background that a one-day seminar organized by The Book Review Literary Trust on *Displacement and Rehabilitation* was held at the India International Centre on 25 January 1993. The take-off point for the seminar was Enakshi Ganguly Thukral's book, *Big Dams, Displaced People: Rivers of Sorrow, Rivers of Change* which was subsidized by the Trust last year for a low-cost edition. The book focusses on the unresolved dilemma of the oustees of the project areas in various states.

In the seminar attended by activists and NGOs, officials from the ministries of welfare and environment, representatives from the Narmada Valley Development Authority and others interested in the question of whether or not large dams should be built at all, a wide-ranging discussion at the role of dams in development and large dams versus smaller dams, tank and tube-well irrigation as well as the enormous range of problems related to environment was followed by a debate on the issue of rehabilitation.

The draft of the National Rehabilitation Policy being circulated by the Government of India came in for heated discussions at the seminar. Experts were of the belief that the relief and rehabilitation policy had done little to ensure means of sustenance for those displaced by large projects. The policy's emphasis on "land for land", it was stressed, would raise a host of problems. Besides the question of availability of land, tension between the host community and the newcomers was fairly common. Several changes in the draft were suggested including penalty clauses for inadequate implementation, statutory status for the policy and encouragement of village-level workers in rehabilitation programmes.

On the positive side, the policy envisages a self-contained procedure for publication of resettlement plans to ensure that the oustees would have adequate information about the government's intentions, as well as for handling objections to such plans. The policy shows an awareness of the need to resettle the oustees as a community and not in scattered pockets, in order to prevent disruption of their way of life.

We are glad to inform our readers that The Book Review Literary Trust is now trying in a modest way to meet the various commitments of its charter and besides publishing *The Book Review*, is providing book subsidies to seminal works in the areas of economics, international affairs, politics, environment and women studies. Seminars are being organized around some of the subsidized books in order to generate an intellectual debate. But there are many other objectives like providing scholarships and holding book exhibitions which we are unable to cover as the process of building a corpus fund is painfully slow. We hope that all our readers will help us in our effort. Any donation from Rs.500/- upwards would be most welcome and take us that much nearer our target figure. A donation of Rs. 2000/- and above will ensure a free supply of the journal for life to the donor. All donations to the corpus fund is eligible for exemption under Section 80-G of the Income Tax Act of 1961.

C.C.

Blinkered Viewpoints

Rajmohan Gandhi

UTOPIAS IN CONFLICT: RELIGION AND NATIONALISM IN MODERN INDIA

By Ainslie T. Embree

Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992, pp. 144, Rs. 175.00

Embree has called his book *Utopias in Conflict*. Yet it is the sub-title, *Religion and Nationalism in Modern India*, that dominates the cover; the title is barely visible. The blurb is more troubling, for it describes the book as providing "a new look at two issues that have caused conflict in India, religion and nationalism", when in fact it consists of six essays published between 1968 and 1987.

That the book is not a piece but a collection was evident in the early pages of the second chapter (more accurately the second essay), and I found confirmation for the surmise under "Acknowledgments", but surely the fact should have been stated in the preface or the blurb. Evidently the essays have been revised and enlarged. But they remain six separate texts, and the separateness surprises the reader.

Ainslie Embree, former Professor of History at Columbia, has been studying the subcontinent and writing on it for decades. He thinks it unlikely that the conflicts in India between modernity and tradition and between various forms of tradition will be easily or peacefully resolved. In his view, those who see or seek a common ground are unrealistic. Indian nationalists sowed seeds against the nationalism they desired by the religious vocabulary they used. Jinnah was right in asserting that India was not a nation or a country but a collection of nationalities, a truth that Gandhi and Nehru refused to face. John Strachey too was right when long ago he declared that "there is not, and never was an India possessing any sort of unity, physical, political, social or religious". And John Morley, likewise, was right in warning that if they washed their hands of India the British would hear "through dark distances the roar and scream of confusion and carnage in India".

I have summarized Embree's views, not quoted him. They cannot please the ear and do not satisfy the mind, not my mind at any rate. I cannot stop with the proposition that differences and disputes in India are deep. Of course they are, and Gandhi for one never suggested that they were superficial. Contrary to what Embree asserts, he faced the truth that Jinnah hurled at him, but he also faced the additional truth that separation was no solution.

Taken to its logical conclusion, the thesis of Jinnah and of the *Hindutva* advocate would call for apartheid in every South Asian town or village containing Hindus and Muslims both, and even in all-Hindu or all-Muslim places, for as Embree surely knows the existence of deep divisions both among Hindus and Muslims has also been established. This being the case, it is hard to fault the Indian nationalists for insisting that a *modus vivendi* had to be found, and hard to fault Gandhi for striving to avert partition which, whatever its other outcomes, did not enhance the security either of the Muslims of truncated India or of Hindus and Sikhs of Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Embree is undoubtedly right in questioning the historicity of the nationalist claim that Hindu-Muslim cordiality was the dominant note of pre-British India, and of its corollary that the Raj's divide-and-rule policy created the Hindu-

Muslim gulf. Resentment of British rule and impatience with its continuance did make nationalists blind to the seriousness of India's internal divisions.

In Embree's chapter, "The Question of Hindu Tolerance", some may see a theoretical explanation for the empirical reminders of recent months that Hindu tolerance is as fragile as Hindu-Muslim cordiality. I found the chapter of interest but not persuasive enough. According to him India does not absorb, synthesize or tolerate; she only encapsulates. While India may admit new ideas or peoples, she does not dialogue with them. They may find lodging but not interaction.

After ascribing a hermetically-sealed uniqueness to Indian thought, Embree cites, as if in evidence, Bhartrihari's lines: "Great was the king with his circle of courtiers, the ladies' moonlike faces, the host of haughty princes, but we submit to time, which swept them all from power, to the path of memory." Was Shelley's "traveller from an antique land" very different when he reported on two decaying "trunkless legs of stones" in a sea of sand, and below the legs the words: "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair?"

The pessimistic note is absent in Embree's fourth essay, "Religious Pluralism, National Integration and Scholarship", which was first published in 1973. Here he says that India's divisions are of such a variety that they succeed "in a countervailing fashion" to "maintain the fabric of the political structure". Embree's conclusion in this chapter that India's

"plural society has been more resilient to external and internal traumas than many more homogeneous societies" seems to contradict the message of the other essays.

It is to religion in India, to the core of Hinduism and Islam both, that Embree links the violence of the past and present and the likely violence of the future. Disentangling love of one's religion from hate of another religious group does not seem to interest him; hate belongs to the religious factor to which Embree assigns the great negative role.

Is hate an inextricable part of religion? Or is it more a tool used by the greedy? The power-hungry who climb on hate and the criminals who hire arsonists to obtain plots of land have no place in Embree's analysis. He has identified India's religious systems as the causes of conflict.

If Embree is right, more than South Asia is doomed. Jews and Muslims will fight it out in the Middle East, Christians and Muslims in Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Balkans, Xhosas, Zulus, whites and Indians in South Africa, and, why not, blacks and whites in the U.S.A., for race can readily replace religion as an "irremovable" cause of conflict. To Embree's arguments an examining mind can be offered. But his defeatism is an unqualified pity.

Rajmohan Gandhi is a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi.

RAM JANMABHOOMI THROUGH THE AGES

By J.C. Aggrawal and N.K. Choudhry

S. Chand and Company, New Delhi, 1991, pp. 152, Rs. 120.00

RAM JANMABHOOMI—BABRI MASJID

Edited by Vinay Chandra Mishra

Bar Council of India Trust, New Delhi, 1991, Rs. 120.00

The first book by two retired Deputy Directors of Education of the Delhi Administration and the second by a senior advocate and a Professor of Law are of topical interest. These two books place before the public in a convenient form a mass of views, opinions, arguments, pro and contra, on the issue whether or not the Babri Masjid was built by dismantling a temple believed to be standing on a site on which Shri Ram was born and on points of debate raised to obfuscate the main issue. Much of this is highly emotional, partisan and confusing. The books would have been of real value if they had placed before the public whatever evidence is available and relied upon by the parties to this dispute. Neither book does that. Both content themselves with what appeared in books, newspapers and quoted by those who were writing on the subject. The editors of the book by the Bar Council of India Trust should have known that this is not satisfactory, particularly as they do not vouch for the textual or factual correctness.

The two books create the impression that the weight of evidence is in favour of the claim that the Babri Masjid stands on the site on which stood a complex of buildings believed to be associated with the Ram Janmasthan. The books do not contain any material to answer the legitimate question whether this is due to a genuine lack of material/evidence per contra or whether it is due to default of studious presentation of the contrary brief. This is an omission that at least the book sponsored and published by the Bar Council of India Trust should have avoided.

The two books do not help an objective evaluation of the issue or of the rival claims but can stoke partisan polemic.

Anandanpillai

Arvind N. Das' book "seeks to examine the concept of India with all its particularities (with their changing nature) as well as in the terms that create the idea of the nation" (Preface). The aim of the exercise is to invent a definition of India that will prevent the country's disintegration. It is a tall order. But Das is not daunted. After an elaborate exploration of the current situation in India in most of its significant aspects and in the context of its historical background, he concludes that there exists for India an alternative to disintegration and "secession of the successful", an "alternative that is premised on hope, ideals and human values" (p.195). That alternative, according to him, "lies in the formulation of an India based on equity—social, economic, political, federal and gender-based. It calls for a constitution of India on truly republican principles—deeper and more multi-dimensional than mere formal democracy, an India where even the poor matter as citizens of an autonomous republic. This requires a considered evaluation of India's past, a critical examination of its present and a vision of its future" (p.195).

The soundness of Das' view of what should be the basis of a new India will be realized by all who value democracy, social justice and humanism. Equity is a key component not only of democracy but of justice without which democracy is barren and oppressive and freedom—the essence of democracy—is robbed of its meaning. Without equity some are less free than others to make use of the opportunities of life. In fact some—slaves, for example—may not at all be free to do so. Equity is also the essence of humanism which makes the freedom and well-being of the individual the end of all human activity. A society that does not address itself to the handicaps of the disadvantaged, treats the latter as people meriting less concern than the advantaged and, therefore, not the end of all human activity. They are means to an end—for example, wage slaves alienated from the fruit of their labour who exist under inhuman conditions to serve the ends of capitalist production.

The absence of equity accounts for much of the social tension that bedevils India and explains to a very large extent the rise not only of communalism but of regionalism and secessionism. Attempts to remove inequities lead to consolidation on religious or regional terms or the belief that the answer lies in secession from India. Regionalism and secessionism also owe much to the inadequacy of India's formal democracy which not only does not give a feeling of participation to vast multitudes but makes cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic minorities—particularly in the outlying areas—feel that they are in the position of colonised people vis-a-vis the dominant centre straddling the national mainstream. Besides, formal democracy is in a large measure meaningless in the absence of the social,

The Idea That is India

Hiranmay Karlekar

INDIA INVENTED: A NATION IN THE MAKING

By Arvind N. Das

Manohar Publications, 1992, pp. 216, Rs. 180.00

economic and cultural conditions which enable people to participate on an equal footing with others in the country's political process. Hence the call for the constitution of India on "true republican principles—deeper and more multi-dimensional than mere formal democracy." Equally important is the emphasis on autonomy at a time when India is increasingly compelled to follow the dictates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

How to make Das' vision a reality? The book does not provide a cut-and-dried answer. The author recognises the complexity of any such enterprise and wants the publication to be essentially "in the nature of only an intervention in a wide-ranging debate" (Preface). Das touches upon a large number of subjects in the course of his intervention. He dwells on concepts and categories like class and tribes; the tendency towards defining ethnicity and identity in terms of religion; the origins of the caste system and the emergence of the Dalit movement; the problem of religious minorities in a secular state; the rise of Hindu fundamentalism and its assumption of a frighteningly intolerant character; and the language question. Das also examines, among other things, the Mandal issue, the abandonment of the Nehruvian social and economic models in favour of market-oriented capitalism prescribed by the IMF and the World Bank and dependent on export-oriented economic growth powered by NRI investment, the nature of India's lumpen capitalism and the compulsive consumerism of the Indian yuppie.

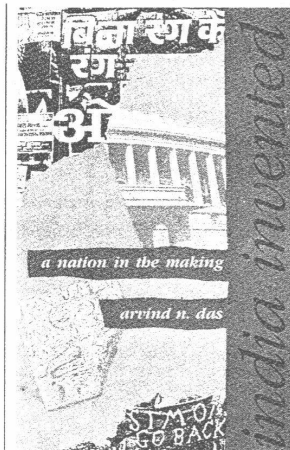
Das rejects several prescriptions for reinforcing India's unity. One of these is integration through the market. He rightly points out that "no brand—not even the secular constitution—has an universal reach and acceptance, as the purveyors of the alternative 'Ram brand' and the 'Bajrangabali sub-brand' testify" (p.6). Secondly, nearly 400 million people in India have no access to the market thanks to poverty. Thirdly, the consumption basket of even those with monthly incomes of Rs 2,000 and above—about 300 million people—comprise goods "produced fairly near their places of residence" (p.6).

The author also rejects integration on

the basis of *Hindutva* which is being advocated by the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and allied organizations. He argues that the "Hinduisation of the basic concept of Indian nationalism excludes the active participation in it of the religious minorities as well as of those 'Hindus' who do not accept the version of Hinduism ordained from Nagpur by the RSS" (p.80). According to him, Hinduism as propagated by the RSS, "increasingly means devotion to the *Vaishnavite* Ram as the superordinate deity in the Indian pantheon. The delightful and exciting possibilities of Hindu polytheism, of pluralistic philosophical and moral discourses, of the many diverse subaltern traditions are sacrificed at the altar of this synthetically homogenised and consumerised religiosity. Even the myriad expressions of Hindu polity are negated by the supremacy accorded to the political pronouncements of the RSS supremo in Nagpur on Vijaya Dashmi day", (p.80).

That Das is right in his rejection of *Hindutva* in its current connotation as the content of Indian nationalism is clear from the fierce exacerbation of communal hatred in the country in the aftermath of the criminal demolition of the Babri Mosque on December 6 last year. If anything, such an emphasis on *Hindutva* will further reinforce the centrifugal forces which threaten to tear the country apart by lending a violently aggressive character to the other religion-based group identities.

Das has little use for the majoritarian approach which underlies the *Hindutva* campaign. He rightly points out that the "differentiation of individuals is so intense that although individuals coalesce into social groups, these groupings themselves are so extremely fragmented, segmented and stratified that the very concepts of 'majority' and 'minority' appears illusory" (p.25). Thus a person who belongs to India's religious majority as a Hindu, may belong to a linguistic and ethnic minority as a Bengali or Tamil. This clearly underlines the fact that the Hindus are not a homogenous lot. They are divided by language, caste, and economic relations. Besides, even if Hinduism is the religion of the majority, it contains many streams and sub-streams and



sects, each of which constitutes a minority within a majority with its distinct deities, manner of worship and mythology.

According to Das, nation-building needs three prerequisites. The first is economic development. The relations of production and distribution provide a base for social relations among various 'ethnic' and 'sub-national' groups. The second is scope for participation in the decision-making process and the sharing of political power. This leads to the emergence of a political community. The third is opportunities to develop secular institutions and the scientific temper to "facilitate members belonging to different groups to interact on equal terms" (p.158).

His examination of the developments in India in these areas offers a number of interesting insights, incisive comments and useful observations. Particularly, his observations on the nature of India's lumpen bourgeoisie, the unwisdom of counting on support from NRIs in accelerating India's economic development, and the character of the Indian yuppie, deserve to be noted. His analysis, however, is sometimes not rigorous enough and there is a tendency to express opinions without doing enough to justify them. Besides, he is on occasions confusing and contradictory. For example, discussing the concept of class, he criticises scholars and politicians who turn "workers into objects of their own ideological exercises" He argues that as a result "the working class is segmented and reduced from being a historical process and phenomenon into a category, well-defined and easily recognisable" (p.32).

This represents class as almost an existential phenomenon recalling Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of the being in the process of becoming. But while a class is often in the process of historical evolution, it cannot be the process itself. It is the subject of the process which shapes it. This

The soundness of Das' view of what should be the basis of a new India will be realized by all who value democracy, social justice and humanism. Equity is a key component not only of democracy but of justice without which democracy is barren and oppressive and freedom—the essence of democracy—is robbed of its meaning. Without equity some are less free than others to make use of the opportunities of life. In fact some—slaves, for example—may not at all be free to do so. Equity is also the essence of humanism which makes the freedom and well-being of the individual the end of all human activity. A society that does not address itself to the handicaps of the disadvantaged, treats the latter as people meriting less concern than the advantaged and, therefore, not the end of all human activity. They are means to an end—for example, wage slaves alienated from the fruit of their labour who exist under inhuman conditions to serve the ends of capitalist production.

process is the result of many factors. Das himself admits as much when he states subsequently, "Class, as history has borne out, is a historical phenomenon: a social and historical formation arising from processes which work themselves out over a considerable historical period" (p. 36).

A phenomenon which arises out of a process cannot be the process itself. A class may reflect, in its composition or disposition, the character of a society's evolution. But it must have at a given juncture a distinct, recognisable social, economic and sometimes, political, contours and a clear identity. Otherwise it becomes a collective abstraction, a phantom analytical category, and not a presence in reality.

Again, his summary rejection of the theory that the caste system has a racial basis and it arose out of the Aryan invasion of India and the attempt to integrate the conquered indigenous inhabitants within a stratified society, ignores the complexity of the whole issue. The great deal of racial admixture that has occurred during the millennia since the caste system began taking tentative shape, has often given to *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas* and the other upper castes physical characteristics very different from those of the fair-skinned light-eyed Aryans from whom they, according to this theory, have descended. Similarly, some of the *Shudras* and *Atishudras* do not display the ethnic features of the indigenous people whose descendants they are supposed to be. Nevertheless, one still has fair-skinned *Brahmins* with high and narrow noses who can be identified as being of Indo-Aryan stock, and dark-skinned, snub-nosed *Shudras* who can be identified as the descendant of the pre-Aryan inhabitants of northern India. While race could not have been the only basis of caste formation, it will be simplistic to say that it has had no impact on the latter.

Those who reject the racial theory doubt whether there had at all been an

Aryan invasion. But then the eminent historian, D.D. Kosambi, who does so, also tends to suggest to the contrary. He writes in *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, "The Aryans who advanced (not later than 1000 bc) to the east from Punjab differed considerably from those who had burst upon the Indus cities at about 1750 bc. . . . They had tamed the elephant and the buffalo, or were soon to do so. Their chariots, horses, cattle were about the same as before, except that the humped Indus cattle now formed the greater part of the herds. This mobile-food supply was indispensable in the migration" (Kosambi, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1960, p. 51).

The above passage tends to contradict Kosambi's earlier statement in the book that it was a "way of life" and not people who had travelled eastward. Rather, the term "migration" suggests actual movement of people and reference to the indispensability of "this mobile food supply", that this migration was on a significant scale.

There are other bones one can pick with Das. His drawing of a parallel, even if as a merely illustrative device, between the stages in the evolution of French politics since the Revolution of 1789 and Indian politics since Independence in 1947, is a bit laboured. But none of all this—nor his less than charitable polemical swipes at Parsonian sociologists—detracts from the fact that the book projects a point of view which needs to be heard, particularly when India, partly out of its own choice and partly under pressure from the IMF and the World Bank, has embarked on a course of development that will be disastrous for it, and when extremist advocates of *Hindutva* threaten the very basis of the country's unity.

Hiranmay Karlekar is Deputy Editor of Indian Express and General Secretary of the Editors Guild of India.

Diabolical Doublespeak

Urvashi Butalia

KHAKI SHORTS SAFFRON FLAGS: A CRITIQUE OF THE HINDU RIGHT

By Basu, Dutta et al

Tracts for the Times 1, Orient Longman, New Delhi, pp. ii+116, Rs. 35.00

In an eight-page pamphlet currently being distributed in a house-to-house campaign in south Delhi, BJP supremo L.K. Advani (also one of the key and long-standing members of the RSS) says, "last year, a Calcutta daily asked me to identify a day or moment in my life which I regard as my happiest. I named October 30, 1990, and more specifically the moments (sic) I heard the BBC broadcast that kar sevaks had overcome all obstacles and . . . penetrated into Ayodhya and performed kar seva.

"Ironically, this year's kar seva day at Ayodhya, December 6, turned out to be one of the most depressing days of my life. . . . I have seldom felt as dejected and downcast (sic) as felt (sic) that day."

Proofing errors apart, Advani's rather contrite posturing here and his simultaneous belligerence and lack of regret (barring his initial reaction) in the media are typical of the doublespeak that has characterised the RSS-BJP-VHP combine (in a manner reminiscent of the violent and ruthless mafiosi 'families', known euphemistically as the *sangh parivar*). It is this that authors Basu, Dutta, Sarkar and Sarkar and Sen bring out so well in their recently released booklet *Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags*.

The first of Orient Longman's new series, *Tracts for the Times*, *Khaki Shorts* is a welcome document: an analysis of the forces of *Hindutva* which lays bare its ideological, institutional and infrastructural underpinnings, particularly in the RSS (whose history is traced here, in a welcome move, *critically* rather than admiringly) and its politic, convenient and effective separation of the different arms of the 'family', the RSS, the BJP and the VHP. Basu et al examine what they call the significance of the politics of *Hindutva*, showing how a communalism that claims to represent the majority can present itself from 85 per cent of the population, glossing over the multiple identities of caste, sect, region, gender, class, belief that form its plurality.

Correctly identifying the low key, supposedly 'cultural' organization, the RSS, as the driving force of *Hindutva*, Basu et al devote the better part of their tract to a fairly detailed outline of this organization. They show how all tactics—whether it is rewriting history, redefining tradition, or even just outright lies—become grist to the mill of establishing *Hindutva* as something that has a long history and commitment to nationalism.

Telling examples of the organization's so called 'nationalism' however shatter this RSS-perpetrated myth. For in large measure this 'nationalism' consists of attacking the 'enemy within', the Muslim, who is said to be a 'foreigner'. No matter that in the 20s and 40s, all nationalist activity against the real foreigners, the British, involved Hindus and Muslims, and indeed many others, with the signal exception of the RSS which kept conspicuously away from and in many cases, even denounced movements such as the non-cooperation movement, the agitation against the Simon Commission, the Quit India movement and others. The organization's fascistic aspects, well hidden under the spurious cultural veneer, are exposed in many ways, as the following quote from Golwalkar testifies:

German national pride has now become the topic of the day. To keep up the purity of the nation and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the semitic races—the Jews. National pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how well-nigh impossible it is for races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by.

A good lesson for those who see the RSS as being 'harmless' and engaged only in 'cultural' activity. Laying stress on the careful indoctrination carried out by this organization, the authors show its gradual infiltration into schools and textbooks, and indeed, with the induction of women into what has hitherto been a wholly male organization, into the private sphere of the home.

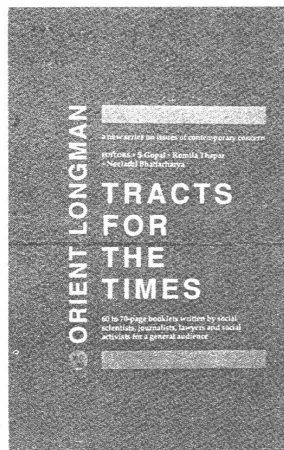
Indeed, this exposure of *Hindutva's* appropriation of the Hindu woman is an important contribution: no longer is she merely a wife and mother, rather she is active, communal, equipped with 'a new and empowering self image. She has stepped out of a purely iconic status to take up an active position as a militant.' Not only are women merely targeted in RSS-VHP propaganda, often they are the ones who carry the most violent and virulent messages, as is evidenced by Rithambara and Uma Bharti. For those of us today, particularly activists within women's groups, who are having to face up to the fact of women's militancy in communal organizations, this section of

Khaki Shorts is essential reading.

A second, equally detailed chapter is devoted to an examination of the VHP and its tactics. An important contribution here is the demonstration of the links between the widespread dissemination of the VHP's messages and the media. While supposedly 'harmless' things such as serials on television provide the much needed backing and legitimization to the VHP's messages (the *Ramayana* and its new iconisation of Ram, and Chanakya being two good examples) through the 'official' media, newspapers and magazines contribute their own mite (and a considerable one at that) by glorifying communal leaders and the so called kar sevaks. And into this conducive atmosphere steps the VHP, all claims of indigenisation blown to the wind, taking to its heart the much hated 'foreign' technology, with its series of video and audio cassettes, carefully manufactured studio products which purport to be touting truth and which include carefully worded incitements to violent action. The print media are no longer the principal weapons in this fight: technology (alas, western, but nonetheless appropriate) is to be drawn in. Many of these new technological products help to consolidate the myth of the inevitability of *Hindutva* by 'predicting' events which then happen and are passed off as being spontaneous. Thus Rithambara speaks of the heroic resolve of Hindus to liberate the Janmabhoomi, which, as the authors point out, is no mystical ability to 'see' the future. Rather, it is something that reveals the close coordination between the aims of the movement and the media message.

Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags is rich in detail, and there is not enough space here to enumerate its many positive points. Such careful research is both important and necessary and it raises a number of questions. First, as the authors themselves acknowledge, so much has happened in the recent past, and so quickly, that this tract, written a year ago, now seems lacking in some key areas. Thus a discussion of the Shiv Sena, as pointed out by the authors, is one such. Another area brought into sharp focus by the events of December 1992 and January 1993 is the extent to which the instruments of an increasingly impotent state, for example the police, have become communalised. This could have merited more discussion.

The authors' laying bare of the formidable and meticulously organized moves of the Sangh 'parivar' conclusively establish that no move the 'parivar' makes can, by any stretch of the imagination, be called spontaneous. But this very exposure also poses a problem. Many of us—secular people who believe in a democratic, free and pluralistic India—are today confronted with only one choice, between action and inaction, in order to resist the very real threat of fascism. And the question then comes up of *how* to act, which moves to make, which language to speak. It is painfully clear that any action must



be long term, sustained, organized, and if possible, many-fronted. While knowledge of the 'enemy's' strength is necessary and enabling, it can also, all too often, be disempowering. Given the size and determination of the animal, one might ask, how does one even begin to fight? While the authors of *Khaki Shorts* do take up this question and point to the need for a creative left wing response to the challenge (citing Shankar Guha Neogi as one who embodied such a response) the sad truth is that much of the organized left, trade unions and mass based bodies have been oddly silent on this major issue—unlike their stand during say the communal riots in 1947. If anything, today real responses have come from the much maligned people's groups—women's groups, civil liberties organizations, NGOs, citizen's groups. And not enough space has been given to their activities—although, to be fair, they have begun their sustained work more recently than the book was written. Perhaps in a future publication the authors will take up such positive responses which need to be highlighted to carry the struggle forward.

And perhaps the publishers will take note that material such as this needs widespread dissemination and *must* move beyond the confines of English. Finally, on a lighter note, here is a wonderful revelation provided by the authors about the so-called 'nationalist' Indian and 'non-foreign' RSS: its very symbol, the khaki shorts, are copied from the British Indian police and army! So much for ethnic purity and indigenisation!! Why, one wonders, did RSS *shakhs* not carry out their 'cultural' activities in appropriately 'cultural' Hindu attire, for example, the *dhoti* (which, one supposes, would have had to be khaki, for the mind boggles at what would have happened to pristine white *dhotis* during physical drill!).

Urvashi Butalia is a publisher, editor and writer.

Defining Secularism

Surjit Mansingh

THE QUESTION OF FAITH

By Rustom Bharucha

Tracts for the Times 3, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 94, Rs. 30.00

Rustom Bharucha admits in his preface that the political scenario has changed considerably since he started writing about the politics of faith in early 1991. The scenario now has been altered drastically by the deliberate destruction of the Babri Masjid and the no less intentional incendiaryism of Bombay, and it is in this context that Bharucha's monograph will be read. He must be commended for tackling the issues he does—the need to define secularism as something more than scepticism, the need to see traditional religious faith through the eyes of a believer, the twin dangers of denying the plurality of faith or of equating religion with fundamentalism, the urgency of combatting the political demands of fundamentalists without playing into their hands.

But these are big issues and, as he says, his essay is only a beginning that provokes more questions. For example, why has modernization often been accompanied by the rise of religious fundamentalism in India, and elsewhere? Because modernization is incomplete, or threatening to traditional identities and elites, or all or none of the above? Why do fundamentalists use violence to the extent they do? Because they need terror to build authority or because they are incapable of compassion? How do women—invariably the victims of religious authoritarianism, communal conflict and mass sadism—come to support fundamentalist political parties as many have done in India and abroad? Because male chauvinism is no less irksome in other parties, or because women are usually the vehicles of tradition or because they find space behind a physical or metaphorical veil to strike out? Perhaps subsequent *Tracts* will tackle these questions, Bharucha does not.

His essay tells the liberal, the secular, and the intellectual (among whom he counts himself) to become aware of and sensitive to the richness and diversity of religious faiths that infuse the lives of most Indians present and past. He tries to define "faith" in chapter 2 and acknowledges that faith is something to be experienced

rather than reduced to words. He proceeds to analyze some of the greatest mass celebrations of faith in the world, that is, the Kumbha Mela at Prayag and the Ramliila at Ramnagar.

What he discovers needs to be emphasized. "The Kumbha Mela was first ordained by Adi Shankaracharya to facilitate the meeting and exchange of ideas between different sects on a pan-Hindu level. . . . Today, the Kumbha Mela has become a ground for fundamentalist proselytizing" (p.22). One might add that "pan-Hindu" traditionally spanned almost every known philosophy and form of religion so that present day attempts to homogenize it seem paradoxical. Bharucha too hopes that "the spirit of the Ganga, which animates the multitudinous energies and configurations of the *mela*, has the power to absorb any political ideology attempting to rule in the name of religion" (p. 23).

He finds similar variety, and much compassion, in renderings of *Ramliila* and *Krishnalila*, and if he explores this topic further afield he will find still greater diversity and generosity. He was struck that "Ravana's defeat in the Ramliila is presented in a decidedly non-militant manner. Ram embraces Ravana. Though his victory is unquestionable, he never exults in it. Indeed, he does not even appear like a warrior. In the tradition of Tulsidas, this Rama maintains a consistent gentleness and composure" (p.33).

In chapters 4 and 5 Bharucha explores the ubiquity of faith in Indian culture through the works of Anantha Murthy, Rammanohar Lohia and Mahatma Gandhi without attempting to formulate new theories. The enduring salience of Gandhi's life and thought, rooted as they were in ethics and sustainable economics, strikes home again. His endless search for Truth, or God, "above the man-made constructions of religion" (p.75). The fact that "Gandhi counters violence by scrupulously avoiding the language of violence" (p.78). The lessons are obvious.

We are still left with basic questions, but Bharucha has some pointers. "The mere advocacy of 'secularism' without a systematic process of 'secularization' . . . through concrete measures like education, employment, and industry" is not adequate. (p.16) "When the State has attempted to counter the fundamentalist misuse of religion, the irony is. . . that the fundamentalists have appropriated the language of the State." "While the idea of nationalism has been centralized, its reality is being challenged. . . ." (p.83). "We need to develop. . . our cultural resources that animate and bring people together through an intrinsic respect for differences" (p.84). Yes, indeed, we *must*, if we are to rebuild India as India.

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Turnaround in Industrial Growth

L.C. Jain

PRODUCTIVITY AND GROWTH IN INDIAN MANUFACTURING

By Isher Judge Ahluwalia

Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 260, Rs. 250.00

Ever since the First Plan, India has been investing most of its resources and hopes on industry—regarding it as the engine of growth. But analytical and insightful information available in Indian industry has remained in inverse proportion to the rising investments on this sector. Through her two painstaking books, *Industrial Growth in India; Stagnation Since the Mid-sixties (1985)*, and *Productivity and Growth in Indian Manufacturing (1991)* Isher Judge Ahluwalia has attempted to fill this information void on Indian industry to a notable extent. The comments here seek to highlight what appear to be some of the weakspots in her 1991 study.

On methodology, the author emphasizes that her 1991 study has been "highly data-intensive" (with 55 excellent Text and Annexure Tables), that is, the analysis and conclusions are based on and backed by unusually detailed and disaggregated figures and facts. But as you read along, you discover that the author has taken liberty with facts.

Self-reliance has been a principal objective of Indian industrial planning... explicitly introduced in the Third Five Year Plan (1961-66)...

Self-reliance has in practice been interpreted to mean a strong import substitution orientation in the development strategy. In an extreme form self-reliance was equated with self-sufficiency which led to a position of favouring any displacement of imports by domestic production anywhere, in the economy at whatever cost.

The critical link between the objective of self-reliance and the import substitution orientation in the Indian strategy for industrialization is the assumption of export pessimism.

The author's interpretation however is a faithful representation of the Third Plan:

An important reason for stressing new and far-reaching measures and policies for increasing exports during the Third Plan is that this is the period in which exports must be built up in order to meet the much larger requirements anticipated for the Fourth Plan... Considering the requirements on account of repayment obligations abroad and maintenance and development imports. *This is itself one of the essential conditions for ensuring that India's economy becomes self-reliant and self-sustained by the Fifth Plan* (emphasis added).

Should there still be any doubt about the interpretation of self-reliance as envisaged in the Third Plan, we turn to Finance Minister Manmohan Singh's Budget Speech (Part A) 1992-93:

Our vision of a self-reliant economy should be of an economy which can meet all its import requirements through exports, without undue dependence on artificial external props such as foreign aid. I suggest to this august House that this is precisely the vision of self-reliance as bequeathed to us by Jawaharlal Nehru as elaborated in the Third Five Year Plan...

As for the general charge of *export pessimism* levelled against the early planners, which Ahluwalia is not alone in making, in fact, the Plan documents from the First to the Third Plan reveal that the planners' perspective on exports has throughout been positive and promotion of exports regarded as integral to achievement of self-reliance. For example, the *First Plan* said that "the account of policy throughout must be on maintaining a high level of exports."

The *Third Plan* went to the extent of laying down that "domestic consumption must be held within reasonable limits with a view to creating the surpluses for exports and steps must be taken to mobilize public opinion in favour of exports and acceptance of the burdens involved."

Ahluwalia also argues that the virus of export pessimism had smitten not only India but also many developing countries in the immediate postwar period. But, she adds that while "many developing countries changed their course in the early to mid-sixties, India along with some Latin American countries persisted in export pessimism until for India it became a self fulfilling prophecy". Ahluwalia omits to make any reference to the devaluation effectuated by India in the mid-sixties which was strongly premised on propelling exports. She omits also to take note of the numerous policy and institutional measures, incentives and 'liberation' of exports from the restrictions designed for domestic production from the beginning of the Third Plan. Besides, from 1971 onwards a new dimension to the export promotion effort was added in the form of creation of many export organizations aimed at providing export services to the exporting country.

Import Substitution: Certainly, Indian

planners were not striving for an export-led development strategy, but to heap 'export pessimism' on their heads wholesale, would appear to be a case of *overkill*. The author's compulsions for doing so appear to emanate from her contempt for what she regards as magnificent obsession with import substitution. Undoubtedly, in its pursuit of import substitution, India has made quite a few errors but the author is making less than a balanced comment when she suggests that India has followed "a position of any displacement of imports by domestic production anywhere in the economy at whatever cost". Such a sweeping generalization or caricaturing converts an argument into an abuse for which there should be little place in a study based on highly intensive data.

In the first place, imports have not been displaced from the Indian economy. If any thing, imports have galloped—between 1960-61 and 1990-91 they have risen from Rs. 1122 crore to Rs 43192 crore. These imports are meeting diverse needs of the economy including materials, machinery, spares and servicing of hundreds of foreign collaborations, required among others by the import substituting enterprises themselves. It shows that import substitution has been selective, limited and not wholesale.

Secondly, as the author acknowledges, a definite impact of import substitution led industrialization has been with respect to diversifying industrial structure which at the time of independence was dominated by Textile and Sugar Industries. If selective import substitution had not been undertaken in the early planning phase, it is certain that our import resources would have been consumed mainly by a narrow range of industries which happened to have made an early entry on the Indian industrial scene. Thus it would have been well nigh impossible to achieve any significant diversification of the industrial base.

Analysis by other scholars also points

out that there is more than one side to the role and impact of protection policies which were used as a tool to support import substitution. It is not all black; and some of the inefficiencies attributed to protection policies may have been contributed by other policies independent of protection, such as the large space reserved for public sector in the industrial landscape.

Unemployment: The book gives an unmistakable impression (perhaps unintended) that solution of the problem of unemployment is not an integral part of Ahluwalia's definition of productivity and growth or "improved performance unambiguously established", and that the "disturbing trends in employment" are not allowed to cast a shadow on the satisfaction exuded about the "turnaround".

It is difficult to overlook the connection between Ahluwalia's after-thought advocacy of exit policy and her unambiguous declaration in the Summing Up that "the major findings of the study highlighted in this Chapter (7) are explicitly related to the current economic debate on economic policy in India". The link between the two is elucidated by the author:

The need for speedy procedures to clear the backlog of the exits and for a mechanism which allows the firms to manage the consequences of competition and technological change is most urgent if the process of industrial restructuring and industrial revitalization is to be carried forward...

The problem is not limited to the backlog of sick industrial units. *As the government eases the restrictions on entry, there will be a rush for investment in new areas and mistakes will be made. The exit option assumes greater significance in this context (emphasis added).*

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I, Chandra Chari, hereby declare that particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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CHANDRA CHARI

"The choice for India is between deep change and slow death" said the global management guru, Professor C.K. Prahalad, speaking at a recent seminar at the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation in New Delhi. This was a thought that the person in whose memory he was speaking, the former prime minister late Mr Rajiv Gandhi, would probably have shared. In the audience were seated the members of Rajiv's cabinet, Mr Sam Pitroda, Mr V. Krishnamurthy, Mr Abid Hussain and so on. There is no denying that Mr Gandhi was seized of the necessity for a new economic agenda for India and after his experience with liberalization in the period 1986 to 1988, he had learnt all the lessons he needed to relaunch his model of economic development if he had won the election in 1991.

Mr Gandhi has been criticized, and this reviewer believes rightly so, for not evolving an "appropriate strategy" for economic reform that would have in fact strengthened the base for autonomous capitalist development in India. His model was based on freeing the most dynamic sections of the Indian society from the constraints that the extant regime had imposed so that they would go ahead and become the engine of economic revival. These sections comprise of the business and agrarian classes as well as the middle classes, both urban and rural. They, with help from non-resident Indians and foreign business were meant to hasten the pace of economic growth even if this was at the expense of the marginalized urban and rural poor. The intensification of dualism within Indian society and economy was inherent to his strategy, and Rajiv and his ilk were not overly bothered about the attendant risk. The social and political crisis India is facing today is possibly a result of the deepening cleavage between those who have prospered as a result of the growth experience of the 1980s and those who have not.

Among the many intellectual inputs that must have gone into the evolution of Mr Gandhi's revisionist theory of capitalist development in India, the set of papers gathered together in this book must have been an important component. The editors claim that the manuscript of this book was made available to Mr Gandhi in September 1990, at a time when he was busy unseating the V.P. Singh government, and that Mr Gandhi had passed it on to a team of experts who were advising him on new directions that Indian economy ought to be taking. Mr Sam Pitroda and Mr V. Krishnamurthy were among them.

It is not clear how deeply this book influenced them, but the fact remains that the direction that economic policy has taken over the last two years has more or less conformed to the outline drawn by some of the papers here.

However, the reason why India opted for the new economic policies of Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao and Dr Manmohan Singh had less to do with a well devised strat-

Blueprint for Economic Revival

Sanjaya Baru

FOUNDATIONS OF INDIA'S POLITICAL ECONOMY: TOWARDS AN AGENDA FOR THE 1990S

By Subroto Roy and William E. James

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 337, Rs. 275.00

egy on the part of India's policy makers and had more to do with the compulsions of IMF and World Bank conditionality imposed as part of the balance of payments support they offered at a time when India was in its worst foreign exchange crisis in three decades.

One step followed another and a series of policy changes have been put in place with very little real debate on the cost and benefits of these policy changes. It would be interesting to know who were at the Hawaii seminars at which the papers in this volume were discussed and how representative the range of discussions was of the views prevailing in India on economic policy options. If there was indeed a genuinely widespread debate it would be far more interesting to see the kind of positions taken by those across the ideological spectrum to what has been said in many of these papers. For the papers are in themselves not as interesting as the responses to them would be from those who advocate what the government has been doing over the last year and those who oppose it.

Of course, the wide canvas of this book goes beyond the narrow concerns of India's economic reformers today. It is only the papers in Part II of the book by T.N. Srinivasan, Amaresh Bagchi and a fascinating historical document, a 1955 memorandum on economic policy submitted to the Government of India by the

nobel laureate Milton Friedman, that focus on economic policy. Part I of the book in fact discusses issues of governance and the nature of the social and political order in India. And in Part II, there are excellent papers by Anil Deolalikar and K. Subba Rao dealing with health, nutrition, and food and agricultural policy which deal with issues that have not yet taken hold of the attention of India's economic reformers today.

The political contributions are from James Manor, who puts forth his familiar thesis on the ungovernability of India, and Bhagwan Dua on the strains on India's federal structure in recent years. The third political essay is by Paul Brass who suggests very convincingly that the secular consensus underlying the Indian constitutional structure has gradually eroded and the Indian government and mainstream political leadership has begun to manipulate people on the basis of their linguistic, religious and ethnic differences.

The essays here do raise the question, quite prophetically, whether the Indian Republic is under such great strain that it may in fact collapse. After all, the constitution of the Republic of India calls it a sovereign, secular, socialist democracy. Over the 1980s each of these features of the constitution have come under strain. Most importantly, however, it is the secular character of India that is today being

The essays here do raise the question, quite prophetically, whether the Indian Republic is under such great strain that it may in fact collapse. After all, the constitution of the Republic of India calls it a sovereign, secular, socialist democracy. Over the 1980s each of these features of the constitution have come under strain. Most importantly, however, it is the secular character of India that is today being relentlessly attacked and the manner in which India's political leadership will resolve this battle will determine not just the nature of Indian democracy and the future of the Indian Republic, but in fact the very existence of the Indian nation.

relentlessly attacked and the manner in which India's political leadership will resolve this battle will determine not just the nature of Indian democracy and the future of the Indian Republic, but in fact the very existence of the Indian nation.

Concerns such as these constitute the first part of the book and it is just as well that the reader is forced to deal with the complexity of India before he can get his feet onto the relatively more tractable territory of the Indian economy.

Srinivasan, Subba Rao and Bagchi offer an excellent summary of the mainstream view of Indian economic policy today. It is however, Milton Friedman's essay which will attract most readers to this book. Friedman was writing this essay on the eve of the launching of the Second Five Year Plan and he could not have been a great supporter of Mahalanobis's strategy. His view that excessive governmental regulation will be detrimental to growth is a familiar position of the critics of the Nehruvian model of development.

However, it is Friedman's conclusion that is striking and underscores why men like Mr Prahalad now believe that the choice is indeed between "deep change and slow death". An optimistic Friedman concludes in 1955:

"the fundamental problem for India is the improvement of the physical and technical quality of her people, the awakening of a sense of hope, the weakening of rigid social and economic arrangements, the introduction of flexibility of institutions and mobility of people, the opening up of the social and economic ladder to people of all kinds and classes. And what gives an outsider like this writer a feeling of optimism and hope about the future of the India, makes one feel that India is on the move and will continue to move, is that so much is being done and such a good beginning has been made on this fundamental problem of creating the human and social basis for a dynamic and progressive economy."

The fact that what Friedman said in 1955 could be said even today, with less optimism in our view, is the most disturbing aspect of the present conjuncture.

While this book does not offer any new perspectives on the problems of India's economic development, it is a very good introduction to the range of problems India faces across a variety of economic sectors and in her society and polity. For a student, for someone interested in acquiring a broad familiarity with India as it has evolved through seven five year plans, this is a good book to begin with even if it offers only a biased critique of policy—not taking into account the wealth of literature that radical Indian economists have generated over these five decades.

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Paradigms Of Industrial Sickness

Nitish Sengupta

INNOVATIVE CORPORATE TURNAROUNDS

By Pradip N. Khandwalla

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp 279, Rs. 250.00

There is an oft-repeated complaint that in the management literature available in India there is a dearth of home-grown case studies and materials, and super abundance of case materials and theories imported from overseas. The present work by Pradip Khandwalla will go a long way in refuting this assumption, insofar as it is an excellent blend of case studies on turnaround, both from India and overseas. Examples such as those of Bharat Heavy Plates and Vessels, BHEL, Enfield India, Jaipur Metals, Sylvania and Laxman and Southern Petrochemicals are juxtaposed with global successful turnaround cases like Chrysler, Olivetti, ICI, British Steel and IRI. Altogether there are 65 cases of corporate recovery carefully studied with reference to financial efficiency, marketing strategy, technology improvement including modernization, product diversification and human resource development. They represent a wide spectrum of industries from "Hi-tech" to consumer durables. Of these cases, 23 illustrate break-even turnarounds and 42 complete turnarounds. Both sets of stories, according to Khandwalla, are useful. The break-even cases provide detailed anatomy of the initial turnaround strategies essentially centred on crisis management. The complete turnaround stories show how the corporations, after first reversing decline, went on to return to normal levels of profitability. Interestingly, some of these, after their successful turnaround during Khandwalla's survey period, have again relapsed into sickness and some have even gone into liquidation, eg. Eastern Airlines, USA. One would like to know what Khandwalla, the theorist, will have to say about these cases. In any case, it would be interesting if the author would like to have another round of studies into these cases and bring out the lessons in the form of an epitaph or postscript.

In chapter 2, 27 cases of complete turnarounds are surveyed. Two major alternative turnaround patterns have been identified—the harsh one and the humane one. The harsh turnarounds, in their several variants, are examined in chapter 3. Chapter 4 examines the various forms of human turnaround. It also gives a comparative assessment of the two types. In chapter 5 the author considers the operating context of turnarounds inclusive of culture, viz. ownership, the

nature and extent of sickness and the way these influence the turnaround strategy. Chapter 6 investigates turnaround creativity and its impact on turnaround performance. Chapter 7 tries to unravel the dynamics of turnaround management and covers areas of change aspects and organizational learning. Chapter 8 (Turnaround Musings) is a brilliant chapter which takes a broad sweep at some conceptualized thoughts and explores their implications for organizational theory and turnaround theory.

There is the general impression in our country that industrial sickness is primarily due to management failure and hence it is the management which is primarily responsible for removing sickness. An objective analysis will always show that there is no set paradigm for industrial sickness. Each sick enterprise has its own reasons for falling into sickness. The reasons can be manifold: technological obsolescence, high volume of redundant manpower, loss of market for its products on account of the arrival of better products from competitors, chronic industrial relations problems affecting production and productivity, import restrictions denying essential raw materials and inputs, change in consumer habits, non-availability or inadequacy of power supply, inability of the management to make the required adjustment with changes, inadequacy of working capital, government's licensing restrictions hampering enterprise's growth, loss of overseas market, serious disputes among shareholders, and incompetent management. If we diagnose the causes of sickness of an enterprise, one or the other or a combination of the few of the maladies listed above is more likely to be identified. Successful turnaround will depend on the ability to take corrective action against these reasons. Using a number of approaches by which enterprises are often saved from bankruptcy and sickness throughout the world, Pradip Khandwalla's excellent study explores the methodology of turnaround management, including causes of sickness, the kind of action that characterizes turnarounds and the inter-relationship between different types of action. With the help of massive data collected from the 65 cases of successful turnarounds from all over the globe, he examines the difference between surgical turnaround

and the non-surgical turnaround, between participative and technical turnaround and between innovative and conventional turnaround. Some of the Indian cases, notably the one on Bharat Heavy Plates and Vessels, are indeed very interesting. The final conclusions of Khandwalla appear to be somewhat contrary to the normal belief in the field of turnaround management that surgical turnarounds are faster and more effective. The available data suggest, on the other hand, that a humane non-surgical participative and innovative turnaround is, in fact, the better alternative. They are not only more civilized and less costly in human terms but work faster and yield better results than harsh earthquake type of turnaround. Also, all parties concerned, namely, shareholders, managers and workers must be taken into account in any worthwhile turnaround strategy. Such a strategy need not be just imposed from above, but must evolve by taking all these elements into confidence. That is the biggest assurance for success. The book provides rich data on different types of turnarounds combined with in-depth quantitative analysis. Also, it explores new ground for turnaround management. Above all, it is a rare study on the subject on a truly international and cross cultural setting providing rich comparative knowledge.

This book is a 'must' for all those who try to seek a shorter cut to current maladies in our industrial scenario by either advocating *en masse* privatization or totally defending the present public sector as it is. The last chapter which provides some interesting and practical insights into turnaround strategies, will be of immense interest. One would however find it difficult to agree with the conclusion that death, like birth and maturation, is not a commonality between an organization and the living organism, and that all organizations need not die. Real life situations surely point to the conclusion that is contrary to Khandwalla's models of organizational immortality. But even while discussing these theoretical formulations, one cannot but recommend this for compulsory reading by all those, whether in the public sector enterprises or in the private sector, who are grappling with the pervasive phenomenon of industrial sickness and are looking around for successful turnaround strategies. This book will offer very useful guidance and perspective into the various choices, the available tools and approaches in bringing out successful turnaround. For Professor Khandwalla, who has earlier distinguished himself as a serious researcher and author of excellent books such as *Organizational Designs for Excellence and Effective Management in the Public Sector*, this is yet another bright feather in his cap.

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Wildlife in the Himalayas

M.K. Ranjitsinh

HIMALAYAN WILDLIFE, HABITAT AND CONSERVATION

By S.S. Negi

Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 207, price not stated.

Himalayan Wildlife is a reference book which lists the faunal species found in the mountains, describing in brief the main mammals, reptiles and fish. There is a very useful chapter giving basic description of the national parks and wildlife sanctuaries of the region and another handy though very brief list of the main forests and ecotypes found in the Himalayas. A chapter on the conservation problems faced there and to what extent they are being tackled, would have been most useful. Also hints as to where to go to see some major species or to savour the main protected areas, would also have been helpful.

What is the ambit of the word Himalayan in the context of this book? Can the Terai and the level forests well south of the first foothills be deemed to be Himalayan? Can the Asiatic lion and the hog deer, be called Himalayan wildlife? Or the nilgai, wild buffalo and the Bengal florican, for that matter? Can Goru-mara, or Katemiaghat or Dudhwa be deemed Himalayan sanctuaries or parks? There is so much diversity of faunal and floral life in the Himalayan Range itself that it would be futile to diffuse this geomorphological and zoogeographic entity.

The photographs, unfortunately, are poorly reproduced. Why should they, especially black & white pictures, be so uniformly badly printed in India? The selection of photographs too is unsatisfactory and unrepresentative, most pictures being of captive animals.

These deficiencies notwithstanding, the book is a welcome addition to the literature on the wildlife of the Himalayas. There is so little written on this vast subject—either for the traveller or for the expert—barring a couple of scholarly works on the Himalayan flowers, that any addition to the knowledge on the subject is noteworthy. By its scope and coverage, particularly its fairly comprehensive listing of species and of the protected areas, makes this book a most useful companion to carry about in the Himalayas.

Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh is a wildlife expert.

Altering Patterns Of Gender Relations

Maitreyi Chaudhari

WOMEN IN PEASANT MOVEMENTS: TEBHAGA, NAXALITE AND AFTER

By Debal K. Singha Roy

Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 153, Rs. 175.00

For some time now the nature and scope of the women's movement in India have been widely debated. This debate, though not exclusively confined to one between the 'left' and the 'feminists', can be said to be largely dominated by it. The 'feminists' would argue that the left parties tended to be 'patriarchal' and would often 'subsume' the women's question under broader issues.

The left would allege that the issues which the 'feminists' raised (a fall-out of their urban middle class backgrounds and an uncritical exposure to western feminism) were not of primary concern for the larger section of Indian women. These debates have generated a great deal of controversy, occasionally unseemly, adding grist to stereotyped images of hysterical 'feminists' and manipulative sexist communists.

Because of the privileged access that many women's groups in the cities have both to the media and to international 'feminist circles', the concerns and views of these groups have often received an attention that would belie their strength. Of left movements and women's participation, precious little is known except what can be 'deciphered' from documents of the left. Indeed, one of the main culprits for this abysmal state of information is both the left and gender skewed attention that had been given in the past to the process of documentation itself.

Debal K. Singha Roy's account, *Women In The Peasant Movement: Tebhaga, Naxalite And After* is specially welcome as it fills critical gaps and thereby helps clarify the kind of confusion that exists about the traditional left and women's participation. His book, as its attractive jacket states, is 'based on solid empirical and historical data' and traces 'the form, direction and dynamics of the working class rural women's participation in the peasant movements in West Bengal focussing on the radical (viz. the Tebhaga of 1946-47 and Naxalite movements of 1967-71) and the 'reformative' peasant movements of the seventies and eighties.' This distinction that he makes between the 'radical' and the 'reformative' peasant movements is critical to the central arguments of his book.

The argument presented is that in the

Tebhaga and Naxalite movements where 'women were in the forefront of the struggle with the police, in forcible harvesting of the crops, in the meetings and campaigning and organizing activities, in supplying food and maintaining communication network among the underground activists and in stimulating the moral strength for resistance' (p.47), the pattern of relationships which bound them altered. While their traditional 'dependent' relationship to landowners and traditional money-lenders changed to an 'inimical' one, they developed a 'hostile, antagonistic' attitude to the government machinery. Significantly in the 'pre-peasant movement' days they were not even aware of the 'state' and its significant role (p.70). Contrary to the widely held belief that radicalization along class lines is usually not accompanied by 'gender' awareness, Singha Roy's account suggests that 'in the course of the movement, the females were placed in a situation where they felt they had equal status with their male counterparts' (p.70).

In contrast to the radical experience of the Tebhaga and Naxalite movements the contemporary peasant movement which is reformative, one where 'the peasantry is mobilized by the recognized political parties following institutionalized norms and procedures has led to a decline in women's mobilization' (p.121). With the emphasis having shifted from revolutionary 'overhauling of the normative and institutional arguments of society' to 'gradual social changes' there is a tendency for a reinforcement of 'the norms and institutions that either legitimize or promote the cause of deprivation among women' (p.122).

This finding is significant for it points out again that the women's question both constitutes and is constitutive of societal relations in general and of production relations in particular. Any movement that questions the basic structural arrangement is bound to affect gender relations. If contemporary West Bengal is witnessing a deradicalization in general it is but inevitable that women's role would tend to get marginalized. A very disturbing finding of the study is that *Operation Barge*, the very successful programme of the Left Front government to record the names of sharecroppers, the tenures of

landlording have been recorded invariably in the name of the male members of the household', and 'even widows and daughters of the deceased sharecroppers have been deprived of their dues' (p.128).

The author has done a commendable job in relating the changing political economy of agrarian West Bengal to women's role both in the production process and in the peasant movement. Especially interesting in this context is the impact of the increased availability of non-agriculture activities in the more modernized villages ('A' category villages) on women agricultural workers and their willingness to participate in village level agitations. Any simplistic model of class gender relations will have to be dispelled by the complex processes in the field that caste, class and ethnicity generate, a relationship which in turn is determined by the specific context (the village) within which they operate. As the author argues, it is difficult to characterize the agrarian situation in West Bengal by only one mode of production.

The book reflects a clear theoretical perception and an awareness to root a study in its broader context (an obvious enough fact but one frequently missing from a great deal of sociological research indulging in decontextualized statistical statements about observable behaviour patterns). At the same time it skillfully goes into details about caste, class, gender and ethnic interface in the village studies. The villagers themselves have been carefully chosen to be representatives of the state. Indeed the book cannot be charged guilty of the common methodological fallacy of isolating women from society and the movement whose dynamics they are subjected to, and projecting them as independent objects of research and analysis. What could perhaps have been further explored is the actual manner in which gender relations altered in the 'radical' movements and got institutionalized in 'reformative' movements.

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Through The Eyes Of Poets

Seema Alavi

GLIMPSES OF MUGHAL SOCIETY AND CULTURE: A STUDY BASED ON URDU LITERATURE IN THE 2ND HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY

By Ishrat Haque

Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 155, Rs. 200.00

M s Ishrat Haque makes use of a new kind of source material to study the social history of late Mughal north India. Here, the history of the 18th century is reconstructed on the basis of contemporary poetry written in Delhi and Lucknow. The poetical works of some prominent poets of the age, Mir Taqi Mir, Mirza Rafi Sauda, Shah Hatim, Nazir Akbarabadi and Mir Dard, are used as entry points to the study of the politics, society, economy and culture of the 18th century.

Haque arrives at conclusions which confirm the recent interpretations of the 18th century (C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, CUP, 1983; M. Alam, *Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India*, OUP, 1986)—that it was a century which saw an eclipse of Mughal power. But if Mughal power waned its authority remained unchallenged until early 19th century. Indeed Mughal authority continued to provide legitimacy to a variety of political entities that mushroomed during the period of Mughal decline. Again, political collapse didn't result in economic decay and stagnation. For the century saw a growth in economic activity as trade routes and trading communities realigned themselves around the new regional centres of power. Further, in the realm of cultural activity the century saw a proliferation of literature in the regional languages—Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Oriya etc. The life sketches of Mir, Sauda, Nazir Akbarabadi and Dard confirm the theory that the 18th century was characterized by the migration of the literati of Delhi and that the migrants continued with their literary pursuits. The 18th century therefore was characterized by a realignment of social groups than a complete collapse of Indian society and economy.

In this context the book has enriched the historiography of the 18th century. For it offers some very interesting dimensions on some of the general themes addressed in the studies of Alam, Bayly and others. For instance, the book highlights the human side of the process of political and social realignments that characterized the 18th century. Haque shows that the process of 'unsettling' of social groups and their eventual settlement in new regional power centres was not a happy and smooth operation. It was in a way, a human tragedy. These migrations

from Delhi, therefore, cannot be explained only in terms of the shifting power centres and the fluctuating economic and political fortunes of the migrants. For the migrants from Delhi often faced practical problems of 'cultural adjustment'. Mir Taqi Mir, who migrated to Lucknow in the 1770s was one of the cases in point. Apart from the financial difficulties Mir experienced at Lucknow, his dissatisfaction with the city went much deeper. Mir remained unhappy with Lucknow's society and found it difficult to adjust to the new environment, its ways and fashions, mannerisms and, above all, its literary and poetical style. Moreover, the clientele in Lucknow had narrowed down to the court circles and the courtesans' *kotha*. This was very disturbing to the Delhi poet who was accustomed to a poetic clientele that had a far broader social base which extended from noblemen to the common man's *khanqah*. These problems, experienced by Mir, in his day to day existence kept the memory of his bygone good days at Delhi alive. Mir, though settled at Lucknow, continued to crave for Delhi society and the rule of the Mughal Emperor who appeared 'decadent' to outsiders. For similar reasons Sauda used traditional symbols of royalty to connote the real or supposed glory of the Mughals. Thus it appears from the book that there was more than mere 'legitimacy' to the continued use of Mughal symbols and the nostalgia about Mughal rule that was reflected in the lives of people in the 18th century.

Another interesting aspect of the book is that it opens up avenues for further research on the social history of regional languages that became popular in 18th century Mughal north India. For, the emergence and popularity of a vast body of literature in the regional languages of a mystical, theological, political and literary nature was in itself symptomatic of and reflected the grave problems of political control that the hitherto Persian speaking Delhi was experiencing. Indeed as Haque argues the popularity of Urdu in 18th century Delhi reflected the struggle to overcome the 'tyranny' of Persian, and eventually break out of the overarching hegemony of the Persianized ruling class.

The novelty of the book lies in its ability to construct an image of power as seen from the eyes of the poets of the age. The use of the poets' perception to reconstruct the history of the 18th century is indeed welcome. However, such source material needs to be handled with caution. For the poets' flights of imagination very often lead to the construction of 'ideal' society in their works. Historical reality, however, may be very different. It is in this context that the book's eulogisation of religious 'harmony' and growth of an 'eclectic' religious and political culture in 18th century north India may need to be further qualified.

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A Cult of Joy

Krishna Chaitanya

KRISHNA: THE LIVING GOD OF BRAJ

By D. Anand

Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 220, Rs. 1300.00

The realization that myth, though it basically belongs with poetry and includes fantasy, is also a cognitive mode, is a recent one, and the researches of Jung have helped here. The world's great myths are sensings of the deep structure of reality, not the 'how' but the 'why' of things, the world, man and man's destiny.

But they have almost always come to us with heavy admixture of dross. That is why Santayana preferred the myth re-handled by a creative poet. Vyasa did this in the case of the Krishna myth. Krishna lore had been developing for at least four centuries before Vyasa's time and in several currents. There was the intrepid lad of a cowherd community who reduced the herds and the herdsmen from wild animals which later were soon transformed into demons by legend. There was the folk hero of astounding sexual prowess. Vyasa rejected these strands. Then there was Krishna Vasudeva, scion of the ruling house of Mathura. Vyasa retained that detail because, like Berdyaev, he believed that history is the encounter of Being and Becoming, transcendence and incarnate reality; and he created a great role for that Krishna in the Kurukshetra war, the central episode of the great epic he wrote. And Krishna's discourse on the battlefield at zero hour clarified how man's erroneous concepts of himself, of the world and their reciprocities brought on this war where only ten people survived out of eighteen vast armies, a blueprint of what the next world-war of our time is going to be. Krishna held up the idea of a partnership between man and God in the arena of history which can yet redeem the world.

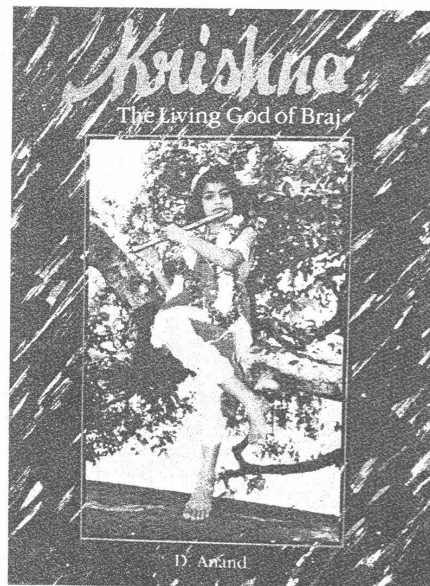
That, in a rather breathless summation, is the story of the evolution of the Krishna myth up to its masterly creative rehandling by Vyasa. But all the great myths of the world have suffered vicissitudes and the Krishna myth has not been spared. The strands shed by Vyasa were picked up again by the subsequent tradition. Court poetry, strongly stamped by the cult of the erotic, addressed itself to the task of making Krishna a Casanova, right from the time of Hala Satavahana's anthology of Prakrit poetry onwards,

through the *Harivamsa* and the *Vishnu Puranas* to Jayadeva and to Vallabha who latter unambiguously links the Rasalila of the *Bhagavata* to the erotics of Vatsyayana mediated by Jayadeva.

The amours of Radha and Krishna figure very much in the narrative of the book under review, inevitably along with Krishna's affairs with many other maidens. But highlighting this is perhaps a little unfair. The Krishna cult as it developed in Braj softened the too physical and raw erotics of court poetry to romance; it made religious living a joyous celebration. This was forgetting Kurukshetra, but men may be forgiven if they forget the problematics of life in our troubled world for some carefree happiness. The poetry of this cult could win the heart of people of other faiths too. Ras Khan the Afghan wrote: "If I be a bird, then let me dwell for ever in the boughs of the Kadamba tree on the banks of the Yamuna."

The author seems to have fallen in love with the colour of life in Braj; he is a photographer too and this is primarily a book of pictures. As regards the text, he has been pretty thorough in giving information about the places of pilgrimage, the temples, the fairs and festivals, the arts and crafts. The presentation of the material in the manner of dictionary entries also makes reference easy. But many deep and significant aspects of the cult have been missed.

The child Krishna is perhaps more important in this tradition than Krishna the lover. God as the father figures in many religions. But probably nowhere else do we see a reversal of roles with man playing parent to the lovable but mischievous child-god. The concept has a great lineage for, twice in the *Rigveda*, we get a fine image of the songs of the poets soaring up to God and fondling him as if he were a little child. The concept of God as the father can lead to the unity of mankind since all men then would be his



children. God conceived as the child would also have the same result for God is in all children and men should care for all of them equally.

In the reference to Govardhan the important sequence in the *Bhagavata* should have been recalled. The shift of the pastoral community to the foot of the hill is due to explicitly stated reasons of ecology including not only what it means to the survival needs but also to the being needs of man. There are routine details of the Gobind Dev temple; the author does not seem to be aware that it is a great landmark in the evolution of architecture, integrating Moghul features in the construction of Hindu temples. The iconic form of the very popular figure of the infant Krishna crawling on the floor with a lump of butter carefully held up in his right hand has a high classical source, for it goes back to the graphic description by Lilasuka in his *Krishnakarnamrita*, one of the most mellifluous poems in Sanskrit. While the various dances have been described in a routine manner important choreographic details have not been mentioned. For instance, the Braj Ras is unique for the travelling piroquette on knees which traverses the whole stage.

The book thus remains at the level of a guide book for tourists when it could have brought out the finer aspects of the Krishna cult, its charm and poetry. But it is a pleasant volume and will make the devout especially very happy.

Krishna Chaitanya, scholar and critic, is the author of more than thirty-five books on Art, Literature and Culture.

A Powerful Linguistic Tool

Anvita Abbi

THE OTHER TONGUE: ENGLISH ACROSS CULTURES: SECOND EDITION

Edited by Braj B. Kachru

University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1992, pp. 384, \$ 19.95

The second edition of this famous work is welcome for three reasons. First, as a reminder to us that World Englishes are not just deviations of the English English or the American English but natural languages which have grown and developed in language contact situation of seemingly different types of sociolinguistic contexts. Second, it raises a fundamental question regarding the definition and scope of a 'standard'. Third, it obliterates the myth of nonacceptability of a language if it is not the mother-tongue of any of its speakers.

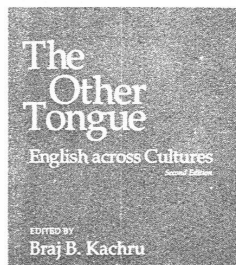
In its reincarnated version *The Other Tongue* is divided into six parts as opposed to the five parts in the previous edition. There are nineteen chapters out of which eight chapters represent contributions from four new authors. Part VI, consisting of a sole chapter, "World Englishes in the Classroom: Rationale and Resources" is most appropriate and a much needed addition. The book includes forewords and prefaces to the first and second editions and an absolutely new introduction by the editor. Ironically, the foreword to the second edition is written by Peter Derek Strevens and it is to his memory that the book is dedicated. As the editor informs us this is one of the last pieces that he wrote before his death (November 2, 1989). The chapters are organized into six main categories: English in the global context (6 papers), formal and functional nativization (4 papers), contact and change with specific reference to the question of a standard (3 papers), literary creativity in the other tongue (2 papers), discursial strategies (3 papers) and finally, World Englishes in the classroom (1 paper).

In a typical Asian environment there is an aura built around the third person 'Vo' (the other). She is the target of contempt, jealousy, and insult of some and love, respect, and pride for the others. She dominates as no one else can, she demands as no one else does, and she mes-

merizes and charms as no one else dares to. In a pendulum like situation between 'we can do without her' and 'we cannot she stays on and we accept her. Similar has been the case of the other tongue, i.e. English in its non native contexts. Some of the Asian countries such as India have witnessed oppositions against this colonized past and its traces in *Angrezi hataao* campaigns and yet English has not only resisted such backlashes but has stayed on with greater vengeance than ever before. It is no longer 'just an official language' or the language of the intelligentsia but has become the language for wider communication, that which links us to the vast rungs of humanity extending to almost the entire world. *The Other Tongue* talks of this English with all its encompassing functions and roles in new and newer societies, the English which when transmigrated, has acquired a new grammar and new semiotics appropriately befitting the new communities where it is nobody's mother tongue.

The first edition of the book undeniably established the legitimacy of the notion of a 'non native' variety of English, the second edition attracts our attention to think and rethink about how 'other' this tongue is. Hasn't this tongue already crossed the portals of the inner sanctums in our homes? I will specifically concentrate on the additions and newer material in the second edition of the book to avoid repeating what has already been said for the last ten years about it.

English has come and stayed as an international language (Peter Strevens) and a most interesting and paradoxical situation has arisen since the mother-tongue speakers of English now constitute only one quarter or one fifth of the total speakers of English. Strevens feels that the rise and stability of "ethnocentered" speakers is due to the nature of English language which freely incorporates ideas, concepts, and expressions from other societies and makes them part



of its grammar. This "open door" policy has helped English to become the 'global' language which is shown magnificently in a map (p.33). In this map the continent of South America is shown as devoid of English penetration (which seems to be an omission by the author).

It is the diversity of the language which gives it a multifunctional and global character. Larry E. Smith (p.75) takes the position that it is unnecessary for every user of English to be intelligible to every other user of English. "Our speech/writing in English needs to be intelligible only to those with whom we wish to communicate in English". Smith's contribution to the volume is an important one as his research results are based on a difficult but significant experiment on "what is the understanding of English?" He reaches the conclusion that native speakers of English are neither the best judge of deciding what is standard nor are they most widely understood around the globe, nor are they best able to understand the different varieties of English. He thus brings home an essential concept of communication, that the fluency and familiarity with the form of a language is more significant than a competence in it.

A similar idea is reverberated in the article written by Kamal K. Sridhar and S.N. Sridhar (pp.91-107) where they emphasize that an indigenized variety of English is neither like an interlanguage nor a fossilized variety of native English but is a powerful medium with appropriate linguistic features for communicating among bilingual Indians.

Bringing forth the futility of applying the standard of native English to non native Englishes, Peter H. Lowenberg (pp. 108-121) in his article, discusses the inevitability of nativization of Englishes because the nativized features operate as identity markers of the communities where these are used.

English in the bilingual context has generated institutionalized varieties

(Nigerian English, Kenyan English) and the performance varieties (Chinese English and Japanese English) the account of which the readers will find in part II of the volume. This part, along with the following one makes interesting reading as it unfolds the contents and processes of language acculturation, language adaptation, linguistic innovations, language acceptance, language loyalty, and language spread all of which can be ascribed to contact induced changes.

The range of new and newer styles of the creative English literatures in non native contexts is the scope of the part IV. This is an area which perhaps demands a whole new volume. Out of the two papers in this section, special mention should be made of Edwin Thumboo's paper on 'The Literary Dimension of the Spread of English' which focusses on the vertical spread of the language by analyzing the literary writings in the multilingual contexts. He strongly advocates that comparative literature as a discipline should incorporate studying writings in English across cultures as well as mother tongue based literatures. This, he feels, would demand the working out of appropriate concepts, terminologies, and approaches specially needed to unravel the complexities of varied social realities.

Cecil L. Nelson's paper "My language, Your culture: Whose Communicative Competence?" raises the cardinal question as to why we should consider non native English as 'the other' English. He clearly demonstrates through various examples that the non native varieties of English cannot be understood fully by a person who is not a bilingual in one of the languages of the native context. He concludes by saying that "for one body to claim 'ownership' of English on some basis of historical antecedence is pragmatically unsound thinking" (p.337). The question arises: what kinds of deviations in any variety of English should be considered 'mistakes'? This brings us to the age-old debate on grammaticality vis-a-vis acceptability of linguistic forms, which is not touched by any of the authors.

A real down-to-earth paper is by Yamuna Kachru on "Culture, Style, and Discourse: Expanding Noetics of English" where she studies stance making adverbials in written Indian English. Interestingly, she reaches the conclusion that the Indian English in its journalistic writing is a class apart primarily because of its high involvement style. This means that the Indian English Press is far from being "faceless". She further claims that the rhetorical style of Indian academic writing owes its genesis to the tradition of writing in Indian languages which in turn is derived from the age old Sanskrit tradition. Kachru maintains that "the rhetorical style of Indian English thus reflects an attempt to create the Sanskrit noetics in English: it expresses the same cultural meaning that the Indian languages do. In this sense, English in India has truly become an Indian

language" (p.347).

The last chapter, "Teaching World Englishes" is a good summary of the volume where Braj Kachru discusses and disproves six popular fallacies about the native language English and Englishes and demonstrates the way the contributors to this volume have exploded the myths about the former. English represents not a monolithic culture but serves as a repertoire of varying cultures, and in this way English offers a counterthesis to the 'one language, one culture' dictum.

In a volume of about 400 pages what one misses is a study on the use of English script, i.e. Roman in non native contexts. There are interesting adaptations and innovations made in the script to accommodate phonetic needs of the language it is supposed to represent. The globalness of the language is also reflected in the use of its writing system as it is regional and religiously neutral. What I have in mind is the latest trend of using Roman script for written Hindustani which was written earlier in the Nagri or in Perso Arabic scripts. Needless to emphasize there is a big range of uses of the Roman script from representing tribal languages of India such as Khasi, Mizo, Naga and score of others to the writings on the wall and bill hoardings of Indian films.

Barring this minor point, I feel that the biggest contribution of the present volume is to draw our attention to the dynamic character of English, that is, its elasticity and plasticity in form, in function, and in content. It has been acculturized in different and variant contexts around the globe, operated a new genre of writings in various countries, cemented the gaps in intercommunication among the educated and the intellectuals, served as a powerful linguistic tool in the hands of politicians and bureaucrats, has helped in scientific and technological developments of the countries, and above all, given a sense of pride to its learners, speakers, and writers. English has been like wet clay. Every user society moulds it to suit its socio-linguistic needs and aspirations.

Readers will enjoy reading this book as it does not traverse through technical jargons. The result of reading *The Other Tongue* is that you fall in love with Indian English and begin to appreciate the cultural specifics in the language. This volume will pave the way for a fresh look at Englishes not as the 'other tongue' but as 'my tongue' and 'our tongue'. In this sense the book is a path-setter.

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A Useful Reference Digest

Namita Ranganathan

STRESS AND COPING: THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE

By D.M. Pestonjee

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p. 238, Rs. 225.00

In an era characterized by accelerated technological expansion and development resulting in an overall explosion in knowledge and opportunities, it is to be expected that the roles and functions characteristic of traditional society will undergo a metamorphic change. Acceptance of this transition or change is no easy task however, for it involves conscious adaptation on the part of individuals and organizations who are its constituent members. This often results in the emergence of conflicts, tension and anxiety. The problem is further compounded by the observation that "things and events in the environment have started occurring faster than ever before". This is accompanied by an explosion of expectations. The net result is "stress" be it tension, anxiety, frustration or role conflict.

The concept of 'stress' however is not a modern one. References to it as *dukha* (pain, misery or suffering), *klesa*, (afflictions), *kama* or *trishna* (desires), *atman* and *ahankara* (self and ego), *adhi* (mental aberrations) and *prajnaparadha* (failure or lapse of consciousness) are found in early traditional texts such as the *Charak Samhita*, Patanjali's *Yogasutras* and the *Bhagvad Gita*. However, there is a significant difference in emphasis on 'stress' as an ancient Indian concept and its more recent western connotation. In the early Indian tradition, there exists a holistic approach to human phenomena and thus behaviour is interpreted in terms of the totality of an individual's life style and total body-mind relationship. In sharp contrast, the western conceptualization seems to explain 'stress' as it is behaviourally manifested and the focus is on analysis of its constituent parts.

D.M. Pestonjee's book entitled *Stress and Coping* clearly addresses itself to the concept of stress in its western 'behavioural analytic' stance. The focus is on discussing and defining the term, analyzing it operationally in the context of individuals and organizations, and dis-

cussing various coping strategies in prevalence. The author resorts to extensive research analyses and substantiation to build up the contents. The book is systematically organized into three sections, each dealing with a critical theme in 'stress theory and research'. The first section deals with the process of stress wherein the author has focussed on defining the concept, emphasizing its relevance in body physiology and describing various life events which contribute to it. The conceptual framework of stress is described in its historical perspective from its emergence in the eighteenth century to its contemporary status. References to noteworthy contributors in the field of stress who influenced its definition such as Hans Selye, Mason and Hinkle in the western context and Singh and Asthana in their indigenous representation, figure prominently. The stimulus-oriented, response-oriented, etiological and psychodynamic views are thus suitably discussed. Professor Pestonjee himself defines stress as "the state which results from demands on an individual exceeding his adjustment resources". This definition has tremendous contemporary relevance given the complexity of the modern psycho-social ethos. An important perspective presented in the conclusive part of this chapter is the positive role of stress, or the contention that a minimal level of stress is essential for effective functioning. The author has aptly evaluated the role of stress in the creative process.

The chapter on stress-related diseases like bronchial asthma, anxiety, neuroses and cancer will be of considerable interest to medical professionals as it greatly emphasizes the role of psychogenic factors in certain organic disorders. The concept of 'life stress' forms the core of the third chapter. An evaluative description of existing life events scales and their contribution to the incidence of stress has been given. The author presents a comprehensive review of related research in this sphere.

In the next section of the book, there is a shift in emphasis from stress as an individualised psychological phenomenon to that of organizational role stress. The concept of role-stress and its measurement and correlates are extensively discussed. The research review presented in this chapter is particularly noteworthy for it reflects on the part of the author a genuine internalised understanding of 'stress' emanating from feelings of powerlessness and meaninglessness triggered off in a "dynamic technological whirlpool which has spawned mega bureaucracies, micro-task specialization and greater urbanization." The causal factors of stress, types of stresses experienced by diverse work populations and coping strategies adopted by organizations, especially in the industrial setting have been described. The section concludes with research studies indicating the type of stress experienced by various professional groups such as nurses, teachers, women executives, policemen and special caste groups. The discussion is detailed and greatly enhances an understanding of the concept of stress in its organizational perspective.

The final section of the book deals with the management of stress and here, the author discusses different coping styles or strategies adopted by individuals to deal with stress. The various personality and organizational variables which act as moderators of stress are also examined. The last chapter highlights several techniques like yoga, meditation and relaxation which are used to counteract stress. The book ends with a detailed bibliography and index.

As a treatise on "stress and coping" Pestonjee's book is a useful reference digest since he has succeeded in bringing together a very large mass of research information generated by scholars all over India. Although it is no original contribution to the theoretical framework of stress, the book is a valuable source for those interested in the phenomenon of stress. One wishes however, that more qualitative and descriptive analyses were presented and the concept was developed philosophically in its societal perspective as well. In this era where man is looking for a reaffirmation of faith in himself and is facing conflicts of cybernation versus spiritual regression, where children are being trained for more androgynous rather than sex-stereotyped roles in society where the needs, worth and dignity of every child rather than indiscriminate expansion in higher education are receiving attention, the issue of 'stress' is even more relevant. However, these issues would warrant separate books, and, professor Pestonjee must be given credit for his systematic and organized attempt.

Namita Ranganathan is a lecturer in the Department of Education, University of Delhi.

Transpersonal psychology is a dimension which psychology has only recently begun to explore. Although it can trace its origin to Jung or even further back to William James and the nomenclature came into being more than three decades ago, it has still to find respectability in academic circles.

As the name indicates, this branch of psychology goes "beyond" the person, the individual. The search is for transcendence, the emphasis is on both empirical and experiential aspects.

The theme is as ancient as the hills, specially for India, with its vast tradition of spiritual wisdom. This particular book is written by an authority in academic psychology, who got drawn to spirituality by inexorable circumstances. He concentrates on the experiences of one person who has transcended his own personality and experienced the light of consciousness, outside the purview of most people. But it is available, waiting, for anyone who would seek and work for it even half as earnestly as they strive for wealth, status or power.

This state of consciousness is the *Turiya Avastha*, ignored or discarded by the Orientals, who have known about it and unknown to the Occidents. Swami Muktananda in his book *Play of Consciousness* describes his spiritual journey. This book is a commentary, education and elucidation of some of those experiences described by the Swami.

There are five chapters in all. The middle three have extensive quotations which inform the reader about the visions and experiences of Swamiji at various points of his journey. These are "Images of Power and Purification", "Images of Devotion" and "Images of Understanding". As is clear, these deal with the various paths to Self Realization such as *Raja Yoga*, *Bhaktiyoga* and *Gyan Vigyan Yoga*. In each, Swamiji's visions are quoted followed by discussions seeking to help an average, intelligent, interested reader, to comprehend or at least, get some idea of the significance and relevance of those visions. Thus, those visions no longer remain subjective, exclusive or isolated. They are symbols, building bridges across and connecting, unifying, integrating, the varied experiences of those who have set out on the path of Liberation. The liberation is from the narrow, confined claustrophobic existence of everyday life and limited consciousness to one of Universal, Blissful, All pervasive, All encompassing Reality of Super-consciousness. It is called super not only in the sense of being superior to ordinary consciousness, but also because it is beyond the reach of the average person, entangled in the mundane trivialities of existence. The sense of such freedom, joy, awareness of a reality which transcends and underlies the reality perceived by our senses, transforms existence, gives a meaningful richness to life which is beyond communication.

Yet Swamiji has attempted in his book

Light of Consciousness

R.S. Devi

EXPLORATIONS IN TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

By Richard D. Mann

Sri Satguru Publications, Indian Books Centre, (Indian Edition), 1991, pp. xiii+177, Rs. 180.00

to give some idea of this transmutative experiences. Dr. Mann has added his sincere efforts to integrate psychological insight with these spiritual events. In these efforts, his own ideas and perceptions have undergone tremendous changes.

Swami Muktananda's path is called *Siddha Yoga*—the path which has been followed since ancient times, by Siddhas. The Siddhas are those who have attained the supreme aim of Life. Religion, caste, language, etc are irrelevant. Various symbols have been used by those pathfinders to epitomize their vision and attainment. For Swamiji, it is The Blue Pearl. Blue has always symbolized high spirituality. It is the symbol of Infinity, Eternity. It is also the symbol of everlasting Peace, Harmony, the Inviolable, the Immutible, the Ultimate. Since blue has been the colour of divine incarnations as Rama and Krishna, these too are associated with the symbol—not as persons, but as a symbol of Divine Interaction with the Human. Such rich and manifold associations help further in adding emotional overtones, resulting in an increased readiness in receptivity. Of course, this can be true only for people nourished in Indian culture. As this is an Indian edition, these symbols and writings are most relevant and meaningful.

A quote from a colleague given on the very first page of preface is arresting. Dr.

Mann asserted he did not "believe in God or anything like that." The answer was, "What I mean by God is just whatever one spends the greatest amount of time thinking about. So, really, everyone has some God or other, don't you think?"

This set the ball rolling. The author was forced to think of his own god, which led him to Muktananda, his narrative, teachings and even personal interventions in the author's life. These "illuminated, confronted and changed" Dr. Mann's world view.

In every chapter the author gives copious quotations from Muktananda's book. This is followed by comparable experiences of other seers and the author's own exposition and commentary.

In the chapter on "Images of Power and Purification," Muktananda's account of the first appearances of Blue Pearl in his meditations, is quoted. The author then explores the implications of the vision for understanding the common reality as human beings.

"We are constantly being spoken to by our own, deepest, sacred self. . . . The self is shining forth and in its range of expression and communication within our consciousness awareness, it is bedazzling. . . . The images and the sacred we find in Muktananda's wide-ranging, meditative experiences leap beyond the bounds of a particular culture. Of these, four recur-

rent and, I suspect, universal images remind me of my own inner symbol system and its efforts to convey the latest understanding of the self" (p.17).

"The first image is of the center. We drift through life and the ordinary world we inhabit is the world of, at the very least, the ten thousand things—sometimes, this chaos yields, and a structure emerges. The end of this wonderful process is the experience of the "Still point of the turning world", the bindu, the Blue pearl. As we approach the centre, everything becomes more subtle, more powerful, more the pure expression of the one inner self.

The second image of the sacred is the Essence, uniformly present in and as everything. The blue light of consciousness is in everything, manifesting as everything.

The third image of the sacred is the unbounded and undifferentiated whole. The Blue Pearl emerges as not a thing, but as everything.

The fourth image of the sacred conveys the dynamic, purposive, aspect of the self. . . . From our depths comes the powerful evocative image of the sacred person; the goddess, the Lord, The Redeemer or the Guru" (pp. 17-18).

The author poses three questions as fundamental "Who am I"? "Who (or what) is the other?" "What is the relationship between this 'I' and that 'Other'?"

He postulates that classical yoga of Patanjali is most concerned with the first query. It sets forth techniques which lead to the realization of the Ultimate Reality, "I am the free, unbound Spirit". This path, as interpreted by the author, is dominated by themes of energy, power, endurance and will.

The second question is often answered by following the Path of the heart or *Bhakti Yoga*.

The third "path of understanding" or *Jnana Yoga* is concerned with the third question of relationship. While the yogic path is described in the chapter of "Images of Power and Purification", the next chapter describes experiences of the followers of *Bhakti Yoga*. It is aptly named "Images of Devotion". Here the devotee hankers for the Darshan of the Supreme. Our culture, rich in *Bhakti* and *Sufi* literature is best acquainted with this path.

"Muktananda's account of seeing the Blue Person in meditation. . . shows how the primary image of the self can be the beloved Other, the one that blesses, teaches, and transforms from its place in the devotee's heart. . . . The devotional path stresses constant remembrance, a constant opening to the Divine Person in a spirit of reverence and gratitude. It is the goal of meditation to remain fully attuned to the Sacred, the self, while fully awake and alert to the details of the everyday world. The path of devotion shows us the possibility of a continuous sense of darshan, a continuous sense of relationship with the sacred other, throughout all aspects of our lives" (p.70).

The author's interpretation of this final stage of realization runs thus:

"I make the universe, The universe is more than a merely physical or mental system. It is consciousness. It is a system of meaning of which I am the creator, sustainer and destroyer. I do not need to identify with the apparently fixed elements of my life, my body, my life history, my personality. I may identify with. I may recognize my unity with the deeper process of awareness itself. Something endures in the midst of everything. It is consciousness, and I am That. The world of differences is the play of that consciousness and I affirm my identity with that play, because from the center, where I locate myself, all meaning arises. We are all epicentres of the one conscious energy, and we are each the creators of our own meaning and experience".

Transpersonal psychology has ventured beyond the personal and individual. In a way, the seeds were already planted by the collective unconscious idea posited by Jung. The modern world seeking for a meaning in the chaos of today's technology and crude materialism is turning to these "hidden" or ignored aspects..

The author interweaves such expositions with his own encounters with Swamiji and successive experiences. These add value to the book as not being merely an intellectual exercise, but an authentic "existential" totality in which his whole being is imbued.

The author is also concerned with the pitfalls and dangers attending each path. "The yogic experiences led him (Swamiji) to the pitfall of pride, which he avoided through the humbling darshan of the Blue person. The glory of these devotional experiences led him to another pitfall, that of settling for an incomplete understanding" (p.84).

Jnana yoga is the next stage, narrated under the heading of "Images of Understanding". Here, the duality of self and the other disappears; the Advaita, non-duality, is experienced. "There is in fact, nothing to attain. The self is already attained," "Be what you are! Know yourself" are all ancient adages expressing the same idea. People differ from each other, not in their essential nature, but in their recognition of themselves. At this stage तत् (Tat, That, standing for Universal Immanence) त्वत् (You, the seeker) अस्ति (art) also is अहम् (I, the seeker) अमृत (the ultimate, the innermost, the infinite, the eternal) अम (Am). Thus, the differences between the first, second and third persons vanish. There is only One. In this connection, it is also essential to remember such assertions of various religions, at various times. The name of Abraham's God in the Old Testament, Jehovah also means "I AM!".

The author's interpretation of this final stage of realization runs thus: "I make the universe, The universe is more than a merely physical or mental system. It is consciousness. It is a system of meaning of which I am the creator, sustainer and destroyer. I do not need to identify with the apparently fixed elements of my life, my body, my life history, my personality. I may identify with, I may recognize my unity with the deeper process of awareness itself. Something endures in the midst of everything. It is consciousness, and I am That. The world of differences is the play of that consciousness and I affirm my identity with that play, because from the center, where I locate myself, all meaning arises. We are all epicentres of the one conscious energy, and we are each the creators of our own meaning and experience" (pp. 115-116).

Thus the three chapters together synthesize the three paths of Realization. The purification of the ego gives rise to an inner power. Then the Other is revealed as the source of power and also as the Beloved. Lastly, there is no other. "The self blazes forth, forging the identity of Being between all forms of consciousness. It becomes a matter of choice whether one revels in that oneness or delights in the apparent dualities. Every element of synthesis is available to one who has reached the goal" (p.117).

The last chapter "Transpersonal psychology" is the most important, since it seeks to translate the experiences of an individual in the spiritual realm, to universal idioms in terms relevant to psychology. This is a Herculean task by any standard. First of all, psychology as an academic discipline has yet to recognize spirituality. It is true that Jung laid the foundations for such an approach even before this century began. Many schools of psychology have sprung up in this century, reacting against the fragmented approach of Behaviourism and the uni-dimensional approach of psychoanalysis. Self-psychology, Gestalt, Existential, Humanist and many other off-shoots have been brought under one umbrella which Maslow called the Third Approach or school. This approach seeks to discover the unity, uniqueness, the integrating principle, without missing the multi-dimensional aspects, of the person.

Transpersonal psychology has ventured beyond the personal and individual. In a way, the seeds were already planted by the collective unconscious idea posited by Jung. The modern world seeking for a meaning in the chaos of today's technology and crude materialism is turning to these "hidden" or ignored aspects. The rise in religious fundamentalism, witches' groups, black/white magicians' groups, etc. testify to the hunger of the bewildered human spirit. It is time that psychology re-discovered "psyche" and gave a fruitful, positive direction to this search.

"What I learn about the Blue pearl narrative is not one single understanding. It is a conglomerate of understandings that open up one aspect after another of the nature and function of the Absolute" (p.121).

Such understandings lead to transformation of attitudes, values, goals, perceptions, relations. It would change not merely the personality structure of the seeker, but has far reaching implications for the society and our civilization as a whole. Transcending the mundane, experiencing the sublime, unity with the universal are possibilities which seem so remote today. Yet, books such as these may provide some glimmer of light on the path towards further evolution of humanity.

Dr. R.S. Devi is a senior psychologist and a retired Reader, Department of Education, University of Delhi.

Jungle Tales With a Difference

H.Y. Sharada Prasad

ANIMAL AND OTHER ANIMALS

By R.P. Noronha

Sanchar Publishing House, 1992, pp. 138, Rs. 160.00

Wild life is decreasing in our jungles but increasing in our cities. That quip is of all people by Mahatma Gandhi. One fortunate consequence of the unfortunate destruction of forests is the decrease in the stories or yarns about tiger-shoots.

If the jungle stories bring out his total fearlessness as well as humanity, the village stories reveal his humour. Rarely has our rural life been more affectionately and indulgently portrayed. His Hiralals and Shivalals, the Omvatis, the Ruppas and Sukhias will live long in memory.

Wild life is decreasing in our jungles but increasing in our cities. That quip is of all people by Mahatma Gandhi. One fortunate consequence of the unfortunate destruction of forests is the decrease in the stories or yarns about tiger-shoots.

Shikar stories are generally a bore. The boasts of solar-tooped sahibs or semi-sahibs about their exploits are not easy to bear. But this book is an exception. The narrator has a likable reticence about him, his prose is lean, and, above all, a sense of sanctity for life pervades his tales.

The late Ronald Noronha was a genuine lover of forests and all their denizens, four-footed or two-footed. If he raised his gun against a tiger, it was reluctantly and only because he wanted to put a stop to killings of other living beings. The tigers he shot were all man-eaters. In none of the incidents is there any intent to glorify self. The fallen beast emerges as the tragic hero or heroine, dying because of hubris. One of the saddest stories is not about a tiger but about a man-killing wild buffalo which had to go because the tribals of the area had to survive.

Noronha was not basically a shikari but a busy civil servant who rose to be chief secretary of Madhya Pradesh. He built up a formidable reputation for integrity and spurned extensions. After retirement he settled down in a village where he lived as a farmer, refusing to throw his weight around and even resisting the temptation of playing the evangelist of reform and development. "The two great loves of my life have been the jungle and the village", he says in his preface. And a junior colleague of his, M.N. Buch, adds in his foreword that Noronha became an adopted Adivasi, being counted as one of them by the Gonds of

Chhindwara, the Baigas of Mandla and the Marias and Murias of Bastar.

If the jungle stories bring out his total fearlessness as well as humanity, the village stories reveal his humour. Rarely has our rural life been more affectionately and indulgently portrayed. His Hiralals and Shivalals, the Omvatis, the Ruppas and Sukhias will live long in memory.

In one amusing story notrigicid takes place. Yellow and black may mix in fearful symmetry on the hide of a tiger burning bright in the forests of the night, but tigers and humour rarely go together. But Noronha has brought them together in "The Sound of Music" in which an imbibing white sahib falls off a machan in his drunken drowsiness but the tiger takes no note of him, concentrating instead on the buffalo calf which had been tied for kill.

Did these fascinating incidents actually take place? Noronha in his preface tells us with tantalising vagueness "to the best of my knowledge they did." He then quotes Hemingway on the secret of intrinsic truth: that "a writer's standard of fidelity to truth should be so high that his intervention, out of his experience, should produce a truer account than anything factual can be".

The book deserves a more sensible title, a better cover and a better format. Why is the lovely girl on the cover clothed in so drab a sari?

H.Y. Sharada Prasad worked in the Indian Express, and was later Editor, Yojana. He was Information Advisor to the Prime Minister of India for over eighteen years. He is now Director, National School of Design, Ahmedabad.

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The Angry Young Woman of Denkal

Manjula Padmanabhan

UP THE GHAT

By Zai Whitaker

Affiliated East West Press, 1992, pp. 178, Rs. 75.00

In the first two pages of her maiden novel *Up the Ghat*, Zai Whitaker describes an encounter which succinctly sets the tone for the story that follows. Her protagonist Azra has booked a berth on a train bound from Madras to a small hill-station called Denkal. When she enters the compartment, she finds that her fellow passengers, a married couple, have already appropriated what should be her seat and berth. But she refuses the demand to "please adjust". Because right in the opening salvo of her arsenal of personal questions, the woman of the couple asks a question which should be obscene and offensive to any right-thinking individual. "Caste?" she demands to know. "Caste? Minority group, is it?" Whereupon Azra, in a spasm of angry despair at the very existence of such questions and of the people, the culture and the ethos which make such questions not merely possible but commonplace, claims her rightful seat and berth.

It is clear, however, that there is no pleasure in the tiny victory. The field of battle is too dishonourable to admit of anything positive, even in victory. And in a larger sense, such battles as these, with their primitive weapons, their cruelly unfair pre-conditions and their deprived adversaries—these hateful battles which ordinary Indian citizens are constantly being forced to fight against their will and against their finer instincts—are what this novel is about.

Azra's husband Hussain Ali is an honest IAS officer, stationed in Denkal. He is the sub-collector. In the course of the narrative, he pits himself against unscrupulous labour contractors, who shamelessly exploit the wretched Sri Lankan refugees who are the human fallout of the 1972 Bandaranaike-Shastri Pact. The refugees are Muslims, so the accusing finger of communal bias is easily hoisted in Hussain's direction. But his service record has an even worse stain on it. In an earlier posting to Ooty, he had championed the cause of uprooted slum dwellers against the wishes of the Rural Development Officer as well as the Collector. Instead of an enquiry and alternative accommodation for the slum dwellers, this led to Hussain's premature transfer to the career backwater of Denkal.

As Azra watches helplessly, the inexorable pattern of the Ooty incident reasserts itself. She feels trapped and stifled,

painfully aware that she has almost no space in which to manoeuvre. As Hussain's wife she must maintain the social niceties which go with the position. As the mother of a boisterous six-year-old son, Azad, she is ashamed to find she cannot love him as much as she feels she should. As the possessor of cherished memories of her genteel and privileged childhood, she sadly acknowledges that its very grace and civility was its doom. And she is a young woman who feels that life has passed her by: her degree earned in England was not enough of a talisman against the forces of conformity which resulted in her accepting the prosaic and unromantic rewards of an arranged marriage.

What is pleasing in the novel however is that though it describes a fairly typical Indian no-exit situation it avoids being typical itself. Azra refuses to swallow the cup of suffering which is the staple diet of the common or zenana variety of heroine. She broods, she agonizes, she documents her unhappiness; but by her very consciousness, she avoids being defined by it. Instead of dashing down the glamorous path of tragedy, she uses a small machete of irony to hack her own personal path out of the trackless jungle of moral dilemma and poisonous choice which is the daily reality of so many of her readers. Should she trust her domestic help? Should she have domestic help at all, in these enlightened times? Should she jeopardize her son's education by quarrelling with his narrow-minded school-teacher, Miss Williams? Or should she shatter his trust in her by punishing him? Should she support her husband in his largely futile and self-defeating cru-

sades? Or should she wail about the folly of being righteous in a corrupt universe?

She is aided in her personal trail-blazing by the few friends she has cultivated. Jenny, a missionary and an American, helps Azra maintain a perspective on the world outside India's steamy moral morass with her own clearly uncompromising views. There is Mira, whose steady, stolid conservatism offers Azra a staff to lean on when her own uncertainties cloud her will to continue. And then there is Jason.

Jason is a young American teacher whom Azra inevitably meets, in Denkal's social nanocosm. Inevitable, too, seems to be the attraction which quickly springs up between them. Romance, a brief affair and with it, no, not guilt, but release. Azra rides easily through the tide of confusion that the situation might have visited upon a less thoughtful protagonist. She reaches the other shore, revitalized, her psychic batteries recharged, her self-esteem returned. She is even able to rediscover her talent for writing. When she embraces her husband later on, it is with the confidence of a woman whose dormant sexuality had needed only a spot of tinkering for it to rediscover its spark.

Too bad, then, that in this passage in the novel, as in no other, the author's ability to observe the small sideshows of real life fails her. Azra and Jason consummate their attraction for one another out on the hillsides with enviable unconcern for the cowerds, tourists and just plain nosy-parkers who guarantee that dalliance in open spaces is generally swift and furtive. Their encounter is written of in the style of a virgin writing pornography—without conviction. Fortunately, it

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doesn't take up much space. And one is relieved that Azra eschews the howls of guilt and remorse that a woman in her position would normally feel obliged to utter. But it's an annoying blemish nevertheless. The romance scenes of a novel are a kind of touchstone for assessing what is authentic, what is sincerely felt, what can reflect up and out of the cold prose of the printed page and into the life of even the most inert reader. Perhaps that is why it is important to be even more painstakingly honest in these passages than elsewhere. Because it is here that the reader's own life will offer its voice to the roundelay, will vibrate in tune or out and will be the most likely to register a false note.

Happily, this note is not false enough to seriously destabilize the novel. The characters, the locales, the speech anomalies which Whitaker records with roughish fidelity, all of these maintain the thread of narrative sturdily. More than anything else, there is the refreshing relief of the author's anger. It simmers just under the surface of all the fictional conflict. It powers the plot through its tortuous path, as the honest officer faces a court enquiry, as the miserable refugees reverse their testimonies, as the key witness is murdered.

It is the anger, finally, which I like. Because it is real, it is heartfelt. It tells me that what inspired this novel was not the need to earn a fast buck, nor the desire to see a name in lights. But an urge to share an anger which we should all feel, an outrage which we should all be crying out with. And yet it is not an anger which destroys. In the end we are left with a sense of renewal and hope, despite all. There is a sense that, even when the struggle is not worth its own price, nevertheless it is not in vain. And that it is better to pay that price than... not to struggle at all.

Manjula Padmanabhan is a well known cartoonist and playwright based in Delhi.

Two Views From The Outside

Githa Hariharan

A CANDLE OR THE SUN

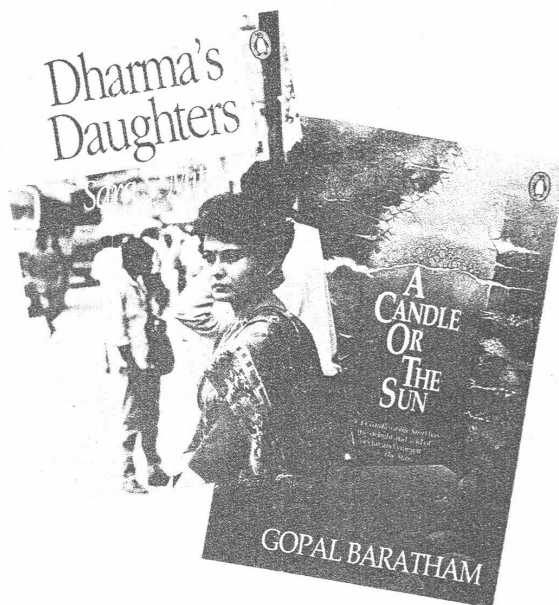
By Gopal Baratham

Penguin Books, 1992, pp. 196, Rs. 75.00

DHARMA'S DAUGHTERS

By Sara S. Mitter

Penguin Books, 1992, pp. 198, Rs. 75.00



A *Candle Or The Sun*, a novel by a Singaporean of Indian origin, was considered too controversial to be published in Singapore. This detail is not treated as a part of the blurb; it is actually part of the novel's indictment of all paranoid governments.

A Candle Or The Sun begins, not on this note of political comment, but quietly, almost demurely, with a furniture shop. Hernie Perera, who runs the shop, is an oddball even in the multi-racial "melting pot" of Singapore. Our first indication that something is festering beneath this corner of the island paradise is Perera's reflection that "Early in my working life I had discovered that salesmanship consisted not of providing people with what they needed, but with what was essential to their dreams." We also discover that Perera is a writer, a kind of involuntary writer who has "several (stories) buzzing and bumping around" in his head, "rather like flies behind a window pane".

As the novel progresses, and Perera tussles with both still-born and fruitful plots, he finds that he is losing control of his life. At the same time, we see the orderly, synthetic face of Singapore cracking here and there, like a Pan-caked *Vogue* model suddenly falling apart. The face is now bizarre. It is being eaten up by Perera's discoveries. First, his father is dying of terminal cancer amid family scenes of black humour. Perera's job is in jeopardy because an American management-type has been called in to push for streamlined, higher productivity. Meanwhile, his affair with a young woman, Su-May, leads to his acquaintance with a strange and shadowy Christian sect of revolutionaries she belongs to. And in the midst

of all this, anonymous "streetpapers" appear here and there in the city, like insidious germs of subversion, exhorting Singaporeans to stop being dogs and reassert their human rights.

Each of these threads entwine around the other till both Perera and the reader know something is going to happen. Perera the writer, obsessed with plots but impotent when it comes to connecting plot with life, has already anticipated, in biblical terms, the kiss of betrayal.

When an old acquaintance, now a government official, offers him a "government writing job", Perera thinks he can handle it. He thinks he can learn to "compartmentalize", be the kind of writer who belongs to the official Guild of Singapore Writers while keeping separate in his mind "acts which were physically identical". He disapproves of his official-friend Samson's methods, but thinks it is enough to steel himself to the idea of being misinterpreted and misused. What he is not prepared for is "total incomprehension"; or a head-on confrontation with the link used to hold the collective life together. Samson's assistant asks him with a mixture of bitterness and amusement:

"Did they never tell you that on this island paradise of our trade is a matter of security, education is a matter of security, health is a matter of security, how you wash your underwear is a matter of security(?)"

Perera's life is now as ugly as the Singapore he reveals to us; as full of skeletons in the cupboard. He says: "I had decided to compartmentalize my life, to live in sealed rooms that had no commu-

nicating doors. But words made this impossible. They crept, like mildew along the walls, spreading from one room to the other, connecting them."

To prove his trustworthiness, to earn a plush government writer's job, he has to betray Su-May's group to Samson. He has to relive "A Kissful of Tears", a story he has written. But Perera adds a dimension to the story when he lives it out. He betrays the streetpaper group, but redeems his conscience, his increasing conviction that he has to act, not react: "I now saw that to be genuine, actions must be at variance with convenience, possibly even inimical to survival. It was this understanding that separated the creature of choice from that of chance." He helps Su-May and her leader escape, knowing that he will have to literally turn scapegoat. And this is what happens, in the brief and chilling final section of the novel. Hernie Perera, idiosyncratic furniture shop manager and dabbler in short-story plots, is now a toothless political prisoner tortured by "young gymnasts, so beautiful that they must have come from another world." Graceful and lifeless, they torture him with modern, scientific equipment. For a state obsessed with outward cleanliness, these are the important details.

All along, Baratham makes use of language to communicate the real plurality of Singapore—which exists in spite of what the government says. Perera's parents speak in a silly but endearing language reminiscent of their dancing hall romance; his wife speaks in mixed metaphors that yield double meanings; his Chinese boss's language has the grim humour underlying all attempts to blend

proverbial wisdom with capitalist hype.

If there is one figure on the canvas who fails in this scheme of linguistic richness, it is the villainous government official Samson, who speaks interminably like a caricature of a streetwise, cool DJ turned baddie. Actually, Baratham does not need Samson to be so patently obnoxious. The real villain is there all along, all-powerful, all the more frightening because he hides behind a vast and impersonal machinery called the government. We really don't need Samson to tell us that

"Yeah, man, if we let those screwballs loose they'll be jamming our networks with talk about world peace, protection of the underprivileged and cat's shit like that. Slime stinkeroo that will make us zoom to our doom... There'll be yobos yelling for independent trade unions, lecherous lizzies bending arse-over-tit screeching for women's lib, punks who don't know what sex they are let alone the colour of their hair knocking our fighting defence policy. We just have to let one little crack appear, boyyo, and the castle comes a tumblin' down."

Even without Samson's assistance, it becomes clear to Perera (and the reader) that a state cannot exist on the basis of a one-point programme of successful commerce. *A Candle Or The Sun* is a skillful, ambitious literary effort, but it also needs to be read and discussed because it addresses the ever-relevant question: What can keep different races, different needs and demands together as a whole? We seem to be able to tackle this question only by process of elimination. Baratham's novel too points to what we want by

exposing what we don't want. What we don't want, in Singapore or elsewhere, is a state that forcibly "harmonises" pluralities with a fascist straight jacket.

The second view is less absorbing. In *Dharma's Daughters*, Sara Mitter describes the lives and "choices facing Indian women today". To do this she divides the book into different sorts of books: description of personal encounters in Bombay; detailed description of living conditions, particularly the housing problem in Bombay; a section on the coexistence of mythology with everyday lives; and another on the growth of urban women's organizations in India.

Mitter has some good patches to offer—especially when she is describing women she has met in Bombay trains or middle/upper middle class high-rises. Within the limitation of the urban focus, she has also done a fair amount of homework for the other sections.

The good news ends there. I found the book difficult to read for two reasons. One, I have trouble with books that are unsure about what species they belong to. *Dharma's Daughters*, described on the back cover as sociology/travel, is not a happy combination of the two. It actually falls between two stools.

The second problem: do we need an Indian edition of a book like this? Even if we skip the long pages that "explain" Bombay with familiar geographical and statistical details, we are left with banal conclusions ("... the fallout of the population bomb is that even when people have food, clothes and money to spend they have nowhere to live.") Or we are given a partial picture: unemployment and lumpenisation are not adequately discussed; working class movements and the participation of women in these as well as peasant movements are only mentioned in passing; and of particular relevance today, of the "many Ramayanas", only one is projected as the authoritative version that has a "homogenous" hold on Hindu minds.

Finally, what we are left with is the kind of romantic image that makes you squirm: "... few homemakers show evident signs of wear and tear. In the early morning, the graceful women pass in classic poses, bent arm raised to steady the double water pots balanced on their heads. All are in bright, neatly arranged saris, their glossy hair pulled into a tight chignon, bangles gleaming on their arms. No one looks frumpy or cranky or shows evidence of having already crouched for two hours over her smoky chulha, preparing food on the swept earthen floor of her hut..."

I can only say I am glad Mitter was privileged enough to see the beauty and romance of the lives of women in Bombay. I wish these women could see it too, at least once in a while.

Githa Hariharan, a freelance editor and writer based in Delhi, has published one novel The Thousand Faces of Night.

Literature As Witness

V. Geetha

RUSSIA PURATCHI : ILAKIYA SATCHIYAM

By S.V. Rajadurai

Annam Publications, 1989, pp 356, price not stated.

A Klee painting named "Angelus Novus" shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned towards the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

—Walter Benjamin.

From the *Theses on the Philosophy of History*

Benjamin's "Angel of History" stands guard at the Kremlin these days as the wreckage of the past pile on, high on high at his feet. The storm blowing from Paradise remains caught in the debris; And the Angel, expectant, nonplussed and somewhat shy of the impending catastrophe seems reluctant to open his wings and fly.

But the desire persists: "to make whole what has been smashed", an entire nation and people within the Soviet Union rummage through the shards of the past and bid the Angel of History wait till they "awaken their dead". Can past time, however, be recovered? How may we imagine the (erstwhile) Soviet Union as if its post-revolutionary history could have been different, as if glasnost and perestroika represent only the logical fulfilment of promises made (and subsequently forgotten) long ago? S.V. Rajadurai in his *Russian Revolution: Literature As Witness* (Russia Puratchi: Ilakiya Satchiyam) does just this. This 356 page Tamil text seeks to uncover the various and contradictory responses to the October Revolution as mirrored and refracted in literary texts, as may be discerned in individual poetic fates... And a tale emerges: a tale that tells of the winter of discontent that set in on the promises of an early spring of freedom anticipated by October. The author raises ghosts from their graves, calls upon long-forgotten names as the

cobwebs of historical memory are carefully unravelled so that the past is forced to confront penitence and humility.

The existential present of glasnost and perestroika marked by surprises, twists and turns in the historical plot is Rajadurai's context. The present moment initiates him into the secrets of a past that had, until now, been represented as a vast epic landscape on the other side of time where nothing could go wrong. Rajadurai's work seeks to interrogate the past's self-proclaimed epic proportions and while doing so it points to its rich ambiguities, its pastoral moments, its spiritual strengths and most importantly, its tragic and fatal flaws. His "Lives" of the poets and novelists who lived through 1917 and who managed to survive the Stalin years constitute the underside of a history that, until recently, was believed to have discovered and realised its utopian moment of truth and freedom.

Rajadurai, it must be said here, has been a communist for over twenty-five years now. His earlier Marxist work—a Tamil classic in its own right—is a study of Marx's notion of Alienation. A densely argued work. *Anniyamathal* (Alienation) sought to reconstitute alienation as a category of analysis within Marxist political economy. It, thus, drew heavily on the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 and, therefore, tacitly challenged and rejected, through an exhaustive ex-

position of the concept of alienated labour, the political and philosophical assumptions that underpin the Althusserian problematic. *Anniyamathal* attempted to restore to Marxism the ethical imperative so clearly present implied in all of Marx's and Engels' works.

Russian Revolution: Literature as Witness is thus only the latest moment in a long dialogue its author has established between Marxism and its ethical and metaphysical traditions. Rajadurai, then, recovers for glasnost and perestroika a past they may see themselves as legitimate heirs to and proposes, therefore, a different history for Marxism as well, a history that derives from long ignored and suppressed pasts.

Rajadurai claims this past to be the revolution's forbear and suggests that such a past was preserved and reconstituted in the works of poets such as Blok, Akhmatova, Esenin and Pasternak, novelists such as Solzhenitsyn and many others who witnessed and welcomed October even as they refused to desert the vantage space of the past and the nineteenth century.

Translations from the works of these and other luminaries of October are well used to prove a point as is evident from the chapter on Lenin's aesthetics.

The perspicacious Issac Deutscher's critiques of 1917 and after are interspersed throughout the text and serve to bind the profuse, wanton and exuberant literary events of those hopeful days within the book's overall ideological vision. Rajadurai's translations of Deutscher, most of which are being made available to the Tamil reader for the first time, mimic and capture the great stylist's ironical mode of discourse perfectly. Deutscher's empathy with his subject lends his irony a poetic edge and Rajadurai's Tamil prose, supple, incisive and transparent translates Deutscher's effortless style very well indeed.

Of these first chapters that detail with precision the literary landscape as it was then three chapters deserve to be looked at in some detail. The opening chapter on Alexander Blok and his poetry and the poet's vision of the October Revolution commences a parable on the book's central thematic concerns: the artist's engagement with revolution, the peculiar nature of this engagement, its readiness for tragedy—presaging the latter chapter on Mayakovsky—its ecstatic and blissful transcendence of History; they are all here, implied in Blok's verse, its symbolism and, most of all, in its destructive energy skillfully caught and expressed through Rajadurai's translations from Blok's seminal *The Twelve*. The chapter on Formalism is easily the most remarkable among these. Mikhail Bakhtin's theories are expounded with a lucidity that leaves Rajadurai's Tamil prose pared down to its essentials. The prose, however, comes into its own with the chapter on Lenin's literary tastes and his theories. This chapter is clearly a labour of love. Selections from Lenin's

letters, his various asides on the question of literary value are all recorded here with the aim of clarifying Lenin's fairly ambiguous position regarding censorship and related matters.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the second half of the book. We have here obviously inspired pieces of literary biography such as the chapter on Vladimir Mayakovsky, sharply etched vignettes of Boris Pilnyak, Issac Babel, Osh Mandelstam, touching recollections of Sergei Eisenstein, Anna Akhmatova, and Marina Tsvetayeva in almost lyrical Tamil prose. . . . But what lends weight to the author's political understanding. The chapter titled "Stalinism" is a grand effort at historical accounting. It opens with tangential reflections on Pushkin's classic *The Bronze Horseman*. Later, we realise that Pushkin and Dostoevsky are being invoked here to gain a metaphorical effect; that is, they serve the author to construct a metaphor for the 'Russian historical condition' if you like. But soon we are made to leave the metaphor aside as Rajadurai takes us through the trauma of the immediate post-revolutionary years.

Rajadurai, attempts to come to terms with the intentionality of power and refuses to, in the manner of Foucault and his adherents, to identify the historical act with its metaphysical 'origin'. His use of the confessional *Through the Eyes of My Generation* by Konstantin Simonov is particularly fortuitous in this respect. Readers familiar with Simonov will, no doubt, recall his refusal to withdraw from publication a poem he had written during the Great Patriotic War in praise of Stalin. Simonov's argument was simple: he had no desire to compromise with historical truth in the name of a latter day moment of historical remorse and penitence. Rajadurai's understanding of Stalin is somewhat similar.

Joseph Conrad, the Polish English novelist once wrote that Russia, to the Pole, seemed a 'huge inky darkness that would soon swallow up its tiny neighbour and continue to cast its ominous shadow across Europe. Josef Stalin may be considered emblematic of this 'darkness' that claimed Russia (and the Soviet Union) and nowhere is the potency of evil that he came to represent so acutely visible as in the tortured and magnificent verse of the poets he silenced: Mandelstam, Akhmatova, Tsvetayeva. The satiric prose of Zamyatin, Solzenitsyn's eloquent testimonies to the horrors that underpinned the Socialist dream are further witnesses to the same. Rajadurai's translations from Akhmatova are particularly moving and succeed in evoking the sensuality, the passionate energy encapsulated in the single word, image and symbol.

Appropriately enough the chapters on Pasternak and Solzenitsyn follow each other, separated only by the chapter on Brezhnev. In Pasternak, all Europe is present, while in Solzenitsyn an older 'Slavic' morality helps to shape the narra-

tive. Rajadurai is ecstatic in his praise of *Dr Zhivago*. A much maligned novel is reconstituted for its significance in the context of glasnost and the recent revelations about Soviet history. The author is less enthusiastic and more ambivalent in his attitudes towards Solzenitsyn. Pasternak's romanticism, belonging as it does to the European tradition that hailed the poet as prophet and reminiscent of Goethe and Schelling, obviously enchants him. But Solzenitsyn's uncompromising morality, while it appears to be the truth, leaves the author wondering if the ejection of history leaves one with any kind of a vantage space from which to initiate fresh challenges to authority and power. It is this rejection of a morality without history, however consistent and rational such a morality might seem, that prepares us for the arguments advanced in favour of glasnost in the book's last chapter. Rajadurai had, earlier, analysed the mutations undergone by Stalinism, first, under Khrushchev and later, under Brezhnev. The basis of Stalinism, he had demonstrated, was never really challenged until Gorbachev's reforms. Under Khrushchev, Soviet literary policy had, initially, relaxed its totalitarian stronghold on creativity but the Pasternak affair proved that essentially nothing had changed. The writ of Zhdanov still ran large in Soviet literary affairs and, after the brief spontaneity of the war years when literature was roused into defiance by nationalism, literature and the arts came into their own only after glasnost and perestroika had taken root.

What fascinates Rajadurai about the era of glasnost is the proliferation of ideas in every sphere of human activity in the Soviet Union. The subterranean 'otherness' referred to earlier seems to have broken through the icy crust of history and flooded the Soviet landscape. This 'buried life', teeming as it does with theories and notions, the author hopes, will cause the Soviet Leviathan to turn over and move.

Rajadurai's book was published nearly a year ago and it had been in the making for at least a year prior to that. History has, since, caught up with the Soviet Union in several significant ways and one cannot expect him, of course to say it all. But it is the book's barometric sensitivity to the anxieties and expectancies of recent Soviet history that is remarkable. Rajadurai's text, caught in the interface between faith and pride in a revolutionary past and despair and tentative hope in its future symbolises, with great honesty, the communist dilemma of our times. At a time when our communist parties seem set in their moribund politics and at a time when political and cultural life in Tamil Nadu remains fatefully linked to banalities of one sort or another, Rajadurai's work is unique, and, sadly, alone.

V. Geetha is a Social Science Research scholar interested in Tamil politics.

Marxist with a Difference

P.G. Sundararajan

MARXIAMUM TAMIL ILAKIUMUM (MARXISM AND TAMIL LITERATURE)

By Gnani

Parimanam, 1991, pp 371 + XLIV, Rs. 40.00

Gnani (whose real name is K. Palanichamy) is an unusual Marxist whose extensive writings in Tamil have been a source of considerable controversy. Traditional Marxists find his unflinching intellectual integrity something of an embarrassment. Unlike his "westernised" confreres, his Marxism is rooted in the Tamil soil and is constantly reassessed by him in terms of his experience. In his preface to this collection of essays written over a long period, he says emphatically that Marxism has provided direction and meaning to his life. But he also adds, "All my Marxism stems from my social environment in the course of history and my own experiences that have affected my life." In other words, he has tested his Marxism in the crucible of his personal and political life and the shape that politics has taken in Tamil Nadu. He is also involved in the issues raised by the contradiction between Tamil nationalism and the wider demands of Pan-Indian politics. A chronological analysis of these pieces would show that the author has arrived at an interpretation of literature in general and more particularly Tamil literature in the light of an unorthodox brand of Marxism that goes well beyond what the official custodians of Marxist dogma would consider legitimate.

In the discussions that follows only some of the strands of Gnani's thinking are taken note of.

Gnani is Marxist enough to be emphatically of the view that literature must help the great struggle for the eradication of exploiting ruling class. Literature has a vital role to play in this struggle. In his view, the crisis in human relations throughout history forms the content of literature. Man alienated from himself for a variety of reasons seeks a solution for his predicament through struggle. The recording of this struggle is part of the duties of literature.

Marxists have a historical responsibility of retrieving the life of the people from class oppression through every means available to them, including art and literature. In his view, Indian Marxists have failed to do this both at the political and literary levels, partly because they have not related their theories to Indian reality. Marxism is an imported idea which we have not made Indian and our own. During the freedom struggle, we did not formulate an opposition to imperialism as well as to indigenous forms of exploitation. We blindly followed the Moscow

line and acted in a manner which tended to benefit Moscow. We failed to utilise the Second World War for our freedom struggle, as Lenin did the First World War. As a result we have become the guardians of the exploiters in our country. This has reduced Marxism to a farce in India.

In this context, the literary theories of E.M.S. Namboodiripad on art and literature are subjected to a close scrutiny by Gnani. He notes that EMS embarked on his criticism belatedly and admitted some of the errors committed by Marxists. But his attempt to rectify them were half-hearted and futile. EMS admits that Marx, Engels, and Lenin did not have enough time to expound all the ramifications of the cultural aspects of the dialectics of history. And though EMS quotes thinkers like Gorky, Plakhnov, Lunacharsky and Zhdanov, he scarcely refers to Christopher Caudwell, George Lukacs, Sydney Fingelstein, Earnest Fischer, George Thompson, Rolf Fox and Alice Wester and other latter day Marxists. One wonders whether the omission of these names of contemporary marxians whose views are at considerable variance with "Official Marxism" is accidental or deliberate. EMS may or may not agree with them, but to omit them and their views on art and literature would seem to suggest a narrow, dogmatic approach.

Gnani is also critical of EMS's views on the relationship between literature and art on the one hand and ideology, on the other. According to EMS, the only yardstick for judging aesthetics is whether it subserves the interests of the struggling under class at any point of time. He takes the orthodox Marxist view that Kumaran Asan and Vallathol were only reflecting the dominant attitude of the ruling classes of the times in their artistic creations. The implication that such art which sustained the interests of the ruling classes cannot be acceptable to a Marxist, who has the interests of the working class at heart. Gnani considered such narrowness invalid. Though he does not approve of the principle of "art for art sake", he can see the beauty of a work of art that is not overtly class conscious. Artistic and literary creations can exist in their own right.

Gnani's views expressed in several of the essays in different contexts on the duties of the artists and writers in the Indian context and on the Marxist approach to literature are quite provocative. Orthodox communists regard art

and literature as mere tools of politics. Gnani disagrees. In his view, Marxists in India have been practising politics for the last 40 years and yet they have not got anywhere near capturing state power for realising the welfare of the proletariat. They are not even agreed among themselves in their assessment of class-consciousness in India. They have been remiss in not evolving an Indian concept of Marxism and are tied to the apron-strings of either the Soviet or the Chinese version of communism. They have generally lacked the political, economic, philosophical and cultural knowledge of India in order to evolve a brand of Marxism rooted in Indian reality.

Why do communists need art? Gnani contests the view that contemporary art should subserve the party's propaganda purposes only. He thinks that art that is not overtly proletarian in content can still be related to the people. Art is indispensable to man because it enables him to appreciate beauty. Man in whatever station in life or to whichever class he belongs is entranced by music and literature. The communists have no satisfactory answer why it is so.

Official Indian Marxists argue that only the literature that involves itself in social problems is true literature. Acceptance of this condition would lead to the rejection of our religious and devotional writings. When Marxists tried to explain classics in terms solely of the class-consciousness they are doing a great injustice to the great works of geniuses like Kampan and Tiruvalluvar whom the people of Tamil Nadu have been revering for a long time with a sense of pride. Man's inner consciousness is deep and abiding. Even when he engages himself in changing the external world, he renews himself and one of the forms that this renewal takes is literature. When his inner consciousness expresses itself as art and literature, it acquires various symbols and myths. An individual cannot rid himself of his social commitment. But he is at the same time an autonomous entity. True Marxism will recognise that at every stage genuine literature transcends in some mysterious way the society in which it is produced. Gnani has a very perceptive piece on the Tamil Siddhas, itinerant "folk philosophers" who have nominally opted out of the social contract. He brings out the literary and philosophical merits of their mystic outpourings expressed in the language of the people. These Siddhas, who were seemingly "other worldly" were in fact revolutionaries in that they sought to free man from the shackles of caste and religion. In fact, they were a constant thorn in the flesh of conventional religionists. These latter had no answer to the implied Siddhas' criticism that they were supporting the exploiters with their rigid caste and ritual ridden practices. The Siddhas had the courage to declare that kindness, integrity and equality among men were greater values than "the love" of God practised by the orthodox. Even

the protestant ideology of the Dravidian movement owes something to the Siddha tradition.

Gnani has a number of interesting observations on Bharathi, Bharathidaasan and even on T.S. Eliot. He considers the "Kannan Pattugal" (Kannan's Songs) of Bharathi as even superior to the hymns of the Alwars which provides the original inspiration for Bharathi's poems. On Bharathidaasan, he traces the circumstances in which exigencies of Dravidian politics coloured his evaluations. But his authentic poetic voice is never in doubt.

Gnani has some acute observations on some of Eliot's key concepts such as dissociation of sensibility, poetry as extinction of personality rather than its expression. He derives sanction for his own theories of Tamil literature based on a maverick brand of Marxism from the doctrine of depersonalisation as pre-condition to artistic success. He argues that if Eliot had pursued to its logical conclusions his contention that literature moves towards a state of timelessness, he would have discovered that as man accumulates social experience, he realises new dimensions in his poetry. Gnani also considered T.S. Eliot's view of the unbroken nature of a constantly renewed tradition as very valuable.

On contemporary Tamil literature, Gnani has some unorthodox views. He feels that despite an astonishing number of practitioners of poetry—he himself is a leading light of a group of literary enthusiasts calling themselves Vaanambadi (Nightingale)—there is a certain stagnation in contemporary Tamil poetry. He has attempted a detailed analysis of the output of the Tamil poets of our times and suggests with breathtaking candour that this so-called "socialist approach" affected by them often stands in the way of true artistic achievement by them. He finds many of them naively propagandist. He is also critical of the fact that much of the "political poetry" of these poets is motivated by party political considerations and therefore has failed to achieve true artistic excellence.

Gnani also bemoans the fact that Tamil has not produced novelists of the stature of Tolstoy, Gorky, Solzhenitsyn etc. The social crises of our times has not been adequately dealt with even in the best Tamil novels of our times, he says. His critical studies of some of the reputed novelists of the day deserve more than a passing attention.

These essays are an exercise in "applied Marxism" of a man of great intellectual integrity, unafraid to strike a different note from the official line. They throw a new light on both Marxism and literature in Tamil Nadu, and deserve to be read closely by anyone interested in the dynamics of literary creation in Tamil Nadu.

P.G. Sundararajan writes in Tamil under the name Chitti and has written several critical pieces.

A Delightful Cameo

Madan Gupta

DELINQUENT CHACHA: A NOVEL

By Ved Mehta

Penguin Books India, 1991, pp. 115, Rs. 60.00

"Delinquent", explains Chacha, "is a sort of shorthand for saying I am old fashioned." Whether he is in fact delinquent in the accepted meaning of the word or not is hardly material. The novel is a treasurehouse of undiluted reading pleasure. In the 115 pages it covers Ved Mehta keeps the reader thoroughly amused and totally engrossed in the doings of Chacha whose one insatiable desire is to be in what he calls 'Ox-Ford'.

Chacha's only qualification is that he is a "Failed B.A. from British College Lahore. Good University man with two brothers in I.C.S." A product of pre-partition Punjab, Chacha is an admirer and worshipper of the British and their rule. He says, "It took the British to teach us how to live. Now that they have gone home, there is darkness and anarchy all around us—Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians are all at each other's throats and no one is there to arbitrate, to tell us what is right and what is wrong."

Interwoven with the adventures or misadventures of Chacha are delightful pieces about some of Chacha's countrymen. There is a Mr. S.S.S. Singh, about whom Chacha says: "What an ideal of a man! You know, he was the only man from Multan ever to go to Ox-Ford. I remember so well the day of his coming home. . . . When the train pulled into the station, the fathers of all the unmarried damsels were there. Before the returning hero could touch the ground, they lifted him out of the train and carried him on their shoulders. . . . 'Singh—ingh—ingh, my daughter is the prettiest!' they all chanted. Singh kept on saying gallantly, 'Yes, yes!' and each father was certain that the offer of his daughter had been accepted. All Singh was saying, of course—in the chivalrous, British, Ox-Ford manner, was that all the Multani damsels were pretty. But marching along the road to Singh's home, the fathers crooned wedding songs, as though their daughters were already betrothed." Chacha's admiration for Singh does not diminish even when he is proved a fake.

To fulfil his dream of visiting England, particularly Ox-Ford, Chacha tries to enlist the help of his nephew, narrator of the story, who gets admission in Oxford. When he finds he can't help, Chacha manages through another source to get onto a ship. How he manages this is another story with laughter at every step.

The chance that put Chacha on a ship, however, does not bring him the assign-

ment he was promised. Nonetheless he manages to land in London. A fellow-Multani—Lala Suraj Pal who runs a Curry, Chutney and Soup Restaurant—comes to his rescue and Chacha launches into London life as an usher at the restaurant.

This does not take away from Chacha his desire to be in Ox-Ford. His nephew one day gets news that Chacha has managed a trip to attend a Model United Nations Meet at Oxford; not only to attend but to be a speaker. He comes to meet him in London. Chacha adds a C.M.G. to his name confident that one day the Queen will bestow this title on him and buys suitable attire for the visit on credit; the shop getting the impression that he is a member of the aristocracy.

Ved Mehta's account of the proceedings of the Model United Nations is delightful. Chacha's description of India's architectural wonder the Taj Mahal attracts the wrath of the Pakistani delegate who proclaims that Chacha is a fraud—no C.M.G. but an usher in a London Curry, Chutney and Soup establishment. The delegate then denounces the British treachery in not giving Pakistan a corridor to Agra which has the Taj Mahal, a Muslim architectural wonder. The revelation of Chacha's true identity creates pandemonium and disorder.

Chacha is prosecuted for fraud: first, for using C.M.G. with his name; second, for getting clothes from a London tailoring firm knowing that he has no means of paying for them. The account of the trial is sheer delight. Thanks to the British sense of justice Chacha gets off scot-free from both charges.

The last act of Chacha, before the novel closes, is to write a letter to Queen Elizabeth II of Britain, in which he says, among other things: "Not long ago, I was at Oxford, attending a meeting of the Model United Nations and I witnessed a scene that in its pandemonium can only be compared to the Sepoy Mutiny. It strengthened my conviction that if Britain is to continue as a great power and be an island of order in this topsy-turvy hurly-burly of a world, such rebellions have to be quelled. I offer my services. I beseech you to make me a Knight of the Order of the Garter (C.M.G. is not enough) in a hurry, so that I can help you ride out the storm. . . ."

Ved Mehta is a story-teller par excellence. His suave and sophisticated prose in *Delinquent Chacha* raises chuckles at every page. The tongue-in-cheek descriptions of men and events is like a waft of fresh air in a closed room. Besides, Mehta shows keen insight into the mental processes of that generation of Indians, particularly Panjabis, and makes use of the insight to poke fun at them; sometimes mercilessly, sometimes indulgently. The result is a piece of writing which both amuses and arouses sympathy, particularly for its hero, the Delinquent Chacha.

Madan Gupta is a Delhi based freelance writer and translator.

Great Buys

Kunal Chaudhry

1000 NORTH-EASTERN REGION QUIZ

By Pramila Pandit Barooah

Rupa and Co., 1992, pp. 181, Rs. 30.00

1000 GEOGRAPHY QUIZ

By S. Muthiah

Rupa and Co., 1992, pp. 188, Rs. 30.00

IN DEEP SPACE AND OTHER STORIES

By Jaya Paramasivan

Frank Educational Aids, 1992, pp. 72, Rs. 25.00

Pramila Pandit Barooah, author of the book entitled *1000 North-Eastern Region Quiz* has lived and extensively travelled through undivided Assam for sixteen years, in order to gather material for her books. She lives in New Delhi and has become a social worker. This book is an excellent publication and will test the reader's knowledge and increase his knowledge of the exotic North-Eastern Region.

It offers a 1000 questions as described in the title. All these questions have been beautifully framed and are of a large variety. They range from the natural geography of North-Eastern India to the handlooms of the people of this region.

North-Eastern India comprises seven states—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. The book comprises a number of sections on the different aspects of N.E. India. In fact there are 25 sections ranging from 'History' to 'Semiculture.'

The section on 'Customs and Traditions' is most outstanding. The questions are so vivid and imaginative that just reading them is sheer pleasure. 'Which is the only tribe that carries poisoned arrows and have oblong shields of buffalo hides?' and 'In which state do men, women and children all smoke and are inveterate smokers?' are examples of questions to be found in this section.

All the questions have got multiple choice answers, so the reader of the book can take a wild guess if he doesn't know

the answer! If studied carefully, this book can help anyone become an expert on North-Eastern India. The section 'Picture Quiz' is another outstanding section. All questions are aided by beautiful pictures. All the photographs have been beautifully shot.

At a reasonable price of Rs 30.00, this book is an excellent bargain and offers endless hours of interesting education to its reader.

A. Muthiah, author of the book entitled *1000 Geography Quiz* is a well renowned cartographer. He has edited a number of cartographic productions including *The Social and Economic Atlas of India, An Atlas of India* and *The Road Atlas of India*. This quiz book, written by him is another credit to him. It has been cleverly written in such a way that whether the reader is a 12-years old or 40-years old, he will find it entertaining.

This book offers a large variety of questions, ranging from general geography to the landscape of South America. In fact, the book opens with the preface immediately followed by the title section 'General Geography'. This section contains such questions as 'What is a Peninsula?', 'What do isotherms indicate?' and so on. All questions have got multiple choice answers, so even if the reader is unaware of the answer, he can take a wild guess!

The section on India is most comprehensive. This section is divided into a number of smaller sections on the basis of the cardinal directions: 'North India', 'South India', 'East India', 'West and Central India'.

The rest of the book contains numerous sections of different continents of the world—'South Asia', 'The rest of Asia', 'Africa', 'Europe', 'North America and the Caribbean', 'South America', and 'Australia and Antarctica'. Each section has been excellently framed with interesting questions. A question from 'Australia' says: 'What is Ayer's rock?' Though many people have heard of this name, not many actually know what it is! This book contains a bonus section on 'Eurasia Today'.

The author of the book *In Deep Space And Other Stories*, Jaya Paramasivan, has done a very good job, as the book offers stories filled with vivid imagination. This book has been classified under the section of science fiction as all the stories deal with extra-Terrestrials (E.T.'s) and U.F.O's, space travel, etc.

The opening chapter of the book is the story "In Deep Space". This piece of literature gives a vivid picture of Earth in 3890 A.D. The story deals with an astronaut

Tiny Shiba who is selected to join the crew of a spacecraft, to visit the giants of the solar system—namely Jupiter, Saturn, Neptune and Uranus. But a surprise mishap in space leaves the astronaut stranded in space only to be rescued by a group of E.T.'s! Now are the E.T.'s or aliens, good or bad, cruel or kind and do they help the astronaut? To find this out read the book!

The second story "Stranger Than Fiction" is not as good as the first. But even so, it has been written very well and the illustrations help one to grasp the outline of the story. In this story, two boys, Ron and Mickey, spend their holidays at Ron's uncle's isolated house in the hills. The boys enjoy going on hikes and are ever-anxious to discover new trail. When Mr Barun (Ron's uncle) suggests a new trail for the boys to explore, they are thrilled. They set off for the trail in the morning, when they suddenly hear some strange

sounds which leads them to an injured alien lying in a ditch. Now, the alien is the good guy and when it's revived with the help of the boys, it is grateful. But, another alien, a dangerous one, is lurking around in search of first alien and. . .!

"On The Beach" is the best story of the book. It holds the reader's attention with its vivid descriptions and illustrations. The story deals with a boy called Ricky who is playing with his cousins on the beach, when he sees a bottle with a note inside, foundering in the sea. He fishes the bottle out, and when he opens it, he is immediately transported back in time. The bottle is then picked up by some thieves, but can Ricky find the bottle in time?

At twenty-five rupees this book is an excellent buy.

Kunal Chaudhry is a thirteen-year-old school boy.

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The title of Ezekiel's book in the Oxford University Press Advertisement in the Nov/Dec. 1992 issue of *The Book Review* should read NISSIM EZEKIEL SELECTED PROSE INTRODUCTION by ADIL JUSSAWALLA. Error is regretted.

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SATYA SHEEL PACHORI is Chairman and Professor of English, Department of Language and Literature, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, USA.

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The cooperatives have supported not only a rapid expansion in production and employment, but also a major increase in facilities for irrigation, education, and health care.

DONALD ATTWOOD is Associate Professor of Anthropology at McGill University.

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PARSHOTAM MEHRA

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

PARSHOTAM MEHRA was formerly Professor and Chairman, Department of History and Central Asian Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

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BHASKAR DUTTA, SHUBHASHIS GANGOPADHYAY, DILIP MOOKHERJEE, DEBRAJ RAY

The Indian Statistical Institute Conferences on Economic Theory and Related Mathematical Methods were conceived with the goal of fostering research and discussion in the application of theoretical methods to economic development. This collection of papers, all outcomes of the presentations and lively discussions at the first three meetings, is being published with the same purpose in view.

The chapters fall into four broad subject categories: macroeconomics, industrial organization, planning and public policy, and intertemporal economics.

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BHASKAR DUTTA, SHUBHASHIS GANGOPADHYAY, DILIP MOOKHERJEE AND DEBRAJ RAY are at the Planning Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi.

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AMIT BHADURI

Amit Bhaduri is internationally known for some of the economic writings collected in this volume, even though he has been a well-known critic of mainstream neoclassical theory. Significantly, several essays in the volume indicate an alternative paradigm in terms of which economic analysis can be more fruitfully conducted.

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AMIT BHADURI is professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. He is also honorary professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum.

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D.E.U. BAKER

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Such events evoked varying political responses: in the nineteenth century two revolts sought to stem the tide of change, of political intervention, and of an altering market and agricultural economy; by the early twentieth century they had provided the impetus for various forms of nationalistic activity which culminated in the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920.

D.E.U. BAKER is Reader in the History Department of St Stephen's College.

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W E B E L

Role of Webel

- Nodal Agency for growth of electronics industry in the state
- Setting up of subsidiary and joint sector units, infrastructure development, Research and development providing guidance and assistance to entrepreneurs
- Providing necessary infrastructure support to entrepreneurs—Saltlee Electronics Complex
- Infrastructure development in districts, spread electronics industries in rural areas

Facilities Available within the Salt Lake Electronics Complex

- International Gateway Switch by Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd.
- Software Technology Park by DOE—WEBEL with dedicated high speed data transmission facility for software export
- Remote Job-Entry Terminal hooking up with Cyber 340 situated at Regional Computer Centre, Jadavpur
- ASIC Design Center with ITI
- Three National quality and reliability centres are being established within the Complex
- DOE—WEBEL National R&D Centre—ER&DC, Calcutta has been established
- Vocational Training Centre under Indo-German collaboration being set up for training in test engineering in electronics

WEBEL Group of Companies

Communication Group

Webel Telecommunication
Industries Ltd
Webel Electronic
Communication Systems
Webel Telematik Ltd
Webel Communication
Industries Ltd

Components Group

Webel Crystals Ltd
Webel Sen Capacitors Ltd
Webel Carbon & Metal
Film Resistors Ltd
Webel Electro Ceramics Ltd
Webel Video Devices Ltd

Others

Webel Business
Machines Ltd
Webel Power
Electronics Ltd
Webel Informatics Ltd
Webel Nicco
Electronics Ltd
Webel Mediatronics Ltd
Webel SL-Energy
Systems Ltd
Webel Electro-Optics Ltd
Webel Toolsind Ltd

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